PUBLIC HEALTH INTERNSHIP

All MPH students are required to complete an internship with a public health or related agency. While every internship involves different goals and activities, all of them provide numerous opportunities for students to enrich and expand on one or more of the MPH core competencies and one or more of their concentration-specific competencies. The internship is usually completed in the student’s final term in the program, although it may be started in the third semester with permission of the Faculty Advisor. Within each internship experience, students must complete a special project that demonstrates their ability to define an issue, apply methods appropriate to their concentration, and produce results. The special project serves as the basis for a final oral and written report. These final activities of the MPH program are intended to encourage students to understand their projects in the larger context of public health as a cross-disciplinary field and in relation to the competencies expected of all MPH graduates. Student presentations are scheduled on one or two Public Health Days near the end of fall, spring and summer semesters. The internship and the written and oral presentations involve registration in different courses, described below.

Internship: An internship consists of 5-8 credits, or 240–384 contact hours. The internship must be conducted in a public health or related setting, and it may include many projects and other activities selected to strengthen the competence of the individual student. Students register for PHC 6946 for the internship course (see the following page for the syllabus) after all or most required classroom-based coursework is completed. During the semester before the internship, students are expected to arrange for an internship site and preceptor, prepare a proposal for the internship and special project, and arrange for approval by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB), as appropriate. IRB approval may take several weeks, and may involve revisions to procedures or instruments. Preparation for the internship MUST begin as early as possible, but no later than the semester before the internship. MPH program staff will assist this process by offering a series of professional development presentations and individual consultations.

Special Project: During the internship experience, each student is required to complete a special project, which serves as the basis of a written report and an oral presentation. The special project may be one of several activities undertaken during an internship. However, it should be a substantial project which involves identification of a question/problem/issue, review of relevant literature, application of appropriate public health methods, description of results, discussion, and identification of strengths and weaknesses. If a student is part of a team working on a large project, the student’s special project is the piece for which s/he is responsible. The content of special project reports is described in the syllabus for PHC 6601 Seminar in Contemporary Public Health Issues (see the following section of the Handbook for the syllabus). A Public Health Day is scheduled every semester (fall, spring, and summer) for special project presentations.

Students who enter the MPH Program with limited experience often choose to enroll in a practicum or work with a faculty member on his or her research, usually during the summer between the two MPH years. In these situations and with approval of the faculty advisor, students may enroll in PHC 6917 Supervised Research Project or PHC 6945 Public Health Practicum. These courses may be used to meet elective requirements in a concentration; however, a practicum or a supervised research project cannot substitute for the internship requirement.