GUIDELINES FOR INTERNSHIP/S IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Purpose and Philosophy
- The internship experience is operated on a competency-based model. Interns are expected to gain and display effective teaching skills and humanistic interpersonal skills. The purpose of the internship experience is to provide interns with the opportunity:
  - To effectively apply the knowledge acquired in all previous coursework to the classroom/school setting.
  - To learn methods of instruction that work best in the internship setting.
  - To effectively display the professional qualities and dedication required of a special education teacher.
  - To learn and display flexibility when outside forces determine a change in schedule or instruction.
  - To experiment with different instructional and behavior management techniques that work best for the intern and students.
  - To display enthusiasm and a positive attitude toward the teaching experience in regards to students, parents, colleagues, paraprofessionals, and administrators.
  - It is the responsibility of the intern to identify a local site that will serve as his/her placement for the internship.

Roles and Responsibilities
The UND Supervisor is expected to:
1. Make the internship requirements available on Blackboard at the beginning of the semester for all interns to view. The UND Supervisor will explain all expectations and assignments for the internship experience using Blackboard.
2. Manage the SPED Internship Blackboard site.
3. Contact the Building Mentor at the onset of the semester to make introductions and to answer questions.
4. To ensure effective communication between all internship stakeholders occurs.
5. Oversee improvement plans, as well as collaborate with the intern’s academic advisor when problems/concerns arise during the internship experience.
6. Oversee and grade all assignments required for the internship.
7. Complete a final evaluation on each intern, including awarding a letter grade for the internship. Note that the letter grade assigned for the internship credits is based on the quality of the written assignments and the Building Mentor and UND Supervisor’s evaluation of the intern’s performance.

The Building Mentor is expected to:
1. Supervise all aspects of the intern’s experience, including both personal and professional growth. There should be ongoing regularly scheduled communication between the mentor and the intern. For example, scheduling a 30-minute meeting once per week. Provide constructive and direct feedback with the intern on a
regular basis, both verbally and in writing.
2. *On-the-job interns may require less formal supervision than traditional interns.  
3. Provide the intern with a caseload of students that will provide the best real-life experience. It is expected by the third week; the intern should be working with more independence.
4. Provide support and mentorship to the intern. Depending on the intern's background and previous experience, he/she may need to observe you conduct an evaluation and an IEP (or equivalent educational/treatment plan), and then may need assistance with his/her first evaluation and first IEP meeting. It is intended that the intern be as independent as possible in fulfilling the duties and roles of a special education teacher in the internship setting. The Building Mentor will need to attend all meetings and be listed as the case manager.
5. Consult about the students you assigned to the intern on a regular basis to suggest effective instructional techniques, behavior management strategies, and collaboration techniques for working with students, teachers, and parents.
6. Orient the intern to pertinent building policies, procedures, and routines (e.g., workday starting and ending times, classroom schedule, discipline procedures, duplicating, supplies, dress code).
7. Effectively communicate with the UND Supervisor when necessary.
8. Express any concerns about the performance of the intern or other aspects of the internship experience to the intern and the UND Supervisor immediately so that concerns can be dealt with in a timely fashion.
9. Assist the intern with the written assignments required by UND for successful completion of the internship experience. A list of the assignments and their descriptions will be provided to the intern.
10. Although the UND Supervisor grades the written assignments, the building mentor is expected to provide the intern with opportunities to complete the internship requirements. The building mentor should also ensure all written documentation going into students' files meets the requirements and standards of their internship placement location.
11. Complete the Student Evaluation Form, provided by UND at the end of the semester. The building mentor's input will assist the UND Supervisor in assigning a letter grade for the internship credits in which the intern is enrolled.
12. Model best practices while remaining open to implementing new practices as introduced by the intern.

The Intern is expected to:
Please note – If completing an On-the-Job Internship, interns are required to comply with any teaching contracts and school policies and procedures. Contact the UND Supervisor for specific questions regarding expectations.

1. Fulfill all the required hours for the number of internship credits in which enrolled. Internship hours are based on 60 hours per credit of direct student contact time with individuals with the disability area matching the internship. Direct student contact time is time spent instructing students or conducting assessments. It does not include completion of paperwork, preparation time, collaboration with teachers, parents, and paraprofessionals, or conducting IEP/assessment meetings and parent conferences.
2. Contact the Building Mentor prior to starting the internship experience. This is a November 2016
professional courtesy and will provide information concerning where and when to begin the first day.

3. Follow the schedule of the internship site rather than UND’s schedule. This may mean beginning the internship earlier than the start of the UND semester. In addition, school holidays/days off will be followed, rather than UND holidays/days off.

