

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**

**Early Childhood Education Program Internship Manual**  
**Early/Primary Education PreK-3 (EPK3) Licensure**  
**Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Licensure**  
**Dual Licensure EPK3 and ECSE**

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) program is committed to preparing educators, leaders, and researchers to work with and on behalf of culturally, linguistically, socio-economically, and ability diverse young children (birth to third grade), their families, and their communities.

### **Program Principles**

The ECE program faculty expects candidates to develop as collaborative, ethical leaders in the early childhood education field by acting upon the following:

- Apply a **strengths-based approach** to their work with young children, families, communities, and other professionals;
- Engage in **reflective practice** and make informed decisions using research and knowledge of effective instructional strategies and tools;
- Recognize and understand **social justice**, especially the impact of race, ethnicity, linguistic heritage, poverty, disability, gender, and other diversities on young children, families, communities, and other professionals;
- Engage in **advocacy** for equity, access, and participation to support young children, families, communities, and other professionals; and
- Possess an awareness of **global connectedness** and its impact on young children, families, communities, and other professionals.

### **Early Childhood Education Program Information**

For information about the Early Childhood Education program, visit the program website at <https://education.gmu.edu/early-childhood/>, email [earlyed@gmu.edu](mailto:earlyed@gmu.edu), or call 703-993-3844. For specific information about the internship process please contact Dr. Bweikia Steen, ECE Internship Coordinator, at [bsteen2@gmu.edu](mailto:bsteen2@gmu.edu).

### **Internship Experiences**

All teaching internship placements must be arranged through the Clinical Practice Specialist who works directly with the surrounding school districts to set up appropriate internships. Candidates may not contact schools directly to request an internship. Contacting a school directly may result in not being placed at that school and may possibly result in not being placed in that school district. Candidates are assigned to work at sites under the mentorship of a mentor teacher and supervision of a university supervisor.

### **EPK3 Internships**

EPK3 candidates will engage in 16 weeks of successful full-time student teaching in the endorsement area sought (prekindergarten through third grade) under the supervision of a mentor teacher with demonstrated effectiveness in the classroom and a university supervisor assigned by the university. Candidates will enroll in ECED 790 Internship with Diverse Preschool Children (3 credits) for 8 weeks and ECED 795 Internship in Kindergarten Through Third Grade (3 credits) for 8 weeks. Candidates engaged in an on-the-job internship will enroll in ECED 788 Internship in Early Childhood Education Prekindergarten – Third Grade (6 credits). The summative supervised student teaching experience will include at least 150 clock hours spent in direct teaching at the level of endorsement (prekindergarten through third grade) in a public or accredited nonpublic school, and at least 300 total hours. The exact schedule will vary depending upon the contract hours for the candidate’s mentor teacher. However, candidates must be on site full time during each week of the internship and must be completely responsible for the classroom for at least two (2) full weeks during each 8-week placement and at least four (4) full weeks for a 16-week placement. **Due to the nature of EPK3 programs, internships must be completed during the academic school year, not during a summer session.**

### **ECSE Internships**

ECSE candidates will engage in 16 weeks of full-time student teaching in the endorsement area sought (early childhood special education, birth – age 5) under the supervision of a mentor teacher with demonstrated effectiveness in the classroom and a university supervisor assigned by the university. Candidates will enroll in ECED 791 Internship with Diverse Infants and Toddlers (3 credits) for 8 weeks and ECED 793 Internship in Preschool Early Childhood Special Education (3 credits) for 8 weeks. Candidates engaged in an on-the-job internship will enroll in ECED 789 Internship in Early Childhood Special Education Birth – Five (6 credits). The summative supervised student teaching experience will include at least 150 clock hours spent in direct teaching at the level of endorsement (early childhood special education, birth – age 5) in a public or accredited nonpublic school, and at least 300 hours total. The exact schedule will vary depending upon the contract hours for the candidate’s mentor teacher. However, candidates must be on site full time during each week of the internship and must be completely responsible for the teaching and work responsibilities for at least two (2) full weeks during each 8-week placement and at least four (4) full weeks for a 16-week placement. **Due to the nature of ECSE programs, internships must be completed during the academic school year, not during a summer session.**

### **Dual Licensure Internships (EPK-3 and ECSE)**

Candidates pursuing licensure in prekindergarten through third grade *and* early childhood special education (birth through age 5) work in a variety of contexts to meet the equivalent of three internship placements. Candidates will work with their university supervisor and mentor teachers to fulfill the hour requirements as outlined in the EPK3 internship and the ECSE internship placement experiences above.

