



Office of Academic and Career Services

Employer Internship Guidelines

Introduction:

The field internship is intended to provide students, majoring in environmental health, with an opportunity to use the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom in an actual work setting. It is intended to be both practical and educational.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this internship, students should be able to:

- ☐ Apply the theoretical concepts of the classroom to the realities of the field;
- ☐ Communicate with, and work with, the public and other health professionals;
- ☐ Identify environmental public health problems, gather and interpret data, and propose alternative solutions with an understanding of the health, economic, social, legal, and political implications of each alternative;
- ☐ Observe and evaluate conditions and situations likely to have an adverse effect on human health and well-being;
- ☐ Relate the role of environmental health to other public health and environmental protection programs, and to community values, demands and priorities; and,
- ☐ Understand, and be able to describe, the legal and political processes, including, but not limited to, the role of the county commissioners, local and state boards of health, writing rules and regulations, enforcement techniques and the basic rights of citizens.

Logistics:

1. Duration: The internship experience is a minimum 400-hour commitment in which a student will work with an agency for the purpose of being trained through observations and instruction, in the conduct of environmental health programs in the community. The internship may be taken any academic quarter. The student enrolls in ENVH 482 during his/her internship experience as a way of tracking and demonstrating fulfillment of this program requirement.

2. Process: Organizations may hire interns independently or work with the DEOHS Career Services Manager to interview and offer internships to students. DEOHS can work with your organization to help develop and publish job descriptions, collect resumes, coordinate interviews, and communicate with students.

2. Paid vs. Unpaid Internships: The Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences strongly encourages employers to pay their interns for three primary reasons. First, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has set forth a legal framework compelling for-profit employers to provide minimum wage and overtime provisions to interns except in very rare cases. Second, equitable access to internships and their myriad benefits requires that paid internships be available for students who cannot afford to engage in uncompensated internships. Third, wages provide compensation for the effort put forth in an internship itself, whereas academic credit provides compensation for the completion of assignments demonstrating the learning that takes place in an internship.



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Guidelines and Responsibilities

These guidelines are intended to aid interns and supervisors in structuring the 400-hour internship experience. A successful experience depends on clear expectations and objectives for both interns and supervisors.

EXPECTATIONS OF SUPERVISORS AND HOST ORGANIZATION

The supervisor should guide the student to an understanding of the organization and its environment. Through this involvement, the supervisor will also gain a better understanding of the student's total internship activities, and a greater awareness of what the student is involved with at any time. The successful internship should meet three principal criteria:

- 1) The host organization and the internship supervisor(s) are strongly committed to enriching the intern's exposure to environmental health practice within the organization. This can be realized in several ways:
 - a. informal, but regular "mentoring" by the supervisor and other members of the immediate team;
 - b. opportunities to develop problem solving skills, learn to work as part of a team and gain an understanding of organizational dynamics;
 - c. exposure to field equipment, data collection, and data interpretation;
 - d. structured opportunities for the intern to present the results of his or her work;
 - e. other appropriate means of achieving the same basic end.
- 2) The intern is involved directly in environmental health-related projects which are:
 - a. directly relevant to the important work of the organization;
 - b. likely to produce results that will be visible to key organizational decision makers;intellectually demanding and thus bring out the best in the intern; integrative, calling upon students to synthesize and apply the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to environmental health practice, under controlled circumstances.
- 3) The internship supervisor should commit to providing the following:
 - a. Work with student to establish a scope of work plan for the internship no later than one week into the internship.
 - b. Meet with student regularly to discuss their progress on the work plan and agreed internship objectives.
 - c. Evaluate the experience at the conclusion of the internship.

EXPECTATIONS OF DEOHS

The University establishes relationships with internship sites that agree to meet the program requirements for awarding academic credit. When a student independently locates an internship, the ENVH 482 instructor must review and approve the internship plan prior to the beginning of the internship. The individual responsible for supervising the academic portion of the internship is the internship coordinator.



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The Internship Coordinator ensures the success of the internship program through:

1. Making and maintaining industry connections for possible internships.
2. Negotiating internship agreements and monitoring the university's compliance (if applicable).
3. Provide field supervisor with university's expectations and student evaluation criteria.
4. Request and review field supervisor's evaluation of student intern.
5. Assign credit for the course based on specific criteria.
6. Send letters of appreciation to the site internship supervisor and other professionals at the organization, as deemed appropriate by the internship coordinator.