

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON** | COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

***Mentor Teacher  
Handbook***

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## **Welcome to Student Teaching at the University of Houston!**

*We are pleased and honored that you have chosen to be a part of our teacher education program!*

*The University of Houston has a long-standing commitment to excellence, and the College of Education, in particular, believes that our well-developed program will continue our tradition of excellence in preparation of tomorrow's teachers.*

*Student teaching is the capstone experience for a novice teacher. It is critical, challenging, and rewarding to all involved and a time of great professional growth. The student teaching experience typically has a lasting effect upon a teacher's outlook toward teaching and, as a consequence, greatly affects future generations of teachers and students.*

*As a **Mentor Teacher**, we know that you give in so many ways of your time and effort to our candidates as they begin their professional lives, and for this we are deeply appreciative. Without your support and guidance, our program could not provide that vital link to real school contexts so necessary in beginning a career in today's schools. We know that at times it can be a challenge to stop and explain everything that you do, but we also hope that it can become a time for renewal and rededication to the profession for you.*

*It is absolutely essential that Student Teachers, Mentor Teachers, and University Supervisors function effectively as a team during this student teaching experience. Good communication is vital to ensuring a positive experience for all involved. Ask good questions about your teaching, try new things, and study your environment . . . good teachers never stop being good learners!*

*Our best wishes for a powerful semester of learning as our graduates become the next generation of professional educators!*

**The Teacher Education Team**

## Terms and Definitions

- **Student Teaching 1 and 2 (ST1/ST2)** - These are the two semesters and blocks of courses that are taken during the final year in the program. During Student Teaching, EC-6 Teacher Candidates will report to their field placement with a single Mentor Teacher for 4 full days each week. Secondary Teacher Candidates will report to their field placement 3 full days each week. On the non-field placement days, Teacher Candidates will attend methods courses at UH.
- **University Supervisor (US)**- UH's faculty member assigned to supervise, coach, and evaluate Teacher Candidates during the student-teaching placement. University Supervisors are trained and certified by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching on administration of the TAP rubric. University Supervisors function as links between schools, school districts, and the university.
- **Sites**- University Supervisors will be assigned a school or schools (sites) in which their cohort of Teacher Candidates will complete their field placements. Schools will be arranged to provide a diverse teaching experience and align to the Candidates' certification (e.g., ESL, SPED).
- **Teacher Candidate (TC)** – A Teacher Candidate is a student admitted into the teacher education program at the University of Houston. Teacher Candidates may be in an “early phase” consisting of pre-teaching and developing teaching semesters that take place prior to the student teaching year; or in a “later phase” consisting of the final two semesters when they are completing the student-teaching year.
- **Mentor Teacher (MT)**- The P-12 classroom teachers in the partner school district who have agreed to have a Teacher Candidate in their classroom.
- **Performance Assessment (POP Cycle)**- The evaluation process used at the University of Houston. A POP “cycle” consists of (a) a pre-conference to review the Teacher Candidate's lesson; (b) observation and scripting of the lesson by both the Teacher Candidate and University Supervisor to gather evidence for evaluation; (c) post-conference meeting with the Teacher Candidate to review evidence, coach and assign ratings.
- **UH Performance Assessment Rubric**- Also referred to as TAP Rubric, it's an instructional rubric designed by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching as part of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP). UH has adapted this rubric for supporting Teacher Candidates, and will use the rubric during the POP cycles. From the entire rubric, six/fourteen indicators have been selected to serve as the evaluation standards for UH.
- **Classroom Walkthrough (CW)**- Short (5-15 minute) observation that allows the University Supervisor to collect a “snapshot” of information on co-teaching, professionalism, and overall development of the Teacher Candidate.
- **Performance Gates**-are benchmarks that must be met in order to successfully complete the certification program.
- **Professional Growth Plan (PGP)**- Support tool created by University Supervisors when issues arise with Teacher Candidates or when they are at risk of not meeting performance gates.
- **Student Teaching Class**- is a weekly class taught by the SC in which TCs develop their instructional and professional knowledge. This course includes multiple assignments that aid the SC in applying theory and best practices to the classroom.

## **Information for All Student Teaching Participants**

The ultimate goal of the Student Teaching experience is the preparation of an effective, skilled, independent educator. Teacher Candidates teach a total of 4 formal, full-class, observed lessons, 2 during each of the two Student Teaching semesters.

### **Student Teaching Time Commitment**

We consider student teaching to be a full-time endeavor. Teacher Candidates are asked to make a commitment to this profession beginning now. We recognize that student teaching is a disruption to family life, work schedules, and leisurely habits; other professions admittedly require less time and fewer requirements outside coursework. However, we make no apologies for the rigor and the time commitment—we are preparing teacher candidates for one of the most demanding professions, as well as some of the most meaningful work that can be done.

Teacher Candidates will be in coursework or in the field full time, Monday through Friday, for the entire semester. Specific weekly schedules will be provided at the Student Teaching Orientation.

Teacher Candidates are expected to be present and on time every day in their assigned classroom, during the teacher contract hours for that district—teachers work extensively before and after school. Nevertheless, we understand things may happen during the semester, and Teacher Candidates will be given personal days for instances in which they need to be absent (such as doctor's appointments, illness, testing, etc.). They will need to inform their University Supervisor and Mentor Teacher as soon as possible of their plans. If they are absent on any required day for any reason (excused or unexcused), beyond the personal days granted, they will be required to make this day up before the end of the semester.

