



**Sam Houston
State University**

Graduate Teacher Certification Programs



INTERNSHIP HANDBOOK

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College of Education

School of Teaching and Learning

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Introduction

This handbook is designed to provide the teacher intern, mentor teacher, Professor of Practice (university field supervisor) with an overview of the internship experience. The intern teaching experience is rewarding and challenging, and this experience will prepare you to be a qualified, professional, and effective teacher! There is a strong team of educators here to support you. We are looking forward to a successful internship.

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Internship

An alternative certification program internship is a paid position in a public or private TEA accredited school. It is a minimum of 2 semesters, 180 days of teaching on an intern certificate for which Sam Houston State University ACP recommends the intern. The intern is the “teacher of record” and is afforded the same benefits and responsibilities that any first-year teacher receives; however, extracurricular duties must not interfere with program requirements.

- An intern must complete two successive, successful semesters of internship in the same content area.
- The internship must be completed in the area for which certification is sought, and the TExES content exam must be passed.
- The Sam Houston State University ACP staff will assign a faculty mentor supervisor (Professor of Practice) to all interns and in collaboration with the ACP program and the district, a mentor teacher will be assigned from the school.

Program Completion Requirements: Candidates qualify for a standard teaching certificate once they have completed:

Program courses:

CIED 5301 Alternative Teacher Preparation I (3 credit hours completed prior to beginning internship)

CIED 5302 Alternative Teacher Preparation II (3 credit hours)

CIED 5398 Practicum in Classroom Instruction I (3 credit hours) - First semester of the internship. Can begin fall or spring semester.

CIED 5399 Practicum in Classroom Instruction II (3 credit hours) - Second semester of the internship.

Field-Based Experiences (FBE) 50 hours (completed before internship):

A minimum of 25 hours of student interaction hours

Up to 25 hours of classroom observation hours

All required TEA tests:

Content Area Test (completed before internship)

Science of Teaching (STR) for literacy focused content areas (completed before internship)

Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) (Taken during the internship year. Must be completed prior to the expiration of the Intern Certificate.)

A full-year Internship: Candidates will complete a one-year internship in a TEA approved school. During the internship, candidates register for: CIED 5398 (1st semester), CIED 5399 (2nd Semester).

At the end of the internship, candidates must be recommended for licensure by their:

Principal,

Professor of Practice, and

Mentor Teacher (required by SHSU but not required by TEA)

TCAR Portfolio: Complete the Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness (TCAR) Summative Portfolio Assessment

TCAR Planning Template: [Click Me!](#)

Instructional Video: <https://youtu.be/Hc3qJp-2-V4>

As a final step in the teacher certification program, candidates will complete this performance-based assessment of teaching skills. The TCAR (Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness) is a performance-based assessment of teacher candidate readiness for classroom teaching. There are four domains in which candidates will be assessed, similar to the T-TESS instrument used in formal observations. The domains are:

- Planning;
- Instruction;
- Classroom environment, routines, and procedures;

- Professional practices and responsibilities.

Additional Certification Areas

Candidates complete their internship focusing on a specific content area. After completing the program and receiving a standard certification in that content area, the certified teacher may add other certifications by exam without approval from this program.

Internship Support System: 19 TAC §228

Mentor Teacher:

Qualifications:

3 years minimum credible teaching experience.

An accomplished educator as shown by student learning.

Trained by the Educator Preparation Program (EPP) in coaching, and mentoring.

Valid certification in the certificate category for the intern.

Duties: Guide, assist, and support the candidate in lesson preparation, classroom management, instruction, assessment, working with parents, obtaining materials, and district policies. Report candidate's progress to the field supervisor (3 reports).

Campus Administrator: Can be a principal, assistant principal, or other "designee".

Duties: Collaborate with the candidate and field supervisor. Examples: co-observations; post-observation collaborative coaching and goal setting; or feedback related to established goals.

Professor of Practice:

Qualifications:

Accomplishment as an education as shown by student learning.

Trained by the EPP as a field supervisor.

Completed Texas Education Agency (TEA)-approved training.

Certified Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) appraiser.

Three years credible experience in the class in which supervision is provided or in administration.

Valid certification

A minimum of a master's degree

Duties and Tasks:

Contact the candidate within the first three weeks of assignment start date. Verify the appropriateness of the placement and report issues to the EPP.

Observations: Conduct all formal and informal observations.

Formal Observations: The first formal observation must take place in person within the **first four weeks**.

Conduct **three** formal observations in the **first semester**.

Conduct **two** formal observations in the **second semester**.

