



Public Health
PUBH 4080
Internship Manual

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Table of Contents

Department of Rehabilitation and Health Services
University of North Texas Public Health Undergraduate Program ... 3

Purpose of the Internship Experience 4

Objectives and Goals for Internship 6

Procedure for Arranging an Internship 6

Agency, Supervisor, Student and Faculty Responsibilities
The Agency 6

On-site Supervisor Responsibilities 6

Student Responsibilities 9

Faculty/RHS Responsibilities 11

Procedure for Handling Lack of Satisfactory Progress in Internship.....12

**Department of Rehabilitation and Health Services
University of North Texas**

Public Health Undergraduate Program

The Department of Rehabilitation and Health Services' Public Health Program works to prepare students for the professional world. Public health professionals promote health and identify, prevent, and solve health problems at community, local, national, and global levels. This program prepares students with the knowledge and skills to promote health. It draws on knowledge from the social, behavioral, and health sciences.

Our degree program is well suited for students invested in building healthy communities here in the DFW area, nationally, and globally. We are situated in an academic department that promotes interdisciplinary solutions to health issues that affect diverse communities across the lifespan. Due to the broad, generalist focus of this program, upon completion individuals may pursue careers within public health departments, hospitals, non-profit agencies, and government agencies. Graduates can also continue on to pursue advanced degrees in Public Health, Health Administration, Medicine, Business, and more.

The internship is the final course that students must complete to earn the Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health. The course has both a virtual classroom and a service learning component.

Students will identify a public health problem, conduct a literature review of the problem, and devise a solution to solving the problem. Students use the knowledge they have gained from all their courses in public health to critically analyze a public health problem.

The service learning component requires students to spend 100 hours practicing public health in the professional world during a minimum of 10 weeks. This integrative experience helps students achieve cross-cutting competencies in communication, diversity and culture, leadership, professionalism, integration of theory and practice, and public health knowledge and skills.

The purpose of this manual is to introduce you to the goals and objectives of the Public Health internship. This manual is designed to guide you through the general requirements of the course, detail the process to become eligible to register for the course, and prepare you for reaching out to a possible internship site. The manual also includes a list of agency, field site supervisor, student, and faculty responsibilities.

Purpose of the Internship Experience

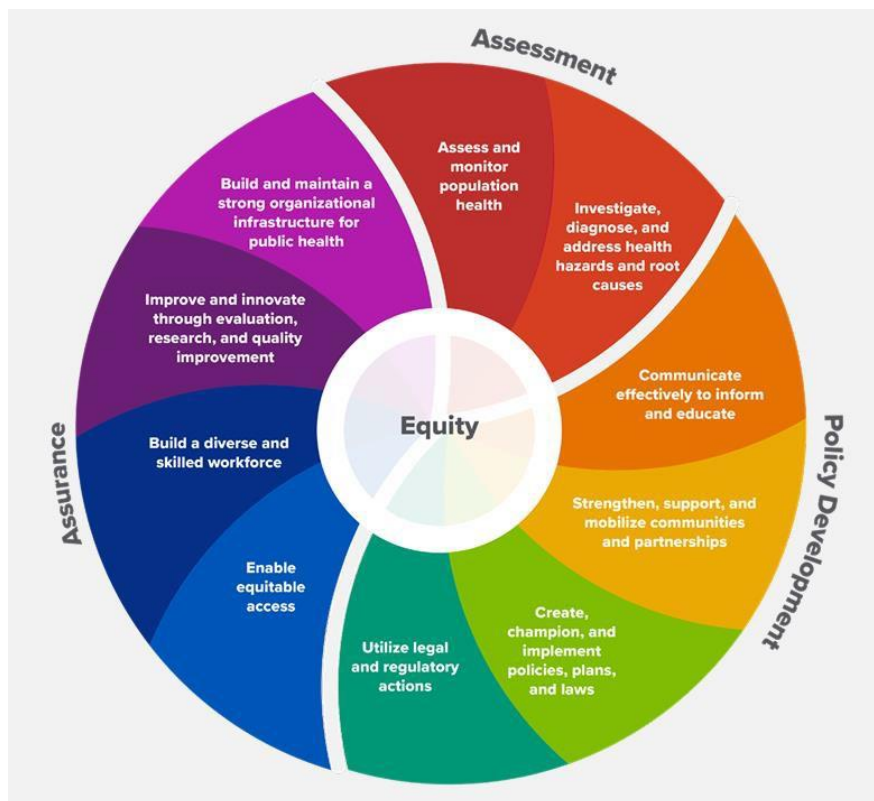
The purpose of the Public Health internship is three-fold. It is designed to help students gain an understanding of the diverse responsibilities of professionals in public health. The experience is expected to provide students with opportunities to participate in public health activities. Finally, it is an opportunity for public health students to establish professional contacts and networks.

