

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Department of Public Health

Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

A Profile of the Health Care Administration Internship Program at
Western Kentucky University, Academic Requirements for the
Undergraduate and Graduate Programs, and Procedures

Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

This document contains the guidelines for students conducting their internship in the Health Care Administration program, Department of Public Health at Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky. Internship students, preceptors (responsible for supervising the student on site), and faculty advisors should refer to these guidelines for information relative to the types and scope of tasks/activities in which the student should be engaged in order to demonstrate competence and the ability to apply academic knowledge in an operational environment.

In addition, the guidelines provide Western Kentucky University requirements, program requirements, internship purpose, and objectives, in addition to other pertinent information relative to the internship experience.

Student interns and preceptors having questions concerning the internship program or desiring additional information, guidance, or clarification regarding any items contained within this guide should contact the faculty supervisor:

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Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENT

Each student in the health care administration (HCA) program is required to successfully complete a twelve week or 480 hour internship experience in an approved health care organization, health related organization, or a governmental agency that is associated with health care organization licensing, certification, or regulation. This can include, but is not limited to hospitals, long term care facilities, rehabilitation agencies, home health and hospice organizations, physician office practices, managed care organizations, reimbursement or financial intermediaries, medical suppliers, governmental agencies, research groups, pharmaceutical companies, information systems companies or health care consulting groups.

This is a mandatory prerequisite in order for the student to be eligible for graduation and awarding of a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in Health Care Administration from Western Kentucky University. The internship experience may be completed in any academic semester provided the student meets all current requirements for internship placement. The HCA program director is be responsible for reviewing and approving all applications for internship placement and for approving all internship sites.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the administrative internship experience is to provide the student with opportunities in an operational environment to:

1. Acquire and demonstrate competencies expected in a professional managerial environment within a health care organization as outlined above.
2. Integrate and apply the academic theory and knowledge acquired in the classroom to the actual practice of health care management.
3. Acquaint the student with various consumer, customer or client populations, organizational activities, scope of services, and required personnel within the internship organization.
4. Develop objective methods for evaluating responsibilities, decisions, and operations relative to effective and efficient management and organization of a health care organization.
5. Assess the external environmental factors which affect the strategic ability of the health care organization to operate such as: community organizations, advocacy organizations, civil rights organizations, federal and state regulatory agencies and regulations, reimbursement mechanisms and constraints, certification and accreditation procedures, public attitudes, consumers, competition, or unions.
6. Acquaint the student with the interrelationships and interdependencies of the various components of the health care delivery system and the interfaces to the internship organization.
7. Observe and study the interrelationships and interdependencies within the health care

Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

organization.

8. Allow students to assess the suitability of his/her qualifications for and commitment to the profession of health care management.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

The internship experience consists of a series of tasks and activities that the student must successfully complete in order to demonstrate his/her competence in a particular area and exhibit the ability to apply academic knowledge. The preceptor may verify the student's competence by reviewing performance and completion of tasks and activities, by observation, or by oral or written tests. The student's success during the internship depends on individual motivation, and application. Student success can be achieved by each individual who is capable of applying the theories, concepts, principles, knowledge, and techniques learned and acquired through formal academic preparation to practical operational situations, and problems in the areas to which the individual student is assigned.

During the internship, the student must conform to the general policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of the organization in the same way that all personnel of the organization must do. Students must pay particular attention to and conscientiously observe the ethical directives specific to the organization. Students must not interfere with the operations of the organization. Further, students must observe strict confidentiality of all information as would any health care professional be expected to follow. Students will speak in a professional manner at all times in the presence of personnel, patients, customers, clients, families, visitors, community representatives or other guests of the organization. Students are absolutely forbidden to discuss any information relative to a patient's condition unless specifically authorized to do so. Students will follow the directions of the preceptor or the preceptor's designee at all times in matters pertaining to the organization.

The preceptor, program coordinator, or the organization supervisor may, singularly or collectively, require the student to be assigned to different work areas and different shifts on a rotational basis. In such instances, the student will be under the supervision of the individual assigned by the preceptor and the student will be required to perform a variety of tasks and activities. Students are encouraged to seek the advice, counseling, and guidance of the preceptor and others assigned as the student's supervisor. Students should perform all tasks and activities assigned to them effectively and efficiently and to continually seek better ways of applying themselves in the internship experience, perform assigned tasks as directed, and exhibit a cooperative attitude at all times.

Students are reminded that the internship experience is an extension of the academic preparation and an opportunity to acquire experience in an operational environment. Students are also reminded remuneration by the University or the organization should not be expected or requested.

Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PRECEPTORS (Preceptor Responsibilities)

For students planning an internship with an organization that is not currently affiliated with the HCA internship program, a formal affiliation agreement must be established. It is requested that the chief executive officer (or authorized designee) of the organization complete and return an application for internship site affiliation, and two copies of the internship site agreement to the HCA program director. In addition, it is requested that the appointed preceptor forward a curriculum vitae to the program director. The aforementioned are required by the University and various accrediting agencies.

Preceptors will be responsible for verifying the student's competence relative to required tasks and activities as outlined in these guidelines. **The preceptor, or designee, must initial all student assignments and reports before they are sent to the faculty supervisor. If reports are being sent electronically, the student should first submit the report(s) to the preceptor who will then forward the report(s) to the faculty supervisor. This method should ensure the preceptor sees and authorizes all reports prior to submitting to the faculty supervisor.**

The preceptor should meet with the student on a regular specified schedule in order to evaluate performance, apprise the student of strengths and weaknesses, identify problem areas, and modify, if necessary, the outlined program to reflect changes and altered needs of the student and the organization. Preceptors may formulate and administer oral and/or written examinations to verify student competence in a subject or particular area.

Preceptors may formulate their own individual student internship plan as long as the University's plan is incorporated. However, such plans should be submitted in outline form to the HCA program director either prior to or during the first week of the internship.

The preceptor will be required to complete and submit to the faculty supervisor an evaluation of the student intern at the end of the internship period (Appendix E). The student will provide the preceptor with the appropriate copies of the evaluation form.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

Internship students will be required to submit reports to the University program director/faculty supervisor as follows:

1. Complete and forward both the "Internship Weekly Report" (Appendix A) and the "Internship Activity Log" (Appendix B) at the end of each week during the internship. The student is responsible for duplicating sufficient blank reports for the duration of the internship. Reports may be submitted via fax (270-745-4437), mail, or electronically. If reports are submitted by fax or mail, they should be signed (or initialed) by the preceptor. If reports are sent electronically, they should be submitted to the preceptor first, and the preceptor should then forward the reports to the faculty supervisor (this will indicate the preceptor's authorization of

Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

the material).

2. Consult with and determine mutually with the preceptor, any project, research study, etc., which will be commenced and completed during the internship period. Once the assignment(s) is determined, the student intern will be required to complete, and submit, an "Internship Project Agreement Form" (Appendix C) in accordance with instructions contained on the form.
3. Upon completion of the project, a "Project Completion Form" (Appendix D) should be completed by the student and authorized by the preceptor for submission to the program director/faculty supervisor.

In addition to the weekly reports and the project agreement form, student interns must:

1. Complete tasks and activities as outlined in these guidelines, and submit related reports, abstracts, etc., immediately upon completion.
2. All assignments and reports submitted by student interns shall be typewritten on quality bond paper or sent electronically, proof read for errors in spelling and grammatical construction, and initialed (or authorized) by the preceptor prior to forwarding to the faculty supervisor. **If reports are sent electronically, the intern should submit the report to the preceptor first. The preceptor will then forward the report to the faculty supervisor (this will ensure that the preceptor has had access to the material prior to submitting it to the faculty supervisor).** Assignments and reports not initialed by the preceptor will be returned. Erasable bond paper and oversized computer paper are unacceptable.
3. Faculty approval must be obtained for any deviation from the planned internship. Additionally, students will notify the faculty supervisor of any changes regarding work schedules, times, etc.

FACULTY SITE VISITS

The faculty supervisor will make one or more site visits during each internship period to confer with the student and preceptor jointly or with each on a private basis. The conferences will address areas relative to student's overall performances and evaluation thereof, student's abilities and capabilities, student's personal educational strengths and weaknesses, evaluation of internship experience, student's suitability for health care management, suggestions for student improvement, suggestions for program improvement, etc. The faculty supervisor will provide, in advance, each preceptor and student, with a schedule indicating the time and date of site visits. Other faculty visits may occur at unscheduled times.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

The preceptor will be required to complete and submit to the faculty supervisor an evaluation of the student intern at the completion of the internship (Appendix E).

PROGRAM PARAMETERS

The administrative internship period is twelve (12) weeks. The total number of clock hours associated with this period is approximately 480 hours; however, student interns will be required to complete additional hours as specified by the preceptor in order to provide the student with optimum opportunities for learning and acquiring operational experience. During this period of time, the student intern should be afforded the opportunity for exposure in all aspects of the organization operation including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Direct interaction with clients and families.
2. Contact with personnel in all of the organization's departments.
3. Involvement with the governing body.
4. Interaction with external environmental forces.
5. Exposure to organizational policies, procedures, planning, financing, etc.
6. Community involvement including seminars, conferences, meetings, professional association activities, etc.
7. Day and night shifts, weekends, holidays, etc.
8. Special assignments, projects, research, studies, etc.

