Internships in the Community Health Program (CHP) at Tufts University involve approximately 11 hours per week at the site (fall and spring semesters) and 14 hours per week at the site (summer) to total 150 hours over the semester. Interns and supervisors should meet before the start of the semester to clarify responsibilities, establish a schedule, begin orientation, and complete agency paperwork/documentation/verification for clearance to enable students to start onsite the first week of the semester. Students have class commitments in Medford (CH 180, Internship Practicum) and should consider class meeting times when making a work schedule.

At CHP, we understand the role of the intern to be different from that of a volunteer. Internships involve a structured learning experience with active, weekly on-site supervision. The following guidelines have contributed to the successful completion of hundreds of CHP Internships with mutual benefits to both the intern and the placement organization:

- A particular person in the organization must take on the role of Site Supervisor. We expect the supervisor to meet with the intern for at least one hour of direct, on-site supervision per week to address issues related to work at the site. The supervisor must be available for calls and/or site visits with a member of the Community Health Program. The supervisor may be asked to help the intern with seminar assignments such as gathering basic information about the organization. Overall, the site supervisor must be sufficiently familiar with the intern’s specific activities to effectively and fairly evaluate the intern’s work.

- The supervisor and the intern should develop a list of clearly defined responsibilities. We have found that identifying specific ongoing projects contributes greatly to a successful internship. It is also useful to have a few options/tasks to return to during quiet, less busy times. Of note: internships should include limited repetitive “busy work.” For example, some positions involve some data entry or survey review. We have found that successful internships limit this type of work to 1/3 of the weekly work hours (4-5 hours/week). Shadowing other professionals, if appropriate, has been a positive experience when limited to 15 hours over the course of the internship.

- We recommend that interns have a desk or some other space dedicated to their work while they are on-site to integrate them into the organization and contribute to effective work. This space may also be shared. Working in an isolated environment or off-site (from home or in a “home office”) is not recommended. We have found that the most rewarding internships are those where the student is in contact with other interns/staff/personnel and can be a part of the ongoing workings of the organization. This works best when working onsite at the agency.

- The experience of actually being in the workplace is vital for the intern. For some, it is the first time they have worked in a professional health-related organization. Consequently, they are learning not just from their projects, but simply from being at your organization. If the supervisor is not available on any given day, please identify another “on-site” person who can offer guidance.

- You can help acclimate/integrate students by:
  a) introducing them to as many co-workers (staff or other interns) as possible
  b) encouraging them to have lunch with co-workers (and vice versa)
  c) inviting them to as many agency meetings/lectures/clinical sessions as appropriate
  d) providing opportunities to interact/work with other professionals and/or projects

Ongoing contact between the intern, site supervisor, and internship liaison is an effective way to avoid misunderstandings. If any problems or small concerns arise, please contact Pamela Schoenberg Reider at 617-627-2349 or pschoenberg.reider@tufts.edu.

Please note:
Interns meet on the Tufts campus five times over the course of the internship. Three meetings are with all other interns; two meetings are individually arranged with the internship supervisor. Students must attend these meetings.
Common questions supervisors discuss with interns

How many hours per week should the intern work?
In order to complete the 150-hour requirement, students should work an average of 11 hours per week during fall or spring semester. Summer interns spend on average 14 hours per week at their sites. The supervisor and student should come up with a way to record work hours and keep track of these 150 hours.

Should lunch be included in internship hours?
This is entirely dependent on work place policy. In general, if lunch is 30 minutes or less, we recommend that it be included in the intern’s hours. We do, however, leave the final decision up to individual site supervisors, understanding that at many sites, lunch is not included in an employee’s time. Please discuss this with the student during the first weeks of the placement.

Can the student work from home some of the time?
We strongly discourage working from home. We have found that students are most engaged and productive when working onsite and interacting with others.

Does briefly checking in daily with the student suffice as supervision?
No. We encourage the supervisor and student to set aside a specific time each week to discuss the project/research/work. We have found that without this opportunity, students lack important feedback on their work, and miss out on information, guidance, and significant learning opportunities.

Additional information to address with students

Workplace etiquette and dress code
For some students, this is their first work experience. While we will discuss aspects of professionalism in class, you may want to discuss any specific concerns re: professional issues, dress code, workplace etiquette, etc. which are relevant at your site.

Days off
Please share with students the policies at your site for calling in sick or missed work days. In addition, please discuss any workplace holidays that fall during the internship period. Students are expected to make-up any missed hours.

Goal Setting
At the onset of the semester, students are asked to set specific goals and list objectives that will help them to achieve their goals. Please review and discuss these goals during initial supervision meetings. Students should think about what they would like to achieve over the course of the internship. Students will be asked to reassess and update their goals throughout the semester.

Supervision and Evaluation
The CHP internship is structured and supervised. Supervisors and students should set aside one hour per week devoted to in-person supervision. This can be split up a number of ways that best meets the needs of the organization, but it is a critical piece of the internship experience. Please review Supervision Guidelines (reverse of this page) to more clearly understand the role of Site Supervisor.

Toward the end of the internship, the supervisor will complete a final student Evaluation. We ask that you to review the evaluation with the intern to provide feedback on the experience and to offer an opportunity for constructive discussion pertaining to future work. Please return the signed evaluation to CHP by the specific date on the form.

Statement of insurance and liability coverage: For activities directly related to the internship, Tufts covers students registered for Community Health Internship Credit with comprehensive general liability insurance coverage while working at the internship site. This insurance coverage extends from the beginning of the internship until the end date; dates correspond with the semester dates as indicated in the initial placement letter. Tufts students are not eligible for worker’s compensation through Tufts University.