

# A GUIDE FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS





Dear Cooperating Teacher,

Thank you for serving as a mentor to our teacher candidates and interns during the field experience portion of their program. The real world experiences that you offer are indeed an important component to the professional growth of our candidates. Through positive mentoring experiences, it is our hope that our candidates will develop into educational leaders that positively impact learning in the school community.

This booklet is being provided as a mentoring reference for outlining responsibilities of all team members who are assigned to the candidate for field experience. The university supervisor assigned to your candidate will be providing you with more specific responsibilities as mandated by the candidates program of study. Feel free to contact the supervisor or our office with questions that you may have regarding the field experience. You will find our contact information below.

The mission statement of the University of West Georgia's College of Education reflects the commitment we as a team have to preparing our candidates for teaching:

*"Locally connected and globally relevant, the Mission of the College of Education is to prepare graduates for meaningful careers in diverse settings. Spanning undergraduate through doctoral study, we are committed to depth of knowledge and excellence in teaching, professional practice, and applied research."*

Have a great semester!

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## Terms used throughout:

- *Cooperating Teacher (CT)* - The on-site host teacher
- *Teacher Candidate* – The university student enrolled in the College of Education in the practicum phase of the program
- *Intern* – The university student enrolled in the College of Education in the final phase (semester) of the program
- *University Supervisor* – A faculty member from the university who monitors the progress of the student throughout the semester
- *Candidate Assessment on Performance Standards (CAPS)* – The instrument used for summative assessment of the teacher candidate/ intern
- *Professional Growth Plan (PGP)* – A plan devised by faculty and student to identify areas for concern and to outline expectations for improvement
- *TK20* – The electronic platform used by the College of Education to house evaluative data



## **PREPARING for a Teacher Candidate or Intern**

### **The Role of the Cooperating Teacher:**

- Serve as a positive role model.
- Maintain open communication necessary for productive teamwork.
- Complete a planning and teaching schedule with the teacher candidate early in the experience.
- Share manuals & resources that will help the candidate become familiar with the curriculum.
- Review lesson plans and provide feedback prior to the teaching of lessons.
- Observe and evaluate various lessons taught by the teacher candidate. The form is housed on TK20.
- Complete a midterm and final CAPS on TK20.
- Assist the teacher candidate in:
  - ▶ Understanding the comprehensive duties of a teacher
  - ▶ Becoming acquainted with the diversity of the learners in the classroom and planning instruction to meet their needs
  - ▶ Learning about the school facilities
  - ▶ Becoming involved in curricular and professional activities
  - ▶ Developing an individual teaching style
  - ▶ Making short and long range plans
  - ▶ Developing lessons and activities
  - ▶ Enhancing their creativity and originality
- Communicate at the conclusion of each field experience day with the teacher candidate.
- Communicate with the university supervisor on a regular basis.
- Communicate with the university supervisor immediately if questions or concerns arise.
- Please note that teacher candidates may not be left unsupervised with students.

## The Role of the Teacher Candidate/Intern:

- Assist, but not assume full responsibility for such teaching activities as:
  - ▶ Conducting recess activities
  - ▶ Supervising and planning playground activities
  - ▶ Working with individuals, small groups, and the large group
  - ▶ Participating in art and music activities
  - ▶ Developing bulletin boards, learning centers, and hands-on instructional materials, etc.
  - ▶ Assisting with evaluation procedures
  - ▶ Assisting with field trips and special events
  - ▶ Developing appropriate classroom management techniques
  - ▶ Evaluating and interacting with students in their use of technology
- Assist with clerical or routine activities such as:
  - ▶ Recording grades or scores
  - ▶ Checking student work
  - ▶ Preparing materials
- Participate in professional activities such as (when appropriate or feasible):
  - ▶ Attending faculty meetings
  - ▶ Attending grade level planning meetings
  - ▶ Observing and/or participating in conferences with parents
  - ▶ Attending school-community activities
  - ▶ Discussing specific professional concerns with cooperating teachers
  - ▶ Attending conferences concerning student placement
- Maintain their portfolio
- Plan, formulate, and teach the number of lessons as required by the program of study.  
Collaborate with the cooperating teacher when planning lessons.



