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

STUDENT TEACHER (TAC 228.2(5))

An individual, who has been formally admitted to the UTeach-Liberal Arts program, has completed UTL 640 Teaching in Secondary Schools and has been approved for student teaching in preparation for teacher certification.

COOPERATING TEACHER (CT) (TAC 228.2(12))

- Assigned by the educator preparation program (EPP) and campus administrator.
- At least three years of teaching experience.
- An accomplished educator as shown by student learning.
- Completed cooperating teacher training by the EPP within three weeks of being assigned to a clinical teacher.
- Currently certified in the certification category for the clinical teaching assignment for which the clinical teacher candidate is seeking certification.
- 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 (TAC 228.2(15))

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 TEACHER

Student teachers will take both UTL 360 and UTL 670 during their last semester in the UTeach-Liberal Arts program.

UTL 360 - Problems/Principles of Secondary Education
UTL 360 Practicum Seminar is a letter grade course which consists of 45 hours of class time on the UT-Austin campus on Thursday evenings from 5:00pm – 8:00pm. Each seminar is divided
between presentations on current pedagogical topics and time for curricular cohorts to meet and discuss said topics through their own curricular lens.

**UTL 670 - Directed Teaching in Secondary Schools**
The UTL 670 Secondary School Teaching Practicum is a pass/fail course that involves a supervised educator assignment at a public school accredited by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) or other school approved by TEA that will lead to the completion of the UTeach-Liberal Arts program and a standard teaching certificate. The assignment will include 65 consecutive full teaching days, Monday through Friday.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT TEACHER**

- Contact cooperating teacher before or at the beginning of the semester to make introductions and confirm the 65-day placement start date.
- 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.
- Create a draft and original unit plan with corresponding supplemental materials documenting their instructional planning, formative and summative assessment design, and reflection for a single unit delivered during the student teaching semester.
- Take over a minimum of two class periods for a six to seven-week period, including lesson planning and grading.
- Record and complete the electronic Attendance Documentation. Communicate with UTLA instructor if there is a change in the agreed 65-day placement end date.
- 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 said materials to be kept by the student teacher.

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.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COOPERATING TEACHER WITH A STUDENT TEACHER

Supervise the student teacher for 65 consecutive full-time teaching days and serve as a teaching model for the UTLA student.

Phase in the classroom responsibilities of the student teacher. Allow the student teacher primary responsibility for classroom management while providing support when necessary.

Phase in student teachers to take over a minimum of two classes for a six to seven-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 the student teacher and observe the taught lesson using the appropriate observation form.

Plan time to debrief and provide feedback to the student teacher about the lesson written and taught.

Complete formative and summative evaluations and meet with the student teacher and field supervisor for the formative and summative conferences.

Verify and date that you have completed the cooperating teacher training.

Communicate with the UTLA instructor throughout the semester and especially at the first indication of problems.

Use e-mail to communicate with your student teacher, UTLA instructor, and field supervisor (if applicable).

Meet administrative deadlines as established by UTLA.

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH STUDENT TEACHER

The student teacher will contact you to schedule a time to meet and discuss when they will begin student teaching. Below are suggestions to help the student teacher become an accepted member of the professional staff of the campus.

Exchange all contact information in case of emergencies.

Introduce the student teacher to other campus teachers, office personnel, and your students.
• Have curriculum materials available for the student teacher to use.
• Provide a workspace.
• Provide the student teacher some background on the district, campus, and students in your classroom.
• Get to know each other as individuals by discussing backgrounds, interests, hobbies, and concerns.
• Answer any questions about policy or regulations the student teacher might have.

LEAVING THE CLASSROOM

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. The CT should feel confident that the student teacher can handle the particular teaching assignment planned. Even then, the length of time the CT leaves the classroom should be brief during the early stages in the student teaching experience. Until the student teacher has developed adequate classroom management and teaching skills, the CT should stay near the classroom when leaving the student teacher alone. The welfare of the students and student teacher should be a priority.

FIELD SUPERVISOR (TAC 228.2(16))

• 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.
• Shall have at least three years of experience and current certification in the class in which supervision is provided.
• Shall be an accomplished educator as shown by student learning.
• May have experience as a district or campus administrator and hold a current certificate.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD SUPERVISOR

• 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 four times, which includes two informal observations, a formative and summative observation, face-to-face post-conferences, and verbal and written feedback. The post-conference for the formative and the summative observations will include the field supervisor, cooperating teacher, and student teacher.