### **Field Experiences in Student Teaching 1 and 2**

Student Teaching 1 and 2 require Teacher Candidates to be immersed in the profession of teaching at their target grade range. They will be placed in a classroom assigned to a Mentor Teacher for two full semesters, and will be engaged in planning, teaching and assessing lessons for small and large groups of students, preparing materials, meeting with other teachers or parents, completing practice teaching requirements assigned by their courses, and otherwise assisting the Mentor Teacher in ways that provide experience with the complex work of teaching. In addition, Teacher Candidates will spend significant time developing the ability to reflect on what they are learning by documenting their learning in various ways.

### **How Candidates are placed with our Partner School Districts**

Our ability to place Teacher Candidates with an effective Mentor Teacher so that they can learn the profession depends on our strong relationships with dozens of local school districts. These districts also place Teacher Candidates from other institutions, so it is vital that we communicate with the district representatives in a timely and organized manner.

Our schools and Mentor Teachers accommodate Teacher Candidates on a voluntary basis, so various grade levels or specializations may or may not be available on a particular campus during any given semester. Also, district partnerships occasionally change, even at the last minute; if this happens, Teacher Candidates will be notified as soon as possible so that they can make the necessary arrangements. Note that for a variety of reasons, Teacher Candidates cannot be placed at a school where any relative is employed or is attending.

The purpose of field experiences in the Teacher Education Program is to provide authentic observational experiences and structured teaching practice in school settings. The goal, first and foremost, is for teacher candidates to gain experience in performing the professional dispositions required of teachers in Texas.

To respect our relationship with our partner districts who have asked us to communicate with them through consistent district representatives, it is our policy that Teacher Candidates do not contact school districts or individual schools directly to request a placement. Even if they happen to know a principal, and she has said she wants them to come teach for her, we must work through the district protocols. We are guests in our partner schools, and their normal and effective operation will be impaired if our candidates swamp them with individual requests.

The ability of our Teacher Candidates to complete the program—and their degree—in a timely manner is important to us. Therefore, candidates who apply to a Teacher Education component late, or who have not completed all required benchmarks, may still be eligible to be placed if they are able to complete all benchmarks by an extended deadline. However, it is likely that they will not be placed in the district of their choice. Our district partners make plans well ahead of time for how many Teacher Candidates they can accommodate, balancing UH candidates with those from other institutions. After the application deadline, we provide each district with a final placement list so they can make the necessary arrangements. Following that deadline, we then work with a very small number of districts who have agreed to accept late applicants.

### **Teacher Education Philosophy on Lesson Planning**

The Teacher Education program views the planning of lessons, and the larger act of designing curriculum, as an exciting, complex, and vitally important part of the work of a teacher.

Lesson planning at this advanced stage of the teacher preparation program requires teacher candidates to synthesize what they have learned previously about content, pedagogy, and technology. They will further receive instruction during Student Teaching 1 about effective lesson design, and Mentor Teachers and University Supervisors will evaluate their lesson plans using a rubric prior to them teaching all observed lessons. Teacher Candidates are required to complete and submit to you and their Mentor Teacher written lesson plans for every lesson they will teach during both semesters of student teaching. Effective lesson planning is a required element of their preparation, and no candidate unable to produce a quality lesson plan will be recommended for certification by the University of Houston.

Teacher Candidates have been introduced to several formats (e.g., Madeline Hunter, 5 E, discovery lesson) throughout the program for the purpose of breadth of comparison and contrast. However, during both student teaching semesters, teacher candidates will use the *UH Lesson Plan template*. This template provides a scaffolded learning and practice opportunity for effective lesson planning, yet allows the flexibility to accommodate different planning terminology. Even if their placement district has an approved lesson planning format, or if their Mentor Teacher has one that fits his or her teaching style, teacher candidates will use the approved UH Lesson Plan template or a 5 E lesson plan for the observed lessons. For lessons other than the required observations, they may use the approved district format, or another format recommended by their Mentor Teacher, provided they have prior approval from the University Supervisor, including a conversation about how they will address any missing required elements in the alternate form. (Details on specific sections of the *UH Lesson Plan template* are discussed in the Student Teaching 1 and 2 syllabi, e.g., meeting content and technology standards, and differentiating planned instruction to address the needs of English-language Learners, students with special abilities, and gifted and talented students.)

## **The Teacher Candidate’s Support System during Student Teaching**

One of the most important ways Teacher Candidates will be supported during their preparation as a teacher will be through the work of the University Supervisor. The University Supervisor (US) is a UH faculty member assigned to supervise, coach, and evaluate teacher candidates during field placements.

A University Supervisor will be assigned to a group of Teacher Candidates in the same school or “site”. This arrangement will enable the University Supervisor to understand Teacher Candidate goals and recognize strengths and weakness related to instructional competency and professionalism, and then assist the Teacher Candidate to develop and excel in these important dimensions. The University Supervisor will actively promote Teacher Candidates positions in partner districts – on the condition that the Teacher Candidate has satisfied the expectations of the program.

The University Supervisor will also be the Teacher Candidate's primary point of contact for communication about the Teacher Education Program, and the point of contact for the Mentor Teacher. To the extent possible, all communication will flow through the University Supervisor.

