
How to Hire the Best Health Promotion Staff

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Session Objectives

The attendee should be able to:

- Describe how to create excellent job descriptions for both a health promotion director and a staff health educator position.
 - List 3-5 examples of essential interview questions to ask health promotion applicants.
 - Identify 3-5 recruiting venues for attracting a strong candidate pool.
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Overview

- Background -- *Guidelines for Hiring Health Promotion Professionals in Higher Education*
- Overview of health promotion
- Benefits of hiring well-qualified health promotion professionals
- Types of positions
- How to attract well-qualified candidates
- Academic degrees, training and preparation
- Salary
- Creating a position description
- Interviews
- Essential question topics with examples
- Advertising options

Background: *Guidelines for Hiring Health Promotion Professionals in Higher Education*

- Need to support hiring well-qualified health promotion staff
 - Lack of specific degree programs addressing health promotion in higher education
 - Limited credentialing options
 - Repeat inquiries from administrators, listservs, etc.
 - Position descriptions did not reflect established standards:
 - ACHA Standards of Practice for Health Promotion in Higher Education
 - Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care
 - Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education

Guidelines for Hiring Health Promotion Professionals in Higher Education Committee Members

- Jane Emmerée, Committee Chair
 - Gina Baral Abrams
 - Alison Beaver
 - Jim Grizzell
 - Sarah Mart
 - Amy Melichar
 - Paula Swinford
 - Ric Underhile
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Health Promotion Defined

- Health promotion is “the combination of educational and environmental supports for actions and conditions of living conducive to health.” (Green & Kreuter, 1990)
- Developing “health-related programs and policies to support student learning,” and advocating “for campus, local, state and national policies that address campus and community health issues”
(ACHA Standards of Practice for Health Promotion in Higher Education)
- Adopting an ecological approach that addresses both individual and environmental influences on health

Benefits of Hiring Well-Qualified Health Promotion Professionals

- Trained and experienced to design and implement *evidence-based* and *cost-effective* health promotion *programs to improve the overall health and academic performance of college students*
- Specific competencies include:
 - Conduct needs assessments of the population and campus community
 - Set measurable program objectives
 - Use theories and models of health promotion
 - Implement evidence- and theory-based programs
 - Evaluate programs for student learning outcomes, individual health status and behavior changes, and community health and change
 - Report outcomes

Types of Health Promotion Positions

- A range of positions exist:
 - Management to staff positions
 - Generalists to specialists
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Types of Positions:

Director of Health Promotion

- Professionally trained individual responsible for assessing, planning, implementing, supervising, and evaluating administrative activities to insure mission accomplishment and high quality effective health promotion services
 - Supervising and evaluating staff, management and coordination of the budget, policies, programs, and resources that result in student learning and health behavior and status improvement on individual and community levels
 - Oversees the department's strategic planning process and development of the department's vision, mission, goals and objectives for student learning and health behavior and status
 - Conducts needs assessments, prioritizes health issues, and organizes, implements supervises, monitors and evaluates health promotion efforts
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Sample Position Description Components:

Director of Health Promotion

Develop strategic plans, goals, and measurable objectives for health promotion	Essential
Plan, administer, and manage operating budgets	Essential
Hire, train, manage, supervise, and evaluate professional, support, and/or student staff	Essential
Actively participate in professional organizations, preferably in a leadership capacity	Preferred

Types of Positions:

Health Promotion Staff

- Position titles may include specialists, coordinators, or health educators
 - Health promotion staff serve in a variety of roles and are specifically trained to:
 - Use evidence- and theory-based strategies and methods
 - Develop policies, procedures, interventions, and systems
 - Conduct individual and campus community assessments of health risks, needs and interests
 - Select priority health issues based on needs assessment results
 - Set measurable program goals and objectives
 - Plan, implement and evaluate evidence and theory-based interventions
 - Promote advocacy and policy development to help students learn and improve health behaviors and status.
 - **Should not** spend a significant amount of time coordinating and delivering events, activities, health fairs and presentations
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Sample Position Description Components:

Health Promotion Staff

Plan, implement, and evaluate theory- and evidence-based health promotion strategies, policies, programs, and services	Essential
Collaborate with key stakeholders on and off-campus to develop a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach to health for students	Essential
Incorporate multicultural diversity and social justice concepts and principles into health promotion services	Essential
Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) or eligible and intent to become certified	Preferred

Attracting Well-Qualified Candidates

- Define desirable academic degrees, training, and preparation
 - Determine appropriate salary
 - Create a comprehensive and relevant position description
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Academic Degrees, Training and Preparation

- Director-level candidates:
 - Minimum of a Master degree or advanced degree in public health, health promotion, health policy, health education, or closely related field.
 - Staff-level candidates:
 - Minimum of a Bachelor degree and at least two years of health promotion-related work experience.
 - Hire professionals with specific abilities and skills versus attempting to hire someone to “do everything” to address a certain content area
 - Provide clear responsibilities and qualifications for all health promotion positions
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Salary

- Salary determination may be influenced by many factors:
 - Geography
 - Level of education
 - Experience
 - Benefits
 - Internal institutional equity
 - Other factors
- According to CAS, the health promotion staff salary levels and fringe benefits “must be commensurate with those for comparable positions within the institution, in similar institutions, and in the relevant geographic area.”

