IHS Internship Placement Process

Important Information

All IHS students are required to complete a capstone experience prior to graduation. Most students complete an internship. The internship consists of 200-240 hours of work at a health care or health related organization and attendance in the companion course, HSV 4900. Internship typically occurs in the last semester of the senior year.

Students must fill out an online application for their internship one academic year before they are planning to do their internship. Students are also required to attend a meeting with the internship coordinator. Students will be contacted by the coordinator when their applications are received. Students should review further information about internships located here:

https://wmich.edu/healthservices/academics/internships

Students create a meaningful internship based on their individual needs as they ready themselves for a career or graduate study. The careful selection of an internship site is the most significant step in this process.

Internship Options

- **Internship Site Leads**
  Most often, students will need to consult with the coordinator to acquire internship site leads. The coordinator and the student will meet to identify one or two sites that are consistent with the student’s future plans for employment and/or graduate study. The coordinator will most often provide the student with an internship site contact name and contact information for that person.

- **Using current place of employment for internship site**
  Only students who are taking the Pre-Physician's Assistant track may use their current job “as is” in a health-related field as their internship site. Other students employed within a health-related organization may use their employer organization as an internship if they are able to work in a different department or their supervisor is able to designate new responsibilities for the student specific to the internship. This will usually involve working extra-unpaid internship hours at the employing organization. The internship responsibilities must be related to the student’s program of study.

  Any internship established at the student’s current work location must have the approval of the internship coordinator as well as the work supervisor who agrees to serve as the internship site supervisor for internship.

- **Selecting your own internship site**
  Students are encouraged to use and develop network contacts for locating their internship and may elect to create an internship in a new or unique site. In such cases, students may be aware of opportunities in the community or know a health care professional willing to work with them. The internship coordinator must determine the appropriateness of a site that the prospective intern proposes and must approve all internship sites. Upon student request, the coordinator will contact a prospective site supervisor to explain the internship and WMU’s IHS internship requirements.

Contacting Potential Sites

When a potential internship site has been identified, the student is required to communicate with the internship site contact. Initial contact with the site may include a telephone call, e-mail, or letter. The student should introduce himself or herself in a manner similar to below (not word for word):

Hello, my name is __________ and I am a student at Western Michigan University majoring in Interdisciplinary Health Services. As part of the requirements for my degree, I must complete a 200-hour internship in a health care or health related organization. I am writing
(or calling) to see if you may be interested in speaking with me about the possibility of my
interning with ____________ (organization) for the upcoming _____________ (fall, spring,
or summer) semester. My career goal is to _______________________(fill in your personal
goals either for employment or graduate school) and I believe interning with your
organization would provide me with valuable experience. I would appreciate an opportunity
to meet with you to discuss internship. Please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Internship site contact people tend to be very busy. If you do not hear back from them in 7-10 days
send a professional and polite follow-up email or leave a voicemail requesting contact. If you do not
hear back from a site contact after three contact attempts (spread out over a few weeks) contact the
internship coordinator to determine a next step.

Placement interview at potential internship site
An in-person meeting with the potential internship supervisor is required in order to make a site decision. In
the introductory meeting, explicit expectations need to be agreed to by both parties. These expectations
include student internship tasks and duties and a discussion concerning the time commitment required by
both parties. During the initial meeting the student should provide the internship supervisor with appropriate
materials. These may include their resume and the Internship Handbook.

Internship site acceptance
- Once the student and the supervisor mutually agree to the internship, please inform the internship
  coordinator. Students must honor verbal agreements as binding and may not seek or secure another
  site once they have accepted an internship.

- Before the start of the internship semester, students must complete all site requirements. These
  requirements are unique to each site and may include: physicals, TB tests, drug screen, and a
  background check. See the IHS website for further information on obtaining needed checks/tests.

- Students must also register for HSV 4900 when registration opens. If you cannot self-register, email
  your advisor with your WIN and the CRN of the HSV 4900 class you wish to register for.

Students are responsible for maintaining communication with the IHS program and meeting all IHS contact
deadlines throughout the internship placement process.

Any questions and concerns contact:

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