



SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY

MPH Internship Handbook

KNES 785: Internship in Physical Activity and Public Health

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MPH Internship Guidelines

I. Introduction

To obtain a Master of Public Health (MPH) with a concentration in Physical Activity, students are required to complete a **200-hour practicum experience/internship** (KNES785: Internship in Physical Activity and Public Health). *It is the student's responsibility to identify and obtain approvals for an internship.* The internship allows students to integrate knowledge and skills developed in the classroom and apply them to real-world settings. Thus, a beneficial partnership emerges in which the organization gains from the intern's participation in and/or development of a needed program, evaluation, or other activity, and the intern gains from hands on experience with colleagues.

While exploring potential internship opportunities, students should review the MPH competencies for the specialization in physical activity. All of the Physical Activity competencies must be addressed between the student's coursework, internship and the culminating project. Students should work with their advisor to identify how each competency will be met. It is important to note that the activities of the internship and the project must be separate experiences.

This handbook provides information to interns and internship organizations about the Department of Kinesiology policies and procedures regarding the MPH Internship in Physical Activity and Public Health. The forms that are needed for the internship program are provided in the Appendices.

II. Overview of the Internship Program

The 200-hour (4 credit) internship is normally undertaken close to the completion of all other academic requirements. **Required pre-requisites** are EPIB610, EPIB650, HLSA601, HLTH665, MIEH600, and KNES600. Completion of KNES601 and KNES602 is also recommended. Students are able to split their internship requirement into two separate experiences. Students interested in doing so should contact the MPH Coordinator for more details.

The internship includes a 10-hour per week minimum hourly requirement. The intern and site preceptor negotiate specific hours and days of the internship. Interns are required to work the weekly hours onsite, guaranteeing access to a preceptor assigned by the participating organization. The preceptor provides onsite advice and guidance to the intern and in addition, provides feedback to the KNES Internship Coordinator about the intern's progress and learning opportunities. Meanwhile, interns register for the internship under the KNES785: Internship in Physical Activity and Public Health course using the designated section number for the MPH Coordinator. The MPH Coordinator works with interns to provide guidance for and evaluation of the internship.

Interns must adhere to agreed-upon agency work schedules and administrative policies. At the same time, interns typically follow the University calendar, observing University holidays and breaks, and school closings due to inclement weather. However, interns are responsible for informing their preceptor about any absences, and whenever possible, the intern should negotiate absences ahead of time. Interns are encouraged to share the University calendar with their preceptor prior to the beginning of the internship (during the interview or negotiation of a weekly schedule) to avoid any confusion related to Labor Day, religious holidays, Thanksgiving, spring break, or other calendar events.

Before the internship, the student intern is responsible for developing learning objectives and an educational plan that is customized to his/her internship. During the internship, the student is responsible for carrying out that plan. At the completion of the internship, the student is responsible for submitting a final written internship report and providing an oral presentation about the internship experience.

Internships may be funded or non-funded by the sponsoring organization. Some organizations pay an hourly wage, others offer stipends and still others are unable to provide any financial assistance. Interns are encouraged to judge sites according to professional and educational opportunities provided, not solely on the remuneration involved. All sponsoring organizations are expected to reimburse interns for expenses incurred in fulfilling their responsibilities (i.e. assigned travel, copying, or workshops). It is the joint responsibility of the intern and site preceptor to agree upon which expenses will be reimbursed (i.e. transportation, parking).

III. International Internships

In keeping with the philosophy of the University of Maryland, KNES encourages its MPH students to take advantage of international internship opportunities. International internships offer special challenges and special rewards. International internships must be part of an *ongoing, established* program by a legitimate and recognized organization (e.g. World Health Organization). The organization must have a site preceptor who has experience supervising interns and is qualified in the technical field of expertise. Both the organization and the site preceptor must be pre-approved by the student's faculty advisor, the KNES Internship Coordinator, and the University's Office of International Programs. Refer to the latter's web page on International Internships for more information:

<http://www.international.umd.edu/ge/4950>. International internships must be coordinated through the University's Office of International Programs, which will help with local arrangements. Students should allow extra time to work out the details concerning international internships.

Students undertaking international internships must demonstrate knowledge of the country's language and culture prior to the internship. In some cases the working language may be English, but it will still be advantageous to speak the local language and be aware of cultural sensitivities. It is the student's responsibility to determine any special requirements of the specific internship opportunity. Students can take courses in language and/or culture or government as electives prior to the internship.

