



# **Internship Guide**

## **M.Ed. in Special Education**

***“Together We Shape the Future”***

**College of Education**

**Qatar University**

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The conceptual framework of the College of Education at Qatar University is “Together We Shape the Future”, which is our belief to prepare educators who would shape the future of Qatar and beyond through teaching, scholarship, and leadership. The educators we prepare see the potential in every learner no matter what their disability may be and possess the knowledge, skills and dispositions that allow them to make informed decisions that support the achievement of the learner. This guide contains information that will assist candidates in gaining the most benefit from their graduate level internship experience.

### **COURSE RATIONALE:**

The Internship in Special Education is designed to provide the opportunity for graduate students to practice and demonstrate those planning, teaching, assessment, management, and collaboration skills that have been identified by the program as essential components of being an effective special educator. It is during this internship that candidates confirm that they have mastered those skills needed to work with learners who are in special education programs.

Internship is a six-credit hour field-based experience of 400 hours in duration. It is designed to provide the intern with opportunities to exhibit knowledge, skills, and disposition developed during the graduate program. During the internship experience, the candidate engages in the practice of skills, techniques, and knowledge acquired in both the classroom and field-based settings that were embedded in the previous coursework. As such, the candidate is expected to try out, revise, and finally refine these skills necessary for successful teaching.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. The student will demonstrate the ability to develop and implement a comprehensive classroom management plan that addresses academic, functional skills, and social behavior.
2. The student will assess and interpret results of diagnostic tools commonly used in educational assessment of individuals with disabilities.
3. The student should demonstrate knowledge of and evaluate educational interventions used with students with disabilities
4. The student will demonstrate knowledge of learner characteristics and design curricula including the academic, functional skills, and career education domains as appropriate for the learners.
5. The student will develop and implement lesson plans that include measurable objectives, the instructional procedures, the materials to be used, and evaluation of the instruction.
6. The student will demonstrate knowledge of procedures to facilitate and support the least restrictive and appropriate placement for learners with disabilities.
7. The student will identify research proven instructional practice for students with disabilities.
8. The student will collaborate with parents and teachers to develop most appropriate curriculum in least restrictive environment.

## **I. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Internship Placement**

If a candidate is currently teaching in a special education or inclusive classroom setting, that environment will be his/her internship placement. Other candidates who do not work in an appropriate setting, she/he will submit an internship placement request to the Coordinator of Special Education, and will be placed with supervising teachers whose credential/background match the licensure area for which the candidate is preparing. The learner population in the internship placements must match the specific field and level of the certification for which the candidate is being prepared. Successful completion of the internship experience requires an acceptable evaluation by the candidate's college supervisor and acceptable valuations by the candidate's mentor or the supervising teacher.

### **Course Personnel**

#### ***Intern / Teacher Candidate***

An intern is the teacher candidate who is taking the internship course for credit, has completed all the prerequisite coursework successfully, been admitted to the teacher education program and has their advisor's recommendation. The term *candidate*, used throughout this document, refers to the intern.

#### **Mentor Teacher (for candidates who already teach in an appropriate setting in school)**

A mentor teacher is the special education teacher who has agreed to mentor the candidate. This teacher has completed at least three years of successful teaching. The mentor teacher has been recommended by the school principal and has been requested for the assignment because of demonstrated skills in teaching, supervisory knowledge and a desire to be a part of the teacher preparation process.

#### ***Supervising Teacher (for candidates who need an internship placement)***

A supervising teacher is the classroom teacher who has agreed to share their learners and time in order for the teacher candidate to have as nearly a realistic teaching situation as possible. This teacher has completed at least three years of successful teaching. The supervising teacher has been recommended by the school principal and has been requested for the assignment because of demonstrated skills in teaching, supervisory knowledge and a desire to be a part of the teacher preparation process.

#### ***College Supervisor***

The Qatar University faculty member who visits the teacher candidate for observation and consultation regarding internship experiences and assists the supervising teacher. The college supervisor has had teaching experience and has a clear understanding of the goals and objectives of the Qatar University Teacher Education program.

