



## Community Health Education Undergraduate Internship Handbook

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## Introduction to the Internship Experience

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The Community Health Education internship is a culminating experience that provides students 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, and synthesize knowledge and skills into health education practice. In addition, the experience allows a student to practice his/her health education competencies and prepare for employment in various community settings. The internship bears 12-hours of academic credit and is required of all undergraduate community health education majors. It is completed during the spring semester of the senior year.

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.

### **Synopsis of requirements:**

The Community Health Education Internship course requires the student to:

1. Complete a minimum of 400 hours with the internship organization by the last day of classes for the enrolled semester.
2. Develop a project plan incorporating measurable and realistic objectives for the internship experience and complete a major health education project for the internship organization;
3. Practice a variety of health education competencies as outlined in the [Areas of Responsibility](#) for Health Education Specialists;
4. Complete a selection of assignments, reports and presentations regarding the internship experience; and
5. Participate in seminars/synchronous meetings with assignments and discussions regarding professional competency development, and other health education-related issues.

## Internship Definitions

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**Internship:** An experience designed to provide a student with opportunities to:

1. Become more knowledgeable regarding public health and health education issues;
2. Observe a health education specialist or health education practice;
3. Function as a pre-service health educator; and
4. Make a valuable contribution to the internship site through the completion of a major health education project or task

**Internship 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 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 prepared in community health education or have at least 3-5 years professional experience in the field as a practitioner or serving in a public health education supervisory role.

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## Undergraduate Internship Process

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Internships in the undergraduate program occur in the spring semester. Students will complete HEA 426: Internship Planning during the fall semester of their senior year. This course is designed to prepare students for the culminating internship experience in the community health education professional program. The course 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 specialist. By the end of the semester, the students will have identified a quality site, preceptor, and an appropriate internship project.

Students, however, 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 can help in the planning process:

#	Key Steps	Timeline
1	Identify interests, and personal/professional goals	During JR yr.
2	Make list of agencies that align with interests and goals	Spring/Summer, JR yr.
3	Create/update resume and cover letter	August-September, SR yr.
4	Conduct informational interviews with sites/preceptors	August-September, SR yr.
5	Apply to/select an internship site	Mid-Fall semester, SR yr.
6	Complete forms to secure internship (project plan)	End of October, SR yr.
7	Prepare Internship Proposal	Early November, SR yr.
8	Get site approved by internship coordinator	Early November, SR yr.
9	Complete internship and seminar activities	Spring semester, SR yr.
10	Prepare internship reports and evaluations	Spring semester, SR yr.

UNCG's Career Services can also assist with early preparation through resources on developing a resume and cover letter, interviewing skills, and how to conduct an internship search.

### Guidelines for Internship Projects

The Internship has been designed to be mutually beneficial. Together the preceptor and intern will identify a project(s) that will benefit the internship site, which will serve to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real world experience. The project should provide opportunities for the student to demonstrate his/her ability to function as a public health educator, and project objectives should be consistent with the seven Areas of Responsibility for the entry-level health educator.

It is understood that the intern may need to assist with the routine administrative tasks that keep the office functioning; however, it is expected that students will spend the majority of their day working on internship tasks and projects with a minimal amount of 'grunt work'.

Further, the internship should enable the student to 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 project 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 interventions, screenings and risk assessments
- development and facilitation of school-based lesson plans
- coordination of health education services for a community organization

Examples of student projects previously completed by our graduates are listed below.

#### **I. Assess Individual and Community Needs for Health Education**

- Assessment of community leaders regarding their perceptions of health services
- Research and data collection for minority health community diagnosis

#### **II. Plan Health Education Strategies, Interventions, and Programs**

- Developing mass marketing materials (e.g., billboards, public service announcements, newspaper and radio advertisements)
- Curriculum development for teenage pregnancy prevention program

#### **III. Implement Health Education Strategies, Interventions, and Programs**

- Puppet shows on domestic violence for elementary schools
- Peer mentoring program for African American youth
- Alcohol use and abuse awareness program for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students

#### **IV. Conduct Evaluation and Research Related to Health Education**

- Evaluation survey development for cardiac health program
- Evaluation of senior health services in Guilford County

