

Office of Public Health Practice
El Paso Regional Campus
Student Practicum Evaluations
AY 2005-06

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 2005-2006 academic year, 3 students from the El Paso 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. Students and preceptors were contacted three times after the electronic evaluations were distributed. The average annual response rates for students and community preceptors were 82% and 76% respectively.

STUDENT RESPONSES

Primary Campus Location

El Paso (n = 3)

Division

- 67% Health Promotion and Behavioral Science
- 33% Management, Policy, and Community Health

Type of Organization

- 33% Hospital
- 33% Government
- 33% University/ College system

Sites*

- William Beaumont Army Medical Center
- El Paso Water Utilities

*Spring and Summer Only**

Practicum Topics*

- Health Seeking Behavior Among the Uninsured and Illegal Immigrants
- Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology

- Water Quality Lab
*Spring and Summer Semesters Only**

Final Product

- 67% Report
- 33% Thesis

Weekly Time Commitment by Student (Hours/Week)

- 67% of the students at the El Paso regional campus counted their practicum experience for 3 credit hours or more
*Spring and Summer Semesters Only**

Source for Locating Practicum

Faculty	1
Self-developed	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	5.00	4.64
Navigating work environment to accomplish objectives	4.33	4.53
Developing problem-solving skills	4.33	4.49
Working with diverse groups and cultures	4.67	4.43
Understanding the structure of the community organization	5.00	4.38
Formulating an idea from conception to completion	4.33	4.38
Developing an understanding of public health practice	4.33	4.37
Developing leadership skills	3.67	4.32

Student Satisfaction with Practicum

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

Recommendation of Site

- All students reported that they would recommend their community site, with 67% reporting that they would highly recommend their community site to other students

Student Contact with Preceptors during Practice Experience

- Face-to-face was the most common form of communication
- 67% 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	5.00	4.86
Flexible and open to making changes to suit my needs as a student	4.67	4.76
Willing to offer suggestions and directions when needed	5.00	4.73
Available to answer questions and provide support	5.00	4.72
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	5.00	4.64
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	5.00	4.61

Student Satisfaction with Community Preceptors

- All community preceptors were 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	4.33	4.63
Willing to offer suggestions when needed	4.33	4.60
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.00	4.46
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.33	4.45

Student Satisfaction with Faculty Sponsors

- All faculty sponsors were rated as above average with 67% 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, 97% of the community preceptors reported that they would be willing to accept students for future practice experiences; and 96% of the students believed their practice experience was complimentary in preparing them for the job market.