FIELD EDUCATION IN PUBLIC HEALTH

PRECEPTOR GUIDE

NEVADA PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINING CENTER
School of Community Health Sciences
University of Nevada, Reno
OVERVIEW

NEVADA PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINING CENTER

The mission of the Nevada Public Health Training Center (NVPHTC) is to improve the competencies of aspiring and current public health professionals by researching, designing, implementing, and evaluating training programs which target prioritized educational and skill-based needs in the public health workforce.

NVPHTC is part of the Western Region Public Health Training Center, which is a larger coalition of training centers in Arizona, California, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands. NVPHTC is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The NVPHTC is housed in the UNR School of Community Health Sciences (SCHS) and works collaboratively with the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine’s Office of Statewide Initiatives. NVPHTC engages with traditional and non-traditional public health partners throughout the state.
SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY HEALTH SCIENCES

Community health sciences is a broad discipline that includes personal health and wellness, population health, studying the health of our communities as it relates to people, environment, social systems, and the classic study of public health.

The current School was established by the Board of Regents on September 1, 2004. The School offers a minor, an undergraduate degree, a master's degree, a Ph.D., as well as, dual degree programs with the Orvis School of Nursing and the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine.

Graduates from the School of Community Health Sciences are prepared to promote and protect the health of communities nearby and around the world.

MISSION

The mission of the School of Community Health Sciences (SCHS) is to develop, disseminate, and apply knowledge with an ecological approach to protect and promote the health of populations statewide and worldwide.

GOALS

The goals of the SCHS programs are the following:

- To prepare future public health practitioners, researchers, educators, and leaders
- To develop the knowledge base for public health through research
- To be recognized for leadership in innovative approaches to public health
- To engage with multiple communities through professional and scholarly service
- To expose students to diversity in multiple venues

VALUES

Foster equitable and healthy communities. We achieve this vision through these values:

- Advancing Knowledge
- Embracing Diversity
- Demonstrating Integrity
- Inspiring Learning
SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY HEALTH SCIENCES

FIELD EDUCATION

WHY FIELD EDUCATION?
As part of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), students must be given the opportunity to integrate, synthesize and apply knowledge through cumulative and experiential learning. As such, all undergraduate SCHS and Master of Public Health (MPH) students must partake in a Field Studies in Public Health course (i.e. CHS 494 or CHS 798)

CRITERIA
- It must be health related and the student must identify a public health problem
- It must be a service-learning activity: Meaning, the student must be doing something of service and that is beneficial for the host organization
- The student must be learning knowledge and skills that will be useful to their future career

IMPORTANT NOTES
- A relative or close friend may not supervise a student
- Independent research, observation/job shadowing, filing, basic data entry, and menial office tasks should not account for more than 10% of overall time
- Paid internships should not be expected, but are allowed
- Students should be gaining new knowledge and skills; therefore, if a student already works or volunteers for your organization, the field study activity must be different from their normal duties

POLICIES
- According to UNR policy, students may only earn hours during the academic semester for which they are enrolled
- Students are responsible for completing assignments adjacent to their internship as part of the CHS 494 or 798 courses. Coursework does not count toward their hour commitment
- Students must submit their student forms(e.g. student agreement, waiver,and orientation acknowledgment) before beginning their internship hours
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GETTING PREPARED

Follow these simple steps to make sure your organization is prepared to take on a SCHS student:

1. ASSESS YOUR NEEDS

   Our students should help, not hinder your organizational goals. It is important to assess what needs you have that could use some extra hands. Once you figure out your needs, then you can figure out what kind of student you need.

   - Undergraduate student interns complete a total of 100 hours per semester. Internships are needed during spring, summer and fall semesters. Most undergraduate internships are unpaid.
   - Graduate student interns complete a total of 270 hours. In-person MPH students conduct their student internships between the end of May and early August. However, we also have online MPH interns that are looking for internships year round. Most graduate internships are paid.