## **V. Administer Health Education Strategies, Interventions, and Programs Speaker's**

- Bureau on infant mortality
- Establishing county-wide teen advisory council

## **VI. Serve as a Health Education Resource Person**

- HIV/AIDS awareness outreach to high-risk neighborhoods
- Resource manual for immigrant populations in Guilford County
- Domestic violence resource & referral guide for health care providers

## **VII. Communicate and Advocate for Health and Health Education**

- Provision of community health fairs
- Development of an organization newsletter for staff and consumers

## **VIII. Ethics and Professionalism (Effective Spring 2022)**

## **Identifying a Quality Site**

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The process of finding an appropriate location for an internship begins when you enter the program. Talk with faculty and other personal contacts to begin identifying possible opportunities. Students find this to be the most difficult phase in the process: how to decide where to go and commit to a site. Based on your personal goals, make a list of the type of agencies or organizations you would like to work for as a health education specialist. Search a variety of places for internship announcements: web, professional organizations, faculty, your peers, and community agencies. You can also look in the phone book in the front section of "Community Agencies" for potentials. Agencies may go through a 'hiring' process whereby they request student resumes, interview interested students and select the most appropriate candidate.

Narrow down your potential sites to 3-5 possible placement sites and gather contact information. Contact the agencies to inquire about internship possibilities with a professionally prepared health educator or a supervisor with experience in health education.

Once you have identified a potential agency, you should initiate contact with the internship coordinator/advisor to discuss it. With some exceptions, you will then contact the agency directly. If you are interested in a working on a project that relates to a faculty's research activities, that faculty member will also need to agree to serve as an additional internship advisor. The following are things to consider in locating a good quality site:

- Is there a qualified preceptor (see below for specifics)?
- Does the preceptor have the time to devote to "the job"?
- Are there appropriate resources at the site?
- Can you achieve your learning goals at this site?

- Are the preceptor and/or other key agency personnel open to new ideas or ways of doing things?
- Are the logistics and conditions appropriate given your personal constraints: can you get to the site, can you afford to work there, does it accommodate your schedule?

## **Identifying a Qualified Preceptor**

The qualities of the preceptor, in many respects, are more important than the qualities of the agency. The preceptor is a person who knows health education and understands the complex work of health educators, is willing and able to put in the necessary time and is willing to work in partnership with the university as a teacher. The preceptor ensures the intern completes an appropriate orientation and training, identifies the internship assignments, provides continuous feedback regarding the intern's performance, and acts as a professional mentor.

### ***Academic Background:***

Preceptors should be academically prepared as a health educator, which means s/he has an undergraduate or graduate degree in health education (MPH, Med, DrPH, PhD). Although we could approve people without this educational background as preceptors, we will do so on a case-by-case basis. Those who do not have a graduate degree in health education will need to indicate that the combination of their educational and employment background ensures they are qualified to supervise a health education internship (at least 3-5 years professional experience in the field as a practitioner and supervisory skills).

### ***Internship Guidance:***

- Is willing, and has time to be, a mentor.
- Discuss and arrange an internship schedule that meets the needs of the organization.
- Notifies the intern 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.
- Provide adequate supervision and access to necessary information and resources required to enable the intern to plan and carry out assigned activities.
- Allow the student release from the internship to attend conference calls with the course instructor, if necessary.
- Provides the student the opportunity to meet those within or outside the agency who could be helpful contacts for future employment.
- Before completion of the internship, inform the intern whether the preceptor is able and willing to act as a professional reference



### ***Supervision & Guidance:***

- Is willing to give a constructive, descriptive evaluation of the intern's work.
- Agrees to: meet with the student to help develop/approve the internship project plan; provide the resources called for in the program plan; oversee the duties/work and be available for counsel and advise; meet with the student at least once a week; meet with the internship coordinator for a mid-course conference; and evaluate the student's performance.
- Speaks directly to the student if there are problems. If the preceptor is unsure how to proceed or deal with an issue, we recommend contacting the internship coordinator/advisor directly.
- Gives the student credit and recognition for his/her own work.
- Notify the internship coordinator immediately concerning any problems with the intern's performance.

