

**Office of Public Health Practice**  
Dallas Regional Campus  
Student Practicum Evaluations  
AY 2007-08

**INTRODUCTION**

A practicum is a planned, supervised, and evaluated “hands-on” experience that allows students to use the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom. The practicum is directly related to the academic goals and professional interests of the students. The practicum is population based and addresses a need identified by the host organization. The practicum is an essential part of the curriculum and is a requirement of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), the accrediting body of Schools of Public Health.

During the 2007-2008 academic year, 9 students from Dallas regional campus completed a practicum evaluation. Students and community preceptors completed evaluations at the end of the semester. About two weeks before the end of the semester, Survey Monkey™ formatted evaluation forms were sent to students and community preceptors via email. The average annual response rates for students and community preceptors were 96% and 88% respectively.

In an effort to increase response rates, students and preceptors were contacted three times after the electronic evaluations were distributed.

**STUDENT RESPONSES**

**Primary Campus Location**

Dallas (n = 9)

**Type of Organization**

- 33.3% Hospital/College
- 22.2% Local Health Department
- 22.2% University/College System
- 11.1% Community Service Organization
- 11.1% Government

**Sites**

- University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
- Parkland Medical Center
- Dallas County Health and Human Services
- Centers for Disease Control
- Dallas County Health and Human Services Department
- Parkland Health and Hospital System/Children's Hospital
- Children's Medical Center
- Baylor College of Dentistry

**Practicum Topics**

- Chronic Disease Prevention
- Reducing Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*
- *Neisseria meningitides* Trends
- Predictors of treatment non-completion among breast, colorectal, and prostate cancer patients
- Chicken Pox Outbreak
- Inter-Relationship Between HIV and Other STIs In Adolescents
- Prematurity and Low Birth Weight
- Education of Volunteers in a Healthcare Environment
- Dental Access and Public Health

**Final Product**

- 44.4% Report
- 22.2% Instrument/Protocol
- 22.2% Presentation
- 11.1% Promotional Materials

**Weekly Time Commitment by Student (Hours/Week)**

- All students enrolled at the Dallas regional campus spent 12 hours or more per a week working on practicum related activities
- All students enrolled at the Dallas regional campus counted their practicum experience for 3 credit hours or more

**Source for Locating Practicum**

Faculty	4
Current Employer	2
Friend/Colleague	1
Other	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

**Effectiveness of Learning Experience**

As indicated in the table below, students reported that their practicum provided an effective learning experience across eight competencies

Question	Rating on a scale of 5.00 Average	SPH Average
Developing skills to work as a team member	4.11	4.53
Navigating work environment to accomplish objectives	4.33	4.47
Developing problem-solving skills	4.22	4.44
Working with diverse groups and cultures	4.22	4.44
Understanding the health goals of the organization	4.44	4.46
Formulating an idea from conception to completion	4.67	4.43
Developing an understanding of public health practice	4.33	4.44
Developing leadership skills	4.00	4.23

**Student Satisfaction with Practicum**

- 78% of students reported that the practicum experience was effective, with 67% indicating that the practicum was very effective
- 78% of students reported that their practicum prepared them for job opportunities

**Recommendation of Site**

- All students reported that they would recommend their community site, with 44% reporting that they would highly recommend their community site

**Student Contact with Preceptors during Practice Experience**

- 89% of students met with their community preceptor 10 times or more
- Face-to-face was the most common form of communication
- 89% of students reported that the weekly commitment was appropriate

### **Community Preceptor Attributes**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Rating on a Scale of 5.00 Average</b>	<b>SPH Average</b>
Experienced in his/her field of work	4.89	4.77
Flexible and open to making changes to suit my needs as a student	4.22	4.69
Willing to offer suggestions and directions when needed	4.44	4.65
Available to answer questions and provide support	4.44	4.67
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.22	4.57
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.33	4.59

### **Student Satisfaction with Community Preceptors**

- 89% community preceptors were rated as above average, with 78% rated as very good

### **Faculty Sponsor Attributes**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Rating on a Scale of 5.00 Average</b>	<b>SPH Average</b>
Flexible to suit my needs as a student	4.67	4.52
Willing to offer suggestions when needed	4.67	4.51
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.67	4.44
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.56	4.34

### **Student Satisfaction with Faculty Sponsors**

- All faculty sponsors were rated as above average, with 89% rated as very good

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This evaluation demonstrates the win-win nature of applying classroom learning to the “real world.” Students overwhelmingly reported that the practice experience helped them develop problem solving skills and become more familiar with public health practice. Community preceptors were highly impressed with the students’ skills, motivation, maturity, and initiative. Overall, 90% of the community preceptors reported that they would be willing to accept students for future practice experiences; and 78% of the students believed their practice experience was complimentary in preparing them for the job market.