



# ***HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK***

***A Guide for Student Interns and Organizational Preceptors***

*Revised  
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## Background of Program

The Towson University undergraduate Health Care Management (HCMN) program is a proud member of the Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA). AUPHA is a global network of colleges, universities, faculty, individuals and organizations dedicated to improving health by promoting excellence in healthcare management education. AUPHA has established a rigorous peer review process modeled for those programs willing to undergo the rigors of external review in the interest of program excellence ([www.aupha.org](http://www.aupha.org)). The Board of Directors of AUPHA recently **renewed** Full Certified Undergraduate Membership status to Towson University, illustrating Towson's continued commitment to excellence in our HCMN program. Further, AUPHA recommended our HCMN program internship be recognized by their membership as a "Best Practice" program component; we consider this honor reflective of our commitment to our students and to our community.

The Towson University HCMN Internship is a supervised educational experience in a health care organization that serves as the culmination of the student's study of Health Care Management. This 12-unit course is a major requirement and students must commit to a full-time (approximately 40 hour) work week under the direction of a Preceptor. The Internship is designed to provide students with an in-depth learning experience where they can apply health care management theories and principles in a specific health care setting. In addition to easing role transitions from school to professional work settings, the Internship will provide students with a range of opportunities to further enhance their understanding of the unique aspects of health care management.



## Purpose of Handbook

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide information to improve the overall coordination of Health Care Management internships between the Health Science Department of Towson University and cooperating Health Care Organizations. The Handbook offers a basis from which Interns, University Supervisors and Preceptors can assess the benefits of the internship experience as well as assist in the transition from full-time student to full-time health care manager.

The Handbook also contains basic information pertaining to the responsibilities of the Intern, the University and the Health Care Organization, and is designed to make the internship experience a working relationship among all three parties - the Intern, the University, and the Health Care Organization.

We are especially grateful to those organizations and professionals who share our commitment to excellence in health care management through participation in our internship program.

## Eligibility

### *Students MUST:*

- ✓ Declare HCMN as their major and Business Administration as their minor;
- ✓ Obtain a minimum GPA of 2.0;
- ✓ *Complete all coursework* for a BS degree, save for the internship. For Fall placement, all coursework must be completed by May 31<sup>st</sup>, for Spring placement, all coursework must be completed by December 31<sup>st</sup> ;
- ✓ Complete all courses for both the major and minor with a grade of “C” or better;
- ✓ Submit the “Request for Internship” form to the Program Director;
- ✓ Submit a copy of their Degree Progress Report, signed by their Faculty Advisor indicating their eligibility for the internship.

### *Health Care Organizations MUST:*

- ✓ Submit a description of the health care organization to the University; this description will be available to students to assist potential Interns in the selection process.
- ✓ Assign Preceptors who have:
  - a minimum of one year tenure in their current role at the organization;
  - responsibility for a health care management project, or component of a larger health care management function in the Organization;
  - experience in health care management and/or related fields as well as supervisory experience;
  - a commitment to, and have sufficient time to devote to, the professional growth and development of the Intern.

## I. RESPONSIBILITIES OF TOWSON UNIVERSITY

### A. The University

During the Internship, the University has several responsibilities to the Intern, the Health Care Organization and to the Preceptor. They include but are not limited to the following:

- ✚ Maintain a pool of quality internship placements for students to choose from and assist students in securing a match appropriate for their skills and ambitions;
- ✚ Serve as a resource for both Interns and Preceptors during the Internship and help ensure that the experience is beneficial to both parties;
- ✚ Obtain certificates of insurance for each organizational facility from the State Treasurer's Office;
- ✚ Provide professional leadership for the Internship component of the HCMN Program.

### B. The Intern

During the internship, the Intern has several responsibilities to the University, the Health Care Organization and to the Preceptor. They include but are not limited to the following:

- ✚ *One full-semester will be spent in the health care organization internship experience.* The Intern should expect to commit to a fulltime work week for each week of the semester (16 weeks). Any adjustment in work schedule from this policy must be discussed and approved by the Preceptor and TU's Program Director.
- ✚ *The Intern should view his/her internship experience as an opportunity to learn how to apply theory and principles in the context of work situations and to develop skills essential to these tasks.* The Intern will be placed in a health care organization and is expected to function as a staff member with responsibilities commensurate with his/her capabilities and position.
- ✚ *The Intern is expected to adhere to the policies, procedures, and working hours that apply to professional and administrative staff members of the health care organization.* Interns may be required to meet additional specific requirements for employment in the health service organization (e.g., liability insurance, pre-employment physical examinations, personal background checks, etc.), and it is their responsibility to find this out during the interview.
- ✚ *The Intern will assume major responsibility for a program or project in the health care organization, commensurate with the Intern's competencies and the health care organization's needs.* The program/project will be discussed and approved by both the Preceptor and the University Supervisor. The following are examples of health

care organization management processes in which active participation would be appropriate for student interns:

- Assessment of the health care needs of the population or sub-populations served by the organization;
- Supervising personnel in the implementation of a program/policy;
- Developing a business plan or marketing strategies for community programs and services;
- Assessing staffing needs for programs and services;
- Developing a budgeting plan for program/services;
- Planning project/programmatic events;
- Organizing/coordinating personnel and other resources for project/program implementation;
- Working with health care organization personnel to write funding proposals or identify funding sources for community programs.