The type of work carried out by public health professionals is diverse, making it challenging to determine where to look for an internship site. Referring to the core responsibilities of public health is the recommended way to guide your search. Assessment, policy development, and assurance encompass those core responsibilities. They are detailed in the figure below.

We ensure students gain public health experience by requiring the internship experience to align with at least three of the 10 Essential Public Health Services. These services encapsulate the work done in public health.

Your internship must involve working with an agency or organization that offers at least three of the 10 Essential Public Health Services. Review the ten services and examples in the following pages. The Internship Introduction video and additional resources on the Canvas page include information related to the services.

10 Essential Public Health Services



Purpose of the Internship Experience continued

The 10 Essential Public Health Services are detailed below:

1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. Inform, educate and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce.
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

Source: American Public Health Association. Retrieved from: <https://www.apha.org/about-apha/centers-and-programs/quality-improvement-initiatives/10-essential-public-health-services>

Examples of where these services may be offered:

Federal, state, county, and local public health offices

These offices offer many services to their communities, ranging from assessment, program and policy development, and assurance. Areas of focus could include monitoring disease occurrence, investigating environmentally hazardous situations, connecting people with social services, providing medical care and community outreach, and health education.

Municipalities (Cities and Towns)

Many municipalities offer public health services similar to the services provided by state and county public health agencies. Municipalities often monitor water safety, inform their communities of issues that pose a threat to health, and provide services to ensure the safety of community members such as emergency medical response.

Other government agencies

Texas Health and Human Services

Example: Disability Services

Emergency Preparedness Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Policymakers, hospital systems, and non-profit organizations also offer three or more of the ten essential public health services to their communities. You can find a number of suggestions for potential sites in the area in the Internship Site Ideas document posted on Canvas.

Field-site experience

The internship experience shall include instructional experiences dealing with public health concerns and clinical experiences that facilitate the development of basic public health skills, such as assessment, research, policy development, disease prevention or educational programming, advocacy or community outreach, developing or maintaining community partnerships, community health, monitoring population health status and needs assessment, family nutrition, and assuring an effective system that enables equitable access to care which are overseen by an on-site supervisor.

In addition to the off-campus (field site) component of the internship, students are also expected to engage in the academic component which involves submitting course assignments online to the course instructor. Direct, periodic communication will be maintained throughout the semester between the site supervisor and the UNT faculty practicum/internship coordinator. The internship experience requires a minimum 100 hours of experience in the field during a minimum of 10 weeks.

Students must fulfill the internship obligations to which they agreed upon with the internship site and site-supervisor, including completion of any project, etc. they work on with the organization, even if their assignment extends beyond 100 hours. Completing the internship involves more than just fulfilling the minimum required hours; it requires a commitment to professionalism and meeting the expectations set by the internship site and site supervisor. Professional courtesies include actively engaging in assigned tasks and projects, demonstrating initiative and a willingness to learn, and adhering to workplace policies and procedures. Students should strive to contribute meaningfully to the organization's goals and objectives, seeking opportunities to make valuable contributions and demonstrate their skills and capabilities. Effective communication with supervisors and colleagues, seeking feedback, and addressing any concerns or challenges in a timely manner are also essential aspects of professionalism during an internship. By demonstrating professionalism and a strong work ethic, students can maximize their learning experience, build valuable relationships, and position themselves for future success in their chosen field, which are objectives of the internship experience.