Formal Observation Requirements:

45 minutes minimum

POP Cycle:

Pre-conference-2 to 4 days before

Lesson plan and question responses

Observation

Teaching and evaluating the lesson

Post-conference

Discussion (within 72 hours)

Reflection (by candidate entered in Tk20)

Documentation of educational practices observed with written feedback are sent to mentor, campus administrator, and candidate.

Pre and post observation conferences can be done in person or virtually.

Informal Observations: The first informal observation must take place **in person** within the **first six weeks**.

Conduct **three** informal observations in the **first semester**.

Conduct **three** informal observations in the **second semester**.

Informal Observation requirements:

15 minutes minimum

Post observation conference (virtual or in person)

Written feedback on targeted skills. Provide a copy of all written feedback to the candidate, campus administrator, and mentor.

Administrator Contact: Collaborate with the candidate and campus supervisor or their designee.

Communication

Communication is essential. Early identification, discussion, and resolution of difficulties are vital to support an intern's successful completion of their program. The intern or the mentor teacher must notify the university Professor of Practice as soon as a problem is identified. The Professor of Practice will then communicate with the program director. If the difficulty is specifically related to the Professor of Practice, the intern or cooperating/host teacher should contact the program director. After notification, appropriate corrective feedback/action—conferences, and referral to the Associate Dean, implementation of a growth plan, placement change, etc.— may be initiated.

SHSU Communication Guide

Email Communication: All communication is required to be through a teacher intern's SHSU email. Text or other modes of communication are allowed, however, SHSU email must be checked daily and is the official mode of communication.

Successful internships require continual communication on the part of all teacher interns, mentor teachers, principals, Professors of Practice, and district personnel. The following guidelines should be used by all intern teaching stakeholders. The purpose of these guidelines is to support effective communication among all parties in service of excellent development opportunities for teacher candidates/residents.

1. Strong relationships are the foundation of effective communication. All intern teaching experience stakeholders should strive to build trust and communicate regularly.
2. Interns are novice professionals who often benefit from support in developing strong communication skills.

Interns are encouraged to communicate regularly with the mentor teacher, Professor of Practice, principal, and university faculty members. Communication should be:

- Timely
- Clear and concise
- Specific to the audience
- Professional

When challenges arise, interns should consider how they might resolve the challenge. Interns are encouraged to communicate with both their mentor teacher and assigned Professor of Practice when challenges arise.

Professional Growth Plan

Teacher interns may have a professional growth plan developed that must be successfully completed, if approved for a new placement. The expectations in the plan should include specific professional development and activities to support improvement in identified areas of concern. All activities should be determined by appropriate education faculty via the input and feedback from the teacher candidate/resident, site coordinator/university supervisor, and original cooperating/host teacher(s).

Tk20: All teacher candidates/residents are required to upload documentation in Tk20, including agreements, forms, and observations.

Clinical Teaching Online Field Experience Binder Tk20© is an online support system for colleges of teacher education, created for the collection and evaluation of performance data for teacher interns and for overall management of academic activities at the colleges. The clinical teaching evaluation forms found in this guide will be completed online. Teacher interns and field supervisors can log in to Tk20© at <https://tk20.shsu.edu> with their SamWeb username and password. Mentor teachers will be given login information and granted access to complete their evaluation of their assigned intern. Specific instructions for accessing and submitting the online assessments will be forthcoming. Please contact SHSU Tk20 support (tk20@shsu.edu) if you have any difficulty logging in or completing any form.

Tk20 Binder Forms

Field Supervisor Forms

- Guidelines for Clinical Experience - Agreement and Electronic Signature NEW (x1)
- Field Supervisor Contact Log NEW (x1)
- Educator Candidate Dispositions Assessment - Long Form NEW (x4)
- Teacher Prep Growth Plan NEW (x1)
- Informal Observation NEW (x6)
- T-TESS Formal Observation NEW (x5 plus 1 extra)
- Field Supervisor Final Recommendation NEW (x1)
- Field Supervisor Form Verification NEW (x1)
- Field Supervisor Survey of Cooperating/Mentor/Host Teacher NEW (x1 for each)

Cooperating/Mentor/Host Teacher Forms

SHSU Intern Handbook (August 2025)

- Cooperating/Mentor/Host Teacher Guidelines for Clinical Experience Acknowledgement and Agreement NEW (x1)
- Cooperating/Mentor/Host Teacher Progress Report and Recommendation NEW (x3)
- Cooperating/Mentor/Host Teacher Verification NEW (x1)

