

Office of Public Health Practice
Health Promotion and Behavioral 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, 32 health promotion/ behavioral 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

Health Promotion/ Behavioral Science (n=32)

Primary Campus Location

- 91 % Houston
- 6% Dallas
- 3% Brownsville

Type of Organization

- 44% University/ College
- 22% Hospital
- 16% Government
- 12% Community Organizations
- 3% HMO
- 3% Foundation

Sites*

- University of Texas at Dallas - Criminology Department
- Center for Health Promotion & Prevention Research
- CHPPR

- Baylor College of Medicine - Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Research Center
- Health Disparities
- Harris County Psychiatry Center - Research and Program Evaluation Studies
- Health Communication, Research & Networking
- Community Prevention and Intervention Unit
- Center for Health Promotion, It's Your Game...Keep It Real Program
- UT- Houston, Medical School
- Texas Tech University
- UT School of Public Health
- Baylor College of Medicine
- Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects
- Texas Birth Defects Epidemiology & Surveillance Branch
- Houston Police Department
- Birth Defects and Epidemiology Surveillance Branch
- Texas Department of State Health Services
- M.D. Anderson Cancer Center
- Downtown Family YMCA
- Area Health Education Center
- Pink Ribbons

*Spring and Summer Semesters Only**

Practicum Topics *

- Rape and Victimization in the Prison System
- It's Your Game, Keep It Real! Project - Facilitator
- Delivering Curriculum for an HIV, STD, and Pregnancy Prevention Program
- Breast Cancer
- Smoking Relapse Prevention Among Postpartum Women
- Transporting Treatment for Homeless Cocaine Abusers
- Health Communication - Public Awareness of Health Education Campaign
- HIV Prevention
- Psychosocial Aspects of Unknown Primary Cancer
- Traumatic Brain Injury in Prison Population
- Facilitate HIV/STD/Pregnancy Prevention Program for Middle School Youth
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases Among Incarcerated Youth in Southeast Texas
- Childhood Obesity Community Outreach Research
- Behavioral Research for the Prevention of HIV among Substance Abusers
- Emergency Center Utilization Patterns
- Developing a Further Understanding of Ethics as it Applies to Human Subjects
- Diabetes, Folic Acid and Birth Defects
- Bioterrorism / Natural Disaster Preparedness

- Birth Defects
 - Prevalence of Diabetes in MD Anderson
 - Health Policy
 - Health Disparities Research
 - Establishing a UT-YMCA referral network
 - Bi-National Health Week - Planning and Organization
 - Breast Health Promotion and Marketing of Community Fundraisers
- Spring and Summer Semesters Only*

Final Product

- 41% Report
- 25% Other
- 19% Thesis
- 6% Journal Article
- 6% Training Manual
- 3% Presentation

Weekly Time Commitment by Student (Hours/Week)*

- 81% of health promotion/ behavioral science students spent 16 hours or more working on practicum related activities
 - 88% of health promotion/ behavioral science students counted their practicum experience for 3 credit hours or more
- Spring and Summer Semesters Only**

Source for Locating Practicum

Faculty	9
Friend/Colleague/Student	6
Self-developed	3
Current employment	1
Email	7
OPHP Practicum website	3
Other	3

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	4.53	4.64
Navigating work environment to accomplish objectives	4.43	4.53
Developing problem-solving skills	4.35	4.49
Working with diverse groups and cultures	4.41	4.43
Understanding the structure of the community organization	4.34	4.38
Formulating an idea from conception to completion	4.30	4.38
Developing an understanding of public health practice	4.50	4.37
Developing leadership skills	4.25	4.32

Student Satisfaction with Practicum

- All students reported that the practicum experience was 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 50% reporting that they would highly recommend their community site

Student Contact with Preceptors during Practice Experience

- 81% of health promotion students reported that they met with their community preceptor 16 times or more
- Face-to-face and email were the most common forms of communication
- 97% of health promotion 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	4.87	4.86
Flexible and open to making changes to suit my needs as a student	4.74	4.76
Willing to offer suggestions and directions when needed	4.71	4.73
Available to answer questions and provide support	4.71	4.72
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.55	4.64
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.52	4.61

Student Satisfaction with Community Preceptors

- All community preceptors were rated as above average with 65% 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	4.48	4.63
Willing to offer suggestions when needed	4.39	4.60
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.39	4.46
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.26	4.45

Student Satisfaction with Faculty Sponsors

- All faculty sponsors were rated as above average with 51% 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.