FIELD EXPERIENCES

Field experiences are an integral component of the UTeach-Liberal Arts Program and are built on strong collaborations with school districts. These experiences involve the observation of elementary, middle, and high school classrooms and are designed to be sequential, cumulative, and performance-based, while preparing our graduates to implement and evaluate effective practices with diverse student populations. Our future teachers engage in field experiences that assist them in mastering their subject knowledge and pedagogical skills, learning how to work collaboratively with stakeholders, developing dispositions to be active citizens, and offering students the opportunity to develop these characteristics themselves. (19TAC 228.15)

REQUIRED COURSEWORK FOR STUDENT TEACHER

UTL 360 - Problems/Principles of Secondary Education
Student teaching is a learning experience that helps the student teacher develop or improve the skills needed for effective teaching. UTL 360 and 670 are the last courses student teachers take prior to certification. It is during the student teaching experience that most students will fully develop their skills in classroom and behavior management.

UTL 670 - Directed Teaching in Secondary Schools
The UTL 670 Secondary School Teaching Practicum involves 65 consecutive full teaching days, Monday through Friday. Student teaching begins after the student teacher has completed the district’s student teaching orientation. In tandem with UTL 670, student teachers are also enrolled in UTL 360 Practicum Seminar, which consists of 45 hours of class time on the UT-Austin campus. UTL 360 is conducted on Thursday evenings from 5:00pm – 8:00pm.

Other academic and coursework policies and guidelines can be found on the UTeach-Liberal Arts website.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT TEACHER

- Contact cooperating teacher before or at the beginning of the semester to make introductions and schedule observation time.
- Recognize and accept that the cooperating teacher has the ultimate responsibility for what may or may not be done in the classroom.
- Know and follow the rules, regulations, and policies of the district and school, including irregularities in the schedule.
- Maintain an ethical and professional attitude. This includes a professional relationship with students, teachers, and administrators, professional dress, arriving with sufficient time to prepare, and utilizing discretion regarding students’ confidential information.
- Be available for regular planning and feedback sessions with the cooperating teacher and field supervisor.
• Submit lesson plans in advance of observations and share copies with the cooperating teacher and field supervisor if being observed.
• Record and complete Attendance Documentation form with cooperating teacher’s signature and return to UTLA instructor by the last UTL 360 class meeting.
• Use e-mail to communicate with cooperating teacher, UTLA instructor, and field supervisor.
• Wear the UTLA lanyard and badge during the student teaching experience.
• Become familiar with the school climate and culture, and when possible, become acquainted with campus teachers, administrators, and staff.
• Follow all university, UTLA, district, and campus policies, regulations, and guidelines. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and termination from the program.

Additional Considerations by the Student Teacher
• Outside activities (e.g., employment, sports, sororities, fraternities, student organizations) should be held to a minimum during student teaching and must not interfere with student teaching responsibilities.
• Instructional materials created using supplies provided by the campus should remain with the campus at the completion of the student teaching assignment unless the policy of the school district allows it.
• Student teachers are never allowed to administer prescription or over-the-counter medicine to students. This is prohibited by University policy.
• Student teachers must follow district/campus policy when coming into contact with blood or any other potentially harmful substances. When in contact, always use protective hand covering.
• Corporal punishment (even in the mildest form) is not permitted at any time. Refrain from any bodily contact with your students unless an emergency requires it.
• Providing student transportation to and from campus is prohibited. You will be held legally liable for any accidents or injuries.
• Student teachers should only grade papers for students of their cooperating teacher.

COOPERATING TEACHER (CT)

A cooperating teacher is the campus-based mentor for the UTeach-Liberal Arts Program. Their role is to supervise and provide feedback to help student teachers develop effective teaching skills. The CT will be responsible for the student teacher for the required amount of time aligned with the course they are taking.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COOPERATING TEACHERS WITH A STUDENT TEACHER
• Supervise the student teacher for 65 consecutive full teaching days and serve as a teaching model for the UTLA student.
• Phase in the classroom responsibilities of the student teacher. The student teacher should not be left alone in the classroom for an extended period of time or on a regular basis until the cooperating teacher and student teacher agree on this decision.
• Allow the student teacher primary responsibility for classroom management while providing support when necessary.
• Phase in student teachers to take over a minimum of 2 classes for a six-week period, including lesson planning and grading.
• Meet with your student teacher to plan and schedule lessons.
• Require lesson plans from the student teacher in advance of teaching assignments, in addition to following all district and campus policies regarding lesson plan submission.
• Evaluate required lessons taught by your student teacher by observing the taught lesson and completing the appropriate observation form.
• Plan time to debrief and provide feedback to the student teacher about the lessons they have taught.
• Complete formative and summative assessments and meet with the student and field supervisor for the formative and summative conferences.
• Verify with a signature and date that you have completed cooperating teacher training and have read the roles and responsibilities of a cooperating teacher.
• Communicate with the UTLA instructor at the first indication of problems.
• Use e-mail to communicate with your student teacher, UTLA instructor, and field supervisor (if applicable).
• Meet deadlines as established by UTLA.