2. BE RISK & SAFETY READY

   UNR likes to know the students are safe and the organizations they intern at are protected in the event something goes wrong. UNR has put forth new requirements for all organizations hosting an intern. This includes a site visit, a signed organizational agreement, a sexual harassment policy, and proof of liability insurance on file.* Contact NVPHTC to initiate the process.

3. WATCH VIDEO

   Besides reading this guide, check out the Preceptor Orientation Video.

4. ADVERTISE INTERNSHIP

   The first place students will look for internships is on our new web-based internship management platform, Sonia. Post, revise or update an internship opportunity by updating your profile at https://internships.unr.edu.

5. CONDUCT INTERVIEWS

   - It is very important to find the right intern for the right job! NVPHTC strongly encourage organizations to interview students before hiring them on as volunteers/interns.
   - Recognize their career experience is limited, but it’s important to assess a student’s willingness to learn, initiative, and skills they may bring to the table.
   - Students must have their internship lined up at least two weeks after the semester starts. It is suggested opportunities for interviews cut-off the week before this deadline.

*UNR DOES NOT COVER LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR STUDENTS
TIMELINE: UNDERGRAD

4+ WKS BEFORE
INTERNSHIP SEARCH
Students will independently search for a viable internship. Internships must meet CEPH criteria and be approved by class instructor/internship coordinator.

2+ WKS BEFORE
AGENCY INTERVIEWS
Two weeks before until one week after the semester begins, agencies are encouraged to conduct interviews during this period.

1 WK AFTER
IDENTIFY YOUR INTERN
One week after the semester begins, make sure your final internship candidates have been selected and notified.

2 WKS AFTER
BEGIN INTERNSHIP
Student can begin their internship once the semester has started, they have completed the orientation, and have submitted their student forms.

2 WKS AFTER
ORIENTATION & FORMS
Student must attend orientation, complete a quiz and sign an acknowledgement form. They also must submit signed student forms: Student Learning Agreement and Waiver.

MIDTERM
Half way through the semester Preceptors will be asked to complete an online evaluation of student progress. Phone check-ins with Preceptors might also happen during this period.

MIDTERM 50 HRS

COMPLETE 100 HRS
INTERNSHIP COMPLETED
At 100 hours, the student must turn in their final hour log with their Preceptor’s signature. Preceptors will also be asked to complete a final evaluation on student’s total performance.
TIMELINE: GRADUATE

PRE-INTERNSHIP ACADEMIC MODULES
Student must complete all pre-internship academic modules and associated assessments.

16+ WKS BEFORE

INTERNSHIP ORIENTATION
Student must complete an online module and take a pre-internship quiz.

AGENCY INTERVIEWS
Agencies are encouraged to conduct interviews during this period.

12 WKS BEFORE

INTERNSHIP SEARCH
Students will independently search for a viable internship. Internships must meet CEPH criteria and be approved by advisor and internship coordinator.

INTERNSHIP DOCUMENTATION
Student must submit their final Student Learning Contract and risk/legal paperwork with signatures.

8 WKS BEFORE

CONTRACTS MEETINGS
Students will assemble their internship team: Faculty Advisor, Internship Coordinator, and Preceptor. This team will give final feedback on the Student Learning Agreement. This meeting can be done in-person or virtually via GoToMeeting.

MIDTERM
At 100 internship hours completed, students will have to submit an hour log, and an internship midterm report. Preceptors will be asked to complete an evaluation and a virtual site visit will be scheduled where the student will give a presentation.

MIDTERM 100 HRS

COMPLETE 200 HRS
At 200 hours, the student must turn in their final hour log, an internship final report, and a site assessment. The Preceptor must complete a final evaluation, and the student will present a final project film.
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THE ROLE OF THE PRECEPTOR

Mentoring is a process of helping students increase their professional knowledge, social capital and providing psychosocial support as they enter their chosen career field.

