

University of Texas School of Public Health Practicum Evaluation Executive Summary – Spring 2013

Introduction

One hundred and one students from all four degree programs completed a practicum experience during the Spring 2013 semester. Students and community preceptors were asked to complete an evaluation through Survey Monkey™. Student and preceptor response rates were 95% and 93%, respectively. The key findings are listed below.

Primary Campus and Division

- 66% Houston, 34% regional campuses
- 35% Epidemiology; 24% Management, Policy & Community Health; 19% General program; 11% Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences; 8% Biostatistics; 6% Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences

Students

- Locations: Hospital/clinic (35%), university/college system (19%), community service organizations (18%), health departments (10%), business/corporate (5%), government (5%), foundation (4%), federal (2%), international (1%), primary/secondary education (1%)
- 91% of students thought the practicum was very effective (60%) or effective (31%) as a learning experience
- Final products: Report (35%), more than one product (23%), presentation (14%), instrument/protocol (6%), journal article (6%), promotional material (6%), training/procedure manual (5%), thesis (4%)
- The practicum was very effective (60%) or effective (36%) in giving students a better understanding of public health practice
- 89% of students registered for 3 credit hours or more (registrar's data)
- Student hours per week: 16 or more (30%), 12-15 hours (44%); 93% considered the weekly hours to be appropriate
- 57% of students reported contact with their preceptor 14 or more times
- Overall ratings of preceptors were positive: 85% very good and 12% good
- 95% of students highly recommend (56%) or recommend (37%) their community preceptors
- 96% of students highly recommend (46%) or recommend (38%) their faculty sponsor
- 92% of students highly recommend (39%) or recommend (51%) their practicum site

Community Preceptors

- 77% of preceptors rated their student's final product as excellent (50%) or above average (27%); 5% of students had an incomplete mainly because the final product was an instrument/protocol or report
- 98% reported that student proficiency in using appropriate methods was very effective (72%) or effective (26%)
- Preceptors rated overall student performance as very good (76%) or good (18%)
- 76% of preceptors reported meeting with the student 10 times or more
- 94% of preceptors found the student's weekly time commitment was appropriate
- 94% of preceptors are willing to accept another student

Student Comments

- Awesome! My preceptor was very caring about all of us students, but especially myself in being the only public health student.
- I really enjoyed working with my community preceptor! He definitely made my practicum a great educational experience.

- My community preceptor was able to ensure that I was able to be with others who could teach me when she could not be there. I was immediately included as part of the team from the very beginning and the atmosphere was very supportive to my being able to learn.
- She allowed me to get involved in the history and physical exams of patients, encouraged and facilitated my learning, and allowed me to get a sense of the needs and issues faced by patients with chronic health conditions and acute problems.
- She 'infected' me with a refreshing enthusiasm for the nature of her work, and that helped me with the learning process!
- Very Smart. Very Knowledgeable. Very helpful. A great resource.

My community preceptor was...

- Amazing. It was extremely helpful to have a fellow UT SPH student as a preceptor. This experience has been more than fulfilling.
- Amazing. I still have much to learn from her, so I intend to remain in contact even after completion of my practicum.
- My preceptor is amazing. You can tell that she is not only knowledgeable about her field, but also has a passion for it. She is an excellent person to learn from and I'm glad I had the chance to work with her.
- My preceptor was an excellent preceptor. One thing I like about her is her ability to provide clear instructions on work expectations. She was also very understanding in working with my schedule as a student. I really think she is a great preceptor.
- My preceptor was an excellent preceptor. He was always there to answer any questions, and was very helpful in training me to conduct the semi-structured interviews. He also offered to meet with me to practice prior to conducting my first interviews. He was very friendly, approachable, very experienced in his field, and great to learn from.
- My preceptor really advocated for me during this experience. I knew he had my interests in mind when choosing projects and when negotiating conflict. He is excellent, and I have the good fortune of being able to continue working with him outside of the practicum experience.
- Excellent, and very helpful!!! Seeing that my preceptor also has her MPH she was great about ensuring the other student's really learned the importance of public health since it is often overlooked, and was there to help guide us every step of the way.
- My community preceptor has guided me very well through this practicum experience. Coming from a different country, 'Practicum' and procedures in writing 'Manuscript' or 'Journal Article' were quite alien for me. It was my community preceptor who helped me learn about all this. This was a unique and wonderful opportunity where I could apply my classroom knowledge of Epidemiologic Principle to real world scenario.

Community Preceptor Comments

- It has been my education pleasure to know this student as she presented not only a completed project for us, but gave me new insights into the field,
- It has been my pleasure having this student on my practicum. Even though I am with the College of Pharmacy, the practicum is an inter-professional experience working with the Bexar County FFACTS Clinic and several HIV/AIDS community organizations.
- This student was our first intern in the Employee Health and Wellness program. He definitely served as our "guinea pig" and I look forward to this opportunity expanding and fine tuning the internship program within our department.
- Student was an excellent practicum participant, the best we have had from SPH. We tried to give him an all-around exposure to clinical research, from patients to data handling, and he took advantage of it.
- There is need for a strong partnership between UTSPH and the Houston Department of Health on student internship/practicum program.

Acknowledgements

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