

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM MANUAL

A Guide for

**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS, FACULTY,
and
SUPERVISING AGENCIES**

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This handbook is intended to provide students, faculty, and internship supervising agencies information relating to the Health and Human Performance, Community and Public Health Division's Internship Program. None of the information contained herein shall be interpreted to create a contract. The information included is up-to-date as of the time of printing. The University reserves the right to make changes in policy, regulations, and fees, as circumstances dictate, subsequent to publication.

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COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

OBTAINING THE INTERNSHIP:

I. Obtaining the Internship

- A. The Internship Application must be submitted by **SEPTEMBER 28** for the spring session, **February 28** for the summer, and **March 28** for the fall session. Late applications cannot be guaranteed an internship. It is optimal to contact the Internship Coordinator two (2) semesters prior to your planned registration for HLTH 4990. Deadlines must be met, so contact the Coordinator early.
- B. Prior to the above dates, the student will submit to the MTSU Internship Coordinator the application (Form A), the objectives (Form B) and Career Center approved resume. After receiving this information the Coordinator will give the student permission to set up an interview with a community partner.
- C. At the interview:
 - Explain the internship program to the site supervisor.
 - Provide a copy of the Agency internship manual to the site supervisor.
 - Ensure the agency will have a qualified health supervisor.
 - Obtain examples of the activities and experiences that will be available for the intern.
 - If an agreement is reached, the supervising agency completes and signs the Supervising Agency Interview Report (See Form C).
 - If for some reason, the first placement choice is not suitable, the student will contact the second choice. It is extremely difficult to change internships after all arrangements are completed; therefore, you should spend considerable time before making your decision.
 - Form D is completed by the Intern and MTSU Internship coordinator
 - The Internship Coordinator sends an acknowledgement to the student and the supervising agency saying the internship is approved
 - Interns are expected to attend all class meetings at the MTSU campus, which will include:
 - Orientation during the first week of the internship
 - Final class meeting to present to the class and to submit all required assignments

Introduction and Orientation

The Community and Public Health undergraduate program of the Health and Human Performance (HHP) Department at MTSU offers students the opportunity to prepare for careers as health professionals in communities, schools, industry, and allied areas.

HLTH 4990 is an internship course that provides concentrated and practical pre-professional experience with a health agency. This course is designed to provide an opportunity for students to apply the knowledge, theories, and experiences gained from their undergraduate program to real life situations. The internship is the culminating event of a student's university experience. Thus, it is critical for the internship to be carefully planned and implemented. The Internship Manual contains guidelines to help ensure that the internship is a valuable and positive experience. As such, you will be required to fulfill the obligations outlined in this manual, as well as to perform the duties required by the supervising agency to which you are assigned. As you begin planning your internship, please keep in mind that the manual is designed to be used in conjunction with counsel from your class supervisor. Requirements for completing the internship will be given in the online d21 website.

The responsibility for obtaining an acceptable internship is the student's. However, the MTSU coordinator should be consulted before beginning the process. You must receive approval by the internship coordinator before interviewing with the agency. The MTSU coordinator has a list of community partners available.

Students majoring in Community and Public Health must choose a non HHP facility either in a public or private setting. The student should choose the facility that best matches his/her future employment interests. A good

internship experience can go a long way in helping the student find a post-collegiate professional position or in selecting an emphasis area for graduate study.

The first days at the site of the internship will be spent in orientation. The exchange of information should be beneficial to both you and your supervisor. You will be given an introduction to the overall goals and objectives and other aspects of the agency for which you will be working. This overview will include such things as becoming acquainted with agency personnel, equipment and facilities, work schedules, policies and procedures of the agency, administrative procedures, etc. You, in turn, will have the opportunity to provide your supervisor with background information relative to your capabilities and desires.

Students are encouraged to pursue certification as a Certified Health Education Specialist. Membership in a professional organizations such as the SOPHE or APHA is also strongly encouraged.

A. Description of Internship Program

- a. HLTH 4990 is an internship with flexible hours. The student may choose between 6 and 12 hours academic credit. For every 1 credit hours earned the student must work 30 hours at the agency site. Thus, a 12 hr. internship means 360 work hours.
- b. The internship affords the student an opportunity to merge academic knowledge with practical job experiences. It is a win/win situation for both the intern and supervising agency. The student and the agency will discuss and decide the number of hours that the student will work and this will be recorded on Form C when the contract is signed.

