

## **Saint Louis University School of Public Health 2007-2008 MPH Internship Program**

# **INTRODUCTION, OBJECTIVES and POLICIES for MPH/JD, MPH/MD and MPH/PhD**

## **MPH INTERNSHIP STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE**

A critical component of the curriculum at Saint Louis University School of Public Health is the opportunity for MPH students to integrate their classroom learning, which provides a broad spectrum of public health skills, into experiential learning. This planned, supervised, and evaluated experience improves competence in public health practice relevant to the field of study. The practice experience provides a dynamic environment for students to work with experienced professionals in public or private organizations that address significant public health issues.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Students in joint degree programs (MPH/JD, MPH, MD and MPH/PhD) must still meet their internship requirements by completing a practice experience within an approved organization relevant to the student's area(s) of study. These students should refer to the objectives for the MPH Internship Program, as well as objectives relative to their other degree program, when planning and setting learning goals for their practice experiences. These objectives are attached to this introduction.

Information regarding internships and potential placements is available through the Office of Education and Student Services. Students are welcome to develop opportunities through their other departments, but placements must still be approved by the School of Public Health faculty advisor and the MPH Internship and Placement Coordinator.

## **INTERNSHIP OBJECTIVES**

Each student in the School of Public Health (SPH) Master of Public Health (MPH) program is required to complete a **360-hour internship** in an approved public health agency or organization. The goal of the internship is to develop core public health practice skills, and to provide service to the cooperating agency. More specific objectives may include:

1. Application of classroom theory and principles to the realities of work situations.

2. Becoming acquainted with community groups, agencies and organizations that are involved in the public health concentrations of behavioral science/health education, biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental/occupational health and health policy.
3. Developing and/or enhancing public health practice ability based on the competencies specific to the student's concentration.
4. Learning by working closely with and under the guidance of experienced public health professionals.
5. Developing an ability to plan, implement and evaluate health programs for specific populations and/or purposes.
6. Developing an ability to collaborate with various constituents and organizations.
7. Developing an awareness of factors in the political and policy-making arenas that affect the development, improvement, and expansion of health programs.
8. Refinement of consultation and technical skills as related to program design, implementation, and evaluation or analysis.
9. Attending meetings and/or seminars, especially those with community representation, to develop an appreciation for the work of agencies, coalitions and of preceptors and other organizational personnel.

## **INTERNSHIP POLICIES**

### **A. JOINT DEGREE PROGRAMS**

1. MPH/JD: Students in this joint degree fulfill the internship requirement by completing **CMH C594-01: Internship in Community Health**. An internship for this course of study should emphasize practice in health law or an aspect of public health practice that will enhance the study of law. An internship that emphasizes public health policy may also be appropriate for this joint degree.
2. MPH/MD: Students in this joint degree fulfill the internship requirement by completing **CMH C594-01: Internship in Community Health**. Students may choose to emphasize the public health aspects of clinical practice, or they may choose to complete a non-clinical internship in a public health or community-based organization. An internship that emphasizes public health policy may also be appropriate for this joint degree.
3. MPH/PhD: Students in this joint degree fulfill the internship requirement by completing **CMH C594-01: Internship in Community Health**. Students who are choosing to complete an MPH degree along with their doctoral degree must complete an MPH internship in their chosen area of concentration. While the internship may have a research focus, it ideally would allow the student to experience, as well, other aspects of public health practice that will enhance his/her skills and training. The student must

decide the content and goals of the internship in consultation with his/her faculty mentor and comply with the general guidelines for MPH internships as outlined in **Internship Policies**.

## **B. CONTACT HOUR POLICIES**

1. Each student's internship should comprise approximately 360 contact hours. This may be accomplished by working either full or part-time at the approved internship.
2. If completed full-time, the internship would be for 9 weeks at 40 hours per week. Part-time placements should meet the 360 contact hours goal within one year.
3. It is preferred that all contact hours for the internship take place at one agency, or in connection with a specific project, to insure a meaningful internship experience.
4. The intern is responsible for keeping track of hours spent on the internship. It is suggested that the intern record hours worked at least monthly to enable the tracking of the intern's progress toward completion of the internship.

