

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON** | EDUCATION

***Teacher Candidate  
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 Teacher Candidate, you will be putting into practice all that you have learned through your coursework and field experiences, while at the same time learning from two other sets of expertise—those of your Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor.*

*It is absolutely essential that Teacher Candidates, 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; and (d) ensuring the timely uploading of video capture and entry of ratings by the Teacher Candidate and University Supervisor into the CODE database.
- **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.

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.



## Teacher Candidate's Expectations and Responsibilities

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
- Participation in all Mentor Teacher in-service trainings throughout the school year, initiation of placement prior to the beginning of UH schedule, and return to classes when partner-district classes begin.
- 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.
- Work collaboratively with the Mentor Teacher 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.
- Greater student achievement gains with the Mentor Teacher's and University Supervisor's support.

### Schedule

Student Teaching is considered a full-time experience. Your syllabus will provide a calendar of dates for student teaching related events—these events are all required elements of your preparation. Teacher Candidates are expected to:

- Report to their assigned school for teaching responsibilities. **EC-6 students will report to the field at least 4 days and 4-8/7-12 students will report to the field at least 3 days every week for the contract hours for teachers in that district.** Teacher Candidates are expected to check with the front office to sign in upon arrival and sign out at time of departure from the school ( It is vital that we have accurate records of field attendance). **When classes are not in session, student teachers are expected to report to their campuses 5 days per week.**
- Participate in all activities in the school and the district, and to take part in after-school programs, special programs, PTA meetings, faculty meetings, and any other activities of the school.
- Follow the academic calendar of the assignment public school district, and so will observe only those holidays scheduled by the district. Any exceptions to this will be noted in the calendar in the syllabus.

### Professional Attributes

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. During the student-teaching semesters, University Supervisors will support Teacher Candidates in developing characteristics of a professional educator (Please refer to the Teaching and Learning Professional Attributes Policy).

Teacher Candidates will be evaluated on their professional conduct twice during the semester (during each performance assessment). This evaluation will be informed by input from Mentor Teachers, and by observations conducted by the University Supervisors during walkthroughs, interactions, meetings and instructional sessions. Teacher Candidates will complete a self-assessment at each performance assessment using the online Professional Attributes form to be used as talking points during formative conferences. Mentor Teachers assess Teacher Candidates' "Professional Attributes" once a month by completing the Mentor Teacher Progress Report (ONLINE).

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)

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).

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

Teacher Candidates are responsible for maintaining an accurate record of their attendance using the *Daily Attendance Log* and requesting the Mentor Teacher to initial each day. Teacher Candidate attendance will be monitored by the University Supervisor through the use of the Attendance Log, feedback from the Mentor Teacher, and Walkthrough Data.

### **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 will result in a 5 point deduction from the TCs final grade.

### **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 (PGP) and will result in a 5 point deduction per absence. 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.

### **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.

#### **For the Teacher Candidate, the performance assessment cycle (POP Cycle) consists of 3 steps:**

1. Scheduling with the University Supervisor a time for a pre-conference review of the lesson and the time for observing the specific lesson;

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. University Supervisors will use the *Pre-Conference Rubric* (see appendix) to prompt Teacher Candidates and to ensure they are ready to deliver their lessons. Teacher Candidates may use the *Pre-Conference Preparation and Expectations* sheet to ensure they are ready for the Pre-Conference (see appendix).

2. Providing *instruction* on the appointed day, including the use of video-capture device

Performance Assessments: 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 the UH Performance Assessment and enters the

scores in the *Online PA Data Form*. Teacher Candidates also score their own teaching using the UH Performance Assessment and input their scores in the *Online PA Data Form*, and bring their self-evaluation to share with their University Supervisor at the post-conference.

3. Scheduling with the University Supervisor a time for a post-conference to review evidence, and identify areas for reinforcement and refinement.

Post-Conference: University Supervisors meet with Teacher Candidates **within 48 hours after an observation has taken place** to conduct a Post-Conference using the *Post-Conference Rubric*. 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.

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)lan for any student who is at risk for not meeting performance gates.