✚ *The Intern, in concert with the Preceptor, will identify an organizational problem and, using a case study approach, develop a workable and realistic solution to the problem. A written report of the identified problem, related background information, and the recommended solution will be provided to the Preceptor for potential organizational implementation.*

✚ *The Intern is expected to establish a productive and respectful working relationship with his/her Preceptor, co-workers, volunteers and other members of the department/division with the health care organization with whom s/he may come in contact in the course of performing duties/responsibilities. The Intern is expected to respect the confidentiality and dignity of the client population and employees of the health care organization at all times.*

✚ *The Intern must maintain communication with the University Supervisor throughout the internship experience. Interns must monitor a TU email account daily and access to the Internet to participate in the web-supported portion of this course. Communication will take the form of emails (including weekly Learning Logs), responses to discussion questions posted at the online portion of the course, telephone conversations, face-to-face meetings and seminars.*

✚ *If the Intern experiences difficulties that may be related to an improper placement, the student must discuss the issue with his/her Preceptor at the health care organization **FIRST**. The Intern should apprise the University Supervisor in a timely manner of the issue and the steps proposed to resolve the problem.*

✚ *When required, the Intern is expected to adjust the scheduling of his/her working hours at the Health Care Organization.*

## II. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATION

### A. The Organization

During the internship, the Health Care Organization has several responsibilities to the Intern and to the University. They include but are not limited to the following:

- ✚ Supervision of Intern - this includes guidance and professional supervision. It should also include helping the Intern obtain additional opportunities for learning. A Preceptor should be assigned who has the appropriate education and experience to carry out this function.
- ✚ Orientation of Intern - the Health Care Organization should provide an orientation experience that provides an overview of the organization, introductions to other staff members and clear guidelines for performance assessment.
- ✚ Work Environment - the Health Care Organization will provide appropriate workspace and necessary equipment to meet work obligations and responsibilities (e.g. computer with access to the Internet, desk space, access to phone, etc.).

### B. The Preceptor

During the internship, the Preceptor has several responsibilities to the Intern and to the University. They include but are not limited to the following:



- ✚ *Maintain a current resume on file* with the University;
- ✚ *Maintain a current placement description* with the University to assist potential interns in placement selection;
- ✚ *Agree to interview potential interns.* Consent to complete the Interview Form and return it to the HCMN Program Director within one business day after interviewing the prospective Intern. In the event of a non-match, provide relevant feedback to the HCMN Program Director to assist in further attempts to place the intern with another organization;
- ✚ *Assist the Intern in establishing and meeting goals and objectives* for his/her particular experience that will mutually benefit the Intern and the Health Care Organization. Agree to conduct two performance evaluations of the Intern and complete all required Evaluation forms.
- ✚ *Provide opportunities for the Intern* to develop a professional network, as well as gain exposure to various positions in health care management. This may be

accomplished by shadowing, informational interviews, attending executive-level meetings, 'rounding', etc.

- ✚ *Meet with the University Supervisor* as needed to discuss the Intern's progress, and maintain ongoing communications in a timely manner;
- ✚ *Sign off on the Intern's final portfolio* for release of information and contents.

### III. INTERNSHIP POLICIES

#### Absences:

The Intern is expected to maintain a regular work schedule pursuant to the health care organization's policies and must notify both the Preceptor and the University Supervisor in a timely manner in the event of an unexpected work absence (e.g. sickness). If the Intern is out from work for three consecutive workdays or more, s/he must submit a doctor's note/report to both supervisors. Time lost due to illness must be made up (or compensatory time may be used) before the last day of the internship. Physician and dentist appointments should be scheduled outside of work hours.

#### Intern Seminars:

All Intern Seminars are mandatory. Unless s/he makes special arrangements in advance with their Preceptor, the Intern is expected to meet the work obligations for hours missed to attend Seminars on campus.

#### Holidays:

The Intern will follow the work schedule of the Health Care Organization and not of the University. S/he will be off from work on the holidays recognized by the Health Care Organization for their employees.

