Student Guidelines for Community Health Internships

Department of Health and Kinesiology
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INTRODUCTION

The undergraduate curriculum in Health and Kinesiology is structured to present concepts which prepare students to become effective leaders in their chosen profession. In addition to the student’s classroom experiences, the Department of Health and Kinesiology provides the student an opportunity for pre-professional experience. Those students whose career goals do not include certification as a teacher are placed in various agencies which best fit their professional goals. Examples of these might include voluntary and/or public health agencies, hospitals, all therapy affiliations, sports rehabilitation facilities or other appropriate sites. Internships are to come after the completion of the student’s course work.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this experience is to make each student aware of situations that arise in work settings that may not have been discussed in theory courses. Each student, by learning to synthesize theory into practicality, may be more prepared to make the transition from student to employee.

This document is designed to answer questions about the internship program. It should be read before you begin your internship and retained as a reference during your internship.

DEFINITIONS

Field Experience/Internship: Those activities in which the student is involved while working cooperatively with an approved agency or institution.

University Coordinator: The departmental person directly responsible for the arrangement and providing supervision of the student intern while he/she is in the field. This person is responsible to the Chair of Health.

University Supervisor: This person is assigned by and responsible to the University Coordinator.

Intern: A student of senior classification who is seeking a degree in Health, who has met all the requirements and has been approved by the cooperating agency/institution.

Agency Supervisor: The individual employed by the participating agency/institution to whom the intern will be directly responsible.

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DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS

The student considering a twelve-hour internship must be of senior classification and have completed all their course work to be registered for the 12 hour internship. The responsibility for initiating contact with the agency/institution rests with the University Coordinator (Mrs. Shafer). The student may have had informal discussion with the personnel involved, but cannot and must not make arrangements for the internship.

Internships may be established locally or throughout the state, depending on the student's interest and needs, and the availability of cooperative agencies. Some work has been done in establishing out-of-state internships, but these are generally discouraged. Students may select agencies in cities close to friends or relatives to help defray living expenses.

The internship requires the student to spend a number of assigned hours full-time in an agency or institution which has been approved by the University Coordinator. Twelve hours of academic credit will be earned for this experience. Some agencies require evening or weekend obligations. The student will be expected to perform all activities requested by the agency. The minimum number of hours required for the 13-week internship is 520.

During the internship, the student will assume the role of a "quasi" employee in the agency selected. The student always should act in a professional manner. The first week on the job will probably be an orientation to the particular agency. The student should attempt to learn as much about the agency as possible. Dress and demeanor will be in accordance with the agency standards and expectations.

While interning, the student should be considered as part of the agency’s staff. With reference to holidays, the agency’s holidays will be observed and not those of Texas A&M University. The agency’s policies concerning absenteeism and tardiness will be in effect. If an absence is anticipated or tardiness occurs for any reason, a call to the Agency Supervisor is mandatory. If this person cannot be reached, a message should be left explaining the situation. However, it is strongly advised to talk directly to the supervisor to whom the intern is responsible.

The University Supervisor’s task is to be a liaison for the student, the University, and the agency or institution. The University Supervisor will personally observe progress during the internship. A meeting may be arranged that includes the Agency Supervisor, the University Supervisor, and the student so that the three may discuss the internship, as well as the final evaluation.
The Agency Supervisor's task is to help the student develop into a professional. A preliminary orientation (approximately one week) may be planned to acquaint the intern with the agency. As the student's proficiency increases, an increase in the responsibilities of the student should be seen. The internship is meant to be a meaningful experience. However, one should be aware that all jobs require a certain amount of what seems to be busy work (filing, typing, computer work, etc.). If these assignments appear to be excessive, the intern should discuss this with the University Supervisor. From past experience, we have found that interns have provided a most valuable assistance in activities such as collecting information, reading and editing papers, writing pamphlets, planning conferences, and working directly with the community/clients.

ABOUT YOUR INTERNSHIP

SUPERVISOR:

The University Coordinator's office (Mrs. Shafer) is in the Department of Health and Kinesiology and may be reached by telephone (979) 845-1266. The Agency Supervisor will be employed by the particular agency or institution at which the student is serving the internship and will probably be available at all times. They may base their direct supervision on the student's capabilities and initiative. If the student feels an inappropriate amount of supervision is being devoted, the student should discuss this with the appropriate supervisor.

PREPARATION FOR THE INTERNSHIP

Listed below are some general guidelines which may be helpful in preparing for a meaningful and successful experience during the internship.

1. Consult with the University Coordinator (Mrs. Shafer) to determine acceptable agencies or institutions with which internships may be established.

2. Discuss an agency with which you would like to intern, as early as possible with the University Coordinator (Mrs. Shafer).