### **Classroom Walk Throughs**

In addition to the two live observations, University Supervisors will conduct four walk through visits throughout the semester to provide ongoing feedback, coaching, and support. At each visit, the University Supervisor will complete the online Classroom Walk Through Form and send electronically to the Teacher Candidate.

### **Student Teaching Course**

This course will be guided by a syllabus created by the Teacher Education Office. During this course, University Supervisors will continue to support Teacher Candidates' development of instructional proficiencies and professionalism, lesson planning, completion of assignments, and ethical and legal responsibilities associated with teaching. This course will also encompass a content that is dynamic in the sense that University Supervisors will be in a unique position to identify and provide support in specific strategies associated with goals for instructional proficiency.

### **Grading**

Teacher Candidates are evaluated in a variety of ways including classroom performance, walkthroughs, written assignments, participation in Student Perception Survey assignment, analyzing data, and professional attributes.

All forms related to documenting the assessment of Teacher Candidates are provided to the University Supervisor by the teaching program office. Details on the other assignments requiring primarily Teacher Candidate work can be found in the Student Teaching syllabi, as well as in Blackboard Learn.

University Supervisors will assign Teacher Candidates a student teaching grade following the guidelines specified in the Student Teaching Syllabus. Performance gates are required in order to pass the student teaching class. If any of the performance gates are not met, the student will receive an F in the student teaching course. Performance gates are mandatory for passing the student teaching course. Any student at risk for not meeting any of the performance gates should have a Professional Growth Plan submitted to the Teacher Education office.

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

Once students are determined to be struggling, clear, actionable guidelines will be discussed and documented in the PGP 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.

## 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 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 (dismissed from their placement), the Teacher Candidate is to report this to the Student Teaching Leadership Team immediately. In this situation, the Teacher Candidate will not be placed again during that semester; they may receive an "F" for the course, have to repeat the semester or be 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 Teacher Candidates

## Preparing Yourself

- Read your Teacher Candidate Handbook carefully and review any questions with your University Supervisor.
- Make arrangements for full-time commitment to student teaching. Student Teaching I and 2 are a full-time, daytime commitment, between coursework and field requirements, and you are urged to consider it as full-time employment in order to give this semester the appropriate time allocation. This is the capstone event in your preparation, so do not sabotage your success by attempting to do too much. You are strongly encouraged to avoid taking classes, other than those required on your degree plan, or working at another job during these challenging and rewarding semesters. Plan now for YOUR success by making all arrangements possible to provide yourself with time to succeed.

## Collaborating with your University Supervisor

- Give your University Supervisor a schedule of your public school class days as well as a typical daily schedule for your placement class. The schedule should also show the grade level for each period (for secondary), the conference period, and lunchtime. (See the Sample Weekly Schedule in the Appendix).
- Provide a copy of your Daily Attendance Log as your University Supervisor requests. Make sure your MT initials your attendance every day.
- Submit an online version of your lesson plans (for any observed lesson you teach) to blackboard and keep a hard copy for your University Supervisor to review on the day you are scheduled to teach. Lesson plans for required observations must be sent by email to the University Supervisor at least 48 hours before your observed lesson on the UH Lesson Plan Template or any other UH approved lesson plan template.
- Complete and submit forms as required and noted in Student Teaching Handbook and Syllabus.
- Your University Supervisor has other Teacher Candidates, and you will likely need to be flexible with when you schedule your observed lessons. Know that your University Supervisor is quite experienced in the operations of schools and understands that scheduling a lesson is tricky and must be worked out with your Mentor Teacher.

## Collaborating with your Mentor Teacher

- Make sure that you send an introductory email to your Mentor Teacher prior to meeting him/her.
- Introduce yourself in person and do your best to show that you WANT to be there and WANT to be a teacher.
- Communicate the days that you will be in your Mentor Teacher's classroom; give your MT a calendar showing these days. It is especially important that you take responsibility for reminding your MT frequently when you will be there and when you will not. He or she will not have your schedule at the top of their minds, yet it is vital that they know where you are.
- Remember that you are a guest in this classroom, and your Mentor Teacher's policies, habits, and wishes always apply. You will have your own classroom soon enough!
- Have a thorough discussion with your Mentor Teacher regarding school and classroom policies. Consider that this will be an ongoing discussion throughout the semester as you learn enough to ask better questions. It is better not to assume anything—if you don't know—ask!
- Arrange with you Mentor Teacher for working and storage space in the classroom. Again, don't assume that you can put your personal belongings anywhere you like.



