

Illinois State University
COOPERATING TEACHER
Handbook for Student Teaching

Illinois State University
Teacher Education Programs

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Dear Cooperating Teacher:

Your willingness to serve as a cooperating teacher in the student teaching program is greatly appreciated. Illinois State University recognizes that the teacher education program could not have been developed nor continued without the cooperation of dedicated professionals. The experiences you provide enable your teacher candidate to demonstrate skills for planning, organizing, evaluating and relating to students and parents.

Teacher candidates will officially begin their work in the school to which they have been assigned on the date listed on your copy of the student teaching confirmation letter. If your teacher candidate does NOT report at the time scheduled, please call the appropriate coordinator in CECP. Student absences should be reported to the university supervisor, who will work with you on appropriate supplementary experiences to fulfill the student teaching assignments.

The Cooperating Teacher Handbook contains statements of our policies and other pertinent information. Additional information for cooperating teachers can be found at:

<http://www.teacheredcenter.ilstu.edu/clinicalexp-studentteaching/coopteachers/>

At least once every two weeks a supervisor from our University will visit you and the student teacher. The university supervisor will notify you of the visit in advance. During a typical student teaching program, the university supervisor will visit and observe the student teacher and will confer with both of you following an observation of the student teacher presenting the lesson. The university supervisors may hold a seminar for the students during their student teaching program. They will provide you with the pertinent information. If you have not heard from an Illinois State University supervisor within the first student teaching week, please call 309/438-5416. Do not hesitate to call any time for assistance.

I. SUGGESTED COOPERATING TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Arrange to meet with your teacher candidate before the official start of the experience. Spend time learning about one another as people, not just as educators.

Introduce the teacher candidate to other faculty members, support personnel and administrators.

Tour the school including staff work areas, the lounge, adult restrooms, etc.

Post the teacher candidate's name (Mr./Ms. Smith) along with your name near the classroom door.

Send a note to families to let them know you will have a teacher candidate teaching with you.

Provide a desk or designate a work area for the teacher candidate with supplies and copies of necessary manuals, textbooks, etc.

Provide a picture of the class or individual students to help the teacher candidate learn names more quickly.

Review items directly affect the teacher candidate: the length of the school day, school security, emergency plans, where to park, etc.

Explain any staff activities or special events that the teacher candidate could choose to participate in or attend.

Discuss classroom rules and expectations for student behavior as well as acceptable rewards and consequences. Provide the student handbook for review.

Discuss a timetable for immersion of the teacher candidate into full-time teaching responsibilities.

Work closely with your teacher candidate in planning for the initial lessons. Require a detailed lesson plan for each class assumed until the teacher candidate shows by his/her performance that it is possible to operate successfully with less **written** details.

Discuss the lesson plan with the teacher candidate before the lesson is taught and again after. Observe the lesson and help the teacher candidate to evaluate it in terms of whether the objectives were met, and how it could be improved.

Allow the teacher candidate to try various teaching methods and techniques, even though you may choose not to use them yourself.

Plan for the teacher candidate to assume full teaching responsibility for at least three or more weeks or as dictated by department preference.

Provide the teacher candidate with both verbal and written feedback. Point out the teacher candidates' basic strengths as well as identifying areas needing improvement. Both informal and formal conferences will be beneficial.

Notify the university supervisor if the teacher candidate is unable to do required work. Concerns need to be identified early and problems need to be resolved as soon as possible. Use the Disposition Concerns form as a remediation tool to help concerns be resolved.

Return Illinois State University evaluation forms and other specified materials to the assigned university supervisor.

II. PLANNING WITH THE TEACHER CANDIDATE & UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR

Provide time to develop plans jointly, providing for a range of well-balanced activities and experiences.

Plan an appropriate place and amount of time for conferencing with the university supervisor and teacher candidate.

Supervision of a teacher candidate requires a great deal of careful planning. Preplanning on the part of the classroom teacher and university supervisor can create a good learning atmosphere and alleviate many problems before they arise.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

Absences

When illness occurs, the teacher candidate has the responsibility of contacting the assigned school and the university supervisor. Procedures for reporting ABSENCES should follow the policy of the assigned school.

If the teacher candidate is to be absent to attend any University-sponsored activity such as workshops or seminars, he/she should make arrangements well in advance with the cooperating teacher for the absence.

Appearance

Appropriate dress and conduct is expected of all teacher candidates. As a rule, teacher candidates should be guided by the dress code of their assigned school.

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected of teacher candidates. Attendance is a factor that reflects the professionalism of the teacher candidate. Unauthorized or lengthy absences may require an extension of the student teaching experience.

The teacher candidate's work day is the same as that of the cooperating teacher. Teacher candidates are expected to arrive early enough in the mornings to allow ample time for planning and organizing before classes begin. Likewise, they are expected to remain a short time after dismissal to allow time for planning and conferencing.

Calendar

During student teaching, teacher candidates are expected to follow the calendar of the school district in which they teach rather than the university calendar. Exceptions should be discussed and approved by school personnel and the university supervisor.

Corporal Punishment

Teacher candidates are not permitted to administer corporal punishment.

Observations by University Supervisors

A University supervisor will plan to make visits every two weeks during the student teaching practicum to observe the teacher candidate's performance and to confer with the cooperating teacher.