B. Internship Benefits

- a. **Student Intern** - The internship enriches education by adding the vital component of "work experience" for the student. The experience allows students to explore and clarify professional goals, establish post-graduation job contacts, and to acquire skills and experiences related to their career goals. He/she can determine areas of strength and work to improve on areas of weakness.
- b. **Supervising Agency** - The site supervisor has the opportunity to preview and assess the potential of the intern as a possible future employee. The internship program provides the added benefit of allowing the supervisor to have a trained intern with specific skills at no cost.

C. Community and Public Health Faculty

- Sandra Neal, Professor, Internship Coordinator
- Andrew Owusu, Associate Professor,
- Shannon Josey, Lecturer
- Casie Higginbotham, Lecturer
- Bethany Wrye, Assistant Professor
- Chandra Story, Associate Professor
- Kahler Stone, Assistant Professor
- Angela Bowman, Assistant Professor

D. Program Goals and Objectives

- a. The goals of the Community/Public Health Internship Program are to:
 - i. Prepare the student for entry-level community and public health employment.
 - ii. Provide practical work experience for students who plan to pursue a community and public career.
 - iii. Provide health educators who are prepared to practice health education in areas of medical, social, and economic change on a local, national and international level.
- b. The goals for the Intern are:
 - i. Develop an understanding of the structure and function of the sponsoring organization.
 - ii. Develop skills and knowledge appropriate for an entry level community and public health professional.
 - iii. Made a meaningful contribution to the sponsoring organization.

Eligibility Requirements

A. General Criteria

- a. In order to participate in the Community/Public Health Internship Program you must:
- b. Be a community and public health degree-seeking student in good standing
- c. Complete all required health classes before the internship semester
- d. Possess an overall minimum grade point average of 2.0 and a major gpa of 2.5 or above

B. Intern Site Requirements

- a. The internship work must be directly related to the community and public health field of study. **The agency must have a public health professional to supervise the internship.** The student intern is normally not a paid internship.
- b. Interns may be required to have a background check and/or liability insurance. Payment is the responsibility of the student.

Roles and Responsibilities

A. Supervising Agency

- a. The agency participates in an intern interview/meeting session and completes the supervising **Agency Agreement (Appendix C)** for submittal to the Internship Coordinator. It is the agency's responsibility to interview as many students as they need to be comfortable with their intern choice.
- b. The agency provides a safe environment for the student. All company policies and regulations, as well as conditions of health and safety, apply to the intern.
- c. The agency provides a supervisor or mentor under which the student may work. **This supervisor should have a public health background.**
- d. The agency accepts the student as a professional member of the staff and encourages professional growth.
- e. The agency provides the physical facilities and supplies necessary to accomplish the interns on site responsibilities (desk space, computer access, supplies, and other essential services).
- f. If a background check and/or liability insurance is/are needed, the agency informs the intern in the interview meeting.
- g. The agency provides the intern with an orientation at the beginning of the internship experience.
- h. The agency provides an opportunity for the intern to function as a full-time staff member. Weekly meetings between the intern and his/her supervisor provide greater opportunity to learn.
- i. The agency provides the intern with an opportunity for participation in a variety of tasks and relationships common to the activities of community and public professionals at the internship site
- j. The agency completes the Midterm Supervising Agency Evaluation of Intern and the Final Supervising Agency Evaluation of Intern and submits each form to the Internship Coordinator by e-mail. These evaluations should also be given to the student.
- k. The agency should provide informal feedback on observations on a continuous basis.
- l. The agency implements Suggested Activities for Supervising Agencies as appropriate. Job rotation enhances the learning experience.
- m. By the midpoint of the internship, the agency in conjunction with the intern identifies a major project to be planned, implemented, and evaluated by the student intern. The scope of project is decided by the site supervisor in conjunction with the intern and approved by the university supervisor.
- n. The agency notifies the Internship Coordinator of any problems or difficulties during the internship.

B. Suggested Internship Activities

- a. Internship activities are usually mutually agreed upon by the intern and site supervisor. Possible ideas include, but are not limited to:
 - Identification and diagnosis of a program need or problem
 - Fact finding as related to a program need or problem, e.g., conducting literature searches, writing reports, press releases, news articles, etc.