## **Attendance and Record Keeping**

Interns are expected to uphold the same attendance and punctuality requirements as their supervising/mentor teachers. They will report to their assigned schools everyday, for the full school day and for the full college semester. Candidates should follow the school's daily schedule and calendar. In case of absence, Interns should notify the school according to its policy as well as the cooperating teacher and the college supervisor. Absences may require the extension of the internship placement beyond the end of the college semester. Interns are expected to maintain the same types of records as the cooperating teacher. This includes attendance, grades, and other types of clerical materials. All recorded information is kept in strict confidence. No absences other than illness or emergency are allowed during internship. Questions regarding this regulation should be addressed to your college supervisor. ***If you are absent, you must provide lesson plans to the person who will teach you class(es) for each and every day you are responsible for the planning and teaching.***

## **II. COURSE GUIDELINES**

Interns should make every effort to be as professional and conscientious as possible during their internship experience. The following rules, regulations, policies, schedules, and forms are designed to help the student to have a successful professional experience.

### ***Arrival and Departure Times***

Report at the time all teachers in the school report each morning. Remain at the school until the time teachers are permitted to leave in the afternoon. If the supervising teacher reports unusually early or stays unusually late, it is the Intern's responsibility to determine how he/she is to operate. Usually, the Interns will always follow the supervisor's schedule.

### ***Commitment***

Internship is a full time activity and candidates should not plan to work or spend time in campus or outside activities that require much of their time. If special circumstances require added responsibilities, make the college supervisor aware of these. If they interfere with internship experiences, it may be necessary to extend internship or delay it until a more appropriate time.

### ***Confidentiality***

Remember that all knowledge you have about learners is ***confidential*** and should only be shared within professional guidelines. If in doubt about whether to comment on learners, Interns must not say anything until they have checked with one of the supervisors or an administrator. It is okay to say, "I will have to check" or "I do not know."

### ***Ethical Behavior***

Interns should exhibit ethical behavior at all times. This means that you should refrain from discussing with anyone other than the two supervisors any negative reactions you might have. Should you have professional concerns, you should discuss these ***confidentially*** with your college supervisor. ***All intern communications with parents regarding their child must be made under the direct supervision, and knowledge, of the supervising teacher.***

### **III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This section contains information that should help the intern and the supervising teacher to understand the roles and responsibilities each has during the internship experience. All parties should read the material in all sections to gain an understanding and appreciation for the entire process. This section of the *Guide* is divided into four parts. The first and second sections provide information specifically for the Interns and the supervising teacher to help them have a successful experience. The third section outlines the assistance provided by the college supervisor and the fourth section provides a weekly checklist designed to serve as a guide or benchmark for suggested progress during the internship experience.

#### ***Interns***

##### ***Responsibilities***

1. The Interns must be enthusiastic of the process if he/she is to derive full benefit from the experience.
2. The Interns must be prepared to guide the learning experiences of young people.
3. The Interns must be excited and interested in becoming a teacher.
4. The Interns must be able to translate learning from the college campus to the classroom.
5. The supervising or mentor teacher should expect an eager, enthusiastic, and well-prepared intern. To settle for less is a disservice to the profession.
6. The Interns must always act in responsible manner while in the classroom and in the school setting. Use common sense in dealing with difficult situations.
7. The Interns must realize that she/he is a guest in the school and this relationship must dictate appropriate and professional behavior at all times.
8. The Interns must take responsibility for the evaluation of her/his own teaching performance. The Interns should begin to identify problems and formulate solutions rather than relying on the supervising teacher exclusively.

The following information is designed to provide a useful guide for the candidate during the internship experience.

##### ***Daily Schedule***

One of the first forms to be completed and given to your college supervisor is the daily schedule. The daily schedule provides information to the college supervisor and helps in making decisions about times to schedule visits. In addition, you should be prepared to provide directions to your school for the college supervisor.

### *General Checklist for the Interns*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule a visit to your assigned school to meet with your supervisor. Pick up curriculum materials, list(s) of learners' names, other pertinent information. Be prepared before your first day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide your supervising teacher with pertinent background information about yourself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find out how to contact your college supervisor, where to call, when is the best time to call, phone numbers, email etc. Always keep your college supervisor informed of any unusual circumstances or problems you are experiencing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Become acquainted with all school personnel and their duties.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Become familiar with emergency procedures in your classroom and school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend all school functions required of the supervising teacher.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete a weekly journal and submit to your college supervisor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare all lesson plans for lessons taught and present these to your supervising Teacher approximately one week in advance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete the testing, special needs and resource reports and submit to your College supervisor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make observations of other classrooms and share your experiences with your College supervisor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow directions regarding the submission of your final teacher education portfolio.

