

Internship



IHS Surveyors interviewing respondents during the Health State Valuation Survey

Internship

Public health practice is an integral part of all academic programmes at the Institute of Health Systems. The need for actual hands-on experience is essential for the well-rounded education of our students. To emphasize this and to provide the opportunity for our students to participate in a work environment, a supervised internship of one year is prescribed for all students who have satisfactorily completed the required course work of the Advanced Studies in Public Health programme. However the faculty committee may consider request for waiver of internship from students with substantial field experience.

Purpose

The internship is viewed as the culminating, synthesizing experience in the Advanced Studies in Public Health programme. Therefore, the internship should enable the student to:

- apply public health core knowledge and specialty skills;
- acquire additional skills and knowledge in public health services;
- contribute to the solution of public health problems;
- interact regularly with public health professionals and become knowledgeable about their skills and responsibilities;
- produce a written analytical evaluation of the experience;
- develop personal confidence and leadership as a public health professional.

The internship provides an important first step to a career in public health, if a student has little or no prior experience. If the student has extensive experience or advanced degrees in other fields, they have the opportunity to apply existing skills at a higher level and to develop new professional skills in public health.

Choice of Internship Site

Each student is assigned a Faculty Advisor from IHS who assists the student in identifying professional and career objectives, clarifying learning objectives and identifying appropriate internship sites. The Institute of Health Systems is a preferred site for internship of students. At any given time the Institute will be handling public health projects in many of the concentration areas offered by the programme. IHS will offer an internship position to a student, subject to the student's interests and choice of concentration, availability of a suitable position at the Institute, and the concurrence of the Faculty Advisor. The Institute assumes responsibility in providing internships at other sites if a suitable position is not available at IHS. The choice of such internship sites is determined by the following criteria.

- the site location can be within or outside Hyderabad.
- the agency may be either public or private.
- the selected agency or site must offer the student the practical application of principles of public health in the area of concentration chosen by the student.
- the time of assignment will not be less than one year

Internship at worksites

Employee sponsored / inservice candidates can receive internship at their place of employment. It is expected that they will satisfy internship reporting requirements while they are in their regular jobs.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Organization and the Supervisor

The Institute of Health Systems or the chosen agency will provide a Supervisor to oversee the student's internship. At IHS, the Supervisor will be the Coordinator of the project to which the student is assigned. The Supervisor should have expertise in assigned project areas, experience and status within the organization, and an interest and competence in supervising and mentoring. The Supervisor serve as a resource person and provides applicable experiences for the intern, creating a viable learning experience. The responsibilities of the Supervisor include:

- providing orientation, guidance and supervision to the intern
- arranging informational meetings with key personnel in student's area of interest
- reviewing organizational policies and procedures
- making necessary arrangements for the student experience
- insuring that the student is actively involved at the site
- insuring that the student has physical space at the site
- monitoring the progress of the student and communicate periodically with the faculty advisor
- signing the internship agreement.

Role and Responsibility of the Faculty Advisor

The Faculty Advisor has to assure that internship experiences are valuable learning opportunities for students and that the internship sites chosen are appropriate. The Faculty advisor can assist the Site Supervisor in his/her role and provide technical assistance and the Institute's academic resources. The Faculty Advisor will:

- meet with student to discuss the student's interests, career goals, and possible internship sites
- help develop learning objectives and activities
- help initiate the internship process with the Site Supervisor
- insure all program paperwork has been completed with appropriate signatures and provide the initial signature for the internship contract
- meet regularly with the student during the internship
- maintain communication with the student and the Site Supervisor through visits or phone contacts throughout the experience
- guide the student in preparing the internship report

Role and Responsibilities of the Student

The internship provides exposure and access within organizations that may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience during the early years of their public health careers. The student is expected to function as a professional, which is reflected in the projects and activities performed and in relationships with the organization's administrators and other staff. The student is responsible to the Site Supervisor for agreed upon projects and work duties.

Students are expected to:

- develop and finalize learning objectives and specific activities to accomplish these objectives in collaboration with the Site Supervisor and Faculty Advisor prior to the start of the internship
- complete the internship agreement and send a signed copy to the Site Supervisor, Faculty Advisor, and the Director of the Institute. The agreement must be in effect prior to the start of the internship
- provide professional quality work
- adhere to the rules and regulations of the internship site
- integrate within the structure of the organization
- take initiative in designing or implementing a project
- prepare and present the internship report

The Internship Agreement

The Internship Agreement is developed prior to the start of internship by agreement among the Site Supervisor, Faculty Advisor and the student. The Internship Agreement describes and defines the working relationship between the student and the organization. It integrates the student's learning objectives and interests with the needs and opportunities of the site and is a tool for communication, monitoring, and evaluation of the practice experience. The Internship Agreement consists of:

a. Specifications

Name of student, Organization, Site Supervisor, Faculty Advisor, start and end dates, stipend amount, other compensation if any, Supervisor/student meeting frequency, and other logistics, working conditions or site requirements.

b. Scope of Work

A work plan detailing the student's learning objectives, proposed activities, evidence of learning/products, and time schedule. The learning objectives are central to the integration of the student's academic learning with the practice skills and knowledge they gain during their internships.

c. Brief description of Project

A brief description of the internship site and the primary project to which the student is assigned.

d. Expected Outcome

Finished product the student delivers to the site during the internship. Examples: Report, computer program, publication etc.

e. Signatures and Date

Student, Supervisor, Faculty Advisor, and Director of IHS.

Stipend

The Institute strives to ensure that students are adequately compensated during their internship period. The Institute recommends a minimum stipend of Rs. 10,000/- per month. However students may be placed with organizations which are unable to provide the prescribed minimum stipend. This is because they offer something unique that cannot be found elsewhere, and the student, the Institute, and the community benefits from the experience.

The Internship Report

Student's level of achieving the learning objectives will be measured by the completion of a final internship report. This is an opportunity for the student to describe what was done, what was learned, and to place the experiences within the context of the organization, the community and the APH programme. The internship report has two components.

a. Written Report

The written report will include the profile of the internship site, an analysis of the policies, programmes and ability to fulfill its mission, and a self evaluation of the student's performance.

b. Oral Presentation

The student will be required to make an oral presentation before a student and faculty colloquium, reporting on activities during the internship and relating those activities to broader public health issues.

"Health Sector is already growing sector of the Indian Economy. During the 21st century, the health care services sector will grow at a much faster rate. In India, the capacity for health care services is very low compared to what will eventually be required by the population. We have less than 1 hospital bed per 1000 persons. Most developed economies have more than 7 hospital beds per 1000 persons. Although there is some debate about too much dependence on hospitals, such discussions would not arise in the context of an economy characterized by gross inadequacy. We have a large and still growing primary health care sector, that suffer from poor efficiency. Capacity growth and quality service enhancement in the health sector is going to happen both in the private and public sector. Health and education are the two sectors in which additional investments in the public sector are advocated by most economist, international monetary institutions like IMF and the World Bank. India's economic liberalisation program, also envisages additional investments in the health and education sector. Its time we give a fresh look to the country's health manpower needs and plan to produce personnel that can meet largely rural India's aspirations for a reasonable healthy life expectancy. Reforming the health sector to meet the aspirations of India's vast population means that we have to be creative. We need to look at new ways of organising the country's health system to harness the potentiality of new technologies and take into account local constraints. Health is a heavily human resource oriented sector. An important input to growth and reform in the health sector is development of appropriate human resources. We need to look at new possibilities."