OBSERVATIONS

Student teachers are required to be observed a minimum of four times during student teaching by a UTLA field supervisor. Two informal observations and two formal observations will occur. Included in the observations are a pre- and face-to-face post-conferences. Both the cooperating teacher (informally) and field supervisor will evaluate the student teacher.
and discuss the student teacher’s lessons, progress, and provide verification that they took part in the required observation and post-conference.

Having both scheduled and random observations is essential to the development of student teachers. It is suggested that the cooperating teacher schedule some observations with the student teacher and to also observe at other random times. This allows the CT to observe student teachers at their best and how they usually teach.

**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 will be provided electronically to the evaluator and on the website to download.

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

**EVALUATING AND RECORDING OBSERVATIONS**

Cooperating teachers will evaluate the student teacher teaching lessons on an informal basis and alongside the field supervisor using the appropriate forms. CTs will rate each observable behavior and cite specific examples as supporting evidence.

When observing and evaluating the student teacher 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 teacher if comments about the lesson are also included.

**DEBRIEFING SESSION**

After informal observations, a debriefing session will be conducted to provide feedback about the lesson taught. The debriefing session should occur approximately 15 to 30 minutes. Evaluators will discuss with the student teacher the student teacher’s strengths, areas of concern, and ways to improve in preparation for the next lesson. When completed, the student teacher, CT, and field supervisor will all receive a copy of these forms electronically to approve and have.

After the formative and summative observation, the student, CT, and field supervisor will schedule a face-to-face conference to discuss the observed lesson. These observations and debriefing sessions are required for teacher certification. It is important that the following information is recorded on the observation forms: name of student, date, start and stop time, and signatures. When completed, the student teacher, CT, and field supervisor will all receive a copy of these forms electronically to approve and have.
ATTENDANCE FORM

Student teachers will receive a link and be responsible for their electronic Attendance Documentation form to complete and record absences. This electronic documentation will be approved by the cooperating teacher and UTLA instructor at the end of the student teaching experience.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

University Attendance Policy

Regular attendance at all class meetings is expected. Instructors are responsible for implementing attendance policy and must notify students of any special attendance requirements. Special regulations of colleges and schools, required by the unique nature of their programs of study, may be enacted through the normal approval process. These special regulations may not conflict with University regulations on class attendance and absence.

Religious Holy Day

A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

Absence for Military Service

In accordance with section 51.9111 of the Texas Education Code, a student is excused from attending classes or engaging in other required activities, including exams, if he or she is called to active military service of a reasonably brief duration. The maximum time for which the student may be excused has been defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as “no more than 25 percent of the total number of class meetings or the contact hour equivalent (not including the final examination period) for the specific course or courses in which the student is currently enrolled at the beginning of the period of active military service.” The student will be allowed a reasonable time after the absence to complete assignments and take exams.

Student Teaching Experience

The student teacher experience includes 65 consecutive full teaching days, Monday through Friday, during a single semester. According to the Texas Education Code a school day shall be at least seven hours (420 minutes) each day. If there is a cause for a student teacher to be absent, they will need to document their absence on the attendance form and notify the cooperating teacher, UTLA instructor and if needed, the 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.
If it becomes evident that a student cannot complete 65 consecutive days of student teaching within the given UT semester, the individual will be removed from UTL 670, will receive a failing grade for the course, and not be referred to for certification.

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 if needed, the 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.

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.

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. Anyone working with a student may refer the student 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 is dropped 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 your student teacher. The UTLA instructor will meet with the student teacher to review and monitor the student’s progress and discuss the results of the IGP.

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.
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 teaching, 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.

**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.

**SUBSTITUTE TEACHING AND THE STUDENT TEACHER**

School districts in the area have different policies when it comes to substitute teaching. During student teaching, UTLA policy does not permit UTLA student teachers to substitute. Student teachers accepting a paid substitute teaching job during this period of time will not receive credit toward the required 65 days of student teaching for said substitute teaching days. Upon completion of student teaching, UTLA students are free to work as substitutes for any school district.