



**EASTERN
CONNECTICUT
STATE UNIVERSITY**

HANDBOOK
for
CLINICAL EXPERIENCES
&
STUDENT TEACHING

School of Education and Professional Studies

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Mission

The mission of the Office of Educational and Clinical Experiences is to seek and secure sites for each teacher candidate to meet the candidate's learning outcomes in a variety of settings near Eastern's campus. While assigned to the clinical site, candidates develop instructional knowledge, pedagogical-content knowledge, and student management skills integrating theory and practice.

I. Overview and Introduction

A. Introduction

Eastern Connecticut State University's teacher candidates engage in a range of authentic clinical experiences over four successive semesters. Clinical experiences also referred to as field experiences, are designed to deepen candidates' understanding of teaching practices and connect educational theory to practice. While engaged in live classrooms, future teachers learn instructional skills and develop management techniques that promote a positive school climate.

Each of the four Education programs: Early Childhood, Elementary, Physical Education, and Secondary Education provide a unique blend of guided instruction at various sites within their specific discipline and grade levels. These initial teaching experiences prepare candidates for the more rigorous demands of student teaching as they acquire a consistent progression of competencies. Initial clinical assignments are typically weekly visits intended for small group or co-teaching apprenticeships followed by a practicum, pre-student teaching, and intensive clinical work culminating in a full-time student teaching placement.

Candidates have been actively engaged in clinical practice for four semesters. Each successive semester provides opportunities for candidates to build pedagogical and classroom management skills, merging theory and practice in the classroom. During pre-student teaching and special education practicum (Core III), teacher candidates engage in a co-teaching model focusing on differentiation in their content discipline and a range of disciplines for Early Childhood and Elementary.

B. Core I and Core II

Clinical practice during Core I provides an initial classroom experience where candidates acclimate to a school setting and begin to understand the elements of best practices. Candidates will observe and reflect on lessons, emphasizing learner traits, student engagement, content learning, classroom materials, technology, and instructional questions and discussion techniques as they impact student learning.

Core II clinical practice is designed to strengthen student understanding and competence in lesson design, assessment, and intervention with students who require support. The experience fosters candidates' sense of working with *all students* and meeting their diverse learning needs in preparation for Core III pre-student teaching and special education practicum.

During initial clinical practice, candidates participate in and reflect upon developmentally appropriate classroom management tasks. These are co-selected by the classroom teacher. Candidates synthesize their clinical experience to identify their strengths, benchmarked with program standards. Core I and II are the foundation for the subsequent clinical and pre-student teaching and special education practicum experiences. They allow candidates to explore and understand the range of competencies necessary for a successful student teaching experience.

C. Clinical Competencies

Candidates are expected to demonstrate proficiency in the following:

- Create a class climate that is responsive to and respectful of the learning needs of students with diverse backgrounds, interests, and performance levels.
- Support and contribute to the learning environment; Foster appropriate standards of behavior that support a productive learning environment for all students.
- Select appropriate assessment strategies to monitor ongoing student progress.
- Provide meaningful, appropriate, and specific feedback to students during instruction to improve their performance.
- Engage in reflection, self-evaluation, and professional development to enhance their understanding of content, pedagogical skills, resources, and the impact of their actions on student learning.
- Collaborate with colleagues to examine instructional strategies and curricula to support student learning.
- Conduct themselves as professionals in accordance with Connecticut's Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators.

D. Core III

The pre-student teaching model focuses on 14 of the 25 student teaching competencies and is an extensive opportunity for candidates to work with their cooperating teacher for one semester before the formal student teaching experience. During Core III clinical experience, the candidate is expected to increase site visits to at least two full days per week. Pre-student teaching provides continuity for the teacher candidate and their capacity to impact P-12 student learning positively. We expect candidates to have a more comprehensive understanding of curriculum, assessment, classroom climate, and professional collaboration to develop teaching competencies for the student teaching semester.

