

## **Responsibilities of the Cooperating Teacher**

The cooperating teacher is the public school classroom teacher who supervises Interns. The role of the cooperating teacher is to help the teaching intern have a professionally rewarding experience while helping to prepare the intern for a career in teaching. The teaching internship is regarded as one of the most important phases in any teacher education program. It is quite likely that the cooperating teacher will have more to do with the future performance of the teaching intern than any other person. There is no doubt that this person will greatly influence the professional attitude of the teaching intern as well as provide them with the opportunity to increase their professional knowledge and skill. It is with this challenge in mind that the following suggestions are made.

### ***Preparation***

1. Assist interns to obtain adequate housing (if necessary) at as modest a cost as possible.
2. Be sure that the teaching intern is introduced to administrator(s) immediately and to other faculty members and employees.
3. The cooperating teacher and the teaching intern should cooperatively determine the policy on such matters as: (a) daily working hours, (b) extended activities, (c) responsibilities, (d) level of professional dress, (e) mileage and other expenses, (f) personal conduct, and (g) absences.
4. If the teacher intern is expected to participate as a teacher or at an event or school function the school should cover expenses.
5. Acquaint the teaching intern with the school and agriculture department facilities and with the activities and procedures of the school and department. This undoubtedly will be a progressive undertaking, but interns should be familiar with such items if they are to benefit from their experiences in the teaching internship center and if they are to be useful as an assistant to the cooperating teacher.
6. Put the intern at ease and make them feel useful and important to your program. Students should address the intern as "Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_" rather than by their first name.
7. Prepare your classes for the intern by explaining to your students the purpose of a teaching internship.
8. Plan ahead! Discuss tentative teaching assignments and responsibilities for the entire teaching internship experience.
9. Review the intern's assignments to familiarize yourself with them so you are in a position to oversee their completion.
10. Share teaching materials with the teaching intern, and assist the intern in preparing their own teaching materials.

### ***Planning the Teaching Internship Experience***

1. In cooperation with the teaching intern develop an *Internship Experience Plan* and develop a plan to complete the tasks (outcomes) during the teaching internship experience. You have the freedom to determine a set of experiences and a schedule which will include the activities the intern feels they need and the cooperating teacher wants them to experience.
2. Make assignments for teaching or participation in FFA activities early enough so the intern can be prepared.
3. Coordinate teaching assignments with your course outline; however, if possible, start the intern teaching a unit in a field in which they are well qualified.
4. Plan ahead and set up a long-range schedule of teaching assignments and responsibilities for FFA and other activities which will allow the intern to plan their work and schedule.
5. Make it a point to have the intern visit students' agricultural experience programs with you early in the teaching internship experience.

### ***Supervision of Teaching Interns***

1. Be a salesperson for the teaching profession. Portray a positive image of the teaching profession and help the teaching intern to see the positive rewards of teaching.
2. Establish an atmosphere where the intern is not afraid to try something new. Give the intern the opportunity to experiment with strategies you may not have tried. While you should encourage the intern to explain their plans to you before trying them, give them the freedom to succeed or to occasionally fail – both are great learning experiences. Be a support person for the intern while maintaining an objective outlook.
3. Check instructional plans before each lesson is taught (at least during the first few lessons of each new class assigned). All lesson plans should be checked and approved by the cooperating teacher before the lesson is taught. (Remember, student learning is still the responsibility of the cooperating teacher.) Feel free to make copies as you need.
4. Supervise and monitor intern's progress in planning and supervising agricultural experience programs.
5. Conduct evaluations of the intern's classroom, laboratory, and field instruction and offer constructive criticism during a weekly feedback conference. *NOTE: During the three weeks of instruction, set aside time at the end of each day for a daily feedback conference with the intern.* As the internship progresses, these may be moved to weekly conferences. At no time should interns go longer than one week without a formal evaluation and conference with the cooperating teacher.
6. An intern should have their own class responsibilities. The cooperating teacher should not take control and direction of the class when an intern is teaching, except in an emergency.

7. Observe the ability of the intern to work with other people in the school and community. The development of the ability to follow professional procedures and to communicate well with people is nearly as important for the intern, as is development of their teaching.
8. Provide the intern with both verbal and written weekly evaluations of their work. For the written feedback, use the *Teaching Internship Weekly Evaluation Form*. Grade the intern no less than weekly throughout the teaching internship experience. The cooperating teacher should also provide a final evaluation during the last week of the teaching internship using the *Teaching Internship Summative Evaluation Form*. The evaluation should be reviewed with the intern prior to submitting to the university supervisor at end of the internship.

### ***Intern Evaluation***

Interns are evaluated by the cooperating teacher using both formative and summative measures. Much of the intern's grade for their internship course will be determined by the cooperating teacher's evaluation of the intern's performance (see "Grade Assignment"). *Just as it is unfair to the intern to evaluate too harshly, it is equally unfair to lead the intern to believe they are performing at a level above their actual level of performance.* The final grade of the intern is calculated from the scores determined by the cooperating teacher, university supervisor, the intern's satisfactory completion of assigned internship experiences, weekly journal entries, and portfolio/notebook. Each of these areas stands alone in its importance in the evaluation of the intern's performance. Remember, the intern is in total control of their grade. Your job in the evaluation process is to correctly evaluate those items contained on the *Teaching Internship Summative Evaluation Form*. Note that weekly evaluations (*Teaching Internship Weekly Evaluation Form*) are formative in nature and are not reflected in the final grade, except as they influence the final evaluation.

The cooperating teacher will formally observe the student teacher once each week and a complete a final evaluation (*Teaching Internship Summative Evaluation Form*). The final evaluation form should be gone over during the midpoint of the student teaching process so the intern knows what areas are lacking. The College of Education should also send you an electronically generated *University of Florida Student Teaching Performance Evaluation Form* through Live Text. Cooperating teachers should complete a minimum of 10 observation forms to document intern progress and assist in completing the weekly evaluation form.

Enclosed in this manual are forms to assist the cooperating teacher in observing teaching performance. It is suggested that the cooperating teacher complete observations using each of these forms.