### **Learner Outcomes**

This internship experience is designed to enable candidates to do the following:

1. Create a supportive, healthy, challenging, and respectful environment for learning for diverse young children that includes the application of effective classroom management techniques,

guiding and supporting positive behavior, classroom community building, and individual instruction and interactions that promote emotional well-being and teach and maintain behavioral conduct and skills consistent with norms, standards, and rules of the educational environment.

2. Apply knowledge of human growth and development and the interaction of individual differences to guide learning experiences and relate meaningfully to students and families.
3. Use a variety of evidence-based, developmentally appropriate teaching and learning approaches to support young children's development and learning.
4. Design, implement, and evaluate developmentally meaningful and challenging curriculum for each child that builds classroom community and includes individual interventions that promote emotional well-being.
5. Plan, implement, and evaluate culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based instruction that promotes the development and achievement of culturally, linguistically, socioeconomically, and ability diverse young learners.
6. Assess diverse young learners, analyze data, use analysis to plan instruction, evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, and reflect on future instruction and interactions to promote positive outcomes for each child.
7. Use technology to support instruction, assessment, planning, and delivery for diverse young learners.
8. Collaborate with individuals, teams, and families to promote children's development and learning.
9. Engage in reflective practice.
10. Exhibit standards of professionalism, ethical standards, and personal integrity with children, families, the mentor teacher, the university supervisor, and professionals in the student teaching setting.
11. Use writing as an instructional and assessment tool to generate, gather, plan, organize, and to communicate for a variety of purposes; integrate correct written conventions (i.e., grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling); and format using current APA style.

## **Responsibilities**

Internships are regarded as a critical component of teacher education programs. The effectiveness of the internship experience depends upon the degree to which the whole team – Candidate, Mentor Teacher (MT), University Supervisor (US), and Seminar Facilitator – fulfill their responsibilities and establish a good working relationship. Open communication is extremely important.

## ***Candidates***

The internship is a time to focus on the art of teaching and working with diverse young children and their families with the guidance and support of practicing professionals. Candidates must remain flexible in adapting to differences in school cultures, teaching styles, MT and US philosophies, and individual child/family strengths and needs. In particular, candidates will do the following:

- Demonstrate initiative, responsibility, and resourcefulness.
- Become reflective practitioners, learning from other professionals, diverse young children and their families, and their own experiences, including mistakes.
- Ask for help, advice, and feedback – and act on it as appropriate.

- Demonstrate high standards of ethics and professionalism in interactions with colleagues, children, and families.
- Video-record their teaching each week over the course of the internship and upload to the identified platform.
- Complete weekly progress reports and submit to Blackboard weekly.
- Complete weekly lesson plans and submit to Blackboard at the beginning of each week.
- Write detailed daily lesson plans and submit to the MT for review prior to teaching.
- Write detailed lesson plans prior to a scheduled observation and submit to the observer prior to the observation.
- Upload Formal Observation Reports completed by the mentor teacher and university supervisor to Blackboard.
- Upload Internship Midpoint Progress and Dispositions Evaluations completed by the university supervisor with input from the candidate and mentor teacher to Blackboard.
- Upload Internship Final Performance and Dispositions Evaluations completed by the university supervisor with input from the candidate and mentor teacher to Blackboard.
- Complete the Lesson plan assessment assignment and upload to Tk20/VIA and to Blackboard.
- Maintain an accurate log of hours and submit signed form to Blackboard at the conclusion of each internship placement.
- Follow the schedule established with the MT and US during the semester.
- Share internship course syllabus with MT and plan for how assignments and requirements will be completed.