### *Reflective Teaching*

The goal of reflective teaching is to develop lifelong students of teaching; professionals who are committed to continuing to grow and learn as teachers. Reflective teaching enables teachers to use higher level thinking skills with regard to their teaching performance. Interns should not rely solely on the feedback of their supervising teacher or college supervisor. Interns should continuously analyze and evaluate their own teaching. They should also identify areas for improvement and formulate strategies for growth. To stimulate reflection, Interns are required to complete a weekly journal and a summative reflection during their internship experience.

Weekly Journal. The weekly journal is to be written on a weekly basis (or Interns may desire to make entries on a daily basis). It will be a **confidential** dialogue between the student teacher and the college supervisor. The college supervisor will decide on the schedule of when and where the journal will be turned in for reaction and the format (i.e., notebook, email, etc.). The journal is designed to provide a way for you to express your emotional and cognitive reactions to the internship experience. Your entries could include any of the types of topic sentences below:

- Today I observed an event that made me very (happy/sad/confused/angry/etc.) because . . .
- When I woke up this morning I was (excited/scared/dead tired/etc.) because . . .
- Since I've been internship my (family/boyfriend/girlfriend/sorority sister/etc.) . . .
- If I could change the educational system I would . . .
- I felt really (bad / good / etc.) today because . . .

- When you came to visit I was (scared/happy/mad/relieved/etc.) because. . .
- I tried a new method today and it (flopped/was fantastic/was so-so/etc.) because . . .
- This week I learned something new about myself. . .
- This week I learned something new about the learners in my class. . .
- My greatest fear is that I will not be able to . . .
- I am eager to start teaching so that I can. . .
- I have found that my greatest strength as a teacher is. . .
- I have found that my greatest weakness as a teacher is. . .
- I would like my supervisors to help me with. . .
- My classes at Qatar did not prepare me for. . .
- My classes at Qatar prepared me well for. . .
- No one ever told me that teaching. . .
- If I could restructure my classroom in some way, I would. . .
- If I could restructure internship in some way, I would. . .

The college supervisor will write comments, answer questions, and in general try to be responsive and empathetic to your feelings.

Summative Reflection. At the conclusion of internship, you are to prepare a brief reflective overview of your internship experience. This reflection paper (approximately two pages in length) will summarize your experience, what you have learned and what goals you have set to further prepare yourself for your teaching career. This summative reflection paper is not confidential and should be placed in your teacher education portfolio prior to its submission for its final check.

### *Lesson Plans*

Lesson plans are to be written for everything you teach. You should plan the overall unit, chapter, section, etc., at one time to identify your objectives, materials, and timeline. Your specific daily plans with all handouts, tests, teaching aids, etc. should be ready two to seven days in advance and shared with your supervising teacher. The supervising teacher will determine specific requirements for the preparation and submission of plans to him/her. You will begin each subject you teach using the Qatar University lesson plan format. At the point the college supervisor and supervising teacher believe your plans reflect acceptable planning skills with adequate understanding of the sequence of objectives, transitions between learning activities, and relationships between and among concepts, you will be given permission to use an abbreviated lesson plan form.

Once you have submitted your plans to your supervising teacher in advance, the supervisor can check to see if they reflect the program objectives of the curriculum and may suggest methods and materials, which would be more appropriate for the learners and could certainly help in the wording of objectives and types of evaluations. Your college supervisor will usually read your lesson plans after they have been taught.

### *Reports*

**Special Education Report.** The Special Education Report is to familiarize you with the specialists who serving all learners with disabilities. In this report, you should identify the procedures and criteria for referral to the specialist. The specialists might include counselors, other special education teachers, speech and hearing therapists, or school psychologists. Your report should follow the outline below:

- A. Resource person and title
- B. Location of resource person
- C. Type of student served - definition
- D. Procedure for referral
- E. Criteria for receiving services

**School Resource Report.** The School Resource Report is to locate valuable resources in the school building. For example, the Interns should visit the media specialist, technology resource person, etc. to learn about services available.

