



Office of Field Experience and Clinical Practice (OFECP)
Department of Education

Internship Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: Can I be a substitute teacher in my internship classroom during my internship day and have it count as both?

A: No.

Q: Can I be a substitute teacher on a day I am not interning?

A: Yes (subbing during Phase 1 esp. In December is a great idea! If you are on the sub list you can also sub after Phase 2 in May).

Q: If I do more than 25 days in Phase 1 can I count them toward the 75 days for Phase 2?

A: No

Q: May I stop going to my school once I complete the 75 required days for Phase 2?

A: No. The MSDE requirement is at least 100 days, not only 100 days. The Academic Calendar (Appendix A of your handbook) lists your start/end dates.

Q: May I count hours and minutes to track my internship days?

A: In a normal year when students are brick and mortar, no, teachers are professionals, not hourly employees. *However, in a virtual classroom there is built in flexibility for all participants and a "day" is harder to quantify. For Phase 2 interns, they are expected to attend **ALL synchronous activities their mentor is required to attend.** However asynchronous time occurs, as professionals until you have materials ready the instruction. Phase 1 interns are required to attend **some synchronous activities with their mentor** but asynchronous activities may occur a different times so as to provide flexibility for individuals, as long as materials are prepared in a timely manner. Please see page 12 of your handbook for more details.*

Q: Do we get personal leave days during Phase 2?

A: No. Absences only occur when you are sick or having an emergency. If you need a sick/emergency day you must communicate with your mentor and supervisor and you must provide sub-plans and arrange materials for anything you were responsible for teaching that day. You will also have to make any missed days up by extending your internship. *COVID-19 symptoms,*

exposure, or diagnosis have a protocol as defined by the district and UMBC that should be followed. Ask your mentor about district protocols, UMBC protocols can be found here.

Q: Do we have to make up snow days during Phase 2?

A: No. That is as long as MSDE does not require local school system (LSS) to make up snow days or for LSS to obtain a waiver from making up days. You are not required to make up days during Phase 2 when schools are closed officially, i.e., snow days or other inclement weather closings or delays, holidays, emergency closings. UNLESS those days are made up during the time you are in internship (i.e. if schools open on a previously closed day like President's Day, Spring Break) Such closings will not impact your ability to complete at least 25 days during Phase 1.

Q: My mentor doesn't write detailed lesson plans, so why do I?

A: Your mentor teacher has a teaching position, but you are trying to secure one. Consider the internship a yearlong interview! Your mentor is an expert, one day you will be too! However, now you are still learning and need detailed lesson plans.

What to include in your lesson plans:

- Anticipated questions to ask
- Ideas for students that finish early/struggle
- Classroom management/transition strategies

Q: When must my mentor approve my lesson plans before I implement them? What happens if I don't?

A: **Two school days** prior to the lesson's proposed implementation. The mentor should not allow you to teach. *In a virtual environment it may be necessary to alter the timeline to give them mentor more time to review a lesson, please establish clear expectations with your mentor and supervisor.*

Q: When must I submit the mentor-approved lesson plan to my supervisor before I implement them? What happens if I don't?

A: **One school day** prior to the lesson plan's implementation. The supervisor and mentor reserve the right to cancel the observation and reschedule. *(See above) Please see supervision timeline (page 12) for more details.*

Q: Why must my mentor approve my lesson plans before I implement them?

A: Ultimately, the mentor teacher is responsible for what is taught in the classroom.

Q: Can I get my weeks of full teaching done early (so I can sit back and observe the rest of the semester while I finish course projects)?

A: No. Our programs use a "ramp-up/ramp-down" or gradual induction approach to intern integration into the classroom. You will gradually take on more responsibility from the mentor and

gradually return it so that your involvement in and exit from the classroom is as seamless as possible. Please see your handbook for details.

Q: Am I responsible for documenting my attendance at my placement site?

A: YES! In brick and mortar interns sign the attendance book at your school upon arrival to the building each day—usually in the main office or department office depending on the school policy. If you arrive late, be sure to sign the late book, if there is one. Maintain your Attendance Tracking sheet for each visit to your school during both phases of the internship. Your mentor/s will sign the form. This form will be submitted to OFECP electronically and uploaded to your portfolio. Be sure to keep a copy for yourself. *In a virtual environment, the intern and mentor will determine time spent engaged in internship on the Internship Interaction Plan (handbook pg. 13). Once established and approved by the Supervisor, the intern will keep an Internship Activities Log (pg 12) it will be shared with your mentor and supervisor and will serve as documentation of activities and professional development.*

Q: If I fall behind in my course assignments, is it okay for me not to report to my placement?

