**MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE**

**School of Graduate Studies & Research**

**Division of Public Health Practice**

MSPH 71801: Externship/ Field Placement

Fall 2014- Summer 2015

**INSTRUCTOR**

Dr. William Washington

MSPH Director/ Professor

Clay Simpson Building, 2nd Floor

615-327-6069

[wwashington@mmc.edu](mailto:wwashington@mmc.edu)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The application of skills gained in the class to actual health agency and community programs. Students will identify and solve real health problems in communities, operating agencies, local and state governments, and etc. *3-6 credits.*

**COURSE THEME**

The externship is a planned and supervised learning experienced gained through firsthand observances and on-the-job training through participation in public health activities in health care organization. It will seek to provide an environment conducive to integrating the application of skills gained in the class with actual health agencies and community programs. Students will identify and solve real health problems in the community, operating agencies, local and state governments, etc.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Although the specific responsibilities and tasks performed may vary form one organization to another, the objectives of every placement are as follows:

* To strengthen problem-solving and decision-making abilities, and promote the development of additional public health skills within a health care setting;
* To enhance understanding of concepts and principles acquired in the didactic phase, and realizations of the workplace environment often require the modification of strictly applied theory and principles;
* To expose student to the decision-making process of organizations, agency structure, and how different departments and their staff are interrelated;
* To expose the student to professional ethics that will influence the student’s own development of professional standards and philosophy of conduct appropriate to the health care setting.

**OUTCOME OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the externship experience the following objectives will be achieved through the use of verbal and written exercises:

* The student will be able to demonstrate problem-solving and decision-making skills;
* The student will be able to demonstrate the understanding of concepts and principles acquired in the didactic phase of their educational curriculum;
* The students will be able to identify decision-making processes of organizations and agencies in which they worked;
* The student will be able to identify how different department’s staffs are interrelated in organizations of agencies in which they worked;

* The student will be able to discuss how ethical practices could positively or negatively affect working relationship among the staff in the organization or agency in which he/she worked.

**Competencies**

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| **Summer Externship Experience** | | |
| **Week** | **Activity** | **Competence** |
| Week 1 – Week 10 | Specified Summer Externship Experiences at Worksite to include:  1. Preliminary Externship Report  2.Weekly log or journal  3. Timesheet  4. Final report | 1. Demonstrate good problem-solving and decision-making in private and public healthcare settings  2. Become familiar with the process of organizational decision-making in private and public healthcare settings.  3. Understand the interplay of roles and personal relationships within organizations.  4. Understand the effects of ethical practices on intra- as well as inter-organizational relationships and decision-making  5. Understand concepts and principles taught in the didactic phase of educational curriculum. |

**THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT**

Students express their preferences for the types of health care organizations they are most interested in learning about, to include specific public health agencies or private organizations. The division offers suggestions about possible externship sites. The students work individually to coordinate interviews, and negotiate specific arrangements of the externship such as start dates, work schedules, and salary. However, several sites that have taken externs year after year have a set salary schedule that must be followed, so salaries will not be negotiated. Student are expected to dress and behave in a professional manner by arriving to work and meeting on schedule, demonstrating personal motivation and integrity, meeting work assignment deadlines, and demonstrating a positive attitude toward the externship organization and staff. Students will be evaluating on these and other components of professionalism by the preceptor and the division.

