



Healthcare Management

Internship Handbook

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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). In 2015, the Board of Directors of AUPHA awarded Full Certified Undergraduate Membership status to Towson University for another six years, the longest term awarded, 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, unpaid educational experience in a health care organization that serves as the culmination of the student's study of Health Care Management. This 12 credit course is a major requirement. Students must commit to a full-time (40 hours a week) internship site under the direction of a Preceptor and Faculty Supervisor. 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 Sciences 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 prior to Internship. For Fall placements, all coursework must be completed prior to the August 26th (*up to 12 credits hours for summer course work allowed*). For Spring placements, all coursework must be completed prior to the January 26th (*up to 4 credit hours allowed for Minimester coursework accepted*); Exceptions for completing coursework are made at the discretion of the Program Director.
- ✓ Complete all courses for both the major and minor with a grade of “C” or better;
- ✓ Submit a copy of their Academic Requirement Report (printed from PeopleSoft) and Internship Clearance form, signed by their Faculty Advisor indicating their eligibility for the Internship.

Health Care Organizations MUST:

- ✓ Submit a Description of the Health Care Organization (p.15) to the Internship Coordinator, Wendy Whitner at wwhitner@towson.edu. 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

Several personnel play a role in the HCMN internship experience including the Program Director, Internship Coordinator, Faculty Supervisor as well as the Health Care Organization and Preceptor. A comprehensive list of job responsibilities for the described parties ensures the proper supervision of students during their off-campus and on-campus commitments during their Internship.

A. The University

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

- ❖ Serve as a resource for both Interns and Preceptors during the Internship and help ensure that the experience is beneficial to both parties;
- ❖ 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;
- ❖ 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.

During the Internship, the Internship Coordinator also has several responsibilities to the student intern which include but are not limited to the following:

- ❖ Meeting with students to discuss placement opportunities, as well as matching student interests at well-established health care organization sites that offer Preceptors with the education, experience, and skills necessary to house a student intern.
- ❖ Conducting site visits with current and potential health care organization sites to ensure facilities and Preceptors are providing a comprehensive learning experience for the student intern.
- ❖ Facilitating correspondence between the student and Preceptor in the initial steps of the interviewing process to secure an internship and all necessary paperwork.
- ❖ Acting as a mentor and resource made available via email, office hours, phone, etc. during the student's internship experience to answer questions or handle any concerns the student intern or Preceptor may have.

During the Internship, the Faculty Supervisor also has several responsibilities to the student intern, which include but are not limited to the following:

- ❖ Holding required meetings with the student intern in the semester prior to the Internship to discuss Internship and career goals and aspirations. Such meetings serve as the foundation for which students select a proper and suitable internship site.
- ❖ Conducting site visits (2X/semester) to evaluate the student intern and Preceptor by discussing the Intern's progress and experience at the health care organization.
- ❖ Acting as a mentor and resource made available via email, office hours, phone, etc. during the student's internship experience to answer questions or handle any concerns the student intern or Preceptor may have.

FACULTY

Health Care Management Program faculty members with academic and practical expertise in the area of health care management and policy teach the health care management core courses. Health care management instructors have implemented teaching innovations in the curriculum that incorporate real-world applications (e.g., case studies, assessment instruments). The health care management faculty seeks to utilize teaching methodologies that involve student participation and teamwork as well as related methodologies.

Wayne Nelson, PhD

Professor, Interim HCMN Program Coordinator & Chair, Department of Health Sciences

Expertise: Long-Term Care and Gerontology

wnelson@towson.edu



Susan Casciani, HSHA, MBA, FACHE

Lecturer & Internship Faculty Supervisor

Expertise: Strategy and Leadership

scasciani@towson.edu



Randy Cochran, PhD

Assistant Professor

Expertise: Behavioral Health, Health Information Exchange, and Coordinated Care Delivery

rcochran@towson.edu



Cassandra Henson, DrPA, MBA

Assistant Clinical Professor & Internship Faculty Supervisor

Expertise: Performance Measures, Financial Analysis, Ethics and Compliance

chenson@towson.edu



Andrew Jones, MS

Clinical Assistant Professor & Advisor, Healthcare Management

Expertise: Long-Term Care, Human Resource Management

atjones@towson.edu



Mary Helen McSweeney-Feld, PhD

Associate Professor & Advisor, Healthcare Management
Expertise: Long-Term care, Healthcare finance, HR
mmcsweeney-feld@towson.edu



