Student Teaching Handbook

Texas A&M International University

College of Education
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The Student Teaching Handbook is a description of the requirements for student teaching, evaluations, and tests required by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) regulations as of the date of this publication. These are subject to change by TEA. Candidates are responsible for meeting all requirements established by the University and TEA in order to graduate from the University whether published within or not.
Introduction
Student Teaching is a cooperative endeavor between the College of Education, Texas A&M International University, selected public schools, and the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Student Teaching is a significant part of each candidate’s total pre-induction into the teaching profession consisting of a carefully planned sequence of first hand experiential learning as a full time student teacher under the mentorship of other professionals. Additionally, student teaching is a competency and standards-based culminating experience in teacher preparation.

Student Teaching provides opportunities for synthesis and application of theory acquired in previous coursework to authentic professional experiences in order to develop the student teacher’s competencies toward becoming a professional educator. Completion of this capstone experience prepares candidates to be potentially recommended to sit for the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) TExES certification exam.

Purpose
The purpose of the Educator Preparation Program Student Teaching is to ensure that all teacher candidates are prepared to provide opportunities for the demonstration of learned teaching strategies in a classroom setting. In this culminating experience of your program, teacher candidates receive support and quality feedback from a certified mentor and university supervisor who is assigned to work with them during their student teaching field-based placement.

This handbook was developed for the benefit of students who are following degree plans seeking initial educator certification. The handbook also familiarizes personnel who are working with student teachers with roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

College of Education Mission Statement
The mission of the College of Education at Texas A&M International University is to provide a comprehensive and coherent professional development system for educators by linking all aspects of the education profession. Faculty in the College of Education is committed to accomplish this mission through:

- Collaboration with colleagues across the university community and the public schools
- The use of reflective teaching practices
- Research that enhances knowledge about teaching and learning and
- Service to the community of educators in the region
Learning Outcomes

Student teaching is designed to provide teacher candidates opportunities to implement what they have learned throughout their Educator Preparation Program (EPP) coursework. During student teaching, teacher candidates are expected to function in professional capacities in the district, school and classroom settings. Outcomes were developed to prepare teacher candidates to build a pedagogical knowledge base of effective, research-based teaching practices in order to improve student learning. In order to successfully progress through the program, field-based outcomes must be completed by the teacher candidate.

The following are the outcomes, which reflect the standards tested in the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR)TExES, best practices, and Learner-Centered Proficiencies as prescribed by the State Board for Educator Certification:

1. The teacher candidate will design instruction appropriate for all students that reflects an understanding of relevant content and is based on continuous and appropriate assessment.
2. The teacher candidate will create a classroom environment of respect and rapport that fosters a positive climate for learning, equity, and excellence.
3. The teacher candidate will promote student learning by providing responsive instruction that makes use of effective communication techniques, instructional strategies that actively engage students in the learning process, and timely, high-quality feedback.
4. The teacher candidate will fulfill professional roles and responsibilities and adhere to legal and ethical requirements of the profession in accordance with the Texas Education Agency Educator’s Code of Ethics Chapter 247.

Admission Criteria for Student Teaching

Candidates applying for Student Teaching must have completed all of the coursework on their degree plan. During the Student Teaching (which can be taken Spring or Fall semester), students are required to gradually gain full control of a public school classroom for a total of 12 weeks. During this semester, students will be assigned a university supervisor to oversee planning, progress, and to formally observe students.

Eligibility for Admission to Student Teaching is contingent upon the following requirements having been met:

1. Admitted to the College of Education (provide copy of admission letter)
2. Submit FERPA agreement
3. Submit Code of Ethics agreement
4. Institutional GPA of 2.7
5. Specialization/Major GPA 2.7
6. Successfully complete Block I and II coursework
7. Submit Student Teaching Field Placement Application
8. Submit Criminal Background forms and DPS form
9. Submit TB test result that are current for the year of field placement
10. Unofficial Academic Transcript
11. Degree Evaluation
12. Student Degree Plan (Catalog term) with grades next to each course taken
13. All course substitution forms applicable to degree plan submitted
14. Complete all specialization/major coursework with a “C” or better
15. Complete three (3) hours of Test Preparation
16. Complete and pass TExES practice exam(s) for content/specialization with acceptable score
17. Complete and pass TExES Generalist/Content Exam/s

The application for Student Teaching is obtained from the College of Education in KL 431 A. Applications are due prior to the semester planned for student teaching by the deadline (see COED website for due dates).

