

Office of Public Health Practice
Epidemiology
Student Practicum Evaluations
AY 2006-07

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 2006-2007 academic year, 55 epidemiology 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 94% and 76% respectively.

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

STUDENT RESPONSES

Division

Epidemiology (n = 55)

Type of Organization

- 45% Hospital/Clinic
- 31% University/College
- 11% Government
- 4% Community Service Organization
- 4% Foundation
- 4% Primary/Secondary Education
- 1% International

Sites

- University of Texas Health Science Center
- University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
- Jump Bunch
- St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital
- Baylor College of Medicine

- March of Dimes
- Mothers for Clean Air
- University of Michigan
- City of Houston
- Leadership Education in Adolescent Health (LEAH)
- Houston Dept of Health and Human Services
- Baylor College of Medicine
- Memorial Hermann Hospital
- Citizen Schools
- University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas
- Texas Children's Hospital
- League City Fire Department
- Cayetano Heredia, School of Public Health in Lima, Peru
- Gharbiah Cancer Society

Practicum Topics

- Data handling, cleaning, quality control, and analysis
- Observe and learn process of conducting research in a clinical setting
- Gaining experience in retrospective chart review
- Field and laboratory research of tuberculosis through field visits
- Introducing sports and fitness activities to children in a school setting
- *Escherichia coli* colonization of urinary bladder
- Collection and analyzing data and maintaining a database
- Identify health concerns of infants and their mothers
- Health effects from vehicular traffic and location of schools
- Program development geared for African-American adolescents on STDs
- Retrospective database building for Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program
- Maintaining endocrine database
- Learning infection control procedures
- Conducting retrospective cohort research study
- Improve diagnostic testing available for pediatric HIV positive patients
- Acquire tuberculosis positive blood samples for measurement
- Health disparities report for Houston
- Correlation Between Atrial Size and Diastolic Dysfunction
- Therapeutic preventive aspect of leukemia vaccine
- Trehalose dimycolate
- Teach health curriculum to middle school students in an afterschool program
- Treprostinil Sodium Inhalation Used in the Management of Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (TRIUMPH)
- Children with cancer
- Investigate foodborne illness cases
- Urinary tract infection
- Wellness Childhood Obesity

- Determining Smoke Detector Use In League City
- Epidemiology of West Nile Virus in Houston
- Identifying barriers in coverage of prevention of mother to child HIV transmission of programs in rural Zambia
- Breast Cancer Follow-Up Study
- Evaluate how a city run tuberculosis control division operates
- Epidemiological trend of HIV
- Cardiovascular risk factors in HIV patients on Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy (HAART)
- HPV and Estimate the Lifetime Burden on Women Not Vaccinated
- GRP78 in endometrial carcinoma

Final Product

- 65% Report
- 11% Thesis
- 7% Journal Article
- 7% Training/Procedural Manual
- 6% Presentation
- 4% Instrument/Protocol

Weekly Time Commitment by Student (Hours/Week)

- 91% of epidemiology students reported that they spent 12 hours or more working on practicum related activities per week
- 81% of students counted their practicum experience for 3 credit hours or more

Source for Locating Practicum

Current employment	17
Self-developed	15
Faculty	12
Office of Public Health Practice	6
Friend/Colleague/Student	2
Internship/Career Fair	1
Other	1

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	4.57	4.46
Navigating work environment to accomplish objectives	4.57	4.46
Developing problem-solving skills	4.52	4.50
Working with diverse groups and cultures	4.55	4.40
Understanding the health goals of the organization	4.51	4.41
Formulating an idea from conception to completion	4.57	4.48
Developing an understanding of public health practice	4.45	4.37
Developing leadership skills	4.41	4.32

Student Satisfaction with Practicum

- All students reported that the practicum experience was effective, with 67% reporting that their experience was very effective
- 98% 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 39% reporting that they would highly recommend their site

Student Contact with Preceptors during Practice Experience

- 76% of students met with their community preceptor 10 times or more
- Face-to-face and email were the most common forms of communication
- 87% of the epidemiology 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	4.81	4.78
Flexible and open to making changes to suit my needs as a student	4.80	4.69
Willing to offer suggestions and directions when needed	4.59	4.56
Available to answer questions and provide support	4.70	4.66
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.59	4.49
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.61	4.53

Student Satisfaction with Community Preceptors

- All community preceptors were rated as average or above, with 80% 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	4.65	4.49
Willing to offer suggestions when needed	4.65	4.52
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.54	4.39
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.46	4.32

Student Satisfaction with Faculty Sponsors

- All faculty sponsors were rated as average or above, with 74% 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, 95% of the community preceptors reported that they would be willing to accept students for future practice experiences; and 91% of the students believed their practice experience was complimentary in preparing them for the job market.