## **C. ADVISING AND REGISTRATION POLICIES**

1. All students pursuing an MPH/JD, MPH/MD or MPH/PhD degree must enroll in the internship course (CMH 594-01) for 0 credit hours, as well as for CMHC 592-01 (Community Health Rounds). All students need to attend both the Professional Preparation and the Internship Preparation sessions.
2. All MPH students are assigned a faculty advisor with whom they should meet to plan the internship and discuss possible placement sites.
3. In general, students should register for CMH 594-01 during the semester in which most of the internship takes place. Registration for the internship course requires permission from the Internship Coordinator.

## **D. PLACEMENT POLICIES**

1. The internship may take place within a local, state, national, or international institution, organization, or agency. The organization may be a public or private sector, governmental, not-for-profit or commercial entity. The placement will be arranged cooperatively by the student, faculty advisor, internship coordinator and preceptor. **The internship must be approved by the internship coordinator and the faculty advisor before a student begins.** Before the onset of the internship, the student, faculty advisor, and preceptor will jointly agree upon activities for the internship. The faculty advisor and preceptor will guide and supervise the intern.
2. An organization sponsoring and internship must agree to provide the intern with the following:

- a) a preceptor responsible for coordinating intern activities;
  - b) a written internship job description outlining duties and responsibilities;
  - c) an opportunity for the intern to assume significant responsibility in **at least two of the following areas of competency**:
    - data, needs or resources assessment or analysis;
    - program/project research and design;
    - program/project planning and development;
    - program/project management and implementation;
    - program/project evaluation;
    - formal reporting/writing/presenting of findings or project outcomes;
    - writing/developing educational materials or curricula;
    - participation in community organizing or network/coalition building.
3. The internship setting should be selected and approved not less than three weeks before the start of the internship.
  4. Internships may or may not include compensation (stipends, travel expenses, etc.). Students are responsible for their health insurance. Liability coverage and Workers' Compensation benefits may or may not be covered by the agency sponsoring the internship.
  5. An internship as a part of the student's regular full time job poses particular challenges. In rare instances (e.g. for students who work full time and can not take leave from work to complete an internship), this may be approved by the faculty advisor, only if the following principles apply:
    - The internship project is outside of regular job duties;
    - Time spent on the internship meets the goal of approximately 360 hours;
    - The immediate supervisor does not assume the preceptor role. Another available and appropriate person in the organization or an outside advisor should fulfill the preceptor responsibilities;
    - Written objectives are approved by the faculty advisor and the preceptor and submitted to the Internship Coordinator **before beginning the internship.**
  6. Using a Research Assistant position within the School of Public Health as an internship is not permitted.

## INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

### A. REQUIREMENTS (PRE-INTERNSHIP)

1. An internship may be started after a student has completed at least 18 hours in the program of study, including at least 6 hours of credit required for the student's concentration. In special circumstances, students with fewer than 18 credit hours may begin their internships with the approval of the faculty advisor and the department chair.
2. To prepare for an internship, the student and faculty advisor should develop a plan and discuss goals and objectives for the internship during the student's **first year of enrollment**.
3. Students must attend all sessions of the MPH Internship Preparation sessions (part of CMHC 592-01) in the spring semester before starting an internship. This series of sessions is required only **once** during a student's course of studies.
4. Once internship needs are identified, the student should contact the internship coordinator to begin researching appropriate sites and preceptors **2-3 months** before the anticipated start of the internship. Past and potential internship sites are available from the internship coordinator. Meet with potential preceptor(s) to discuss duties and learning goals.
5. Once location is decided, provide the internship coordinator with a brief description of internship job duties and responsibilities, the name and address of the agency, and the name, title and contact information of the preceptor (***Internship Description and Contact Form***). It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the faculty advisor and the internship coordinator are made aware of the internship location and preceptor, **before** beginning to work at the internship. Failure to do this can result in an internship choice that will not meet the requirements for masters-level work and will not be approved for the course.
6. Discuss the internship job duties and goals with the faculty advisor and preceptor before registering for the internship. Learning goals and internship activities should be discussed and finalized.
7. Develop a **written** statement of purpose, internship learning goals and activities **before** beginning the internship (***Internship Purpose and Goals Form***). Insure that the ***Internship Agreement*** has been signed and returned to the internship coordinator. (MPH/MSW students complete the Learning Agreement – Health Practice from School of Social Service).
8. Register for the internship course, CMH 594-01, for 0 credit hours.
9. Learn as much as possible about the agency and/or internship activities before the internship begins.
10. Return all forms to the internship coordinator.

## B. REQUIREMENTS (INTERNSHIP PERIOD)

1. Seek the advice of the preceptor when uncertain about assigned tasks.
2. Confer regularly with the preceptor and/or faculty advisor regarding progress.
3. Perform internship activities effectively and efficiently as defined by the job description and the goals and objectives.
4. Participate in the evaluation process as required:
  - With the preceptor, complete the *Internship Progress Report* at the midpoint of the internship.
  - Complete and return a *Student Final Internship Evaluation*.
  - Ensure that the preceptor completes and returns the *Preceptor Final Internship Evaluation*.
  - Complete and return the *Internship Final Summary*.
5. Meet with the faculty advisor to discuss the internship and receive feedback from the preceptor's evaluation.

## C. EVALUATION/GRADES

1. Students and preceptors should be meeting regularly throughout the internship. About halfway through the internship the student's progress should be evaluated. The *Internship Progress Report* should be completed at this time and returned to the internship coordinator. Note that this form has two sections, one for the student and one for the preceptor.
2. Before the end of the internship period, the preceptor should conduct an exit interview with the student. This meeting should include an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the student, an evaluation of the internship activities, and some recommendations for the student regarding career potential.
3. Within **one week** of the completion of the internship, the preceptor should complete a *Preceptor Final Internship Evaluation*. Completed evaluation forms should be returned to the internship coordinator. This form evaluates the student and the internship experience. A final grade will not be given until this form is received.
4. Within **one week** of the completion of the internship, students are required to complete a *Student Final Internship Evaluation*. This form should be returned to the internship coordinator. This form evaluates the internship experience, including the site and the preceptor. A final grade will not be given until this form is received.
5. Within **one week** of completing the internship, students are required to submit to the internship coordinator a paper/report summarizing internship activities and projects and evaluating internship goals (*Internship Final Summary*). With permission of the faculty advisor, the student may use an alternative format for the summary. At a minimum, it should

sufficiently describe the scope of activities and any special projects undertaken. Specific examples (e.g. brochures, written curricula, newsletters, scholarly writings, etc.) may be included if possible and appropriate, but will not take the place of the final report. Students should also meet with their faculty advisors at this time to discuss the internship, including strengths and weaknesses, outcomes achieved, and the preceptor's evaluation.

6. **Final Grade:** The faculty advisor, upon receipt from the internship coordinator of completed *Student Final Internship Evaluation*, *Preceptor Final Internship Evaluation* and the *Internship Final Summary* or an acceptable alternative will decide a final grade for the internship. Grades for the internship period will be either "Satisfactory" (S) or "Unsatisfactory" (U).

**Please note:** Saint Louis University confers degrees three times a year, in January, May and August. Students who are not able to complete their internships before the grading deadline for each term should contact their advisors and the internship coordinator about the reason for the delay and when they expect to complete the required work. Internships that extend too far beyond the deadline may require registration in the subsequent semester and delay in receiving a diploma.