

**University of Texas School of Public Health
Practicum Evaluation
Executive Summary – Summer 2011**

Introduction

Two hundred two students from all four degree programs completed a practicum experience during the Summer 2011 semester with an additional nine students from the dietetic and occupational medicine programs. Students and community preceptors were asked to complete an evaluation through Survey Monkey™. Student and preceptor response rates were 90% and 93%, respectively. The key findings are listed below.

Primary Campus and Division

- 66% Houston, 34% regional campuses
- 28% General program; 25% Management, Policy & Community Health; 20% Epidemiology; 18% Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences; 8% Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences; 1% Biostatistics

Students

- Locations: University/college system (20%), hospital/clinic (18%), health departments (17%), community service organizations (13%), business/corporate (8%), government (6%), international (5%), foundation (3%), federal (3%), primary/secondary education (1%)
- 86% of students thought the practicum was very effective (55%) or effective (31%) as a learning experience
- Final products: report (33), more than one product (29%), presentation (16%), instrument/protocol (7%), training/procedure manual (6%), promotional material (4%), journal article (3%), or thesis (1%)
- The practicum was very effective (54%) or effective (36%) in giving students a better understanding of public health practice
- 95% of students registered for 3 credit hours or more (registrar's data)
- Student hours per week: 16 or more (55%), 12-15 hours (32%); 93% considered the weekly hours to be appropriate
- 56% of students reported contact with their preceptor 14 or more times
- Overall ratings of preceptors were positive: 66% very good and 23% good
- 90% of students highly recommend (48%) or recommend (42%) their community preceptors
- 88% of students highly recommend (48%) or recommend (40%) their faculty sponsor
- 89% of students highly recommend (49%) or recommend (40%) their practicum site

Community Preceptors

- 82% of preceptors rated their student's final product as excellent (53%) or above average (29%); 8% had an incomplete mainly because the final product was a publication
- 95% reported that student proficiency in using appropriate methods was very effective (72%) or effective (23%)
- Preceptors rated overall student performance as very good (79%) or good (15%)
- 72% of preceptors reported meeting with the student 10 times or more
- 97% of preceptors found the student's weekly time commitment was appropriate
- 95% of preceptors are willing to accept another student

Student Comments

- A very brilliant public health expert and a nice professor.
- Great!
- Overall, I would say that my preceptor was very good at communicating my assignments and working as best he could to include me in the details of their projects.
- Preceptor gave me every opportunity to experience public health from a local health department's standpoint in the community. She was always available and willing to help or offer advice, and she taught me tons about health education and promotion and its role in the community. I was able to pick her brain (and share my own opinions) about anything we were working on. My experience with her was invaluable to both my education and career.
- He would receive an A+++++. Everyone at the Texas Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Obesity was so supportive and welcomed me with open arms. I can't say enough good about my experience.

My community preceptor was...

- He gives you the opportunity to develop your own project, allows you to work independently, but is always willing to help and give ideas if you need them.
- She was a wonderful community preceptor. She gave me the opportunity to work on challenging, interesting projects and was always available for guidance. She mediated communications with project stakeholders and provided useful advice.
- Highly organized and properly giving me a lot of help that I need. Easy to reach if I have any question. Giving me a lot of suggestions and comments for my policy brief and impact assessment.
- My community preceptor was extremely helpful to me over the course of my practicum. We worked together on a daily basis, and she really helped me understand the field of worksite wellness. She taught me a lot about what the field involves, and she was always available to answer questions. She provided valuable feedback of my work, and really seemed to care about me and my future career.
- Preceptor is a fabulous, very driven and connected woman who enabled me to take control of the project and make it my own. She also gave me the opportunity to attend dozens of meetings with her across the city.

Community Preceptor Comments

- Although she served as the guinea pig for this new MPH internship/practicum experience, the student did very well, was abundantly helpful, gave us excellent ideas for improving the experience, and took away new knowledge and experiences which will serve her well.
- I am impressed with the level of work that the student did for my organization in this short time. She never complained but carried out the work carefully and confidently and revamped when necessary. This was a great help for our organization as we are a new non-profit with limited cash flow and this helped us identify weaknesses and gave us information that can help us apply for future grants. I thank you for giving CollegeVISTA the opportunity to work with your students.
- Further collaborations between UTSPH and WIC in community health/nutrition project developments would help to build student skills and quality of public services.
- I enjoyed working with the student and feel he is very bright and energetic. He came into a chaotic situation but helped us make sense of it.
- The student was a great student. She presented the project as a poster at Regional meeting and Won the 1st prize beating competitive Infectious disease MDs in the field.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the University of Texas Health Science Center School of Public Health, the Office of Public Health Practice extends our warmest gratitude to the organizations and community preceptors who graciously allowed our students to gain practice experience. Without your continued support and feedback, we would not be able to offer this invaluable experience to our students.