International internships are not allowed in countries that are on the U.S. Department of State's advisory list. It is the student's responsibility to check this list prior to departure, and to work with the University's Office of International Programs in this regard. In the event that a country becomes listed during an internship, the KNES Internship Coordinator will contact the student with instructions on how to proceed. If other circumstances occur beyond the control of the site preceptor, site organization or local government that may endanger the student's personal welfare, the student is required to notify the KNES Internship Coordinator immediately and may be required to return home without finishing the internship. Such circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and decisions will always be governed by concerns for the student's safety.

IV. Objectives of the Internship

The broad objectives of the internship are to enable the intern to:

- Broaden student understanding of the functioning of health and/or physical activity related agencies in the community setting;
- Integrate and apply MPH coursework to community-based practice or research;
- Gain an understanding of the organization, administration, program activities, and problems of health and/or physical activity agencies;
- Improve student skills through on-the-job professional practice; and
- Allow the student to assume specific responsibilities for planning, implementing, administering, and/or evaluating some specific part of the agency's program(s).

V. Internship Preparation

During the semester prior to the internship, the student must complete these tasks:

- Meet with the MPH Coordinator to review expectations and requirements of the internship
- Develop learning objectives and an educational plan (1-2 pages, single-spaced)
- Meet with the faculty advisor and KNES Internship Coordinator to review learning objectives and educational plan, ensuring that both meet a number of the Physical Activity Competencies (all competencies must be met between the internship and the culminating project)
- Identify potential internship sites that mesh with the learning objectives and educational plan devised by the student
- Contact potential sites, interview with them and choose a site (see section VI below for details)
- Obtain approval from faculty advisor and the KNES Internship Coordinator
- Register for KNES785

Learning objectives and educational plan:

The learning objectives and educational plan are the foundation for the internship experience. The learning objectives sought from this experience are agreed upon by the student, site preceptor, MPH Coordinator and faculty advisor.

Learning objectives:

These are statements about competencies, skills, knowledge, or understandings that the student plans to achieve in order to enhance his/her physical activity knowledge and practice abilities, and to optimize future professional employment placement. The learning objectives should be specific, measurable, and be able to be completed within the time period of the internship experience. The educational plan follows the learning objectives and details the specific internship activities that will be done to meet the learning objectives.

To develop learning objectives, the student should consider the knowledge, skills, and experiences s/he would like to gain. These four areas should be considered:

1. Personal development: What are your personal needs in regard to advancing your education in physical activity and public health?
2. Academic learning: What physical activity and public health topics would you like to learn more about?
3. Career development: What physical activity and public health career options would you like to explore?

4. Skill development: Would you like to gain or hone specific skills such as how to evaluate a program's effectiveness, or how to design or conduct a survey?

Other questions for students to ask themselves as they develop learning objectives are:

1. Is there a target population, target exposure, or target outcome that you are most interested in working with?
2. Is there a specific agency in which you are most interested? Do you want to learn more about health departments, hospitals, government agencies, research agencies, non-profit organizations?

Students should develop at least three learning objectives prior to the start of the internship. These must be approved by the student's faculty advisor and the MPH Coordinator.

Educational plan:

The educational plan (1-2 pages, single-spaced, including the learning objectives) is tied to the learning objectives and provides details on what the student plans to do during the internship. The plan is initially developed with the student and site preceptor, and then reviewed (and possibly revised) by the faculty advisor and the MPH Coordinator. The initial plan is due to the faculty advisor and KNES Internship Coordinator no later than the end of the second week of the internship semester. The final plan must be approved by the site preceptor, faculty advisor and MPH Coordinator. The educational plan has the following components:

1. Internship title/position
2. Brief description of the internship and internship site
3. Learning objectives
4. Activities/methods for accomplishing the learning objectives
5. Proposed product and/or deliverables
6. Timeline for proposed activities
7. Evaluation methods to determine if learning objectives are met
8. Tentative dates that the intern will meet with the site preceptor for mid- and final-evaluation of progress
9. How internship is consistent with student's career goals

VI. Specifics About Internship Site Selection

It is the student's responsibility to choose an internship site (through consultation with the faculty advisor and the MPH Coordinator). Potential sites can be identified through communications with organizations seeking interns, from formal internship programs, from faculty connections with organizations, from other students, or from networking at professional meetings. When a student finds a potential internship site, s/he should assess how the site will help her/him achieve her/his learning goals. If the site appears appropriate, the student will schedule an interview (either in person or by telephone) with a site contact to discuss possible internship opportunities. If the internship site is part of a formal internship program, it is the student's responsibility to complete the necessary application materials. Internship sites must:

- Be an organization, agency, or community in which the student can meet her/his learning objectives
- Provide a site preceptor who is willing and able to spend regularly scheduled time with the student to provide guidance
- Be willing to increase student responsibility and independence over the course of the internship
- Require that the student complete the internship on site, and provide work space and resources in order to do so

The internship site must be approved by both the MPH Coordinator and the Faculty Advisor.

