



# Student Teaching Handbook

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Dear Students and Colleagues,

Welcome!

Student Teaching is a transformative experience. During the student teaching semester, students have the opportunity to practice what they have learned during coursework and deepen their learning through the mentorship of master teachers and support of university supervisors.

This Student Teaching Handbook is designed to provide guidance and direction for

- Student Teachers,
- Mentor Teachers,
- University Supervisors,
- and School Administrators.

This handbook includes information about program goals, requirements for student teachers, and instructions for mentor teachers and university supervisors. I hope that you will refer to it frequently.

If I can be of assistance at any time, please contact me at [sharla.hart@usu.edu](mailto:sharla.hart@usu.edu) or 435-797- 0958.

Sincerely,

Sharla Hart  
Director, Field Experiences Teacher  
Education and Leadership Utah State  
University

### **Teacher Education and Leadership Mission Statement**

As a unit within the land grant institution of Utah State University, we geographically dispersed are part of one university. We acknowledge and appreciate the complex contexts that shape our work, and we are committed to furthering the cause of equitable educational opportunity for all students. We aim to prepare students to be informed and influential in local and global communities.

### **Student Teaching Overview**

Student teaching is the capstone experience of the Utah State University teacher education program and provides an opportunity for students to continue academic and professional growth. More importantly, the student teaching semester is a crucial step in induction to the teaching profession.

Student teaching is a full-time, co-teaching experience. Initially, student teachers will observe the mentor teacher and assume partial responsibility for student learning. As the semester progresses, students will gradually take on more responsibility until they assume all teaching duties under the direction of a mentor teacher and university supervisor.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of student teaching is to provide opportunities to develop and evaluate the major areas of teacher practice. Student teaching requires the constant pursuit of productive curriculum plans, effective teaching strategies, and appropriate use of assessment to provide quality learning for all students. The experience includes formative and summative evaluation of the student teacher's competence in a school setting and is intended to facilitate taking theory into practice.

## **Student Teaching Placement**

Student teachers are placed with the goal of providing them with the best possible learning environment. Student teaching must occur in a classroom where there is a teacher certified in the same content area who serves as a mentor teacher. *Under no circumstances should a student teacher arrange his/her own assignment with a particular teacher or school.*

There are several factors considered when determining a student's placement:

- **Student's Request**  
The content, level, and school the student teacher requests on his/her application form is given sincere consideration. You may not student teach in a school you attended or in a school where your siblings, children or relatives attend or work.
- **Number of Student Teachers**  
The number of students teaching in a particular content area during a given year affects the placement options. Also, mentor teachers must have at least three (3) years of full-time teaching experience.
- **Demands of the Public Schools**  
The district's and individual school's needs determine final placements. Administration can accept or reject student teaching placement requests based on circumstances.

The final decision for placement of a student teacher is the responsibility of the Director of Field Experiences at USU. The director will consider a variety of factors, including those outlined above, to create an opportunity for success in student teaching.

## **International Student Teaching Placement**

Utah State University offers students the opportunity to student teach abroad during the second half of the semester. The countries, costs, and program requirements vary from semester to semester.

[Current information about the International Student Teaching program can be found on the TEAL website.](#)

## Student Teacher Responsibilities

### Before Student Teaching

- Submit a complete student teaching application to the Office of Field Experience. (Instructions and deadlines for the application can be found [here](#).)
- Maintain a 3.0 grade point average and grades required for your teaching program.
- Pass any content area Praxis exam(s) required by your teaching program.
- Become familiar with the Essential Teaching Dispositions outlined on page 33 of the [Utah Effective Teacher Standards](#).
- Enroll in the Student Teaching course(s) and Seminar required by your teaching program.
- Contact assigned mentor teacher(s) and school administrator, and provide current copy of your resume.
- Register for the PPAT (Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers).

