

TWO-YEAR MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM

Overview of Summer Internship

The Department of Health Policy and Management (HPM) is committed to the education of professionals for positions of leadership in public and private organizations concerned with the planning, financing, and delivery of health care and related services. HPM offers programs for students and professionals who are prepared to apply strong analytic and quantitative training to the critical public health issues facing health care managers and policy makers.

Beyond the weight it places on the core curriculum—consisting of specialized courses in policy planning and implementation, the principles of economics, quantitative methods, and management—HPM recognizes that masters-level training must be supplemented by problem-solving experiences in actual health care organizations.

A summer internship between the first and second year of the two-year Master of Science Program allows students to apply the technical tools, analytical skills, and theoretical knowledge gained in the first year, and to acquire further exposure to career possibilities in the field. In the past, students have participated in summer internships in such settings as hospitals, managed care plans, consulting firms, community-based organizations, pharmaceutical companies, state, local and federal governments, and universities.

Because of diverse student needs and interests, the internship's requirements are flexible, allowing students to develop a field experience that most closely meets their educational and career objectives. The Summer Internship sometimes leads to a full-year Applied Research and Practice opportunity during the second year.

Criteria for Project Selection

The Summer Internship should:

- Complement the student's career objectives
- Require the student to utilize analytic and problem-solving skills,
- Focus on actual problems and needs of the host organization or sponsor,
- Integrate the student into an organizational setting as a new employee, using whatever methods the sponsor normally uses, and
- Be full time and at least eight weeks in length.

Finding a Summer Internship

Most students locate placements on their own and are encouraged to discuss potential opportunities with faculty members, alumni, and current students, and to contact professionals in the field. A list of Summer Internship projects from prior years is available from HPM's office of academic programs and student services.

Responsibilities of the Summer Internship Sponsor

The sponsor is the personal and professional link between the intern and the organization. Responsibilities begin with an understanding and assessment of the intern's interests and academic preparation. An agenda of projects and activities should be developed that link the intern's efforts to the needs of the organization, and a working relationship should be established between intern and sponsor that encourages ongoing guidance, project planning, support, feedback, and evaluation.

The specific responsibilities of the sponsor are to:

- Develop, in conjunction with the intern, a plan for the summer that specifies work schedules as well as expected projects and written reports;
- Provide the intern with appropriate orientation to the organization and to fellow workers (this should include information on the purpose, history, and policies of the organization);
- Introduce the intern to the organization's structure, personnel, and other professionals, including any relevant community members;
- Provide adequate work space, special equipment, and support services for the intern to complete specified projects; and
- Maintain regular (at least weekly) contact with the intern to ensure personal support, project direction, and performance feedback.

Responsibilities of the Intern

The student/intern is responsible for pro-actively seeking new learning opportunities within the host organization and for satisfactorily meeting the expectations of that organization during this probationary employment period. Specifically, the intern assumes the responsibility to:

- Develop a realistic work plan for the summer, in conjunction with the sponsor and host organization;
- Devote full-time hours of work each week (excluding vacation periods) to specified projects;
- Meet regularly with the sponsor to discuss direction and progress;
- Present any written reports in a well-organized and timely fashion;
- Submit an abstract and conduct a presentation describing the internship upon the student's return to HPM in the fall.

For more information please contact: Anne Occhipinti, the Director of Academic Programs and Student Services (617-432-4511 or aocchipi@hsph.harvard.edu) or Nancy Turnbull, Director of the MS2 program (617-432-4496 or nturnbul@hsph.harvard.edu).