Toby Tighe, MPH, FACHE

Lecturer & Internship Faculty Supervisor, Healthcare Management
Expertise: Hospital Administration, Mentoring
Ttighe1@comcast.com



Wendy Whitner, PhD, MPH, LSSBB

Assistant Clinical Professor, Internship Coordinator &
Internship Faculty Supervisor, Healthcare Management
Expertise: Quality Improvement, Health Services
wwhitner@towson.edu



Michael Fisher, PhD, MS

Assistant Professor
Expertise: Health policy, Health program evaluation, Mental health stigma and access to care, Qualitative and mixed methods
mfisher@towson.edu



B. The Intern

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

- ❖ *Attend mandatory pre-internship meetings the semester before the Internship, as well as meet with the internship coordinator/faculty supervisor who assists in site selection and assures that the students review the Site-Summaries in the Pre-Intern Blackboard site containing profiles of over 70 possible internship settings. Interns are also advised to read reflective statements of previous intern experiences (if available) that are maintained for each internship site and Preceptor, as well as the internship portfolios compiled by former interns. The students' resumes and cover letters are reviewed as students must be interviewed and accepted by their preceptors in a normal job-interview process. Students are matched to sites by fit and GPA.*
- ❖ *One full-semester will be spent in the health care organization internship experience. The Intern should expect to commit to a fulltime work week (40 hours) for each week of the semester (16 weeks). Students are not allowed to take a spring or fall break during the Internship. Any adjustment*

in the work schedule from this policy must be discussed and approved by the Preceptor and TU's HCMN 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 Faculty Supervisor. *The major project will identify an organizational problem and 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 present this project to an audience such as at a staff meeting, the final internship meeting with the Preceptor and faculty supervisor, etc.
- ❖ Evaluation will consider the interns data management knowledge and skills, financial acumen as appropriate, and the integration and application of conceptual knowledgeability and student managerial judgment.

The following are examples of health care organization management processes in which active participation would be appropriate for student interns:

- Assessing 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 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;
 - Collecting and entering data for future analysis
-
- ❖ *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 patient/client population and employees of the health care organization at all times.

- ❖ *The Intern must maintain communication with the University Faculty 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, learning logs, telephone conversations, face-to-face meetings, and seminars.
- ❖ *If the Intern experiences difficulties that may be related to improper placement, the student must discuss the issue with his/her Preceptor at the health care organization FIRST.* The Intern should appraise the University Faculty 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 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 Internship Coordinator within five business day after interviewing the prospective Intern. In the event of a non-match, provide relevant feedback to the Internship Coordinator 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 Faculty 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- (Refer to *Internship Policies Form* in Appendix F; student signature required)

Absences:

The Intern must comply with the policies and rules set forth by the Preceptor and health care organization. Interns are 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/Mandatory Meetings:

All Intern Seminars/Meetings prior to and during the semester are mandatory. Interns are required to be dressed professionally (dressed for an interview) for all of the mandatory seminars/meetings.

Holidays:

The Intern will follow the work schedule and rules 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 its 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 Faculty Supervisor. Interns should discuss religious holidays with their Preceptor and University Faculty 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.

Criminal Background Check:

Towson University *does not* require a student to undergo a criminal background check; however, some health care organizations do require such clearance. If a student's internship site requires a criminal background check, it is the responsibility of the Intern to complete all necessary background checks, drug screenings, etc. to comply with such policies. Results dissemination should be carried out in accordance with the health care organization's policy. The University has no obligation to refund expenses for an outside party's requirement.

Appendices

Appendix A



Health Care Management Internship Interview Form

_____ has concluded an interview with me regarding possible placement at

Name of Intern

_____ as an Intern for the Fall 2019 semester.

Organization

This placement will be: _____ Acceptable _____ Unacceptable

Agreement if placement is acceptable:

I understand that full-semester Interns are expected to work 40 hours per week during the semester at the Health Care Organization (matching the normal full-time worker's hours at a given placement). The initial plan is to have this Intern work the following schedule (hours/days, including likely evenings and/or weekend activities):

I agree to promptly notify the Program Coordinator if these hours/days need to change.