Core III is a precursor and complement to student teaching. A university supervisor will conduct a minimum of three formal visits and monitor the candidate's progress throughout the pre-teaching experience. For Early Childhood Candidates, Core III consists of a Special Ed Practicum. This practicum is required for Early Childhood (113) Certification. The practicum offers candidates the opportunity to work closely with children with special needs within a developmentally appropriate early childhood program.

E. Core IV

Student teaching, Core IV, is the culmination of all the clinical practice in ECSU's Teacher Education Department. It is an opportunity to refine all skill sets and emerge as a true professional. Teacher candidates work closely with a cooperating teacher, university supervisor, and faculty to maximize their full-time student teaching experience and positively impact P-12 student learning.

Student teaching is a pivotal experience where a candidate immerses themselves in a full-time teaching environment and begins shifting from candidate to professional. Eastern candidates are often recognized for their exemplary work as student teachers leading to teaching positions at numerous partner host sites.

F. Clinical and Student Teaching Roadmap

Clinical and Student Teaching Roadmap				
	CORE I Clinical	CORE II Clinical	CORE III Pre-student Teaching & Special Education Practicum	CORE IV Student Teaching
Early Childhood Education	Prekindergarten/Kindergarten setting (45 hours minimum)	Field setting in a first, second, or third-grade (45 hours minimum)	The inclusive setting at the pre-kindergarten or kindergarten (135 hours minimum)	Full-time student teaching in a first, second, or third grade (12 weeks minimum)
Elementary Education	Initial placement in grade K, 1, 2, 3 (45 hours minimum)	Assigned to grades 4, 5, 6 (45 hours minimum)	Pre-student teaching in grades 1-6 (135 hours minimum)	Full-time student teaching in grades 1-6 (12 weeks minimum)
Physical Education	Initial experience in an elementary setting grades PreK-6 (24 hours minimum)	Second directed experience in a Secondary setting grades 6-12 (24 hours minimum)	Pre-student teaching elementary and secondary (45 hours minimum)	Full-time student teaching at both the elementary and secondary settings (12 weeks minimum)
Secondary Education (Biology, English, Earth Science, Math, Social Studies)	Initial placement at the middle school grades 7-8 (45 hours minimum)	Assigned to high school setting grades 9-12 (45 hours minimum)	Pre-student teaching in Grades 7-12 (135 hours minimum)	Full-time Student Teaching in grades 7-12 (12 weeks)

G. Student Teaching

Student teachers are expected to complete 12 full-time weeks at their student teaching sites. Graduate candidates in the Early Childhood program complete a minimum of 10 weeks, followed by four weeks in a full-time special education practicum. Contact with university supervisors and other professors occurs through the student teaching seminar and supervisory visits to the school. Of primary importance to the students' development during the student teaching term is the encouragement and feedback they are given, under the guidance of

cooperating teachers and the university supervisory and instructional personnel, to reflect on, experiment with, and evaluate their ideas about teaching.

In both the fall and spring terms, the beginning of student teaching coincides with the beginning of the University term. Following the start date, student teachers follow the assigned school district calendar. Student-teacher candidates are expected to participate in all planned events, including an open house, in-service days, departmental meetings, parent conferences, IEP meetings, and similar activities unless the cooperating teacher or a school administrator explicitly states otherwise.

II. Policies and Procedures

A. Professional Ethics for Student Teaching

Student teachers serve as representatives of ECSU. School district personnel may judge the quality of ECSU's education program by the attitude and performance exhibited by student teachers. The Education Department is committed to maintaining the positive partnerships it has developed with area school districts. Therefore, we expect each teacher candidate to strive for excellence to help ensure the continuation of this relationship.

