OVERVIEW

Thank you for your interest in hosting an intern from the Public Health Science program at the University of Maryland, College Park. The internship is offered for students as a way to integrate their coursework in the theory and science of public health with real world experience, increase their understanding of public health-related organizations, and develop professional skills though on-the-job training. Internship placements take place during fall and spring semesters and are attached to a graded course (PHSC399). Internships may vary significantly in time spent and responsibilities. That is, students may work from 3-18+ hours per week and responsibilities range from small data collection and report-writing tasks to larger community outreach efforts and advocacy work. Expectations are negotiated in advance with the student and host organization to be suitable to both parties. Many of our students plan to apply to medical school or other professional schools, enter into allied health careers, or continue with advanced degrees in public health. Real-world work experience through internships can help them fine-tune their goals and offers invaluable practice in applying their skills.

What are some examples of the work PHSC interns do?

- Perform community outreach and health screenings
- Collect and analyze survey data
- Conduct community needs assessments
- Facilitate focus groups
- Present on program evaluation results
- Contribute to grant proposals
- Write program reports
- Plan and implement health fairs and other health promotion events
- Develop culturally appropriate health communication materials
- Participate in policy reviews and health advocacy efforts

What are the dates of the internship?

The internship occurs during a regular semester:
- Internships for Spring will run from late January to mid-May
- Internships for Fall will run from late August to mid-December

How much time does a student spend in an internship?

The internship counts as a 1-6 credit course, and students are required to work 3-18 hours per week, depending on the credits applied. Most will also be taking other courses in addition to the internship.
What type of courses have students completed?
All Public Health Science students seeking internships have generally completed courses in:
- General Biology
- General Chemistry
- Microbiology
- Anatomy & Physiology
- A foundational social/behavioral science course
- Public Health Biology
- Environmental Health
- History of Public Health

Some have also completed courses in:
- Epidemiology
- Biostatistics
- Health Policy
- Health Informatics
- Health Communication
- Emergency Preparedness
- Program Planning & Evaluation
- Global Health
- Behavioral and Community Issues in Public Health

What are my responsibilities?
The primary responsibilities of a host agency/internship supervisor are:
- Designate a qualified site supervisor/preceptor for the intern who is available to meet with the intern at least once per week. Typically this person has an MPH or at least 5 years’ experience in public health.
- Provide meaningful work that promotes the professional growth of the intern while pursuing the goals of your organization.
- Provide an orientation and training for the intern, similar in quality to that provided to new employees. This includes orienting the student to the background, structure, regulations, and operations of the organization.
- Give your intern regular work hours and record his or her hours worked. (The student will need to turn this in at the completion of the internship.)
- Work with the student to develop goals and objectives, a set of responsibilities, and days and hours to be worked. This will form the basis of a contract signed by both parties and will be one of the items used to assess the student’s final grade.
- Offer a range of opportunities for learning (such as staff meetings, conferences, community events, public hearings) whenever possible.
Assign routine clerical tasks only to the extent that the intern derives some learning experience from them.

- Provide the intern with adequate work space and supplies.
- Make other staff available to the intern to answer questions and provide support when needed.
- Alert Nancy Smith, Internship Coordinator, of any problems or concerns.
- Prepare two evaluations of the intern, a mid-term and final, and offer corresponding feedback to the intern. Evaluation forms will be provided by email.

**What will I gain from the experience?**

The benefits to hosting an intern include:

- Gaining valuable assistance in pursuing organization goals from interested and enthusiastic students with current training in public health.
- Obtaining fresh perspectives, insights, and ideas on a variety of projects and tasks.
- Providing an opportunity for your organization and the University of Maryland to collaborate.
- Contributing to the further development of public health professionals.

**What’s the next step?**

Your intern will be requesting to meet with you to complete the Internship Contract. Please be as specific as possible when describing the intern’s duties. Keep a copy of this contract for your records and give a copy to the intern. You can use this when preparing his/her evaluations.

Questions about the internship program should be directed to:

Nancy Gray Smith, PhD, MA  
Internship Coordinator  
Public Health Science Program  
School of Public Health, Room 2322  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20878  
301-405-9146  
phscintern@umd.edu

Thank you kindly for your consideration!