

# Field Experience in Health Policy and Administration

## HPA 395

Department of Health Policy and Administration  
College of Health and Human Development  
The Pennsylvania State University

**Professor:**

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*The syllabus for this course may vary depending on your section professor.*

*If you have questions regarding your internship or about any assignments, please contact us via phone and/or email as soon as the concern arises.*

### Course Description

HPA 395 is intended to expose students to real work experience in the field of health administration, policy and/or research. The internship is designed to mirror a full-time job. Through the internship, students will develop important professional skills that will help them launch a career in the healthcare industry.

### Course Objectives

The primary goal is to prepare students for post-graduation success in an entry-level position in the healthcare industry. Students will:

- Improve self-awareness
- Enhance speaking and presentation skills
- Enhance professional appearance
- Develop useful healthcare knowledge
- Improve listening skills
- Enhance networking skills
- Develop teamwork skills
- Improve assertive communication
- Improve resume skills

### Academic Credit Options:

At the time of registration and with approval by the Director and Associate Director of Undergraduate Professional Development, students can elect to earn up to six (6) credits for the internship course. Three (3) credits are required to graduate with a Health Policy and Administration Degree.

CREDIT HOURS = WORK HOURS

1 credit = 120 hours (minimum 12 weeks at 10 hours per week)

2 credits = 210 hours

3 credits = 320 hours

4 credits = 400 hours

5 credits = 500 hours

6 credits = 600 hours (maximum 15 weeks at 40 hours per week)

Divide the total number of work hours by the number of weeks you will be working to find how many hours you will need to work each week.

Tuition is charged for credit earned through internship courses the same as it would be for other courses.

Below are three sample options of internship completions:

**Option 1:**

Undergraduate students may earn 3 credits for completing their internship over one semester meeting the required 320 hours. The internship course requires no in-class time and all course requirements can be completed during the internship experience.

**Option 2:**

Undergraduate students may earn between 1 and 3 credits for completing their internship over no more than two consecutive semesters to meet the required 320 hours. The internship course requires no in-class time and all course requirements can be completed during the internship experience. Students completing the internship over two consecutive semesters will be graded on the following:

- First semester – internship logs, internship work plan, mid-semester evaluation
- Second semester – completed internship PowerPoint, preceptor’s evaluation, thank you letter, internship evaluation

**Option 3:**

Undergraduate students may earn more than 3 credits (3-6) for completing their internship over one or two consecutive semesters meeting and exceeding the required 320 hours. The internship course requires no in-class time and all course requirements can be completed during the internship experience. This option benefits students completing an internship during semesters of 15 weeks OR students who want to continue their internship over two consecutive semesters. Students completing the internship over two consecutive semesters will be graded on the following:

- First semester – internship logs, internship work plan, mid-semester evaluation
- Second semester – continued internship logs, completed internship PowerPoint, preceptor’s evaluation, thank you letter, internship evaluation

**Course Communication and Assignments**

It is important that every student become familiar with CANVAS – Penn State’s Course Management System. All course requirements and important updates will be conducted via CANVAS.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

The following table describes the main documents and papers you must submit to your HPA 395

Instructor in order to receive credit for your internship. For a more complete description of these documents, please refer to your Internship Manual.

### **Grading Scale**

95-100	A
90-94	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
65-69	D
<65	F

### **Instructions For Internship Workplan**

It is imperative that you meet with your preceptor prior to starting your internship in order to develop your Work Plan. The internship is a “work-like” experience, not exactly equivalent to “real” work. However, you are expected to rotate through different departments or divisions in your organization in order to gain the broadest possible experience. There are instructions in the Guides to HPA 395 regarding the nature of the ideal internship and Work Plan. You and your preceptor must meet to take the time to discuss and develop the activities that you will be engaged in prior to the initiation of your internship. It is up to you to make sure that your preceptor understands your HPA requirements. This is often a delicate balance. While we fully expect and desire that you become an asset to your organization, we also expect that you are assertive in getting the most out of the experience in terms of learning skills that will assist you in the future.