### ***Mentor Teacher (MT)***

Mentor Teachers (MT) have an important responsibility to be a mentor and coach as candidates apply learning from coursework and continue to develop their teaching competencies. The MT, with the assistance of the US, must be willing to act as a mentor by providing support and guidance for the intern.

The following is a list of suggestions and responsibilities for the MT:

- Encourage candidates to find their own teaching style by permitting them to try their own techniques and approaches in order to learn from their successes and/or mistakes.
- Treat the candidate as a colleague.
- Confer regularly, especially about the rationale for educational decisions.
- Build confidence by having the candidate gradually assume responsibility for guiding behavior and implementing instruction. Be sure the candidate is prepared to take full responsibility of the classroom and/or teaching/work responsibilities for at least 2 weeks for an 8-week placement and at least 4 weeks for a 16-week placement.
- Review course syllabus for assignments and requirements and assist the candidate in planning for site-related work.
- Oversee candidate's planning; monitor the candidate's learning about the children and their families, and offer relevant feedback.
- Help the candidate video-record and critically reflect on teaching events.
- Conduct two formal observations (for 8-week internship) and four formal observations (for 16-week internship), and provide written observation reports.

- Encourage reflection and self-analysis when giving feedback.
- Be open and honest about areas for growth; provide assistance as appropriate.
- Discuss strengths and concerns with the US on an on-going basis.
- Introduce the candidate to the full range of duties, to the available resources at the site, and to all appropriate staff.
- Complete weekly progress reports with the candidate. The signed report should be given to the candidate for upload to Blackboard.
- Participate in two 3-way meetings with the candidate and the US: one midpoint evaluation to discuss progress and dispositions and one at the end of the internship to evaluate performance and dispositions. Provide input to the evaluations.
- Provide the candidate with a recommendation for employment, if warranted.
- Follow the FERPA Policy guidelines as written in the FERPA Policy in Student Internship Placements for Mentor Teachers and University Supervisors.
- Complete and return paperwork necessary to receive the MT Honorarium.

### ***University Supervisors (US)***

The University Supervisor (US) serves as a link between the school and Mason, providing support and guidance to both the candidate and the mentor teacher (MT). University supervisors (US) play a critical role in facilitating communication and in providing feedback, assistance, and evaluation for candidate. The following is a list of responsibilities for the US:

- Meet with the candidate and MT to establish internship expectations, determine schedule, and review site-linked assignments. Clarify any questions or concerns about assignments with MT as soon as they come up.
- Be accessible to the candidate and school or agency staff through regular visitations, email, and/or by phone.
- Encourage open communication and a collaborative approach to supporting and providing feedback to the intern.
- Provide guidance on policies and procedures for the internship. Check to ensure that they are followed.
- Conduct at least two formal observations during an 8-week period and four formal observations during a 16-week period. Follow each observation report with a conference and follow up with a written report. Provide a copy of the observation report to the intern to be uploaded to Blackboard.
- Review copies of weekly progress reports and provide feedback as appropriate.
- Guide development of teaching competencies by promoting reflective practice through interactive coaching and mentoring, reviewing weekly lesson plans, and encouraging self-analysis.
- Facilitate the candidate's video-recording and critical reflection of teaching events.
- Participate in internship seminars and share major concerns or changes with the ECE internship coordinator in a timely manner.
- Facilitate the record keeping and documentation necessary for program administration and licensure.
- Facilitate two evaluation meetings with the candidate and the MT: one at midpoint to discuss progress and dispositions and one at the end of the internship to evaluate performance and dispositions. Complete the final evaluation with input from the candidate and MT.

- Evaluate and grade candidate's performance.
- Provide the candidate with a recommendation for employment, if warranted.
- Follow the FERPA Policy guidelines as written in the FERPA Policy in Student Internship Placements for Mentor Teachers and University Supervisors.