After each observation the teacher candidate should plan to spend time in conference with the university supervisor.

Observations by Teacher Candidates

When possible, teacher candidates should have an opportunity to observe teachers in other classrooms or in special rooms. These arrangements may be made by the teacher candidate in consultation with the cooperating teacher and the principal. The purpose for such observations is to broaden the teacher candidate's perspective as to teaching styles, classroom environments, and methods of classroom management. It also helps to acquaint the teacher candidate with responsibilities of special teachers. Such observations are often scheduled during the final stages of experiences as the cooperating teacher resumes teaching responsibilities.

Outside Activities

Attempts to work or to carry on responsibilities outside of student teaching are not encouraged by the University because such activities usually mean that the long hours of preparation demanded in student teaching may not be met.

Seminars

Teacher candidates may be required to attend University sponsored seminars. Cooperating teachers will be informed of these seminars by the university supervisor.

Substituting

Teacher candidates, by law, are not allowed to fill the role of substitute teacher.

Work Stoppage and/or Strikes

Teacher candidates will assume the role of neutral persons and will maintain an uninvolved status with respect to a work stoppage. In the event that the work stoppage continues for a week or more, the university may make arrangements for an extended experience or an alternate placement in another agency.

IV. EVALUATION OF STUDENT TEACHING

All teacher candidates at Illinois State University are evaluated throughout the student teaching assignment with evaluative instruments provided by the Office of Clinical Experiences. The teacher candidate evaluations are based on the *Realizing the Democratic Ideal Ethical and Intellectual Commitments* listed below. Individual departments may also use additional evaluation instruments.

Realizing the Democratic Ideal

Illinois State University has a historic and enduring commitment to prepare teachers and other school personnel who will be responsive to the ethical and intellectual demands of a democratic society. To teach in a democracy is to consciously take up the challenge of improving the ethical and intellectual quality of our societal dialogue by including in it as many educated voices as possible.

The democratic ideal unites caring and knowing: The more voices we call into thoughtful dialogue, the truer our convictions and conclusions will be. This is a demonstrable necessity of a democratic society, and it is why Illinois State University graduates aspire to teach and serve everyone, including those on the margins, those who have been or are in danger of being excluded.

The democratic conception of education informs all aspects of teacher education at Illinois State University. Graduates ready to meet the challenges and rewards of serving students in a democratic society embody the ethical and intellectual aspects of teaching and learning.

The ethical commitments are

- Sensitivity toward the varieties of individual and cultural diversity
- Disposition and ability to collaborate effectively with others
- High regard for learning and seriousness of personal, professional, and public purpose
- Respect for learners of all ages, with special regard for children and adolescents

The intellectual commitments are

- Wide general knowledge and deep knowledge of the content to be taught
- Knowledge and appreciation of the diversity among learners
- Understanding of the factors that affect learning and appropriate teaching strategies
- Interest in and ability to seek out and use informational, technological, and collegial resources
- Contagious intellectual enthusiasm and courage enough to be creative

The teacher candidate's performance is formally evaluated on two occasions during student teaching: 1) at midterm and 2) at the conclusion of the practicum. The midterm evaluation is a formative evaluation and is discussed jointly by the university supervisor, cooperating teacher and the teacher candidate. Its purpose is to help the teacher candidate become aware of his/her progress or lack of it. The midterm assessment is discussed between the teacher candidate,

cooperating teacher and university supervisor. The midterm assessment is not returned to Illinois State University.

The final evaluation is summative in nature and serves to indicate the quality of the teacher candidate's total teaching performance. The final grade is determined by the university supervisor and should reflect the combined judgment of the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor.

The following standards are prepared for arriving at final grades in student teaching. Illinois State University does not use plus and minus with letter grades, however, several programs use split grades for the hours earned in student teaching. The university supervisor will provide criteria to be used when this is an option to assigning a single letter grade.

1. The "A" teacher candidate demonstrates beginning level competencies to such degree that he/she can be recommended without reservation to prospective employer.
2. The "B" teacher candidate demonstrates beginning level competencies to such a degree that he/she can be highly recommended to a prospective employer.
3. The "C" teacher candidate demonstrates potential beginning level competencies which would allow him/her to be recommended with certain reservations to a prospective employer.
4. The "D" teacher candidate demonstrates such limited potential for teaching that he/she will not be recommended for teacher certification.
5. The "F" teacher candidate is as completely ineffective as a teacher that he/she would not be awarded any college credit for student teaching nor be recommended for teacher certification. Individuals who demonstrate inadequate performance should be counseled early to consider dropping student teaching.

Of the challenges facing teachers and other school personnel in the 21st century, none is more pressing than the need for them to develop and maintain a strong sense of their ethical and intellectual commitments — a professional identity. Toward this end, Illinois State University prepares teachers and other school personnel who have a dynamic, reflective sense of themselves and their mission; through caring and knowing, they work to realize the democratic ideal.

We appreciate your participation in our Teacher Education Program and welcome your comments and/or suggestions for improving the preparation of our future teachers. Please share your comments and ideas with our university supervisors or CECF personnel. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Molly Munson-Dryer
Director, Office of Clinical Experiences & Certification Processes