

Supporting Professional Development in Public Health Internships

Most public health students want professional development and networking opportunities as part of their internship. Here are some ideas for how to incorporate these opportunities into an internship.

NOTE: You don't have to include everything listed below. Offering just 1-2 of these activities per internship is a great place to start. Ask your intern what they're most interested in, and plan from there. Creating even a few of these opportunities can make a big difference in your intern's experience.

1. Goal-Setting and Reflection

- Set goals together at the beginning of the internship.
- Have a mid-point check-in and an end-of-internship reflection to see how they're doing and where they've grown.
- Give clear, helpful feedback to support their learning and development.

2. Inclusion in Team Activities

- Invite interns to team meetings, brainstorming sessions, strategic planning, etc. They may not be familiar with all the details, but they really appreciate seeing how the sausage is made.
- Let them see how different departments or teams work together on public health projects.

3. Internal Networking Opportunities

- Host "meet-and-greets" or lunch-and-learn events with staff from various departments or leadership levels.
- Set up job shadowing so interns can explore different roles.
- Bring in guest speakers from your organization to talk about career paths and share advice.

4. External Networking Exposure

- Encourage interns to attend conferences, webinars, or association meetings (even virtually) relevant to the field.
- Help them connect with partners, alumni, or professionals in the field.
- Suggest or help them join professional organizations or student chapters (e.g. APHA).

5. Structured Mentorship

- Pair interns with mentors beyond just the preceptor. These can be professionals in different roles or departments.
- Set regular check-ins where mentors can discuss career development, challenges, and industry insights.

6. Professional Development Workshops

- Organize or recommend workshops and resources on:
 - Resume/CV writing sessions
 - LinkedIn tips
 - Interview skills
 - Public health-specific skills, like data analysis, program planning, or health communication
- Here are some online workshops that may be of interest: [Training Resources for Public Health Student Workers](#)
- Make it a requirement that students take a certain number of trainings as part of their internship, and have those trainings count towards their work hours.

7. Project Showcases and Presentations

- Ask interns to present their final project to your team or department. Invite higher-level staff too.
- Use it as a platform for them to practice public speaking, receive feedback, and celebrate their contributions.