Site preceptor selection:

The site preceptor may be selected by either the intern or the sponsoring organization depending on the situation. This person must have expertise in the assigned project areas and sufficient time and interest to mentor the student during the internship. The site preceptor will need to provide on-site supervision of the intern's work and be able to meet with the student regularly to discuss progress and other issues related to the student's activities. The ability to provide constructive feedback to the students is critical. The site preceptor also must agree to complete the mid-evaluation and final evaluation forms during and after the internship.

VII. Internship Process

Once an internship site has been selected, the intern needs to complete the Internship Contract form with the site preceptor and provide the form to the MPH Coordinator.

Correspondence with MPH Coordinator:

During the internship, the student will correspond with the KNES Internship Coordinator at least once every 2 weeks during the internship via bi-weekly emails to the advisor. Specific information on the content of the correspondence is provided in the KNES785 syllabus.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for human subjects research:

If the internship activities involve human subjects, IRB approval should be requested after the internship has been approved by the faculty advisor and the MPH Coordinator. The student's faculty advisor is the actual IRB applicant on behalf of the student. The student may prepare the IRB application under the advisor's direction, but the advisor must take the ultimate responsibility for the student's work with respect to the protection of human subjects. Any student who collects data from human subjects (qualitative or quantitative) must obtain IRB approval before collecting any data. For complete details, visit the UMD IRB website at <http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/index.html>.

Students collecting data from human subjects also need to complete an online Collaborative Institutional Training Institute (CITI) course (www.citiprogram.org). Typically it is the "Biomedical Research - Basic/Refresher, Basic Course" that should be completed; however, students should check with their advisors before they begin the online course. Students **may** choose to (and are encouraged to) complete CITI training before submitting an IRB proposal. **Be aware that a separate IRB may have to be submitted at the internship site.**

VIII. Responsibilities

Student

Semester Before Internship

- Identifies core MPH competencies to be addressed during the internship and capstone project experiences
- Identifies internship learning objectives
- Meets with faculty advisor to discuss and refine learning objectives and finalize core competencies addressed during internship and capstone experiences
- Meets with the MPH Coordinator to begin planning internship selection and collect paperwork for processing internship
- Identifies potential internship sites
- Interviews sites and narrows choices. Provides each site with the handout “Hosting an MPH Intern”.
- Meets with faculty advisor to identify best internship site
- Inform MPH Coordinator of internship site/preceptor for final approval
- Registers for KNES785

Internship Semester

- Completes Site Confirmation form
- Develops educational plan
- Meets with MPH Coordinator and field site preceptor to discuss and refine educational plans
- Submits educational plan to the MPH Coordinator prior to due date
- Completes all KNES785 assignments, including bi-weekly e-mails, evaluations, hours log, final report, final presentation, etc.
- Provides professional, quality work
- Complies with the policies and procedures of the organization
- Works with site preceptor to strengthen weaknesses and build upon strengths that become apparent during the internship
- Prepares and gives an oral presentation on the experience
- Formally thanks the field site preceptor and organization for the internship opportunity
- Evaluates the intern experience

Faculty advisor

Semester Before Internship

- Meets with student to discuss and refine learning objectives
- Meets with student to discuss core MPH competencies addressed during the capstone experience (MPH internship and project).
- Meets with student to identify best internship site

Internship Semester

- Work with student if IRB approval is required
- Attend final presentation of internship experience, assess core competencies met during internship

KNES MPH Coordinator**Semester Before Internship Begins**

- Conducts an Internship Orientation session for students planning to do their internship the following semester. This session guides students in identifying an appropriate internship site and reviews requirements and deadlines
- Meets with interns to discuss their internship site options and assess how a site will help achieve their learning goals
- Updates information on available internship sites and informs interns about new sites seeking interns
- Approves new internship sites

Internship Semester

- Meets with student to discuss and refine educational plans
- Maintains regular contact with student to assess progress of internship through bi-weekly e-mails from students
- Grades assignments
- Communicates with site preceptor mid-way through the internship
- Attends final presentation of internship experience, assess core competencies met during internship
- Keeps electronic copy of final internship report

Field site preceptor

- Works with the intern as a mentor to help him/her meet learning objectives and educational plan
- Orients the intern to the work environment
- Provides work space and needed resources to the intern
- Mentors the intern
- Provides constructive feedback to the intern on progress
- Evaluates intern's performance
- Communicates with MPH Coordinator on issues that arise
- Provides honest feedback and evaluation on intern's skills and abilities
- Completes mid and final evaluations

IX. Internship Evaluation**Evaluations:**

The field site preceptor will complete first evaluation and final evaluation forms. At the end of the internship, the intern will complete an internship site evaluation form. These forms should be turned into the MPH Coordinator.