Creating a Position Description

- Creating a comprehensive and relevant position description will attract many qualified health promotion candidates
 - A mediocre job announcement may inadvertently detract exceptional candidates
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What to Exclude From Position Descriptions

- Inaccurate terminology
 - e.g., “Health Promotions”
 - Advertising responsibilities
 - Advertising or marketing medical, dental or counseling services
 - Primary focus on topic expertise
 - Position centered on expertise and experience in one or more illnesses, behavioral problems or health topics
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Interviews

- In an *ideal* Health Promotion staff search, a multi-disciplinary committee of faculty, staff and students will:
 - ❑ Pre-screen applicants via a phone interview process
 - ❑ Conduct at least one full day on campus interview process with finalists
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Essential Question Topics

- Academic Preparation and Training
- Collaboration
- Diversity and Social Justice
- Educational Methods
- Evaluation and Needs Assessment
- Evidence-based Practice
- General Health Promotion
- Literature Review
- Policy
- Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking
- Program Planning
- Research
- Standards and Frameworks
- Strategic Planning and Goal Setting
- Theories and Models
- Other

Sample Interview Questions by Category

- Academic Preparation and Training
 - *Describe your academic training, university-level coursework and/or continuing education experiences relevant for this position.*
- Collaboration
 - *Describe a time when you collaborated with peers from other departments in order to advance your health promotion initiative.*
- Diversity and Social Justice
 - *Provide an example of how you have applied issues of diversity and social justice to your health promotion practice.*
- Educational Methods
 - *Which of the following is your strongest skill? Public speaking, conducting workshops, facilitating individual behavior change sessions or small group discussion/facilitation. With which are you the least comfortable?*
- Evaluation and Needs Assessment
 - *Describe a time when you evaluated the process, impact, and outcome objectives of a health promotion program. What strategies did you use? How did you use the evaluation results to make decisions about the future of the program? How did you communicate the results to your community?*

Sample Interview Questions by Category

- Evidence-based Practice
 - *Tell us about evidence-based health promotion strategies that you have implemented in your practice or health promotion programs.*
 - General Health Promotion
 - *What does the term “health promotion in higher education” mean to you?*
 - Literature Review
 - *How have you applied the results of a literature review to the development of a health promotion program or development of educational materials?*
 - Policy
 - *Tell us about a time when you worked toward changing a policy to improve the health of a community. What were some of the essential steps in the process? What were some of the challenges and how did you work toward solving them?*
 - Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking
 - *Describe a difficult situation that you have faced in your work and how you worked to solve it.*
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Sample Interview Questions by Category

- Program Planning
 - *Describe a complex health promotion program you planned or in which you participated. What was your specific role in the program? What specific steps did you take to plan the program?*
- Research
 - *Please provide an example of when you assessed student learning outcomes.*
- Standards and Frameworks
 - *What is your understanding of the ACHA Standards of Practice for Health Promotion in Higher Education and how would you apply them if offered this position?*
- Strategic Planning & Goal Setting
 - *Tell us about a time when you needed to set short- and long-term goals for your department and how you monitored progress toward those goals.*
- Theories and Models
 - *Provide an example of how you have applied health promotion theory to the development of programs.*
- Other
 - *Inquire about computer, supervisory, and communication skills as appropriate and as per your Human Resources department.*

Advertising Options

Name	Contact Information
American College Health Association (ACHA)	http://www.acha.org/prof_dev/classifieds.cfm
American Public Health Association Public Health CareerMart	http://careers.apha.org
Chronicle of Higher Education	http://www.chroniclecareers.com
HEDIR: Health Education Directory, with HPCareer.net	http://www.hedir.org
HigherEdJobs	http://www.higheredjobs.com
Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention	http://www.higheredcenter.org/jobs/
Hlthprom listserv	send email to hlthprom@lists.wisc.edu
NASPA Health in Higher Education Knowledge Community listserv	send email to hhekc@listserv.naspa.org
NASPA Placement Exchange	http://www.theplacementexchange.org
Student Health Services listserv	send email to shs@listserv.utk.edu

References and Resources

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- Green L, & Kreuter M. Health promotion as a public health strategy for 1990s. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 1990;11:313-334.
- National Association for Student Personnel Administrators. *Leadership for a healthy campus: an ecological approach for student success*. PDF file at <http://naspa-sql.naspa.org/help/archives/docs/EcologyBooklet.pdf>. Accessed on April 15, 2008

Questions?

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