**Written Assignments for the Externship**

Each student is required to complete five written assignments selected from the experience Grid and complete additional written components of the externship, which include:

1. **Preliminary Externship Report**

This plan must be prepared by the student with assistance from the preceptor and handed in to the division no later than 14 days following the start date of the externship. The preliminary externship plan must include:

1. A detailed description of the projects the student intends to complete during the externship (based on the minimum of five selected from the Experience Grid and, if appropriate, how the projects relate to the student’s choice of thesis topic). Include basic information such as name and address of organization and preceptor’s name and title.
2. A description of evaluation schedule and methods to be used by the preceptor to evaluate the student’s performance.
3. The signatures of both students and the preceptor.
4. **Weekly Log or Journal**

These are weekly narratives of activities, meetings, tasks, responsibilities, or problems each student encountered at the externship site. **Copies of the weekly logs are due every Monday by midnight CST after the start of the externship, and the final copy is due at the end of the externship and should be turned in with the Final Report.** The logs or journals should contain the following:

* Description of the initial orientation the student received regarding the extern experience.
* Brief explanation of rotation schedule through various departments of the organization, duties assigned, services provided, or networking conducted.
* Attendance at relevant meetings of the organization including names and titles of facilitators.
* The project(s) assigned to the student by the preceptor such as a research project, public health education project, a Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Organization (JCAHO) or other accrediting organization interim survey, procedural guide revisions, a budget development plan, a Certificate of Need application, a marketing plan, a disaster plan design, or patient, employee survey, etc.
* Brief description of the student’s involvement in public health and other health related activities such as participation in a public health community organization project.
* Accomplishments for the week, as well as priorities for the next week. Students should also include any challenges or roadblocks that were experienced during the completion of a task.

1. **Timesheet**

Each student is required to maintain a timesheet showing the number of hours worked each month. The timesheet must be signed by the preceptor and submitted to the division on a monthly basis. **Calendars should be received no later than the 7th working day of the month following the last month of the externship (ex. August 7th).** The final calendar should be turned in with the Final Report.

1. **The Final Report**

This report essentially is a detailed, comprehensive student assessment of the externship experience. The document should contain narrative information concerning each of the outlined tasks from the experience Grid that were to be accomplished. The student must describe what was done differently from the Preliminary Plan, explaining outcomes and evaluating results. **This document must be submitted to the division on Friday, August 31st, 2015.**

The report should also include one or more positive comments, if possible, about the experiences and recommendation for future students at the site.

**SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS**

* Please note the due dates on all assignments. Your responses must be typed, **using 12pt. font, double-spaced, in MS-Word format**. Failure to comply will result in point deductions. The assignments must be turned in by midnight of the due date (Note: Blackboard/Canvas and I operate on US Central Time).
* **Include your name in the upper right-hand side of each page on all assignments.** Upload all assignments in Blackboard/Canvas under the appropriate assignment link. Points will be deducted for failure to follow the format requirements. **No e-mail attachments will be accepted, due to the risk of viruses.**
* Read each assignment carefully for alternate or additional requirements.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Students are expected to complete their assignments on-time. Assignments submitted after the specified due date and time, without the permission of the MSPH Director or Academic Program Administrator, will have its total score reduced by 50% for each day that it is late. Any assignment submitted **MORE THAN TWO DAYS** after the deadline will receive a failing mark. (i.e. 0 points)

**GRADES**

The student’s grade in the Externship Fieldwork (MSPH 71801) course is based on completion of written assignments, projects, presentations, evaluations and professionalism within the organization. **Assignments turned in late will result in a lower grade.**

* Satisfactory competition of 90% of the assignment = A
* Satisfactory competition of 80% of the assignment = B
* Satisfactory competition of 70% of the assignment = C
* Competition of less than 60% of the assignment = F

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| **Criteria for Grading** | **Points Possible** |
| Externship Attendance | 100 Points (10 points per week for 10 weeks) |
| Class Attendance | 100 Points (10 points per class attendance for 10 weeks) |
| Weekly Log or Journal | 100 Points (10 points per week for 10 weeks) |
| Preliminary Externship Plan | 25 Points |
| Interim Progress Report | 25 Points |
| Final Report | 50 Points |
| Student Evaluation | 50 Points |
| Preceptor Evaluation | 50 Points |
| **Total Points** | **500 Points** |

**SEMESTER’S SCHEDULE**

Students are required to complete 400 hours during their externships. Workdays and hours are to be agreed upon by the preceptor and student.