FIELD SUPERVISOR

A currently certified educator, hired by the educator preparation program, who preferably has advanced credentials, to observe candidates, monitor their performance, and provide constructive feedback to improve their effectiveness as educators. (TAC 228.2.10)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD SUPERVISORS

• Assist in the placement of student teachers.
• Communicate with student teachers and cooperating teachers offering guidance about the field experience.
• Communicate with the UTLA instructor on a regular basis to ensure that progress is being made by the student teacher and address any issues that may arise.
• Observe the student teacher a minimum of five times, which includes a formative and summative observation and provide verbal and written feedback after each observation.
• Schedule a post-conference after the formative observation (mid-term) and summative observation (final) to discuss the evaluation of the student teacher. Each post-conference will include the field supervisor, cooperating teacher, and student teacher.
• Keep a file of written memos, announcements, and all communication pertaining to your responsibilities.
• Meet deadlines as established by UTLA.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY

Student teachers are entitled to the same protection of the law accorded to teachers and administrators. This protection does not apply in cases where there is use of excessive force in
the discipline of students or negligence resulting in bodily injury to students. Nor does the protection apply to the operation or use of any motor vehicle.

This means that in the weeks before taking over teaching the classes full time, the cooperating teacher should not leave student teachers alone for an extended period of time or on a regular basis. In addition, they should not be left alone on a field trip with a group of students without a certified teacher. If these rules are violated or a student teacher has been placed in an uncomfortable situation, a UTLA faculty or staff member should be contacted immediately.

The University does not provide liability insurance to student teachers. Insurance coverage can be purchased by student teachers and is offered by organizations such as the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE), Texas Classroom Teachers Association (TCTA), and other professional teacher organizations.

SUBSTITUTING DURING FIELD EXPERIENCE

School districts in the area have different policies when it comes to substitute teaching. During student teaching, the UTLA policy is that UTLA student teachers do not substitute. If they are paid for substitute teaching during this period of time, these days will not be counted toward their required 65 days of student teaching. After student teaching is complete, student teachers are free to be paid substitutes for any school district.

CALENDAR

University regulations require that UTLA instructors follow the University Course Schedule as printed unless all students in a given course agree at the beginning of the semester to a modified schedule. There may be times when the University has a holiday and school districts are in session. You are not required to attend your student teaching assignment on these days. However, this break in your contact with the classroom could interfere with a sequence of instruction and prolong your student teaching experience. In these cases, you may wish to proceed with your student teaching. If you do take the University holiday, then you are required to provide the cooperating teacher with lesson plans so that your absence will not affect the students. If the school or school district is conducting professional development sessions, then you are expected to attend these sessions unless the school district has specifically requested that you not attend.

ATTENDANCE

The student teacher experience includes 65 consecutive full teaching days, Monday through Friday, during a single semester. If there is cause for an absence, notify the cooperating teacher, UTLA instructor and field supervisor as soon as possible. Days that are missed must be made up at the end of the field experience. The student teacher should assume responsibility for sending plans and/or materials to the school if an absence does occur.
Absences include, but are not limited to, illness, out-of-town job interviews, and religious holidays. In the case of religious holidays, the student teacher should give advance notice to the cooperating teacher, UTLA instructor, and field supervisor that this absence will occur and schedule a make-up time. Attendance and punctuality will be evaluated on an ongoing basis. Absences and tardiness, as well as a lack of notification, can result in the termination of the placement.

Student teachers will be given an Attendance Documentation form to record absences. By the last UTL 360 class meeting, the student teacher will have the cooperating teacher sign the form and the student teacher will return it to the UTLA instructor.

**OBSERVATIONS**

Student teachers are required to be observed a minimum of five times during student teaching. Three informal observations and two formal observations will occur. After each formal observation, a scheduled post-conference will be held where evaluators will discuss the student teacher’s progress and provide a signature that verifies that they took part in the observation and post-conference.

