

MPH Internship FAQ

1. When can I begin my internship?

In the MPH Program, a student can begin their internship when they are enrolled in HSCI 693A, once they have completed 21 units in the program.

2. How many hours do I need to complete for the internship?

300 hours (for students admitted as of Fall 2016). 400 hours for students admitted prior to Fall 2016, regardless of when the student registers for internship.

3. Where can I do my internship?

CSUN is contracted with many organizations (both community based and hospitals) that have been vetted and approved by the University, with an executed affiliation agreement. Please contact the Internship Coordinator, Prof. Susan Cohen, MPH, for a copy of the Preceptor Database.

4. What if I want to do my internship at a site that is not approved? Is that possible?

Yes, if a student finds a new site, she/he should contact the Internship Coordinator no later than one semester PRIOR to the semester in which the student wants to begin their internship. There is an approval process to go through and this could take 2-3 months to complete.

5. When should I begin thinking about where I want to do my internship?

We suggest students begin this process in the first year of the program or no later than the completion of 12 units. It can take time to find the right site, to interview, go through a background check, and to get accepted into an internship. The more popular sites will fill up quickly. It's best to begin sooner than later.

6. What are the qualifications of the preceptor?

The preceptor, or site supervisor, must have an MPH and must be willing/able to supervise a student for the duration of their internship. They should be able to provide oversight of the student's objectives and meet with them regularly to provide guidance and mentoring.

7. Can I do my internship at my work?

It is not advisable for students to intern at their current place of work. However, under certain circumstances, an internship may be possible. Students should discuss their concerns with the Internship Coordinator.

8. Can I do my internship outside of LA County?

Refer to FAQ #4. For out of state internship inquiries, students are encouraged to research local health departments and organizations for potential internship opportunities. The internship coordinator does not maintain a national database at this time.

9. Can I begin my internship hours early?

No. The University requires all legal documentation be completed prior to working internship hours. A mandatory orientation must also be completed. These requirements are met at the start of the semester in which the student is enrolled in HSCI 693A. Therefore, hours may only be accrued once all risk management forms and orientation are completed.

10. What if I don't complete my hours in one semester?

Most students will complete their hours in two semesters. Students register for HSCI 693A and take the course only once. If a student does not complete their hours in one semester, a grade of incomplete will be assigned. Once the student completes all of their hours and required assignments for the course, a grade of "credit" will be assigned.

11. How do students complete their hours while taking classes, working or caring for family?

While it can definitely be a challenge to complete the internship hours while students have other responsibilities, it is a short-term challenge. As soon as you begin the MPH program (or in your first semester), discuss your upcoming internship with your employer, boss, significant other, and any additional supports you have in your life. Now is the time to strategize for planning to reduce work hours (if possible) while you do your internship; maybe use vacation time to get a full day in per week at your internship site; change your work schedule; seek alternative child-care arrangements, and call on the people in your life to support you. We know it can be done and for those who plan, there is less stress and much more enjoyment in the process. Your internship is a key time for you to gain practical experience in the field of public health, build your network, and expand your career. It is also a required and essential component of completing the program. Plan now to utilize the resources that are available to you.

12. Do we need to complete our internship hours before we take the comps?

Students must complete their internship hours the same semester as taking the comp exam. Per the Office of Graduate Studies, the Comprehensive Exam is the culminating experience to fulfill the requirements of your graduate degree (your MPH). As such – all course and program requirements must be met in order for a student to be eligible to sit for their culminating experience, for our program, the Comprehensive Exam. In addition - if a student passes the comp exam, but has not yet completed internship hours by the end of the same semester, he/she will have to pay University tuition/fees in order to get their MPH degree officially awarded by the University. Please note that the University will not award a degree in any semester if the individual is not a registered student in that semester! This also includes Summer; if a student is planning to complete internship hours the Summer after completing comps, she/he will need to pay to become a registered student to obtain the MPH degree. Unless the student plans to take another course *after* completing comps, it is best (and most economical) to complete internship hours the same semester as comps.

13. Can I participate in the MPH Hooding ceremony if my Internship hours are not complete?

No. In order for students to participate in the Spring MPH Hooding ceremony, they must complete ALL requirements for the degree. This includes passing the Comprehensive Exam (Parts I & II), as well as completing all Internship hours before the Spring semester has officially ended. There are NO exceptions. (Completing Internship hours in Summer is *after* Spring semester has ended.)