

2021-22 Guidelines and Responsibilities for Cooperating Teachers

Thank you for hosting one of our teacher candidates for a semester this academic year. We appreciate your commitment to mentoring the next generation of teachers.

At the University of San Diego, we hold a strong belief in the value of field experiences to bolster coursework during our teacher candidates' programs of study. Further, we integrate general education and special education content and standards across our programs, and most candidates seek two credentials. There are three types of teacher candidate field placements:

1. Practicum: an observation-based first-semester placement consisting of approximately 20-50 hours over the course of one semester/summer. Not supervised.
2. Extended Practicum: a 20-hour-per-week commitment for approximately 13 weeks (the whole semester) where the teacher candidate spends half their time with a gen ed teacher and the other half with an education specialist. This is a supervised placement where students are observed four times.
3. Student Teaching: a full-time, full-semester experience where students are assigned a cooperating teacher who should allow them to teach at least 20 solo days (as per CTC guidelines). They will have a university supervisor and will be formally observed at least six times during the semester.
 - a. Teacher candidates will student teach across two separate semesters if they are seeking two credentials.

It's important to understand which type of field experience you are hosting so that you and the teacher candidate can hold the same expectations. Some other tips include:

Help the teacher candidate get off to a good start. Prepare your pupils for the arrival of the teacher candidate. Introduce the teacher candidate to the pupils as another teacher, and introduce them 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. Allow the teacher candidate the opportunity to observe other exemplary classrooms and participate in all school functions.

Model a variety of effective instructional practices and classroom management techniques. The field experience is an opportunity for the teacher candidate to translate academic theory into sound classroom practice. Although they have had/ will have other field experiences, it is important for the teacher candidate to see techniques in all subjects, successful transitioning between classes or subject, and the incorporating of all the components of teaching duties (e.g., grading, team meetings, professional development, parent conferences, etc.).

Specific Notes for Cooperating Teachers of Student 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:

- Necessary skills and confidence for the management of a class;
- Techniques for planning and implementing high quality and engaging lessons; and
- Skills to effectively work with fellow teachers, other professional staff members, administrators, and parents.

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 20 days when he or she is solely responsible for all instruction and classroom management as per CTC guidelines. Many students are solely responsible for a much longer time, if they're ready.

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. 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 six observation visits. Please be prepared to give them ongoing, informal feedback on how the assignment is progressing. Meet with the student teacher and university supervisor for the initial and final triad meetings.

Complete the final evaluation form. 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 the field office directly if necessary.

Contact Information

Teacher candidate: _____ Semester: _____

Placement Type: Practicum Extended Practicum Student Teaching

University Supervisor: _____ Email _____

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