

University of Massachusetts Summer Service-Learning Assistantship

The UMMS Summer Service-Learning Assistantship Program offers summer placements in a variety of health and human service organizations throughout the Commonwealth for between 9-12 rising second-year medical students. These placements allow students to develop deeper understanding of the social determinants and environmental influences on health as they build relationships in the communities they intend to serve.

Placements are planned for a minimum of 4 weeks; most students work at their sites for between 6-8 weeks. Students are paid \$12 per hour for up to a total of 200 hours. . Occasionally, students elect to work at their placement sites for more than this maximum number of hours; these additional hours, however, are pro bono and are not reimbursed by the school. Students are UMMS employees for the summer and so need to complete the requisite paperwork in May to ensure timely payment.

While placements can be arranged at sites throughout the state, placement preference will be given to students responding to community partners' specific requests, to students participating in a community-focused Pathway and to students who work with our Worcester Department of Public Health partners to advance activities related to elements of the comprehensive, community responsive Worcester Community Health Improvement Plan. The five priority areas articulated in the plan include: Healthy Eating/Active Living, Behavioral Health, Primary Care/Wellness, Violence/Injury Prevention, and Health Equity/Health Disparities. Students working in these areas would be working closely with the leads for the priority area, under the auspices of the Worcester Department of Public Health and UMass Memorial Health Care.

Goals:

- Learn about the agency where placed—including mission, funding, staffing, origins, governance – and population being served
- Explore relationships between medical providers and community, medical and health related organizations
- Learn about policy issues relevant to host site
- Contribute to the Commonwealth's health and human service agencies

Logistics:

1. Following an informational session held in January, students complete their application, including site placement preferences. We encourage students to reach out to either of the faculty preceptors, Heather-Lyn Haley and Suzanne Cashman, to discuss their own learning objectives and placement preferences. Applications are due by the second week of March.
2. Students are matched with sites and connected with a site preceptor to discuss their learning goals and the agency's service needs to ensure a good fit. In conjunction with the site preceptor, students may develop their placement schedules; these should not be less than four or more than eight weeks in length. Weeks are not required to consist of a full 40 hours.
3. Following this meeting, the student should contact Heather-Lyn Haley to confirm the placement or to identify an alternative. Ideally, this should be accomplished by the third week in April; then Dr. Haley or Cashman will meet with the student and his/her site preceptor.
4. Between four and five small group meetings will be held with UMMS faculty over the course of the summer. The purpose of these meetings is to share experiences and insights with other students as well as to trouble shoot and problem solve. The final meeting is often a potluck dinner meeting held locally.

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5. Students keep a journal of reflections, initially due at the end of their second working week and then at the end of the placement. These are seen only by the UMMS faculty, Suzanne Cashman and Heather-Lyn Haley.
6. Students participate in the university's end-of-summer poster session by completing a poster describing their experience; students may complete this assignment in pairs if placed together or in similar sites. Preceptors and other site representatives are encouraged to attend.