

A Mentor's Guide to the MPH Internship Program



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Internship Requirements for the MPH Degree

The internship component of the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree is viewed as the culminating experience of the MPH student's academic and professional development. It is designed to provide a meaningful opportunity for students to integrate knowledge gained during academic coursework in a professional public health setting. As such, the degree requirements are extensive and total 12-credits or 960 hours of experience.

In order to be eligible to complete an internship, a student must complete at least four core courses before beginning an internship, including the core course in the internship's area of concentration. The MPH Core Courses are as follows:

EPI501	Principles and Methods of Epidemiology I
STA552	Principles of Statistical Inference I
HPM500	Organization, Financing and Delivery of Health Care
HPM525	Social and Behavioral Aspects of Public Health
EPI503	Principles of Public Health
BMS505	Biological Basis of Public Health
EHT590	Introduction to Environmental Health
EPI 514*	Computer Programming for Data Management and Analysis in Public Health (*may fulfill Core requirement for this purpose)

A student typically completes a 6-credit internship during the summer after their first academic year at 40 hours/week for 12 weeks. The remaining 6-credits can be completed throughout the second academic year at 20 hours/week for 12 weeks during the fall and spring semesters. The 12-credit requirement can be filled by various combinations of 3-credit (240 hour) internships however, a student is required to complete 6 to 9-credits within their area of concentration and 3 to 6 credits in one or more other area of concentration (health policy and management, social behavior and community health, epidemiology, biostatistics, biomedical science, and environmental health science).

The MPH Internship Experience

A relevant public health experience must include at least one of the following components:

1. Assessing, monitoring, or conducting surveillance of health problems/services in a population;
2. Establishing health objectives and priorities;
3. Conducting research on population-based health problems including biological, environmental, and behavioral issues;
4. Developing and/or implementing policies and intervention strategies to meet public health needs; or
5. Studying the natural history of disease or health-related effects in a population.

In addition, **Table 2** provides a set of guidelines and minimum criteria for internships in each of the areas of concentration. Developing and Submitting a Position

DescriptionMPH Learning objectives adapted for the internship experience are grouped into five skill areas: analytic skills, communication skills, basic public health sciences skills, social and cultural skills, and policy development/program planning skills. There are multiple specific learning objectives relevant to each skill area as specified in Table 1. Different skills are required for different internships, depending in part on the student's area of concentration and the area of concentration of the internship; however, most internships require at least a basic application of some skills in most of the skill areas. Thus, each internship addresses a different subset of specific learning objectives that cut across all five skill areas.

Interviewing and Selecting a Student

- a) Acceptable experience may include only a portion of a full project that is ongoing or continued after the student's participation.
- b) The internship experience should be sufficient to warrant a formal presentation in an oral or poster format.

Acquiring an MPH Student

Table I: Learning Objectives for MPH Internships

I. Analytic Skills

- a. Define the health problem being addressed in the internship.
- b. Describe the use of data, statistical methods, and/or laboratory procedures used in addressing the problem.
- c. Employ quantitative techniques to analyze data pertaining to the problem.
- d. Describe the basic research design used in addressing the problem.
- e. Explain how the data illuminate ethical, political, scientific, economic, and overall public health issues.
- f. Make relevant inferences from the data.

II. Communication Skills

- a. Communicate effectively both in writing and orally.
- b. Present accurately and effectively demographic, statistical, programmatic, and scientific information for professional and lay audiences.
- c. Solicit input from individuals and organizations.
- d. Advocate for public health programs and resources.
- e. Lead and participate in groups to address specific issues.

III. Basic Public Health Sciences Skills

- a. Define, assess, and understand the health status of populations, determinants of health and illness, factors contributing to health promotion and disease prevention, and factors influencing the use of health services as pertains to this internship.
- b. Describe public health science research methods used in this internship.
- c. Identify the basic public health sciences used in this internship, including behavioral and social sciences, biomedical sciences, biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health, and prevention of chronic and infectious diseases and injuries. (Many internships use more than one of the public health sciences.)
- d. Understand the historical development and structure of state, local, and federal public health agencies.

IV. Social and Cultural Skills

- a. Describe the dynamic forces contributing to cultural diversity
- b. Interact sensitively, effectively, and professionally with persons from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, educational, and professional backgrounds, and with persons of all ages and lifestyle preferences.
- c. Identify the role of cultural, social, and behavioral factors in determining disease, disease prevention, health promoting behavior, and medical service organization and delivery.
- d. Develop and adapt approaches to problems that take into account cultural differences.
- e. Identify techniques for involving community groups in devising solutions to their non public health problems.

V. Policy Development/Program Planning/Management Skills

- a. Collect and summarize data relevant to the public health issue addressed in the internship.
- b. State policy options and summarize the fiscal, legal, social, political, administrative and overall public health implications of each option.
- c. Articulate the health, fiscal, administrative, economic, ethical, scientific, legal, social, and political implications of each policy option as they affect decision making in public health policy.
- d. State the feasibility and expected outcomes of each policy option.
- e. Decide on the appropriate course of action.
- f. Write a clear and concise policy statement.
- g. Develop a plan to implement the policy, including goals, outcome and process objectives, and implementation steps.
- h. Translate policy into organization plans, structures, and programs.
- i. Identify public health laws, regulations, and policies related to specific programs.
- j. Develop mechanisms to monitor and evaluate programs for their effectiveness and quality.
- k. Monitor program performance.
- l. Apply basic human relations skills to the management of organizations and the resolution of conflicts.