**OBSERVATION FORMS**

The cooperating teacher and field supervisor will use the observation forms below to document the progress of the student teacher. These forms are the official documents for the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and are based on the Texas Teacher Evaluation Support System (T-TESS). They are available in the UTLA office and on the website.

- UTL 360/670 Observation Form
- Formative Assessment Form
- Summative Assessment Form

**INDIVIDUAL GROWTH PLAN**

When a student teacher is struggling, the UTLA instructor has the option to develop an Individual Growth Plan (IGP) to help improve the student teacher’s skills. A student teacher’s cooperating teacher or field supervisor may also identify a student teacher for an IGP as long as they have rationale and proper documentation.

The IGP identifies weaknesses and provides a description of performance issues, target goals, deadlines, and consequences for failing to meet those goals. The UTLA instructor will meet with the student teacher to review and monitor the student’s progress and discuss the results of the IGP.

**APPLYING FOR CERTIFICATION**

Students begin the certification process during the UTL 640 semester and complete it during their student teaching semester (UTL 360 & UTL 670).
To be eligible to apply for certification, students must:

1. Successfully complete all UTLA program and degree coursework;
2. Successfully complete the appropriate certification exams (i.e., TExES, TOPT);
3. Submit a completed application and fees to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

Exam Registration and Application Process:

- Students are required to create an account with the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) via the TEA Login (TEAL) website prior to registering for certification exams and applying for certification. Upon creating an account, students receive a TEA identification number. A TEA ID is required for both exam registration and certification application.
- Certification exam dates and registration are available on the Educational Testing Service (ETS) website. Students use their TEA ID to create a personal account with ETS and register for the appropriate exams.
- After passing the exams and receiving the test results, students formally apply for certification online via the TEA Login website. Instructions for fingerprinting and submitting fees are included in the online application.

A student will become officially certified when all of the following have been fulfilled:

1. He/she successfully applies for certification via the SBEC website;
2. He/she officially graduates and the degree is conferred;
3. UTLA verifies coursework for successful completion;
4. The College of Education has officially notified TEA of program completion.

*You will have a three-year time frame after program completion and/or graduation in which to officially apply for certification. If you do not apply within this three-year timeframe you will be required go through an appeals process, which may involve retaking certification exams or completing additional coursework, before being eligible for certification.*

Additional information about certification procedures, including adding new levels or fields of certification by exam after receiving initial certification, is available in the FAQs section of the UTLA website, in the College of Education Dean’s Office (SZB 216), or on the College of Education Certification page.

**FINANCIAL AID**

During the student teaching semester most UTLA students will be registered for nine (9) hours of upper-division UTLA coursework (UTL 360/670). UTLA students are not allowed to take coursework other than UTL 360/670 during the final student-teaching semester without approval from their UTLA instructor or Advisor.

Financial aid will be proportionally adjusted based on the cost of tuition and actual hours enrolled. Students should contact Student Financial Services if they need more information on how this will affect them. For students who receive financial aid, we recommend that they meet with their Financial Aid Counselor at least one full semester before Student Teaching to plan accordingly.
**Tuition Rebate (for undergraduate students only)** - UTLA undergraduates may be eligible for a tuition rebate of up to $1,000 at graduation if they have attempted no more than eleven (11) semester hours beyond the minimum number of hours required for the degree. Current policy states, “If the student earned a bachelor’s degree and a Texas teaching certificate concurrently, any required teacher education courses are not counted as hours attempted if they exceed the number of hours of free electives allowed in the bachelor’s degree program.” For more information, visit the College of Liberal Arts Tuition Rebate webpage.

**ELECTRONIC MEDIA POLICY**

Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing web sites, editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites. Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication, such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.

UTLA students must read and understand the district electronic media policy and receive written permission from their cooperating teacher before any exchange of electronic media occurs with students. If permission is granted, electronic media may be used to communicate with currently enrolled students about matters within the scope of the UTLA student responsibilities. UTLA students’ use of electronic media to communicate with currently enrolled students for social reasons is prohibited.

If a UTLA student chooses to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, they are responsible for the content of their page, including content added by the UTLA student, the UTLA student’s friends, or members of the public who can access the UTLA student’s page, and for web links on the UTLA student’s page. The UTLA student is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

**CODE OF ETHICS POLICY**

Per Texas Administrative Code (Title 19, Part 7, Chapter 247, Rule 247.2), UTLA students shall comply with the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators. UTLA students shall also comply with standards of conduct set out in this policy and with any other policies, regulations, and guidelines that impose duties, requirements, or standards attendant to their status as UTLA student teachers. Violation of any policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination from the teacher certification preparation program.