



PITT-GREENSBURG

TEACH

Pre-Student Teaching

and

Student Teaching

Handbook

PREFACE

The University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg Education Department considers the student teaching experience to be one of the most important components of the teacher preparation program. During the student teaching term, candidates for teaching certification can work under the guidance of experienced teachers and University supervisors toward integrating their understanding of the teaching/learning process and toward demonstrating proficiency in the competencies required to teach and manage a classroom of learners. The student teaching program provides a structure for future teachers to apply the learning they have acquired over several years of study and experience, and to further develop their abilities to become reflective and exemplary educators.

We believe that a successful student teaching program must have guidelines to provide organization and continuity for the individuals involved in the program. The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a guide and a source of information for all parties participating in the student teaching program at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg. The handbook is divided into six sections: (1) The Scope of the Program, (2) Policies and Procedures, (3) Student Teaching Expectations, Goals, and Outcomes, (4) The Cooperating Teacher, (5) The Administrative Personnel at the Student Teaching Site, and (6) University Supervisors. The Appendices contain copies of the various forms referred to in the handbook.

This handbook was written to be specific enough to provide practical guidance to all student teaching participants while being general enough to allow flexibility within the various programs. The handbook was designed to be used by persons in both the Early Childhood and Secondary student teaching programs.

PITT-GREENSBURG EDUCATION DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

(Updated 2022)

The mission of the education program at Pitt-Greensburg is to prepare highly skilled, flexible, and knowledgeable teachers capable of empowering their diverse students to think critically and master the challenges of an increasingly technological and global society.

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[Time Log \(Pre-Student and Student Teaching\)](#)

[Weekly Report Form \(Pre-Student and Student Teaching\)](#)

QUICK REFERENCE

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF:

- SITUATION:** Illness, family emergency, funeral, etc.
TELEPHONE: Cooperating Teacher, University supervisor, School Office
- SITUATION:** Change in daily school schedule (for example, special assemblies or standardized testing)
TELEPHONE: University supervisor immediately and Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification.
- SITUATION:** In-Service Day, Back-to-School Night, Parent Conferences, Field Trips
ACTION: Attend with cooperating teacher if school permits
TELEPHONE: University supervisor
- SITUATION:** Faculty strike
TELEPHONE: University supervisor and Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification.
- SITUATION:** Inclement weather
ACTION: Listen to designated radio or TV reports which announce whether the school is open, closed or delayed. Confirm with cooperating teacher.
- SITUATION:** Emergency at the school: Evacuation, lock down etc.
ACTION: Follow the school emergency procedure.
TELEPHONE: Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND EMAILS:

Coordinator of Field Experiences: _____

University Supervisor: _____

Cooperating Teacher 1: _____

Cooperating Teacher 2: _____

School Office #1: _____

School Office #2: _____

Note: ALWAYS check with the cooperating teacher and university supervisor regarding proper procedure and whether they wish to have students telephone them at home.

THE SCOPE OF THE STUDENT TEACHING PROGRAM

A. ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND FIELD EXPERIENCES LEADING TO STUDENT TEACHING

1. Introduction

The Education Department of the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg has designed its programs to meet and exceed the standards for each certification specialty area as outlined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and by appropriate professional associations. Prior to pre-student teaching and student teaching, a candidate completes a sequence of courses designed to prepare him/her for the intensive nature of the classroom experiences required during student teaching. Many of the preparatory courses include field experiences in local school classrooms. Prior to beginning any field experiences, background checks are required: Department of Human Services Child Abuse History Clearance, Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Records Check, Federal Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) and Mandatory Child Abuse Training/Act 26. Additionally, a candidate must submit a negative tuberculosis test to the Education Department.

2. Freshman and Sophomore Years

During the freshman and sophomore years, pre-education majors complete the following courses related to Education: Social Foundations of Education; Developmental Psychology; Educational Psychology; Strategies and Techniques of Instruction; and Early Field Experience. In Social Foundations of Education, students participate in a field experience that includes classroom observations and reflections on those observations. Strategies and Techniques of Instruction includes a field experience with either middle school or high school students (Secondary Education) or Pre-Kindergarten through grade 4 students (Early Childhood Education) in which the pre-education majors tutor or teach small groups of students under expert supervision within one of the programs offered in collaboration with area schools. In Early Field, pre-education majors are involved in two 15-hour placements; when possible, the placements are representative of two different age groups that the Pre-Education Majors may instruct. For example, secondary pre-education majors would be placed in one middle school placement and one high school placement; early childhood pre-education students would be placed in one K-1 classroom and one 2-4 classroom); Special Education pre-education majors will be placed into classrooms representing two different levels of need and/or different ages; and Spanish pre-education majors will be placed into different grade levels. All Education majors also take Exceptional Learners in the Classroom I (I&L 1060) during the sophomore year, which includes a 10-hour practicum.

Note: *The Early Childhood majors take Early Field at the beginning of the junior year.*

3. Junior and Senior Years

Sophomores who meet several specific requirements are admitted to the upper-level education program and complete a set of courses and sequential field practicum during their junior and senior years. Each practicum is linked with specific courses for which the student is registered that term. Each practicum also has scheduled class meetings designed to guide students toward achieving effective learning from their observations and active participation in the classroom.

Early Childhood majors complete four (4) practicum experiences in three successive semesters prior to student teaching. The first of these courses is an Early Field Experience during which ECE majors complete 30 hours between two different placements. The second practicum requires 30 hours and links Language Arts and Mathematics Methods courses with an in-the-field Pedagogy Lab. These courses are planned by a professor and a classroom teacher in tandem so that the most effective teaching techniques are observed and the greatest amount of transfer of learning occurs.

Concurrently, the ECE majors complete 30 hours in an early childhood setting as part of the Engaging Young Learners course, including infants/toddlers (15) and preschoolers

(15). The fourth course, Pre-student Teaching (60 hours), occurs in the classroom in which the teacher candidate will student teach. During this course, the teacher candidate will move from observing the class to assisting the teacher so that when student teaching begins, the transition is seamless.

Secondary Education majors complete two in-depth practicum experiences during the two terms prior to student teaching (Methods and Pre-Student Teaching). The first is a set of courses linking discipline specific methods (e.g., Social Studies Methods, Math Methods, etc.) with an in-the-field pedagogy lab (30 hours). These courses are planned by a professor and a classroom teacher in tandem so that the most effective teaching techniques are observed and the greatest amount of transfer of learning occurs. The second course, pre-student teaching (60 hours), occurs in the classroom in which the teacher candidate will student teach. During this second course, the teacher candidate will move from observing the class to assisting the teacher so that when student teaching begins, the transition is seamless.

PK-12 Spanish Education majors complete two in-depth practicum experiences during the two terms prior to student teaching (Methods and Pre-Student Teaching). The first is a set of courses linking Spanish Methods with an in-the-field pedagogy lab (30 hours). When possible, this pedagogy lab is split between elementary Spanish and high school Spanish classrooms. These courses are planned by a professor and a classroom teacher in tandem so that the most effective teaching techniques are observed and the greatest amount of transfer of learning occurs. The second course, pre-student teaching (60 hours), occurs in the classroom in which the teacher candidate will student teach. During this second course, the teacher candidate will move from observing the class to assisting the teacher so that when student teaching begins, the transition is seamless.

Special Education majors PK-12 Spanish Education majors complete two in-depth practicum experiences during the two terms prior to student teaching (Methods and Pre-Student Teaching). The first is a set of courses linking math and language arts methods courses with an in-the-field pedagogy lab (30 hours). When possible, this pedagogy lab is split between language arts and mathematics to students with special needs. These courses are planned by a professor and a classroom teacher in tandem so that the most effective teaching techniques are observed and the greatest amount of transfer of learning occurs. The second course, pre-student teaching (60 hours), occurs in the classroom in which the teacher candidate will student teach. During this second course, the teacher candidate will move from observing the class to assisting the teacher so that when student teaching begins, the transition is seamless.