Students may utilize a maximum of two public health – related agencies to complete the minimum 100 hours of supervised experience, however, the student must complete at least 50 hours at each field site for the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of the organization's mission, values, and operations. This timeline also serves to provide the student an opportunity to foster new relationships and assure a sense of commitment to the agency. Spending extended time at a single internship site enables students to build relationships with colleagues and supervisors – ensuring the site supervisor has sufficient time to observe the student to provide an authentic evaluation of their work, allows the student consistent supervision so they may receive guidance, support, and feedback from experienced professionals, utilizes both the supervisor and agency's time and resources in a way that positively contributes to the agency, and provides a comprehensive and enriching learning experience that prepares the student for success in the public health field.

Capstone course

The capstone course builds on the basic skills learned throughout the program. In addition to the field work at an agency site, the capstone includes an online course presented through Canvas. This course requires weekly engagement by the student including, but not limited to, timely submission of course assignments, performance evaluations, job-ready career skills, and a self-reflection regarding the student's internship experience.

Objectives of the Internship

1. To learn the function, structure, and goals of the agency/organization and how they relate to the essential public health services.
2. To apply professional competencies in public health.
3. To participate in public health-related activities.
4. To understand how the agency/organization fits into the public health system.
5. To identify and understand the health issues the agency/organization addresses.
6. To develop skills in problem identification, analysis, and problem-solving within a professional public health setting.
7. To develop skills in written and verbal communication.
8. To learn how to establish and maintain significant relationships with fellow staff and community members, including persons of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Procedure for Arranging an Internship Site

The timeline and procedural description that follows are provided to assist the student and the university in fulfilling their responsibilities for the internship.

Semester Preceding the Internship

- The semester preceding the beginning of an internship, the student will enroll in and complete the self-paced Public Health Internship Introduction course via Canvas. In this orientation, internship procedures and requirements will be presented in detail to the students. Students will be advised that the internship materials can be accessed by connecting with the Public Health academic advisor(s). For a list of advisors, please visit [Advising | College of Health and Public Service \(unt.edu\)](https://www.unt.edu/advising/college-of-health-and-public-service).
- Ideally, the capstone course should be completed during the student's last semester of enrollment. However, if the student has a compelling need to enroll in the course prior to their final semester, he/she still must meet all eligibility requirements and should be no more than approximately 12 hours (including capstone) of coursework away from graduation. For any deviations from these guidelines, please consult with the RHS Internship Coordinator for guidance and approval.

Semester Preceding the Internship continued

Once you have completed the Public Health Internship Introduction requirements (watch the Introduction video and answer at least 80% of the questions correctly on the Introduction to the

Course quiz), you may reach out to the HPS Advising office to request access to register for the PUBH 4080 Capstone course. Remember, you are required to view the Internship Introduction video, review the Internship Student Manual, and make at least an 80% on the Introduction to the Course quiz. HPS Advising office email: HPSAdvisingServices@unt.edu

Research organizations you would like to work with. Think of the five core disciplines in public health – epidemiology, health policy and management, biostatistics, social and behavioral sciences, and environmental health sciences. Seek out organizations that offer services related to those disciplines. You could also look for organizations that carry out public health work related to disease screening and prevention, ensuring health equity, environmental health, worker’s health, ensuring access to safe and healthy food, injury and violence prevention, dental health, maternal and child health, addiction prevention, health education, access to quality health care, and hospital administration. A list of potential internship sites is available on the Canvas Internship Introduction course page titled Student Internship Site Ideas.

Once you have narrowed your search, begin reaching out to organizations. Please note - it is important to secure a site as soon as possible because some agencies may have additional steps for you to complete before you can work with them (ex. background check).

When you secure a site, get the contact information of the person who will supervise your work. Arrange a meeting with your internship site supervisor, if necessary. You may begin to arrange plans for the internship. Once you have made arrangements, the agency/organization must sign the Partner Agreement document. This signed agreement must be submitted via Canvas to the Capstone course instructor at the beginning of the course. Students may begin counting their internships hours the first day of the Capstone course.