### **Preparing the Class:**

- Announce the impending arrival of the teacher candidate/intern
- Describe the purpose of the candidate's experience
- Inform students of expectations of proper respect to be given to the candidate
- Encourage the candidate to visit the school/class at least once prior to the start of the experience so that introductions can be made

### **Suggested materials/information to share with the Teacher**

#### **Candidate/Intern on the first day of reporting:**

- Class Schedule
- Class List (first names are acceptable)
- Seating Chart (if applicable)
- Behavior Management Plan
- Emergency Alerts and Protocols for fire, inclement weather, lock down, etc.
- Contact information
- Schoolwide responsibilities and duties



# ENGAGING the Teacher Candidate/Intern

## Initial Non-Instructional Activities:

- Checking attendance
- Grading assignments
- Assisting with seatwork
- Assisting with technology related projects
- Working with small groups
- Gathering resources/materials
- Reading aloud
- Creating/assisting with displays

## Initial Instructional Activities:

- Allow time for observation
- Have candidate/intern teach a modeled lesson (2nd period)
- Co-planning
- Co-teaching

## Building a Positive Working Relationship

### *Effective Practices:*

- Be available
- Share expectations early
- Be realistic with expectations – candidate is in the learning phase
- Provide encouragement
- Provide honest and timely feedback
- Share helpful information about the students in the classroom
- Assist early with planning
- Share behavior management tips
- Assist with time management
- Be flexible and a positive role model



## COACHING the Teacher Candidate/Intern

### Lesson Planning and Observation

- Questions to ask the teacher candidate/intern and the university supervisor:
  1. How many lessons are required to be taught for the semester?
  2. What lesson planning format will be used?
  3. How far in advance of teaching the lesson will I receive a copy of the lesson plan for preview?
  4. What form should be used for lesson feedback/observation?
- If possible, meet with candidate prior to the first observation to define expectations.

#### *Possible questions:*

1. What is your plan for engaging students at the start of the lesson?
  2. Do you have a plan in place for managing materials?
  3. Do you have a plan in place for disruptive behaviors?
  4. How will you meet the needs of varied learners?
  5. How will you informally check for student understanding throughout the lesson?
- Always be mindful of the 10 standards on CAPS (see Teacher Keys Effectiveness System flip booklet) as you are observing a lesson. Choose one or two of the standards to focus on with each lesson observation. This will allow you to be more intentional with your ratings at the end of the semester.

- Schedule a time after each observation to conference with the candidate regarding the lesson. Possible questions/focus areas:
  - Allow the student to reflect on the positives and negatives from his/her point of view prior to sharing your observation.
  - Tie your comments to the observation document and or Intern Keys standards.
  - Ask – What are your follow up plans for the lesson? How will you remediate “Johnny” who exhibited a lack of understanding throughout your lesson?
  - Do you feel as if you promoted higher level thinking with your questioning? In what way?
  - Was your lesson student focused or teacher directed, etc.?
  - Behavior management
  - Assessment
  
- Assist the teacher candidate/intern with goal setting for subsequent lessons.

## **EVALUATING the Teacher Candidate or Intern**

### **University and Professional Standards Commission Policies and Evaluative Measures**

- Admission to the Teacher Preparation Program – All candidates must pass the Georgia Assessment for the Certification of Educators Basic Skills and GPA that meets the criteria for admission to the teacher preparation program. They must also complete an application for a Pre-Service Teacher Certificate which is issued by the Professional Standards Commission. Criteria for issuance of the certificate includes a Criminal Background Check which is deemed “clear”.
- Liability of teacher candidates/interns – All admissions to teacher preparation programs must obtain personal liability insurance prior to reporting to a site to complete a field experience.
- FERPA – All teacher candidates/interns have protected rights for privacy of personal information under the Family Education Rights Protection Act (FERPA). This private information includes evaluation records. Discussions regarding evaluations should be limited to the appropriate college personnel and the teacher candidate/intern. Disclosure to parents, non-essential colleagues, and hiring authorities is not advised unless consent has been provided by the teacher candidate/intern.
- Due Process – Due process procedures are in place to protect the candidate/intern and the university insuring that proper steps have been taken to clearly define responsibilities. These steps include such things as student orientations, written defined expectations and requirements for program completion, evidence of conferencing for professional growth and follow-up as the experience progresses. University supervisors and cooperating teachers are reminded that the importance of documentation is of the utmost importance. In ethical or legal situations, the school administrator, university supervisor, and the director of Field Experiences should be contacted immediately.