## **The University of Houston- Co-Teach Model**

At the University of Houston, we view the entire student teaching experience as a collaborative process between our Teacher Candidate and the school community. Although it is informative to see if a Teacher Candidate can function independently, our experience has shown us that the strongest preparation for our novice teachers is not time alone but rather constant modeling by an experienced Mentor Teacher. Experience with lead or solo- teaching should not be interpreted to mean that the Mentor Teacher must exit the room, nor should they be seen as a time for the Mentor Teacher to disengage from the educational process.

As the Teacher Candidate becomes increasingly more involved in the planning and implementation of instruction, he or she will be more able and confident to teach independently. When the Teacher Candidate is actively teaching, the Mentor Teacher is most instructive when he or she continues to observe, give advice, and provide feedback, and to look for opportunities for co-teaching and co-planning. In addition to co-teaching the same lesson, this is an ideal time for the Mentor Teacher to parallel teach, working with centers or workstations, or pulling small groups or individual students for additional remediation or enrichment. Whether it is called “team” teaching, “partner” teaching, or “co-teaching” teaching, we have found the most academic success for students, as well as the most benefit—and even enjoyment—for both Mentor Teachers and Teacher Candidates, when both members in the teaching partnership are active.

The “co-teaching” model offers some helpful definitions of how the Mentor Teacher and Teacher Candidate might work together to share the planning, organization, delivery, and assessment, as well as the physical space:

<b>One Teach, One Assist</b>	One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other assists students with their work, monitors behaviors, or corrects assignments.
<b>One Teach, One Observe</b>	One of the advantages in co-teaching is that more detailed observation of students engaged in the learning process can occur. With this approach, for example, co-teachers can decide in advance what types of specific observational information to gather during instruction and can agree on a system for gathering the data.

<b>Team Teaching</b>	Both teachers are responsible for planning, and they share the instruction of all students. The lessons are taught by both teachers who actively engage in conversation, not lecture, to encourage discussion by students. Both teachers are actively involved in the management of the lesson and discipline.
<b>Station Teaching</b>	Both teachers divide the instructional content, and each takes responsibility for planning and teaching part of it. In station teaching, the classroom is divided into various teaching centers. The teacher and Teacher Candidate are at particular stations; the other stations are run independently by the students or by a teacher's aide.
<b>Alternative Teaching</b>	In alternative teaching, one teacher manages most of the class while the other teacher works with a small group inside or outside of the classroom. The small group does not have to integrate with the current lesson.
<b>Parallel Teaching</b>	In parallel teaching, the teacher and Teacher Candidate plan jointly but split the classroom in half to teach the same information at the same time.

It is important to note that the Mentor Teacher—the teaching professional—maintains the authoring in pacing. When beginning a field experience, some Co-Teaching strategies are more appropriate than others. The Mentor Teacher decides when to use which strategies. Once both co-teachers are comfortable working with each other, the co-teachers are encouraged to vary the strategies and roles, as appropriate (Carpenter, 2010, Montana State).

Although class situations vary, one rationale for a full-year student teaching is the flexibility to allow novice teachers to develop in their expertise over a longer period of time. However, as a general rule, Teacher Candidates will progress through the first semester of student teaching, gradually leading more of the planning and instruction so that by the last month of the first semester, he or she is the primary lead for most of the day, again maintaining the co-teaching presence of the Mentor Teacher. It is expected that this leadership will continue throughout the entire second semester of student teaching. At the discretion of the Mentor Teacher, the Teacher Candidate should seek out opportunities to visit other classrooms and grade levels to expand his or her vision of teaching.



## **Mentor Teacher's Expectations and Responsibilities**

The Mentor Teacher is the primary professional role model for the Teacher Candidate. The Mentor Teacher carries a shared responsibility with the University Supervisor for the Teacher Candidate's induction into the role of a successful teacher.

Below is a summary of the **expectations and responsibilities of the Mentor Teacher:**

- Work collaboratively with Teacher Candidate and the University Supervisor to plan, deliver and assess instruction consistent with the co-teaching model, and consistent with the Teacher Candidate's progress through the teacher education program
- Provide time for instructional events during which Teacher Candidate can conduct assignments and Performance Assessments
- With the assistance of the University Supervisor, guide improvement of the Teacher Candidate's instructional competency and professionalism
- Attend any professional development/ and or meetings conducted by the University Supervisor
- Consult informally with the University Supervisor about Teacher Candidate progress during walkthroughs
- Monitor attendance by initialing the *Daily Attendance Log* (see Appendix)
- Complete the online *UH Mentor Progress Report* once a month (see Appendix)

The following are **expectations of Teacher Candidates:**

- Prompt, consistent, reliable attendance in the field placement, beginning prior to the start of the school day and ending with the dismissal of students
- Co-teaching in a manner consistent with the progression through the Teacher Education Program.
- Earnest efforts in the improvement of his/her instructional competency
- Participation at weekly meetings, co-planning sessions, discuss progression of teaching responsibilities, discuss upcoming calendar and teaching events, and discuss any issues related to professionalism.

### **Professional Development for Mentor Teachers**

Mentor Teachers are required to complete the Mentor Teacher ONLINE training at the beginning of the semester and document their participation, as it is required by the State. Additional professional development meetings may be held by the University Supervisor would be centered on co-teaching and meeting expectations or requirements associated with student teaching. This meeting time will provide additional opportunities to grow a collaborative team that supports the Teacher Candidate.

The University of Houston will provide Professional Development credit hours if these trainings occur outside of regular teaching contract hours.