4. Student Teaching Term

The culminating experience for each certification program is the student teaching term wherein students earn a total of 12 academic credits for full-time participation in area classrooms under the supervision of experienced teachers and university supervisors. Students also attend a one-credit "Student Teaching Seminar" designed to further develop the transition to professional teaching. The seminar is offered after 5:00 p.m. Student teachers need to be given sufficient time at the end of the appropriate day to attend the seminar class on campus.

B. STUDENT TEACHING TERMINOLOGY

The following terms and their definitions may provide clarification, as needed, for the professional vocabulary used for the student teaching experience:

Student Teacher Candidate: The University student who is enrolled for the professional term.

Pre-Student Teaching: 60 hours of observation and participation in the same classroom where student teacher candidates will student teach.

Student Teaching Experience: A full term of guided teaching during which the student teacher candidate takes increasing responsibility for classroom/schoolwork with a given group of learners in a cooperating school district.

Student Teaching Abroad: Students may opt to complete 7 weeks of their student teaching experience abroad. However, pre-student teaching remains the same.

Cooperating Teacher: The certified, experienced teacher of students in grades K-12 who cooperates with the University in supervising student teaching, in communicating the student teacher candidate's progress to the candidate and to the University Supervisor throughout the term, and in providing a recommended grade and evaluation for the student teacher at mid-term and the conclusion of the term.

In the secondary academic program, cooperating teachers are also responsible for scheduling the distribution of their student teacher candidate's time between their own classroom and the classrooms of other cooperating teachers, and for arranging observation and/or participation in co-curricular activities.

Student Teaching Site: A school that is not controlled or supported by the University but that provides facilities for student teaching as an established center determined by university personnel and school district administrators.

University Supervisor: The University representative is responsible for supervising a student teacher candidate or a group of student teacher candidates, for communicating with student teachers and their cooperating teachers about the candidates' progress throughout the term, and for recommending a midterm and final grade for student teacher candidates in conjunction with the mentor teacher. Additionally, the university supervisor completes the PDE-430 Evaluation for the student teacher candidate.

Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification: The University faculty member who is responsible for coordinating all field experience work, including arrangements for student teaching, and who ensures that students follow the mandates of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The Director of Field Placement and Certification will also verify certification through the TIMS system.

C. **STUDENT TEACHING CALENDAR**

In both the fall and spring terms, the beginning of student teaching coincides with the beginning of the University term or when the school district term begins if that occurs after the University's opening date. Student teacher candidates who student teach in the fall term are strongly encouraged to begin student teaching on the first day of the placement school's term. Student teacher candidates have the responsibility of contacting the cooperating teachers for specific beginning dates.

Student teacher candidates follow the calendar of the student teaching site in which they are placed. They are expected to participate in all planned events during the term, including open house, in-service days, departmental meetings, parent conferences, IEP meetings, and similar activities unless explicitly told not to attend by the cooperating teacher or a school administrator.

II. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

The first obligation of the student teacher candidate is to fulfill as effectively as possible every role of the teacher. The student is urged to participate as fully as possible in the activities of the host school, including after-school activities. Student teaching is the culminating activity of the Teacher Education Program and is a full-time responsibility. The student teacher candidate's actions impact not only upon the candidate, but also upon the pupils, the cooperating teacher, the cooperating school, and Pitt-Greensburg. **Therefore, the student teaching experience must take precedence over all other commitments.**

B. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR STUDENT TEACHING

Student teachers serve as representatives of Pitt-Greensburg. The Education Department is committed to maintaining positive relationships with area school districts. Therefore, student teacher candidates are expected to act as ambassadors for Pitt-Greensburg and conduct and perform in a way that will not only demonstrate exemplary skills, but also attest to the quality of the University.

The following professional ethics policies apply to student teaching as well as to all types of pre-student teaching field experiences. Students who violate any of these policies may be asked to withdraw from student teaching, and they may be ineligible for application for certification.

- University students are eligible to participate in student teaching only after they have submitted updated copies of background clearances (Criminal, Child Abuse, FBI and TB) to the Education Department.
- Student teachers must maintain the confidentiality of any privileged, sensitive, and/or confidential information gained directly from a member of the school staff or indirectly through any other means.
- Student teachers may not make critical mention of the name of any student, teacher, administrator, or other staff member in class discussions or in any other venue.
- Student teachers may not use the name of any school student in any written assignment.
- Student teachers are required to follow the absence and punctuality policy included within this Student Teaching Handbook.
- Student teachers must promptly return any materials that belong to their cooperating teachers or to the school.
- Student teachers must follow the Department's "Recommendations for Professional Appearance for the Observation Experience, Directed Tutoring, Pre-Student Teaching Practicum, and Student Teaching," included within this Student Teaching Handbook.
- Students must be rated as proficient on the Pitt-Greensburg Disposition Rubric (see Appendix A)

C. REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION TO PRE-STUDENT TEACHING/STUDENT TEACHING

As specified in more detail in the Education Department Handbook, Pitt-Greensburg students must meet the following requirements before being permitted to pre-student teach and student teach:

- (1) Submission of student teaching application by stated deadline
- (2) Successful completion of all selected courses with minimum B- grades
- (3) Successful completion of all required methods courses and field experience courses
- (4) Completion of 75% specialty area courses (Secondary Education only)
- (5) Completion of a minimum of 90 credits
- (6) Cumulative QPA of at least 3.000
- (7) QPA in the Major of at least 2.750
- (8) Submission of current PA Background Clearance, Child Abuse Clearance, Federal Criminal History Record (FBI), and Mandated Reporter Training and TB test results
- (9) Passing score on the Education Department oral language screening
- (10) Demonstration of positive performance in pre-student teaching and academic field experiences
- (11) Pass all three modules of the Basic Skills Assessment

D. STUDENT TEACHING PLACEMENT

Each term, the Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification arranges for student teaching

placements in area schools after consultation with university supervisors and/or other Education Department faculty.

In the initial contact, the schools receive information about the dates of the student teaching term and the number and types of placements desired in those schools. Cooperating teachers are selected within the schools based on the criteria outlined in Part V of this handbook. Careful professional judgment is exercised in the placement of student teachers.

Student teachers complete either one 15-week student teaching placement or two placements (7 and 8 weeks) if student teaching abroad. Students pursuing more than one area of certification may be placed in more than one classroom; they also may be required to extend the length of their student teaching term.

The Education Department determines all student teaching sites; students are not granted permission to student teach in a site that has not been established by the University. Student teachers generally are not assigned to the school district from which they graduated nor are they assigned to a district where they have relatives employed or children attending the school.

E. ATTENDANCE AND TRANSPORTATION ABSENCES

The student teacher candidate is responsible for the full teaching day. Each candidate reports to the school when the cooperating teacher is required to report and is to remain until the end of the scheduled day (the same schedule as the cooperating teacher). Because of the value of this professional experience, student teacher candidates are encouraged to attend parent-teacher conferences, workshops, faculty meetings, and other professional activities if permitted by the building administration. Any variation in the schedule must be agreed upon by the cooperating teacher, the school, and the university supervisor.

In addition, each candidate is required to attend a professional seminar which is conducted concurrently with pre-student teaching and student teaching. The seminar is conducted by a university professor or supervisor and is designed to consider practical problems encountered while teaching and to guide students through the process of gaining certification. Attendance and participation in the seminar are factors in the candidate's final grade for student teaching.

During the student teaching term, student teacher candidates are permitted two absences for professional purposes such as participation in job fairs, scheduled interviews, competency exams, and similar types of events without having those two days added to the student teaching term. It is not permitted, however, to take these two days' absence for personal reasons; missed days must be documented.

