



Guide to Hosting a UTSA Public Health Intern

**Department of Public Health
College for Health, Community, and Policy
The University of Texas at San Antonio**

Guide to Hosting a UTSA Public Health Intern

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Internship Overview

Public health students are required to complete a 300-hour internship during their senior year. The internship is primarily an educational experience to prepare students for entry into public health, community health, and health service-related fields

Internship Objectives

In alignment with Council of Education for Public Health (CEPH) criteria the internship experience will:

- Broaden student understanding of the functioning of health-related agencies.
- Integrate classroom-based knowledge and skills in daily professional practice.
- Analyze the role of health and community health or public health professionals in agency settings.
- Gain an understanding of the organization, administration, program activities, and problems of placement sites.
- Improve student skills through on-the-job training, by allowing the student to assume specific responsibilities for planning, implementing, administering, and/or evaluating a health-related program/activity.

Internship Structure

- The internship counts for 6 credit hours, and students earn a letter grade.
- The 300-hour internship must be completed in a single semester.
 - This is equivalent to 20 internship hours per week during the fall and spring semesters.
 - This is equivalent to 30 internship hours per week during the summer semester.
- The internship can be fully in-person, fully virtual, or hybrid. The modality is determined by the internship site's needs.
- The internship can be paid or unpaid.
- The intern should be able to provide 5-7 examples of meaningful activities that were completed during the internship. This can include training certifications, photos from events they helped prepare for/attend, print or media samples (newsletters, infographics, etc.), and excerpts from research they participated in (recruitment materials, data summaries, etc.). This list is not exhaustive; contact the internship coordinator at publichealth.internship@utsa.edu if you have questions about this requirement.

Internship Site Requirements

Internship sites go through two rounds of approval.

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1. Departmental approval requirements
 - a. Be able to engage the intern in activities focused on health promotion and disease prevention and/or developing relevant skills (see the full list of approved activities in Appendix A).
 - b. Have a designated supervisor for the internship who is willing and able to provide at least one hour of feedback each week to the intern and oversee meaningful activities (see a full list of the guidelines in Appendix B).
2. University approval requirements
 - a. The Site must enter an educational agreement with the University of Texas at San Antonio. The agreements can last from one to five years.
 - b. The agreement is mandatory and provides liability coverage for the student intern.

Once approved, the site information is provided to public health students through the departmental webpage.

Internship Recruitment

Prospective internship students will be instructed to review all approved internship sites on the webpage a semester in advance of their planned internship. They will contact the sites they are most interested in interning with and provide their resumes. Internship sites determine how many interns they want to host each semester and have full choice in who they offer interviews and internships to.

Internship sites requiring background checks, vaccination records, or other requirements should work directly with the student(s) to secure appropriate documentation. These requirements should be disclosed during the interview process.

Once a site supervisor has accepted a student intern for the upcoming semester, the internship site supervisor will complete a guideline form for each UTSA public health intern. The intern will submit this form to the UTSA internship coordinator prior to the start of the internship. Once those are received, the UTSA Department of Public Health will register the student for HTH 4936, the fully online, asynchronous internship class. Internship registration deadlines are April 1 for summer internships, July 1 for fall internships, and December 1 for spring internships. Students should have an internship in place by these dates to allow time for registration.

During the Internship

Internships start and end based on the [official UTSA semester dates](#). Emails will be sent to site supervisors and students prior to the start of the semester and periodically throughout the semester with important information and reminders. Internships may begin early with prior approval from the internship coordinator, but all hours must be completed by the official end of the semester.

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Interns will be provided an hours' log, required forms, a syllabus, and a schedule at the beginning of the semester through their online course on UTSA's learning management system. Interns will submit periodic reflections and a portfolio of their progress at the end of the semester as part of their internship class grade. These will be evaluated by the faculty supervisor (HTH 4936 instructor).

Site supervisors will receive a copy of the syllabus and schedule at the beginning of each semester. During the first week of the internship, student interns and site supervisors will develop a plan for the semester.

- The plan should include 2-3 learning objectives/goals related to the student's professional goals and the work of the site and
- a list of 5-7 potential products to include in the professional portfolio

Site supervisors will be responsible for providing a midterm and end-of-semester evaluation of the student intern's efforts and for reviewing and approving their hours' log periodically.

Suggested Hours Distribution

We recommend the following hours distribution for the required 300 hours. The activities should be appropriate for a Bachelor's level professional. Sites that require students to engage in clerical or custodial activities (such as sorting items, cleaning, or basic data entry) for more than 10% of overall hours may lose their approved status.

- 10% Education
 - Organization required training, policies, and procedures
 - Supervised education through videos and readings, etc.
- 20% Coaching/Feedback of the intern
 - One-on-ones between the supervisor and intern
 - Team/staff meetings with feedback for the interns
 - Performance management
- 70% Exposure/Experience (from the list of acceptable internship activities in Appendix A)
 - Relevant assignments, projects, activities
 - New and challenging responsibilities

Contact Information

If at any time you have questions about the internship, please contact the internship coordinator and/or the Department of Public Health.