Campus Administrator Forms

- Administrator Guidelines for Clinical Experience Acknowledgement and Agreement NEW (x1)
- Administrator Evaluation and Recommendation NEW (x2)
- Administrator Form Verification NEW (x1)

Teacher Candidate Forms

- Dropbox
 - Generic Artifact – for attaching files
- Beginning of clinical experience forms
 - Teacher Candidate Dispositions – Candidate Self-Assessment NEW #1
 - Guidelines for Clinical Experience – Agreement and Electronic Signature NEW (x1)
 - Teacher Candidate FERPA Consent to Release Educational Records and Information NEW (x1)
 - Teacher Candidate Field and Clinical Experience Badge Contract Policy and Procedures NEW (x1)
 - Teacher Candidate Standards of Professional Conduct NEW (x1)
- Pre-conference, Lesson plans, Post-conference
 - Teacher Candidate Pre-Conference Lesson Plan and Questions NEW (x5 plus 1 extra)
 - T-TESS Self Reflection NEW (x5 plus 1 extra)
- End of clinical experience forms
 - Teacher Candidate Dispositions – Candidate Self-Assessment NEW #2
 - Teacher Candidate Verification Form NEW (x1)
- Required surveys
 - Teacher Candidate Survey of Services and Operations NEW (x1)
 - Teacher Candidate Survey of Cooperating/Mentor/Host Teacher NEW (x1 for each)

Professionalism and Expectations:

1. Professional, Personal, and Scholastic Integrity: The intern must demonstrate honesty and integrity by adhering to the SHSU Student Code of Conduct (Code of Conduct) being truthful about background, experiences, and qualifications; doing one's own work; giving credit for the ideas of others; and providing proper citation of source materials.

2. Communication Skills: The intern must demonstrate sufficient written and oral skills to comprehend information and communicate ideas and feelings.

a. **Written:** The intern writes clearly and uses correct grammar and spelling. The intern demonstrates sufficient skills in written English to communicate effectively and successfully complete all written documentation.

b. **Oral:** The intern communicates effectively with other participants, program and campus staff, professionals, and students. The intern expresses ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates a willingness and an ability to listen to others.

3. Personal and Professional Requirements:

a. The intern must comply with the Texas Educator Code of Ethics [TAC (Texas Administrative Code) §247.2]

b. The intern must exhibit respect for superiors, peers, staff, and students within and outside of the program.

c. The intern must demonstrate interpersonal skills that are required for successful professional teaching. These skills include:

1) openness to unfamiliar ways of teaching and varying or modifying instruction to promote student success;

2) ability to accept and act upon reasonable criticism and suggestions for improvement;

3) enthusiasm for working collegially;

4) ability to understand others' perspectives about teaching and to separate personal and professional issues;

5) disposition to act always for the benefit of all students.

d. The intern must not sexually harass others; make verbal or physical threats; become involved in sexual relationships with students, supervisors, or staff; or engage in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse.

e. The intern must attend all training sessions in accordance with program policy. Punctuality is expected at all times, and absenteeism should be minimal.

f. The intern must demonstrate positive personal hygiene habits and comply with campus dress codes.

g. The intern must demonstrate positive social skills in professional and social interactions with program and campus/district staff, colleagues, parents, and students.

4. Cultural Attitudes and Behavior:

a. The intern should appreciate the value of diversity and look beyond self in interactions with others.

b. The intern must exhibit respect for differences of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, social class, national allegiance, and cultural heritage.

- c. The intern must not impose personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on others.
- d. The intern must exhibit acceptance of, and provide accommodations for, exceptional learners.
- e. The intern must be able to speak in a manner appropriate to the context of the classroom.

5. Physical Skills: The intern must exhibit motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in training activities and teaching duties.

6. Emotional and Mental Abilities:

- a. Stress Management - The intern must demonstrate the ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms. The intern must handle stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.
- b. Emotional and Mental Capabilities - The intern must use sound judgment and exhibit emotional stability in his/her scholastic and professional performance.
- c. Cognitive Dispositions:
 - 1) The intern must think analytically about educational issues.
 - 2) The intern must be thoughtfully reflective about the practice of teaching.
 - 3) The intern must be flexible, open to new ideas, and willing and able to modify personal educational beliefs and practices.
 - 4) The intern must question and test assumptions about teaching and schooling.

Interns who violate these policies may be placed on a growth plan or may be issued a Fitness to Teach Notification and will be coached to improve performance or correct behavior. Failure to make needed changes and improvements may result in dismissal from the program. Interns will be screened from program admission to program completion according to the criteria addressed in this Fitness to Teach Policy. Additionally, the program may request that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) revoke, suspend, cancel, or otherwise render void the candidate's intern certificate.

