Overview

The Experience

All Community Health Education majors must complete an internship during the last semester of the senior year. CHE interns are placed throughout the US and abroad to work hand in hand with a variety of populations and a variety of settings. The 12-credit internship is a culminating experience that provides a student with the opportunity to:

- Observe a professional health educator in practice
- Complete a health education project that is mutually beneficial to the student and the organization
- Synthesize knowledge and skills into health education practice.
- Practice health education competencies and prepare for employment in various community settings.

Networking. When we hear the word 'networking' many people think of 'doing lunch', selling ourselves, and handing out business cards. If we changed the word to 'Connecting' we might feel better about it. Most people really enjoy being nice and helping one another when they can. So, if you ask someone for help or information, most people will gladly provide it. Your search begins with the people you know! Never underestimate the knowledge and influence. Don't forget -- you are not asking for a job! You are seeking information, a lead, a contact, or a referral. Put as much work as you would when doing research project.

Placement Process

Internships in the undergraduate program primarily occur in a spring semester of the senior year. Students should begin planning for the internship once they are accepted into the professional program, which is generally the fall semester of their junior year in the program. The following suggested timeline could help in the planning process.

Junior Year, Fall Semester

Personal planning. In order to get a better sense of where you would like to complete your internship, you may need to spend some time thinking and writing about who you are, what moves you, what your goals are and where you see yourself in the near future. In your planning process, answer the following questions and add any additional thoughts or questions of your own as you see fit.

1. What is your understanding of Public Health as a field of practice?
2. Provide your definitions of Public Health, Community Health Education, and Health Promotion.
3. What Health Education Competencies do you see as your strength? In which
areas do you feel you need additional effort?
4. What are your long term career goals? What are your shorter-term one year and five year career goals?
5. What issues (if any) move you? What are you passionate about?
6. What populations (if any) interest you?
7. Take a few paragraphs to summarize your professional and/or educational experiences especially as they relate to your current and future goals.
8. How do you see the internship experience fitting into your plan for personal and professional growth?

Junior Year, Spring Semester

Advising and pre-registration. During your spring semester advising session, register for HEA 426: Internship Planning course. Share your personal plan with your faculty advisor, course instructors, personal mentors, or even your peers to get feedback. Use this time to practice introducing yourself and skills to others (as if preparing for an interview) and to identify potential sites or preceptors for further investigation.

Interests. Based on your personal plan, make a list of the type of agencies or organizations you would like to work for as a professional health educator. Search a variety of places for internship announcements: web, professional organizations, career services, faculty, your peers, and community agencies. You can also look in the phone book in the front section of "Community Agencies" for potentials.

Resume and cover letter. Refine your resume (tailor your objective for an internship/service learning experience) and draft a cover letter. In the HEA 426 course you will use both for your informational interviews or applications, but right now you will need your resume for networking. UNCG's Career Services Center can assist with developing the resume and cover letter, conducts mock interviews, and can help with your internship search.

Senior Year, Fall Semester

Students will complete HEA 426: Internship Planning the fall semester of their senior year. This course is designed to prepare students for the culminating internship experience and encourages the student to demonstrate initiative in acquiring experiences and skills related to his/her individual professional needs in preparation for a career as a health education practitioner. By the end of the semester, the students will better understand the role of a student intern, identified a quality site and preceptor, and identify an appropriate internship project.
Placements

A student is placed in community health agencies based on the student's interests and experience, as well as demonstrated commitment to student learning by the community organization. Considerations for internship placements are also based on the resources available from the Department to support the supervision of fieldwork experiences, such as internships outside a 60-mile range from the campus.

Sample Locations by Health Topic or Issue

- Children's Health: Millis Center - High Point Regional Hospital
- Adolescent Pregnancy: Guilford Coalition on Adolescent Pregnancy
- Minority Health Issues: Sickle Cell Disease Association of the Piedmont
- Wellness & Health Promotion: Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center
- Tobacco Use: Step Up NC
- Substance Abuse: Alcohol & Drug Services
- Responsible Sexual Behavior: Family Life Council Wise Guys
- Mental Health: Mental Health Association in Greensboro
- Injury and Violence: NC DOI Safe Kids Program
- Environmental Quality: NC Division of Environmental Health

