STUDENT TEACHER HANDBOOK  
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 70 consecutive full teaching days, Monday through Friday.

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.

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 TEACHER

• Contact cooperating teacher before or at the beginning of the semester to make introductions and confirm the 70-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 70-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

• Student teachers should only grade papers for students of their cooperating 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.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COOPERATING TEACHER WITH A STUDENT TEACHER

• Supervise the student teacher for 70 consecutive full-time 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 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.
- Complete 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 all administrative deadlines as established by UTLA.

**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, a face to-face post-conference, and verbal and written feedback.
- Schedule a face to face pre- and post-conference for the required observations. 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. 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 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 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.

**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 their strengths, areas of concern, and ways to improve in preparation for the next lesson. When completed, the student teacher, UTLA instructor 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, UTLA instructor and field supervisor will all receive a copy of these forms electronically to approve and have.

**ATTENDANCE FORM**

Student teachers will receive a link to their electronic Attendance Documentation form to complete and record absences. The cooperating teacher and UTLA instructor at the end of the student teaching experience will approve this electronic documentation.
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 Attendance

The student teacher experience includes 70 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 70 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.

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.

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 a rationale and proper documentation.

The IGP identifies areas that student teachers are struggling in and need attention. It 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.

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

UTLA student teachers will be allowed to substitute up to five days for their cooperating teacher during their student teaching experience. Below are the requirements that must first be fulfilled to substitute during student teaching. Student teachers must –

- Complete the district’s substitute training
- Complete at least seven weeks of student teaching
- Complete and submit the curriculum unit required by UTL 360
- Be approved by their UTL 360 Instructor to substitute
- Be approved by their campus administration

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). The registration and application process is provided in detail on the UTeach-LA website along with fingerprinting and fees.

If accommodations for testing need to be provided, students will complete an accommodation form for each test that they will take. The form is located on the Texas Educator Certification Examination Program website and needs to be submitted three weeks prior to the testing date for approval.

Program graduates 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.
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.

PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarship are available to UTeach-Liberal Arts students. Please contact the UTeach-Liberal Arts Program staff for more details.

In order to receive any of the following scholarships you must be an active student of UTeach-Liberal Arts. Please see individual scholarship details for additional eligibility requirements.

In the event you are no longer a student of UTeach-Liberal Arts when receiving a scholarship/award or do not attend the conference/study abroad program, the full scholarship/award must be reimbursed. Students will be financially responsible for any late, change, or cancellation fees.

UTeach-Liberal Arts Study Abroad Scholarship (for all UTeach-LA students) Scholarships based on need are available to help defray the cost of study abroad travel. To be eligible, students must complete UTL 101. Apply online through the College of Liberal Arts website. Application deadlines are March 1 and November 1.

UTeach-Liberal Arts Conference Scholarship (for all UTeach-LA students) This scholarship is awarded to UTeach-Liberal Arts students to cover the cost of registration for professional conferences. To be eligible students must be currently enrolled in or have completed UTL 202. Applications should be submitted to UTeach-Liberal Arts 45 days prior to the conference date. The application is available on the UTeach-LA website.
Marilyn White APSI Scholarship (for UTeach-LA PDS students) The Marilyn White Scholarship is awarded to UTeach-Liberal Arts students who wish to attend Advanced Placement Summer Institute (APSI) training offered through the College Board. To be eligible, students must complete UTL 640 or UTL 360/670 in the spring semester prior to the summer institute. Please see the UTeach-Liberal Arts Office Manager for more details.

Friends of UTeach-Liberal Arts Student Teacher Scholarship (for UTeach-LA students entering student teaching semester) Scholarships based on need are available to help defray costs during the student teaching semester. Apply online through the College of Liberal Arts scholarships website. Application deadlines are March 1 and November 1.

Patricia Sandlin Pennington UTeach-Liberal Arts Scholarship (for UTeach-LA PDS students) This is a need and merit-based scholarship to help defray costs, such as certification, expenses during student teaching, etc. **GPA of at least 3.25.** If you have already received a “Friends of UTeach-Liberal Arts Student Teacher Scholarship” you are not eligible for this scholarship. Apply online through the College of Liberal Arts scholarships website. Application deadlines are March 1 and November 1.

AISD Future Teacher Scholarship (for UTeach-LA students seeking LOTE certification) The AISD Future Teacher Scholarship is awarded to students seeking certification in critical needs areas. In UTeach-Liberal Arts, only students in Languages Other Than English fall into this category. LOTE students are eligible to receive the scholarship during the final four semesters before certification. They must, however, apply for the scholarship each semester for which they are seeking aid.

English Oxford Program Fee Reduction (for UTeach-LA students seeking certification in English) The Department of English at The University of Texas at Austin has sponsored a summer program in Oxford since 1984. The Oxford Summer Program gathers students to enjoy life and literature at Oxford University, the oldest English-speaking university in the world. UTeach-LA students are eligible to apply for a program fee reduction. For more information visit the English Oxford Program website.

Jefferson Junior Fellows Program (for all UTeach-LA students) The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Study of Core Texts and Ideas offers a competitive scholarship of $300 per semester to students enrolled in a Core Texts and Ideas course. For more information, please see the Junior Fellows section of the Jefferson Center website.