

Appendix E: Internship Overview for Preceptors

Dear Prospective Preceptor:

Thank you for your interest in supporting a Master of Health Administration (MHA) student through our required internship experience. We realize the effort this requires on your part and appreciate your willingness to volunteer to mentor an emerging public health professional. We aspire to ensure that all of our internships result in positive experiences for all stakeholders involved, including our students, the organization, our program, and –most importantly – your agency’s clients, the public.

This letter is intended to briefly outline, from the preceptor’s perspective, the expectations and processes required of our students in arranging and completing an internship. These expectations are outlined in detail in the student’s Internship Manual, which is accessible as a PDF file via our department’s website (<http://publichealth.uncc.edu>). This summary is divided into three phases: establishing the internship; precepting the internship, and evaluating the internship.

Establishing the internship. We expect our master’s students, as part of demonstrating their competence to act as a professional, to identify an appropriate site for their internship and to negotiate the specific arrangements, goals, and deliverables. Prior to the start of the internship, the student is expected to develop a preliminary statement of goals and objectives and to identify a number of organizational details that are needed in order for our College to formally place a student into the internship. For internships that are unpaid and outside of formally advertised internship programs, our college requires an agency-level affiliation agreement if one does not already exist. These formal agreements must be in place prior to the start of the internship. Depending on the needs of the agency, this process may involve development of several iterations spanning several months. Thus, students are advised to plan well ahead. To generate the preceptor letter, the student will need to ascertain information found on our “Appendix A Internship Contact Form document:

- Name and mailing address of Agency
- Name, title, phone, fax, and email of preceptor
- Planned start/end dates and approximately weekly hours to be spent on internship
- Brief summary of planned activities/projects for internship experience
- If an agency affiliation agreement is needed, also required are:
 - Name, title, and contact information of Agency signature authority (if different from preceptor)
 - County in which the internship site is located

Agency requirements/waivers

Interns must comply with college and department policies for the internship as well as any agency-specific requirements set forth in the affiliation agreement. **Neither the preceptors nor I can modify the requirements set forth in these agreements.** Modifications to these requirements can only be made by formal amendment of the agreement by the responsible signature authorities for the Agency and the College.

Generally, I will be in contact with preceptors (by email or phone) prior to the start of the internship, but prospective preceptors are encouraged to contact me at any point in the process.



Precepting the Internship. Once the preceptor agreement is in place, the student is free to begin the internship. Within the first twenty hours of effort, the student is expected to “finalize” the statement of goals and deliverables with you and report them to me for approval. The preceptor is expected to provide oversight and guidance of the intern throughout the experience. We expect master’s student to be self-directed, but recognize that the preceptor will need to provide an orientation to the organization and facilitate acculturation into the organization.

The student intern also is expected to provide me brief progress reports following every 40 hours of internship experience. These progress reports can be used to document changes in the planned scope of activities, etc., due to changing organizational needs and priorities (as is typical in professional practice). Preceptors or interns may request a site visit from me to observe the intern in the organization and to discuss the internship and the internship process with you. Such meetings typically lasts an hour. If a site visit is impractical, a conference call or video conference may be substituted.

You are invited to contact me should any difficulties or concerns regarding the intern or the internship experience arise.

Evaluating the Internship. At the conclusion of the internship, the preceptor is asked to complete a brief (6-page, typeable PDF) confidential assessment of the intern and to return it to me (by mail, email, fax). The student will provide you this form (or it can be found on the Public Health Sciences website).

Again, thank you for your support of our program and our MHA students.

Sincerely,



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