Sample Locations by Settings

- Community Health: Family Service of the Piedmont
- College & University: UNCG Student Health- Wellness Center
- Health Care & Medical: Moses Cone Health System- Regional Cancer Center
- Public Health: Forsyth County Department of Public Health
- School Health: Communities in School
- Worksite Health: Duke's LIVE FOR LIFE
- Research Setting: Tanglewood Research

Securing the CHE Internship

Students generally find their internships with the aid of the faculty field coordinator and academic advisor the semester prior to the internship with most internship placements primarily in the spring semesters. For internship planning, students have access to Organizational Profiles from sites that can provide a strong experience. Once a student as decided on a site, the faculty coordinator contacts the potential preceptor to finalize the placement and complete University Instructional Agreement.
REQUIREMENTS

The Health Education Internship requires the student to:
• complete a minimum of 400 hours with the internship organization;
• develop a work plan that identifies measurable and realistic objectives for his/her internship experience and complete a major health education project for the internship organization;
• practice a variety of health education competencies;
• complete a variety of assignments, reports and presentations regarding the internship experience, professional development issues, and other health education issues;
• attend seminars/meetings with assignments and discussions or complete distance learning activities, upon approval.
GUIDELINES

It is expected that the student will participate in a range of health education experiences. The student is encouraged to become involved in health education interventions utilize health education methods and strategies such as community assessment, social marketing, programmed instruction, and group facilitation. Specific learning objectives for each student will be developed jointly between the student, the preceptor, and faculty coordinator. Examples of the specific service learning responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- program planning, implementation and evaluation of community health education interventions
- planning and coordination of special events community health assessments (including assessments of assets, needs and resources)
- health education resource and material development (i.e., brochures, displays, web pages, newsletters)
- development of health communication interventions (i.e., mass media campaigns, PSAs)
- training development and facilitation (i.e., in-service trainings, staff trainings)
- patient education and one-on-one counseling on various health topics in an effort to assist consumers in successful lifestyle/behavior change
- assist in administration of health screenings and health risk assessments
- development and facilitation school-based lesson plans
- coordination of health education services

Professional Liability

All students who are enrolled in PHE courses that include field experiences are strongly encouraged to purchase professional liability insurance prior to starting any internship, practicum, or student teaching experience. The professional liability insurance should be in effect for each course that requires a field experience, as well as during student teaching. In instances where a student causes damage or injury during the field experience or student teaching, neither the University nor the State of North Carolina will be responsible for providing legal defense for the student, or for paying for any judgment that may be entered against the student. If students purchase the professional liability through UNCG the cost is currently $20.00 and is due the 1st week of December prior to the internship placement in the spring semester.

Supervision

Supervision of the internship is typically provided by a health educator who is academically prepared in community or school health education. In absence of an academically prepared health educator, a preceptor may be assigned. Assigned preceptors should be or have at least 3-5 years professional experience in the field as a
practitioner and supervisory skills. The preceptor insures the intern is completes an appropriate orientation and training; identifies the internship assignments, provides continuous feedback regarding the intern's performance, and acts as a professional mentor.

**Communication**

The faculty coordinator will conduct site visits as needed during the semester to (1) assess student progress, (2) observe the student implementing a program, and/or (3) provide guidance, as appropriate. Telephone or e-mail contacts will also be utilized to monitor the internship experience. The student will contact the preceptor and faculty coordinator with any questions or concerns at any time during the internship. The student, preceptor and faculty coordinator will have continued communication throughout the internship in regard to the student's progress or any areas of success or concern. Additional information and guidance will be provided during the semester related to student expectations and assignments for the Health Education Internship. Organization supervisors and students with questions or comments are encouraged to contact the faculty coordinator.
DEFINITIONS

Faculty Coordinator
The faculty member in the Department of Public Health Education who is responsible for coordinating and managing the internship experience. This is typically the course instructor for HEA 428: Community Health Education Internship.

Intern
A student from the Department of Public Health Education who has completed all the required departmental courses and is undergoing supervised fieldwork training in community health education.

Internship
An experience designed to provide a student with opportunities to:
• become more knowledgeable regarding public health and health education issues;
• observe a professional health educator or health education practice;
• function as a pre-service health educator; and
• make a valuable contribution to the internship site through the completion of a major health education project or task.

