

Office of Public Health Practice
Management, Policy, and Community Health Science
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, 49 management, policy, and community science students 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. Students and preceptors were contacted three times after the electronic evaluations were distributed. 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

Division

Management, Policy, and Community Health Science (n = 49)

Type of Organization

- 42.9% Hospital/Clinic
- 22.5% University/College
- 8.2% Foundation
- 6.1% Community Service Organization
- 6.1% Local Health Department
- 4.1% Business/Corporate
- 4.1% Government
- 2.0% Federal Health Agency
- 2.0% International
- 2.0% State/Regional Health Department

Sites

- Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital
- Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center
- Baylor College of Medicine
- Ben Taub Hospital
- Veterans Affairs Medical Center
- University of Texas Health Science Center, School of Public Health
- Texas Children's Hospital
- Children At Risk
- The Methodist Hospital
- University of Houston
- Healthcare for the Homeless- Houston
- City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services
- Community Resource Group Medical Foundation for Patient Safety
- University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
- University of Texas Medical Branch
- March of Dimes
- Kinderworld Child Care and Learning Center
- University of Texas Health Science Center, Medical School
- University of Texas Health Science Center, Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences
- Baptist Health System
- Paso Del Norte Health Foundation
- Tuscaloosa Veterans Affairs Medical Center
- Texas Department of State Health Services
- Families Under Urban and Social Attack
- Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
- Legacy Community Health Services
- Tawam Hospital/John Hopkins Medicine
- St Luke's Episcopal Health Charities
- Sisterhood of Faith in Action

Practicum Topics

- Pregnant Patients at Risk of Fetal Abnormalities
- Cost-Effectiveness Analysis Project
- Socioeconomic Disparities with Respect to Access to Clinical Trials
- How JCAHO Regulations Impacted Clinical Outcomes
- Ad Abstract Suitable for Submission to a National Liver Transplant Meeting
- Houston Health Services Research Collaborative (HSR)
- Documenting Stories of People Affected by Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
- Policy Analysis
- Compliance in Health Care Institutions
- Employee Health
- Dry Eye

- Healthcare and the Homeless
- Assessment Intervention & Mobilization (AIM)
- Cost-Effectiveness of Project From Economic Evaluation Perspectives
- Conduct Legal and Economic Analysis of Take-Back Programs
- Childhood Cancer Care In Africa
- Intellectually Disabled
- Uninsured Americans
- Premature Birth
- Childhood Obesity
- Hypotensive Resuscitation
- Off-Pump Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery
- Podcasting: A New Medium for Dissemination?
- Policy Analysis and Program Development
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Liver Donors and Hepatic Artery Anomalies
- Risks Factors for Child Inactivity
- Primary Preventative Dentistry
- Electronic Medical Records System Effectiveness in Preventive Care
- Formulary Management Process
- Mental Illness
- Build Ontology of Medical Vocabulary
- State-Level Health Policy Research and Legislative Drafting Process
- Access to Care Policy
- Hospital Management
- Study Difference in Pathogenesis of Pouch Disorders in Pouchitis and Crohn's Using Inflammatory Response
- Intervention Research on Youth Development to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
- Prenatal Outreach and Education
- Examine Trail Use and Physical Activity Living in a Racially Diverse Neighborhood
- Dosing Formula for Immunosuppressant Drug For Kidney Transplant Patients
- Infection Control

Final Product

- 61.2% Report
- 10.2% Instrument/Protocol
- 8.2% Presentation
- 8.2% Thesis
- 6.1% Journal Article
- 4.1% Promotional Material
- 2.0% Training/Procedure Manual

Weekly Time Commitment by Student (Hours/Week)

- 69% of all health management, policy, and community health science students spent 12 hours or more per a week working on practicum related activities
- 78% of all health management, policy, and community health science students counted their practicum experience for 3 credit hours or more

Source for Locating Practicum

Self-Developed	15
Faculty	14
Current Employment	8
Office of Public Health Practice	7
Friend/Colleague	3
Other	2

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	4.59	4.53
Navigating work environment to accomplish objectives	4.58	4.47
Developing problem-solving skills	4.55	4.44
Working with diverse groups and cultures	4.47	4.44
Understanding the structure of the community organization	4.51	4.46
Formulating an idea from conception to completion	4.65	4.43
Developing an understanding of public health practice	4.47	4.44
Developing leadership skills	4.28	4.23

Student Satisfaction with Practicum

- 96% of students reported that the practicum experience was effective, with 76% indicating that the practicum was very effective
- 92% 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 45% reporting that they would highly recommend their community site to other students

Student Contact with Preceptors during Practice Experience

- 78% of students met with their community preceptor 10 times or more
- Face-to-face was the most common form of communication
- 96% of students reported that the weekly commitment was appropriate

Community Preceptor Attributes

Question	Rating on a Scale of 5.00 Average	SPH Average
Experienced in his/her field of work	4.84	4.77
Flexible and open to making changes to suit my needs as a student	4.84	4.69
Willing to offer suggestions and directions when needed	4.73	4.65
Available to answer questions and provide support	4.78	4.67
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.53	4.57
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.69	4.59

Student Satisfaction with Community Preceptors

- All community preceptors were rated as average or above, with 82% rated as very good

Faculty Sponsor Attributes

Question	Rating on a Scale of 5.00 Average	SPH Average
Flexible to suit my needs as a student	4.59	4.52
Willing to offer suggestions when needed	4.63	4.51
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.55	4.44
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.45	4.34

Student Satisfaction with Faculty Sponsors

- All faculty sponsors were rated as average or above, with 76% 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, 98% of the community preceptors reported that they would be willing to accept students for future practice experiences; and 92% of the students believed their practice experience was complimentary in preparing them for the job market.