In order to complete the student teaching component of the program, all students must have a negative TB test record. In addition, candidates are subject to criminal record checks prior to participating in public school settings, which does require a valid Social Security number, as well as one of the following:

- Texas Drivers License,
- Texas Identification (or other state issued identification)
- Or visa.

**TExES Testing Protocol**

Approval to take TExES Exams is based on the procedure and criteria listed below. These procedures and criteria apply to all students pursuing degrees with teacher certification, regardless of their catalog year.

1. **Good Standing.** The College of Education has specific requirements that are different and higher than those required by the University. An undergraduate student in good standing with the College of Education must have an institutional GPA of 2.7 or higher and an institutional GPA of 2.7 or higher in the specialization/major.

2. **Test Preparation Session and Practice Tests.**
   1. Undergraduate students must complete six clock hours of Test Preparation and pass appropriate practice tests before receiving approval to take any TExES exam. Test Preparation Sessions will be scheduled and conducted by University faculty. Three (3) of these hours will be completed prior to applying for Block III.
   2. Undergraduate students pursuing certification must complete the appropriate practice tests to be approved to take the TExES exam. Approval for Practice Tests will be through the Certification Office in the College of Education.
   3. Practice tests are administered in the Texas A&M International University Testing Center, by appointment only.
   4. Students must pass the practice test with an acceptable score established by the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Education to be approved to take the corresponding State Exam.

3. **Exam Sequence.** Students seeking initial teacher certification must take TExES exams in the prescribed sequence noted below:
   - **Generalist/Content Exam in the specialization/major area.** The Generalist/Content Exam will be taken either prior to beginning Block II or during Block II, based on the following criteria:
     1. Students who have completed 75% or more of their coursework in the specialization/major with an institutional GPA of 3.6 or higher will be eligible to take a practice test prior to beginning Block II. Students who are successful on the practice test with an acceptable score will be eligible to take the TExES exam in the specialization/major.
     2. Students who have completed 75% or more of their coursework in the specialization/major with less than a 3.6 institutional GPA in the
specialization/major will take a practice test during Block II. Students who are successful on the practice test with an acceptable score will be eligible to take the TExES exam in the specialization/major.

3. **STUDENTS WORKING TOWARD BILINGUAL EC-6 CERTIFICATION WILL TAKE THE EC-6 GENERALIST AND THE BILINGUAL SUPPLEMENTAL EXAMS (EC-12).**

   STUDENTS WORKING TOWARD BILINGUAL 4-8 CERTIFICATION WILL TAKE THE 4-8 GENERALIST AND THE BILINGUAL SUPPLEMENTAL EXAMS (EC-12).

   STUDENTS WILL NOT HAVE THE OPTION OF TAKING THE BILINGUAL EC-6 OR BILINGUAL 4-8 EXAMS. ALL STUDENTS MUST PASS THE TExES EXAM IN THE SPECIALIZATION/CONTENT AREA TO BE ELIGIBLE TO ENROLL FOR BLOCK III.

4. Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT) (Required for Bilingual EC-6 and 4-8 certification). Students will take the BTLPT while enrolled in Block II. Students must have successfully completed all required Spanish courses prior to taking the BTLPT. **STUDENTS PURSUING BILINGUAL EC-6 OR 4-8 CERTIFICATION MUST PASS THE BTLPT TO BE ELIGIBLE TO ENROLL FOR BLOCK III.**

5. **The Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR).** Students will take the practice test for the PPR in Block III. To be eligible to take the PPR exam, students must pass the practice test with an acceptable score. Students may register for the practice test after receiving three (3) hours of test preparation.

4. Students are expected to demonstrate adequate preparation before sitting for the practice exam.

5. Undergraduates must pass the TExES Exam they have been approved to take before attempting a second exam.

6. **Intervention.** Students who fail a practice test or TExES exam will be required to complete an intervention designed to address domains/competencies on the exam which the student failed. Intervention will be carried out by faculty at Texas A&M International University. Students must successfully complete the intervention to be eligible to retake the practice test or TExES exam they failed.

7. Students are responsible for correctly completing their TExES Registration forms online at www.texas.ets.org by the deadlines given in the online TExES Registration Bulletin. Students are required to pay for their exams online with a credit card.