### ***Agency Guidance:***

- Orient the student to the organization, staff and community. Acquaint the student with the organization's mission, structure, policies, procedures and services.
- Provide a reasonable work area and support to enable the intern to accomplish planned activities and assigned projects.
- Gives the student the opportunity to observe other areas of the agency or other important work the agency is engage in.
- Helps the student understand his/her job in relationship to other jobs/programs in the agency.
- Explains how decisions are made.
- Gives the intern opportunities to attend meetings as appropriate (staff, committee, community, policy, legislative).
- Gives the intern opportunities to attend professional seminars, workshops or other learning opportunities available to the agency staff.
- Gives the student the opportunity to meet the administration or other key members of the management or directing team.

## **Guidelines for Student/Organization Interviews**

The goal of the student/organization interviews is to determine the desirability and appropriateness of the prospective internship site. In most instances, this interview will provide an introduction of the student to the potential preceptor and the placement site.

### ***Cover Letter and Résumé***

Refine your resume (tailor your objective for an internship/service learning experience) and draft a cover letter. In the HEA 426 course, each student is to prepare a written letter of introduction or résumé that includes such areas as:

- Address & Contact Information
- Relevant Courses
- Community Health Education Experiences

- Related Work Experiences
- Career Goals
- Expectations of Internship Experience

You will use both for networking, as well as for your informational interviews or applications.

### ***Informational Interview Recommendations***

Each intern should prepare questions to help guide the interview. These questions would help the student understand the organization and the specific internship responsibilities. The intern should also be prepared to answer the interviewer's questions related to the internship expectations. It is anticipated that in the interview, the potential preceptor would provide a brief introduction to the organization and appropriate staff members, discuss the internship expectations, address the student's questions, and discuss any other appropriate areas.

### ***Sample Questions Interview Questions For Students:***

- What are the most important factors looked at when accepting an intern?
- What skills are considered most useful for success during the internship?
- What kind of experience will I gain from this internship that will further my career goals as a health educator?
- What is a typical day for you? For an intern?

Initial discussions related to work hours, starting date, specific responsibilities and special project ideas could begin in the interview. Open the discussion with the following question: "What are some policies that I should be aware of (e.g., confidentiality, work hours, dress code)?" These areas will be confirmed and recorded on Project Plan once an internship placement is confirmed. A follow-up meeting between the student and preceptor may be necessary to complete the internship placement and necessary forms.

## **Forms to Secure the Internship**

Once you decide which site you are interested in, fill out any applications that may be necessary for the placements. Also send 'thank you' letters to the other sites that provided you assistance and information.

We try our best in the Department to make the internship placement as easy and 'form-free' as possible; however, in order to secure the internship, there are a few steps to take and forms are needed. Once a student identifies an internship site, contact information (phone, mailing) should be sent to the internship coordinator.

***Internship Project Plan:*** The internship project plan is completed prior to the internship to provide an outline of the intern's goals, project objectives, responsibilities, and schedule expectations, etc. It is anticipated that the project plan may change based on internship

resources and schedules (e.g., a grant ends, a change in focus due to community needs, another project is identified, etc.). The preceptor and student will need to complete the initial project plan and submit by the recommended deadline of November 5th for review. Deadlines may vary by course instructor.

***Internship Agreement Form:*** The School of Health & Human Sciences recommends an Instructional Agreement for experiential learning experiences within community agencies. If you need more information about whether a prospective agency has an Instructional Agreement with UNCG, please ask the internship coordinator. If there are additional requirements for a prospective agency, please forward those requirements to the internship coordinator as soon as possible, to facilitate timely processing of all documents.

***Internship Approval:*** Once the student, preceptor, and internship coordinator approve the project plan, the placement is secured. The preceptor and student will receive a confirmation email from the internship coordinator with a signed copy of the internship verification form attached.

The following internship forms are typically available for the student to send to the preceptor prior to placement.

- Internship Project Plan
- Internship Timesheets
- Preceptor Internship Evaluations: Midpoint and Final Evaluation

The following internship course (HEA 428) requirements are also available for the faculty coordinator to send to the preceptor once the placement has been approved.

- Internship Reports: Final Report
- Schedule of Internship course topics and assignment schedule (weekly journals, and group discussions)

## Professional Behavior Expectations

All public health majors seeking a concentration in community health education are considered by department standards to be in a professional preparation program. This means that unlike many UNCG students, you are being trained to have the specific skills and knowledge for future employment as an entry-level health education specialist. This "hitting the ground running" ability emerges from what you have learned, your personal and professional experiences, the types of skills you can competently apply, and the process of critical-thinking you have practiced in your undergraduate program.