ALL ABSENCES FROM STUDENT TEACHING IN EXCESS OF TWO DAYS MUST BE MADE-UP BY THE STUDENT TEACHER CANDIDATE AT THE END OF THE 15-WEEK UNIVERSITY TERM.

Arrangements for such make-up days must be made with the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher. Student teaching grades and credits will be withheld until the makeup arrangement is fulfilled.

PUNCTUALITY

Student teacher candidates are expected to observe the same rules regarding punctuality which apply to cooperating teachers. The cooperating teacher and university supervisor will keep a record of lateness. It is the responsibility of the student teacher candidate to report lateness to the university supervisor.

The cooperating teacher should report any lateness to the University Supervisor.

CALENDAR AND VACATIONS

Student teacher candidates follow the calendar of the host school to which they are assigned.

TRANSPORTATION

Student teacher candidates are responsible for arranging transportation to and from the assigned school.

Student teacher candidates must not transport school pupils in any vehicle for any reason. This stipulation includes field trips and other activities.

F. EMERGENCY TEACHING

In cases where cooperating teachers need to leave their classrooms for a brief period, student teachers may assume responsibility for continuing the pupils' educational program.

Nevertheless, student teachers may not be used as substitute teachers. The school district must provide approved substitute teachers in the event of cooperating teachers' absences from school. In situations where cooperating teachers receive a request to take charge of a classroom due to an emergency, student teachers may only assume responsibility for the cooperating teachers' classrooms if supervised by another approved teacher or substitute teacher. Nevertheless, in all situations, professional teachers are responsible for students in the classrooms.

G. PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

The faculty members of the Education Department offer recommendations for professional appearance listed below. Student teacher candidates need to be aware that clothing considered appropriate and "stylish" for social events may not always be appropriate in school settings where professional dress styles are expected. In the student teaching site, candidates are invited guests and representatives of the Education Department. Through their dress and behavior, they are expected to convey a sense of dignity and respect for themselves and for all others in the school.

1. Professional personnel are clean and well-groomed with hairstyles that do not cause a disruption to the educational process.
2. Appropriate dress may include the following: dress shirts, ties, clean dress shoes, sport jackets and blazers, dress pants, dresses, pant suits, skirts, blouses, and sweaters. Appropriate dress would **exclude** jeans, sweatshirts, sneakers, T-shirts, and tank tops.
3. For all schools, professional attire excludes clothing that is excessively tight or revealing, bare midriffs, yoga pants or excessively short skirts.
4. Some schools object to jewelry that is worn in excessive amounts, that impedes diction (e.g., tongue piercing), that distracts students by the noise that it makes or by its placement (e.g., eyebrow piercing), or that causes a disruption to the educational process in any other way.
5. Most schools object to visible tattoos. Student teacher candidates who have tattoos are advised to make them as unobtrusive as possible.

H. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Candidates with disabilities who require academic or environmental accommodations should notify both the Director of Learning Resources Center and the Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification prior to or during the student teaching application period. Students will be expected to provide the Director of Learning Resources Center with appropriate documentation of their disabilities.

The Education Department will make every effort to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities during their student teaching experience. Whether the disability can be accommodated in a student teaching situation will depend on the nature of the disability, as inherent in the role of the teacher is the ability to adequately manage an entire classroom, to control off-task behavior, and to react quickly and appropriately to students' actions and questions. All student teacher candidates must demonstrate that they can perform acts of instruction and classroom management both reflectively and spontaneously in a satisfactory manner.

I. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Cooperating teachers and principals who believe a student teacher candidate has behaved in an inappropriate manner should contact the university supervisor immediately. The University's Dispositions Policy will be utilized to address the concern. The supervisor in conjunction with the Director of Field Placement and Certification, will assist the cooperating teacher and principal in addressing the matter and will coordinate any disciplinary action which is taken against the student teacher candidate either by university or school district officials.

J. PLANNING

1. Lesson Planning

Student teachers are required to write formal lesson plans throughout the entire student teaching experience unless otherwise directed by the university supervisor. Appendix B contains a sample lesson plan format to which students have been introduced. Cooperating teachers may prefer to have student teachers use the school district's format if it is comparable.

Student teacher candidates are expected to plan teaching assignments carefully and to submit those plans to their cooperating teacher *at least* 24 hours in advance for guidance and approval. If the cooperating teacher asks for the plans earlier, student teacher candidates are expected to honor that request. Student teacher candidates should not be permitted to assume responsibility for a class until their cooperating teachers have approved the student teacher's plans. Failure to comply may result in: (1) not teaching that lesson, (2) lower grade for student teaching, and (3) report to University Supervisor.

K. EVALUATION OF TEACHING

1. Evaluation by the Cooperating Teacher

(a) Formative Evaluation

A Cooperating Teacher should provide written feedback frequently for a student teacher candidate, for example, after significant teaching experiences or at the conclusion of other important assignments. Written feedback (1) allows a student teacher to reread the cooperating teacher's comments for further reflection, (2) assists university supervisors in assessing the progress made by a student teacher candidate between the supervisor's visits, and (3) provides documentation of the candidate's work. The comments can be used as the basis of daily or frequent conferences between a student teacher candidate and the cooperating teacher. Feedback generally includes areas of strength and suggestions for improvement. As the student teacher candidate progresses, reflective questions can replace more directive comments to help develop the important skill of self-evaluation.

There are several effective ways for a cooperating teacher to provide written evaluations of the student teacher candidate's instructional abilities. Many cooperating teachers prefer using an interactive journal wherein they comment on candidate's lessons and other topics needing discussion, and candidates respond to those comments.

In addition to ongoing types of formative evaluation, cooperating teachers are expected to complete the "Student Teaching Performance Rating Scale (STPRS)," found in Appendix D, at the midpoint (week 6-7) of the student teaching experience as well as at the end of the experience. Space has been provided on the back of the form for a descriptive analysis of the student teacher's performance. The results are to be used at the midpoint for an in-depth conference emphasizing areas of strength and those areas needing more improvement.

(b) Summative Evaluation

At the conclusion of the student teaching placement, cooperating teachers provide summative evaluations of overall performance using the same "Student Teaching Performance Rating Scale" (Appendix D) by which the candidate's midpoint and final progress is evaluated. As with the midpoint evaluation, a cooperating teacher is to write a descriptive analysis of a student teacher candidate's instructional and professional competencies on the back of the evaluation form or on a separate sheet of paper.

2. Evaluation by the University Supervisor

Throughout the student teaching term, a student teacher candidate will have lessons observed on four or more occasions by the university supervisors. Supervisors complete typed evaluations of the observed lessons using one of the forms in Appendix D or some adaptation of those forms. The evaluations are used as the basis for conferences held between university supervisors and student teachers. Copies of the typed evaluations are provided to student teachers, cooperating teachers, and Director of Field Placement and Certification. Additional evaluations required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education are completed by the university supervisors at the midpoint and the final point of the student teaching semester. A copy of the PDE evaluation form (PDE 430) is provided in Appendix D along with the university supervisors' formative evaluation forms.

L. GRADING

A candidate's final student teaching grade is determined by his/her effectiveness in the classroom.

The final grade for student teaching is the responsibility of the university supervisor after consultation with the cooperating teacher. Grading decisions are based on supervisors' observations of students' work throughout the term, ongoing consultations with cooperating teachers, and written evaluations and grade recommendations submitted by cooperating teachers.

To be eligible for a Pennsylvania Teaching Certificate, the student teacher candidate must receive at least an academic grade of "C" for the student teaching assignment(s). Candidates are evaluated on the PDE430 by using the Student Teaching Performance Rating Scale (STPRS). See Appendix D.