MENTORSHIP

- Help students understand professionalism in the workplace by establishing expectations of communication, consistency, and follow through
- Help students identify scalable projects that will benefit the organization
- Provide project monitoring and management

EXPECTATIONS

- Acclimate the student to the organization
- Review and approve the student’s Project Management Plan
- Provide regular check-ins
- Review and approve student timesheets in Sonia
- Provide feedback through a mid-term and final evaluation

GIVING YOUR STUDENT FEEDBACK

- The NVPHTC will email the preceptor directly an assessment at the middle and the end of the academic semester
- Use this evaluation as a guide to provide critical feedback to the student on their strengths and what they can work on as a professional in the field

- Evaluations are time sensitive, be sure to note due dates
- If an evaluation is not received, the student will receive a zero for this assignment and could potentially fail the course
- The course instructor should be notified immediately if they have not received any course communication.
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THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT

Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn - Benjamin Franklin

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Students must find their own internship opportunities
- Students will research the organization and develop potential project ideas; however, the Preceptor must determine what is most helpful to the organization
- Students must notify the course instructor of the potential site and ensure the internship site and project will meet the requirements of the course
- Maintain professionalism at all times

EXPECTATIONS

- Submit site contact information
- Submit student forms (e.g. Student Agreement, Waiver, Orientation Acknowledgement)
- Submit a Preceptor approved Project Management Plan or Student Learning Contract
- Complete CHS 494/798 coursework
- Ensure the Preceptor has received the mid-term and final evaluation
- Ensure they keep accurate records of their time and have their Preceptor approve their hours
- Complete specified hours of field work

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

- A student is responsible for keeping in constant communication with all parties involved
- The student should provide the Preceptor with a copy of this guide, as well as their class syllabus
- It is encouraged students maintain a consistent schedule if possible
- The student should ask what is expected of them as a volunteer/employee of the host organization (e.g. attire, communication preferences, scheduling)
- The student is responsible for keeping their Preceptor aware of their internship progress, applicable deadlines, and any CHS 494 requirements
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EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

Examples of successful field study activities from previous semesters:

CLINICAL

- Creating health communication materials for a water therapy program at a physical therapy clinic by researching therapeutic methods, adapting existing content, writing new content where needed, creating professional quality images, and pre-testing materials.
- Developing an injury prevention curriculum for community outreach.
- Designing exercise instruction videos for clients to use outside the clinic to prevent pain or further injury.

PUBLIC HEALTH

- Create a Reno area Walking Guide for a local non-profit organization by researching and compiling park/trail information, photographic parks/trails, designing user-friendly booklet, and creating a distribution plan for printed guides.
- Developing and teaching a dance therapy program for children with disabilities.
- Engaging restaurant owners to voluntarily provide nutritional information for menu items.

RESEARCH

- Assisting with a UNR study on physical activity and literacy by completing research ethics certification, receiving training on study protocol, leading elementary school students in brief daily physical activity sessions, conducting assessments of literacy skills, and entering data.
- Engaging in community based, participatory research to increase HIV testing among African American females. This includes community outreach, marketing, qualitative interviews, data collection, and reporting.
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MITIGATING CHALLENGES

When the organizational fit isn't fitting

Most internship experiences are mutually beneficial by providing extra help to our community partners and professional development for our students. However, occasionally, some students and some preceptors do not find out until later that this internship is not a good organizational fit. And as a result, both parties involved become increasingly unsatisfied with their experience. Here are the steps to mitigate the situation in the event this happens.

THE AGREEMENT

- The student signed an agreement that stipulates they can be removed from the site at the request of the Preceptor.
- In turn, students can also remove themselves from the site in the event their educational needs are not being met or they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

CONTACT US

- It is important the organization or student contacts NVPHTC as soon as possible if problems start to arise.
- The NVPHTC will intervene and help bring both parties to a resolution.
- Challenges will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- NVPHTC wants to ensure the experience is beneficial for both parties.

CONTACTS FOR FIELD STUDIES

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