



## Northern Plains Transition to Teaching

### Alternative Internship Option Policy and Procedure

#### **Program Standards**

The NPTT program requires each program participant who has completed the three “qualification” courses (EDCI 552, 553, and 554) to hold a minimum of a .5 FTE contract teaching position, in which the participants are paid, in the content area in which they are receiving their endorsement(s) while enrolled in the on-line Internship courses (EDCI 558 and 559). Within the program, the term “internship” refers to a school year long teaching contract, with a mentor teacher assigned to work with the intern and a building supervisor (school principal or superintendent) assigned to evaluate the intern’s performance. The Internship experience is a mandatory component to the NPTT program that cannot be waived because the instructional program is designed to build upon current real life experience in the classroom.

#### **Alternative Internship**

There have been instances in which a highly qualified NPTT candidate was unable to secure a fulltime teaching position, but may have the opportunity to create a reasonable alternative, such as a part time paid internship plus some additional unpaid (ie. volunteer) work that would serve to achieve the same combination of hours and experiences needed to guarantee full preparation toward licensure. If such a need is demonstrated, the program participant may request, in writing, that the NPTT program accept a non-paid internship in lieu of the normal paid internship. The NPTT Steering Committee will meet to review the request and make the final decision. The Steering Committee will give consideration to applicants’ requests, if in the initial application the following points are addressed:

1. This option should only be pursued if full or part time employment in a public or private accredited high school cannot be obtained. Applicants must provide written explanation of the kinds of attempts made to secure employment and why these attempts were not successful in the initial request.
2. Secondly, applicants must attempt to obtain employment, outside of teaching full or part time, in an accredited school and provide written explanation of this employment. Preference will be given to employment that demonstrates contact with students in a teaching environment of some sort within the parameters of the public or private accredited school. Examples of such employment may include,

but are not limited to, tutoring, paraprofessional aide, or extra-curricular program involvement.

### **Guidelines for Alternative Internship**

We understand that many NPTT program participants who are interested in this option are engaged in various activities within schools/districts currently. When possible, we will work with each interested participant to work within the confines of the participants' current position. The following guidelines should be observed when exploring the option of an Alternative Internship. The experience must include the following:

A combination of the following:

- 300 hours of structured participatory observation in schools within the program participant's approved endorsement area(s); plus
- 100 hours of classroom work, co-teaching, tutoring, and other duties; and
- 40 hours of solo teaching included in the 100 hours of classroom work, etc.

This will require formal sponsorship with a school, principal, and teacher(s) willing to work with each participant. This is a minimum required total of 400 hours over the course of enrollment in EDCI 558 and 559. The time and its associated teaching and work duties must be based upon a schedule and a contract agreed upon by all parties.

Various combinations of the above blended with other reasonable and appropriate sets of experiences may be considered. Any such combination of paid and unpaid internship experiences must meet the fundamental tests of contact time, experience in teaching and all other duties associated with being a teacher, direct work with students, and experience within institutions that serve the educational needs of students (public schools, primarily). The internship must achieve everything professionally required of the practicum in accordance with state standards and national guidelines. And it must do so in a manner that enables adequate documentation, supervision, and assessment of the experience so that the basis upon which we recommend for licensure can be clearly documented.

### **Procedures**

The candidate must submit for Alternative Internship approval:

1. A written "Request for Variance" to the NPTT Steering Committee, clearly explaining the problems encountered in seeking employment as a paid teacher. Explain the steps taken to secure employment and provide a rationale for requesting permission to pursue an unpaid internship to serve as an alternative to the standard paid internship. (Participants are not authorized to begin seeking alternative placements until a decision has been reached and a formal consultation has been held with each participant applying for this variance).

**After the NPTT Steering Committee has made the decision to approved a request for an Alternative Internship, the participant will provide the following:**

2. A document indicating the school(s) he or she is requesting for placement in the non-paid internship and a full proposal for the work that will be completed to ensure that the Internship will meet NPTT guidelines.
3. A contract/memorandum of understanding must be signed by both the school in which the program participant will be completing his or her Alternative Internship that they will agree to cooperate/work with the NPTT Internship Coordinator to facilitate the internship.

