

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

**Department of Public Health  
College for Health, Community and Policy  
The University of Texas at San Antonio  
San Antonio Texas 78249-0654  
Tel. (210) 458-6023  
Fax: (210) 458-5873  
Email: [PublicHealth.Internship@utsa.edu](mailto:PublicHealth.Internship@utsa.edu)  
Website: <https://hcap.utsa.edu/public-health/current-students/internships/>**

**Table of Contents**

I. Introduction.....p. 3

II. Explanation of the Internship Program.....p. 3

    A. Time Requirements.....p. 4

    B. Objectives of the Internship Experience.....p. 4

    C. Financial Considerations.....p. 4

    D. Advisement and Problem Solving.....p. 5

III. Intern Roles and Responsibilities.....p. 5

IV. Site Responsibilities.....p. 5

V. University Responsibilities.....p. 6

VI. Internship Termination.....p. 6

Appendix A: Definition of Terms.....p. 7

Appendix B: Internship Overview Form.....p. 8

Appendix C: Internship Site Guidelines Form.....p. 9

## **PUBLIC HEALTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

### **I. Introduction**

The Department of Public Health, College for Health, Community and Policy (HCaP) at the University of Texas at San Antonio, offers two Bachelors of Science degrees: Health and Public Health. Both degrees require that students complete an internship. 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 seniors. 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 University of Texas at San Antonio's 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. Health and Public Health majors are eligible to apply for the internship course if they have:
  - a. A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50;
  - b. Are within 12-13 hours of graduation (including the 6 hours of the internship) for the fall and spring semesters and within 6-7 hours of graduation for the summer semester. BS in Health students are allowed 13 and 7 hours as they are required to take the capstone course with the internship.

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**

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. The internship is a time-limited, supervised period of health education, health promotion, community health, and public health activities carried out in public and private organizations.

- A. Time Requirements
  - a. The student will earn 6 credit hours (on a letter grade basis) for completing the internship. During the fall or spring semester, twenty (20) hours a week for one

full semester (15 weeks) must be spent working for the placement organization for a total of 300 hours. During the summer semester, thirty (30) hours a week for 10 weeks must be spent working for the placement organization for a total of 300 hours. The student is expected to adhere to agreed-upon agency work schedules and administrative policies. Failure to participate in scheduled work activities (i.e. evenings or weekends) will result in termination of the internship.

#### B. Objectives of the Internship Experience

- a. To broaden student understanding of the functioning of health-related agencies.
- b. To integrate classroom-based knowledge and skills in daily professional practice.
- c. To analyze the role of health and community health or public health professionals in agency settings.
- d. To gain an understanding of the organization, administration, program activities, and problems of placement sites.
- e. To improve student skills through on-the-job training, by allowing the student to assume specific responsibilities for planning, implementing, administering, and/or evaluating an agency program.

These objectives may be accomplished through (but are not limited to) the following suggested methods:

1. Needs assessment of a problem facing a placement site;
2. Mobilization and coordination of resources to discover the facts related to a problem facing a placement site;
3. Coordination and administration of a program activity;
4. Implementation of a health-related activity;
5. Collaboration with professional staff on an interdisciplinary and/or interagency basis;
6. Interaction with the public through promotion, programming, or other related activities;
7. Participation on committees;
8. Preparation, assembly, pre-testing and/or evaluation of materials;
9. Evaluation and follow-up of implemented activities.

#### 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 when submitting their Internship Overview Form into the online portal.

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 Bexar county area. Additional potential costs an intern may incur should be discussed between the site supervisor and the intern in advance of the internship. Any financial compensation to the intern student should not alter how the intern is evaluated as stipulated in this Manual.

#### 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.
4. In the event that a mutually agreeable solution cannot be found, the university faculty supervisor may initiate an alternative placement for the intern if time permits. This however may delay the completion date of the internship.

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

#### A. Site Selection

1. Review potential internship sites on the Department's Internship web page. When submitting applications, consider how a site relates to your career goals and how an organization's objectives fit your interests.
2. Review content of "Internship Overview Form" (see Appendix B).
3. Select at least three agencies as potential internship sites and set up interviews.
4. Following the interview(s), determine which site most closely meets your career interests.
5. Contact the desired internship site to receive approval from the site for the completion of the internship.
6. Contact all other sites at which you completed interviews to inform them of your decision to intern elsewhere. Or, if not approved by the initial site selected, contact these sites until you receive approval for completion of the internship.
7. Complete the content for the "Internship Overview Form" with input from and agreement with the site supervisor.
8. Obtain approval and appropriate signatures from the site supervisor for the "Internship Site Guidelines Form" (see Appendix C).
9. Submit the content from your completed "Internship Overview Form" and the signed "Internship Site Guidelines Form" electronically via the link provided for your respective semester

#### B. Course requirements

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.

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

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

#### **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 will:
  - a. Network with health-related organizations and agencies to locate appropriate internship placements.
  - b. Orient the site agency to the Health and Public Health programs at UTSA.
  - c. Counsel and advise students regarding the requirements of the internship.
  - d. Work with students to identify placements or sites that have availability.
  - e. Review and approve the content from the student’s “Internship Overview Form.”
  - f. Assist in the resolution of questions or problems that may arise regarding appropriate roles and responsibilities of the intern.
  - g. Provide professional liability insurance for student interns (\$1 million/\$3 million policy).

#### **VI. 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.
  - b. The student will forfeit that semester and any financial obligations
  - c. The student will need to submit a request of substitution courses to the department chair to replace the internship.
- C. If there is a resolution, then the university faculty supervisor will assist the student in completing 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 professional 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 Overview Form**

*The following information will be electronically entered into an online portal by the student. The student will receive a link to complete the form online for their appropriate semester and the link will also be available on the department’s internship website.*

**Student Information**

Name:  
Banner (7-digit ID that starts with the @ symbol):  
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 job assignments for which you will be responsible during this internship.

**Provide internship hours, specifically which days/times you’ll be at the 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 Site Guidelines Form**

*Internship students must provide the form on the subsequent page to their site supervisor. The form must be reviewed and signed by the internship supervisor. Once signed by the site supervisor, the internship student will upload the signed document into the online portal. Electronic signatures are permitted.*

**Internship Site Guidelines**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Internship Semester:** \_\_\_\_\_

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 complete content of the **Internship Overview Form, specifically job duties and schedule.**
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 a public 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. Perform a criminal history background check of the student, if required at the organization.
4. 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.
5. 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 to complete his/her course assignments.
6. 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 Bexar county area. Additional potential costs an intern may incur should be discussed between the site supervisor and the intern in advance of the internship.
7. Assign meaningful work that promotes the 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.
8. Avoid burdening the intern with only routine clerical and/or custodial tasks.
9. Provide adequate work to complete a 300-hour internship.
10. Respond to any communication from the UTSA faculty supervisor in a timely manner (3-5 business days).
11. Prepare two evaluations of the student intern: one midway through the experience and the other during the last week of the internship.

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

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Site Supervisor Name	Site Supervisor Signature	Date
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Name of Agency/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_