

Making the Most of Your Practicum/ Internship Experience

Pitt Public Health Office of Student Affairs
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How to make the most...

Before

- ✓ How to find site that is a good fit for you
- ✓ Benefits to you

During

- ✓ Expectations of you & your site
- ✓ Develop your professional image
- ✓ Connect with people at your site/ networking
- ✓ Navigate the work environment of your site

After

- ✓ Your post experience tasks
- ✓ Network and keep in touch
- ✓ Recommendations
- ✓ Job opportunities

BEFORE | How to find a site

- Talk to your advisor
- Talk to student services liaison
- Review school requirements
- Review department procedures and manual
- Talk with senior students
- Ask where others have gone

How to find a site... cont.

- Research what you are interested in
 - Google
 - Web sites (see handout of resources)
- Use LinkedIn Groups
 - Current research
 - Connect with Pitt Public Health alumni
- Be creative

Source: George Washington SPHHS presentation retrieved from
<http://sphhs.gwu.edu/studentres/practicum/onlinetraining/index.html>, 15FEB2013.

Benefits to you

- Contribute to a community resource or program
- Develop practical skills in a public health setting
- Develop personal confidence as a public health professional
- Provide glimpse of future career and setting
 - Insights
 - Experiences

Source: George Washington SPHHS presentation retrieved from <http://sphhs.gwu.edu/studentres/practicum/onlinetraining/index.html>, 15FEB2013.

Applying for a practicum

- Cover Letter Basics: To whom are you writing?
Cover letter is the place to demonstrate that you WANT to be engaged in ...
- CV or Resume? For whom are you writing?
CV or Resume demonstrates that you have capacity or transferable skills to add value to their organization.

Interview prep

- Research organization
- Telephone or Skype?
- Practice answering typical interview questions and behavioral questions
- Develop questions for the interviewer(s)
- Know location of interview and arrive early
- Dress professionally
- Bring typed list of at minimum 3 professional references

Source: George Washington SPHHS presentation retrieved from <http://sphhs.gwu.edu/studentres/practicum/onlinetraining/index.html>, 15FEB2013.

DURING | Expectations of you and your site

- SITE
 - Educational experience
- PRECEPTOR
 - Feedback
 - Learning opportunities
- YOU
 - Be a part of the team
 - Act with public health ethics and standards in mind
 - Professional image
 - Set goals

Source: How To (and Not to) Make the Most Out of Your Internship. Retrieved from: bostinno.streetwise.co/2012/06/08/how-to-and-how-not-to-make-the-most-out-of-your-internship/super-intern 29APR2013.

Goal Setting

- Two major areas for which you can have multiple goals:
 - Developing/ increasing competence: hard and soft skills
 - Developing growing community: peers, bosses, colleagues, mentors, those whom you would like to know and those whom you might help

- You may not have an end-goal in mind when starting the practicum but setting goals related to each of these will allow you to practice leading in any environment and increase your impact on your circle of influence.

Developing Competencies

- Increasing one's competency or profile in a particular area also lays the groundwork for promotion
- Look for opportunities to grown your own skills as well as solve someone else's problem
- Is there an opportunity to:
 - Collaborate on a research project
 - Publish an article or contribute to a book
 - Present at a professional meeting
 - Take a class or teach another

Developing Community

- Make the most of your practicum connections
- Community requires communicating 😊
- How is this different from networking?
- You need relationships with peers, bosses, and would-be collaborators as well as folks whom you admire in your field

Navigate the work environment

- Develop professional image
- Always be professional
- Don't expect everything to be prepared for you when you arrive on first day
- Set-up a system for staying up-to-date on project developments and for your accomplishments and tasks

Source: Some useful tips about the practicum. Retrieved from: www.einstein.yu.edu/docs/centers/public-health-sciences/current-students/practicum-capstone-handbook-7-5-2011.pdf, 07MAR2013.

Navigate the work environment... Cont.

- Make daily notes of your tasks and accomplishments
- Offer to share ideas
- Be observant
- Be willing to do work outside of your project
- Compile observations and consider providing them to your supervisor in a written report

Navigate the work environment... Cont.

- Have regular meetings with your supervisor
- Tackle all tasks with enthusiasm and a positive attitude
- Avoid negativity
- Never shun a chance to learn more about the site
- Get as much exposure as possible

It's Your Party too!

- Don't be afraid to ask questions
- Take initiative
- Find a mentor
- Network, network, network
- Leave with tangible accomplishments
- Enjoy yourself

*Source: Getting the Most out of Your Applied Experience. Retrieved from:
<http://krieger.jhu.edu/publichealth/academics/guidelines-uploads/Getting%20the%20most%20out%20of%20your%20Applied%20Experience.pdf>, 07MAR2013.*

AFTER | Post-practicum tasks

- Evaluate experience
 - Practicum forms
 - Save notes for yourself to recall experience
- Thank you notes
- Ask for recommendation letter
- Update your resume
- Update your LinkedIn profile and connect with those from practicum
- Stay connected to practicum organization
- Job opportunities

Thank you!

Any questions?

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Sources

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