

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO**  
**PUBLIC HEALTH INTERNSHIP**  
**PROCEDURAL MANUAL**

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## **PUBLIC HEALTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

### **I. Introduction and Eligibility**

The Department of Public Health in the College for Health, Community and Policy (HCaP) at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health. This degree has two concentrations: Health Services and Health Promotion. Both degrees require that students complete an internship for academic credit as a senior. The major goals of the internship program are:

- 1) To prepare students for entry into the public health, community health, and health service-related fields.
- 2) To ensure that graduates are knowledgeable regarding program planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- 3) To ensure that graduates have internalized positive attitudes and values toward the mission and goals of the community health and public health field.

The internship experience is required for all eligible public health students. The internship gives the student an opportunity to apply and integrate the cognitive knowledge and skills developed in the classroom in real-world settings. A community-based internship offers a vast range of opportunities for the student to explore potential careers in different settings ranging from volunteer organizations and hospital-based programs to health and fitness centers and public and non-profit agencies. Through the internship program, the Department of Public Health program hopes to establish cooperative relationships with public and private organizations, resulting in a positive experience for students, the program and the placement organizations.

- A. Students are eligible to apply for the internship course if they:
  - a. Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50;
  - b. Are within 30 credit hours of graduation (including the 6 hours of the internship)
  - c. Completed the prerequisite courses: HTH 2413, HTH 3503, HTH 3663, and HTH 3713. These should be completed prior to the internship, not concurrently.
  - d. Students under catalogs Summer 2022 and earlier do not have prerequisite courses but should complete the internship in their last semester.

Note: Students with less than a 2.5 GPA should contact the internship coordinator to develop a course substitution plan.

### **II. Explanation of the Internship Program**

- A. Experiential learning is an indispensable and valuable element for health and public health professionals. An internship enables the student to gain practical experience as a professional under conditions conducive to educational development. Students will have opportunities to integrate, synthesize, and apply knowledge gained within the classroom through experiential activities. The internship is a time-limited, supervised period of health education, health

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promotion, community health, and public health activities carried out in public and private organizations. Time Requirements

The student will earn 6 credit hours (on a letter grade basis) for completing the 300-hour internship.

- During the fall or spring semester, this is equivalent to at least twenty (20) hours a week for one full semester (15 weeks).
- During the summer semester, this is equivalent to at least thirty (30) hours a week for 10 weeks.
- Students are eligible for up to 5 make-up hours provided by the Department of Public Health during the internship semester. Students can email their faculty supervisor to utilize this option.
- The student is expected to adhere to agreed-upon agency hours' schedules and administrative policies. Failure to participate in scheduled internship activities will result in termination. Students and sites need to establish if nights and weekends will be required before completing the internship paperwork.

#### B. Objectives

In alignment with Council of Education for Public Health (CEPH) criteria, objectives of 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.

These objectives may be accomplished through (but are not limited to) activities found in Appendix D. Interns and site supervisors will develop site-specific objectives at the beginning of the semester.

#### C. Financial Considerations

Internship experiences are designed to provide the student an opportunity for professional experience and should be selected on the basis of their educational quality. *The internship may be a paid experience.* The student must declare in advance if they are accepting payment for fulfilling the required internship hours on their Internship Registration Form.

Whether or not the intern is receiving payment, the sponsoring organization 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 location. Additional potential costs an intern may incur should be discussed between the site supervisor and the intern before the internship begins. Any financial compensation to the intern student should not alter how the intern is evaluated as stipulated in this Manual.

### **III. Intern Roles and Responsibilities**

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#### A. Confirming Internship Eligibility

- a. Students should meet regularly (at least once per academic year) with their academic advisor. They should confirm their internship eligibility with their advisor at least one semester before they plan to complete the internship.
- b. Students who need/wish to take more than 6 credit hours with the internship and capstone need to file a credit appeal with the department. See Appendix E.
- c. The student should have an idea of what type of internship they are interested in including agency, modality, and health focus. Students are encouraged to use the self-assessment tool available on the internship webpage.
- d. The student should prepare a resume. Resources are available through Career [Services](#).

#### B. Securing an Internship

1. Three months prior to the internship semester, students should review potential internship sites on the Department's internship web page.
2. Select 5 to 7 potential internship sites and contact them to request interviews. Students should apply for internship opportunities in accordance with each site's preference. Listing in the Public Health Internship Site Excel sheet.
3. Once you have secured an internship, you and your site supervisor should sign the Internship Site Guidelines Form (see Appendix B) and determine your internship schedule for the semester.
4. Complete the "Internship Registration Form" with input from the site supervisor.
5. Submit your completed "Internship Registration Form" and "Internship Site Guidelines Form" electronically via the link provided on the internship webpage.