### **Performance Assessment of Teacher Candidates**

Teacher Candidates are formally observed and evaluated two times per semester by the University Supervisors using the UH Performance Assessment Rubric. Teacher Candidates are required to meet the following **performance gates regarding teaching performance:**

- Scores of 2 in all indicators by the end of the first semester (ST1)
- Scores of 3 in all indicators by the end of the second semester (ST2)

\*If a teacher candidate does not meet a performance gate, or is at risk of not meeting a performance gate, the University Supervisor will fill out a Professional Growth Plan (PGP) with the Teacher Candidate to determine next steps. PGPs should be submitted to the Teacher Education Office within 48 hours of meeting with the TC.

Assessment of the performance of a Teacher Candidate is a collaborative process engaged in by the Mentor Teacher, the University Supervisor, and the Teacher Candidate as a team, based on a series of formative and summative assessments.

Mentor Teachers are encouraged to observe and have a discussion with the University Supervisor based on the teacher candidate's performance. Performance assessment and feedback from both the University Supervisor and the Mentor Teacher are used to support the Teacher Candidate's overall growth in teaching performance. Additionally, **Mentor Teachers will complete the online Mentor Teacher Progress Report once a month throughout the semester.**

Formal observations of teaching performance are preceded by a Pre-Conference meeting between the University Supervisor and the Teacher Candidate and are followed by an in-depth Post-Conference meeting in which the University Supervisor provides specific, actionable feedback to the Teacher Candidate in areas of refinement and reinforcement identified during the performance assessment.

Pre-Conference: Teacher Candidates submit lesson plans to the Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor **48 hours in advance** of the Pre-Conference. Both the Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor should review the lesson plan and provide the Teacher Candidate with suggestions/strategies/questions designed to improve the lesson.

Formal Observations: The University Supervisor, Mentor Teacher and Teacher Candidate schedule Performance Assessments, with the first PA occurring prior to week 6, and the second assessment occurring prior to the final two weeks of the semester. After each Performance Assessment, the University Supervisor scores the Teacher Candidate's lesson on a 1-to-5 scale using UH Performance Assessment and input their scores in the *Online PA Data form*.

Post-Conference: University Supervisors meet with Teacher Candidates **within 48 hours** after an observation has taken place to conduct a post-conference where the lesson is analyzed. Teacher Candidates are provided with detailed feedback on one area for reinforcement and one area for refinement, each of which is tied to a specific indicator on the UH Performance Assessment Rubric. During the Post-Conference, University Supervisors and Teacher Candidates analyze how a particular strength of the lesson contributed to student learning and discuss how the Teacher Candidate can continue to build on that area of strength in future lessons (reinforcement). They then analyze an element of the lesson that could be improved to maximize student learning and discuss how the Teacher Candidate can work to strengthen his/her practice in the identified area of refinement.

It is expected that the University Supervisor provide the Teacher Candidate with clear evidence, including specific examples from observed practice to document areas of reinforcement and refinement.

Follow Up Support: University Supervisors and Mentor Teachers provide Teacher Candidates with follow-up support after the post conference by conducting walkthroughs, on the spot coaching, demonstrating lessons, or modeling teaching strategies in university coursework. University Supervisors will fill out a Professional Growth Plan (PGP) for any student who is at risk for not meeting performance gates.

### **Minimum Expectations for Supporting Struggling Teacher Candidates**

Once students are determined to be struggling, clear, actionable guidelines will be discussed and documented in the Professional Growth Plan as per our Student Success criteria. University Supervisors will make contact with their Teacher Candidates and/or Mentor Teacher to check on Teacher Candidate's progress. Demonstrated lack of growth in struggling areas will result in escalation of student success processes and meetings with the university-based faculty to assess opportunities to demonstrate further growth and success.

### **Classroom Walkthroughs**

In addition to the **two** Performance Assessments, University Supervisors will conduct **four** walk through visits per semester to provide ongoing feedback, coaching, and support.

### **Supporting Teacher Candidates' Development of Professionalism**

During the student-teaching semesters, University Supervisors will support Teacher Candidates in developing characteristics of a professional educator. Although these characteristics are many, the University Supervisors will focus explicitly on: (a) communication with colleagues and peers in the school; (b) communication with P-12 students; (c) communication with University Supervisors; (d) professional dispositions; and (e) attendance, including the maintenance of an accurate *Daily Attendance Log/Signature Card* (See Appendix).

### **Expectations for Professionalism**

Teacher Candidates are expected to exhibit professionalism in all interactions with P-12 students, colleagues, campus personnel, Mentor Teachers, University Supervisors, UH faculty, staff and during University courses. Professional Attributes Assessments will be completed by University Supervisors and Teacher Candidates to be used as talking points during formative conferences. Teacher Candidates found in need for support in professionalism will be placed on a Professional Growth Plan (PGP) (refer to the section titled Student Success to review this process).

Teacher Candidates are required to meet the following **performance gates regarding professionalism**:

- A score of 2.0 or higher and no 0 or 1's in any Professional Attribute (ST1)
- A score of 2.5 or higher and no 0 or 1's in any Professional Attribute (ST2)

\*If a teacher candidate does not meet a performance gate, or is at risk of not meeting a performance gate, the University Supervisor will fill out Professional Growth Plan (PGP) with the Teacher Candidate to determine next steps. PGPs should be submitted to the Teacher Education Office within 48 hours of meeting with the TC.