4. Observe the Building Mentor as closely as possible for teaching techniques (e.g., teaching methods, methods of disciplining). Interns are expected to observe the Building Mentor extensively at the beginning of the internship experience, typically for 1 to 2 weeks. By week 3, the intern should have full responsibility of a caseload of students.

5. Perform all the duties of a full-time special education teacher (e.g., planning for and instructing students per their individualized plans, assessing students both formally and informally, conducting at least one IEP meeting (or other individualized plan meeting), assessment meeting, collaborating with classroom teachers and parents, completing all due process paperwork) by the end of the internship experience.

6. Meet with the Building Mentor and UND Supervisor when necessary. Ask questions and/or share any challenges. It is important to remain open and responsive to feedback. Be up-front and direct regarding any concerns immediately!

7. Request assistance proactively related to teaching, assignment clarification, working with school personnel, professional issues, and any personal issues that may impact job performance.

8. Implement and share best practices in the field learned in UND coursework and on-the-job.

9. Complete all the required written assignments for the internship credits in which enrolled. A list of assignments with their descriptions will be provided by the UND Supervisor through the SPED Internship Blackboard site. Note that the grade assigned for the internship experience will be based on the written assignments and the mentor’s and UND Supervisor’s evaluation of performance.

10. Clear all absences such as illness with the Building Mentor and report the absences to the UND Supervisor. Missed internship hours must be made up, potentially extending the length of the internship experience.

Policies and Procedures
Explanation of Requirements:

1. When classes officially start, the internship Blackboard site will be made available. All pertinent internship information and links for uploading all assignments will be available in the internship Blackboard site.

2. At the onset of internship, interns will be responsible for sharing the pertinent internship information with their Building Mentors. Additionally, a welcome email will be sent to the Building Mentor with the UND Supervisor’s contact information.

3. If there are concerns regarding the internship, it is the responsibility of the intern and/or Building Mentor to contact the UND Supervisor.

4. Only when necessary, collaborative meetings will be conducted with each intern, his/her Building Mentor, and UND Supervisor. Meetings/updates will be conducted to evaluate performance, to discuss timelines, to problem-solve issues/concerns, and to pose questions/answers relative to requirements, guidelines, and/or

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assignments. These meetings/updates are usually conducted via email.

Note: It is **not** UND’s policy to provide onsite visits at a distance, as the direct supervision of internships is completed by an onsite Building Mentor, who has been approved by the University and school district. If an onsite visit is requested by the student or the school site, any travel expenses will be paid by the student or the school, depending on who is requesting the site visit.

Note: If special circumstances apply to an internship, it is the intern’s responsibility to communicate with instructor of record of the internship so a creative plan can be established which meets all the internship guidelines and requirements.

**Improvement Plan Process for SPED Internships**

1. When concerns arise, this is the process that will be followed by building (Building Mentor) and UND Supervisors:
2. There should be sufficient documentation that all supervisors (Building Mentor and UND Supervisor) have provided the intern with direct feedback. Suggestions for improvement should be provided both orally and in writing.
3. If the concerns that have arisen are related to the intern’s disposition, the disposition form will be filled out by the UND Supervisor, inclusive of feedback provided from the intern’s Building Mentor. The disposition form will then be shared with the intern and their mentor.
4. If the concerns that have arisen are related to the intern’s teaching, the intern will be asked to arrange for a live feed of their teaching, or to submit a videotape of them teaching to the UND Supervisor. The intern will be responsible to secure all permissions necessary from parents, administration, and/or Building Mentor and to provide documentation to the UND Supervisor that such permission has been received. Contact the UND Supervisor for mailing instructions. The UND Supervisor will provide written and oral feedback to the intern on the teaching observed on the videotape. These observations will also be shared with the Building Mentor.
5. If, after the above action steps, there has not been improvement satisfactory to the UND Supervisor and Building Mentor, then an improvement plan will be developed by the UND and Building Mentor. **Changing Building Mentors or internship placements may be options at this point as well as a lowered internship grade.**
6. If the improvement plan has been implemented and has not been successful, then the UND Supervisor and Building Mentor will meet with the intern and determine what action to take. The district/agency administration may be involved in this discussion as well. **Removal from the internship and a failing grade are options that will be considered at this point.**

*Please note – For the aforementioned steps to work successfully, the Building Mentor must effectively communicate concerns with the UND Supervisor. The UND Supervisor must be notified of Building Mentor concerns in a timely manner and frequent communication between the Building Mentor and UND Supervisor is paramount.*

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