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## Guidelines and Responsibilities for Cooperating Teachers

The student teaching experience is the culmination of the teacher pre-service preparation program. During student teaching, the student teacher learns in a supportive environment through doing, and applies theories learned in class work to the practice of teaching. The student teaching program at the University of San Diego is primarily designed as an opportunity for the student teacher to learn rather than as a test of how much he/she already knows. The aim of the program is to produce strong beginning teachers, and the cooperating teacher is the key to this success. Through the efforts of the cooperating teacher and those of other staff members at the school, we expect the student teacher to learn the:

1. Necessary skills and confidence for the management of a class;

2. Techniques for planning and implementing high quality and engaging lessons; and

3. Skills to effectively work with fellow teachers, other professional staff members, administrators, and parents.

**Help the student teacher get off to a good start.** Prepare your pupils for the arrival of the student teacher. Introduce the student teacher to the pupils as another teacher, and introduce him/her to your colleagues at the school. Make sure that the student teacher becomes acquainted with the school policies and procedures. Define expectations and the extent of authority and responsibility early. Provide needed textbooks, materials, and equipment. Provide a workspace and a place for the student teacher to store personal items. Allow the student teacher the opportunity to observe other exemplary classrooms and participate in all school functions.

**With the student teacher, develop a schedule that gradually allows the student teacher to assume classroom responsibilities.** The student teacher should be given gradual responsibility, rather than total responsibility from the start. We recommend that your student teacher spend most of the first two to three days observing your classroom activities as well as those of your colleagues. Direct these observations toward particular features of your teaching or the activities of pupil; the observation period will be more valuable if it is directed rather than non-directed.

After the initial period, the student teacher should begin instructional activities. With the student teacher, develop a schedule that gradually allows the student teacher to assume classroom responsibilities. A cooperative, team teaching approach is certainly permissible and encouraged. The student teacher is required to complete a minimum of four weeks when he or she is solely responsible for all instruction and classroom management. Many students are solely responsible for a much longer time.

**Model a variety of effective instructional practices and classroom management techniques.** The student teaching experience is an opportunity for the student teacher to translate academic theory into sound classroom practice. Although he/she has had other field experiences, it is important for the student teacher to see techniques in all subjects, successful transitioning between classes or subject, and the incorporating of non- teaching duties.

**Observe and communicate with the student teacher regularly.** Your regular observations of the student teacher’s performance, with written feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson, should be a normal part of the student teaching experience. Per semester, a total of **five formal, written observations** are submitted to the Supervisor. Please review the student teacher’s lesson plans before the lessons are delivered to the students. Many cooperating teachers have found that keeping a journal or log of their observations, and sharing that log with the student, is an effective method for providing feedback and for monitoring the growth and progress of the student teacher.

**Communicate regularly with the university supervisor.** The university supervisor will contact you periodically and will conduct at least five observation visits. Please be prepared to give him/her ongoing, informal feedback on how the assignment is progressing. Meet with the student teacher and university supervisor for the orientation, midterm and final triads.

**Complete the mid-term and final evaluation forms.** These forms are submitted electronically and the supervisor will work with you to ensure they are completed successfully.

**Enjoy the experience!** Above all, take the opportunity to enjoy your relationship with the student teacher. If any concerns or questions arise, please discuss the issue with the university supervisor and then call us if necessary. You will receive a stipend at the end of the student teaching period.