### **Monitoring Attendance in the Field Placement**

Teacher Candidates are responsible of asking Mentor Teachers to initial their attendance at the field placement through the use of the *Daily Attendance Log*.

### **STUDENT TEACHING ABSENCE POLICY**

1. Teacher Candidates must attend **all** faculty meetings, special training meetings (attended by the MT), all other events normally attended by the faculty (Open House Night, PTA meetings, Curriculum Night, Science Fair, school carnival, etc.) as well as actively assist on field trips and field days.
2. Teacher Candidates follow the same academic calendar of the assigned public school district, and so will observe only those holidays scheduled by the district.

3. It is expected that Teacher Candidates will be present and on time to their assigned campus except in cases of **serious illness** or other **serious** circumstances. In those instances, the Teacher Candidate must contact the MT and University Supervisor no later than the morning of the necessary absence AND prior to the required arrival time at the campus.
4. Late arrival or early departure will count as ½ day absent.
5. A maximum of **5 field days for EC-6** students and **3 field days for 4-8 and 7-12** students (for serious illness/circumstances) will not need to be made up provided appropriate documentation has been submitted to the University Supervisor.
6. All absences beyond the allotted days must be made up prior to the end of the semester by attending activities outside of normal school days or hours (i.e. Saturday school, extended tutorials, after school activities, etc.) Make up dates must be clearly marked on the Attendance log with the date of the original absence noted.

### **Absence Notification Protocol**

Teacher Candidates will notify their Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor of any absences (planned or unplanned) as soon as possible through the Absence Request/Verification Form (See Appendix). In the event of a planned absence, this form must be submitted to the Mentor Teacher and the University Supervisor one week prior to the absence date. In the event of an unplanned absence (e.g., illness), the form must be submitted to the Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor within 24 hours of returning to school.

Tardies and early departures will also be documented with the Absence Request/Verification Form and included in the Teacher Candidate's file.

### **Excessive Absences**

Teacher Candidates who miss more than the days allotted will be required to meet with the University Supervisor to complete a Professional Growth Plan, and a portion of that plan will be the make-up of the time missed in a way that is helpful to the Mentor Teacher. Continuation of absences following the Professional Growth Plan will result in the Teacher Candidates being removed from the placement, and a review about continuation in the Program.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Teacher Candidates incurring **excessive absences or tardies throughout the entire semester may receive a failing grade in the course and will need to repeat the student teaching semester.** Exceptions to this will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be documented by a signed petition from the College of Education. Teacher Candidates should contact the University Supervisor regarding extenuating circumstances, and these will be considered on a case by case basis by the Teacher Education Office.

## Student Success

Teacher preparation comes to its culmination with a series of experiences called student teaching. This internship is one that has disparate tasks, skills, relationships and professional attributes that must be brought together for successful completion. During this process, Teacher Candidates are supported through a team comprised of the Mentor Teacher, the University Supervisor, University Faculty members, and the Teacher Education Team. Teacher Candidates exhibiting specific difficulties with professionalism, academic, and teaching requirements will follow a tiered set of stages of intervention with the goal of supporting all Teacher Candidates toward program success, to the extent possible.

### Teacher Candidate Professional Growth Plan (PGP)

A Professional Growth Plan (PGP) is a tool designed to support students who may be in danger of not progressing in their major/academic plan. The PGP outlines specific action steps a student must complete in order to maintain or return to good standing within their major/academic plan. There are three reasons for making a PGP referral:

- Poor academic standing (i.e. ongoing academic deficiencies across coursework)
- Issues regarding professionalism (classes or clinical experience)
- Academic integrity violation (plagiarism, cheating, etc.)

The following outlines the steps to be taken in completing the PGP process.

#### Step A

1) The University Supervisor will have a discussion of concerns with the student. This discussion will include:

- a) Reasons and examples of the problem
- b) Asking the student if there are outside factors that are hindering his/her progress and success
- c) Submission of a personal statement (as appropriate)

2) The University Supervisor works with the student to solve problems by offering examples of support that can be given by the University Supervisor or by other departments within the college.

3) The University Supervisor should maintain written documentation resulting from meetings with the Teacher

Candidates. If the issue(s) are resolved no further action is necessary.

If the student continues to struggle with the issue(s) then the following steps are taken:

#### Step B

1) The University Supervisor submits a Professional Growth Plan referral to the Teacher Education Office

2) The University Supervisor notifies the student that a PGP Referral has been submitted and that he/she may be contacted by the Director to schedule a follow-up meeting.

3) The Director reviews the referral to determine if additional information is needed.

4) The Director will determine what steps need to be taken next, and communicate with the University Supervisor.

If the Director determines that a plan is needed, then the following steps will be taken:

### Step C

- 1) The University Supervisor works with the Director (and other roles as appropriate) to develop the PGP.
- 2) Following the creation of the PGP, a meeting will be convened with the Teacher Candidates and program administrators to communicate the plan.
- 3) The University Supervisor will monitor the PGP and communicate progress to the Director.

Note: All communication regarding a student's progress is confidential. If email is used, names cannot be included in the subject line.

Persistent lack of professionalism, academic, and/or teaching requirements, or the contingencies of a growth plan not being met, may result in a Student Success Committee meeting to discuss the best course of action for that particular candidate. This Committee will consist of a subset of two or more members including: any relevant Faculty Members, University Supervisor, Coordinators for various components of the program, and the Teacher Education Program Coordinator.

