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Catalog Course Description

Prerequisites: MSPH student having completed 18 or more graduate credit hours and permission of the Graduate Coordinator. Intensive, supervised experience in the practice of public health in community settings. Pass/Unsatisfactory or IP grading only.

Course Overview and Goals

Using the internship site as the "organizational laboratory," the MSPH internship provides a structured opportunity for students to apply theories, ideas, principles, and skills learned in the classroom to public health practice. The internship is intended to develop direct understanding through hands-on experience in public health or health promotion organizations thereby exposing the student to organizational cultures, management systems, operations and resources, programs and services and target populations. Such knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences will continue to develop and grow as each student graduates and becomes a life-long learner and practitioner of public health.

Syllabus Subject to Change

The instructor reserves the right to alter this syllabus based on best practices that fit changing circumstances.

Required Texts & Readings

Current Academic Year MSPH Internship Student Handbook and Current Academic Year Program Handbook (available as PDF files from the student resources tab of the PHS website, www.publichealth.uncc.edu)
Teaching Strategies

HLTH6471 Internship is an experiential learning course. A minimum of 160 hours of supervised field placement effort in public health/community health/health promotion practice is required. No formal classroom sessions are held.

Internship Course Objectives

The objectives of the MSPH Internship are to:

- Provide a practice setting for the student’s application and integration of the core public health knowledge.
- Experientially prepare the student with inter-disciplinary skills and competencies, including leadership, communication, professionalism, cultural proficiency, program planning and assessment and systems thinking.

As detailed in the MSPH course-competency matrix, upon successful completion of this course, each student will be able to:

Leadership
- Create and communicate mutually-established project goals and objectives.

Communication
- Demonstrate the ability to give, solicit, and receive oral and written information.
- Prepare relevant, integrated, and comprehensive written project report(s).
- Use various communication methods and media to complete project activities.

Professionalism and Cultural Proficiency
- Demonstrate the ability to manage time and prioritize workload.
- Display professionalism, sensitivity, and tact in an organizational/community setting.
- Interact productively with supervisors, colleagues, and community stakeholders.

Program Planning and Assessment
- Plan, manage, and monitor a project plan in order to meet established goals and deadlines.
- Prepare a written proposal for project approval from internal and external sources.
- Identify, collect, and analyze data for a practical public health issue or concern.

Systems Thinking
- Assess the roles and responsibilities within a public health organization.
- Describe the interactions and inter-dependencies among various public health organizations.
- Demonstrate and integrate knowledge of core public health concepts into a practice setting.
- Evaluate experiential methods of instruction and learning.
Course Conduct and Professional Responsibility

The internship serves as an extension of the teaching mission of the Department of Public Health Sciences by giving students work experience in the public health, health services, or research environments in which they will eventually pursue careers. While serving in on- or off-campus graduate internships, students are representatives of the Department. As such, they will act with total professionalism at all times.

Students participating in internships need to follow the dress standards of their work environment. All students need to comply with the work hours associated with their assistantship or internship. While at work, all students should ensure that their level of effort and contribution to the work environment meet and, preferably, exceed sponsor expectations.

Conduct. Students are advised to maintain a professional demeanor (i.e., be prepared, be responsible, and be courteous) in actions and interactions within courses and in the community. Students should know and abide by the six areas of ethics for a health educator (see MSPH Student Manual).

Students can be dismissed from the internship if they demonstrate behavior that conflicts with professionalism essential to Public Health practice. Unacceptable conduct may include, but is not limited to: displaying problems for which the student does not respond to appropriate treatment or counseling within a reasonable period of time; engaging in public health practice for which the student has not been authorized; displaying conduct which violates the Code of Student Academic Integrity, violating the Code of Ethics for the Health Educators, or threatening the physical, emotional, mental, or environmental health or safety of others or the student himself/herself.

*Students who do not conduct themselves professionally will be dismissed from the internship. Dismissal is likely to jeopardize a student’s ability to complete the MSPH program.*

Electronic Communication Courtesies. Students sending UNC Charlotte-related communications should do so as responsible professionals. Electronic communications are far more prone to misinterpretation than many other forms of communication. Their brevity and lack of non-verbal cues heightens this possibility. Writing good electronic communications requires students to raise dramatically their level of sensitivity to the potential reactions (misinterpretations) of diverse readers. When communicating electronically, always "take the high road" of graciousness and sensitivity. If you are in doubt, do not send the email as it provides a permanent record. Students should bear in mind that for communication to be effective, the message must be meaningful and understood by the recipient and should not require great effort on the recipient’s part, especially if the student is requesting action or response as a result... make it easy for the recipient to respond.

*Email etiquette.* Ensure the email contains a brief descriptive subject line. Include a proper salutation, e.g., "Dear Dr. ...." Compose a brief, organized message that is appropriate in tone and formality given its purpose and recipient. Close the message with your name (and title if appropriate and not included as part of a signature block). Ensure the message is spell-checked/proofed before it is sent.

