

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SCIENCES
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM HANDBOOK
EM 490, HS 490, and HS 590

Department of Health Sciences
Western Illinois University
1 University Circle
Macomb, IL 61455

February 2010

Rational for the Professional Internship

The professional internship is one phase of the total training program. The two parts, course of study and internship, are designed to contribute to a basic objective, which is to provide opportunities for the student to develop the competencies necessary to assume responsibilities in the public arena, health care, business and industry, and in related areas.

Although academic study and fieldwork are often thought of as two distinctive types of experiences, they have much in common: theoretical insight and the development of sound concepts are important parts, both of academic course work and the field experience. Thus, the professional internship provides an opportunity for the testing of hypotheses and of the classroom experience. Both experiences are learning experiences and the same educational principles apply to both situations.

The professional internship must contribute to the student's goals for professional growth. These goals should be clearly perceived and consciously striven for by both students and supervisors. Effective field training principles must be followed to insure a sound educational experience. The following principles are starting points for planning the internship.

1. The student is an active participant in planning the internship experience.
2. Field training for an individual student must be planned in terms of his/her abilities and needs and as an integral part of the total training experience in which he/she is participating.
3. The experiences offered the student should meet real needs of the agency/organization. In so far as he/she is capable, the student should be given the opportunity to function as a full-fledged staff member.
4. The training experience should be so designed that the student has an opportunity for responsible participation in a wide variety of tasks and relationships common to the activities of professional emergency management, health sciences/community health, and health services management workers. The resources available must be adequate for this purpose.
5. Field training shall be under the guidance and supervision of an individual who is able to make a learning experience out of a work situation and who is professionally competent.
6. The agency/organization shall provide experiential learning to improve student competencies.
7. Evaluation of the field training experience must be in terms of:
 - a. The student's growth in understanding and abilities needed in situations faced by emergency management and health sciences/community health workers professionals.
 - b. The student's contributions to the internship site's programs.
 - c. The degree to which the student attained his/her stated objectives for the internship.

Objectives of the Internship

The objectives of the internship should be:

1. To enhance the student's understanding of the structure and functions of the agency or organization.
2. To relate the activities of the emergency management, health services management, and health sciences/community health professional to the goals of the agency/organization.
3. To gain a better understanding of the linkages between health/emergency management agencies and other organizations in the community.
4. To integrate the classroom theory and the field experience.
5. To improve the student's professional skills to the degree possible.
6. To make a meaningful contribution to the agency/organization.
7. To strengthen the student's philosophy and understanding of the Emergency Management, Health Education, Health Sciences, and Health Services Management profession.

Internship Eligibility

All undergraduate students must:

1. Complete all course work for the degree with the exception of six hours to be completed in the minor or general education.
2. Receive departmental approval of the internship site.
3. Have a minimum grade point average of 2.5 in the major and 2.0 overall.

All graduate students must:

1. Complete a minimum of 27 semester hours to include the core courses (HS 511, HS 512, HS 530, HS 570, and HS 571).
2. Receive departmental approval of the internship site.
3. Have a minimum grade point average of 3.25 in the major and 3.0 overall.

When the student meets the above prerequisites he/she may consider the professional internship for next semester. The professional internship is required of all candidates for the Bachelor of Science degree in Emergency Management, Health Sciences, and Health Services Management options. The professional internship is required of those candidates for the Master of Science degree in Health Education in the Community Health option if no field experience was completed as an undergraduate or if the candidate has not had equivalent work experience.

Application and Site Approval

To locate an internship site, the student should develop a list of locations from discussions with people who have been interns and with appropriate faculty, as well as by reviewing the list of sites used by previous interns. In addition, Internship Summary Papers are located in the Department of Health Sciences conference room and can be reviewed for site and project ideas. The student should select a primary internship site and an alternative site that match his/her option and career interests.

Specifically, it is the student's responsibility to:

- Make contact with the internship site.
- Determine the feasibility of completing an internship at the desired site (this includes preapproval of the site by the Internship Coordinator).
- Schedule a formal interview with the prospective internship site supervisor if the site is considered to be feasible.

Final approval of an internship site is the responsibility of the department and occurs after the prospective site has interviewed and confirmed the internship. In all instances the agency/organization has the right to accept or reject a prospective intern.

To apply for an internship, the student **MUST** submit the following:

1. Site and Supervisor Information Form (to be completed by the site supervisor)
2. Internship Placement Agreement (to be completed by the student and the site supervisor)
3. Waiver (to be completed by the student)
4. A current resume

The application will not be processed unless all items are provided. The site supervisor and the advisor (Stacy Dorsett [undergraduate] or Dr. Moore [graduate]) must sign the Internship Placement Agreement. The Site and Supervisor Information Form, Internship Placement Agreement, Waiver, and resume **MUST** be submitted to the internship coordinator by the following deadlines. Failure to do so will result in the internship being moved to a subsequent term:

Fall Internships:	submit choices by May 1
Spring Internships:	submit choices by November 1
Summer Internships:	submit choices by April 1

ALL MATERIALS SUBMITTED MUST BE TYPED

Scheduling the Field Experience

The Internship Coordinator (Dr. Parsons) will register all students once grade point averages (GPAs) have been determined as meeting the minimum guidelines. Any student whose grade point average (GPA) has yet to be determined acceptable for the internship **CANNOT** start the internship until the minimum GPA has been achieved. The internship shall commence on a date that is agreeable to the site supervisor, internship coordinator, and the student.

