

George Mason University

Early Childhood Education Program Internship Manual

Early Childhood Education PK-3 (ECE PK-3) Licensure

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Licensure

Dual Licensure ECE PK-3 and ECSE

Graduate Certificates

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 (ECEP), visit the program website at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/earlychildhood/>, email earlyed@gmu.edu, or call 703-993-3844. For specific information about the internship process please contact Dr. Bweikia Steen at 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 a university supervisor.

EPK-3 Internships

EPK-3 candidates enroll in either two 3-credit internships during their program of study: a preschool internship and a kindergarten through third-grade internship or one 6-credit internship in an early childhood general education setting (preschool through third grade). Each 3-credit internship requires a minimum of **225** hours and **8 weeks** of full-time experience. At least **150** hours of the two internships combined must involve direct teaching. Each 6-credit internship requires **16 weeks** of full-time teaching experience, and candidates are responsible for documenting a minimum of **450** hours with at least **150** direct teaching experience noted. During the internship, candidates are required to work the teacher contract hours. Virginia Licensure Regulations for School Personnel (2007) stipulate that candidates “must be in classrooms full time.” 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 PK-3 programs, internships must be completed during the academic school year, not during a summer session.**

ECSE Internships

ECSE candidates enroll in either two 3-credit internships during their program of study, an early intervention (Infant and Toddler) internship (birth-2) and a preschool special education (3-5) internship, or one 6-credit internship in an early childhood special education setting (working with children birth through age five). Each 3-credit internship requires a minimum of **225** hours and 8 weeks of full-time experience. At least **150** hours of the two internships combined must involve direct teaching. Each 6-credit internship requires **16 weeks** of full-time teaching experience, and candidates are responsible for documenting a minimum of **450** hours with at least **150** direct teaching experience noted. During the internship, candidates are required to work the teacher/interventionist contract hours. Virginia Licensure Regulations for School Personnel (2007) stipulate that candidates “must be in classrooms full time.” 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. **Due to the nature of early intervention and preschool special education services, both 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 five) work in a variety of contexts to meet the equivalent of three internship placements. Candidates will work with their university supervisor and mentoring teachers to fulfill the hour requirements as outlined in the EPK-3 internship and the ECSE internship placements experiences above.

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 Course Instructors – fulfill their responsibilities and establish a good working relationship. Open communication is extremely important. The program considers the candidate to be “a work in progress.”

Candidates

The internship is a time to focus on the art of teaching and working with diverse young children and their families under the guidance and support of practicing professionals. Candidates must remain flexible in adapting to differences in school cultures, teaching styles, supervisor philosophies, and individual child/family needs. In particular, candidates should 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, feedback – and act on it as appropriate.
- Write detailed lesson plans for daily activities and review them with the Mentor Teacher.
- Demonstrate high standards of ethics and professionalism in interactions with colleagues, children, and families.
- Videotape their teaching each week over the course of the internship in order to engage in an in-depth analysis of their teaching practice using Edthena software.
- Write a weekly critical reflection and submit it to the university supervisor.
- Maintain an Internship Notebook to be reviewed at each visit by the US, which includes progress reports, an accurate log of hours, and other documentation requested by MT and US (see section on Internship Notebook for a detailed list of what should be included).
- Follow the schedule established with the MT and US during the semester.
- Share all course syllabi with MT and plan for how assignments will be completed.
- Provide internship information to their MT including the Internship Manual, MT Honorarium and updated biographical information.

Mentor Teacher (MT)

Mentor Teachers (MT) have an important responsibility to be a mentor and instructor on issues specific to their workplace and the needs of the children and families that are served at that site. During the semester, the candidate’s program of study also consists of intense academic coursework. Course assignments and projects are developed to specifically link with site experiences.

MT must be flexible in accommodating the coursework associated with the internship. The candidate benefits greatly from being able to learn from courses and immediately apply the knowledge in the field. The program faculty believes that this integration of knowledge and classroom experience results in a better-prepared and more confident educator who is able to work in a multitude of settings and with diverse young children and their families. The MT, with the assistance of the university supervisor, 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 to increase the children and parents' level of acceptance. Confer regularly, especially about the rationale for educational decisions.
- Build confidence by having the candidate gradually assume responsibility for guiding behavior and instruction. Be sure the candidate is prepared to take full responsibility of the classroom for at least two weeks.
- Oversee candidate's planning; monitor the candidate's learning about the children and their families, and offer feedback on both.
- Review course syllabi for assignments and assist the candidate in planning for site-related work.
- Help the candidate videotape and critically reflect on teaching events.
- Conduct two formal observations, and write up observation reports.
- Encourage reflection and self-analysis when giving feedback.
- Be open and honest about areas needing improvement; provide assistance as appropriate.
- Discuss any concerns or problems with the US on an on-going basis.
- Introduce the candidate to the full range of your duties, to the available resources at the site, and to all appropriate staff.
- Complete weekly progress reports with the candidate. The original should be given to the candidate for inclusion in the notebook.
- Participate in two 3-way meetings with the candidate and the US: one mid-internship to discuss progress and one at the end of the internship to evaluate performance. Complete an evaluation profile as a team (Candidate, Mentor Teacher, and University Supervisor).
- 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 candidates. 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. 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 kept in the Internship Notebook. Include the report in the candidate's folder.
- Review copies of weekly progress reports and add to candidate's folder.
- Guide development of teaching skills by promoting reflective practice through interactive supervision, reviewing the Internship Notebook, and encouraging self-analysis.
- Facilitate the candidate's videotaping and critical reflection of teaching events.
- Participate in ECE program staff meetings, when possible, and share major concerns or changes 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 mid-internship to discuss progress and one at the end of the internship to evaluate performance. Complete an evaluation profile as a team (Candidate, Mentor Teacher, and University Supervisor).
- Coordinate evaluation and grading of the 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 Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor 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 Program Coordinator, Dr. Bweikia Steen, at 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 change where needed.