### During Student Teaching

- Attend Student Teacher Orientation.
- Participate in a Triad Conference with mentor teacher(s) and university supervisor during your first week of student teaching.
- Conference regularly with mentor teacher(s) and university supervisor regarding progress.
- Complete the PPAT.
- Complete the Evaluation of Mentor Teacher/Supervisor.
- Complete all other assignments required in your Student Teaching Seminar.
- Apply for Graduation.
- Apply for your Teaching License.

### Professional Expectations for Student Teachers

- Practice high moral and ethical behavior.
- Act and dress appropriately.
- Understand and adhere to the legal and ethical responsibilities of a teacher in the classroom.
- Work the same contract hours as the mentor teachers.  
*Additional time outside of contract hours is necessary to fulfill your teaching duties.*
- Arrive on time daily.
- Make yourself available for frequent conferences with your mentor teacher(s) and university supervisor.
- Participate in school meetings, trainings, and activities.
- Follow the public-school calendar for holidays and school breaks. ***Student teachers will not take the USU breaks outlined on the USU calendar.***

### **Absences**

- Student Teachers are permitted three (3) absences during the student teaching experience for extenuating circumstances (such as personal illness or a death in the immediate family).
- Student teachers do not have personal leave days.
- Student teachers must notify their mentor teacher(s) and university supervisor as soon as possible *before* the absence.
- All non-school related appointments or commitments must be scheduled outside of contract time.
- In extreme circumstances a student may need additional time away from their student teaching duties. Additional time off must be approved by Office of Field Experiences in advance and made up by adding additional days beyond the normal end date of student teaching.

### **Substituting (Student Teachers Only)**

- Student teachers are only allowed to substitute in an emergency in their assigned classroom(s) if given consent from the university supervisor, mentor teacher(s), and the principal.
- Student teachers should register as a substitute with the local agency if they wished to be paid as a substitute.
- Days spent as a substitute teacher will count toward the student teaching requirement.
- If the student teacher is not substituting and their regular classroom teacher is absent, a substitute is required to be in the classroom with the student teacher.

### **Commitment to Students**

- Keep all information about students confidential.
- Focus on student learning.
- Maintain dignity to gain respect from students.
- Exhibit an empathetic and courteous attitude toward all students.
- Employ disciplinary measures that conform to the instructions of the mentor teacher(s).
- Treat the class as if it were your own.
- Be mindful of each student as an individual with special abilities, interests, and capacities for learning.
- Remain impartial in working with students and strive to be fair in judging their actions.
- Show respect toward all groups and individuals.

### **Commitment to the Mentor Teacher(s).**

- Mentor teachers are legally responsible for classes.
- Be loyal to your mentor teacher(s).
- Do not be judgmental of the teaching style(s) of your mentor teacher(s).
- Do not say anything negative regarding your mentor teacher(s) to students or other faculty and staff members.

- Be respectful of knowledge and experience of your mentor teacher(s).
- Accept the decisions of your mentor teacher(s) regarding curriculum and instruction.
- Strive to meet the expectations of the mentor teacher(s).
- Be open to suggestions from the mentor teacher(s).
- Be willing to assume teaching responsibility.
- Preview lesson plans with your mentor teacher(s) to receive positive feedback and correction.
- Give credit and appreciation to the mentor teacher(s) for assistance they have given you.

#### Associate Educator Agreement

- Student teachers may be hired and paid by Utah school districts at full pay. We do not allow student teachers to be paid less than full pay if they are working for the school district as teacher of record.
- This option is instigated by the school district, not the student teacher.
- If you have specific questions, please contact Sharla Hart via email at [sharla.hart@usu.edu](mailto:sharla.hart@usu.edu).

## **Mentor Teachers**

The mentor teacher facilitates the professional experiences of the student teacher and is an integral part of the student teaching experience.

Mentor teachers are provided a small honorarium at the end of the student teaching semester.