Table 2: Guidelines and Minimum Criteria by Internship Area of Concentration

Health Administration or Policy

Internships may be classified as health administration or policy if the student's internship is focused on several of the following:

1. Focusing on research or practice-based activities related to the structure, management, or evaluation of the delivery, financing, or organization of health care services, within the private or public sector;
2. Engaging in activities that involve policy development, implementation and/or evaluation either at the industry, organization, or sub-organization (e.g., department) level;
3. Gaining skills in one or more areas of health management or policy such as health care service delivery, health care strategy, financial management and reimbursement of health services, health care access, organizational change or restructuring,; health professions or workforce training;
4. Acquiring skills in more specialized health administration or policy topics in the research or practice areas such as organizational decision making processes, organizational cultural or structural analysis, policy formation, analysis, and evaluation (e.g., economic evaluation, outcomes research), budgeting, statistical analysis of population-based data, business planning, or human resources development;
5. Participating in the production of some tangible output related to the health management or policy activities or skills noted above, which may include (but is not limited to) an analytical paper or report, position paper, internal planning, evaluation, or management report, survey instrument, strategic plan, organizational manual, or public or internal presentation.

Behavioral Science/Community Health

Internships may be classified as behavioral science/community health if they focus on two or more of the following:

1. Social, psychological, and/or behavioral factors that influence health (including mental health) and/or health-related behaviors;
2. Psychosocial or behavioral mechanisms through which cultures, communities, policies, and society shape people's health;
3. The development (including community needs assessment activities), implementation or evaluation of health promotion programs or interventions

that facilitate healthy behaviors or address the social environment of individuals, groups or communities;

4. A community-based approach to a public health problem;
5. The development of health education materials, health communications, or social marketing campaigns.

Environmental Health Sciences

The individual must be able to demonstrate that their environmental health sciences experience has direct public health relevance. Given this fundamental requirement, the student's experience must involve one or more of the following to be classified as environmental health sciences:

1. A focus on research and problem solving related to specific laboratory-based experimental work.
2. A focus on research and problem solving related to specific field-based experimental work.
3. A focus on research and problem solving related to analysis of existing data.
4. Participation in a larger, on going research based study that has a basic science focus with a relevant long term Public Health impact.

Biomedical Sciences

Internships may be classified as "biomedical sciences" if the majority of the internship experience involves two or more of the following:

1. A focus on research and problem solving related to a specific laboratory based project involving wet lab bench experimental work.
2. Engaging in daily activities during the internship that involve the development of and execution of an experimental project relevant to biomedical science specifically focused on research areas of biology that have an ultimate impact on Public Health.
3. Involve literature study and presentation of an area of biology relevant to biomedical science specifically focused on research areas that have an ultimate impact on Public Health.
4. Extensive work in a laboratory involved in the daily development, implementation, and/or use of Public Health related screening, diagnostic and/or genetic testing technology.
5. Participation in a larger, on going research-based study that has a basic science focus with a relevant long term Public Health impact.

Epidemiology

Internships may be classified as "epidemiology" if they include (1) at least 2 of the four activities from the following list or (2) at least 3 of the 4 activities in number 3:

1. Develop research question/program objectives.
2. Design study/program.
3. Conduct study/program (to include: identify/select relevant people to be in study/program; measure characteristics of them; manage/analyze data; interpret and present results).
4. Plan subsequent action, based on what is learned.

All activities should have a clear and definable Public Health impact.

Biostatistics

The majority of the internship experience must meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Use vital statistics or other public health records in the description of population health characteristics or in public health research or public health evaluation.
2. Apply descriptive techniques commonly used to summarize public health data, including data display (tables, graphs, figures) or measures of distribution shape, central tendency, variability, correlation, or risk assessment.
3. Apply common statistical methods for inference in a health related activity, including estimation, confidence intervals or hypothesis testing.
4. Interpret results of statistical analyses found in public health studies, including assessing the assumptions, quality of data, appropriateness of statistical methods and validity and utility of conclusions.
5. Apply descriptive and inferential methodologies (consisting of sample selection, research and hypothesis development, hypothesis testing, decision errors, power, and sample size determination) to answer a particular health related research question.

Internship Paperwork Deadlines

Semester	Registration Form	1-Month Review	Mentor&Student Evaluations	Final Paper	Abstract
Spring (AY1)	February 1st	March 15th	May 15th	June 30th	One week prior to presentation
Summer	June 5th	July 15th	August 31st	September 30th	One week prior to presentation
Fall (AY2)	September 10th	October 15th	December 20th	January 31st	One week prior to presentation
Spring (AY2)	February 1st	March 15th	May 15th	May 15th	One week prior to presentation

Please Note: Registration for seminar presentations and internship credits will be available only to students who are up-to-date with all paperwork. Failure to submit paperwork by the above deadlines may result in an unsatisfactory.