Internship Site
The agency, organization, community group, coalition, institution or university setting that is sponsoring the student’s internship experience. The agency has been approved by the University as an appropriate site for providing fieldwork experiences to undergraduate community health education majors.

Preceptor
The staff person who will supervise the student at the internship placement site. This person is typically the health educator (or person assigned) in the organization who is responsible for the day-to-day management of student interns. Preceptors should be academically prepare
RESPONSIBILITIES

Intern's Responsibilities

Role of a Health Education Intern
A successful internship involves the concerted efforts of the student intern, preceptor and faculty coordinator. There are general expectations of interns that require careful planning and consideration prior to accepting an internship position. Following the general guidelines below will contribute to the success of the internship experience.

Internship Hours
Undergraduate interns must (1) complete a minimum of 400 hours of organization contact at the latest of one week before the end of the spring semester, (2) attend all seminar meetings, and (3) complete all assignments. A student placed in internship sites beyond a 60-mile range from campus and who are not able to attend weekly seminar meetings will be required to complete additional internship hours and assignments (to be determined on an individual basis).

Learning Goals & Work Plan
Interns will develop a set of learning goals in conjunction with his/her preceptor according to his/her own needs and resources and that of the organization. A final draft must be submitted in writing to the faculty coordinator within the first two weeks of the internship.

Intern's Schedule
The intern should prioritize her/his personal schedule to meet the scheduling needs of the organization. If the intern has personal commitments that may conflict with the organization's schedule and needs, the student should discuss these conflicts as soon as possible. The intern should understand that he/she may have to change his/her personal commitments if the organization needs (1) more than part-time, weekly attendance, (2) a commitment for more than 15 weeks, or (3) more than 400 internship hours. These special conditions should be discussed prior to agreeing to the internship placement. The intern is required to contact the preceptor and faculty coordinator if the student is absent from scheduled internship hours. The intern is required to make up time missed due to illness, inclement weather, and/or religious holidays that are not honored by the organization.

Policies
The student is expected to honor the organization's policies, schedules and procedures and must behave in a professional manner at all times. If required, a student must carry his/her own professional liability insurance during the internship. Some agencies cover student interns under organization policies or make available insurance for a minimal charge. The student should check with the organization for clarification regarding liability issues (e.g., transporting clients).
Communication
The student should communicate with the faculty coordinator concerning any problems that may arise during the internship. Adjustments cannot be made unless both the faculty coordinator and preceptor are aware that changes need to be made.

Preceptor & Internship Site Responsibilities

The internship site and assigned preceptor has the following responsibilities to the student and University:

• Provide a reasonable work area and support to enable the intern to accomplish planned activities and assigned projects.
• Orient the student to the organization, staff and community. Acquaint the student with the organization's mission, structure, polices, procedures and services.
• Complete the Instructional Agreement form within two weeks of the student beginning the Internship experience and mail to the faculty coordinator.
• The preceptor and student should discuss and arrange an internship schedule that meets the needs of the organization. The organization should notify the student of any special scheduling needs prior to the start of the internship so that the student can make arrangements. Some special scheduling needs may include needing a student to work (1) more than part-time, weekly attendance, (2) more than 15 weeks, or (3) more than 400 internship hours.
• Meet with and assist the student in developing a set of learning goals in accordance with the student's needs and resources, and those of the organization. This must be submitted to the faculty coordinator within the first two weeks of the internship.
• Provide adequate supervision and access to necessary information and resources required to enable the intern to plan and carry out assigned activities.
• Meet with the intern at least weekly to (1) answer questions the intern might have, (2) deal with problems, (3) revise work schedule, if necessary, and (4) provide verbal feedback on the intern's performance and development.
• Notify the faculty coordinator immediately concerning any problems with the intern's performance.
• Provide written confirmation of intern's completion of hours on the Internship Daily Time Log at least weekly.
• Allow the student release from the internship to attend seminar meetings at the University and for the Senior Exhibit Day, if necessary.
• Meet with the faculty coordinator during a site visit and confer by telephone or e-mail periodically during the internship.
• Complete the midterm evaluation of the intern, providing feedback to the intern on the content of the evaluation and the assessment of strengths and weaknesses. Assure that the intern develops activities to strengthen weak areas.
• Complete final evaluation of the intern with a recommendation of an academic letter grade.
• Before completion of the internship, inform the intern whether the preceptor is able and willing to act as a professional reference