Suggested Course Load During the Internship Semester

Students are encouraged to enroll in no more than 12 credit hours during their internship semester. For example, 3 hours of PUBH 4080 and 3 other 3 credit hour courses. The capstone course involves a substantial time commitment both in and outside of class. Students should also consider other commitments such as part-time jobs, family responsibilities, or extracurricular activities when deciding how many credit hours to enroll in. RHS realizes that students face difficult financial and time management decisions on this matter, therefore, students may wish to consult with the RHS practicum/internship supervisor for guidance.

Practicum Placement:

The internship must inherently align with the provision of essential public health services. Public health typically involves targeted efforts in areas such as disease prevention, health promotion, and healthcare accessibility. Public health services are often more effectively delivered through settings that allow for comprehensive health interventions, community education, and the implementation of preventive measures. Therefore, pursuing an internship at a site whose mission directly aligns with the functions of the 10 Essential Public Health Services and facilitates engagement with essential public health services is deemed essential for achieving the learning objectives of the public health internship.

Multiple public health-related agencies offer internship experiences to Public Health undergraduate students. A list of such agencies is maintained by the RHS Internship Coordinator and can be shared with students if requested via email sent to RHS@unt.edu. If the agency the student desires to complete an internship with is not listed, this does not imply that an internship rotation cannot be arranged. RHS welcomes the addition of qualified sites to offer our students to meet their goals and needs. In addition, students may need to arrange appointments with his/her advisor to discuss appropriate internship sites based on their interests and needs. After meeting(s) with their advisor, the student will investigate internship possibilities by visiting and interviewing with supervisory personnel at various agencies. When the internship has been arranged with the agency, the student will complete the partner agreement form and return to the UNT faculty practicum/internship coordinator during the first week of the internship course. This form will be available to students in the first week of class, in their Canvas course for Capstone.

Field-site supervisor qualification

Qualified field-site supervisors **must** meet the following standards:

- hold at least a bachelor's degree in public health or a related field, such as Biology, Chemistry, Kinesiology, Public Policy, Sociology, Psychology, Social Work, etc.;
- have a minimum of 3 years of relevant experience; and
- have knowledge of the public health program's expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students.

Semester of the Internship Experience

The procedures for the internship are as follows:

- Register for the Canvas internship orientation by emailing your academic advisor.
- Complete the Public Health Internship Introduction in Canvas, which includes a copy of the student handbook, a video from the RHS Internship Coordinator, a no-fail quiz to check for understanding, and a list of internship sites.
- Although no contract is required by RHS, your internship site may require one. If your agency requires such a contract, please contact the RHS Internship Coordinator so that this paperwork can be provided to you.

The procedures for the internship are as follows continued:

- The internship begins during the first week of the designated semester unless other arrangements have been made with the approval of the RHS faculty liaison and the agency.
- Internship log forms must be completed weekly and submitted to the course Instructor via Canvas.
- The Partner Agreement form must be completed and submitted to the course Instructor via Canvas by the first week of class.
- The student evaluation form must be completed by the agency supervisor by mid-term of the semester and then again during finals week. These forms must be submitted to the course Instructor by the student via Canvas by the respective assignment deadlines.
- The agency evaluation and student self-reflection must be completed and submitted to the course Instructor via Canvas the week prior to the final week of class. It is the student's responsibility to see that all evaluations have been completed, signed by the site supervisor, and returned to the course Instructor via Canvas by their respective due dates. Timely completion of all internship course assignments is essential in order to earn a grade for the course.