#### Religious Holidays:

The Intern is entitled to observe his/her religious holidays. When these holidays conflict with regular working hours of the Health Care Organization, hours missed for the observance will require that the time be made up at the discretion of the Preceptor and the University Supervisor. Interns should discuss religious holidays with their Preceptor and University Supervisor at least one week prior to the holiday. Preceptors are asked to work with Interns regarding meeting their needs for religious reasons.

## Travel, Parking, and Other Fees:

Interns are expected to pay for their own travel expenses, parking fees, conference fees, professional wardrobe etc. as incurred as a result of the internship. If there are questions about such fees, the Intern may discuss them with their Preceptor; however the Intern cannot expect the Health Care Organization to pay these fees. These costs considered to be a part of the Intern's professional responsibilities.

## Outside Employment:

There are no policies regarding outside employment, however the Internship is a full-time obligation, therefore, Interns should not be leaving the Health Care Organization early nor arriving late due to outside employment. Also, outside employment cannot interfere with the Intern's duties and responsibilities at the organization if those duties and responsibilities include being at the organization evening hours or weekends; to do so will jeopardize the Intern's final grade and possibly future recommendations.

## IV. TOWSON UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACTS

### *Health Care Management Program Administration*



**Susan Casciani, FACHE**  
**Program Director**  
410-704-3866  
[scasciani@towson.edu](mailto:scasciani@towson.edu)



**Mary Helen McSweeney-Feld, PhD**  
**Department Chair**  
410-704-4219  
[mmcsweeney-feld@towson.edu](mailto:mmcsweeney-feld@towson.edu)



**Toby Tighe, FACHE**  
**Field Supervisor**  
[Ttighe@towson.edu](mailto:Ttighe@towson.edu)



**Don Zimmerman, PhD**  
**Associate Professor**  
410-704-4223  
[dzimmerman@towson.edu](mailto:dzimmerman@towson.edu)



**SAMPLE ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION FORM**



**Health Care Management Internship  
Organization Description Form**

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description/Overview of Organization:

Preceptor's Position, Level of Management and Brief Description of Responsibilities/Experience:

Representative Intern Projects / Duties:

Compensation Available? If yes, please describe:  
(Note: Towson University HCMN Program does not require compensation)

Is this Health Care Organization an equal/opportunity employer in compliance with all EEO guidelines and legislation? Y N

Department of Health Science  
Burdick Hall, Room 141  
410.704.2637 (Tel) 410.704.4670 (Fax)

## **APPENDIX E – SAMPLE LETTER OF AGREEMENT**



### **Health Care Management Internship Letter of Agreement Form**

This agreement is entered into this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ between Towson

University, an agency of the State of Maryland (hereinafter referred to as the

"University"), and \_\_\_\_\_ (hereinafter referred to as the "Organization"). The Letter of Agreement shall govern the use of the Organization's facilities by the faculty and students enrolled in the University Bachelor of Science Degree Program in Health Care Management. The Organization identified above agrees to the following conditions in accepting and supervising the University's Health Care Management Interns:

- ✓ A description of the Organization must be submitted to the University for inclusion in the Internship Site Directory;
- ✓ Notification must be made in advance to the University Health Care Management Program Director when (a) a semester becomes inappropriate for internship experiences, (b) when there is a change in Preceptor, and/or (c) when the Preceptor(s) will be on leave of absence;
- ✓ The Organization must, at all times, provide adequate supervision. The Intern should not replace any employee or assume unsupervised command of any project or role;
- ✓ The Organization will inform the Intern at the time of the interview of any reimbursement policies for on-the-job travel, liability coverage, parking, immunizations, criminal background check or other job related expenses;
- ✓ The Intern should be provided oral and/or written information (e.g. annual reports, description of the Organization's goals, organizational charts, nature of the placement, anticipated tasks of the Intern, working conditions) about the Organization to assist the Intern in making an informed decision when selecting an internship placement. This exchange must be done at the time of the interview.
- ✓ The Preceptor must:
  - have a minimum of one year in her/his current position;
  - be responsible for a health care management project, or component of a larger health care management function in the Organization;
  - have extensive experience in health care management and/or related fields as well as supervisory experience;
  - be committed to and have sufficient time to devote to the professional growth and development of the Intern;

- agree to interview potential Interns;
- consent to complete the Interview Form and return it to the HCMN Program Director after interviewing the prospective Intern;
- agree to meet with the HCMN University Supervisor on a periodic basis and as needed to discuss the Intern's progress;
- agree to complete all evaluation forms;
- agree to provide daily supervision for the Intern.

This Letter of Agreement binds both the University and the Organization to the requirements specified in the Health Care Management Internship Handbook. Should either party be desirous of terminating this Agreement, prior notice must be given sixty (60) calendar days in advance of its termination. Such termination shall not take effect, however, until Interns already engaged at the Organization have completed their internship experience. If no termination by either side is sought, the Agreement will remain in effect. During the performance of this agreement it is agreed that there will be no discrimination against any student because of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation or national origin.

