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

STUDENT INTERN

An individual who has been admitted to the professional development sequence in preparation to be formally admitted to the UTeach-Liberal Arts Program and teacher certification.

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 and begin the certification process. 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.

COURSEWORK POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Grading Policy
All courses required by UTLA (except UTL 670) must be taken on a letter grade basis. Students who receive an incomplete grade in any UTLA sequence course (UTL 101, UTL 202, UTL 640, UTL 360/670), must complete the requirements for the course before the start of the next UTL course:

- Students who receive an “X” in one of the aforementioned courses, but plan to enroll in a subsequent UTL course the next semester must complete the course requirements and the UTLA instructor must report a final course grade by the first-class day of the following long-session semester. Any student who does not receive a grade of at least a B in the incomplete course by the first-class day will be dropped from their current semester’s UTL course.
- Students who receive an “X” in one of the aforementioned courses, but do not plan to enroll in subsequent UTL courses the next semester, are required to adhere to University policy.

Performance Standards Policy
UTLA students who earn a letter grade of “B-” or below in UTL 101, UTL 202, and UTL 640 are automatically suspended from the program and need to re-apply to continue:

- The Performance Standards Committee chair will notify students within seven (7) calendar days of the grade posting.
- Re-application consists of a reflective essay that examines performance in UTLA and why the student should be allowed to continue. Essay guidelines and instructions will be provided in the notification email.
- The Performance Standards Committee and UTLA director will conduct a review of the student’s UTLA course records and reflective essay before rendering a decision regarding re-admission to the program.
- Deadline for essay submission is seven (7) calendar days before the first-class day for fall and spring semesters. The UTLA advisor will notify students of the committee’s decision before the beginning of each subsequent long semester.

Be advised that going through this appeals process does not guarantee approval for continuation in the program. Students who do not re-apply will be withdrawn from the program.

Two-Attempt Policy
No student may attempt any UTLA course (UTL 101, UTL 202, UTL 640, UTL 360/670) more than twice. Other academic and coursework policies and guidelines can be found on the UTLA website.
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 students’ confidential information.
• Be available for regular planning and feedback sessions with the cooperating teacher.
• Submit lesson plans a minimum of 48 hours in advance of observations and share copies with the cooperating teacher and UTLA instructor.
• Use e-mail to communicate with cooperating teacher and UTLA instructor, as well as your field supervisor if you are a UTL 640 student.
• UTL 640 student interns will also be required to be available for regular planning and feedback sessions, submission of lessons a minimum of 48 hours in advance.
• Wear the UTLA lanyard and badge when visiting the 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.

Additional Considerations by the Student Teacher

• 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.

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.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COOPERATING TEACHER WITH A 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 48 hours 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.

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 construction feedback to improve their effectiveness as educators. A field supervisor shall have at least three years of experience and current certification in the class in which supervision is provided. A field supervisor shall be an accomplished educator as shown by student learning. A field supervisor with experience as a principal and who holds a current certificate that is appropriate for a principal assignment may supervise principal, classroom teacher, master teacher, and reading specialist candidates. A field supervisor with experience as a superintendent and who holds a current certificate that is appropriate for a superintendent assignment may supervise superintendent, principal, classroom teacher, master teacher, and reading specialist candidates.

Field supervisors observe and evaluate only UTL 640 student interns and UTL 360/670 student teachers.
RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD SUPERVISOR FOR UTL 640 STUDENT INTERN

- Communicate with student interns and cooperating teachers offering guidance about the field experience.
- Communicate with the UTLA instructor on a regular basis to ensure that the student intern is making progress and address any issues that may arise.
- Observe the student intern twice and provide verbal and written feedback after each observation.
- Debrief with students.
- Keep a file of written memos, announcements, and all communication pertaining to your responsibilities.
- Meet deadlines as established by UTLA.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY

Student interns 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.

Cooperating teachers should be present in the classroom at all times. 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 intern has been placed in an uncomfortable situation, a UTLA instructor or staff member should be contacted immediately.

The University does not provide liability insurance to student interns. Insurance coverage can be purchased by student interns 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.

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.

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 internship assignment on these days.
OBSERVATIONS

Student interns are required to be observed based on course requirements by their cooperating teacher. If they are a UTL 640 student intern, they are observed based on course requirements by their cooperating teacher and a UTLA field supervisor. After each observation, a post-conference will be held to discuss the student intern’s progress.

OBSERVATION FORMS

The cooperating teacher and field supervisor will use the observation forms below to document the progress of the student intern depending on the course they are enrolled in. These forms are the official documentation for UTLA and are based on the Texas Teacher Evaluation Support System (T-TESS). They are available in the UTLA offices and on the website.

- Observation Form 101/202 (cooperating teacher)
- Observation Form 640 (cooperating teacher and field supervisor)

OBSERVATION AND LESSON VERIFICATION FORM

Student interns will document the time spent observing and teaching with the cooperating teacher using the form below. This form is the official document for UTLA and is available in the UTLA offices and on the website.

- Observation and Lesson Verification Form

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 a student intern for an IGP as long as they have a 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 intern to review and monitor the student’s progress and discuss the results of the IGP.

ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS

Clear, effective communication skills with students, parents, or colleagues are necessary for teacher success. Below is the procedure for identifying students who enter the UTLA program who have difficulty with spoken or written language.

- During UTL 101, students will be given an initial oral and written evaluation to be analyzed and submitted to the Language Support Review Committee if support is needed.
• Any UTLA instructor, cooperating teacher, field supervisor, or advisor working with a UTLA student may identify the student for evaluation. A student may also request an advisor to refer him/her for evaluation (self-referral).
• Post-Bac students with a degree from a foreign university are required to take the TOEFL IBT exam. The minimum required score is 79 overall and minimum scores for writing and speaking sections are 27.
• The initial referral and documentation is submitted to the Language Support Review Committee chairperson. If further information is needed, the committee may schedule an interview with the student.
• The committee determines if support is needed, and if so, the nature of that support. If support is needed, the committee develops a Language Support Plan for the student. Specific goals and target dates are detailed in the plan.
• The student’s instructor will monitor progress throughout the semester and submit work samples to the Language Support Review Committee for review. Further recommendations for support may result from that review.

APPLYING FOR CERTIFICATION

Students may begin the certification process during the UTL 640 semester and complete it during their student teaching semester (UTL 360 & UTL 670).

Exam Registration and Application Process:
• The registration and application process is provided in detail on the UTeach-LA 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 and approves 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 on the UTLA and SBEC websites.

CRIMINAL HISTORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As required by HB1508, teacher certification applicants need to be aware of the following:
• In order to receive teacher certification in Texas, you must pass a criminal history background check.
• If you have been convicted of an offense that is considered not appropriate for an educator, you could be ineligible to earn this certification from the state of Texas.
• You have a right to request a preliminary criminal history evaluation letter from the Texas Education Agency prior to admission into this program. The Texas Education Agency currently charges a fee for this criminal history evaluation.

More information on the Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation may be found at: https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Investigations/Preliminary_Criminal_History_Evaluation-FAQs/

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 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 websites, 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.

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.
During student interning, 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 intern responsibilities. UTLA students' use of electronic media to communicate with currently enrolled students for social reasons is prohibited.

**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 interns/student teachers. Violation of any policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination from the teacher certification preparation program.