8. **NOTE: THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION MAY GRADUATE STUDENTS BUT NOT RECOMMEND STUDENTS FOR CERTIFICATION WHO DO NOT MEET QUALIFYING CRITERIA.**
Qualification Requirements for Cooperating Teachers and University Supervisors

Cooperating Teachers
All school district personnel and instructional personnel who supervise teacher preparation during student teaching must have evidence of each of the following:

- Mentor Training
- Demonstrate effective classroom management strategies
- Recommendation from campus principal

University Supervisors
All instructors in postsecondary teacher preparation programs who supervise or direct teacher preparation students shall have the following:

- A valid Texas professional teaching certificate
- A valid Texas Principal or Administrator certificate
- A minimum of 5 years teaching/administrative experience

Responsibilities of Student Teachers, Cooperating Teachers, and University Supervisors

Role of Student Teacher
The student teaching portion of the field-based educator preparation program is designed to provide candidates with opportunities to apply what they have learned to the classroom setting. The focus in the pre-service semesters (Block I and Block II) is on knowledge and learning, the focus in the student teaching semester (Block III) is on demonstration and application of skills. The teacher candidate responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Enroll in the required Block coursework
2. Teacher candidates are expected to display professional attitudes and actions at all times.
3. Demonstrate and maintain a positive, professional and ethical attitude.
4. Work professionally with cooperating teachers in the classroom setting to create an optimal learning environment for students.
5. Become familiar with management approaches, philosophy, rules, policies, procedures, what to do with early finishers, remediation, struggling learners, etc...
6. Carry out all responsibilities agreed upon with the cooperating teacher and university supervisor.
7. Attend field experiences as scheduled, paying special attention to punctuality.

Procedure to follow if a teacher candidate will be absent:
- Call the school and inform the secretary you will be absent. Do not leave a message on the school’s answering machine.
- Call until a reliable person at the school answers the phone.
- Call the cooperating teacher whose class you will be missing.
- Leave a message for your field supervisor explaining the reason for your absence.
8. Submit a weekly report to the university field supervisor by e-mail. This report should include an overview of the week’s activities, noting any progress or issues related to the field experience. Reflect on teaching experiences noting strengths and areas of improvement.
9. Familiarize and follow campus rules, policies and procedures.
10. Outline classroom schedule, including special and unique services to learners.
11. Be courteous with parents, teachers, students, staff and community members.
12. Follow district and campus dress code.
13. Maintain confidentiality at ALL times
14. Become aware of the educational needs of the community and the community resources available.

Role of the Cooperating Teacher
The role of the cooperating teacher is instrumental in the success of teacher candidates in the Educator Preparation Program. The cooperating teacher is a classroom teacher who takes on the responsibility of working with the university to mentor to guide and assist a teacher candidate. It is very important that the cooperating teacher plan and work with the teacher candidate in planning and monitoring their performance. This is critical for the success of the teacher candidate, but more importantly for the learners. The cooperating teacher’s roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Attend cooperating teacher education programs.
2. Maintain electronic contact with the university field supervisor assigned to the student teacher.
3. Introduce student teacher to classroom students, faculty, staff, administration and families.
4. Provide support for the teacher candidate during observations, team teaching, and as they gradually assume full responsibility.
5. Be readily available during the teacher candidates full-time teaching should assistance be needed.
6. Provide specific information about class schedules and expectations.
7. Inform the teacher candidate regarding school activities, policies and procedures.
8. Introduce teacher candidate to grade level team members and other faculty and staff on their campus.
9. Communicate with the student teacher and university field supervisor as needed.
10. Assess the progress of the teacher candidate providing continual feedback.
11. Allow for gradual increase of teacher candidate responsibilities toward 3 weeks of full control.
12. Conduct formal evaluations using evaluation forms provided.
13. Review and discuss all lesson plans with the teacher candidate. The cooperating teacher should make suggestions for improvement prior to the presentation of the lesson by the teacher candidate.
14. Be cognizant of the candidate’s learning process mistakes will happen. Take these opportunities to create “teachable moments” for the teacher candidate.
15. Contact the principal and the university supervisor immediately if the teacher candidate is beginning to exhibit major problems.

Role of the University Supervisor
The Texas Education Agency defines field supervisor as: TAC 228.2 (10) Field Supervisor--A CERTIFIED educator, HIRED by the educator preparation program, who preferably has ADVANCED CREDENTIALS, to:
- Observe candidates,
- Monitor his or her performance, and
- Provide constructive feedback to improve his or her professional performance.