A: No. Your mentor teacher and students count on you and are relying on you to report as negotiated. You want your mentor teacher to be able to honestly say, “I would want this person to be my colleague” and “I would want this person to teach my child.”

Q: On my way to my placement, I see one of my students waiting at a bus stop. Is it okay for me to give them a ride to school?

A: No.

Q: A student in my class forgot to bring her mobile device. Is it okay for me to lend her mine for the lesson?

A: No. Students tend to be rather tech savvy, so you expose yourself to having your contacts accessed and risk having your text messages and emails read. The student may even send messages from your device while you think she is on task.

Q: Is it okay for me to give students my cell number and exchange text messages?

A: No. Be certain that your interactions with students are always professional in nature.

Q: Is it okay for me to accept and/or issue friend requests with students on social media?

A: NO! Be careful about social media use, period! You may even want to revisit your presence on social media and “sanitize” your page! You’ll be surprised by how accessible your information can be by people you least expect! Again, be certain that your interactions with students are always professional in nature. Remember, your best intentions may be misinterpreted!

Q: Should interns be able to lesson plan independently by the end of Phase 1?

Yes, interns should progress from teaching the mentor's lessons to co-planning with the mentors to writing their own lesson plans for individual lessons by the end of Phase 1 (Interns are not expected to plan for large blocks of time but should be able to plan and implement individual lessons). Some interns need more support transitioning from writing hypothetical lessons on campus to lessons for real students. For this reason, mentors need to engage in metacognitive reflection and think alouds to help interns understand the internal processes of day to day lesson planning. For further suggestions on how to make the invisible process visible, use the Lesson Planning Resource. The virtual environment could allow some interns to shine in this areas-- interns have participated in a good deal of online learning as a user and may have some ideas about what works and what doesn't! Also, they may be more comfortable trying and exploring new technology--asking interns to create parts of online modules (a WebQuest or HyperDoc for example) and providing feedback on differentiation or classroom considerations could be valuable. This same virtual environment could also present more of a challenge for some interns; in addition to scaffolding the intern responsibilities, spend some time talking about how lesson plans online are created and what your process is as interns are viewing online lesson content created by a mentor.

Q: If an intern is ready to take on more teaching responsibility more quickly during Phase 2, can they do so?

Yes, the more experience they have teaching independently, the better. However, interns and mentors need to take into consideration the needs of P-12 students and interns in making this decision. This is not their first year of teaching, and it is a protected time for interns before they have full responsibility in a teaching position. It is better to add responsibility more slowly so that they can focus on their craft and reflect on their practice, which they will not have time to do during their first year of teaching. It may also be better for P-12 students to ensure high quality instruction for them.

Q: If an intern is not ready to take on more teaching responsibility, can the transition occur more slowly?

Yes, we recognize that all interns are different and it is better for them and their P-12 students if they wait until they are successful with a few classes before taking over all of them. All timelines are suggestions and leave room for flexibility to meet everyone's needs. However, if transition will be delayed longer than 1-2 weeks, the liaison and supervisor should be brought into the conversation to make sure the intern has the support needed to be successful. Check with liaison and/or program director to make sure the intern will meet minimum requirements for full take over.

Q: What if there are indicators on the STAR that are simply not observable?

STAR uses “forms of evidence” such as: information discussed at pre/post conference, feedback from other school faculty, evidence provided by intern (pictures, journals, other lesson plans, websites, logs, mtg minutes, etc), electronic feedback, and others. In areas not observed the intern should be finding opportunities to offer evidence to the supervisor (and mentor if applicable) and the supervisor should be specifically requesting evidence from the intern. N/A should be used rarely after STAR 1.4. The internship activity log is a document that can be used as a form of evidence, be sure to look at the rubric and try to find ways to demonstrate progress in all indicators. Have honest conversations--this is a whole new world for mentors and supervisors too, talk about what you might expect to see and be open to new ideas.

Q: Is it acceptable for an intern to get a score of “Developing” (2) on the STAR?

During Phase 1, it is considered normal and appropriate for interns to have scores of developing on their STAR as long as they are making continuous improvement. By the end of Phase 2, they should ideally have no indicators marked as “Developing;” however, in some cases a few indicators marked as “Developing” is acceptable, as long as their overall score is at “Target Level” by STAR 2.4 (see handbook page 9-13 for more detailed information).