**Testing Report.** The purpose of the testing report is to familiarize you with the school's group testing program and its purpose. You will want your supervising teacher to assist you in talking with the principal, curriculum coordinator, or counselor about the testing program. These individuals can be most helpful in obtaining information for this report. You should plan to make an appointment with the appropriate person in order to gather the information. Your report should follow the outline below:

- A. Test name
- B. Grade level(s) at which the test is administered
- C. Information available from the test
- D. Possible uses for the test
- E. Summarize your response to the total testing program in terms of its implementation and usefulness.
- F. Every school system is required to test several grades. You should identify the Grades and have information for at least these.

**Visits to Other Classrooms.** The Interns is to visit a minimum of three classrooms to observe other teachers. The purpose of this activity is to expose you to teaching styles different from those exhibited by your supervising teacher or to reinforce those skills you have observed. The supervising teacher will be instrumental in scheduling these observations by suggesting teachers for the Interns to visit and making the initial contact on behalf of the student teacher and helping to make decisions about the appropriate time for the visits. You should complete a report on each visit following the outline below:

- A. Teacher visited
- B. Statement of why that teacher was selected
- C. Summary of the observation
- D. Evaluation and general reactions to the observation.



Your college supervisor will give you specific instructions on when, and in what format, your reports should be completed and submitted for evaluation.

### *Submitting the Candidate Electronic Portfolio for Final Evaluation*

As internship is the final step in completing the teacher education program, it is also the time at which the Teacher Education Candidate Electronic Portfolio is submitted for final evaluation. The portfolio, developed and checked throughout the program will be complete at the conclusion of the program. The candidate's adviser will accept the portfolio and check all elements included and will pay particular attention to the Comprehensive Lesson Plan. Also, the student's last entry will consist of the Summative Reflection paper on their internship experience.

### **Supervising Teacher**

The supervising teacher is the single most important individual in the internship process. As the individual with whom the Interns will be working for 400 hours, the supervising teacher has a critical role to play in the overall success of the experience.

### *General Checklist of Responsibilities for Supervising Teachers*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Expect a visit from the Interns prior to the beginning of internship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Request general information about the candidate from him/her if this information was not received from the college.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide curricular materials for the Interns to review prior to the first day of internship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide a list of your students' names and any other information that would be helpful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare your students for the internship experience. Involve them in the planning of welcoming activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare your parents for the Interns. A letter is often successful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plan exposure to all facets of the teaching experience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Convey your likes and dislikes early to the Interns.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Outline all procedures to be used and those not to be used.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Share rules and regulations for teachers in your school (both written and the ones that are simply "understood"). Make sure your Interns is aware of all emergency procedures for the school and in your classroom.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Exemplify good teaching. Often you are the first public school teacher the Interns has seen for any length of time since high school. The supervising teacher has a tremendous influence on the fledgling teacher.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You must release responsibility of the classroom to the Interns as soon as possible. This helps to identify strengths and weaknesses. Remember, Interns are to have entire teaching responsibilities for a minimum of four weeks, mainly without your presence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Feedback, feedback, feedback. The most often identified criticism by Interns of supervising teachers is that they did not evaluate enough. You must evaluate and provide feedback on a continuous basis. The Interns must understand the evaluation. The supervising teacher must be critical but fair.

### *Evaluating the Interns*

Evaluating the Interns is a very important responsibility for you as the supervising teacher. The Interns will bring with him/her several years of preparation and will be trying out many ideas and techniques. Your evaluation will help the Interns sift through those ideas and techniques that he/she may want to continue to utilize as a classroom teacher in the years to come. For this reason, your evaluation should always be handled in a detailed and thoughtful manner. It may not be enough for the Interns to know that they "did a good job" or that "things didn't go very well." They need to know why "they did a good job" or why "things didn't go very well." With such knowledge, the Interns can make adjustments, build upon success, improve, and ultimately become an effective and secure teacher.

### *Handling Criticism*

Of necessity most evaluation will involve criticism. This criticism should be of a constructive nature and for the good of the Interns. Since you will need to deal with criticism, it is important that you, first of all, establish an atmosphere conducive to evaluation and the criticism that will need to accompany evaluation. The way in which you develop this atmosphere will vary a great deal with the two personalities involved. However, you may find the following suggestions helpful:

- Make the Interns feel comfortable in your presence from the very beginning. You can do this by seeing that the Interns meets other staff members, giving him/her information on yourself, and talking to the Interns about his/her own background and aspirations.
- Explain the techniques and instruments you will use to evaluate the lessons to be taught. Be sure that the Interns understands the instruments and emphasize that this is one way that you feel you can be of help while he/she is in your room. Progress reports and evaluation forms will be discussed in the next section, and examples are found in the appendices.
- When the Interns teaches the first lesson, leave the room for at least the beginning part of the lesson. This may make the Interns more comfortable and more willing to be observed and evaluated as his/her experience progresses.
- During your evaluation, raise questions that will help him/her evaluate his/her own performance and reinforce reflection. The following kinds of questions may lead to the Interns' realization of what needs to be done to improve:
  - What motivational technique did you use today?
  - What indications do you have that the children were truly interested in your lesson?
  - How did you hold the attention of the pupils?
  - What evidence do you have that each student met the objectives you set for the lesson?

### *Conferencing*

Conferences between you and your Interns can be a very important element in the

work that you do with him/her. Through conferences, you can get to "know each other" as you discuss the progress the Interns is making in your classroom. Although "last-minute" and daily short conferences will be helpful, you will want to hold a regular conference at least once a week. In these regular conferences, you can plan to discuss predetermined topics as well as any problems that might need attention. Such conferences can give the Interns experience in discussing important professional concerns in an "eyeball to eyeball" manner with you. Adequate planning on your part can provide the opportunity for the Interns to discuss topics leading to professional growth.

Time and place for conferences. There seems to be something "natural" about planning conferences either at the beginning or end of the week. This may very well be the case in your situation. However, it may be more convenient for you to plan your weekly conference during a period when pupils are not in the room. You may also find it desirable to meet in your classroom for your regular conferences.

Establishing rapport. The rapport that you have with your Interns will determine, to a great extent, the success of not only your conferences but also the entire relationship. You need to build a rapport in which there is sincerity, warmth, sensitivity, faith, and respect. This does not always come easy to two people in the internship experience. Rapport must be built. Often, there is little at the beginning of the experience. When this is the case, you should take the responsibility to "build" the best rapport possible. You will be able to do your part in building rapport through consistent attention to the following kinds of behavior:

- Project a professional image with other teachers. Show that you can be trusted to deal professionally with professional matters.
- Be fair in all dealings with your Interns.
- Share the workload. Don't overload your Interns with the "extra duties".
- Treat your Interns with respect at all times.
- Don't correct the Interns in the presence of others.
- Keep your appointments with the Interns. Show him/her that you are sincere and mean business.
- Don't do all of the talking in conferences. Develop the habit of listening to your student teacher.
- Take a positive approach to your work with him/her. More might be accomplished, and a better relationship between the two of you may be developed, when you look at the bright side.
- Try to keep to the conference topic, but do encourage discussion of any bothersome problems. However, do not allow conferences to drift into question-and-answer periods. There should be some substance or specific objective to a conference.
- Keep accurate records and notes of all conferences. Offer to share this data with the College supervisor during her/his visits.

### ***College Supervisor***

The role of the college supervisor is to work cooperatively with the supervising teacher to provide a high quality experience for the Interns. Specific responsibilities of the college supervisor include the following.

#### *Roles and Responsibilities*

In relation to the supervising teacher:

- Interpret the policies and procedures of Qatar University teacher education program.
- Serve as a resource person.
- Become an integral part of the school environment.
- Be available to help with the Intern's experience.
- Visit periodically during the internship experience.
- Provide methods of evaluative feedback to the supervisor and the Interns.
- Decide who will conduct the Reading Lesson assessment.

In relation to the Interns:

- Visit and conference regularly.
- Act as counselor/confidant.
- Provide quality orientation experiences.
- Provide support to help in the transition to beginning teaching.
- Read and react to the Intern's weekly journal.
- Observe the Interns at least twice during the internship experience.
- Complete all evaluation forms and provide appropriate copies to the Interns.

#### *Visits by the College Supervisor*

Generally, the Qatar University supervisor will visit the Interns a minimum of five times during the ten to twelve weeks of internship. This may be increased as needed or as suggested by the supervising teacher. The college supervisor will meet briefly with the supervising teacher during each visit for feedback and information sharing purposes.

#### *Reflective Teaching*

The role of the college supervisor in reflective teaching is to serve as a resource to the supervising teacher/mentor teacher and Interns for reflection. The college supervisor should provide support, guidance, and information on reflective teaching. Conferences with the Interns should encourage reflection while developing and refining the reflective process.