### **Responsibilities**

- Provide relevant experiences for USU students that may include, but are not limited to: observation, classroom activities, teacher responsibilities (all duties), parent/teacher conferences, and professional meetings.
- Evaluate whether the student teacher demonstrates adequate knowledge of the content being taught, and assess the student teacher's communication, management, planning, presentation, and assessment skills.
- Observe and critique the student teacher's performance on a frequent and continual basis.
- Support the student teacher in gradually assuming teaching responsibility.
- During the student teaching experience, complete the required formative observations as outlined below, and one summative evaluation.

### **Required Formative Observations and Feedback Forms**

#### **Elementary Mentor Teachers**

Most Elementary Education student teachers will work with one mentor teacher during the student teaching semester. Mentor teachers should plan on doing two formative observations and completing two Formative Feedback Forms during the placement. One summative evaluation will be completed during the last week of student teaching.

Elementary student teachers who are working towards dual endorsement will have one 10-week student teaching placement and 5-week placement with two mentor teachers. Each mentor teacher should complete one formative observation and one Formative Feedback Form. One summative evaluation will be completed by the mentor teacher at the semester. The 10-week placement allows a student teacher time to complete the PPAT in one classroom.

#### **Secondary Mentor Teachers**

Most Secondary Education student teachers will work with one Mentor Teacher. Mentor teachers should plan on doing two formative observations and completing two Formative Feedback Forms during the semester. One summative evaluation will be completed during the last week of student teaching.

Secondary student teachers who are working towards endorsement in both their major and their minor will have two student teaching placements and two mentor teachers. Each mentor teacher should complete two formative observations and two Formative Feedback Forms during the semester. One summative evaluation will be completed by each mentor teacher at the end of the student teaching experience.

[A detailed timeline for the student teaching semester can be found on the TEAL website.](#)

## University Supervisors

The primary role of the university supervisor is to serve as a liaison between the university and the school and to serve as an additional mentor and support to the student teacher during the student teaching experience.

University supervisors are given a small honorarium at the end of the semester and will be reimbursed mileage according to USU policies and procedures.

### Responsibilities

- Observe each student teacher and provide constructive criticism and positive feedback.
- Advise and coach student teachers when necessary.
- Advise the Director of Field Experiences or Department Chair of serious concerns with student teachers.

### Required Formative Observations and Feedback Forms

University supervisors should observe the student teacher four times and complete a Formative Feedback Form for each observation. A summative evaluation should be completed for each student teacher during the last week of the student teaching experience.

[A detailed timeline for the student teaching semester can be found on the TEAL website.](#)

## Evaluation Process

### Overview

The student teaching requires observation and feedback of the classroom experience. This necessitates the involvement of the student teacher, mentor teacher, and university supervisor in an ongoing process of evaluation. Mentor teachers and university supervisors should be open and honest in providing timely feedback to the student teacher. Classroom teaching observations are designed to assist in the growth and development of a student teacher. Student teachers will be observed a minimum of two times by the mentor teacher and four times by the university supervisor. A post-observation conference should be held at the end of each observation.

### Formative Evaluation

Mentor teachers and university supervisors routinely observe and provide informal feedback to student teachers throughout the student teaching semester. Documentation of observations and feedback is also required. The number of formative observations required of the mentor teacher and university supervisor is outlined in previous sections of the handbook.

Observations typically last 30-45 minutes. You may use the [electronic copy of the Formative Feedback Form](#) to document your observation. Download and save the formative Feedback Form to your desktop before you begin typing. Write a narrative of your observation. After the observation, score the candidate using the rubric that follows. Some criteria may be marked not scored if there was no evidence during the observation or during the consultation following that would support a particular score. Note that some items have already been designated as OBSERVATION items and some as CONSULTATION items. Please review the Formative Feedback Form and your observations with your student teacher. The student teacher is responsible for uploading the Formative Feedback Form to the student teaching CANVAS course in which they are enrolled. The Office of Field Experience reviews all Formative Feedback Forms during the semester. This formative feedback provides insight into student teacher's progress and allows us to provide additional supports if necessary.