Agency, Supervisor, Student and Faculty Responsibilities

The Agency

1. The agency will make available an experienced on-site supervisor who is directly involved in providing public health services, including but not limited to, public hospitals, health departments, health insurance companies, and non-profits offering public health-related services. This on-site supervisor must be available to provide close, one-on-one supervision to the student on a daily basis. The on-site supervisor should have experience in public health and be experienced in the management or supervision of public health trainees.
2. The on-site placement agency and site supervisor should be aware of the expectations and standards for public health intern students. This information should be made available to the agency and the site supervisor prior to the student's placement in the agency.
3. All ethical and HIPAA guidelines for protection of client confidentiality and client information will be strictly adhered to by the student and the University.
4. It is strictly prohibited for individuals within an agency, particularly supervisors and students, to engage in relationships where a familial or personal connection exists. Such relationships can compromise the professional boundaries required for effective supervision and mentorship. This policy is in place to prevent any potential conflicts of interest, maintain a fair and equitable environment, and ensure that each student receives unbiased guidance and evaluation. Adherence to this policy is crucial to upholding the integrity of the agency and fostering an atmosphere that prioritizes professional conduct and ethical standards.

Field-Site Supervisor Responsibilities

1. The agency/organization will make available an experienced on-site supervisor who is directly involved in providing public health services. This on-site supervisor must be available to provide close, one-on-one supervision to the student on a daily basis. The on-site supervisor should have experience in public health and be also experienced in the management or supervision of public health trainees.
2. The on-site supervisor is given the Partner Agreement.
3. The on-site supervisor should acknowledge his/her willingness to supervise the student by signing the Partner Agreement.
4. Each on-site supervisor is asked to initially assist the student to develop a preliminary internship activity plan, such as the number of hours expected to work each week or each month and develop learning goals/objectives for the internship experience.
5. The on-site supervisor's role for Internship students will be to provide the student orientation and observation experiences to familiarize them with the agency/organization or facility policies and procedures, role, activity of the public health professionals in that setting, type of clients/families that they serve, etc.
6. The on-supervisor will assign tasks to the student, depending upon the student's level of readiness and prior experience.
7. The on-site supervisor must agree to complete two standard student site performance evaluation reports at mid-term and at the end of the semester. Each evaluation report provides a checklist plus a written narrative that summarizes the student's progress in terms of strengths and areas that require improvement in the skills and competencies of a Public Health Professional.
8. All ethical and HIPAA guidelines for the protection of client confidentiality and client information will be strictly adhered to by the student, agency, and the University.
9. Field supervisors are prohibited from supervising individuals with whom they have a familial or personal relationship that could compromise the impartial evaluation of the student's internship experience. It is essential to maintain objectivity in the assessment process to ensure a fair and unbiased evaluation of the student's performance and professional development. This policy is in place to uphold the integrity of the internship program and to guarantee that each student receives a comprehensive and impartial evaluation. Field supervisors are expected to adhere to this guideline to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct within the context of the internship program.

Responsibilities of the Student

1. To secure an internship site at least 6 weeks prior to the start of the internship semester and complete any onboarding training or background check requirements of the agency before the start of the internship semester.
2. To meet with your site supervisor to discuss the internship details including but not limited to the agency/organization's professional requirements, internship experience requirements, goals and objectives of your time with the agency/organization, internship timeline, assigned activities, etc.
3. To learn and observe the procedures, policies and regulations of the agency.

Responsibilities of the Student continued

4. To ask for assistance and supervision when needed to assure the client adequate services.
5. To seek the assistance of appropriate staff members to address problems and, if necessary, to register complaints.
6. To utilize the agency supervisor's direction for maximum learning opportunities.
7. To attend conferences, staff meetings, client staffings, etc. assigned by the agency supervisor.
8. To conform to the dress code of the agency.
9. To inform the agency supervisor when he/she will be late or absent.
10. To complete weekly log sheets and submit them to the faculty liaison.
11. To complete a student self-assessment form and an agency evaluation to be returned to the faculty liaison the final week of the semester.
12. To contact the faculty liaison in the event of any problems.
13. Students are expressly prohibited from selecting an internship site where they have a familial relationship with any individual involved in the site's administration, supervision, or other relevant capacities. This policy is implemented to uphold the principles of fairness, impartiality, and professional integrity within the internship program. Choosing an internship site where a student has a familial connection may compromise the objectivity of the learning experience and the evaluation process. Students are expected to adhere to this policy to ensure a level playing field for all participants and to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct in the pursuit of their professional development. Any violation of this policy will be subject to review and may result in consequences, including but not limited to the requirement to select an alternate internship site.
14. Students are required to conduct themselves professionally at their internship site at all times. This includes professional interactions between site employees, adherence to the site dress code, and prompt contact with the Internship Site Supervisor if the student will be late or absent.
15. A minimum of 100 hours of supervised experience is required.
16. The internship must take place for a minimum of 10 weeks.
17. Along with the work students carry out at their internship site, they are required to complete additional coursework including weekly assignments. Details regarding coursework will be available in the Canvas capstone course once the semester begins.
18. Students are encouraged to limit the number of courses taken during their internship semester to 12 hours, including the Capstone course. Students should also consider commitments outside of coursework such as jobs, family responsibilities, and extracurricular activities when deciding how many courses to take during this semester.