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Organization Representative Date

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Preceptor Date

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Susan Casciani, Towson University HCMN Program Director Date

Towson University  
 Department of Health Science  
 Burdick Hall, Room 141  
 8000 York Road  
 Towson, MD 21252-0001  
 410.704.2637 (Tel) 410.704.4670 (Fax)

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

## LEARNING CONTRACT TEMPLATE



### Health Care Management Internship LEARNING CONTRACT

This Learning Contract will be between (***your name***), ***Intern, Towson University*** and (***Preceptor's name, title, organization***). The Internship will be designed to lead toward the Intern developing the competencies identified of a Towson University HCMN graduate\* to a level equivalent to that expected of an entry-level management position. With these competencies in mind, during the course of the Internship from (*first day of semester*) to (*last day of semester*), I, *your name*, would like to accomplish the following goals\*:

Goal 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\* specific project/task to meet goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\* specific project/task to meet goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Etc....

Through diligent work and appropriate guidance, the above goals should be able to be accomplished. In completion of the above tasks/projects, a set of deliverables will be presented to the preceptor including at a minimum an organizational case study and a major project as defined in the Towson University HCMN Internship Procedure Manual.

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Intern's Signature  
*Your name, Intern*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Preceptor's Signature  
*Preceptor's name, title*

\* The competencies expected of a Towson University HCMN graduate are attached.

## **THE PROFILE OF A PROGRAM GRADUATE**

*The Towson University Health Care Management Program prepares our graduates to achieve excellence in their professional careers. Our combination of rigorous academic studies and hands-on practical experience — all subject to strict measures of performance — develop the following Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSAs) that are foundations for professional success:*

### **BUSINESS SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

Know, apply and integrate the content of the major.

### **KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTH CARE ENVIRONMENT**

Ability to discuss and apply knowledge of the healthcare system and the environment in which healthcare managers and providers function.

- Interrelationships among cost, quality, access, resource allocation, accountability and community;
- Patient perspective;
- Funding and payment mechanisms;
- Complexity associated with interacting and integrating among health care sectors to improve service efficiency and quality.

### **COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT**

Ability to communicate clearly and concisely, establish and maintain relationships, and facilitate constructive interactions with individuals and groups.

- Demonstrate effective written, oral and presentation skills;
- Prepare and deliver business communications including meeting agendas, presentations and business reports;
- Provide and receive constructive feedback;
- Demonstrate effective interpersonal relations.

### **PROFESSIONALISM**

Ability to align personal conduct with ethical and professional standards that include a service orientation and a commitment to lifelong learning.

- Be attentive, proactive and ready to learn;
- Meet commitments and complete tasks according to assigned requirements;
- Treat others with respect; show sensitivity to their views, values and customs;
- Demonstrate ethical behavior consistent with professional codes of ethics;
- Knowledge of patients' rights and responsibilities;
- Assume responsibility for one's own career management and goal-setting;
- Demonstrate effective resume and interview skills;
- Prepare for lifelong learning and career planning.

### **LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK**

Ability to inspire individual and group excellence.

- Participate in and lead teams;
- Focus on goal achievement;
- Guide team toward achievement of common goals;
- Maintain group cohesion, follower satisfaction and productivity;
- Incorporate and apply management techniques and theories.

## **SAMPLE EVALUATION FORM**

### **Health Care Management Internship Supervisor Evaluation of Intern**

Intern Name:

Semester and Year of Internship:

Name of Organization:

Preceptor Name and Title:

The evaluation of your Intern provides important feedback to the student and the University. Please rate the Intern's performance, review the evaluation with him/her and then return the form to the HCMN Program Director.

**For each competency area\*, please provide a brief description of the Intern's strengths and weaknesses:**

*\* For a complete description of each competency group, please see the TU HCMN "Profile of a Program Graduate".*

#### **BUSINESS SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

Know, apply and integrate the content of the HCMN major.

#### **KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTH CARE ENVIRONMENT**

Ability to discuss and apply knowledge of the healthcare system and the environment in which healthcare managers and providers function.

#### **COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT**

Ability to communicate clearly and concisely, establish and maintain relationships, and facilitate constructive interactions with individuals and groups.

#### **PROFESSIONALISM**

Ability to align personal conduct with ethical and professional standards that include a service orientation and a commitment to lifelong learning.

#### **LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK**

Ability to inspire individual and group excellence.

#### **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

Proficiencies in intrapersonal and interpersonal skills in the areas of self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness and social skills.\*

\* Freshman, B. and Rubino, L. 2002. Emotional intelligence: a core competency for health care administrators. *Health Care Manager*; 20(4), 1-9.