- Substitute Teaching – At no time is a teacher candidate/intern allowed to substitute teach during assigned hours of field experience. Legal ramifications of potential adverse situations arising prevent candidates/interns from teaching in this manner.
- Mid Term/End of Semester Evaluations – All candidates in teacher preparation programs are evaluated using CAPS (Candidate Assessment on Performance Standards), formerly named Intern Keys. CAPS is identical to TAPS (Teacher Assessment of Performance Standards) using the same ten standards for summative evaluation. These standards should be reviewed with candidates/interns at mid-term and at the end of the semester. The formal document is completed at semester end by the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. Ratings on CAPS should RARELY and possibly “Never” reflect higher than a 3 rating, which represents a score of “Proficient”. A rating of 4 is used in describing a teacher at the “Exemplary” level who “continually seeks ways to serve as a role model or teacher leader”. Candidates should be rated with the same expectations of a teacher currently working in the field.
- Dispositions Rubric – Professional dispositions are an important measure of readiness for the profession of teaching. Dispositions such as respect, responsibility, flexibility, collaboration, etc. are measured each semester throughout the candidate’s/intern’s program of study. This rubric is to be completed by the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor at the end of the semester.



# Concerns Regarding Performance and/or Professional Dispositions

Teacher candidates/interns may encounter difficulties throughout field experiences. Those in the earlier stages of the program will most likely need more guidance as they are learning to navigate the field of teaching. In any case, documentation and communication with the university supervisor and student is critical to the improvement of the noted concerns. Below, protocol for concerns with leveled candidates is outlined.

- **Teacher Candidate:**
  - Conference with the candidate regarding the documented concern. Give suggestions for ways to improve and set goals with the candidate. Notify the university supervisor of the concern.
  - If no improvement is observed, contact the university supervisor. Have the US schedule a conference with you and the candidate in attendance to address lack of growth. A Professional Growth Plan may be administered by the US at this time. Expectations, goals must be documented.
  - If no improvement is noted, contact the university supervisor immediately.
  
- **Intern:**
  - At the start of the semester, question the intern regarding areas of weakness or insecurities that he/she may have in the classroom. Discuss strategies to improve.
  - Concerns that arise should be discussed in conference with the university supervisor present if possible. Document goals for improvement and a timeline for evidence of improvement.
  - If no improvement is observed, contact the US immediately. The US will review all previous documentation of concerns and consult with the university program coordinator for next

steps.

\*\* As stated in the Memorandum of Understanding for Candidates/Interns and for School Partners:

*"The School System and/or the university may remove any UWG student from a field experience at any time if deemed necessary to the health, safety, and well-being of its students."*

At the start of the semester, each candidate/intern signs the following document which outlines expectations of professionalism while in the field:

# Memorandum of Understanding: Office of Field Experiences Yes/No Quiz

## Educator Preparation Handbook

- I understand that it is my responsibility to read and be familiar with the Educator Preparation Handbook for Field Experiences &/or Internship that is located on the OFE website [www.westga.edu/ofe/index.php](http://www.westga.edu/ofe/index.php)

## Active Engagement

- I understand that I must be active and alert at all times. I understand that I am a guest in the school so I need to be friendly as well as an active participant in the classroom. I need to volunteer to help whenever I can. I understand that I need to avoid sitting in the back of the classroom observing.

## Contract Hours of School

- I understand that I must report to the school during contract hours for teachers. I may come earlier and stay later if I choose. I understand that I must assume the responsibilities of the cooperating teacher as assigned by my program.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to know the contract hours of my school each semester.
- I understand that I cannot “bank” field placement hours in anticipation of days I will be absent.
- I understand that I cannot leave my placement early for outside work purposes or lay coaching duties.

## Professional Dress

- I understand that I must dress professionally as defined by the school system in which I am assigned.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to obtain a copy of the school system’s dress code policy for faculty and staff and that I am to print a copy to be placed in my field experience notebook/binder for reference.

## **Zero Tolerances**

- I understand that having knives, guns, or anything that might be used as a weapon in my vehicle or on my person is prohibited. I understand that drugs, alcohol, and tobacco are prohibited.

## **Confidentiality**

- I understand that I will avoid discussing teachers, students, peers, administrators, or anyone else connected with my school unless it is for professional purposes.
- I understand that I will not use social media to discuss my field experience either positive or negative.