In addition to these responsibilities, the following admonitions regarding internship settings have been developed and apply to all students:

1. Students will not visit clients socially during regular working hours.
2. Students will not correspond with clients except regarding matters of a professional nature.
3. Students will not bring anything into or out of the agency without the permission of the agency supervisor.
4. Students may not make outside contacts for clients without the permission of the agency supervisor.

In addition to these responsibilities, the following admonitions regarding internship settings have been developed and apply to all students continued:

5. Students may not accept gifts from clients. If the student desires, they may purchase items the client usually sells providing the purchase is conducted through agency procedures established for this purpose.
6. Any unusual or inappropriate client behavior must be reported to the agency Supervisor.
7. Students are expected to adhere to the internship-site program's policies regarding confidentiality as well as relevant ethical standards.
8. Field-supervisors are encouraged to get in touch with the Clinical Coordinator for the Rehabilitation and Health Services program in the event of any student issues/concerns.

Responsibilities of the UNT Public Health Capstone Instructor

1. The Public Health program will provide a designated faculty member each semester as an internship coordinator and course instructor. All arrangements for internship site placements and for the maintenance of internship site experience requirements/documentation rest with this individual.
2. The Capstone course instructor is responsible for being available to the Internship Site Supervisor if any questions or issues arise. They will also process evaluation forms, and any other information needed to allow the Internship Site Supervisor to fulfill their student supervision task efficiently and effectively.
3. The internship instructor is responsible for determining the final course grade for each student, using the site supervisor's evaluation(s) and student's performance on coursework.

Procedure for Handling Lack of Satisfactory Progress in Internship

If it is determined that a student is not making satisfactory progress in the internship field site experience, the Practicum/Internship Coordinator and Field Site Supervisor will consult as soon as possible to identify specific problem areas and to meet jointly with the student to develop a plan for resolving training deficiencies or addressing attitudinal or behavioral problems that are not consistent with professional or ethical expectations of Public Health Professionals.

If a student does not respond satisfactorily to initial supplemental educational/training efforts, the Practicum/Internship Coordinator will report the student's lack of progress to the full Public Health faculty for their review and recommendations. The faculty may request a meeting with the site supervisor and the student during its deliberations. In cases of serious student misconduct, either the Public Health Program or the internship site may terminate the student's internship experience, preferably after initial remediation efforts have been attempted unsuccessfully. When behavior is considered unethical or fails to abide by the rules of the agency or university, the student may be dropped from the program.

Evaluation of students

A **mid-term** and **final** evaluation will be conducted by the field-site supervisor and faculty supervisor. Thus, it will be possible for both the faculty and field-site supervisors to evaluate how well students are meeting the objectives of the Capstone course throughout and at the end of the Internship experience.

Evaluation by student: A final typed self-reflection of the internship experience component and internship supervision component of the internship is required from the student at the completion of the course and submitted to the course instructor through Canvas. The report should include personal impressions, reactions, and examples of meaningful experiences, suggestions for improving the internship experience, supervision, and other comments the student feels appropriate. The self-reflection should present and reflect a concise picture of the total internship experience.

Final grade: The assignment of the final grade is the responsibility of the faculty instructor, with input from the field-site supervisor.