- Developing, coordinating, and administering a program activity
- Attending professional and staff meetings
- Assisting in the preparation of special reports, and curricula
- Grant opportunities and applications
- Presenting health related information
- Health Promotion Events
- Identifying resources
- Assisting with program evaluation
- Working with the professional staff on an intra-agency basis
- Visiting other health related agencies/developing partners
- Virtual community material
- Communication plans

C. The Intern responsibilities:

- a. Keep the Internship Coordinator informed of all problems, difficulties, or delays encountered during the internship.
- b. Read MTSU e-mail regularly.
- c. Submit weekly reports promptly.
- d. Ensure that your site supervisor has submitted your evaluations to your university supervisor.
- e. Work the hours agreed on with the agency, arriving on time and not leaving early for appointments, classes, etc.

D. Internship Major Project

- a. All Interns are responsible for a final major project during their internship. A project provides many benefits and opportunities for personal growth and individual skill development in your area of interest. Project Focus: The project should demonstrate your competency as a pre-professional Community and public health professional. The nature of the project will be determined collaboratively by the intern and the intern site supervisor with approval from the MTSU supervisor.
- b. Internship Focus: Developing a project enables you to work on a specific goal. Identifying, designing and completing projects provide evidence of your effectiveness as a community and public professional. .
- c. Internship Site Enhancement: While you will receive education, training and an excellent experience, your internship should also serve to benefit the participating organization. The projects you develop, (especially the Major Project) should help the sponsoring organization attain its institutional goals.
- d. Evaluation of Student Internship: Your performance relative to working on projects provides the Health & Human Performance faculty with a means of evaluating the quality of the internship site as well as the intern's professional skills. The evaluation of your project will be by the Intern Site Supervisor and University Internship Coordinator.

The MTSU Internship Coordinator will:

- Be informed of the professional qualifications of the agency supervisor to ensure proper health education support is provided to student intern.
- Conduct pre-internship orientation meeting with the prospective agency supervisor, if needed.
- Make contact with each agency supervisor during the first four weeks of the semester to confirm that the student has started the internship and provide an opportunity for the supervisor to ask any questions about the internship process.
- Visit the supervising agency as necessary during the semester. In most cases, the visits will be made at or after midterm. The meeting should be a visit with both the supervisor and the student intern. At the discretion of the Internship Coordinator, separate meetings may be held with the supervisor and the student intern in addition to the joint meeting.

- Ensure the Intern weekly reports are completed.
- Ensure all final evaluations are received.
- Determine, with significant input from the site supervisor, the final grade earned by the intern.
- Provide additional supervision via telephone, e-mail and other appropriate means.

General Policies

A. Attendance

- a. Student interns are required to work 30 clock hours per 1 hr. of academic credit during the internship period. 12 hrs. = 360 work hours; 9 hrs. =270 work hours, and 6 hrs. = 180 work hours. The specific number of hours/week will be coordinated with the agency. Tardiness is not permitted. Absences are also not permitted unless preapproved, or in the case of an emergency. Work or family/personal responsibilities cannot be excuses for failing to meet the commitments of the internship. Student interns will not be excused from any student intern responsibilities in order to work, participate in a class, or take part in University activities. For holidays and vacations student interns must follow the schedule of the supervising agency.

B. Conduct

- a. Student interns must conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the professional, ethical, and moral standards outlined by the Association for the Advancement of Health Education (AAHE).

C. Dress Code

- a. The attire and grooming of student interns while at the supervising agency should conform to the accepted good practices at the agency.

D. Background Checks/Insurance

- a. Background and drug checks may be a requirement at some internship sites. Payment for these will be the responsibility of the student. Insurance may also be required by the agency. As a student community and public health professional, you will be exposed to a variety of clinical settings while engaged in your Student Internship Program, thus you may be required to obtain Professional Liability Insurance, as a protective measure. You may wish to consult with your existing family/individual insurance agent or go online to find a reliable company to administer your professional insurance plan. The Marsh Affinity Group Services at www.proliability.com is a possible online source, but is in no way affiliated with MTSU. Copy of proof of professional liability insurance must be filed with your internship agency supervisor if required.

A booklet with all the needed forms can be found on the [Community and Public Health Internship forms](#) website.