



College of Public Health 2010 Employer Survey Report
Summary of Survey Results

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Introduction

In July of 2010 136 employers of CPH graduates were contacted via email and invited to participate in an online survey regarding CPH graduates in the workforce. The survey was designed to gather employer perspectives on the College's preparation of public health graduates. CPH received 46 completed surveys for a response rate of 34%. Detailed methods are described in appendix B.

Results Summary

The most common organization type reported by employers was state or local government (38%) followed by hospitals or other health care providers (20%). Table 1 details the organization types reported. Ninety-eight percent of employers reported their organization was based in the United States and 91% reported the organization being in the public health field or having a public health related mission. The median size of employer organizations was 250-499 employees with the most common size (36%) reported being 1,000 or more employees (see table 2).

Employers rated the skill set of CPH graduates very high (3.35 overall on a 1- 4 scale with 4 as the best rating). Leadership skills were rated the lowest (3.09) and satisfied 89% of employers. Employers also rated CPH graduates in other areas. Again graduates were rated highly (4.54 overall on a 1-5 scale with 5 as the best rating). Demonstrating team building methods for achieving organizational and community health goals was rated the lowest (4.29) with 89% of employers satisfied with the area. Tables 3 and 4 detail all the ratings.

Thirty-five employers reported on the main responsibilities of CPH graduates. Responsibilities were in the areas of research and analysis (20%), epidemiology (20%), administration (14%), environmental and occupational health (14%), health education (14%), public health preparedness (6%), faculty (3%), and other (9%).

Of the 30 employers that left comments regarding overall assessment of CPH graduates, 93% commented on perceived strengths and 33% on perceived weaknesses. Of the perceived strengths reported, 25% were perceived personal strengths and 75% were perceived strengths in academic preparation. Academic preparation strengths reported included analytical/technical skills (9), public health knowledge (7), general academic preparation (3), communication skills (3), practical skills (2), and leadership (2). Of those that reported perceived weaknesses, most suggested graduates' practical skills could be strengthened (7), and another three suggested strengthening communication, leadership, and team work skills.

Employers were asked why they would or would not be willing to hire other CPH graduates if the opportunity presented itself. Thirty-three (72%) of employers replied and of those, 85% reported being willing to hire CPH graduates again, 9% were unsure, and 6% were not hiring. Most did not give reasons, but five reported preparation as the reason for their willingness to hire. Three that were unsure about hiring each reported a different reason: being unsure how much the degree impacts performance; perceived applicants have too much research training and not enough public health experience, and; applicants may not understand work within a political context. A listing of all comments is in appendix A.

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Table 1: Employer Organizations

Organization	Frequency	Percent
State or local government	17	38%
Hospital or other health care provider	9	20%
Association, foundation, voluntary, NGO, or other non-profit organization	6	13%
Federal Government (US or foreign)	6	13%
University or college	6	13%
Pharmaceutical, biotech or medical device firm	1	2%
Consulting firm	0	0%
Military	0	0%
Other industrial or commercial firm	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total	45	100%

Table 2: Organization Size

Number of employees	Frequency	Percent
1-10	2	5%
11-24	2	5%
25-49	1	2%
50-99	8	18%
100-249	6	14%
250-499	4	9%
500-999	5	11%
1000 or more	16	36%
Total	44	100%

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Table 3: Skills Rated by Employers

Based on your experience with USF COPH graduates employed in your organization, please rate our graduates in the following areas:	Mean	Standard Deviation	% good or very good rating	<i>n</i>
Problem solving skills	3.41	.497	100%	44
Analytic / assessment skills	3.47	.505	100%	45
Systems thinking skills	3.33	.522	98%	45
Basic public health sciences skills	3.55	.504	100%	42
Cultural competency skills	3.27	.618	96%	45
Writing skills	3.30	.558	95%	43
Oral communication skills	3.37	.488	100%	46
Leadership skills	3.09	.570	88%	43
Skills to conceptualize problems related to field of expertise	3.43	.545	98%	44
Skills to analyze determinants of health and disease using an ecological framework	3.21	.622	95%	38
Information technology skills to access, evaluate, and interpret public health data	3.42	.543	98%	45

1=very poor, 4=very good

Table 4: Areas Rated by Employers

Based on your experience with COPH graduates employed by your organization, please indicate your level of satisfaction in the following areas:	Mean	Standard Deviation	% Satisfied	<i>n</i>
Seeks clarification or asked questions when necessary	4.54	.585	96%	46
Ability to work independently	4.51	.661	96%	45
Works collaboratively with diverse communities and constituencies (e.g. researchers, practitioners, agencies and organizations)	4.51	.589	96%	45
Demonstrates team building methods for achieving organizational and community health goals	4.29	.787	89%	45
Takes initiative	4.47	.588	96%	45
Meets goals and deadlines	4.60	.539	98%	45
Promotes high standards	4.67	.477	100%	45
Values continuing professional education	4.71	.458	100%	45
Exhibits professionalism in appearance, behavior and attitude	4.59	.498	100%	46

1= very unsatisfied, 5=very satisfied

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Appendix A: Open ended comments

What are the main responsibilities of the USF CPH graduates you employ?