**Prior to start of Internship, the following items must be received by the NPTT office:**

1. Documentation of current health insurance effective during the year of the non-paid internship.
2. Documentation of at least \$1,000,000 liability insurance for the year of the non-paid internship (available for a modest fee through teacher associations such as MEA/MFT in Montana, and Wyoming Education Association in Wyoming).
3. A copy of a current, valid Alternative/Provisional teaching license or Exception Authorization valid in the state he or she wants to complete the non-paid internship, *or* current copy of criminal background check and fingerprints.

**Costs**

Because of additional costs and time commitments associated with the Alternative Internship option, the requirement for the participant of an Alternative Internship will incur additional cost to the program participant. Enrollment in an Alternative Internship (EDCI 576) course, for three credits each will be required concurrently with EDCI 558 and EDCI 559, at the rate at which regular NPTT courses are offered, for a total of six additional credits.

**Evaluation**

The **cooperating principal** will complete two evaluations of the intern. One will be completed after 300 hours of structured observations in the school and after 60 hours of classroom work including co-teaching, tutoring, and other duties and before the 40 hours of solo teaching. The second evaluation will be completed after the 40 hours of solo teaching.

The **cooperating teacher** will complete an evaluation form at the end of the 40 hours of solo teaching.

The **university supervisor** will complete an evaluation of the intern after the 40 hours of solo teaching.

The **intern** must complete assignments for the Alternative Internship. These assignments will be completed during the course of EDCI 576, and compiled on a CD titled Alternative Internship Portfolio. The assignments will include, but are not limited to:

- biographical information in essay form with picture
- resume
- description of teaching context with pictures
- teaching philosophy
- discipline and management style with plan
- a weekly log documenting 300 hours of structured observation, 100 hours of classroom work, co-teaching, tutoring/other duties, 40 hours of solo teaching
- (2) lesson observations of other teachers with descriptions and reflections
- attendance at one public school board meeting with documentation, summary and reflections
- recorded lesson analysis and reflection (in conjunction with EDCI 558 and 559)
- special needs project
- cultural and ethnic diversity essay
- assessment essay
- original exemplary unit including assessments and pictures
- cooperating teacher evaluations
- principal evaluations
- university supervisor evaluation
- summary of experience reflection essay

Final evaluation will be determined by the **NPTT intern supervisor** with input from the cooperating principal, teacher, and intern. Pass/Fail determination will be made by the NPTT intern supervisor based on this input, final evaluations forms and additional documentation provided by the student in the Alternative Internship Portfolio.

### **Legal Status**

For many of these Alternative Internship positions, the NPTT program participant and the University Supervisory are both considered “guests” within the classroom and school district. The school district retains the right to remove either person upon notice to the NPTT program.

The NPTT program retains the right to remove the Intern based upon performance standards within knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the teaching profession and the MSU Program Basics.

### **Summary**

The NPTT program is designed to integrate real life teaching experience with formal preparation and scholarship to provide high quality preparation for those career professionals seeking a change from an existing career to the profession of teaching. Because many are place-bound in their communities, the alignment of need and opportunity does not always happen, and some end up stopping out of the program when they are not able to secure a teaching position at the time required by the NPTT program schedule. In an ideal world, this would never happen, but it does. In those cases, if all

remaining options have been exhausted, we will consider reasonable alternatives to the full time paid internship otherwise required by the program. We need to limit the use of this option to cases of absolute necessity, and we need to ensure that the alternative has as much richness and authenticity as possible. We considered and then rejected standard “student teaching” models. They embody a different structure because undergraduates tend to be younger and less experienced than NPTT candidates. Alternatives to the paid internship must be viewed as sponsored partnership arrangements in which the NPTT candidate will contribute fully to the work and the teaching of the school as an unpaid volunteer or in some kind of paid position different from that of a licensed teacher (eg. an aide). This partnership arrangement requires sponsorship (formal agreement) by the school administration and the teacher(s) with whom the Intern will work. There are formal responsibilities incumbent then upon the administrator, the teacher(s), and the intern. The process of seeking such an alternative requires two stages. First, permission must be granted on the basis of a written request. Second, the actual conditions of the internship must be explored through mutual discussions and then agreed upon formally and a written Memorandum of Understanding.

DRAFT