The following rubric will be used for determining the final grade:

- A grade of "A" indicates that the candidate has consistently and thoroughly demonstrated the criteria shown in PDE430.
- A grade of "B" indicates that the candidate usually and extensively demonstrated the criteria shown in PDE430.
- A grade of "C" indicates that the candidate sometimes and adequately demonstrated the criteria shown in PDE430.
- A grade below "C" indicates that the candidate rarely or never and inappropriately or superficially demonstrated criteria shown in PDE430.

M. USE OF TEACHERS' ROOMS AND OTHER FACILITIES

Student teacher candidates are advised to ask their cooperating teachers and/or principal about using the Teachers' Lounge and other facilities or equipment; for example, when it is appropriate to use the copy machine.

N. STATE LAWS CONCERNING LIABILITY

Teachers and student teacher candidates have been held legally liable by the Pennsylvania courts for the behavior of pupils under their direction. If a pupil is injured because of the negligence of either a teacher or student teacher candidate, that person can be held legally responsible. For this reason, it is highly advisable for the student teacher candidate to be protected by liability insurance. Such insurance is highly recommended and available through membership in the Student Pennsylvania State Education Association (SPSEA)/National Education Association (NEA) or through an insurance company.

O. EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The extra-curricular program at each school site offers an excellent opportunity for a student teacher candidate to gain needed professional experience in planning and directing an educational program. Student teacher candidates are encouraged to assist with coaching, clubs, and other extracurricular programs if the activities do not interfere with the student's teaching responsibilities. The student teacher candidate should discuss any question of compensation with the university supervisor. Student teacher candidates should not be assigned to lunch, hall or bus duty, study halls, or supervision of a field trip without the presence of the cooperating teacher.

P. INJURIES INCURRED WHILE STUDENT TEACHING

Student teacher candidates are encouraged to maintain a health insurance program in case of an injury suffered while participating in the student teaching experience. Student insurance plans are available through the University's Health Center. If a student teacher candidate incurs an injury while performing the duties of a student teacher, The University of Pittsburgh will not accept responsibility for the medical care required to treat the injury. The school district to which the student teacher candidate is assigned may or may not accept responsibility.

Q. RIGHT TO KNOW LAW

Public Law 93-380, also known as the "Students' Right to Know Law" and "Senator James Buckley's Amendment" gives students in post-high school institutions "the right to inspect and review any and all official records, files, and data directly related to them."

To comply with the federal law, each university supervisor will show and discuss with each student teacher candidate the student's completed PDE 430 evaluation instrument and the STPRS at midterm and endpoint. Each cooperating teacher should also show and discuss with each student teacher candidate the candidate's completed evaluation form at the end of each student teaching assignment.

III. STUDENT TEACHING EXPECTATIONS, GOALS, AND OUTCOMES

A. THE STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE

1. The Scope of the Student Teaching Experience

The student teaching experience provides an opportunity for Education students to obtain practical experience with classrooms of learners under the guidance of experienced and competent school and university personnel. The student teacher candidate should assume a series of gradually more challenging tasks. The student teacher candidate should:

- Begin with observations. (Pre-Student Teaching)
- Continue with assisting the cooperating teacher or department/grade level members with small tasks such as tutoring or teaching small groups. (Pre-Student Teaching)
- Progress to responsibility for instructing one or more subjects/classes. (Student Teaching)
- Proceed to full responsibility for instructing the class/schedule (Student Teaching)

Progress in the assignment of new tasks will depend upon the readiness of the student teacher candidate and the needs of the pupils. The cooperating teacher should consider the student teacher candidate's satisfactory completion of tasks at each stage. The student teacher candidate is expected to participate in all aspects of teaching, including but not limited to attending faculty meetings and parent conferences, reviewing homework, and administering assessments.

In addition to classroom and school building responsibilities, student teachers will be required to attend and successfully complete the Student Teaching Seminar, a one-credit course which convenes after 5:00 p.m.

2. Employment / Extracurricular Activities During Student Teaching

Student teaching is a full-time, challenging responsibility. Students need to devote all of their energies to the student teaching duties. Candidates will be held accountable for demonstrating an exemplary level of performance for all instructional and other responsibilities to which they are assigned. Past experiences have indicated that employment and/or active participation in numerous extracurricular activities jeopardizes candidates' classroom performance. Student teacher candidates are strongly discouraged from maintaining part-time or full-time employment. Students also should limit their participation in extracurricular activities to those for which they have a serious obligation.

3. Student Teaching Sites

All school districts utilized for student teaching experiences have been approved by The University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg. Each student teaching placement is continuously evaluated, and university faculty investigates new situations to provide optimum and diverse opportunities for each candidate. The successful outcome of the experience is dependent upon the positive relationships between the student teacher candidate, the cooperating teacher, and the university supervisor.

The basic roles and responsibilities are as follows: COOPERATING

TEACHER:

- Formally observes and evaluates the student teacher a minimum of two times during pre-student teaching and two times during student teaching.,
- processes, and procedures using current materials and strategies.
- Formally observes and evaluates the student teacher a minimum of two times during pre-student teaching and two times during student teaching.

- Assists the student teacher candidate in assimilating experiences into appropriately structured teaching-learning strategies and procedures, i.e., long/short range planning and subsequent instruction.
- Evaluates student teaching experiences at the end of each day and provides feedback, promoting continuing improvement.
- Develops within the student teacher candidate an awareness of classroom management skills, professional responsibilities, and faculty/administration rapport.
- Completes a recommendation (STPRS) for each student teacher candidate to be submitted to the university supervisor two times during the Student Teaching semester.

UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR:

- Observes each student teacher candidate a minimum of four times per semester.
- Evaluates each observation and confers with the student teacher candidate and the cooperating teacher.
- Recommends the final grade in consultation with the cooperating teacher.
- Completes a letter of recommendation for each student teacher candidate.
- Completes PDE430 for each student teacher candidate at midterm (week 6-7) and final. Discuss results with student teacher candidate and provide a copy to Director of Field Placement and Certification.

STUDENT TEACHER CANDIDATE:

- Observes classroom teaching strategies, techniques, procedures, student behaviors, and classroom management skills of the cooperating teacher and other faculty members within the school.
- Instructs assigned classes.
- Presents an appropriate lesson plan to the cooperating teacher for each assigned teaching situation 24 hours prior to the actual instructional period.
- Evaluates pupil responses to the above activities.
- Complies with the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy established by the school district.

DIRECTOR OF FIELD PLACEMENT AND CERTIFICATION

- Intercedes in conflicts among cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and teacher candidate.
- Collects and maintains records for the University
- Coordinates student teaching placements
- Considers recommended grades from the Cooperating Teacher and University Supervisor and assigns the final grade for the course.
- Completes verification of TIMS applications for certification through the state of Pennsylvania.

B. BEGINNING THE PRE-STUDENT TEACHING/STUDENT TEACHING TERM

1. Initial Meeting with the Cooperating Teacher

After pre-student teaching/student teaching assignments have been made, a student teacher candidate is expected to contact and meet the cooperating teacher. This initial meeting at the student teaching site also provides an opportunity for a student teacher candidate to meet the principal of the school. A student teacher candidate is advised to dress appropriately for this occasion. Depending on availability of materials at this initial meeting, the student teacher candidate might obtain available copies of teachers' manuals and other materials that will be used on a regular basis during the student teaching experience. It is the responsibility of the student teacher to return all books and materials in satisfactory condition at the end of the student teaching placement in a given school.

In the initial meeting, a candidate generally is informed about the teaching duties and other responsibilities during the placement and is given relevant information about the school and the students. Students are advised to demonstrate initiative, enthusiasm, and willingness to learn, and to work diligently with the cooperating teacher and other personnel at the student teaching site.

2. Pre-Student Teaching

Each student teaching experience is unique. Pre-student teaching responsibilities will vary among student teachers depending upon instructional abilities and certification programs, cooperating teachers and student teaching sites, and university supervisors. The first weeks of the pre-student teaching experience will be primarily a period of orientation and observation; however, some class participation/assistance may occur at the discretion of the cooperating teacher. A list of suggested activities for the pre-student teaching period follows.