Sam Houston State University Standards for Educator Preparation

Knowledge & Skills Standards Teacher candidates:

- 1. (Knowledge) Possess a knowledge base that is comprehensive and directed to candidates' individual needs, which can be demonstrated - the candidate is able to:
(Skill) Use current content area knowledge when planning and implementing instruction.

2. (Knowledge) Possess and apply understanding of theories of effective planning, implementation, assessment, and modification of learning, which can be demonstrated - the candidate is able to: (Skill) Collaborate in the planning, delivery and assessment of teaching and learning.
3. (Knowledge) Understand the importance of the roles of reflection, self-assessment, and inquiry to the process of becoming an effective educator, which can be demonstrated - the candidate is able to: (Skill) Reflect on practice in order to improve instruction, use self-assessment as a part of teaching and reflection, and use inquiry as one method for professional growth.
4. (Knowledge) Know the importance of using technology to plan, implement and assess instruction and of evaluating technology for effectiveness, which can be demonstrated - the candidate is able to: (Skill) Use technology to enhance instruction.
5. (Knowledge) Know the research based best practices, which can be demonstrated - the candidate is able to: (Skill) Use research-based best practice to plan, deliver, assess and modify instruction.
6. (Knowledge) Know the theories of developmental learning including cognitive, affective and physical domains, which can be demonstrated - the candidate is able to: (Skill) Create environments that support student learning and that nurture the individual differences of the students.
7. (Knowledge) Understand differences in styles of learning and teaching that meet the needs of diverse learners, which can be demonstrated - the candidate is able to: (Skill) Use learner profiles to plan, implement, and assess.
8. (Knowledge) Know the characteristics of an effective learning environment which employs a variety of student-centered instructional methods and a range of motivational strategies, which can be demonstrated - the candidate is able to: (Skill) Use diverse technologies, group activities and effective teaching strategies
9. (Knowledge) Know a variety of methods for effectively managing student behavior, which can be demonstrated - the candidate is able to: (Skill) Use a variety of classroom management techniques to optimize the learning environment
10. (Knowledge) Know how to assess performance with variety of formal and informal tools and provide substantive feedback, which can be demonstrated - the candidate is able to: (Skill) Use informal and formal methods of assessment
11. (Knowledge) Understand the importance of continuous growth through professional involvement and membership, which can be demonstrated - the candidate is able to: (Skill) Model life-long learning and literacy and promote life-long learning and literacy among students

12. (Knowledge) Know the national, state and local standards appropriate for specific educational contexts, which can be demonstrated - the candidate is able to: (Skill) Understand how to align the standards at national, state, and local levels

T-TESS: The Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) is a system designed by educators to support teachers in their professional growth. Teacher candidates are to progressively work toward improving proficiency levels in all T-TESS indicators, as noted above.

As novice preservice teachers, teacher candidates are developing their skills during intern teaching and are not expected to perform at a proficient level in all areas. By the end of the intern teaching experience, teacher candidates should meet each indicator with Developing or higher to successfully complete clinical teaching.

By the end of the residency, residents should meet the Proficient performance level measure in each of the following dimensions:

- (A) Planning Dimension 1.1: Standards and Alignment;
- (B) Planning Dimension 1.2: Data and Assessment;
- (C) Instruction Dimension 2.1: Achieving Expectations;
- (D) Instruction Dimension 2.2: Content Knowledge and Expertise;
- (E) Instruction Dimension 2.3: Communication;
- (F) Learning Environment Dimension 3.1: Classroom Environment, Routines, and Procedures;
- (G) Learning Environment Dimension 3.2: Managing Student Behavior;
- (H) Learning Environment Dimension 3.3: Classroom Culture;
- (I) Professional Practices and Responsibilities Dimension 4.1: Professional Demeanor and Ethics;
- (J) Professional Practices and Responsibilities Dimension 4.2: Goal Setting; and
- (K) Professional Practices and Responsibilities Dimension 4.3: Professional Development.

Teacher candidates/residents scoring at Needs Improvement in multiple areas will be placed on a growth plan in an effort to provide structured support for improvement.

The T-TESS Evaluation: The SHSU Student/Teacher candidate Evaluation Report is a form developed collaboratively by the SHSU Educator Preparation Program, College of Education faculty members, and University Supervisors.