The outcomes of such subsequent meetings can range from modified growth plans with additional requirements to a recommendation for dismissal from the Teacher Education program and subsequent denial of the certification process. In more severe cases, to include instances when the outcome is recommendation for dismissal, a hearing will be scheduled with the Teacher Candidate and the Student Success Committee to discuss the candidate's situation, the recommendation, and options. Both written and oral evidence may be submitted at the meeting or in writing by the Teacher Candidate or by committee members. Written records of any formal Teacher Education Student Success Committee student meetings will be maintained. A hearing will not be conducted with two or fewer committee members present.

Candidates must complete all coursework, field placements, benchmark requirements, and performance gates requirements, and have good professional attributes ratings, in order to be eligible to be recommended for certification by the University of Houston. However, **Teacher Candidates who are in good academic standing but who have been dismissed from the Teacher Education program, or those who elect to not pursue teacher certification, are permitted to complete their degree.** These candidates should see their advisors to submit a "Graduating without Certification" petition. They will then work with their instructors to substitute alternate assignments in place of assignments that require time spent in school field placements.

If a campus administrator or a representative from a district Human Resource office asks a Teacher Candidate not to return to a campus (pulled from student teaching), the Teacher Candidate is to report this to the Student Teaching Leadership Team immediately. This Teacher Candidate may not be placed again during that semester; they may receive an "F" for the course, have to repeat the semester or asked to withdraw from the program. If this or any other egregious action occurs, as determined by a subsequent investigation by the Student Success Committee, the process may proceed directly to dismissal from the program.

In the event that the teacher candidate violates the rules, policies, or procedures for conduct established by the school, district, local education agency, UH, and/or the law while on a PGP for unprofessional behavior, the teacher candidate will be disqualified from the UH Teacher Preparation program. Teacher Candidates who are disqualified may not petition to continue in their current academic plan, but may be eligible to pursue other degree options at the University.

## **Recommendations for the Mentor Teacher**

### **Preparing before your Teacher Candidate arrives**

- Attend the Mentor Teacher Meetings.
- Prepare for the Teacher Candidate's arrival. (Share biographical information and anything else you would like for your Teacher Candidate to know.) Make sure that the Teacher Candidate understands that he/she has authority in your class.
- Allow your Teacher Candidate to participate in planning a "proper" welcome with the class (bulletin boards, posters, biographical letters from students, etc.).
- Make arrangements with school personnel for the arrival of the Teacher Candidate. Is there a place to sign in? Is a parking sticker necessary?
- Plan to provide the Teacher Candidate with a place to call "home" in your room (a work area, access to class materials, supplies, etc.).
- Explain sign-in procedures at the school.

### **Providing necessary information**

- Provide the Teacher Candidate with an orientation packet containing parking information, class schedules, student and teacher handbooks, district and school calendars, class rolls and seating charts, and lesson plans for first few days.
- Make arrangements for the Teacher Candidate to have access to textbooks, curriculum guides, and teacher's guides.
- Explain administrative procedures, professional expectations, classroom rules, management systems, and rules regarding office equipment (e.g. copy machine). Tell the Teacher Candidate how to obtain teacher resources.
- Provide the Teacher Candidate with information concerning what has been done up to this point and what is planned for the remainder of the year. Reviewing lessons plans, curriculum guides, district scope and sequence, syllabi, and other plans will help the Teacher Candidate to prepare.

### **Making introductions**

- If it hasn't already been done by the principal, arrange a time for the Teacher Candidate to meet with the principal and key staff people.
- Introduce the Teacher Candidate to other teachers and include him/her in conversations with faculty members. The Teacher Candidate is expected to attend all faculty meetings and other school events.
- Take time to tour the building with the Teacher Candidate (this may be a good opportunity for introductions to teachers and staff.)
- Introduce your Teacher Candidate to your class as a "teacher," NOT as a "Teacher Candidate;" students understand hierarchy and if you introduce your Teacher Candidate as "just a student" or anyone with less importance than yourself, your students will pick up on the discrepancy in authority. Introducing your Teacher Candidate a "teacher" will ensure a more positive working relationship with your students. The more you show professional and collaboration with your Teacher Candidate—as a true teaching partner—the more respect your students will have for him/her.
- Assist the Teacher Candidate in arranging some brief observations in other classrooms so he or she can see a variety of teaching styles and contexts. This is typically done toward the end of the

semester, but can be arranged whenever it will be helpful. Any change in arrangements that would require the Teacher Candidate to spend more than a brief visit with another teacher should be discussed with the University Supervisor so that we can ensure an appropriate placement.

### **Explaining expectations**

- Review this handbook to familiarize yourself with the program expectations.
- Outline the duties and responsibilities you will assign to the Teacher Candidate during the course of the teaching experience. Reiterate to the Teacher Candidate that these duties and responsibilities, especially those which involve additional time before and after school hours, such as tutorials, parent nights, PTO meetings, etc., are part of the normal job of a teacher. They need to see that the job of a teacher does not end at 3:00 p.m.
- Review the Teacher Candidate's semester schedule so that you have an idea of when he/she will be in your room.
- Establish your preferences, habits, attitudes, and ways of doing things. The Teacher Candidate is a guest in your classroom—we have told him or her that—and therefore we expect him or her to adapt to the way you run your class.
- Be a professional role model at all times.