Because you are representing our department, our field, and yourself (which includes your classmates as prospective employees and future employers), it is expected that you act in a professional manner at all times. This does NOT mean being formal at all times, but it does mean being professionally appropriate.

Demonstrate exemplary professional, courteous, scholarly and conscientious behavior as dictated by the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy and Student Code of Ethics, the Code of Ethics for the Health Education Profession, and laws of North Carolina when representing the department as an intern, volunteer or agent of the university. Problematic behaviors that warrant faculty intervention include chronic tardiness, failure to assume responsibility for one's actions, lack of dependability, inappropriate or insensitive social interactions, and difficulty accepting constructive feedback.

When circumstances are such that withdrawal from an internship is necessary, whether because of illness, other personal reasons, or upon the written request of the internship preceptor or university faculty field coordinator, university policy and procedures regarding withdrawal from a course shall be applicable.

Interns are reminded that involuntary withdrawal is not in their best interest. Interns who are asked to leave an internship may have difficulties being accepted for a second placement. Should problems or concerns arise during the internship, the intern should inform the faculty coordinator and should seek ways to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

## **Internship Policies**

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### ***UNCG Academic Integrity Policy***

Academic integrity is fundamental to a successful academic community. UNCG is a member of the Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) and subscribes to the "Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity" (honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility) identified by the center. Deceit and misrepresentations are incompatible with the fundamental activity of this academic institution and should not be tolerated. A violation of academic integrity is an act harmful to all other students, faculty, and ultimately, the university. You may access all of the following policies at: <http://sa.uncg.edu/dean/academic-integrity/>

### ***Student Code of Conduct***

The student code of conduct is one of three formal processes governing student conduct at UNCG. The student code of conduct addresses general student conduct. The university has five principal values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. When members of the community fail to observe these principles, the code is used to affirm these values through adjudication of allegations involving violations of these values through conduct in the University community.

### ***Sexual Harassment***

Although this policy applies to you as a student here at UNCG, the policy does not apply to internship sites. Thus, if you are experiencing sexual harassment at your internship site this policy does not protect you. If you believe you are experiencing sexual harassment at

your internship site we encourage you to contact the internship coordinator to discuss the department's plan to assist you.

### ***Sexual Orientation Policy***

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro regards discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation to be inconsistent with its goal of providing an atmosphere in which students, faculty and staff may learn, work and live. UNCG values the benefits of cultural diversity and pledges to students, prospective students, faculty, staff and the public that it will defend pluralism in the academic community and welcomes all men and women of good will without regard to sexual orientation.

If you believe you have been treated unfairly on the basis of sexual orientation please contact your internship coordinator.

### ***Institutional Review Board (IRB)***

Students must confer with their internship coordinator/advisor to check whether their internship activities will require IRB approval. Resolving this issue early in the project planning process is the student's (with faculty support) responsibility. For more information about the IRB at UNCG go to: <http://integrity.uncg.edu/institutional-review-board/>.

### ***Health Insurance***

Each intern must have health insurance. Interns may elect to participate in the UNCG sponsored group insurance policy, or be insured with his/her parents or spouse.

### ***Liability Insurance***

Each intern must have Professional Liability Insurance Coverage. As of Spring 2017, all Professional Liability Insurance is covered in tuition and fees.

### ***Memorandum of Understanding/Agreements***

If a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or agreement is required with UNC Greensboro prior to the start of the internship students must inform the course instructor prior to November 1. The approval process of agreements may take up to four weeks due to the legal review process. If you have a prior MOU/agreement that has expired, the renewal process should be 2 weeks. If an MOU/Agreement is not required, a signature of the varication form provided in the course will suffice to secure the internship.

### ***Criminal Background Check***

Interns do not have to conduct a Criminal Background Check unless required by the placement site. If required, interns are financially responsible for obtaining this prior to their start date. Internship sites may not cover these expenses.