Department of Public Health

Public.health@utsa.edu

210-458-8169

Public Health Internship Coordinator

Publichealth.internship@utsa.edu



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Appendix A: Acceptable Internship Activities

The student's internship activities must focus on developing skills and strengths necessary for public health work. These may include **but are not necessarily limited to** the following. Please reach out to the internship coordinator if you have questions and/or want to discuss other activities.

1. Research activities
 - a. Survey and data collection design, implementation, and/or analysis
 - b. Participant recruitment/engagement
 - c. Conducting literature reviews
 - d. Writing manuscripts
 - e. Other research dissemination (developing presentations, posters, white papers, etc.)
2. Primary and secondary prevention
 - a. Health screenings
 - b. Motivational interviewing
 - c. Immunization registration
 - d. Behavioral coaching
3. Health promotion activities
 - a. Curriculum development
 - b. Program planning, implementation, and/or evaluation
 - c. Delivering workshops or classes
 - d. Serving as a health resource
 - e. Applying health theories to materials, programs, or services
4. Assessment of needs and capacity
 - a. Identifying existing and available resources, policies, programs, practices, and interventions
 - b. Assessing existing and available resources, policies, programs, practices, and interventions
 - c. Listing the needs of the priority population(s)
 - d. Engaging community stakeholders
5. Health communication and marketing
 - a. Developing educational materials on health promotion/disease prevention for print and electronic media
 - b. Increasing health literacy and/or numeracy
 - c. Examining and addressing factors affecting communication
 - d. Identifying and influencing marketing trends for population of interest
 - e. Evaluating impact of communication

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6. Environmental and occupational health
 - a. Implementing or evaluating worksite wellness activities
 - b. Collecting and analyzing environmental samples
 - c. Employing infection prevention and control activities
 - d. Monitoring and/or employing food safety practices
7. Policy, advocacy, and coalition-building
 - a. Contributing to new or changing policies including information gathering and writing policy drafts
 - b. Evaluating current policy impacts
 - c. Attending or facilitating meetings of the organization, stakeholders, etc.
 - d. Advocating for public health initiatives
 - e. Identifying available resources and gaps (e.g., financial, personnel, information, and data)
 - f. Evaluating advocacy efforts
8. Leadership and management
 - a. Facilitating events to promote health and/or promote agency/organization
 - b. Developing schedules and organizing meetings/appointments
 - c. Supervising volunteers
 - d. Planning training/education, including technical assistance and support
 - e. Developing guidelines, policies, and procedural manuals
 - f. Writing grants and funding proposals
 - g. Engaging in a health organization's strategic planning process



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Appendix B: Site Supervisor Responsibilities

When an organization/agency assumes the role as an internship site for students in the BS in Health and Public Health degrees, the site supervisor agrees to the following:

1. Work with the student to develop a schedule before the first day of the internship. Develop an internship plan at the beginning of the semester that outlines the intern's goals and expectations for the internship.
2. **Provide at least one hour of direct contact to the intern per week.** This direct contact and interaction are extremely important in allowing the intern to more fully understand the roles and responsibilities of the community health professional. This time together enables the site supervisor to observe the intern at work, setting the groundwork for evaluation, and allows the site supervisor to share their expertise with the intern. During the supervisory hour each week, the intern's strengths and weaknesses should be discussed, along with specific suggestions on how to better carry out the internship responsibilities.
3. Ensure all requirements of the organization (background checks, immunizations, etc.) are met upon tentative acceptance of the student intern. If these requirements result in the site being unable to accept the student, the site **MUST** contact UTSA immediately to facilitate other placement options. The student must be told in advance, in writing, if they are responsible for any costs, such as a background check or drug test, and if any travel will be required.
4. Provide the student with an orientation that includes an explanation of the background, structure, regulations and operations of the agency. This can also include additional training necessary for the intern student to complete their course assignments. Clarify relationships to higher-level administration, to other staff and to students, and give the student an understanding of the proper channels of communication.
5. Provide the intern with appropriate workspace and necessary supplies. The site is expected to reimburse the intern for expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties (i.e. assigned travel, assigned attendance at workshops, etc.) if outside of the primary internship area. Additional potential costs an intern may incur, including travel, should be discussed between the site supervisor and the intern in advance of the internship.
6. Assign activities from the approved list that promote professional growth of the intern while supporting the goals of the placement agency. Whenever possible, provide a variety of learning opportunities including attendance at staff meetings, conferences, collaborative meetings, etc. Involvement in clerical and custodial tasks should be minimal.
7. Foster a safe and productive work environment through ensuring the intern knows who to contact for questions about processes and procedures in the workspace including but not limited to lab safety, harassment, bullying, and misconduct.
8. Respond to any communication from the university faculty supervisor or internship coordinator in a timely manner (2-3 business days).
9. Prepare two evaluations of the student intern, one midway through the experience and the other during the last week of the internship.
10. Review the midterm and final hours log to ensure that the student has completed the required 300 internship hours.