Preceptor Name (please print) Signature Date

Intern Name (please print) Signature Date

Return to:
Wendy Whitner, PhD
Clinical Associate Professor & Internship Coordinator
Health Sciences, College of Health Professions, Towson University
8000 York Road
Towson, MD 21252-0001
Phone: 410-704-4223
Fax: 1-410-704-4670
Email Address: wwhitner@towson.edu

Appendix B



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:

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

Department of Health Sciences
Linthicum Hall, Ste 121

Phone: 1-410-704-4049
Fax: 1-410-704-4965

Appendix C

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: _____

Goal 3: _____

* specific project/task to meet goal: _____

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 a major project as defined in the Towson University HCMN Internship Handbook.

Signed:

Intern's Signature
Your name, Intern

Date

Preceptor's Signature
Preceptor's name, title

Date

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

Appendix D

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.

Appendix E

Evaluation

Intern Name:

Semester and Year of Internship:

Date Completed:

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 and/or Intern Faculty Supervisor.

For each competency area, please provide a rating of the Intern, using a typical 5-level Likert scale, evaluating the objective and subjective statements below. Comments or a brief description of the Intern's strengths and weaknesses are welcomed for each criterion.

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

➤ **BUSINESS SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

The student demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the content in the healthcare management major, and can apply and integrate such concepts in the field.

5-Strongly Agree 4-Agree 3-Neither agree nor disagree 2-Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

Comment:

➤ **KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTH CARE ENVIRONMENT**

The student demonstrates the ability to discuss and apply knowledge of the healthcare system and the environment in which healthcare managers/providers function.

5-Strongly Agree 4-Agree 3-Neither agree nor disagree 2-Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

Comment:

➤ **COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT**

The student demonstrates the ability to communicate clearly and concisely, establish and maintain relationships, and facilitate constructive interactions with individuals and groups.

5-Strongly Agree 4-Agree 3-Neither agree nor disagree 2-Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

Comment:

➤ **PROFESSIONALISM**

The student demonstrates the ability to align personal conduct with ethical and professional standards that include a service orientation and a commitment to lifelong learning.

5-Strongly Agree 4-Agree 3-Neither agree nor disagree 2-Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

Comment:

➤ **LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK**

The student demonstrates the ability to inspire individual and group excellence.

5-Strongly Agree 4-Agree 3-Neither agree nor disagree 2-Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

Comment:

➤ **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

The student demonstrates proficiencies in intrapersonal and interpersonal skills in the areas of self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness and social skills.*

5-Strongly Agree 4-Agree 3-Neither agree nor disagree 2-Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

Comment:

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

Appendix F

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS Department of Health Sciences

HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT INTERNSHIP POLICIES FORM

All Health Care Management Interns are expected to act within the professional context of their internship site. Students should arrive on time for professional commitments, including daily field experiences and mandatory on-campus meetings, as well as demonstrate attitudes of integrity and responsibility.

Interns will be treated as employees of his/her placement and must follow the policies and procedures of that particular site. He/She must effectively communicate any concerns or questions one may have to one's faculty preceptor, supervisor and/or program director regarding issues related to attendance, professional behavior, coursework, etc. that are outlined in the Health Care Management Internship Handbook for Interns and Preceptors. Students who fail to uphold these policies, including the **Department of Health Sciences**, will be subject to disciplinary measures that may result in the removal from the Internship or additional coursework.

Interns are expected to behave professionally and ethically. Students must communicate absences (ill, emergency, etc.) to their preceptor and faculty supervisor, and provide written verification of their valid absence. In the event of *inclement weather or holidays*, *the Intern must follow the opening/closing schedule of their internship site, even if Towson University is closed*. Students are expected to report to their placement if the facility at which they perform their Internship is open. Time off for religious holidays can be discussed as needed.

By signing this document, the student intern has acknowledged the receipt of the **Health Care Management Internship Policy**, and understands that the obligations outlined about must be met. A failure to meet these obligations satisfactorily may result in the dismissal from his/her Internship and possibly major.

Student Signature

Printed Name

Date

NOTE: The University has a legal obligation to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Documented disability students seeking accommodations, should register with the University's Office of Disability Support Services and notify your faculty preceptor, supervisor and/or program director prior to the start of the internship field experience. *Approved by the Department of Health Sciences 2020.*