- (a) A student teaching candidate who teaches in the fall may be invited to participate in the in-service meetings that occur before the commencement of the school year.
- (b) A student teaching candidate should volunteer to do things and to make the commitment to perform those activities to the best of his/her ability. The pre-student teaching period is an important time for earning the trust of the cooperating teachers who will be turning over their classrooms to the student teacher.
- (c) A student teaching candidate should read the policy manual and other information about the student teaching site to become knowledgeable about the philosophy of the school, the general objectives of instruction for the district, and the community background of the pupils.
- (d) A student teaching candidate will benefit from establishing a good relationship with the cooperating teacher and discuss problems that arise during their pre-student teaching period in a professional and timely manner.
- (e) A student teaching candidate should meet other faculty and staff members at the school including the secretary, nurse, guidance counselor, maintenance staff, and others, as appropriate.
- (f) A student teaching candidate should observe the teaching techniques and classroom procedures of the cooperating teacher, paying particular attention to procedures for managing homework papers, tests, quizzes, and other student work.
- (g) A student teaching candidate will gain valuable information from observing teachers other than their cooperating teacher. These teachers may teach the same grade/subject as the cooperating teacher, or they may teach subjects different from the student teacher candidate's area of certification.
- (h) A student teaching candidate should learn the names of all students by obtaining a copy of the classroom seating charts or by making a seating chart.
- (i) A student teaching candidate should learn the routines of record maintenance such as taking attendance, recording names of students who are tardy, keeping track of different time/bell schedules, and recording grades.

- (j) A student teaching candidate should learn about the school's emergency care procedures, fire drill procedures, and other procedures deemed relevant by the cooperating teacher and/or the university supervisor.
- (k) A student teaching candidate should discuss with the cooperating teacher pupils with Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs).
- (l) A student teaching candidate should become acquainted with the textbook(s), reference books, course outlines, and other instructional materials used by the cooperating teacher.
- (m) A student teaching candidate should become familiar with resources in the library, audio-visual department, and computer/technology resource room.
- (n) In many situations, pre-student teachers may begin assisting teachers by grading papers, creating bulletin boards, tutoring individuals/small groups, etc. early in pre-student teaching.

NOTE: *Student teaching candidates are still expected to meet their obligations for university coursework while pre-student teaching.*

C. TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Teaching Schedule

Soon after the student teaching period begins, cooperating teachers will give their student teachers regular teaching assignments. Policies for planning these assignments are explained in section II, "Policies and Procedures." Most cooperating teachers continue to add to these first assignments on a gradual basis leading to the student teacher candidates' assumption of full-time teaching and full-time management of other classroom responsibilities. It is important for student teaching candidates to know the tentative schedule that the cooperating teachers have planned for the student teacher candidate's assumption of all teaching responsibilities. The actual schedule of teaching assignments that is followed, however, will depend on a candidate's demonstration of the readiness to assume each new responsibility.

2. Student Teaching Responsibilities

- Assuming full responsibility for the class/schedule for a period to which the cooperating teacher and university supervisor agree.
- Observing at least two other teachers during the semester. These teachers should represent a variety of curricular areas and styles of teaching. (Pre-Student Teaching)
- Writing daily lesson plans for all lessons taught.
- Attending all seminars required by the Director of Field Placement and Certification.
- Creating two visual displays (e.g., bulletin boards, showcases, or a learning center) in a classroom or elsewhere in the school. These displays should be instructional in nature/or a display of the pupils' projects, etc. and must be approved by the cooperating teacher. (Pre-Student Teaching)
- Using educational technology either alone or in conjunction with the cooperating teacher.

3. Varied Responsibilities

The student teaching experience introduces a student teacher candidate to the variety of tasks required of teachers. A candidate should use every opportunity to observe and participate in all the activities associated with teaching. To develop competency in all school tasks, a student teacher candidate ordinarily will be expected to become proficient at performing such activities as the following:

- (a) Taking attendance, collecting lunch money, recording, and maintaining information on pupil records and report cards, and similar clerical duties.
- (b) Preparing tests, quizzes, rubrics, and other student assignments, and using these instruments to assess student development and report academic progress.
- (c) Working with pupils who need special attention.
- (d) Designing seating charts, organizing classroom seating arrangements, and managing other homeroom activities.
- (e) Accepting responsibility for bulletin boards and displays.
- (f) Preparing multimedia materials.
- (g) Arranging and chaperoning field trips.
- (h) Gathering materials for instructional purposes.
- (i) Using the library effectively.
- (j) Using community resources effectively.
- (k) Participating in the supervision of study halls, playgrounds, and cafeterias.

In addition to performing teaching activities, a student teacher candidate will want to become familiar with the total educational program of the school. A candidate will find it beneficial to participate in homeroom programs, co-curricular activities of various kinds, dances, assembly programs, opening exercises, PTA meetings, health services, and guidance services. Arrangements for observing and participating in these various educational experiences should be made with the cooperating teacher.

D. COMMUNICATION WITH UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS

Monthly - Student teachers inform their university supervisors monthly and in advance about their teaching schedules and other events at the school so that supervisors know when it will be most beneficial to visit student teachers. The student teaching candidate must submit a copy of the form entitled "Student Teaching Prospective Schedule and Monthly Schedule" (Appendix C) as electronic mail attachments to the University Supervisor. Any changes to the schedule must be reported to the University Supervisor.

E. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

1. Relationships with the Cooperating Teacher

It is necessary for student teacher candidates to work closely with cooperating teachers who wish to assist and guide student teaching candidates' preparation for teaching assignments. While class work during student teaching is a joint responsibility, cooperating teachers are the individuals who are ultimately responsible for the academic progress of the pupils. Close, professional collaboration between cooperating teachers and student teacher candidates is crucial to best serve the interests of the pupils in the classroom.

As guests in the cooperating teacher's classroom, a student teacher candidate needs to be consistent in upholding and maintaining the cooperating teacher and school policies. It is important for student teaching candidates to develop a style of teaching and managing a classroom, but the ideas and methods must be approved by the cooperating teacher before implementing.

2. Relationships with Pupils

A student teacher candidate will need to maintain a friendly, but objective attitude toward pupils. Interest in pupils and their problems and needs is an important mark of the effective teacher. The developing relationship between a student teacher candidate and pupils, however, should be professional, with a candidate remembering that he/she is responsible for everything that occurs in the classroom when in charge of the classroom.

3. Relationships with Faculty and Staff Members

A student teacher candidate needs to meet and interact with as many of the faculty and staff members as possible at the student teaching site. Professional acquaintances and contacts, as well as informal associations, are important as candidates make the transition from the role of student to the role of teacher.

F. STUDENT TEACHING ABROAD

Student teacher candidates who are eligible for student teaching may opt to complete half of their student teaching abroad. In this case, the entire pre-student teaching and subsequent eight weeks of student teaching would be completed in the classroom of the US-based placement. The other seven weeks would occur abroad (e.g., New Zealand, Bolivia).

Corresponding to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's standards, all supervising teachers in the student teaching abroad program will be trained in their field, be certified in the area that the student teacher is pursuing, will have taught for a minimum of three years, and will be recommended as a highly qualified teacher. Pitt-Greensburg student teachers participating in this program will be assessed in the same manner as our current program. The *PDE 430 form* will be used to document all observations. In addition, the cooperating teacher will complete formative and summative evaluation forms provided in the Student Teaching Handbook. *All evaluation forms apply to both domestic student teaching and student teaching abroad.*

Likewise, all student teacher candidates will attend weekly seminar sessions to reflect on their teaching practices. To this end, candidates will attend the Professional Seminar class on the Pitt-Greensburg campus while student teaching in the US and will attend a similar seminar while student teaching abroad. Candidates are expected to compile a portfolio to present upon completion of the education program; one requirement is detailed reflection on all field experiences. Candidates participating in the student teaching abroad programs will also be required to keep a student teaching file, complete with reflections.

