COOPERATING TEACHER HANDBOOK
STUDENT INTERN
UTeach-Liberal Arts (UTLA)
University of Texas at Austin

COOPERATING TEACHER (CT)

A cooperating teacher is an educator who is collaboratively assigned by the educator preparation program (EPP) and campus administrator; who has at least three years of teaching experience; who is an accomplished educator as shown by student learning; who has completed cooperating teacher training by the EPP within three weeks of being assigned to a clinical teacher; who is currently certified in the certification category for the clinical teaching assignment for which the clinical teacher candidate is seeking certification; who guides, assists, and supports the candidate during the candidate's clinical teaching in areas such as planning, classroom management, instruction, assessment, working with parents, obtaining materials, district policies; and who reports the candidate’s progress to that candidate’s field supervisor.

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.

REQUIRED COURSEWORK FOR STUDENT INTERN

UTL 101 - Introduction to the Teaching Profession
UTL 101 is the first course that students are expected to complete in the UTeach-Liberal Arts Program. This course focuses on the basics of lesson design, the learning environment, class management, and professional responsibilities. As part of this course, students are required to complete 10 hours of field experience in an elementary classroom in which they will observe their cooperating teacher and design and teach three lessons. The field experience should occur over a period of 8 to 10 weeks.

UTL 202 - Introduction to Teaching Middle School
UTL 202 student interns will experience a secondary classroom for the first time. This course will go into more depth than UTL 101 about lesson design, the learning environment, classroom management, differentiation, and school climate. As part of this course, students are required to complete 20 hours of field experience in a middle school classroom in which they will observe their assigned cooperating teacher as well as design and teach six lessons in their specific content area. The field experience should occur over a period of 8 to 10 weeks. This is the last course that students will complete before officially committing to the UTLA program.
UTL 640 - Teaching in Secondary Schools

In UTL 640, student interns have officially committed to the UTeach-Liberal Arts Program. This course focuses on content standards, lesson design, assessment, and a variety of teaching strategies in the students’ specific content area. It also prepares the student to take part in the teacher certification process. As part of this course, students are required to complete 45 hours of field experience in a high school classroom in which they will observe their assigned cooperating teacher as well as design and teach nine lessons in their specific content area. The field experience should occur over a period of 10 to 12 weeks.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT INTERN

- 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 student’s confidential information.
- Be available for regular planning and feedback sessions with the cooperating teacher, and your field supervisor if you are a UTL 640 student.
- Submit lesson plans in advance of observations and share copies with the cooperating teacher and UTLA instructor, as well as your field supervisor if you are a UTL 640 student.
- Use e-mail to communicate with cooperating teacher and UTLA instructor, as well as your field supervisor if you are a UTL 640 student.
- Wear the UTLA lanyard and badge when you are visiting campus.
- Become familiar with the school climate and culture, and when possible, introduce yourself to 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.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COOPERATING TEACHER WITH STUDENT INTERN

- Serve as a teaching model and mentor.
- Meet with your student intern to plan and schedule lessons.
- Require lesson plans from the student intern in advance of the teaching assignments, in addition to following all district and campus policies regarding lesson plan submission.
- Evaluate required lessons taught by your student intern by observing the taught lesson and completing the appropriate observation form.
- Plan time to debrief and provide feedback to the student intern about the lessons they have taught.
- Communicate with the UTLA instructor at the first indication of problems.
- Use e-mail to communicate with your student intern, UTLA instructor and field supervisor (if applicable).
• Contact the student intern at least 48 hours in advance or as quickly as possible if a visit needs to be cancelled. Reschedule the missed classroom visit as soon as possible. Contact the UTLA instructor if unable to reach the student directly.

• Verify with a signature and date that you have completed cooperating teacher training and have read the roles and responsibilities of a cooperating teacher on the UTLA website.

• Meet deadlines as established by UTLA.