#### C. Internship Course Requirement

1. The internship course requires that students complete several assignments related to the internship experience throughout the semester.
2. Refer to the course syllabus for additional information related to the course requirements of the internship.

#### D. Advisement and Problem Solving

The internship provides the student opportunities to learn to solve problems that arise from work duties and interpersonal relationships. Learning to problem-solve within the workplace is thus an expectation of the internship.

The following problem-solving steps should be followed:

1. If the intern encounters a problem with the placement site, it is the intern's responsibility to attempt to resolve the problem with the site supervisor and to inform the university faculty supervisor of the problem immediately by email.
2. If the problem cannot be resolved through a conference between the intern and site supervisor, the university faculty supervisor will arrange a three-way conference to address the problem.
3. If needed or requested, the student, site supervisor, and university faculty supervisor can seek the department chair's counsel or advice before a solution or decision is made.

#### **IV. Site Responsibilities**

- A. All responsibilities of an internship placement site and site supervisors are stipulated in the “Internship Site Guidelines Form” in Appendix C

#### **V. University Responsibilities**

- A. The Department of Public Health has the overall responsibility for developing policies for the internship program and overseeing the internship experiences. The department and faculty will:
- a. Network with health-related organizations and agencies to locate appropriate internship placements.
  - b. Orient the site to the Public Health and UTSA-specific internship requirements.
  - c. Counsel and advise students regarding the requirements of the internship.
  - d. Review and approve the student’s “Internship Registration Form” and initiate registration for the internship course, HTH 4936.
  - e. Assist in the resolution of questions or problems that may arise regarding appropriate roles and responsibilities of the intern.
  - f. Provide professional liability insurance for student interns (\$1 million/\$3 million policy).

#### **VI. Incomplete Internship**

A. During the internship, it is possible that illness, changes in housing, transportation issues, or other major challenges may disrupt the internship. Students in these situations may be eligible to receive an Incomplete grade for the semester and complete make-up hours after the end of the semester. Students who experience an extenuating circumstance during the semester and need to continue their internship hours beyond the last day of the semester may do so only if,

- a. The student was making satisfactory progress in their internship prior to the disruption and completed at least 75% of the hours
- b. Their site supervisor has agreed to let them complete hours
- c. The student has a plan in place with their site supervisor outlining what activities are left and how they will be conducted, and
- d. This information has been emailed to the faculty supervisor by the internship site supervisor, with the student intern copied, by the last day of classes in the semester.
  - i. Students who do not complete their internship hours or do not follow this process risk failing the internship.

#### **VII. Internship Termination**

- A. If the student is terminated from the internship for any reason, the student must notify their university faculty supervisor immediately.
- B. Each termination will be resolved case by case including communication with the site supervisor, student, university faculty supervisor and department chair.
- a. If the student is at fault, then the student will need to withdraw from the internship course.

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- i. The student will forfeit that semester and be responsible for any financial obligations.
    - ii. The student will need to submit a request for substitution courses to the internship coordinator to replace the internship in the following semester.
  - b. The Department of Public Health will arrange for alternate experiences for other determinations.
- C. If there is a resolution, the university faculty supervisor will help the student complete the internship.

## Appendix A: Definition of Terms

### A. Internship Coordinator

- a. An employee of the UTSA Department of Public Health that approves internship eligibility, reviews internship packets, and approves registration for the internship course and/or capstone course
- b. The internship coordinator may also serve as the faculty supervisor

### B. Site Supervisor

- a. The employee at the internship site who has primary responsibility for the student intern

### C. Faculty Supervisor

- a. The UTSA Department of Public Health faculty member who oversees the submission of the academic requirements of the internship including timesheets, progress reports, reflections, and other graded assignments via the University's learning management system



**Appendix B: Internship Registration Form**

*The following information will be electronically entered into a form by the student. The student will receive a link to complete the form online for their appropriate semester.*

**Student Information**

Name:

Banner:@

UTSA Student Email:

Cell Number:

Student Address:

Degree:

Emergency Contact Name:

Emergency Contact Number:

Academic Advisor:

If you are an athlete, who is your athletic advisor?