### **When Issues Arise**

Open, honest, and ongoing communication among the candidate, MT, and US is essential to the growth of the intern and for addressing issues as they arise. The MT and US should talk with the candidate and with each other immediately if there are any concerns about the candidate's dispositions, performance, and/or professionalism, especially those that may affect satisfactory completion of the internship. Often candidates can make changes when they become aware of the issue/s. Likewise, candidates should talk with their mentor teacher and university supervisor as soon as they have concerns about their internship. In most cases concerns and issues can be addressed within the MT-US-intern team. However, in some cases, the team may need to seek additional assistance, especially if there is a possibility that the candidate will not complete the internship with a grade of Satisfactory. In this case, the MT, US, and/or candidate should contact the ECE Internship Coordinator, Dr. Bweikia Steen, at [bsteen2@gmu.edu](mailto:bsteen2@gmu.edu).

### **Schedule of Meetings, Observations, and Evaluations**

The observation and feedback process is a critical part of the internship. It is important that the whole team carefully plans the observations and opportunities for feedback. There will be no surprise formal observations. The purpose of the observation is not to pass judgment on the candidate; rather, its purpose is to promote reflection and to set goals that support continued growth.

### **Internship Documentation**

Candidates will maintain electronic files of all work and forms related to the internship.

Candidates will upload video clips of teaching to the identified platform.

Candidates will upload the following to Blackboard:

- Weekly Lesson Plans
- Weekly Progress Reports completed by the candidate and mentor teacher
- Lesson Plan Assessment Assignment
- Formal Observation Reports completed by the mentor teacher and university supervisor
- Internship Midpoint Progress Evaluation completed by the university supervisor with input from the candidate and mentor teacher
- Midpoint Dispositions Evaluation
- Internship Final Evaluation completed by the university supervisor with input from the candidate and mentor teacher
- Final Dispositions Evaluation
- Signed Log of Hours
- Summary of Internship Placement Sheet

Candidates will share the following with their MT:

- Weekly Lesson Plans

- Detailed Daily Lesson Plans
- Completed Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3 of Weekly Progress Report
- Other information, as needed

### **Evaluation**

The US will work with the MT and the candidate to evaluate the candidate's progress throughout the internship. Evaluation tools will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Weekly progress reports completed by the candidate and MT
- Formal observation reports by the MT and the US
- Video clips
- Midpoint progress evaluation and final performance evaluation forms

### **Log of Hours**

The Virginia application for teacher licensure requires reporting the amount of time spent in certain activities during the candidate's internship. Candidates are responsible for maintaining this record as part of the Internship Notebook. Candidates should record hours on the Log of Hours sheet each day. At the end of the internship, the log must be verified by the MT and reviewed by the US. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the log is current and verified/reviewed.

Candidates must also record the age and grade level of the children at their site, as well as the number of children receiving services for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Special Education. Using the Log of Hours form will ensure accuracy in the certification and licensure process.

Hours must be totaled by the candidate, verified and signed by the mentor teacher, and reviewed and signed by the university supervisor. During the last visit by the university supervisor the candidate must submit all totals, which may require estimating for the final days at the site. The candidate will transfer these totals onto the Summary of Internship Placement and Final Grade form and upload to Blackboard.

Candidates must document total number of hours spent on site in the following activities:

**Direct Teaching** – This includes both co-teaching and independent teaching. Co-teaching includes shared responsibility for planning, instruction, assessment, and student supervision. It may involve team teaching with an entire class or working with individuals or small groups. Independent teaching includes full responsibility for supervising and teaching an entire class according to plans developed by the candidate and approved by the MT. Candidates must take full responsibility of the classroom for at least two full weeks during 8-week internship and four full weeks during 16-week internships.

**Preparation/Collaboration** – This is time spent on site developing lessons, preparing materials, working with specialists and other colleagues, and attending school staff meetings or professional development.

**Observation/Assistance** – This is time spent on site observing the MT and/or other teachers and specialists working with children. The candidate may be called upon to assist with a lesson as a paraprofessional but would have little or no responsibility for planning or supervision of students.