### ***Drug Screening***

Interns do not have to conduct a drug screen test unless required by the placement site. If required, interns are responsible for obtaining this prior to their start date. Please ensure

that you understand which level drug screening is required by your agency, as failure to obtain the appropriate level screening may delay your start date.

### ***Official Internship Start Date***

The first week of school in the spring semester, according to the University Calendar.

### ***Internship Hours***

Undergraduate interns must complete a minimum of 400 hours of organization contact—at the latest—by one week before the end of the spring semester. No credit given or reduction of internship hours will be given for previous work or volunteer experiences. During the supervised internship experience (15 weeks), the workweek is a minimum of 27 hours. Interns are expected to utilize evenings and weekends to study or complete seminar assignments and projects. Internship course assignments do not count as a part of the 400-hour site requirement and should not be completed at the internship site.

### ***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 internship 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.

### ***Holidays and inclement weather***

Interns will follow the schedule established for them by the respective site (i.e., the University Calendar no longer applies). If the site is closed due to inclement weather, the intern will need to make up those contact hours.

### ***Communication***

If feasible, the internship 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 internship coordinator with any questions or concerns at any time during the internship. Adjustments cannot be made unless both the internship coordinator and preceptor are aware that changes need to be made. The student, preceptor and internship 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 course: HEA 428.

### ***Housing and travel***

Interns are responsible for their own living arrangements and costs. Further, each intern must have reliable transportation. Public transportation has inherent limitations; therefore, it is recommended that each intern have a car and carry sufficient automobile insurance coverage for collision and liability. Transportation costs may vary depending on intern's home location and their supervised internship site.

## **APPENDIX A: Frequently Asked Questions**

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### ***Internship Eligibility***

*"When can I register for the internship?"*

Student must meet all of the following eligibility requirements set by the Department in order to register for the Internship Course (HEA 428):

- Complete all required health education courses (including elective HEA courses).
- Have a grade of "C" or better in all required Health Education Courses (including electives).
- An overall minimum 2.5 GPA

### ***Internship Requirements***

*"Why are students required to complete a 400-hour internship? Does this mean that I will have to be at the internship site full-time (i.e., 40 hours a week)?"*

The internship is required by the SOPHE and the AAHE, the professional organizations that grants Program Approval for baccalaureate health education programs. SOPHE states in the Manual on Baccalaureate Health Education Program Approval: Criteria and Guidelines for Self-Study (1990):

Students must be provided an opportunity to apply in the field the knowledge and skills acquired through coursework. It is recommended that whenever possible this practicum should be full-time and should be supervised by an experienced health educator who has demonstrated competency as a practitioner and supervisor. A minimum of 320 hours of field work/practice teaching must be required.

The internship is a culminating field experience that is completed in the last semester of the student's final year. A student earns twelve credit hours for the internship, which the University equates as 12 in-class work hours and 36 out-of class work hours per week (UNCG 2000-2001 Undergraduate Bulletin, p. 15). Therefore, the student is expected to provide his/her internship site with 30-40 hours of work per week, while completing course work congruent with a 3-credit hour course. Continuous and consistent contact with the internship site is advantageous for both the student and organization because this

allows the student to observe, assist and become more acquainted with the staff, clientele, community and programs offered.

### ***Departmental Resources***

*“I have many projects that will require time on a computer and paper supplies or other materials that my internship site doesn’t have. Will UNCG purchase them for me or should I ask my preceptor to cover the cost?”*

Unless your preceptor is a faculty member in the department, the department does not pay for or provide resources/supplies you may need for your internship. The department does not provide office supplies and students will not be reimbursed by the department for supplies/resources they purchase with their own money. Students should try to have their agency provide any necessary supplies. Students are also not allowed to use departmental resources for their internship; this includes the copier, fax, telephone, computer, paper, and other office supplies. If you find that you need some assistance please contact the internship coordinator/advisor.

### ***Completing internship at site with other CHE students***

*“My friend and I are interested in doing the same thing for our internship. Can we intern at the same place?”*

In some cases, an internship site may have an internship project that is extensive enough that two interested students can work on the same project. If a project can provide sufficient independent experience for each student, then two students may work on the project. Students must get approval to do so from the internship coordinator/advisor.