### **Establishing good communication**

- Encourage the Teacher Candidate to ask questions. Set aside a few minutes each day for a conference with your Teacher Candidate.
- Share your educational philosophy with the Teacher Candidate.
- Express an interest in the Teacher Candidate as a person and try to establish a feeling of camaraderie.
- Share the concerns that you had when you "student taught." This might allow the Teacher Candidate to see that he/she is not alone.
- Be careful about expressing every frustration you have. Teaching is a complex profession with plenty of opportunity for challenge. We hope that our novice teachers' optimism is informed by reality this semester, but not squashed by pessimism.
- Communicate issues or concerns to the University Supervisor.

### **Facilitating Teacher Candidate's movement into the instructional phase**

- Refer to the Student Teaching General Timeline for details. Please use this as a guide only.
- The Teacher Candidate should give you a copy of the semester calendar.
- In general, the sooner a Teacher Candidate is able to jump in and get involved, the more experience he or she will gain.
- Encourage the Teacher Candidate to begin learning students' names. Provide the Teacher Candidate with a background of your students, including any relevant academic, personal, social, or other information.
- Focus the Teacher Candidate's attention on your daily routines and procedures.
- Allow the Teacher Candidate to become involved gradually in classroom activities. Initially plan simple tasks which do not require advanced planning on the Teacher Candidate's part, i.e., attendance, grading papers, assisting individual students, etc.
- Work with the Teacher Candidate to identify the first lesson to teach. (Guide the decision and recommend that the Teacher Candidate use your plans for the first lesson).
- Provide positive feedback, as well as specific guidelines for improvement, based on the UH Performance Assessment Rubric.



- Help the Teacher Candidate with lesson planning, especially introducing any specific requirements. Teacher Candidates are required to use the UH Lesson Plan Template for the five required lesson observations each semester; however, they are permitted to use other lesson plan formats that you might recommend for other lessons taught, provided that they meet first with their supervisor for permission and possible other inclusions.
- Share teaching and classroom management strategies and techniques as the opportunity arises.
- Encourage the Teacher Candidate to use and share any and all of your resources, especially visual aids and technology support (video clips, powerpoints, etc.).
- Encourage the Teacher Candidate to try new ideas.

### **Helping the Teacher Candidate assume responsibility**

- As a general rule, Teacher Candidates will progress through the first semester of student teaching, gradually leading more of the planning and instruction so that by the last month of the first semester, he or she is the primary lead for most of the day, again maintaining the co-teaching presence of the Mentor Teacher. It is expected that this leadership will continue throughout the entire second semester of student teaching. At the discretion of the Mentor Teacher, the Teacher Candidate should seek out opportunities to visit other classrooms and grade levels to expand his or her vision of teaching.
- Although the ultimate goal of the student teaching experience is the preparation of an effective, independent educator, we view the entire student teaching semester as a collaborative process. As the Teacher Candidate becomes increasingly more involved in the planning and implementation of instruction, he or she will be more able and confident to teach independently. However, periods of solo-teaching should not be interpreted to mean that the Mentor Teacher must exit the room, nor should it be seen as a time for the Mentor Teacher to disengage from the educational process. Although it is informative to see if a Teacher Candidate can function, our experience has shown us that the strongest preparation for our novice teachers is not time alone but rather constant modeling by an experienced Mentor Teacher.
- During “solo-teaching,” the Mentor Teacher is most instructive when he or she continues to observe, give advice, and provide feedback for solo-teaching, and to look for opportunities for co-teaching and co-planning. In addition to co-teaching the same lesson, this is an ideal time for the Mentor Teacher to parallel teach, working with centers or workstations, or pulling small groups or individual students for additional remediation or enrichment. Whether it is called “team” teaching, “partner” teaching, or “co-teaching” teaching, we have found the most academic success for students, as well as the most benefit—and even enjoyment—for both Mentor Teachers and Teacher Candidates, when both members in the teaching partnership are active. Further, in this age of increased accountability for the classroom teacher regarding student achievement, we respect the Mentor Teacher’s investment in remaining involved and informed with the progress of his or her students.
- Be sure to incorporate the University Supervisor's visits into the plan. In general, the supervisor can be flexible, keeping in mind that they have other Teacher Candidates They Are also trying to schedule.
- Allow the Teacher Candidate to experience all aspects of a teacher's responsibility (including interaction with parents, extra duty, tutoring sessions, recording in grade book, etc.).
- Make allowances for a “novice” teaching style, still in development, and a likely young personality who may not feel comfortable bringing questions to you.
- Continue to promote open, two-way communication.

## **Helping with the formative evaluation of the Teacher Candidate**

- Initial the Daily Attendance Log at the start and end of each day. This seems an onerous task, but allows the program to track our Teacher Candidates' time as closely as possible.
- Offer suggestions and constructive criticism, which will help guide the Teacher Candidate towards having a positive teaching experience. You'll also interact through short, informal discussions that usually occur throughout the normal school day.
- Our University Supervisors are asked to document regular contact with you regarding your Teacher Candidate progress. You can expect regular communication with him/ her for your feedback, which is greatly appreciated.
- Share your feedback with the University Supervisor so that you can work together with the Teacher Candidate on strengths to maintain and areas to improve.
- Pre-Observation Conference: Allow the Teacher Candidate to clarify the objectives of the lesson and how he/she plans to achieve them.
- Observation: Observe and record classroom behaviors of the Teacher Candidate during their formal observations. Conduct a post-observation conference with the Teacher Candidate following the lesson. Encourage the Teacher Candidate to review the lesson and analyze what went well and what did not. Ask the Teacher Candidate to reflect on how he/she might have handled things differently. Guide the reflective process using the UH Performance Assessment Rubric and give the Teacher Candidate specific goals to work on for the next lesson. Finally, give your Teacher Candidate the hard copy of the Mentor Teacher Feedback Form to be submitted to the UH Teacher Education Program. We encourage all other formal observations to be handled in the same way.
- Complete the Professional Attributes Assessment at each Performance Assessment. Use the Mentor Teacher Feedback Form and the Professional Attributes Form as discussion points with the consultations with the Teacher Candidate and the University Supervisor.

