

# **THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

## **2008 Summer Internship Program in Educational Assessment and Accountability**

The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Inc (the Center) is a small non-profit organization that occupies a unique and influential niche at the intersection of psychometrics and educational assessment policy. The Center is pleased to offer summer internships for up to two advanced doctoral students in educational measurement and/or assessment/accountability policy who want the opportunity to work with the Center's professionals on projects with direct implications for state and national educational policy.

### **The Center**

The Center was formed in 1998 by Richard Hill and Brian Gong as a not-for-profit corporation with a mission to improve student learning through better assessment and accountability practices. The Center is located in a beautifully renovated mill building on the banks of the Cocheco River in Dover, NH (10 miles from the seacoast town of Portsmouth, NH and about an hour north of Boston, MA). All of the Center's eight professional staff have earned doctorates in psychometrics, curriculum, or statistics and most have worked at high levels in state departments of education (assessment directors) or in testing companies. The combination of technical expertise and practical experience allows Center professionals to contribute effectively to cutting edge policy issues in educational measurement.

The Center's strives to promote increases in student learning through improved practices in educational assessment and accountability. The Center works directly with states (we currently are under contract with 21 states or entities) and has working relationships with several national research and advocacy organizations such as the National Center for Educational Outcomes (NCEO), The Center for Research on Student Standards and Testing (CRESST), Achieve, Inc., WestEd, and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The Center works with its clients and partners to fulfill this ambitious mission by:

- Providing customized support to states and districts in designing and implementing valid assessment and accountability programs.
- Coordinating Technical Advisory Committees that help ensure states' assessment and accountability programs receive the best on-going technical advice possible.
- Synthesizing existing research and conducting new analyses to provide empirical support for addressing current policy problems in sound, innovative ways.

Sample current projects of the Center include:

- Helping states devise a standards-based student longitudinal growth system for school accountability, and analyze the factors affecting the reliability (decision consistency) of such a system

- Working with a federally funded consortium to develop practical technical guidelines to evaluate and document the technical quality of alternate assessment systems (large-scale assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities that prevent them from participating in the regular assessment)
- Working with a state to design and implant a local assessment system to support high school graduation decisions based on curriculum-embedded work, along with state-wide review procedures to support the quality and comparability of districts' systems across the state
- Examining the impact of various scaling and equating methods on producing assessment systems sensitive to portraying student growth over time
- Examining individual and sets of assessment items (test forms) to relate psychometric characteristics to explicit content standards and cognitive models

### **The Summer Internship Program**

Interns will work on one major project throughout the summer (to be negotiated between the intern and the Center mentor) and will participate with Center staff on multiple ongoing projects. The intern will have the opportunity to attend meetings and interact with numerous state assessment personnel. Interns will be expected to produce a written report, suitable for conference presentation and/or publication, as evidence of successful completion of their project. One of the Center's senior staff will serve as the intern's primary mentor, but the interns will interact regularly with all of the Center's staff.

#### Qualifications

The intern must have completed at least two years of doctoral course work in educational measurement, statistics, research methods, or a related field. Interns with documented previous research experience are preferred. Further, interns must document their ability to work independently to complete a long-term project. We have found that successful interns possess most of the following skills and knowledge:

- ✓ Experience working with large-scale data bases
- ✓ Working knowledge of statistical analysis through multivariate analyses (HLM and SEM are helpful)
- ✓ A solid understanding research design
- ✓ Psychometrics (both classical and IRT) with demonstrated understanding of the principles of reliability and validity

#### Logistics

The internship duration is 8 weeks; the specific term will depend on the intern's school schedule. The Center will provide a housing allowance, reasonable relocation expenses, and a stipend of \$5000.

## Application

To apply for the internship program, candidates should submit the following materials electronically (preferred):

- ✓ letter of interest,
- ✓ vita,
- ✓ recent academic paper,
- ✓ the proposed dates (contiguous 8 weeks) for the internship, and
- ✓ two letters of recommendations (one of which must be from the candidate's academic advisor).

All materials must be submitted to Scott Marion and [smarion@nciea.org](mailto:smarion@nciea.org) and received by February 15, 2008. Postal mail can be directed to Dr. Marion at:

Scott Marion, Ph.D.  
Center for Assessment  
P.O. Box 351  
Dover, NH 03821

Applicants will be notified around March 15, 2008 regarding the internship. To learn more about the Center, please visit [www.nciea.org](http://www.nciea.org) or contact Scott Marion at [smarion@nciea.org](mailto:smarion@nciea.org).