Internship Notebook

The Internship Notebook contains information related to the internship and documentation that the candidate has met aspects of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards and/or National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The notebook will contain the following types of information:

- Daily schedule and information about the school and classroom
- Log of hours
- Weekly progress reports signed by the candidate and the mentor teacher, observation reports, and internship evaluations
- Notes taken by candidate when observing
- Notes taken by candidate when co-planning and co-teaching
- Plans, notes, and artifacts for conducting two-week thematic or project-based unit (preschool)
- Detailed lesson plans or home visit natural environment plans, notes, and artifacts
- Documentation of the effects of instruction on children's learning
- Reflections on the instructional strategies' delivery, child and family engagement, and child learning, using a provided framework
- For the infant toddler internship: Summary and reflection on the transition planning process
- For the infant toddler internship: Completion of the five Principles and Practices of Early Intervention Modules: Requirements for Early Intervention Certification required by the Infant Toddler Connection of Virginia.
- For the infant toddler internship: Interview of early intervention service provider on transition planning and process.

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
- Videotape critical reflections by the candidate
- Mid-point and final evaluation forms

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 submit it to the University Supervisor.

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 their internship.

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 Plan (IEP) meetings, and attending site-based gatherings such as curriculum nights or other events.

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 university supervisor will transfer these totals onto the form and submit it with the candidate's file.

Lesson Plans

Candidates are expected to submit *weekly* plans to their MT for approval prior to teaching independently. More detailed *daily* lesson plans using a lesson plan format approved by the US are to be given to the MT daily and filed in the internship notebook. These should be readily accessible to the MT and US. Detailed daily lesson plans are to be provided to the MT and/or US prior to scheduled observations.

Reflective Journal

Candidates will write a weekly reflection throughout the internship. The journal may be electronic, handwritten, or a combination of both. The journal should include critical reflections on their teaching, learning, and interactions with children, families, and colleagues. The Candidates should make the journal available to the US either electronically before the visit or in a hard copy during visits.

Videotape Critical Reflection

Candidates are expected to videotape their teaching and interactions with children several times over the course of their internships in order to engage in an in-depth analysis of their teaching

practice. Write a critical reflection on the videotaped teaching events and upload it weekly to Edthena.

Internship Policies

Attendance

During the internship, candidates are required to work the teacher contract hours. Virginia Licensure Regulations for School Personnel (2007) stipulate that candidates “must be in classrooms full time.” Candidates should maintain the same schedule as the MT, with the contract day as the minimum but not the norm. Candidates should consult with ECE faculty to determine whether the Mason schedule or the school system holiday schedule will be followed. This will 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 US submits the Candidate’s folder to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs (OASA). After that time, access will be in accordance with the Privacy Act. No materials will be released by OASA 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.

Records Retention

Contents of cumulative folders will be retained for **one year after completion** of the internship. After that, the transcript and the Summary Form will be the only available record. Therefore, candidates should keep their own copies of evaluations, observations, logs, summaries, and other records.

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 mentoring 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 Graduate School of Education (GSE) has approved the following grading policy for Early Childhood Education internships:

1. The grading scale will be S (Satisfactory), NC (No Credit), or IP (In Progress) in accordance with Mason policy for internships.
2. Degrees of Satisfactory performance by a candidate in Early Childhood Education will be documented on the Evaluation Profile by the MT and US.
3. The US shall determine the interim and final grades in joint consultation with the MT.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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 M.Ed. program.

ECE Assessment System

The ECE PK-3, ECSE, and Dual licensure graduate certificate programs are state-approved programs and are accredited. As part of the accreditation requirements, ECE program faculty developed an assessment system that meets the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) requirements and provides evidence that teacher candidates have met the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and/or the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) initial licensure standards.

During the internship, candidates will upload evidence of meeting the required CEC licensure standards and NAEYC initial licensure standards to TK20 through Blackboard. Performance based assessments are included in each internship syllabus.