

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

2010 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 Dover, NH (10 miles from the seacoast town of Portsmouth, NH and about an hour north of Boston, MA). All of the Center's nine professional staff members 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 (current contracts include more than 25 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). Some sample current projects of the Center include:

- Helping states devise student longitudinal growth systems for school accountability, and analyze the factors affecting the validity and reliability of such systems
- Designing innovative, interactive assessment and accountability reporting systems designed to yield meaningful interpretations of student and school scores
- 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
- Analyzing states' equating procedures to disentangle score changes from equating errors and helping states design and monitor technically sound equating procedures

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. Potential intern projects for 2010 include:

- ✓ Conducting simulation studies to examine the extent to which differential growth is detected through commonly applied equating designs and procedures,
- ✓ Developing and documenting procedures to assist states with the process of validating local assessment systems used for graduation decisions, and
- ✓ Refining the reporting, calculation, and use of large scale (state wide) growth analyses using the student growth percentile methodology.

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 as well as fluency with one or more statistical packages, e.g., SAS, SPSS, R (preferred)
- ✓ A solid understanding research design
- ✓ Psychometrics (both classical and IRT) with demonstrated understanding of the principles of reliability and validity
- ✓ An interest in applying technical skills and understanding major policy and practical issues

Logistics

The internship duration is 8 weeks; the specific term will depend on the intern's school schedule, but generally starting in the first week of June. 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**:

- ✓ A letter of interest explaining why the candidate would be a good fit with the Center and what the candidate hopes to gain from the experience,
- ✓ Curriculum vita (CV),
- ✓ One recent sole (preferred) or first-authored academic paper,
- ✓ The proposed dates (contiguous 8 weeks) for the internship, and
- ✓ Two letters of recommendations (one must be from the candidate's academic advisor).

Materials must be **submitted electronically** (including letters of recommendations) to:
Scott Marion at smarion@nciea.org and received by **February 15, 2010**.

Applicants will be notified around March 15, 2010 regarding their candidacy. To learn more about the Center, please visit www.nciea.org or contact Scott Marion at smarion@nciea.org.