**Family & Community Activities** – This is time spent on site interacting with families and the community. Activities may include writing or calling families, parent conferences or informal meetings, Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings, and attending site-based gatherings such as curriculum nights or other events.

### **Lesson Plans**

Candidates will develop *weekly* and *daily* lesson plans using the ECE Lesson Plan Template or a lesson plan format approved by the MT and US. They will upload the *weekly* plans to Blackboard for the US to review and will submit the plans to their MT for approval prior to teaching independently. Candidates will submit detailed *daily* lesson plans to the MT for feedback. These plans will be filed electronically and will be made available to the US upon request. Candidates will provide detailed lesson plans to the MT and/or US prior to scheduled observations.

### **Video-Recording**

Candidates will video-record their teaching and interactions with children several times over the course of their internships. They will upload the video-recordings weekly to the identified platform.

### **Internship Policies**

#### ***Attendance***

During the internship, candidates are required to work the teacher contract hours. Candidates will maintain the same schedule as the MT, with the contract day as the minimum but not the norm. Candidates should consult with the ECE Internship Coordinator to determine whether the Mason schedule or the school system holiday schedule will be followed. This may vary from semester to semester, depending on when scheduled breaks and holidays fall.

#### ***Absences***

Candidates follow the site policy regarding notification of absences for illness. **The MT and principal/director must approve all other absences in advance.** The US must be notified of all absences within 24 hours. The log of hours should also show any absences. Time missed may need to be made up.

#### ***Substituting***

Candidates *are not* permitted to substitute during their internships.

#### ***Professional and Legal Responsibilities***

Candidates are legally responsible for exercising “reasonable care” for students’ welfare and for complying with federal, state, and local policy regulations. This is best accomplished through careful study of the **teacher/employee handbook for the center, agency, or school** where the

candidate is assigned. Special attention should be given to responsibilities and procedures for dealing with suspected child abuse.

### ***Confidentiality of Records***

School division and Mason policies regarding student records will be followed. A candidate's evaluations may be shared with the MT, US, and responsible administrators until the internship is completed. After that time, access will be in accordance with the Privacy Act. No materials will be released for employment purposes other than for verification of meeting licensure standards. In addition, all records of children and families that candidates may have access to during internships MUST be kept confidential.

### ***Professional Recommendations***

Most prospective employers expect applicants to submit recommendations in some form from their MT and US. If a negative recommendation is warranted, the candidate should be told. A letter of reference written on behalf of a student by a mentor teacher, university supervisor, or other person does **NOT** provide that person with the authorization to disclose educational records or to discuss the student's performance even if the letter welcomes telephone calls or other inquiries about the student. The *FERPA Consent to Release Educational Records and Information* must be completed by the student prior to the disclosure of this information.

### ***Grading***

The School of Education (SOED) has approved the following grading policy for ECED internships:

- The grading scale will be S (Satisfactory), NC (No Credit), or IP (In Progress) in accordance with Mason policy for internships.
- Degrees of Satisfactory performance by a candidate in Early Childhood Education will be documented on the Teacher Candidate Assessment by the MT and US.
- The US shall determine the grade after consultation with MT. The US may also consult with the Early Childhood Education Internship Coordinator, especially when the candidate may receive a No Credit or an In Progress grade.
- Candidates who receive a No Credit grade will not be recommended for teacher licensure unless they repeat all or part of the internship with satisfactory performance. This may require re-enrolling and paying tuition for additional credit hours in a subsequent semester or paying a fee for extended supervision.
- Candidates whose performance cannot be evaluated at the end of the grading period will receive a grade of IP (In Progress). An IP grade shall be changed to Satisfactory or No Credit for candidates upon completion of requirements – usually before the beginning of the next semester.
- In some cases, a grade of No Credit may be accompanied by a recommendation that the candidate not be allowed to repeat the internship. In such cases, the candidate will be counseled out of the licensure program, but not necessarily out of the program.