- Make sure your Mentor Teacher has all of your contact information, including multiple emergency contacts. Ask the best method in which to contact your Mentor Teacher in an emergency—text, email, call.

### **Familiarizing yourself with the School**

- Review school and district websites.
- Make a trial run to your campus before the first day you are required to be there.
- Get the policy handbooks of the school and district and read them.
- Follow the dress code of the school; clothing should be neat and professional. See the dress code policy on the main UH Teacher Education Handbook online.
- Introduce yourself to the front office staff and make efforts to communicate with them regularly and pleasantly.
- Identify where resource materials are located in your school. During the first several days, plan to visit these places and familiarize yourself with the various materials and technology available.

### **Taking Initiative**

- Discuss housekeeping responsibilities with your Mentor Teacher. Find out if there are duties you could perform starting the first week—some Mentor Teachers will ask you to do these things and others will wait for you to volunteer. Show you want to be there!
- Ask for a class roster and memorize each student's name.
- Pay attention to clues about each student's academic progress, interests, ways to engage, and frustration points.
- Become familiar with all textbooks used in your classroom. Ask if you could take them home some weekend and sit down and read them. Do the same with curriculum guides.
- Find out about any extracurricular activities you will be expected to attend.
- Set aside time to confer daily with your Mentor Teacher (and get your attendance log signed at that time). Ask for feedback!

### **Other Requirements:**

- If not already passed, file for the official TExES Exams as soon as possible after passing the benchmark versions of the exams.
- Complete all assignments required in the student teaching courses.
- Stay healthy, seek positive people in your life, work hard, and remember the people and reasons that inspired you to be a teacher!
- Apply for certification. You can find specific instructions on how to do so on the COE website.

### **Schedules**

- Student Teaching is considered a full-time experience. You do not have a day off, just as teachers in the classroom do not. Prepare your own planner for the semester, based on the semester calendar provided in the syllabus. Mark required events, scheduled meetings, and planned teaching periods. Keep it up to date.
- Your daily schedule for your days in the field will follow that of your Mentor Teacher's schedule.
- Participate in all activities in the school and the district, and take part in after-school programs, special programs, PTA meetings, faculty meetings, and any other activities of the school.
- Remember to follow the academic calendar of the assignment public school district, and to observe only those holidays scheduled by the district.

## **Absences or Schedule Changes**

- Notify your University Supervisor anytime there is a change in plans due to early dismissal, assembly program, PTA meetings, unscheduled holidays, or any unforeseen event. University Supervisors occasionally stop by unannounced and must always know where Teacher Candidates will be.
- In the case of unavoidable absences (illness or accident) you will have either 5 (EC-6 students) or 3 (4-8/7-12 students) personal days that will not be required to be made up, provided the appropriate documentation is submitted to the University Supervisor.
- Excessive absences that interfere with the successful completion of student teaching may require you to repeat your student teaching semester(s).

## 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/Signature Card

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 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.

### **Classroom WalkThrough Form**

This form is filled out by the University Supervisor for every walk through visit to provide Teacher Candidates with ongoing feedback (online).

### **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 Site Coordinator 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. Students should keep a hard copy for their records and Supervisors will submit the original PA rubrics to the Teacher Education Office. The Performance Assessment Packet is completed by the Teacher Candidate for each of the formal observations.

### Post Conference Evaluation Rubric and Preparation Sheet

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

### **Professional Attributes Assessment**

This form is completed by the Supervisor, Mentor Teacher, and Teacher Candidate independently at each performance assessment (online).

### FERPA Release Form

This is required by TEA for each Teacher Candidate so that written feedback can be provided to campus administrators and mentor teachers. Teacher Candidates will need to complete the form in order to satisfy student teaching requirements.

### Online PA Data Form

This form will be filled out by the US after each performance assessment to input the TC's scores. TCs will input their self-scores in this form as well.