### ***Reduction in Internship Hours***

*“How can I receive credit for my past and present professional work experiences in a field related to public health education? Do I still have to complete a full 400-hour internship even if I have performed some of the tasks expected of an entry-level health educator?”*

No credit or reduction of internship hours will be given for previous work or volunteer experiences.

### ***Out of State, Country or 50-Mile Range Internships***

*“Can my internship be completed outside of Guilford County, or outside of North Carolina? If so, will I be required to do something different? Will I have to come back to UNCG to attend the seminar course?”*

The student is placed in internship sites that can provide opportunities for the student to explore his/her health education interests and practice his/her skills. Considerations for internship placements are also based on the resources available from the Department to



support the management of fieldwork experiences, such as site visits, telephone calls and mail. Therefore, it is the Department's first priority to place all students with internship sites within 60 miles from campus. When choosing to identify internship sites outside of the usual internship range, the student is responsible for providing written documentation on the organization he/she is interested in based on the following:

- 1) Is the site capable of providing a health education student with a variety of experiences and exposure to quality health education practice?
- 2) Will the student be able to observe or practice the "Responsibilities of Entry-level Health Educators"?
- 3) Can the student apply these health education competencies to complete a mutually beneficial project?
- 4) Does the site agree to the terms outlined in the "UNCG Instructional Agreement"?

Students have completed internships throughout many of the 100 counties in North Carolina, as well as many states along the Eastern Seaboard; a few have traveled abroad to Australia, Scotland, and South Korea. E-mail and the Internet have eased the communication constraints and cost; therefore some internships can be in community health organizations outside of the 60-mile range from the campus. However, the student is still responsible for meeting all internship and seminar requirements.

### **Qualifications of Preceptor**

*"Does the Preceptor have to be a Health Educator? What is the possible preceptor's academic and professional experience that would allow her/him to supervise and mentor a health education intern?"*

While we encourage students to seek a preceptor that is academically trained in health education, we understand that the work we do involves collaborative efforts with other academically trained professionals. There is not a recipe for academic and professional experience that will ensure adequate supervision and mentorship; however, the preceptor must be comfortable supervising an internship that provides an opportunity to practice a variety of competencies within the areas of responsibility for the health education specialist. Familiarity with this scope of practice is important. If not, the student may need to acquire a co-preceptor who is able to verify competency development or consult, as necessary.

### **Reassignment of Intern or Removal of an Intern**

*"My internship is just not working for me or my preceptor. We have met to discuss how I can improve my performance, but I just don't feel like this is a good match. Can I go to another internship site? Will I be required to do an additional 400 hours?"*

When a problem arises during the internship, the student and preceptor should immediately meet to address the issue and identify a mutually agreed upon plan of action. If the problem persists, or there is no significant improvement (i.e., if the student does not

show signs of progress), then the preceptor and/or student should contact the faculty coordinator. The faculty coordinator will meet with the student and preceptor individually and/or jointly to identify the problem, suggest strategies for improvement, and propose an evaluation plan for monitoring progress. If the problem cannot or is not solved, then the final decision to remove the student will be made by the faculty coordinator and Department Head. Based on the situation, a determination will be made with regard to reassignment and internship hours.

The Department of Public Health Education has an academic responsibility to place a student who is competent and able to conduct him/herself in a respectful and professional manner. Interns are expected to demonstrate exemplary professional, courteous, scholarly and conscientious behavior as dictated the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy and Student Code of Ethics, the Code of Ethics for the Health Education Profession and laws of North Carolina when representing the department as an intern, volunteer or agent of the university. Problematic behaviors that warrant faculty intervention include chronic tardiness, failure to assume responsibility for one's actions, lack of dependability, inappropriate or insensitive social interactions, and difficulty accepting constructive feedback.

When circumstances are such that a withdrawal from an internship is necessary, whether because of illness, other personal reasons, or upon the written request of the internship preceptor or university faculty field coordinator, university policy and procedures regarding withdrawal from a course shall be applicable.

In addition, if the preceptor finds the student's performance is unsatisfactory or the student does not comply with agency policies or procedures, the preceptor will notify the faculty coordinator and student to develop a corrective project plan to address the concerns. If the student fails to comply or the student's performance does not significantly improve, the faculty coordinator will determine the appropriate exaction of penalty. Penalties are determined based on the individual circumstances and include, but are not limited to, removal from the site, re-placement to a new site with the full requirements of hours and assignments, and in extreme circumstances, dropping the student from the course with a grade of fail.

