

SPH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAM: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The internship component of the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree is viewed as the culminating experience of the student's academic and professional development as it provides a meaningful opportunity for students to integrate knowledge gained during academic coursework in a professional setting. Additional policies and requirements are explained in detail in the SPH Experiential Learning Handbook and provided to each student, mentor and faculty advisor at the start of the internship.

Q: What are the learning objectives and guidelines for MPH internships?

A: MPH internships should be designed to provide students with the opportunity to develop discipline-specific and interdisciplinary/cross-cutting competencies as determined by the Association of the Schools of Public Health. The competencies should be central to the position's development, mentoring process, and internship activities. *Field placement and Practicum experience requirements for MS and DrPH students vary by department and should be arranged with the student's faculty advisor.*

Q: What type of organization qualifies to host an SPH graduate student intern?

A: Host organizations may include county, state or federal government agencies, not-for-profits, private sector companies, community-based, non-governmental and other organizations directly involved in the field of Public Health.

Q: How many hours are required for the internship?

A: MPH students are required to complete a total of 9 internship credits, or 720 hours in at least two different settings, with at least 6 credits completed within the students chosen concentration. Students may begin their internships after a year of SPH coursework. MS Epidemiology students are required to complete a 3-credit field placement.

For the fall and spring semesters, students can complete a 3-credit (240 hours) internship where they work part-time (20 hours/week) at an internship site. For the summer semester, students can either complete a 3-credit or 6-credit internship and work part-time or full-time hours at an internship site. (6 credits= 480 hours or 40 hours a week for 12 weeks)

Q: What qualifications and role should a mentor have in working with an intern?

A: Mentors should have advanced degrees, ideally within the field of public health and should hold decision-making positions within the host organization. A daily supervisor with significant experience as a public health practitioner may be assigned to a student in addition to the mentor. In cases where an individual has been practicing public health for numerous years an advanced degree may not be required.

Q: What are the expectations of the mentor?

A: Ideally, a mentor should:

- Orient the student to the organization and the student's specific public health program(s);
- Clearly explain work rules, policies and procedures;
- Coordinate access to resources such as a computer workstation, relevant data systems, reimbursement for necessary travel, etc.
- Involve the student in a diverse range of organizational activities;
- Arrange for the student to attend meetings both internally and externally;
- Introduce the student to colleagues and leadership within the organization and allow for shadowing opportunities;
- Review the student's required internship paperwork and deliverables in conjunction with the student

- according to due dates;
- Serve as a resource for the student to ask questions;
- Provide guidance, feedback and direction so the student can successfully complete the work assigned.

Q: What is required from the student to successfully complete the internship?

A: In order to meet the SPH internship requirement, it is the responsibility of the student to work directly with his/her mentor & faculty advisor to complete the following:

- **Registration Form**
The internship project should be outlined in detail and approved by the SPH Internship Director & Advisor.
- **One-Month Review**
The student is required to arrange a meeting with the mentor & advisor to review internship progress to date. An in-person meeting is ideal but a teleconference is acceptable, if necessary.
- **Mentor Evaluation**
The evaluation is completed by the mentor and reviewed with the student & advisor for signature and submitted to the SPH Internships and Career Services Office.
- **Final Internship Report**
The report requires review and approval by the mentor & advisor.
- **Student Presentation**
The mentor & advisor attend the student's presentation of his/her experience which takes place either at the internship site or at the School of Public Health's Student Poster Day in April. Both the mentor and advisor are required to submit an additional evaluation of the presentation.

Q: Should the internship project be funded? What if funding isn't available?

A: Many organizations fund the internships and offer between \$12-\$15/hour. If an hourly rate is not feasible, there are three possible resources to support organizations with funding: 1) the Maternal Child Health (MCH) Block Grant; 2) the Public Health Leaders of Tomorrow (PHLOT) program and 3) the Maternal Child Health Public Health Catalyst Program. Guidelines, qualifications and processes to apply for funding through these sources are outlined on the Internship/Placement Proposal Form. While offering funding is beneficial when competing for students, internships can also be unfunded.

Q: What is the process for hosting an MPH Intern?

A: Each semester, the SPH Experiential Learning program sends out a request for proposals to potential mentors. An *SPH Internship /Placement Proposal Form* needs to be completed and submitted to the SPH Internships & Career Services Office by the deadline date to be considered for a graduate student intern. Once all proposals are submitted, the SPH Internships & Career Services Office posts the internships on an internal site for students to review. Students select their Top 5 internship choices, and their resumes are forwarded to those particular mentors. Mentors are responsible for contacting students they would consider for their internship project to arrange an interview time. Once the mentor has decided on a student, (s)he can make an offer to that student. Once the student accepts the offer, the internship is considered filled.

Below is an **example timeframe** of the internship cycle. Specific dates are communicated prior to the start of each semester.

Semester	Proposals Due	Interview Process	Start Date	End Date
Fall	early August	mid-August to beginning September	beginning to mid-September	mid-December
Spring	early November	mid-November to beginning December	middle to end of January	mid-May
Summer	early March	end of March to end of April	middle to end of May	mid-August

For questions or more information about Experiential Learning opportunities at SPH, please contact:

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