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH STUDENT INTERNS

The student intern will contact you and schedule their first observation at the beginning of the semester. Below are suggestions to help student interns become familiar with you, your district, campus and classroom.

• Identify and discuss concerns of the student intern.

• Exchange all contact information in case of emergencies.

• Introduce the student intern to other teachers and office personnel.

• Introduce the student intern to your class during the first observation.

• Clarify any questions about policy or regulations the student intern might have.

• Provide copies of textbooks and other curriculum materials available for the student intern to use.

• Provide the student intern background information on the district, campus, and students in your classroom.

• Get to know each other as individuals by discussing background information, interests, hobbies, and concerns.

• Clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Establish your procedures for setting up observations.

SUPERVISING STUDENT INTERNS

Cooperating teachers will supervise UTLA students during classroom visits lasting approximately one to two class periods. The number of visits and lessons taught will vary according to the course they are enrolled in.

• UTL 101 - 10 hours of observing the CT which will include teaching 3 lessons

• UTL 202 - 20 hours of observing the CT which will include teaching 6 lessons

• UTL 640 - 45 hours of observing the CT which will include teaching 9 lessons

During classroom visits, CTs agree to:

• Provide a space in the room to observe.

• Be present in the classroom at all times. Student interns should be in the presence of a certified teacher at all times.

• Assume primary responsibility for classroom management.

• Serve as a teaching model for the UTLA student.

• Evaluate the UTLA student when they are teaching their required lessons using the appropriate form.

• Provide feedback after the lesson during a debrief session.
SCHEDULING OBSERVATIONS

Cooperating teachers will observe and evaluate the lessons taught by student interns. These lessons will be based on the CT's lesson plans and will be guided and reviewed by the CT. After the CT and student intern have scheduled when observations will occur, the CT and student intern will collaborate to schedule when each lesson will occur.

OBSERVATION FORMS

Below are the forms that CTs will use to evaluate lessons taught by student interns. These forms are the official documentation for UTLA and are based on the Texas Teacher Evaluation Support System (T-TESS). They will be provided by the student intern or can be downloaded from the website in the cooperating teachers section.

- UTL 101/202 Student Interns - UTL 101/202 Observation Form
- UTL 640 Student Interns - UTL 640 Observation Form

EVALUATING AND RECORDING OBSERVATIONS

Cooperating teachers will evaluate the student intern teaching their lesson using the appropriate form. CTs will rate each observable behavior and cite specific examples as supporting evidence.

When observing and evaluating the student intern a variety of methods can be used to record one’s thoughts such as scripting, checklists, T-charts, etc. CTs should identify the student’s strengths, successes, areas of concern, and how they may improve. It is very beneficial to the student intern if comments about the lesson taught are also included.

DEBRIEFING SESSION

After each lesson, the CT will schedule a debriefing session with their student intern to provide feedback about the lesson taught. Debriefing sessions should last between 15 to 30 minutes. CTs will discuss the actions and comments recorded on the observation form. At the end of the debriefing session, a copy of the observation form will be provided to the student intern, UTLA instructor, and CT.

INDIVIDUAL GROWTH PLAN

When a student intern is struggling, the UTLA instructor has the option to develop an Individual Growth Plan (IGP) to help improve the student intern's skills. A student intern's cooperating teacher or field supervisor may also identify them for evaluation at any time. If you choose to refer a student, contact the UTLA instructor and provide rationale and documentation. This documentation is vital if the student drops or fails the course.

The IGP identifies weaknesses and provides a description of performance issues, target goals, deadlines, and consequences for failing to meet those goals. It is important to keep accurate records of observations and feedback sessions for the student intern. The UTLA instructor will
meet with the student intern to review and monitor the student’s progress and discuss the results of the IGP.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHING AND THE STUDENT INTERN

School districts in the area have different policies when it comes to substitute teaching. UTLA's policy is that student interns may not serve as substitute teachers while enrolled in a UTL course.