

Office of Public Health Practice
Management, Policy, and Community Health Science
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, 36 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 82% and 76% respectively.

STUDENT RESPONSES

Division

Management, Policy, and Community Health Science (n = 36)

Primary Campus Location

- 89% Houston
- 8% San Antonio
- 3% El Paso

Type of Organization

- 33% Hospital/ Clinic
- 28% Government
- 17% University/ College
- 8% Foundation
- 8% Community Service Organization
- 3% International
- 3 %HMO

Sites*

- USAF Population Health Support Division
- Center for Infectious Diseases

- Clinical Cancer Prevention
- Kelsey Research foundation
- KPFT
- Center for Health Promotion and Prevention Research
- Adolescent and Sports Medicine
- Behavioral Science
- Center for Health Service Research
- Baylor Liver Center
- Office of Surveillance & Public Health Preparedness
- Office of Health Policy
- Gynecologic Oncology
- Outcomes Center
- Gynecologic Oncology
- City of Houston
- Liberty Medical Surgical Clinic
- EverCare of Texas
- TANGO International
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Veterans Affairs Medical Center
- National Council of La Raza
- UT Houston SPH
- City of Houston
- St. Mark's Medical Center
- Children at Risk
- Baylor College of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics
*Spring and Summer Semesters Only**

Practicum Topics

- Health Seeking Behavior among the Uninsured and Illegal Immigrants
- Epidemiology of Hypertension and Analysis of It's Management in the US Air Force
- Preparation of the Laboratory for Certification
- SELECT Website Pilot Survey
- Databases
- Public Health Radio Show
- HIV, STD, and Pregnancy Prevention in Adolescents
- Secondary Analysis of Adolescent Mother Study
- Depression/Sexual Functioning and Ovarian Cancer
- Health Services Research Collaborative for Improving Policy and Health Outcomes of Low-Income and Uninsured Populations in the Greater Houston Area
- ED Algorithm Study
- Epidemiology and Clinical Outcomes of Liver Transplantation
- City Readiness Initiative

- Ways to Reduce the Uninsured Rate
 - Prevention of Endometrial Cancer
 - Outcomes Research and Quality of Care
 - Low Grade Serous Carcinoma of the Ovary
 - Urban Planning and Public Health
 - Delivering Health Care Via Optimized Management Practices in a Certified Rural Health Clinic
 - Managed Care
 - International Health
 - VA Regional Counsel
 - Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder and Anxiety and Depression
 - Hispanics Social Security and Medicaid Access
 - Project ACTIV
 - Operational Definition of the Houston Department of Health and Human Services
 - Rural Public Health and Emergency Management
 - Public Policy
 - Needs Assessment of Available Outcome Measures
- Spring and Summer Semesters Only**

Final Product

- 42% Report
- 19% Presentation
- 17% Other
- 8% Journal Article
- 8% Thesis
- 3% Promotional Material
- 3% Training Manual

Weekly Time Commitment by Student (Hours/Week)*

- 80% of all health management, policy, and community health science students spent 16 hours or more working on practicum related activities
 - 76% of all health management, policy, and community health science students counted their practicum experience for 3 credit hours or more
- Spring and Summer Semesters Only**

Source for Locating Practicum

Faculty	11
Friend/Colleague/Student	5
Self-developed	3
Current employment	2
Email	4
OPHP Practicum website	9
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	4.71	4.64
Navigating work environment to accomplish objectives	4.58	4.53
Developing problem-solving skills	4.61	4.49
Working with diverse groups and cultures	4.24	4.43
Understanding the structure of the community organization	4.39	4.38
Formulating an idea from conception to completion	4.40	4.38
Developing an understanding of public health practice	4.25	4.37
Developing leadership skills	4.38	4.32

Student Satisfaction with Practicum

- 94% of students reported that the practicum experience was effective, with 65% 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 56% reporting that they would highly recommend their community site to other students

Student Contact with Preceptors during Practice Experience

- Most students met with their community preceptor 16 times or more
- Face-to-face was the most common form of communication
- 94% 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	4.86	4.86
Flexible and open to making changes to suit my needs as a student	4.78	4.76
Willing to offer suggestions and directions when needed	4.69	4.73
Available to answer questions and provide support	4.64	4.72
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.61	4.64
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.58	4.61

Student Satisfaction with Community Preceptors

- All community preceptors were rated as above average with 83% 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	4.64	4.63
Willing to offer suggestions when needed	4.78	4.60
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.67	4.46
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.64	4.45

Student Satisfaction with Faculty Sponsors

- All faculty sponsors were rated as above average with 83% 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 97% of the students believed their practice experience was complimentary in preparing them for the job market.