OUTLINE OF PROGRAM

There are many organizations in which a student may perform an internship. The following outline is provided as an example of activities that might be undertaken in an acute care organization. If the student were in such an organization the following tasks and activities are representative of the expectations of the internship period. Hours are approximate and may be modified to meet needs of the organization or modified as situations and conditions dictate.

1. Twenty four (24) hours devoted to orientation of the organization, administrative policies, personnel policies, patient care policies, organization mission and philosophy, services available, patient composition, organization, etc.

Objective: To acquaint the student with the organization, various policies, departmental personnel, organizational structure, etc.

Requirements: Student will submit a summary of the orientation activities including organizational chart of organization (no free hand drawings will be accepted.); budgeting process and procedures; census procedures and reports; and the preparation of balance

Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

sheet and income statement.

2. Forty (40) hours devoted to review of federal, state, and organization manuals, policies, procedures, etc.

Objective: To permit the student to acquire a wide variety of information concerning rules and regulations relative to organization operation.

Requirement: Student will submit an abstract of information contained in the manuals. Examples of relevant manuals are:

- Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement manual
- Patient care policies manual
- Administrative manuals such as the corporate by-laws or the Medical staff by-laws
- Accounting and financial manuals
- Safety manuals such as a fire and disaster manuals and procedures
- Utilization review manuals
- Pharmacy manuals
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration manuals
- Personnel development and in-service training manuals
- Dietary manuals containing regular, therapeutic, and special diets
- Plant engineering and maintenance manuals
- Personnel manuals
- Infection control and sanitation manuals
- Third party payer manuals
- JCAHO, state licensure, certification surveys
- Other manuals as deemed pertinent by the preceptor

3. Forty (40) hours devoted to survey of the organization relative to certification of organization to participate in Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Objective: To acquaint the student with all aspects of the organization's services, responsibilities, requirements, standards, etc.

Requirements: Student will review previous surveys and submit summary of insights gained

4. Forty (40) hours devoted to survey of the organization's service area to identify all private, governmental, quasi-governmental programs and services available to qualified patients which the organization and patients may take advantage.

Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

Objective: To provide the student with an opportunity to research and learn about the various programs and services that are available in the organization's service area.

5. Forty (40) hours devoted to assignment in business office.

Objective: To provide the student with an opportunity to acquire knowledge relative to total accounting and financial procedures regarding operation of the organization.

Requirement: Obtain knowledge and provide summary of the following: accounts receivable procedures, Medicare, Medicaid, third party, private pay credit, billing, and collection procedures; general ledger and subsidiary accounts; chart of accounts; patient admission and financial status procedures; invoice reconciliation and payment procedures; cost report and cost report preparation procedures.

6. Twenty-four (24) hours devoted to assignment in dietary area.

Objective: To acquaint the student with the procurement, preparation, distribution, storage, etc., of food in the organization. Also, with various diets and dietary requirements.

Requirement: Student must observe and submit a summary of: food preparation, patient tray preparation, nutritional programming; food procurement, receiving, storage and distribution system; cost control methods and procedures; consultation and contract services.

7. Forty (40) hours devoted to assignment in nursing service.

Objective: To provide the student a comprehensive orientation to nursing service duties and responsibilities for patient care.

Requirement: Student will be required to summarize: staffing and staffing ratios; method of care planning and chart documentation; incident and accident procedures and reports; requisition of required supplies; drug and biological procurement, distribution, control, disposal, reports, etc.

8. Forty (40) hours devoted to assignment in engineering-maintenance area.

Objective: To familiarize student with the duties and responsibilities of the engineering department and with the preventive maintenance procedures, work request procedures, etc.

Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

Requirement: Student must summarize: routine maintenance and emergency request procedures; preventive maintenance program and procedures; life safety code; contract services; staffing; licensing requirements; fire and disaster program and procedures; emergency generator procedures

9. Materials Management

Objective: To familiarize student with the procurement, receiving, issue, and distribution system of the organization relative to supplies and equipment necessary for operation.

Requirement: Student must summarize: Vendor selection, bidding and procurement systems for durable and nondurable supplies, standard and non-standard stock items, and major and minor equipment; receiving and stocking system; inventory reconciliation; requisition and distribution procedures; inventory system; records maintained, vendor appointments, and security procedures

10. Forty (40) hours devoted to assignment in personnel department.

Objective: To provide the student with knowledge of the various personnel functions and the laws and regulations which affect personnel administration.