The cost for the student teaching abroad program is not included as part of the regular student teaching. The cost for student teaching abroad is slightly more than the traditional student teaching program. However, every effort has been made to keep the costs as low as possible. Please see Study Abroad Office for information regarding the costs and other specifics of this student teaching alternative.

IV. THE COOPERATING TEACHER

Note: In addition to reading this section of the handbook, cooperating teachers will want to carefully read section II, “Policies and Procedures.”

A. THE ROLE OF THE COOPERATING TEACHER

Cooperating teachers are among the most influential persons in the student teaching program. Although university supervisors provide a link with the University for cooperating teachers and student teachers, cooperating teachers are in the unique situation of consistently observing student teachers in every aspect of their development as professional educators. The planning cooperating teachers do for student teachers' learning, and the guidance cooperating teachers offer are essential sources of development for student teachers throughout the term.

The following section includes effective practices for working with and evaluating student teachers as suggested by experienced cooperating teachers. Statements for educational practices will need to be considered in light of different school situations and modified as necessary. A basic assumption underlying the guidelines is that the welfare of individual pupils and the class is paramount. It is the responsibility of cooperating teachers to assess the appropriateness of various suggestions and to refuse permission for student teachers to engage in activities or practices that are judged as operating against the progress of an individual, a group, or a school's philosophy or objectives. Questions about any of the guidelines or policies can be directed to the university supervisors or to the Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification.

SUGGESTIONS TO ASSIST IN PLANNING FOR THE STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND FOR WORKING WITH A STUDENT TEACHER CANDIDATE

Before the student teacher candidate arrives:

- Inform the students and parents and encourage pupils to look upon the student teacher candidate as a member of the teaching team.
- Collect materials and textbooks for the student teacher candidate to use. Please feel free to give the student teacher candidate materials to prepare for the assignment.
- Set aside and dedicate desk and workspace for the student teacher candidate, if possible.
- Specify certain basic teaching responsibilities for the student teacher candidate.
- Make a copy of the class schedule for the student teacher candidate.
- Verify the candidate's arrival with the principal.
- Duplicate copies of class list, seating charts and the school calendar.

During the first week (Pre-Student Teaching):

- Orient the student teacher candidate to the school, appropriate school and district personnel, support services, students, and community.
- Share school rules, regulations, policies, the faculty handbook, and calendar, including Emergency Plan of Operation.
- Discuss expectations for the student teacher candidate regarding:
 - confidentiality.
 - working hours.
 - reporting times.
 - procedures to follow in case of illness.
 - personal property.
 - procurement of supplies; and,
 - other general responsibilities.
- Explain your method of classroom or laboratory management and discipline.
- Review the school district's discipline policy.
- Assist in arranging opportunities for the student teacher candidate to observe other teachers.
- Give the student teacher candidate informal opportunities to adjust to being in front of the class.
- Explain your methods of assessment, record keeping, and communication to parents.
- Help the student teacher candidate become familiar with the location, operation, and procedure for using various pieces of instructional equipment.
- Provide opportunities for the student teacher candidate to work with individual students.
- Share curriculum and review future educational goals.
- Provide daily feedback regarding the student teacher candidate's performance.
- Confer with the pre-student teacher candidate on days of attendance daily.

During the second or third weeks to end of experience (Pre-Student Teaching):

- Discuss the developmental characteristics of the age group currently being served.
- Discuss unique characteristics of individual students that directly affect their learning.
- Permit the student teacher candidate to accept more teaching responsibilities (small group or individual).
- Check lesson plans prior to utilization the student teacher candidate is asked to present two lessons during pre-student teaching.
- Provide the student teacher candidate with opportunities to observe and to be involved in parent conferences.
- Alert the principal and the Director of Field Placement and Certification immediately if significant problem areas emerge.
- Provide frequent written and oral feedback to the student teacher candidate.
- Collect lesson plans at least 48-hours in advance and provide feedback at least 24 hours in advance prior to lesson being taught.
- Formally evaluate the candidate after observing two lessons taught by the candidate.

Student Teaching:

- Promote self-evaluation of lessons by the student teacher candidate thereby helping him/her to develop a perception of his/her strengths and weaknesses.
- Give the student teacher candidate an opportunity to accept full responsibility for the class/schedule.
- Encourage increasingly independent lesson plan development.
- Continue informal daily evaluations which commend strengths.

- Permit the student teacher freedom to try his/her own ideas and techniques.
- Demonstrate techniques to help the student teacher candidate remediate weaknesses.
- Submit your midterm (week 6-7) and final evaluations (STPRS) to the University Supervisor.
- Formally evaluate the candidate after observing two lessons taught by the candidate.

GUIDELINES FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS

Qualifications:

A cooperating teacher must be an experienced teacher with the following specific qualifications:

- Be willing to serve as a cooperating teacher and to provide the necessary time to plan and evaluate the student teacher candidate's performance.
- Hold a Pennsylvania Instructional Certificate in the same field as the one for which the student teacher candidate is completing the requirements.
- Have a minimum of three years of successful teaching experience in the schools, with at least one year in the current school district.
- Have a regular, full time teaching schedule.
- Be recommended by the district/school administration.

Role and Responsibilities

The role of cooperating teachers is critical in the professional growth of student teacher candidates. The cooperating teachers become mentors who guide the growth and transition of student teacher candidates from student to professional. As such, cooperating teachers act as a trusted guide, teacher, sponsor, host, counselor, supporter, advisor, coach, boss, confidant, encourager, and consultant.

Participation by Student Teacher Candidates

Delegate certain routine but essential responsibilities to the student teacher candidate at the onset of the experience. Assign small group instruction or short teaching tasks such as opening exercises, parts of lessons, spelling tests, etc.

Instructional Planning by Student Teacher Candidates

Collect student's lesson plan before it is taught. Provide feedback no less than 24 hours prior to lesson delivery. Effective teaching necessitates good planning. Pitt-Greensburg trains all candidates to create lesson plans utilizing a lesson plan form contained in this manual. Review the student teacher candidate's lesson plan for each lesson before it is taught so that suggestions may be made and incorporated. No lesson should be taught until a complete lesson plan is presented.

Classroom Teaching by Student Teacher Candidates

- Assign a major responsibility for one or two lessons, for a unit or for a class period. As the student teacher candidate demonstrates his/her readiness, you may assign additional lessons.
- Provide experiences with groups of students with varying abilities.
- Make clear to the student teacher candidate, and indirectly to the pupils, the level of authority and responsibility which is being assigned to the student teacher candidate.
- Provide the student teacher candidate experiences for measuring and evaluating pupil growth and development; the student teaching candidate should prepare a variety of tests, assessment tools, and evaluation situations.
- Inform your pupils that the student teacher candidate is "in charge" when teaching.

- Student teacher candidates should assume full responsibilities during student teaching to fully appreciate the mandates of teaching full-time.

Welfare of Pupils

Cooperating teachers have the ultimate responsibility for the growth and development of the pupils in their classrooms; therefore, the cooperating teacher should:

- Intervene in the middle of a class period ONLY when he/she is certain of irreparable damage to the pupils. Like everyone else, student teacher candidates can learn from mistakes. If the cooperating teacher must take over, it should be done so with tact and finesse.
- Schedule a conference with the student teacher candidate, as soon as possible, to help him/her see why the situation developed and what measures could be taken to deal with a similar situation in the future.
- Confer with the university supervisor if the student teacher candidate cannot be permitted normal responsibility without jeopardizing the best interest of the pupils. If dispositional expectations are not met, placement cancellation or change may result.
- Along with the principal, address parental concerns regarding their son or daughter being taught by a student teacher candidate.