The university field supervisor is a member of the university faculty who works with a teacher candidate and the cooperating teacher at an assigned public school site. The primary role of the university field supervisor is to facilitate reflection and assessment activities for teacher candidates, to assist cooperating teachers in planning and coordinating assignments and activities with student
teachers, to foster communication between the university and cooperating teacher, and to assist in ways which improve academic achievement of PreK - 12 students. The university field supervisor's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Serve as a liaison between the university and the schools.
2. Conduct an initial contact within the first three weeks of student teaching. Contact may be made by telephone, email, or other electronic communication, with the assigned candidate.
3. Document instructional practices observed, provide written feedback through an interactive conference with the candidate, and provide a copy of the written feedback to the candidate's campus administrator.
4. Documentation should include signatures of candidate, cooperating teacher, administrator, and university supervisor.
5. Conduct informal observations and coaching as appropriate.
6. Encourage student teachers to self reflect.
7. Conduct formal observations for teacher candidates in student teaching semester which meet the following criteria:
   a. For student teaching, an educator preparation program must provide a minimum of three observations during the assignment, which is a minimum of 12 weeks.
   b. Each observation must be at least 45 minutes in duration and must be conducted by the field supervisor.
   c. An educator preparation program must provide the first observation within the first six weeks of all assignments.
8. Share with the teacher candidate and cooperating teacher the expectations of performance in the classroom before each observation.
9. Provide the teacher candidate a written report or checklist of observations of the candidate’s performance.
10. Hold an interactive conference with the teacher candidate after each observation.

**Roles of the Campus Principal**

The principal is an important member of the student teaching team supporting the teacher candidate and cooperating teachers at the building level. Facilitating schedules and meeting times to enable individuals to plan and to evaluate is imperative. Additional responsibilities include interacting with teacher candidates when possible and providing input to continuously improve the Educator Preparation Program. The principal’s roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Participate in the selection of cooperating teachers that are best suited to mentor teacher candidates.
2. Provide orientation and establish guidelines for using building facilities and resources for teacher candidates, university supervisors, and cooperating teachers.
3. Provide encouragement and support for cooperating teachers.
4. Accept and review the evaluation forms of lessons taught by the teacher candidate, keeping the information confidential. Meeting with the teacher candidate for suggestions is encouraged, but not required.
5. We encourage you to establish and maintain open communication with student teachers, cooperating teachers and university supervisor.
6. Involve university partners in school events as appropriate.
7. Provide leadership for the professional growth of both the student teacher and cooperating teacher.

**Policies Governing Student Teaching**

The student teaching experience consists of the assignment of a student teacher to a designated school site. The Texas Education Agency defines student teaching as “A 12-week full-day teaching experience through a program provided by an accredited university at a public school accredited by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) or other school approved by the TEA for this purpose that may lead to completion of a standard certificate” (TAC §228.2).

Student teachers should begin the experience with the following policies clearly understood:

- The length of the student teacher’s school day is expected to correspond to that of the Cooperating Teacher.
- School duties must be placed ahead of personal concerns. The student teacher is encouraged to not hold any other employment during student teaching.
- The student teacher will observe the holidays and special events in the school system or school calendar, over that of the university.
- In case of illness/absence, the student teacher must inform the school, the Cooperating Teachers, and the University Supervisor immediately. The student teacher should not be excused from teaching assignments for any reason that is not approved by the Cooperating Teachers, the School Administrator and the University Supervisor.
- If the student teacher is absent more than two days due to illness, family emergencies, or other reasons the student teaching experience may be extended to compensate for the time lost and/or the student teacher may need to repeat the student teaching semester due to excessive absences. Absences may therefore impact impending graduation.
- If a Cooperating Teacher is absent from school the student teacher reports to the class as usual.
- The student teacher is to be punctual, in meeting all responsibilities, including submission of assignments such as lesson plans, reflections, etc…
- Although school and school system norms for dress vary widely, student teachers should maintain a professional image, respectful and representative of the Texas A&M International University community, the College of Education, and themselves.
Student Teaching Placements

Student Teaching placements are assigned based on area of certification as well as consideration of pre-service experiences. Student teachers are placed local school districts within a 60 mile radius. Student teaching in areas outside this radius will be considered placed on availability of courtesy placement by other universities. The placement of student teachers is the responsibility of the College of Education. Students may not arrange for their own student teaching experience. The Texas Education Agency requires that all students be placed at different school sites and grade levels throughout their program to insure a variety of experiences.

During Student teaching, the teacher candidate will be required to complete the following:

- Participate in professional development sessions at Texas A&M International University (TAMIU)
- Conduct 12 weeks of instructional classroom field time
- Gradually work up to full control of the class for 3 - 4 weeks
- Turn in lesson plans to their classroom mentor on a weekly basis
- Obtain Cooperating Teachers field performance evaluation each week
Appendices

A. EDCI 4993 Syllabus
B. Lesson Plan Format
C. Field Observation Form
D. Portfolio Rubric
E. Evaluation Form
F. Typical Schedule for Student Teaching
G. Code of Ethics