

Roles and Responsibilities of the Special Education MSU Interns

Interns are students of teaching, ready to begin an intensive and sustained period of learning to teach in the content of practice. In contrast to conventional “student teaching programs,” Interns are not expected to begin the year ready to teach on their own. Instead, they are expected to engage in observations, co-planning and co-teaching with their collaborating teachers and gradually build their capacity toward assuming an extended responsibility for lead teaching.

Interns are in a period of transition from being students to becoming professional teachers while at the same time retaining the perspective of a learner. It is important that Interns begin to see themselves as life-long learners rather than just students fulfilling requirements. Interns are expected to take an active role in learning as well as to contribute to the learning of fellow Interns. Because the Interns’ conduct during the Internship year reflects on them as professionals, it is important that their responsibilities and the standards by which they are assessed be as explicit as possible.

Planning and communication

- Inform your field instructor in writing of your schedule in the school and your collaborating teacher of your schedule in seminars, and of any changes that occur in these plans.
- Arrange observation and conference times with the field instructor. Notify your field instructor if an observation needs to be rescheduled or canceled for any reason.
- According to formats and procedures negotiated with the field instructor and collaborating teacher, develop unit and daily lesson plans in writing and in advance of instruction, and have them approved by the collaborating teacher and field, or course, instructor. A good rule of thumb is that the plans should be detailed enough that another teacher could follow them. Plans need to be handed in to the collaborating teacher and field instructor during the week prior to teaching so that suggestions for revision can be incorporated into the plans. Suggested unit and lesson planning formats are included in the section “Why do interns write unit and lesson plans?”

Professional activities

- Plan with the collaborating teacher ways to participate in orientation activities at the school and introduce yourself to school administrators, specialists, secretaries, custodians, and other teachers in the building.
- Attend school faculty meetings, parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings and other professional inservices. Follow school procedures for days you are sick, leaving detailed lesson plans for your collaborating teacher. Absences due to sickness will be made up if deemed necessary by your field instructor, MSU liaison, and collaborating teacher.

Personal Learning

- Read and follow the school/teacher handbook; follow the school faculty dress code and your collaborating teacher’s expectations, e.g., the time to be in the classroom before and after school.

- Take initiative in asking questions, searching out resources, inviting feedback, and creating - opportunities to learn.
- Participate in communication in a professional manner.
- Participate in joint conferences as indicated by calendar and/or as needed.
- Reflect on your teaching and your learning about teaching. Share and discuss your reflections with your collaborating teacher, field instructor, peers, and other professionals.

Managing outside work

- Because of the demands of the internship, you are encouraged not to work outside of the school. If you will need to work (a) before 5:00 p.m., (b) more than 10 hours per week, or (c) more than one evening per week, then discuss your plans with your collaborating teacher and field instructor.
- Inform your collaborating teacher and field instructor about your work arrangements and negotiate schedules that are mutually acceptable.

Policy: Professional Conduct by Teacher Candidates

Approved by the Teacher Preparation APPC, 1/11/96

In this time of transition from being a student to being a professional teacher, it is important that you begin to see yourself as a lifelong learner rather than a student fulfilling university requirements. Both your school-based experiences and your university coursework are vital and integral components of your professional preparation. Because the way you conduct yourself in these settings reflects on you as a professional, we want to be clear about your responsibilities with regard to professional and ethical conduct. Failure to comply with these (and other university policies governing student conduct) will result in a review of your progress by your team and specific recommendations regarding your continued participation in the teacher certification program.

Attendance and Punctuality

You are expected to be present and on time for your professional commitments. If you must be absent from any one of your professional responsibilities due to illness or an emergency, you must **inform the people who are affected by your absence**. That is, for your field placement you must notify your collaborating teacher, your MSU field instructor, your co-teachers, and your team partners. For your on-campus courses, you must notify your course instructor. More than two absences during a semester from on-campus courses or pre-internship field placements is cause for concern. Recurring absences or tardiness will put your recommendation for continuation in the program in jeopardy. During the internship, interns who are absent more than four days in a semester in their school placement will be required to make up the time.

If you have difficulty meeting this expectation because of an emergency or any other reason, talk to your field instructor in advance or as soon as possible. Informing the appropriate people about extenuating circumstances will allow us to work with you to make appropriate arrangements.

Confidentiality

CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS: Your field experiences are an important part of your learning and you will be discussing them in your courses. Just as teachers are expected to respect the privacy

and dignity of the children and families with whom they work, so we expect you to use discretion. In casual conversations or social situations, do not relate stories from classrooms or schools that may be embarrassing to teachers or students or that include sensitive information about a child or family. When discussing classroom situations in class, do so carefully. Use a fictitious name for the student involved if you need to include family or individual information in your explanation or if the situation is particularly difficult. Mask the name of a student on any written or visual work shared in class or used in an assignment. When discussing teaching practice you have observed in the field, be mindful of maintaining a tone of professional courtesy.

INTERVIEWS: Use pseudonyms and screen/mask identifying information when reporting interviews with children/youth/adults. If an assignment requires you to interview an adult, you should clearly state or give to the interviewee, in writing, the purpose of the interview and the uses you will make of the material. Ask your instructor for an example if you are unsure how to word this statement.

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOTAPES/AUDIO TAPES: Always ask permission of the classroom teacher to make students' photographs/videotapes/ audio tapes or to use them in displays/portfolios. Occasionally there are circumstances which require that a student's whereabouts be kept secret and photographs are not allowed. Some schools and districts require written permission from parents/guardians for taking any photographs, videotapes or audio tapes. Be sure to check with the classroom teacher on what is needed. Use the written permission form provided to you.

PORTFOLIOS: If you use students' work or interview material in your portfolio, use pseudonyms and screen/mask names and personal identifying information.

DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS: Ask your classroom teacher if there are any other district or school requirements regarding confidentiality that you should be aware of.

Dress and Deportment in Schools

When you are in school, you are expected to dress appropriately. Be aware of your attire and appropriateness of your teaching activities (e.g., on floor, bending over). You will be viewed and judged as another adult by students, parents, teachers and other people in the building. Be polite and considerate of other adults in the building including the principal, custodians, secretary, paraprofessionals, etc.

Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

The University Drug and Alcohol Policy will be enforced which prohibits the possession or use of illegal drugs and alcoholic beverages in classes and field placements. Students are expected to be free of the influence of such substances in classes and field placements. Tobacco is not to be used on school property. Be aware of school policy regarding cell phones and beepers.

Professional Communication

Professional education can be an intensely personal and challenging process. In your classes and field placements you are expected to give and accept constructive feedback appropriately and to react appropriately in stressful situations. You are also expected to take an active role in your learning and contribute to the learning of your fellow students.

If you have concerns, problems, or questions about any aspect of your coursework or fieldwork, you should first address them to the course instructor or field instructor who is most directly involved. This applies to situations at the University as well as in the field. If the situation is not resolved at that level, you should request assistance from the internship manager.

Zero Tolerance:

Be aware of and follow the school policy regarding zero tolerance of weapons.