Do not compose email messages in all caps: USING ALL CAPS IN AN EMAIL MESSAGE IS OFTEN INTERPRETED AS YELLING. Instead, use an underscore at the first and last letters of a word you wish to emphasize, like _this_.


Attachment etiquette. Use commonly available formats (e.g., *.doc [many organizations might not yet support *.docx formats], *.pdf, * xls). Ensure attachments have meaningful file names for the message’s recipient. For example, a student named Carmen Diaz, knowing that her professor would receive 50 attachments named “report.doc,” would name her internship report “Diaz_Cameron_InternshipReport_1AUG2011.doc.”

Course Processes and Roles
The MSPH Internship Manual outlines the general timeline of events, course (and pre-course) processes, procedures, and roles. This syllabus will not repeat those elements.

The internship does not officially begin until all pre-course requirements have been met, the student is registered for the internship, and the department has generated (and in some cases received a returned, signed) preceptor letter.

Students failing to secure these pre-requisites or to make alternate arrangements with the MSPH Coordinator in advance, will be disenrolled from the internship course on the last day of add/drop for the semester. In this case, a student could not begin an internship until the start of the subsequent semester, at the earliest.

Evaluation Methods
The course is graded on a Pass/Unsatisfactory (fail) basis. Students must meet minimal acceptable standards for each required element outlined below to receive a passing grade. The relative weights assigned to each of the elements below reflects their importance to the overall course objectives in terms of time, intellectual effort, and value to the program’s overall goals and objectives. The expectations for each of these elements are described in detail in the MSPH Internship Manual.

- 20% Mutually established goals between the preceptor and student
- 20% Progress reports/updates (including completion of required hours)
- 10% Intern organizational assessment
- 20% Preceptor evaluation of the intern
- 30% Student internship report

Students are advised that several rounds of review and editing of the final report are typically needed and should plan for that time accordingly.

Students who are unable to complete the required internship hours and/or submit an acceptable final report by the last day of classes for the semester and are otherwise making satisfactory progress will be assigned an IP (in progress) until the assignment is complete. After one additional semester, the IP will be changed to an I (incomplete). Such an incomplete will default to a U (unsatisfactory/fail) at the end of the following semester, with all of the attendant consequences of receiving a failing grade.
Applicable University & College Policies

**Code of Student Responsibility.** "The UNC Charlotte Code of Student Responsibility (the Code) sets forth certain rights and responsibilities in matters of student discipline. The Code defines these responsibilities and guarantees you certain rights that ensure your protection from unjust imposition of disciplinary penalties. You should familiarize yourself with the provisions and procedures of the Code" (Introductory statement from the UNC Charlotte brochure about the Code of Student Responsibility). The entire document may be found at this Internet address: [http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-406](http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-406)

**Academic Integrity.** All students are required to read and abide by the Code of Student Academic Integrity. Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Students are expected to submit their own work, either as individuals or contributors to a group assignment. Definitions and examples of plagiarism and other violations are set forth in the Code. The Code is available from the Dean of Students Office or online at: [http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-407](http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-407).

Faculty may ask students to produce identification at examinations and may require students to demonstrate that graded assignments completed outside of class are their own work.

**Course Credit Workload.** This 3-credit graduate course requires a minimum of 160 hours of out-of-class (practical experience) within an agency setting over a 15 week semester, and additional time needed to complete periodic progress reports and a cumulative final report.

**Special Needs.** If you have a documented disability and require accommodation in this course, contact Disability Services, Fretwell 230, phone: 687 4355 voice/TDD) the first week of the semester. Information about available services may be found at [http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-501](http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-501). Accommodations for learning will be arranged by that office and communicated to the Instructor. If you speak English as a second language, please inform the instructor.

**Diversity Statement.** UNC Charlotte strives to create an academic climate in which the dignity of all individuals is respected and maintained. Therefore, we celebrate diversity that includes, but is not limited to ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

All students are required to abide by the UNC Charlotte Sexual Harassment Policy ([http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-502](http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-502)) and the policy on Responsible Use of University Computing and Electronic Communication Resources ([http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-307](http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-307)). Sexual harassment, as defined in the UNC Charlotte Sexual Harassment Policy, is prohibited, even when carried out through computers or other electronic communications systems, including course-based chat rooms or message boards.

**Religious Accommodation.** It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious observances on which they will be absent by submitting a Request for Religious Accommodation Form to their instructor prior to the census date for enrollment for a given semester [http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-409](http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-409). The census date for each
semester (typically the tenth day of instruction) can be found in UNC Charlotte’s Academic Calendar (http://registrar.uncc.edu/calendars/calendar.htm).

**CHHS Field Placements.** The student is responsible for complying with requirements in affiliation agreements affecting student in clinical setting experiences.

If there is a disaster (i.e., fire, bomb threat) or any event at an agency that results in a student being unable to engage in the clinical educational responsibilities, please report the disaster or event to Michael Thompson, methomp1@uncc.edu, 704-687-8980.