Interns are reminded that involuntary withdrawal is not in their best interest. Interns who are asked to leave an internship may have difficulties being accepted for a second placement. Should problems or concerns arise during the internship, the intern should inform the faculty coordinator and should seek ways to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

### *On-Site Contact Hours*

"My preceptor says that space is limited in the organization and I may need to work from home some days, or do my research at the library? Is this okay?"

Finding space and resources in an organization can be difficult, but in order for the student to benefit from the day to day inter-office contact, the student should work primarily from the internship site or associated sites (i.e., off-site at program locations) as much as possible. All students have access to research resources through the on-campus library and computer lab that may provide beneficial support to the internship. It is appropriate to take advantage of these resources; however, the student should complete at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of his/her total weekly hours doing work at the internship site. The internship allows for independent work, but is not designed to be an independent study.

### *Internship Emergencies*

*"What do I do if I have an unexpected emergency and cannot complete my internship hours for the day?"*

Urgent situations will occur that may cause a student to be absent from the internship. When an intern is unable to fulfill her/his internship hours, the preceptor and faculty coordinator should be informed as soon as possible, preferably by a telephone call or voice message. If the intern is unable to work for an extended period of time (e.g., due to an illness) the intern should discuss with the preceptor and faculty coordinator her/his plans to make up the hours and work. If an intern is sick and cannot go to the internship site, the intern is not allowed to do the internship work from home. The intern will have to make up the time and work when he/she has recovered.

### *Agency Holidays/Other Closings*

*"I plan to go away for my last spring break as a student but my preceptor says that I am needed in the office. Isn't it a requirement that I take spring break along with all the other students?"*

The intern should observe any holidays or other closings observed by the internship site. The intern and preceptor should agree to any changes to the intern's schedule at least two weeks prior to the unscheduled change (e.g., the intern needs to take a day off for a medical exam). The intern is required to work during the University's spring break unless approved by the preceptor prior to starting the internship.

### *Student Employment and the Internship*

*"For 5 years I have been working as a health advisor in my current job. Why can't I use my current employment as an internship?"*

We discourage you from pursuing an internship at your current worksite. If you wish to have your employing agency also serve as the site for your internship you will need to get approval from the internship coordinator/advisor early on in the process. At a minimum, to qualify as an appropriate internship site, your worksite must meet the following criteria:

- Agree that the internship is primarily an educational experience.

- Agree that evaluation of the student's on-the job performance will remain independent of the internship preceptor's evaluation of the student's performance of during the internship.
- Provide the opportunity for the student to learn CHES skills and competencies.
- Provide a qualified preceptor who is not the student's supervisor at work; a quality preceptor is one who has the qualities discussed earlier.
- Provide for/allow an internship activity that is separate and apart from the student's normal work.
- Agree that the student must have the opportunity to "fail" or "learn in a safe environment" without jeopardizing their employment.
- Agree for the preceptor to meet with the internship coordinator/advisor prior to UNCG making a final determination about the appropriateness of the site for the internship.

### *Waiver of Student Fees*

*"I am completing my internship exactly 49 miles from campus. I don't plan to come on campus during the internship so I would like my student fees waived and I need a release to get out of my student housing. Can you help me with this?"*

If you are completing an internship beyond a 50-mile radius of the University and you do not commute to campus for any class attendance, as your internship faculty coordinator, I can submit a "Request for Waiver of Health and Student Activity Fees" Public Health Education administrative assistant (Ellen Ashley). Another request for Student Housing can be sent for you; however, you will need to check with the Student Housing Office to determine the deadline for this request.

### *Grade for the Internship*

*"How will I be evaluated as an intern?"*

The internship grade is based on the preceptor's assessment of your performance at the internship site and the internship coordinator's assessment of your performance in the internship course. The grade represents an evaluation of the how well the intern achieved the stated learning objectives and the quality of the work submitted. Should circumstances arise that prevent the internship coordinator from evaluating the intern's performance, the final grade will be determined by the Undergraduate Program Director.