## **Technology**

- I understand that I will not use:
  - \*Social media to contact students, parents, or teachers.
  - \*Technology such as cell phone, computer, ipad, etc., unless it is related to student learning while at my school site.
- I understand that I will leave my cell phone, computer, ipad, etc., in my purse, backpack, tote, etc. during contract hours.
- I understand that my social media accounts are representative of me as a professional Pre-Service Teacher – otherwise my account will not be made for public access.

## **Sarcasm and Profanity**

- I understand that I will not use sarcasm or profanity.

## **Attendance**

- I will adhere to the Office of Field Experiences Attendance Policy. I have read this policy which is located in the student handbook and on the CourseDen homepage.

### **Dispositions and the Georgia Code of Ethics**

- I understand that I must abide by the Georgia Code of Ethics. I have read and am familiar with them. I understand they are located on the CourseDen homepage, student handbook, and at this link: <http://www.gapsc.com/Ethics/NEthics.asp>

### **Professional Development Opportunities, Conference and Interviews**

- I understand that I must follow my program of study's policies regarding attendance at staff development (and faculty meetings), job fairs, interviews, etc.
- I understand that I must not conduct or lead parent conferences (either face to face or via phone) alone and that I must have my cooperating teacher in attendance.

### **Substitute Teaching**

- I understand that I may NOT be used as a substitute teacher. I understand that I may be asked to teach when the teacher is absent but the assigned school substitute must be present.
- I understand that if I have questions or concerns, I must contact my university supervisor.

### **University Supervisor**

- I understand that it is my responsibility to contact (in this order) my cooperating teacher, university supervisor, and school immediately if I am going to be absent.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to schedule makeup days with my university supervisor in conjunction with my cooperating teacher the day after I return from my absence.
- I understand that I must contact my university supervisor if I have instructional problems  
or school related emergencies.
- I understand that if a parent wishes to meet with me, I must have my university supervisor and cooperating teacher in attendance.

### **Transportation**

- I understand that I am responsible for obtaining my transportation or making my own travel arrangements to the assigned field experiences throughout the program.
- I understand that I cannot transport students in my personal vehicle.

### **Leaving Campus During Contract Hours**

- I understand that I cannot leave campus during contract hours for personal reasons or to run personal or professional errands for my cooperating teacher or peers.

### **Documentation of Attendance**

- I understand that I must use the electronic school sign in system to document my contract hours. If an electronic system is not available, I understand that I must sign an attendance log in the main office.

News Alerts, Inclement Weather, and other Announcements.

- I understand it is my responsibility to keep informed about current issues with my field placement and not rely on peers, supervisors, or others to guide me.

### **Instructional Planning**

- I understand that I must plan and provide lesson plans to my cooperating teacher and university supervisor as specified by my program.

### **Calendar**

- I understand that Interns follow the calendar of the school district and that all other field placements will follow the UWG calendar.

### **Corporal Punishment**

- I understand that I am not allowed to administer corporal punishment.

### **Professional Growth Plans**

- I understand that if I do not adhere to the policies, regulations, and dispositions set by the COE's Office of Field Experiences and my program, I will be placed on a Professional Growth Plan that may lead to my removal from my field placement.
- I understand that the School System and/or the university may remove any UWG student from a field experience at any time if deemed necessary to the health, safety, and well-being of its students.

**Answer:** All "Yes"

### **COMPLIANCE OF SELF-REPORTING**

By marking "True/I Agree", I am agreeing to the following statement:

- **I understand and agree to report in writing to the Director of Field Experiences IMMEDIATELY if I am the subject of a pending investigation involving a criminal act. I understand that failure to immediately report any of these circumstances may result in dismissal from the Teacher Education Program.**

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_





## TK20

All evaluative documents are housed in the university's electronic platform named TK20. The following documents will be made available to the cooperating teacher at the start of the semester through this system.

- Lesson Observation forms
- CAPS (Candidate Assessment on Performance Standards)
- Candidate Dispositions Rubric
- Evaluation of the University Supervisor

(Forms may vary by program of study)

It is important that the CT completes these documents in the TK20 system as the data is used for program and unit improvement. The CT will receive an email at the start of the semester from ofe@westga.edu that will have the direct link for accessing the documents in TK20. By clicking on the link, the binder (documents) should open for the assigned teacher candidate/intern. If not, call or email the Office of Field Experiences.

Office of Field Experiences:

- Brittany Freeman – bmosely@westga.edu, 678-839-5162
- Helen Chambers – hchamber@westga.edu, 678-839-6102