3. After approval of the internship experience, contact with the agency will be made before the actual internship begins. The projected role of the intern in their program will be discussed and finalized. Items marked with an asterisk (*) on pages 4-5 of this handout (Objectives, Project Description) will be for academic credit and will be included in your final HLTH 484 grade.

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4. Begin the internship with an open mind and take the internship seriously.

5. Be as willing to give to the internship as you are to take from it.

6. Be empathetic and patient with both the Agency Supervisor and the University Supervisor - they will do the same for you.

7. Feel free to discuss any problems with the respective supervisors.

8. Dress and act according to the agency's expectations for employees.

9. Confidentiality in all agencies is a must!! Never discuss a client with friends, family, or other workers.

10. Be prompt in doing whatever is asked by the agency or University.

11. Plan ahead and keep everything noted in a pocket calendar.

12. Do not procrastinate. Thirteen weeks may sound like a long time, but you will be surprised how quickly it passes.

13. Talk with the Agency Supervisor. Feel free to express those things about which you are not knowledgeable, but are willing to learn.

14. Keep communications open with the Agency Supervisor and with the University Supervisor.

15. Be willing to suggest new things, but think the ideas through before presenting them.

16. Do not fraternize with co-workers or clients.

EVALUATION

1. *A summary of daily activities (Daily Log).* Although there is no required length for detailing each day's events, the summary should be long enough to accurately describe how each day was spent. Include names of those people you met (those you feel are important), agencies with which you worked, and the tasks accomplished. It is also a good idea to include any feelings you had about the day's activities.
A good suggestion would be to carry a small folder to jot down things as they happen, so you do not have to rely on your memory - never wait until the end of the week to describe the activities of that week.

These will be submitted to the University Supervisor every two (2) weeks.

2. **Objectives for your internship.** These objectives should be completed during the time frame given you by the University Coordinator. The student should consult with the agency supervisor to determine what may be accomplished in the 13-week period. An overall objective, plus specific objectives would probably be an appropriate amount. These are negotiable between the agency and the intern.

3. **Initial Information Sheet.** Find out all you can about the agency with which you are working. Such areas as background and history, funding, budget, and purposes should appear in this report. Make it as comprehensive as possible and include any brochures or handouts which may be available to you.

4. **A specific project to be left with the agency.** This must be approved by the University Supervisor before beginning the project. Use the expertise of your agency to discern what things might be appropriate as well as being of benefit to the agency. You will be required to submit a written description of the project. Supporting examples should also be included, i.e. posters, brochures, pictures, bulletin boards, etc.

   There are no specific guidelines for a project due to the varied experiences of each internship.

   **The project must be completed before the internship is finished.**

5. **Program Assessment and Evaluation Questions (4) and Responses.** Written responses to 4 program evaluation questions. These will be submitted to the University Supervisor at designated times during the semester.

6. **Develop a PowerPoint Presentation** (or Prezi) that describes the internship. This should be emailed to Mrs. Shafer prior to debriefing. The presentation should include internship objectives, the project, job responsibilities, highlights of the internship, challenges, suggestions for future interns, and description/examples of how the intern grew professionally and possibly personally. Photos should also be included.

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At the completion of the internship, a debriefing session will be held. All interns are expected and required to meet to share their experiences with the other interns, University Coordinator and University Supervisors.

**INTERNSHIP**

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

The internship is designed to give an “on the job” type of training. It will also afford the student the opportunity to learn responsibility. Since the student is expected to act in a professional manner, the student will be held accountable for his/her actions while an intern:

1. **Turn in TAMU assignments as they are due**
2. Turn in any agency assignments as they are due
3. Proper procedures pertaining to absenteeism and tardiness must be followed

During the first week of your internship, determine a specific (hour and day) each week that you would probably be in the office. Send this time schedule, in addition to your office telephone number, to the University Supervisor. It would also be a good idea to send the telephone number where you could be reached at night so that the University Supervisor or University Coordinator may contact you if pertinent information needs to be forwarded to you.

**PLEASE NOTE:** There are new procedures and deadlines regarding internship: Approved application for admission to the program, application for internship, and completion of HLTH 415, HLTH 425, and HLTH 440 one semester prior to the internship experience are now necessary in order to register for HLTH 484 - Community Health Internship. All of the aforementioned requirements must be met in order to participate in the internship.

Inasmuch as most agencies have a Risk Management Division, students are now required to:

1. Have $1,000,000 - $3,000,000 Liability Insurance coverage before beginning the internship.
2. Provide proof of active medical/hospitalization insurance before beginning the internship.
3. Provide a negative Tuberculin test or negative chest X-ray.
4. Any requirement specific to a particular internship site (i.e. Hepatitis B vaccination).

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