## **APPENDIX B: Intern Professional Conduct Checklist**

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### ***Planning***

- I ensure that the coordinator and I have agreed upon the times I will work.
- I ensure that the coordinator and I have agreed upon my specific job responsibilities.
- I understand that my personal issues (e.g., transportation, childcare, personal relationship issues) should not interfere with my work attendance, performance, etc. and are not, typically, valid excuses for poor performance.
- I strive to develop a plan that is challenging and meets the expectation of the department and the agency.

### ***Logistics***

- I arrive on time and stay at least as long as I said I would.
- I dress appropriately for the job.
- I document my work to meet the requirements of PHE and the agency.
- If I am unable to arrive on time, meet the requirements or have concerns regarding my work expectations, I promptly discuss these concerns with the supervising volunteer and faculty.

### ***Interpersonal Relationships***

- I demonstrate respect for the volunteer coordinator, staff, and other volunteers.
- I demonstrate respect for the clients and all consumers.
- I conduct myself as if this were my permanent job, where I would need to understand, work on teams with, spend 8-12 pleasant hours a day with, and/or be supervised by my colleagues for the next 2-3 years.
- Even if others seem to me to be acting unprofessionally, I maintain a professional approach to my work and interactions.

### ***Agency Contribution***

- I understand and uphold the mission of this agency.
- I remember that supervising volunteers and interns takes energy that the agency is "donating" to me and to PHE.
- I understand that the agency may make decisions on allowing future students to be placed at the agency based on my attitude and accomplishments.
- I demonstrate appreciation for having the opportunity to work at this agency.
- I demonstrate enthusiasm/am an advocate for the project I am working on.

### ***Trouble-Shooting***

- I anticipate potential roadblocks (including school) to completing my work and plan accordingly.
- I arrange to deal with my coordinator/others promptly on any problems that arise in my work.
- I keep my instructor up to date on any major problems that arise (not waiting until the problem is too big to handle).
- I solicit feedback on my work and make appropriate improvements.

- I ensure my own physical and psychological safety by staying aware of my surroundings, avoiding potentially dangerous situations, and having a plan for what to do if something threatening comes up.
- I carry liability insurance.

### ***Protocol***

- I am clear on the agency's confidentiality policy and do not disclose confidential information.
- I am clear on the agency's protocols (instructions for how to handle various types of typical/atypical situations) and adhere to them.
- I am particularly clear on the agency's protocols for situations where clients and/or others are in danger or are a danger.

### ***Learning***

- I demonstrate flexibility in pitching in where needed without losing sight of my original learning objectives and commitments.
- I ask questions as I need to and identify the approach.
- I take responsibility for making this work a learning experience.
- I regularly reflect on what I am learning, my evaluation of the program I am working on, and how this learning experience relates to my future work and to the field of public health education.

### ***Feedback To The Agency***

- I offer constructive criticism when asked or, otherwise, where appropriate.
- I offer to share my learning from PHE and from my life where it may be helpful to the agency but don't force my opinions.
- I only discuss my concerns or problems with the supervising volunteer and supervising faculty (not the support staff or clients) in an effort to maintain a trusting and professional relationship.

### ***Closure***

- I complete my work having given to the agency at least as much as I got from it.
- I share my appreciation to the agency and clients for working with me.
- I have closure (closing thoughts/reflection) with the agency.
- I maintain contact with the agency as part of my professional network-building.
- I provide constructive feedback to PHE on future placements with this agency, coordinator, etc.
- I provide a letter of thanks and appreciation to the supervising volunteer and agency for the experience.

## APPENDIX C: Professional Liability Insurance

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All students who are enrolled in PHE courses that include field experiences are required 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.

### **Information on Professional Liability Insurance through the University:**

General liability insurance is now available from the UNC system for any college students participating in non-clinical internships or other experiential learning activities away from campus. This insurance is included in student tuition and feed since January 2017. The coverage period begins January 1.

**The Program:** The University Student Intern Program provides coverage for an insured party that becomes legally liable to pay damages because of property damage, bodily injury or personal injury because of their participation in a university internship program to which the policy applies. This insurance will also pay those sums, which an insured party becomes legally obligated because of any act, error or omission in the rendering or failure to render professional services in conjunction with an internship.

**Purchasing the Policy:** Talk to your faculty internship coordinator about how you can register for the UNC system general liability insurance during the fall semester before your internship.