Professional Growth and Development

The cooperating teacher should:

- Advise and guide the student teacher candidate in proper interpretation and involvement in faculty room experiences.
- Encourage planned professional reading.
- Promote development of a carefully planned library of teaching aids.
- Prepare the student teacher for interactions with parents or other teachers.

Evaluation of Growth and Development

The evaluation of the cooperating teacher is of enormous importance to the growth of the student teacher candidate; therefore, the cooperating teacher should:

- Make evaluation a continuous process taking place before and after every lesson which is taught.
- Schedule conferences with the University Supervisor.

These conferences, as well as others, may be informal yet they will provide the University Supervisor with valuable input relative to the PDE 430 evaluation reports.

- Guide the student teacher candidate's self-evaluation at the midpoint and at the close of the assignment.
- Report the status of professional growth and development of the student teacher candidate to the university supervisor.

The evaluation should be done in such a way as to provide school officials with a thorough, reliable basis for selecting teachers. Your remarks on evaluation letters will provide school districts with valuable insights during the hiring process.

Confidentiality Regarding the Progress of the Student Teacher

In a situation where a student teacher is not progressing or performing as expected, the cooperating teacher is expected to maintain the confidentiality of the relationship with the student teacher by refraining from engaging in conversations about this student teacher with anyone other than the student teacher, the University Supervisor, and the principal of the respective student teaching site. The cooperating teacher should not demean the student teacher or predispose the student to failure by discussing the student

teacher's progress with other faculty members, staff, paraprofessionals, parents or other persons inside or outside the school.

B. COOPERATING TEACHER HONORARIUM

An honorarium is provided to cooperating teachers by The University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg at the end of their service to the university (e.g., end of two terms). Teachers who have mentored The University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg student teacher candidate for two full semesters (Pre-student Teaching and Student Teaching) will receive full compensation as determined by the university.

- One-third compensation will be received for Pre-Student Teaching
- One-third compensation will be received for 7 – 8 weeks, or when a candidate studies abroad
- Two-thirds compensation will be received for the entire Student Teaching semester

Honorariums cannot be processed unless the appropriate forms are completed. Forms will be provided to you by the Education Department.

Cooperating teachers guide a student teacher for an entire term and receive an honorarium if they have attended the annual Pitt-Greensburg informational session and partial honorarium if they have not.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR REFERENCE LETTERS

Student teachers generally request that cooperating teachers complete a recommendation for them using the form developed by the Education Department. That form can be found in Appendix C or from the Education Website:

<https://www.greensburg.pitt.edu/academics/majors-minors/education>

The completed recommendation should be given to the candidates who have the option of maintaining their own credential file or of submitting the references to the Career Services Office for inclusion in a career placement packet. If cooperating teachers agree to write a recommendation, it is important that the recommendation form be completed promptly so that student teacher candidates can compile their professional documents in preparation for seeking a teaching position.

Letters of reference may address the cooperating teacher's evaluation of a student teacher's performance in the following areas or others that the cooperating teacher may wish to include:

1. Teaching effectiveness, which may include planning skills, using a variety of approaches to meet individual needs, assessing students' learning, and/or establishing an appropriate classroom atmosphere for learning
2. Management of students, materials, and time in a classroom setting
3. Communication skills and command of subject matter
4. Personal qualities relating to effective teaching, including resourcefulness, initiative, openness to criticism, ability to implement suggestions, dedication, and self-reflection
5. Skill in establishing rapport with students, faculty members, administrators, staff members, and parents.

The University Career Services Office reminds those providing references that the letter of reference or recommendation form is "a personalized and thoughtful document" wherein writers offer a "professional opinion of the student's ability and potential within the field of education." Writers also are reminded that the letter of reference will affect the student teacher candidate's future.

The Career Services Office offers the following guidelines for making reference letters or recommendation forms more effective:

1. Before writing the letter, writers may ask students how they perceive their strengths and skills. If the writer concurs, those comments can be used to accent the letter.
2. Writers should be specific when discussing skills and qualities.
3. Comments are strengthened when actual examples are used for illustration. Action words aid in giving an example (e.g., assisted, supervised, created, developed).
4. The length of the letter may vary, but 150 words is a recommended length.

V. Observation Process – Cooperating Teacher (minimum of 2 during Pre-Student Teaching and 2 during Student Teaching)

The student teacher completes a *DAILY LESSON PLAN* using the format provided by the program. He/she provides the Cooperating Teacher with a copy prior to the lesson/observation (hard copy or electronic) at least 48 hours prior to delivering the lessons to the students.

The Cooperating Teacher reviews the *DAILY LESSON PLAN* and, if time allows, conducts a pre-conference with the student teacher to discuss the lesson.

- During the lesson, the Cooperating Teacher completes the *Lesson Observation Form*. The Cooperating Teacher assigns a ranking and provides written comments or identifies evidence of indicators that have been observed in four categories:
 - Planning and Preparation
 - Classroom Environment
 - Instruction
 - Reflection and Professionalism
- After the observation, the Cooperating Teacher and student teacher meet to discuss the lesson, focusing on reflection and self-evaluation. The Cooperating Teacher documents student performance on the *Supportive Feedback* and *Areas for Growth* sections of the *Lesson Observation Form*.
- Using information from the reflective discussion, the student teacher completes the *LESSON REFLECTION FOLLOWING OBSERVATION BY THE COOPERATING TEACHER* form so that both Cooperating Teacher and student teacher agree on what was discussed and a goal is identified for the next observation.
- The student teacher and the Cooperating Teacher should each keep a copy of the completed *DAILY LESSON PLAN*, *Lesson Observation Form*, and *LESSON REFLECTION FOLLOWING OBSERVATION BY THE COOPERATING TEACHER* forms for each lesson observed. A Lesson Observation Packet, including each of the above-mentioned forms, should also be submitted to the university with a *Lesson Observation Packet Cover Sheet*.
- **It is the student teacher's responsibility to submit the packet of forms completed for each observation conducted by the Cooperating Teacher to the University Supervisor within one week of each observation.**

Lesson Observation Packet (for observations completed by the Cooperating Teacher)

- *Lesson Observation Packet Cover Sheet*
- *DAILY LESSON PLAN*
- *Lesson Observation Form*
- *LESSON REFLECTION FOLLOWING OBSERVATION BY THE COOPERATING TEACHER*
- Any additional forms used

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL OF THE STUDENT TEACHING SITE

A. ORIENTATION OF STUDENT TEACHERS BY PRINCIPALS

Without the cooperation of principals and other administrative personnel, it would be impossible to develop excellent student teaching sites in which student teacher candidates could complete professional preparation. Principals hold a strategic position in the induction of student teacher candidates into the field of education. The following topics are suggested as ones that principals might include in their introductory meeting with student teacher candidates:

1. The philosophy, objectives, and overall organization of the school
2. The community and its significance to the program of instruction
3. The wide range of responsibilities that student teachers must accept in the school
4. The procedures and ethics in such matters as handling discipline and confidential records
5. The availability of facilities for teachers in the school
6. School district policies and state laws regarding student teachers

B. SELECTION AND QUALIFICATIONS OF COOPERATING TEACHERS

Principals of schools used as student teaching sites are responsible for selecting those individuals who will serve as cooperating teachers, subject to approval by school district superintendents or their designee. Many principals will make their choices after collaboration with the Director of Field Placements and Teacher Certification and/or the university supervisors assigned to the district. Among the criteria to consider in the selection process are the following requirements stipulated by the state: (a) cooperating teachers must have taught a minimum of three years, with at least one year's service in the building where they will be supervising student teachers; and (b) cooperating teachers must be certified in the area that the student teacher is pursuing.