- Administrative oversight for clinical research trial application.
- Director of Emergency Preparedness and Response activities and the Laboratory Response Network, program director, leadership team
- Program management, consultation, policy development, technical assistance, legislative bill analysis.
- In service, marketing and customer relations
- Public Health Preparedness
- Public Health Preparedness to include planning for an all-hazards environment.
- Infection Control
- Infection Control and infection surveillance
- Manages the Environmental Compliance Department for one of the largest school districts in the nation.
- Responsible for planning and implementing a comprehensive environmental health program.
- water quality assessments
- Communicable disease surveillance.
- Disease intervention through field investigations, personal client interviews and interpretation of data.
- Epidemiology - the person primarily conducts data analysis, statistical trends, participates and coordinates the public health preparedness exercises, and point of dispensation (POD) which should be utilized if there was a bioterrorism attack. In addition the person assist with the development of Disease Control Newsletter; disease investigation in particular with outbreaks, and lastly, assist with the education of the community, and physicians regarding the importance of reporting communicable disease and how to place the needed control measures.
- Epidemiology, Surveillance, Public Health Preparedness, Environmental Health
- Epidemiology/Hepatitis
- Field epidemiology disease investigations
- Reference diagnostics and molecular surveillance for viral vaccine preventable diseases for the United States at CDC. Support epidemiological investigations of outbreaks of measles, mumps, rubella and varicella in the US. Support enhanced control and elimination of measles and rubella globally through WHO/UNICEF Programs.
- Faculty
- health education outreach community-based research
- Manage a childhood obesity intervention in a school district
- Supervisor of several community outreach programs.
- Varies depending on needs but may include: research, health education, administration
- Working for an organ procurement organization in developing potential of organ donor referrals, staff education and promoting organ donation in a health care setting.
- Community health initiatives and research.
- Health Data Analysis
- Lead Scientific Researcher
- Research

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- Research, analyze and compile information on H1N1 related community response and recovery activities.
- Statistical analysis
- Statistical analysis
- Lab coordinator
- Monitors compliance with clinical standards Trains physicians and support staff on electronic medical records OSHA training Clinical skills training
- Working with credentialing, faculty relations and faculty development.

Please provide an overall assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the graduates of the University of South Florida College of Public Health in terms of academic preparation (coursework, field experiences, etc.) and overall work behavior.

- Because I am not in the same office as graduate, it would be difficult to provide strengths and weakness in terms of academic preparation. In addition, graduate worked on assignment after work hours. I was not involved in field experience of graduate. However, I did review a portion of the graduate's project and felt that it attempted too much in a short period of time given the target audience. In terms of overall work behavior, graduate was a hard worker.
- Couldn't be more pleased, very knowledgeable in field, isn't afraid to ask if needs to, takes initiative in projects, works well independently and as part of a team.
- Employee developed skills required to think as an epidemiologist.
- excellent overall work behavior
- Excellent preparation by USF for this employee
- Excellent strengths in analytical work, communication, and leadership.
- Excellent Technical and analytical ability.
- Excellent work ethic, knowledge skills, loyal, well versed in the subject matter, smart. On occasion communication skills ineffective because of a defensive posture at the outset when dealing with an issue or because of a pre-existing strong position on a particular subject which in effect shuts out other viewpoints.
- good preparation mostly academic, need more hands on and practical experience in local health departments
- Graduates are professional, analytical, self-starters and do not require a lot of hands-on training. Like most new positions, training in specific areas is an absolute but I've been lucky with most of the field experiences.
- graduates are well versed in using resources to get needed information. Weakness: the epi students do not have a working knowledge of outbreak investigation upon graduation. This requires on the job training at the local level. Not a big problem as we have a 9 person epi team. In a small health dept this would present a problem early in the graduates career.
- High satisfaction.
- I don't always see an application of theory and general program planning skills being used in problem-solving. How to apply fundamentals to actual practice could be emphasized.
- I would assess their academic preparation as strong and overall work behavior as excellent.
- Some of this is covered within #26. Literature reviews and writing skills are always strong. The students I have worked with have an understanding of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. They are able to work well in a team setting and are strong contributors to our research process.
- Strengths: they are community-minded and have a solid sense of team work and cultural competency Weaknesses: Continued efforts to enhance research and evaluation skills

