

Office of Public Health Practice
Epidemiology
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, 53 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 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

Epidemiology (n = 53)

Type of Organization

- 45.2% Hospital
- 20.7% University/College
- 13.2% Local Health Department
- 5.7% State/Regional Health Department
- 3.8% Foundation
- 3.8% International
- 1.9% Business/ Corporate
- 1.9% Community Service Organization
- 1.9% Federal Health Agency
- 1.9% Government

Sites

- University of Texas Health Science Center, School of Public Health
- Baylor College of Medicine
- University of Texas Health Science Center, Medical Center
- World Health Organization
- City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services
- Memorial Hermann Hospital
- University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
- Airline Family Medicine Clinic
- Infection Prevention and Management Associates Inc.
- Kelsey Research Foundation
- March of Dimes
- DePelchin Children's Center
- St Luke's Episcopal Hospital
- Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services
- Texas Children's Hospital
- Istanbul University Medical School
- International Organization for Migration/Pham Ngoc Thach Hospital
- Veterans Affairs Medical Center
- Texas Department of State Health Services

Practicum Topics

- Traveler's Diarrhea
- *Clostridium difficile* Diarrhea and Colitis
- Reducing Tobacco Use
- Minimizing Dental Decay and Use of Dental Sealants
- Dosing Protocol for Darbapoeitin Alpha in Children on Dialysis
- Complementary Medicine for Palliative Cancer Care
- Cancer Detection
- Develop FQHC-Like Application and Provide Diabetes Education to Immigrant Population
- Hand-Hygiene Among Hospital Personnel
- Factors Responsible for Micrometastasis in Breast Cancer Patients
- Public Health Implications of Spinal Cord Injury
- Quality Assurance Plan
- Public Health Aspects of Spinal Cord Injury
- Prevention of Stroke and Use of Most Recent Advancements of Treating Acute Stroke
- Investigating the Efficacy of Methylphenidate
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Bloomberg Global Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use
- Quality Control Procedures for Research Laboratory
- Premature Birth
- Role of Graduate Student Epidemiology Response Programs

- Influence of Body Mass Index and Chemoradiation
- Hospital Based Clinical Drug Trial
- Children with Behavioral Problems
- Murine Double Minute 2 Protein
- Hepatic Arterial Infusion Chemotherapy
- Food-borne Disease Surveillance
- Genetic Basis of Pancreatic Cancer
- Sexually Transmitted Infections Among Youth at Detention Center
- *Clostridium difficile* Associated Diarrhea
- Ehrlichiosis
- Pediatric Emergencies
- T-cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia
- Ovarian Cancer Progression
- Disparities In Cancer Care
- Vietnam's National Tuberculosis Program
- *Neisseria meningitides* Trends
- Breast Cancer Survivorship
- Cardiac Effects of Anthracycline Therapy in Long-Term Survivors of Pediatric Cancer
- Infection Control
- Predictors of Treatment Non-Completion Among Cancer Patients
- City Employee Wellness
- Research Project Coordinator for Pilot Study
- Influenza Sureveillance
- Workforce Development

Final Product

- 56.6% Report
- 15.1% Journal Article
- 11.3% Presentation
- 7.5% Thesis
- 5.7% Training/Procedure Manual
- 3.8% Instrument Protocol

Weekly Time Commitment by Student (Hours/Week)

- 74% of epidemiology students reported that they spent 12 hours or more per a week working on practicum related activities per week
- 64% of students counted their practicum experience for 3 credit hours or more

Source for Locating Practicum

Faculty	13
Current Employment	11
Self-Developed	10
Friend/Colleague/Student	9
Office of Public Health Practice	5
Internship/Career Fair	4
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	4.53
Navigating work environment to accomplish objectives	4.43	4.47
Developing problem-solving skills	4.39	4.44
Working with diverse groups and cultures	4.43	4.44
Understanding the health goals of the organization	4.25	4.46
Formulating an idea from conception to completion	4.40	4.43
Developing an understanding of public health practice	4.25	4.44
Developing leadership skills	4.16	4.23

Student Satisfaction with Practicum

- 94% of students reported that the practicum experience was effective, with 68% reporting that their experience was very effective
- 98% of students reported that their practicum prepared them for job opportunities

Recommendation of Site

- 98% of students reported that they would recommend their community site, with 38% reporting that they would highly recommend their site

Student Contact with Preceptors during Practice Experience

- Face-to-face and email were the most common forms of communication
- 94% 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	4.77	4.77
Flexible and open to making changes to suit my needs as a student	4.70	4.69
Willing to offer suggestions and directions when needed	4.64	4.65
Available to answer questions and provide support	4.70	4.67
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.64	4.57
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.64	4.59

Student Satisfaction with Community Preceptors

- All community preceptors were rated as average or above, with 77% 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	4.42	4.52
Willing to offer suggestions when needed	4.36	4.51
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.30	4.44
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.21	4.34

Student Satisfaction with Faculty Sponsors

- All faculty sponsors were rated as average or above, with 57% 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 98% of the students believed their practice experience was complimentary in preparing them for the job market.