The following additional criteria have been found to be valuable in the choice of an effective cooperating teacher:

1. Commitment to the student teaching program at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg
2. Evidence of superior teaching skills and abilities
3. Flexibility and adaptability in the use and acceptance of various instructional approaches
4. Ability to relate well to and communicate effectively with student teacher candidates
5. Commitment to continuing professional development
6. Willingness to attend the University's annual information session

C. PRINCIPAL'S COMMUNICATION WITH UNIVERSITY FACULTY

Open communication needs to be maintained among principals, the Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification, and university supervisors assigned to the buildings for which those principals are responsible. University Supervisors and the Director of Field Placements and Teacher Certification welcome comments and suggestions about the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg's student teaching program. Feedback from principals is beneficial to the University's commitment to preparing exemplary teachers for the schools. Likewise, the Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification and the University Supervisors appreciate the invitation offered by many principals to assist in the selection of cooperating teachers. Principals and other school district personnel are welcome to contact the Director of Field Experiences and/or the university supervisors at any time regarding concerns that have arisen with student teacher candidates or ideas for improving student teaching arrangements between the districts and the University.

VII. UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS

Coordinate each phase of the student teaching experience through the Director of Field Placements and Teacher Certification by maintaining and filing accurate and correct materials for:

- Individual student records
- Travel forms (completed monthly)
- Observation forms
- PDE 430 evaluation forms
- Assigning academic grades

Develop and maintain a working relationship between cooperating teachers, school administrators, and student teacher candidate as follows:

- Schedule a mid-assignment conference with the cooperating teacher and student teacher candidate to discuss the progress of the student and to complete the PDE 430
- Conduct an end-of-assignment conference with the cooperating teacher and the student teacher candidate for the purpose of completing the overall evaluation of the student teacher candidate and completing the PDE 430.
- Confer with school administrators to discuss issues concerning the student teaching program and/or particular students.
- Serve as a liaison between the student teaching candidate and the school personnel.
- Serve as a liaison between the schools and the Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification.
- Commenting on reflections and offering some suggestions.

Work with cooperating teachers in the planning of observations, participation, and evaluation of student teacher candidates as follows:

- Review the manner and logistics of observations and conferences.
- Review the type, level, and intensity of experiences which contribute to the growth of student teacher candidates.
- Provide guidance and information to aid the cooperating teacher in preparing an evaluation of the student teacher candidate's performance.
- Observe the student teacher candidate's teaching and provide guidance to make his/her teaching more effective and efficient.

Observe and provide feedback about performance:

- Four on-site visits are **required**. (First visit due week 2-3, second visit by week 6-7, third visit by week 9-10 and fourth and final visit by week 11-14.) If the student teacher candidate has two placements, two site visits are **required for each placement**.
- An observation may be announced or unannounced. In order to gather sufficient information and to provide effective feedback, an observation should include a complete lesson. During the observation, the student teacher candidate's lesson plan as well as the implementation of the plan should be considered by the supervisor.
- Each observation should be immediately followed by a conference with the student teacher candidate.
- The observation must be recorded on an approved observation form.
- Data gathered from observations will be utilized in the preparation of performance ratings for the student teacher candidate.
- Determination of the student teacher candidate's grade should be made by the University Supervisor after conferring with the cooperating teacher and reviewing the STPRS which is completed by the cooperating teacher. The University Supervisor

completes the final PDE 430 evaluation. The Summary of the STPRS (from both the cooperative teacher and the student teacher candidate) and PDE 430 must be delivered to Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification.

- Assign final academic grades for student teaching and submit the grades to Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification.

Conference with student teacher candidate:

A conference should have four student teacher candidate components:

1. The candidate's self-evaluation
2. A review of the candidate's performance
3. A statement of the areas, instructional strategies, and/or activities which were effective
4. A statement of goal areas for improvement
5. Specific recommendations regarding how to improve

Assist student teacher candidates with problems which may arise during the student teaching experience:

- The university supervisor should serve as a liaison between the student teacher candidate and the school, making every reasonable effort to assist the student teacher candidate in making the adjustment to the professional world. This may entail more than the minimum number of observations, more frequent conferences, three-way conferences, etc. The university supervisor is also responsible to enlist the aid of the Director of Field Placements and Teacher Certification to utilize other university services, including the University's *dispositional expectations*.

OBSERVATIONS BY UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR (minimum of four observations) DURING STUDENT TEACHING

- The student teacher completes a **DAILY LESSON PLAN** using the format provided by the program. He/she provides the University Supervisor with a copy prior to the lesson/observation (hard copy or on-line), within the timeframe designated by the University Supervisor. The lesson plan must be available to the observer prior to the observation (at least two days prior to the observation).
- The University Supervisor reviews the **DAILY LESSON PLAN** form and if time allows, conducts a pre-conference with the student teacher to discuss the lesson.
- During the lesson, the University Supervisor completes the **Lesson Observation Form**. The University Supervisor provides written evidence of criteria that have been observed. The University Supervisor assigns a ranking and provides written comments or identifies evidence of indicators that have been observed in four categories:
 - i. Planning and Preparation
 - ii. Classroom Environment
 - iii. Instruction
 - iv. Reflection and Professionalism
- After the observation, the University Supervisor and student teacher meet to discuss the lesson, focusing on reflection and self-evaluation.
- Using information from the reflective discussion, the student teacher completes the **Lesson Reflection Following Observation by the University Supervisor** form and submits it to the University Supervisor (hard copy or electronic) within 2 days of the lesson.

- Within two days of receipt of the *Lesson Reflection Following Observation by the University Supervisor*, the University Supervisor will provide feedback to the student regarding the written reflection.
- The student teacher and the University Supervisor should each keep a copy of the completed *DAILY LESSON PLAN*, *Lesson Observation Form*, and finalized *Lesson Reflection Following Observation by the University Supervisor* forms for each lesson observed. A Lesson Observation Packet, containing each of the above-mentioned forms, should also be submitted to the Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification with a *Lesson Observation Packet Cover Sheet*.
- **It is the student teacher's responsibility to submit the packet of forms to the Director of Field Placement and Teacher Certification completed for each observation conducted by either the Cooperating Teacher or the University Supervisor within one week of each observation.**

Lesson Observation Packet (for observations completed by the University Supervisor)

- *Lesson Observation Packet Cover Sheet*
- *DAILY LESSON PLAN*
- *Lesson Observation Form*
- *LESSON REFLECTION FOLLOWING OBSERVATION BY THE UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR*
- Any additional forms used

PROFESSOR OF SEMINAR COURSE

Conduct student teaching seminar:

- Seminars shall be held on campus unless other arrangements have been made. Student teacher candidates may leave their schools before the end of the school day in order to arrive at the seminar in a timely fashion.
- Director of Field Placement should submit students a syllabus of course topics and assignments that include the core requirement and additional assignments that contribute to the development of the student teacher candidate.
- The course topics will be designed to help student teacher candidates interpret their experiences more fully and promote professional growth.

The Director of Field Experience and Teacher certification holds sole responsibility over changing student teaching placements including any mid- experience changes.

RESOURCES

[Classroom Observation Form](#)
[Co-Operating Teacher Input Form – Fall Semester](#)
[Co-Operating Teacher Input Form – Spring Semester](#)
[Co-operating Teacher Lesson Observation](#)
[Co-Operating Teacher Lesson Reflection](#)
[Co-operating Teacher Observation Process](#)
[Lesson Observation Checklist](#)
[Lesson Observation Packet Cover Sheet](#)
[Lesson Plan Template](#)
[Observations by University Supervisor](#)
[PDE 430](#)
[Reflection of Teaching Following Observation by University Supervisor](#)
[Student Teaching Performance Rating Scale](#)
[Student Teaching Prospective Schedule](#)
[Teaching Education Disposition Assessment Categories and Examples](#)
[Time Log \(Pre-Student and Student Teaching\)](#)
[Weekly Report Form \(Pre-Student and Student Teaching\)](#)