Requirement: The student will be required to report: job analysis procedures; formulation of job descriptions; formulation of job specifications; recruitment procedures (internal and external); interview methodology and procedures; selection procedures; placement procedures; orientation procedures; training programs and procedures; personnel policies; wage and salary program and procedures; position control procedures; labor-management relations; grievance procedures; benefit programs and administration; laws affecting personnel administration; other pertinent information relative to the personnel function of the organization;

11. Twenty-four (24) hours devoted to assignment in administrative office.

Objective: To acquaint the student with the duties and responsibilities of the chief executive/administrative officer and other top administrative personnel.

Requirement: The student will be assigned to observe the daily duties and routine of the chief executive/administrative officer and/or other top administrative personnel. Students will be required to submit a report on observations after review and consultation with the chief executive/administrative officer or other top administrative personnel.

**Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration
Internship Guidelines**

**Appendix A
Internship Weekly Report**

**Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration
Internship Guidelines**

4. Which courses/subjects you feel could be expanded or added that would have helped you perform your job better this week?

Appendix B

Internship Activity Log

Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

INTERNSHIP ACTIVITY LOG

Student: _____ for the dates of: _____

| Day of Week | Activities or assignments | Time spent in each activity |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Monday | | |
| Tuesday | | |
| Wednesday | | |
| Thursday | | |
| Friday | | |
| Other | | |

COMMENTS:

Appendix C
Project Agreement Form

INTERNSHIP PROJECT AGREEMENT FORM

Student Name: _____ Internship Site: _____

**Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration
Internship Guidelines**

Preceptor: _____ Date: _____

Title of Project:

Description and Purpose of Project:

Objectives (Expected results, use measurable indicators or quantify if possible):

Methods (Describe how you intend to accomplish/complete project):

Preceptor Approval: _____

Expected Completion Date: _____

**Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration
Internship Guidelines**

**Appendix D
Project Completion Form**

**Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration
Internship Guidelines**

Project Completion Form

Student Name: _____ Internship
Site: _____

Preceptor: _____
Date: _____

Title of Project:

Description and Purpose of Project:

Objectives Achieved:

Acquired Benefit (i.e., what did you learn?):

**Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration
Internship Guidelines**

Preceptor Approval: _____

Appendix E

Student Evaluation Form

**Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration
Internship Guidelines**

Student Evaluation Form

Student Name: _____

Internship Site: _____

Preceptor: _____

Dates of Internship: _____

The following evaluation is based on a five point scale. Please circle the number you believe most accurately portrays the student's performance or behavior. Space for additional observations or comments is provided at the end of the evaluation.

The student arrives to the site when expected.

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

When changes in the student's schedule occur, the student informs all affected by the change.

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

The student can be expected to conduct his or her activities without constant supervision.

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

The student fosters comfortable and communicative atmosphere with others.

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

Student prepares required reports and written assignments that are focused and free from errors.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Student prepares required reports and written assignments on time.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The student conforms to the organization dress code as appropriate for the activities of the day.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The student preserves the confidentiality and shows proper respect for personal privacy of others.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

When dealing with others, the student is polite and considerate in speech and manner.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The student maintains a clean and orderly work area.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The student reads directions thoroughly or listens to directions carefully.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The student concentrates on work assignments until their completion and disregards outside distractions.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Student utilizes available time with independent study.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

Student asks questions which indicate an interest in deeper or broader aspects of administration.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

When confronted with a complex problem (or project), the student is able to coordinate several activities, ideas, and thoughts.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The student shows the ability to organize assignments effectively and efficiently.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The student gives thought to and makes inquiries about the feasibility of a new or different course of action.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The student tries, despite difficulties, to accomplish assignments or planned activities. For example: willingness to stay beyond normal hours to complete work.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

In interacting with employees, visitors, customers, etc., the student demonstrates an awareness of the organizational or departmental procedures.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Almost Never | | | | Almost Always |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Overall, how would you rate the student's performance on the internship project required of them during the internship experience?

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Ineffective | | | | Very Effective |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Do you believe the project was a valuable learning experience for the student?

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|----------|
| Strongly Agree Disagree | | | | Strongly |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration Internship Guidelines

How valuable do you think the project was to your organization?

| | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|------|
| No | | | | | Very |
| Valuable | | | | | |
| Value | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

Would you hire this person to work in your organization if you had the opportunity?

Yes_____No_____ If your answer is no, please state your reasons.

Remarks: (additional comments about the student's performance during the internship period)

Academic Preparation.

In your opinion, and in the opinion of others with whom the student has interacted, how would you rate the academic preparation and knowledge base of this student?

Inadequate _____ Adequate _____ Good _____ Excellent _____

Academic Suggestions. In what areas do you think our students need more knowledge or preparation?

**Western Kentucky University Program in Health Care Administration
Internship Guidelines**