

**The Cooperative Experience and Internship Program
in Health & Kinesiology at Purdue University:
An Overview and Empirical Analysis of Student Preferences
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Abstract

The Department of Health and Kinesiology at Purdue University offers two professional development options: an internship program and a clinically-based cooperative education program. The internship program, typically completed during the last year of the undergraduate program, has been offered by the department for over 10 years. The cooperative education program available through the department was just recently implemented in August 2006 as a requirement in the recently created Personal Fitness Training degree program - which has been recognized as the first four-year degree program in the United States for students planning to pursue a career in personal training. During their time in the program, students participate in eight cooperative education or clinical practice experiences, obtaining experience in both on-campus and off-campus fitness settings. This presentation will provide an overview of the department's experience with both programs and present data from a recently completed empirical study that uses conjoint analysis to examine the impact of factors believed to impact students' preferences for internship and coop options. These factors relate to the location of the internship/coop site (i.e., whether the site is located in the local area, in a neighboring state, or in another part of the country), the reputation of the organization (whether the organization has a local, regional, or national reputation), compensation provided (whether the student would receive no pay, minimum hourly wage, or a fixed monthly stipend), experience of the supervisor at the site (whether the supervisor would have 1-5 years experience, more than five years experience, or be a senior level person with a recognized reputation in the field), and placement opportunities (whether the organization has no track record for helping students find jobs, provides some job placement assistance, or typically hires students after the internship/coop is over).