Internship report and oral presentation:

A final internship report (8-10 pages) is required by the end of the semester in which the student is registered for the internship. A student cannot receive a grade for KNES785 without submitting a final report. The report should include the following:

1. Brief description of the internship site, the department/unit mission and how that fits into the organization's broader structure, and the physical activity and public health issues that the organization addresses
2. Elements of the educational plan (build subheadings from that plan)
3. Results of the internship activities/Are there specific skills that you improved or developed during your internship? /Are there any areas of coursework that you feel would have helped better prepare you for your internship experience?
4. Specifics about how the student learning objectives and competencies were met/How did your internship help synthesize MPH coursework? /Which courses were valuable to you in conducting your internship activities?
5. Evaluation of the internship placement
 - a. What was the least satisfying part of your internship experience?
 - b. What was the most positive part of your internship experience?
6. A copy of the thank-you letter written and sent to the site preceptor

The oral presentation should provide an overview of the internship experience summarizing the results of the final internship report. The presentation (15 minutes with a discussion to follow) should also include a table summarizing the MPH program competencies met during the internship experience and a summary of the specific activities for each competency. Presentations of all students who have recently completed internships will be made during a specified time.

Further detail regarding the presentation and report can be found in the KNES785 Syllabus.

X. Additional Information

Internship Site and Safety Precautions:

The University of Maryland cannot guarantee the safety of internship sites and experiences. Interns should discuss safety issues and concerns with the site preceptor or organization contact person prior to accepting the internship. Interns are urged to take precautions to assure their safety while at their internship sites. Should an intern be asked to do something that she/he deems unsafe during an internship experience, or if she/he believes that conditions at an internship site are unsafe, the intern should report such safety concerns to the site preceptor and/or the MPH Coordinator immediately. If there is no time to contact the Coordinator or site preceptor, the intern should refuse to engage in the activity and then report this action as soon as possible to the MPH Coordinator and site preceptor. In the event of emergency political or weather conditions, the intern is instructed to place his or her safety first and to notify the site preceptor and the MPH Coordinator at the earliest opportunity. The student should not accept a position to be responsible for the personal safety of others – this is the responsibility of the site preceptor and supervising organization.

Sexual Harassment:

Although the intern's internship is often off the university campus, the University of Maryland is committed to maintaining a work and learning environment in which interns, faculty, and staff are free from sexual harassment. Therefore, should the intern encounter sexual harassment, he/she should

abide by the University's Policy and Procedures on Sexual Harassment. They are posted on this website: <http://www.inform.umd.edu/CampusInfo/Departments/PRES/policies/vi120a.html>.

An intern who believes she/he has been subjected to sexual harassment may report the problem to the MPH Coordinator, faculty advisor or any other University official, including the MPH Director, School of Public Health Dean, departmental or college equity officer, the Office of Human Relations, the Office of Judicial Programs or the President's Legal Office. The MPH Coordinator or other person receiving the report will inform the intern about the University's sexual harassment policy and procedures and, within that context, will support the intern's initiative in taking the most appropriate reporting steps.

XI. Timeline and Forms

Task	Timeframe	Form
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internship planning 	Semester prior to internship	Capstone Competencies Planning Form Hosting an MPH Intern (for site visits/interviews)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting/confirming internship site 	Semester prior to internship	Site Confirmation Form Liability Insurance Information form
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational plan 	Initial plan due two weeks into internship semester	Educational Plan Approval
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete internship tasks • Communicate with KNES Internship Coordinator 	Entire semester	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-term evaluation 	Approximately midway through internship period	Field site preceptor first evaluation form
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final evaluation 	Near end of internship period	Field site preceptor final evaluation form
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internship report • Internship presentation 	End of internship semester	Capstone Competencies Assessment (Faculty – advisor and coordinator)

Review KNES785 syllabus for additional tasks and deadlines.

Appendix

- 1. Competency planning form**
- 2. Hosting an MPH intern**
- 3. Site confirmation form**
- 4. Liability insurance information form**
- 5. Educational plan approval form**
- 6. Field site preceptor first evaluation form**
- 7. Field site preceptor final evaluation form**
- 8. Capstone competencies assessment**