## **Teacher Candidates Express Appreciation**

You matter to our students! The Mentor Teacher is an important figure in the professional (and sometimes personal) life of a Teacher Candidate. Many have expressed appreciation for the help they received from their Mentor Teachers.

- *"My Mentor Teacher was a true partner. He allowed me to be a part of the team."*
- *"My Mentor Teacher took time out for me to ask questions and just to talk to me about what I had on my mind."*
- *"My Mentor Teacher guided me but yet let me 'grow' and discover on my own."*
- *"She always took the time to talk to me and evaluate any work/teaching done in a positive and constructive manner."*
- *"My Mentor Teacher showed me how to be a professional, efficient, and creative teacher."*
- *"My Mentor Teacher and I had an excellent communication system that was open and honest. I knew he was trying to guide me, yet also respected my judgment and opinions."*
- *"My Mentor Teacher was very helpful. She helped me design lesson plans. This will enable me to be more creative when I am a teacher."*
- *"My Mentor Teacher gave me very specific, positive feedback."*
- *"My Mentor Teacher took time every day to talk with me about my teaching and he always gave feedback with idea and suggestions. My school was open and helpful to me from the first day."*

You as the Mentor Teacher play an important and critical role in the development of our future teachers. Your time, expertise, patience, and guidance are invaluable, and we sincerely appreciate you.

## **Rule on Substitution**

**As a rule Teacher Candidates in Student Teaching 1 may not serve as substitute teachers.** Quoting from House Bill 339:

*. . . a Teacher Candidate may not be required to serve as a substitute teacher. A Teacher Candidate is not considered to be serving as a substitute if the Teacher Candidate assumes responsibility for the class while the supervising teacher is out of the classroom for part of the day but is in the building or is engaged in an approved activity relating to Teacher Candidate teaching, including conferring with a University Supervisor.*

**But there is one exception to this rule:** According to Dr. Richard Swain, former Assistant Commissioner for Professional Development with the Texas Education Agency, the Teacher Candidate may teach and allow the Mentor Teacher one released day under the following limitations:

- The Teacher Candidate has been in that student teaching assignment for a minimum of 15 school days;
- The supervising teacher, the principal of the school, and the University Supervisor agree that the Teacher Candidate is capable of handling successfully the teaching responsibilities;
- A certified classroom teacher in an adjacent room or a member of the same teaching team as the Teacher Candidate is aware of the absence of the supervising teacher and agrees to assist the Teacher Candidate if needed; and
- The principal of the school or the principal's representative is readily available in the building.

However, a Teacher Candidate may not be paid for any service rendered while serving as a substitute teacher. Additionally, the school principal and the University of Houston student teaching supervisor must approve the substitute day in advance.

**Teacher Candidates in Student Teaching 2 MAY serve as substitute teachers only in the following situations:**

- The Teacher Candidate has documented 65 five full days (or the equivalent) of supervised student teaching.
- The Teacher Candidate has earned a 3 or higher on each TAP indicator during Student Teaching 2.
- The Teacher Candidate has requested and received approval from Teacher Education program leadership.
- The substitute teaching position is in the same school as the Teacher Candidate is placed for Student Teaching 2.

## Appendix: Student Teaching Evaluation Forms

**NOTE ON ONLINE FORMS:** Please make sure you copy and paste any editable forms to your own device so the originals remain intact.

### Daily Attendance Log

The Teacher Candidate brings this form to the Mentor Teacher to initial and record the time at the beginning and end of every day in the field. Students will be required to submit this form to their University Supervisor once all signatures have been collected.

### Absence Request /Verification Form

The Absence Request/ Verification Form will be filled out by the teacher candidate to document reasons for absences.

### **UH Mentor Progress Report**

This form is filled out by the MT once a month to provide feedback to the US and TC about the TCs progress. The US will review the progress reports and use the data to help plan student teaching course instruction. The MT should review their feedback with the TC before, during, or after submitting the progress reports.

### **UH Lesson Plan Templates- Direct Instruction and Inquiry Lesson**

These are the approved lesson plan formats for the required observations each semester of student teaching.

### Pre-Conference Evaluation Rubric and Preparation Sheet

The Teacher Candidate and University Supervisor will use these forms to ensure effective Pre-conferences take place for each Performance Assessment.

### UH Performance Assessment Rubric and Performance Assessment Packet

The rubric is scored by the University Supervisor for the 2 required formal observations. This rubric will be the basis of discussion at the pre and post-conferences.

### Post Conference Evaluation Rubric and Preparation Sheet

The Teacher Candidate and University Supervisor will use these forms to ensure effective Post- conferences take place for each Performance Assessment.