### Summative Evaluation

Near the end of the student teaching experience, the university supervisor and mentor teacher should each complete a summative evaluation and review the results with the student teacher. The summative evaluation is a required document for graduation and licensure. In addition to the grading rubric, the university supervisor and mentor teacher written comments at the end of the evaluation can serve as a letter of recommendation. All summative evaluations must be signed by the student teacher and the evaluator in order for the student teacher to pass student teaching, graduate, and be recommended for licensure.

### Scoring

In order to pass student teaching, a score of 80% is required for each section of the UTC-PAES: The Learner and Learning, Instructional Practice, and Professional Responsibility. This translates to a total of 53/66 total points. Note that items 10.1 and 10.2 have point values of 0=no and 3=yes.

Ideally, a student should have a minimum total score of 53 to pass student teaching (with no ratings of zero for any criteria and no marks of NO for 10.1 and 10.2). Final decisions about passing student teaching are made by the Director of Field Experiences, in consultation, if necessary, with students' supervisors and mentor teachers.

### **Tiered Support for Student Teachers**

**Tier 1 Support**—One important skill student teachers begin to develop during the student teaching semester is the ability to navigate and contribute to school culture and develop positive, professional relationships with colleagues and supervisors. Student teachers may find that they are unsure of how to handle particular situations, have concerns about their placement or questions about student teaching responsibilities, or encounter a special circumstance that must be addressed. In these situations, student teachers should first discuss their concerns with their supervisor and/or mentor teacher(s). Supervisors and mentor teachers may support you by:

- Identifying resources within the school.
- Facilitating communication with a colleague or principal.
- Providing insight or suggestions for navigating situations and relationships.
- Making necessary accommodations.

**Tier 2 Support**—Occasionally, situations arise that need more direction or support from the Office of Field Experiences. Student teachers should use the [SOS](#) – Tier 2 protocol to initiate a coaching/collaboration meeting with the Director of Field Experience. Mentor teachers and supervisors may also use this protocol. The required forms for the SOS – Tier 2 protocol can be found on the TEAL website.

### **Tier 3 Support - Students at Risk of Failure**

On occasion, student teachers may have insufficient instructional or classroom management skills, or lack the professional attributes or behaviors necessary for professional educators. When this occurs the mentor teacher(s), university supervisor, and director must decide whether a student teacher should continue in or pass the student teaching experience. The procedures outlined in the *Students at Risk of Failure* policy are designed to help the student teacher, mentor teacher(s), and university personnel in this process.

### **Early Termination of Student Teaching**

Student teaching placement and/or participation in the student teaching program may be terminated for cause by the building principal, school district human resources officer, or the Director of Field Experience for serious violations of law, school district or university policies, or for gross insubordination. Before termination occurs, every effort will be made to allow the student teacher/intern to correct the situation. It is the intent of the teacher education program to create a condition wherein each USU student can experience success; however, each student must accept responsibility for his or her own performance and conduct. A student teacher may be offered a second placement if the Director of Field Experience deems it appropriate.

### **Assumption of Risk**

All classes, programs, and extracurricular activities within the University involve some risk, and certain ones involve travel. The University provides opportunities to participate in these programs on a voluntary basis. Therefore, students should not participate in them if they do not care to assume the risks. Students can ask the respective program leaders/sponsors about the possible risks a program may generate, and if students are not willing to assume the risks, they should not select that program. By voluntarily participating in classes, programs, and extracurricular activities, a student does so at his or her own risk. General information about University Risk Management policies, insurance coverage, vehicle use policies, and risk management forms can be found at <http://www.usu.edu/riskmgmt/>.

Important Resources – (links found online at [https://teal.usu.edu/undergrad/ofe\\_eled/student\\_teacher\\_eled\\_page](https://teal.usu.edu/undergrad/ofe_eled/student_teacher_eled_page))

Student Teaching Responsibility Checklist

Student Teaching Formative Feedback Form

Utah Effective Teaching Standards

Utah Teacher Candidate Performance Assessment and Evaluation System Rubric

SOS – Tier 2 Protocol

Students at Risk of Failure Policy