**Internship Site Information**

Internship Site Agency Name:

Site Supervisor Name:

Site Email:

Site Phone Number:

Site Address:

Is this a paid Internship?

**Brief Description of Internship:** Describe the activity assignments for which you will be responsible during this internship.

**Provide internship hours, specifically which days/times you'll be completing internship tasks and/or at internship site:** Monday: Start Time: End Time:

Tuesday: Start Time: End Time:

Wednesday Start Time: End Time:

Thursday Start Time: End Time:

Friday: Start Time: End Time:

Saturday: Start Time: End Time:

Sunday: Start Time: End Time:

Hours Per week:

(consider the number of weeks in the semester to ensure it equals 300+ hours)

**Appendix C: Internship Guidelines Form**

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*Internship students must provide the form on the subsequent page to their site supervisor. The form must be reviewed and signed by the site supervisor and prospective intern. Once signed, the internship student will upload the signed document when completing the online Internship Overview Form. Electronic signatures are permitted with a timestamp.*

### **Internship Site Guidelines Form**

#### **Student Intern**

When a student assumes the role of intern in the BS in Health and Public Health degrees, the student intern agrees to the following:

1. Conduct oneself in a responsible and professional manner at all times and in accordance with the site's policies. This includes adherence to communication norms, dress code, and timeliness.
2. Fulfill agreed upon time commitments. Any changes should be submitted in advance in writing to the site supervisor.
3. Carry out established activities and any additional responsibilities which are mutually agreed upon by the student and site supervisor to the best of your ability.
4. Raise concerns with the site supervisor and faculty supervisor if the objectives for the internship are not being met or if the supervision being received is inadequate.
5. Respond to any communication from the site supervisor, university faculty supervisor or internship coordinator in a timely manner (1-2 business days).

I have read these guidelines, and I agree to abide by them throughout the internship.

---

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

#### **Site Supervisor**

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,

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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 pursuing 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.

***I have read these guidelines, and I agree to work with the student as described above.***

---

Site-Supervisor Name

Site-Supervisor Signature

Date

Name of Agency/Organization:

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## **Appendix D: Acceptable Internship Activities**

The student's internship activities must focus on developing skills and strengths necessary for public health work. Internship activities should reflect the diverse skill set and knowledge applicable to the field of public health. Primary activities should reflect the mission of public health with activities to advance prevention, reduce health disparities, and promote wellness that are grounded in science and professional best practices. The activities list below are based on professional standards set forth by the Council on Education in Public Health and the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing. 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 approval of 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 interventions, workshops, classes, etc.
  - d. Serving as an authoritative resource on health education and promotion
  - 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 in evaluation and planning process
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 within current and new educational material
  - c. Examining and addressing factors affecting communication effectiveness

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- d. Identifying and influencing marketing trends for populations of interest
  - e. Evaluating impact of communication
6. Environmental and occupational health
- a. Designing, implementing or evaluating worksite wellness activities
  - b. Encouraging or evaluating occupational safety practices
  - c. Employing infection prevention and control activities
  - d. Monitoring and/or employing food safety practices
  - e. Conducting environmental testing or evaluation
  - f. Developing, implementing or evaluating sustainability 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. Engaging with coalitions, stakeholders, and policy makers
  - d. Identifying available resources and gaps (e.g., financial, personnel, information, and data)
  - e. Engaging in and 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

### **Appendix E: Credit Appeal**

The Department caps the number of hours a student can complete with the internship to ensure they are able to manage their time and responsibilities. In fall and spring semesters, students completing HTH 4936 and HTH 4921 may take two, 3-hour courses in the same semester. In the summer semester, students may only take HTH 4936 and HTH 4921. Students who need to complete more than those hours with the internship and capstone may file a credit appeal to request special permission.

The credit appeal should be completed the semester prior to the internship semester. It must be emailed to the internship coordinator. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis with a holistic emphasis on the student's wellbeing and degree completion.

- Banner ID (include the @):
- Advisor:
- UTSA GPA:
- Degree Concentration:
- The total number of credit hours needed (INCLUDING the 6-HOUR INTERNSHIP):
- Courses needed in addition to internship (list course name and number):
  - Are any of them online courses? List which ones:
- If you will work outside of the internship, list the average number of hours worked per week. Include both on and off campus jobs. You can clarify if they are primarily weekend or evening. If you will not have a job, write 'N/A':
- Internship site name and modality (fully in-person, hybrid, fully virtual):
- Reason for the appeal (include how you will plan to manage your time or how it could impact graduation)