

REQUIRED INTERNSHIP – HEALTH FITNESS MAJOR

Kate Mathison discusses nutrition and health with employees at a Brown Bag Session with Hennepin County employees during her internship.



Kate Mathison works with employees at “CPR Anytime” sessions during her internship.



EXAMPLES OF INTERNSHIP SITES AND OPPORTUNITIES

*Orthopaedic and Fracture Clinic-PT Clinic,
Mankato, MN*

*Verizon Wireless Health and Wellness Center,
Mankato, MN*

Health East Optimum Rehab, Maple Wood, MN

*Southern Orthopedic Sports Medicine, Columbia,
SC*

Courage Center, Minneapolis, MN

3M Health Fitness, St. Paul, MN

Charter House, Rochester, MN

Spine and Sports Institute, Maple Grove, MN

South Suburban YMCA, Des Moines, IA

*McHenry County Women Infants and Children,
Woodstock, IL*

Health Fitness-Best Buy, Richfield, MN

AND MANY MORE...

**For more examples visit:
[http://homepages.gac.edu/~bvand/Internships.
htm](http://homepages.gac.edu/~bvand/Internships.htm)*

Catherine Osterhaus participated in the event, “Women on the Move” during her internship at the Minneapolis Heart Institute.



Alayna Osborne works with clients to improve fitness and strength at Charter House, Rochester, MN.



Goals of the Health Fitness Internship Experience

This experience encourages students to...

- apply and refine knowledge and skills acquired through Health Fitness course work in a real-world setting.
- further develop communication and interpersonal skills with supervisors, co-workers, and clients.
- explore career opportunities within the field of Health Fitness and related disciplines.
- begin the transition from “college student” to health fitness professional.

Description of Internship

All Health Fitness majors must complete a 12-15 week, full time (420 hours minimum) internship. Internships can carry anywhere from 1 to 3 credits. Internships occur during senior year (the summer before, fall, spring or summer after graduation), and after the successful completion of all courses required for the health fitness major except 350, 351 and 398. All HES required courses must have a grade of C- or higher before you can do your internship. The timing of the internship is often dependent upon one or more of the following: the student's second major and schedule/sequence of courses, financial aid, numbers of credits needed to graduate, athletic participation and personal preferences. Options are usually defined in the spring of the junior year before the fall registration period.

Types of Internships

Most of the health fitness internships fall in one of five categories: corporate, clinical, rehabilitation, health promotion, allied health and exercise physiology.

ALLIED HEALTH: These experiences reflect post-graduate opportunities in physical therapy, occupational therapy, physician assistant, chiropractic, nursing, MD and DO, and nutrition. These internships may also have clinical and rehabilitation aspects.

CORPORATE: If one wishes to pursue a career in corporate fitness, it is necessary to understand that the jobs are not in this part of the country. One of the purposes of the internship is to provide not only experience, but also networking for future employment. Interns also need to understand that to progress within this field a master's degree may be essential. As an undergraduate, a business major is also helpful for students who wish to pursue corporate fitness. It is a common expectation that interns will lead exercise sessions in these settings so students need to gain experience in leading activities such as aerobic dance and weight room orientations. It is important that these skills be developed before the student begins an internship in this area,

CLINICAL: These internships occur in hospital settings. Clients typically seen in these settings are those in cardiac rehabilitation, pulmonary rehabilitation, weight control and prenatal programs. Careers in these areas after internship and graduation usually require additional education and more science courses. Some of the internships have a minimum GPA requirement. Students interested in this area may also be taking courses in Pre-Physical Therapy or Pre-Occupational Therapy, Nursing, Health Education or Athletic Training.

REHABILITATION: These internships occur in rehabilitation settings and the clients typically seen in these settings are those who are working to rehabilitate following an injury. Students who choose this setting are often majoring in athletic training, pre-pt or pre-OT. While the lowest level positions may be available after graduation, additional schooling would most likely be required to assume any greater responsibility.

HEALTH PROMOTION: These internships are not necessarily linked with exercise programs. Interns are often involved in health screenings, education programs and employee assistance programs. Additional schooling is often required and courses as an undergraduate that will help are business, science, communications and health education.

EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGY: These internships may occur in a variety of settings. If it is the student's intention to go to graduate school in exercise physiology, a good GPA, additional classes and research work while at Gustavus would be helpful.

Location For Internships

If a student plans to go directly into graduate school at the time of graduation, then geographical location of the internship is not that critical. If a student plans to go into corporate fitness, location should be carefully considered.

Jobs in our area occur primarily in metropolitan areas. If a student knows an area of the country where he or she would like to live or go to graduate school, then this may be relevant to the decision about an internship.

Securing an Internship

A list of previously completed internships may be found at: <http://homepages.gac.edu/~bvand/>

It is the student's responsibility to find an internship. Each student will discuss the timing and possible internship options with Dr. Van Duser, Associate Professor-HES, before approval is given. It is extremely important that the student takes responsibility for all tasks associated with the internship. Early application is critical to ensure a student secures a desirable internship.

Financial Obligations

A student is required to take at least 1.0 course credit and may take up to three. If a student takes fewer than three courses, the college pro-rates cost on a per course basis. Summer tuition is NOT included within the annual tuition fee; students will pay \$2,200 per credit if taking fewer than 3.0 courses as of summer of 2011.

It is rare to find an internship that pays for services provided by an intern. A few pay a stipend towards a living allowance but the intern is then treated as a full-time employee in terms of work and hours expected. In this type of situation, a student intern quite likely will not have time to work at some other part-time job.

Finding a place to live when completing an internship is the student's responsibility. It is helpful to remember that when completing an internship during the semester, the student is not paying room and board in St. Peter. Many students choose to live with a family while completing the internship. Ways to find a family might include:

- asking the company for suggestions,
 - locating church or religious leaders in the area and asking this person for assistance, or
 - using the Gustie alumni directory which lists Gustie grads by cities and states.
- Many of our students have found relatives or friends to live with and some students rent apartments.

Most sites require that a student has reliable transportation.

For more information on the internship experience required for the Health Fitness major, contact Dr. Bruce Van Duser at bvand@gustavus.edu.