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- Strengths: Knowledge of health care disparities and statistical rationale. Strong work ethic.
Weaknesses: Poor leadership skills
- Strong candidates and very knowledgeable of PH. Some have more leadership personality traits than others which is normal regardless of education preparation.
- Strong data analysis and information technology skill sets.
- The caliber of the graduates from USF College of Public Health is impeccable. The students are well prepared to participate in the various situation and or positions that are delegated depending on the need. They possess the knowledge base, leadership skills, and team building skills, and networking which is needed in order to succeed in the field of public health.
- The coursework prepares the graduates, including the field experience, to step right into a public health position. The graduate working in our department exhibits professionalism and dedication to the field. He works independently and serves as a role model and mentor for other department staff.
- The employee was an independent thinker and self-starter. She also had perfectionist tendencies that in her position were highly valued.
- The student is prepared for statistical analysis.
- The students in general have good analytical skills, however, have little "real world" work experience and have some difficulty relating to business practices.
- Very competent and has essential contacts within the field.
- very good problem solving and analytical skills; good presentation skills, but could be better prepared in writing skills
- Very knowledgeable, professional, dependable, dedicated
- Very prepared for independent work. Highly skilled at data analysis. Very satisfied with overall work behavior.
- Very strong technically; some challenges in working with a team
- Weakness is writing skills Strengths are -- communication skills are very strong, she has an authority about her and is knowledgeable. She excels at presentations, is very detail oriented at staff meetings and very thorough when she explores an issue.

Given your experiences with our graduates, why would or wouldn't you be willing to hire other graduates should the opportunity present itself?

- At the moment we are not hiring.
- Currently we are not hiring.
- I am not sure how the program affected graduate's overall work production, quality, and preparedness to work in the public health sector as graduate was hired after having already started the USF program. So I can not really state how a person graduating from USF would weigh in the decision making process when hiring.
- In a recent interview of several graduates the question the students asked me was what type of research would they be involved in. The current class work tends to lead the graduate to be comfortable in research more than actual public health work. There needs to be a balance between research and real public health experience.
- Need to understand that a new graduate does not start out at the top of the organization. Need to dress appropriately for the work place. Need to understand work within a political context.
- always willing to hire graduate growing professionals.
- I consider USF a key resource for talent.
- I do not have any problem in continuing doing presentations of the services that we offer for the graduates of USF.

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- I would be very willing to hire other MPH graduates as the curriculum prepares them very well for infection prevention surveillance.
- I would be willing to hire other graduates of USF College of Public Health.
- I would be willing to hire other graduates should the opportunity present itself.
- I would be willing to hire. MPH provides good background and base knowledge for health care field.
- I would definitely hire an graduate if I had an opening.
- I would definitely hire your graduates if they prove to be the best applicant
- I would hire a student from USF due to their scholastic and field experience which is needed at my organization in order to conduct robust analysis of public health systems, practices, and lastly, obtain grants that are geared towards public health and evidence based practices.
- I would in a heart beat. In fact I am working on hiring one now.
- I'd be glad to hire another MPH grad if the need arose.
- See #26 and 27 for why I would hire another CPH student. No reason that I wouldn't.
- This individual was hired by this organization before graduating from your institution. I would look favorably on other graduates should the opportunity be presented since your institution seems to screen for the best all around candidates.
- We have hired students for years to work at the City of Tampa Water Quality Lab. Many of them have been a valuable asset to our organization.
- Would and have.
- Would be willing to hire due to professionalism and knowledge.
- Would be willing; however, lab skills are needed as well.
- Would definitely consider hiring based upon the experience to date.
- Would definitely hire more graduates if the opportunity presented itself.
- Would definitely hire program graduates.
- Yes
- yes
- yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes, would hire from USF.
- yes.

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Appendix B: Survey Methods

Employer contact data were gathered from the CPH student exit survey (2008-2010) and from a survey to alumni (2008). Both surveys asked respondents to optionally list contact information for their direct supervisor. Respondents were informed that the supervisor would be contacted and asked to complete an employer survey about USF CPH graduates where both the employer and CPH alumni would be anonymous.

Once the employer data were collected, records with email address or phone numbers were kept, all other records were discarded. Employers missing email addresses were phoned and told they were identified as a potential employer of a CPH graduate and asked if they would be interested in participating in our online employer survey. If they were interested, their email address was collected. After the calls were completed, those employers with no email address, who were self employed or worked for the College of Public Health were excluded. This left 136 unique employer email addresses.

An Email invitation to take the employer survey was sent to 136 employers July 2, 2010. A follow-up email was sent July 9 and final follow-up email sent July 21. CPH received 46 completed surveys for a response rate of 34%.