### **Instructions For Internship PowerPoint**

For this assignment, the student will incorporate the following questions/inputs into a PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint deliverables should include the following:

- 1) A brief overview of the organization where you are completing your summer internship or independent study
  - Include a brief description of the organizational structure within the department or organization itself. Depending on the size and complexity of the organization, you may focus on the particular area in which you’re interning, or if it’s a smaller company, the overall management structure. You can illustrate that with an organizational chart or narrative description, whichever fits best for your end product.
- 2) The mission and purpose of the organization you’re interning at (i.e., not-for-profit community hospital or for-profit consulting firm)
- 3) A brief overview of any project(s) you have been assigned

- Explain in some detail the purpose and goal(s) of the project, the tasks involved, and what strategies you used to accomplish it.
- 4) What have you learned from your internship experience that you could not learn in the classroom. Provide some specific examples such as:
- What have you learned about yourself during your internship?
  - What are your strengths and weaknesses?
  - What skills and areas of knowledge do you need to develop over the next couple of years, and how would you rate your preparation for your internship
  - Was HPA a good choice for you?
  - What suggestions do you have for the HPA department to improve students' preparation?
  - What advice would you offer new students' that are applying for summer internships next year?
- 5) In closing, do you feel this experience was a valuable component of your undergraduate education, and why?

### Instructions for Internship Logs

As stated in the student Internship Manual, you must keep a weekly log of your experience. Your log should include a brief summary of each day's activities typed in a bullet format, please see the example below. Each week should also have a key learning experience that illustrates new information you have learned from that week. Your preceptor should initial each page of your log. *Note: Each week's log should be no longer than one page in length.*

#### Sample Entry in Weekly Log:

Monday, June 10th

8:00 -12:00 pm: Met with preceptor to discuss plans and review project progression. Worked on patient satisfaction surveys and utilized Excel to create graphs. Attended a meeting with senior-level management to discuss strategic planning measures to be enacted within the next month.

1:00 - 5:00 pm: Helped co-worker organize and plan a professional development seminar. Researched HIPAA regulations to update brochure.

Tuesday, June 11th ... Etc.

#### Key Learning Experience (Sample)

"This week I really learned a lot about strategic planning and an administrator's role in the process. I also benefited from using various functions on Excel and feel more comfortable using the program. I now have a better understanding of what it takes to effectively plan a successful seminar."

### Attendance and Tardiness:

Like any professional work environment, it is your responsibility to attend your internship on a daily basis and be on time. Your preceptor will provide your professor with an attendance summary and attest to the completion of your 320-hour requirement.

If your preceptor notifies your professor of any unexcused absences, your grade will be reduced by 5% for each occurrence. In addition, if you arrive late two (2) or more times without notifying your preceptor, your final grade will be reduced by 5%.

If you are ill, have a family/personal emergency, or cannot show up to work for any other reason, it is **your responsibility** to notify your preceptor immediately. In addition, if you are absent for more than three (3) days, you must notify your professor immediately.

## **Academic Integrity**

*Departmental Statement on Academic Integrity:* Health care is a field that will challenge an individual's personal and professional ethics and morals on a daily basis. From patient confidentiality to the balance between cost control and quality care, health professionals, health policymakers, and health administrators face ethical dilemmas that must be handled in a responsible manner. This is an industry in which ethical compromises and shortcuts can simply have the worst consequences imaginable.

We think that student ethical behavior in class and at the University reflect the way they will behave when confronted with ethical dilemmas in the workplace. As a consequence, we feel there is no room in this field for students who believe that it is acceptable to plagiarize, cheat, or otherwise violate standards of academic integrity at Penn State.

Penn State policy on Academic Integrity is clear. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. The HPA faculty expects students to comply with the spirit as well as the letter of all university, college and department ethical standards. Accordingly, it is the responsibility of each student to understand all ethical standards that apply to their work. **Lack of knowledge of ethical standards will not excuse an ethical violation.** We expect students to understand and respect these standards. Each faculty member can be asked to clarify how these standards apply to assignments in their classes.

Penalties for violations of academic freedom are left to the individual faculty member's discretion. All academic integrity violations are reported to the College's Academic Integrity Committee. For serious offenses, Department policy recommends penalizing violations of academic integrity by assigning an "F" for the course.

## **Disability**

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you need accommodation or have questions about physical access, please see me as soon as possible.

Assignment	Due Date	Points	%
Signed and Completed Internship Work Plan	2 Weeks prior to starting date	25 points	18%
PowerPoint	Due last week	25 points	18%
Weekly Log	Due each week	20 points	14%
A formal thank you letter (draft of 3-paragraph letter must be approved by instructor and sent to preceptor by week 9)	Due last week	10 points	7%
Completion of Internship Evaluation	Due last week	25 points	18%
Preceptor's Evaluation	Due last week	35 points	25%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>140 points</b>	<b>100%</b>