Responsibilities of the Student

1. Students are expected to comply with all pertinent university rules and regulations and to all policies, rules, and regulations of the participating agency/organization. If certain agencies/organizations have special requirements, it is the responsibility of the student to ascertain and comply with these requirements.
2. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner, which will reflect credit to themselves, the university, and the agency/organization. This includes personal appearance.
3. Students **MUST ATTEND** an internship orientation meeting conducted by the Department of Health Sciences two semesters prior to the actual internship experience. Meeting information is posted on the department's internship website (<http://www.wiu.edu/health/internships.html>).
4. The student shall participate in planning the internship. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Writing a statement about how the student will be able to contribute to the agency/organization,
 - b. Compiling a list of objectives for the field experience,
 - c. Familiarizing oneself, as much as possible, with the agency/organization prior to the internship,
 - d. Making a personal visit to the site prior to the internship to get acquainted with the site supervisor and to discuss goals and objectives of the internship, and
 - e. Provide the agency/organization with a resume and any other relevant information requested.
5. Students will participate in the mutually agreed upon agency/organization program.
6. Students are expected to keep a daily log to assist them in the preparation of the internship paper.
7. The undergraduate student shall spend 360-480 hours (graduate students shall spend 150-300 hours) with the agency/organization. The internship is full-time (graduate students should discuss weekly hours with the internship coordinator).
8. The student is expected to submit written progress reports to the internship coordinator every two weeks during the internship. The student should provide a copy to the site supervisor as well. If these are not received in a timely fashion, 40 work hours (undergraduate) or 50 work hours (graduate) will be added to the total internship work hours for each violation.

ALL MATERIALS SUBMITTED MUST BE TYPED

9. It is the student's responsibility to make certain the Time Verification Form and Professional Evaluation Form are forwarded to the internship coordinator (these are provided to the supervisor with the confirmation letter). A grade **cannot** be entered or changed until receipt of these two forms.
10. Students may be required to complete an affidavit indicating they participate in the University's medical plan (Statement of Insurance Coverage) and to complete the "Waiver and Release" form. Copies shall be provided for both the agency/organization and the internship coordinator. Original signatures must be on each.

Criteria for Evaluating the Internship

To receive a passing grade in EM 490, HS 490, and HS 590, the student must satisfactorily complete all of the following:

1. Complete at least 360-480 hours (150-300 hours for graduate students) with the agency/organization.
2. Submit a paper of satisfactory quality using the approved style and format (refer to the *Guidelines for Writing the Professional Internship Summary Paper*) which includes:
 - a. Introduction providing an overview of the agency/organization,
 - b. The structure and function(s) of the organization,
 - c. The description of the student's experiences and activities,
 - d. Intuitive judgments about his/her own functions, and
 - e. Appendices exhibiting each of the various projects undertaken.
3. A favorable evaluation by the site supervisor on the Professional Evaluation Form. A rating of "3" or better is required on at least 75% of the performance categories rated. It should be noted that the site supervisor's evaluation is the most significant aspect of the overall evaluation process. Should the student not meet the minimum performance rating, additional internship work hours will be required.
4. The satisfactory performance on an oral presentation before two or more Health Sciences faculty members. The internship paper must be received at least two weeks prior to the presentation. Oral presentations will not be conducted during any break period or during finals week.
5. The internship is graded as "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory."
6. An incomplete "I" will be recorded in EM 490, HS 490, and HS 590 if all the evaluation criteria have not been satisfactorily met prior to the end of the semester in which the student completed the internship.

In the event a student withdraws from the internship (or is withdrawn by the department or at the agency/organization's request) prior to completing the requirements, a subsequent placement, if allowed, will adhere to the regular site approval process. Also, all evaluation criteria must be satisfactorily met at the second site.

ALL MATERIALS SUBMITTED MUST BE TYPED

Agency Interview

After the student has selected the possible internship sites and preapproval of the site has been made by the Internship Coordinator, an interview is arranged between the student and the agency. This meeting should allow the intern and the agency to determine the feasibility of arranging the internship between the two parties. The interview should be treated as a typical job interview with the student preparing in advance for possible questions and responses. It also should provide an opportunity for the student to gather pertinent information about the agency's internship program or potential program to determine if the student's goals and objective will be met. List below are some tips and guidelines that may help with the initial agency interview.

Preparing for the Interview

1. Find out as much as possible about the agency BEFORE going to the interview.
 - a. Call and have the agency send copies of pamphlets, brochures, or materials explaining activities and programs sponsored by the organization.
 - b. If available, read previous summary papers from interns who completed internships at that agency.
2. Write out general goals for the internship experience and be prepared to explain them.
3. Write out the specific goals or objectives related to that particular agency. Be ready to justify WHY the agency was selected as a possible internship site.
4. Develop a list of possible projects for activities that could be pursued during the internship.
5. The following topics should be discussed:
 - a. Work schedule
 - b. Dress code
 - c. Who the direct supervisor will be
 - d. Confidentiality policies
 - e. Agency expectations of the intern
 - f. Possible projects or assignments
 - g. Additional meetings (i.e., night or weekend programs)
 - h. Regular meetings with the supervisor
 - i. Agency policies for employees

Internship Coordinator Contact Information

Nancy Parsons, Ph.D., MPH, CHES
Professor
Department of Health Sciences
Western Illinois University
1 University Circle
Macomb, IL 61455
(309) 298-1746 (voice mail)
(309) 298-2076 (fax)
NP-Parsons@wiu.edu
<http://www.wiu.edu/health/internships.html>