**THE ROLE OF THE PRECEPTOR**

During the course of the student’s externship, the preceptor is the key figure in the experience. It is the preceptor’s commitment, interest, and efforts that will tremendously influences the quality of the student’s experience and the outcome of the process. The preceptor is responsible for overseeing the continuing educational development of the student.

In carrying out this responsibility, the preceptor is expected to advise, counsel, guide, instruct and evaluate the student, and establish and maintain a learning environment that challenges the student’s intellectual and problem-solving abilities. To effectively perform this role, the preceptor must plan and implement meaningful learning experiences for the student with the sincere commitment and enthusiasm of a good teacher. The preceptor must be the official of the organization, responsibility for assuring that the student is made aware of the rules of the organization and abides by them.

The preceptor is required to provide the **Division of Public Health Practice, Meharry Medical College** with the following:

1. A letter to the Division of Public Health Practice indicating the student’s name, the length of the externship, and the number of hours of work per week expected (with salary if a paid externship). The preceptor must complete the **Memorandum of Understanding Form**, and the **Preparedness of Organization to Accept an Extern Form**.
2. A formal job description of the activities the student will be expected to perform.

These items should be returned to the Division as soon as possible once the student has accepted a position with the preceptor. **Items must be received before a student may begin an externship.** All of the above materials should be signed by the preceptor and returned to:

**Nikki Ballentine, M.Ed., M.S.**

**Academic Program Administrator**

**Master of Science in Public Health Program**

**Meharry Medical College**

**1005 Dr. DB Todd Jr. Blvd.**

**Nashville, TN 37208**

[**nballentine@mmc.edu**](mailto:nballentine@mmc.edu)

In addition, the preceptor is required to provide the student with the following:

1. A formal job description of the activities the student will be expected to perform.
2. Information needed to complete the required externship assignments.
3. Orientation to the organization including its history, structure, staffing, policies, and procedures.
4. Introduction to key staff members in the organization and to the other health care associations from the community when appropriate.
5. A tour of the facility and a rotation through the various departments and to other health care organizations when possible.
6. Adequate office space, computers and access to other administrative support as needed for students to effectively perform their duties.
7. Opportunity for the student to attend staff meeting, including upper-level administration meetings.
8. Communicate frequently with the student to discuss the progress of the externship, potential problems, development of the assigned project, and any necessary adjustments. There should be regularly scheduled meetings between the preceptor and the student.

Serve as the student’s mentor, demonstrate leadership abilities, act as a sounding board for the student’s ideas and questions, maintain open lines of communication with the division especially in the event of difficulty with the externship, certify completion of the externship, and provide midterm and final evaluations of the student.

**THE ROLE OF THE DIVISION**

The division will assist students in arranging for externship placement, and provide a portion of the student’s final evaluation form for the externship. Specific responsibilities include:

1. Assisting the student with initial preceptor contacts and helping finalize arrangements.
2. Preparing the externship agreement with the preceptor.
3. Maintaining contact with students and preceptors.
4. Evaluating students, grading assignments and issuing final course grades.
5. Coordinating with the preceptor in the final evaluation process and conducting follow-up activities. Open communication must be maintained between the division and the preceptor to ensure proper coordination of the externship and adequate assessment of the experience.

The following activities must be provided:

1. The division will initially consult with the preceptor to discuss the student’s qualifications, responsibilities of the externship, and the benefits to both the student and the preceptor. The next step is for the student to receive an interview with the preceptor and site.
2. At the midpoint of the externship, the preceptor will evaluate the student’s progress in a discussion with the division either by telephone or in person.
3. Following completion of the externship, a final evaluation will be conducted. This process is a formal evaluation requiring the preceptor to recommend a grade for the student. Final evaluations are generally due toward the last week of the externship experience.
4. If the preceptor or student is having difficulty during the externship, the division should be contacted immediately.