The T-TESS Rubric: The T-TESS rubric includes 4 domains and 16 dimensions. T-TESS domain and dimension rubrics include specific descriptors of practices and 5 performance levels: Distinguished, Accomplished, Proficient, Developing, and Improvement Needed. The full T-TESS rubric can be found here: https://teachfortexas.org/Resource_Files/Guides/T-TESS_Rubric.pdf . Below is a summary of each dimension in each of the four domains.

Domain I – Planning:

Dimension 1.1: Standards and Alignment Goals and objectives aligned to standards, sequenced, relevant and appropriate to the needs of the learners including best practices, use of technology, diverse learners.

Dimension 1.2: Data and Assessment Formal/informal assessments, analysis/use of data to adjust instruction, plan for feedback, confidentiality.

Dimension 1.3: Knowledge of Standards Connection to students' prior knowledge and background, focus on strengths, close gaps.

Dimension 1.4: Activities Questioning that encourages higher-order thinking, instructional grouping, technology and materials aligned with the lesson objective.

Domain II – Instruction

Dimension 2.1: Achieving Expectations Challenging, address student mistakes and follow through for mastery, and allows student opportunities for higher-order thinking.

Dimension 2.2: Content Knowledge and Expertise Content knowledge, integrated learning, anticipate and address student misunderstandings, and allows student opportunities for higher-order thinking.

Dimension 2.3: Communication Questioning that clarifies and encourages learning, clear explanations, appropriate communication, classroom process to communicate effectively.

Dimension 2.4: Differentiation Meets individual's needs, monitors students, recognizes confusion, provides differentiated content, and varies instructional methods.

Dimension 2.5: Monitor and Adjust Monitors and adjusts for student engagement and understanding.

Domain III – Learning Environment

Dimension 3.1: Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures Efficient procedures, routines, transitions and student groups in a safe, positive and organized classroom environment.

Dimension 3.2: Managing Student Behavior Consistently implements behavior system proficiently. Most students meet expectations.

Dimension 3.3: Classroom Culture Engages all students in meaningful learning. Students work respectfully.

Domain IV - Professional Practices and Responsibility

Dimension 4.1: Professional Demeanor and Ethics Follows the code of ethics, meets district/campus/university standards, and advocates for students.

Dimension 4.2: Goal Setting Sets professional goals, meets goals, and increases student achievement.

Dimension 4.3: Professional Development The teacher enhances the professional community.

Dimension 4.4: School Community Involvement – Not Scored

Glossary of commonly used terms:

Alternative Certification Program (ACP) is an educator preparation program that is an alternative to a traditional undergraduate certification program for individuals with at least a bachelor's degree and wish to become certified to teach in Texas Prek-12 schools

Field Experience Binder is a folder of forms that candidates complete during their internship. It is located in Tk20.

Field Supervisor AKA Professor of Practice are currently certified educators with advanced credentials who visit candidates in their classrooms to conduct formal and informal observations, monitor their performance, provide constructive feedback and mentorship, coordinate with mentor teachers, and represent SHSU in the schools.

Growth Plan is used during the internship to focus on elements that are crucial for success in the classroom. Assistant Professors of Practice creates the Growth Plan, reviews it with the intern, and gathers evidence of growth and success.

Intern Certificate is issued to a candidate by TEA after the candidate has passed all requirements for initial certification (150 hours of instruction in CIED 5301, 50 hours of FBE, required certification tests) and is valid for 1 year.

Internship is a paid classroom teacher assignment for one full school year at a public, charter, or private school approved and accredited by TEA for the purpose of completing a standard teaching certificate. Interns are the “teacher of record” in their classroom.

Mentor Teacher is a teacher employed by the school and is assigned to support the candidate during their internship. Mentor teachers must be certified in the same content area as the candidate, have 3 years classroom experience, and have demonstrated accomplishment as shown by student learning.

POP Cycle is completed for each formal observation. A POP cycle consists of:

- Pre-conference-2 to 4 days before
 - Lesson plan and question responses
- Observation
 - Teaching and evaluating the lesson
- Post-conference
 - Discussion within 72 hours
 - Reflection

Standard Teaching Certificate is a certificate issued by TEA to an individual who has met all requirements for a given certification.

Teacher of Record is an educator employed by a school or district and who teaches in an academic instructional setting for not less than an average of 4 hours each day and is responsible for evaluating student achievement and assigning grades.

TCAR (Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness) is a professional performance-based summative portfolio assessment built by candidates during the program and submitted as a final assessment at the end of their internship. It includes 4 domains: planning, instruction, classroom environment, professional practices and responsibilities.

Tk20 is a record keeping system that is used to record important tasks, assignments, forms, and records required for certification. An account is created for each candidate when they are admitted to the program.