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

1. Student teachers must maintain the confidentiality of any privileged, sensitive, and confidential information gained directly from a school staff member or indirectly through any other means.
2. Student teachers may not make critical mention of any student, teacher, administrator, or staff member in class discussions or any other venue.
3. Student teachers may not use the name of any school student in any written assignment.
4. Student teachers are required to follow the absence and punctuality policy included in the Student Teaching Handbook.
5. Student teachers must promptly return any materials that belong to their cooperating teachers or the school.
6. Student teachers must adhere to the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers.
7. Student teachers must uphold the values of ECSU and its education preparation programs.

B. Requirements for Admission to Student Teaching

ECSU candidates must meet the following requirements before being permitted to student teach:

- (1) Submission of student teaching application by stated deadline;
- (2) Successful completion of all education courses with a minimum of C grades; Cumulative GPA of at least 3.00;
- (3) Complete Core I, Core II, and Core III (or clinical experiences required by each Education program);
- (4) Completion of background check process required by their assigned district
- (5) Interview with the prospective cooperating teacher and acceptance by the district.

C. Student Teaching Placement and Transportation

Each term, the Office of Educational and Clinical Experiences arranges student teaching placements in area schools. 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 district and state criteria.

The Education Department and OECE determine all student teaching sites. Students are not granted permission to student teach in a site that the University has not established. 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 school. Student teachers are not typically assigned to school districts where they may be employed or serve as volunteers. **Transportation to and from student teaching sites is the responsibility of student teachers.**

D. Attendance and Punctuality

Regular and punctual attendance is **required** for student teachers. Candidates are to arrive at the school and be present for the same periods, within reason, as the other teachers in the student teaching site.

When absence is unavoidable, due to illness or an emergency, student teachers must notify the cooperating teacher, the university supervisor, and the school **as early as possible**. Students should obtain all necessary telephone numbers and email addresses for this purpose at the beginning of the term. Student teachers are responsible for assuring that all lesson plans, textbooks, and materials needed for teaching are delivered to the school before the beginning of the school day if those materials are not already in the classroom.

In collaboration, the university supervisor must approve absence for reasons other than illness or emergencies in advance with the cooperating teacher. During the student teaching term, student teachers are permitted two days of absence for professional participation in job fairs, scheduled interviews, competency exams, and similar events without having two days added to the student teaching term. However, it is not permitted to take these two days of absence for personal reasons (unless there is a medical emergency). Absence due to

inclement weather may occur during student teaching. Student teachers must follow their school district's policy for delays and cancellations due to inclement weather.

Student teachers who exceed two days' absence for any reason may be required to extend the student teaching term to make up missed days. Decisions about extending the student teaching term rest with the university supervisor in collaboration with the cooperating teacher and the coordinator for educational experience.

If a student teacher does not report to their placement without prior notice or approval, the Cooperating Teacher or School Administrators should immediately contact the Office of Educational and Clinical Experiences. The University will document the incident and follow established procedures to investigate the absence.

E. CARE POLICY related to the Office of Educational and Clinical Experiences

CARE (Committee for Admission and Retention in Education) Policies

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

Nevertheless, student teachers may not serve as substitute teachers. The school district must provide approved substitute teachers even if cooperating teachers are absent.

F. Professional Appearance

The faculty members of the Education Unit offer the recommendations for professional appearance listed below. Student teachers 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, student teachers have guests and representatives of ECSU's Education unit. Through their dress and behavior, they are expected to convey a sense of dignity and respect for themselves and all others in the school.

1. Student teachers are expected to be well-groomed and present themselves professionally.
2. Appropriate dress may include the following: dress shirts, ties, clean dress shoes, sports jackets and blazers, dress pants, dresses, pantsuits, skirts, blouses, and sweaters. Appropriate attire would **exclude** jeans, sweatshirts, sneakers, T-shirts, shorts, and tank tops. Students are advised to observe the teachers at the student teaching site and use that dress to gauge appropriate attire.
3. Professional attire excludes excessively tight or revealing clothing, bare midriffs, or excessively short skirts for all schools.
4. Some schools object to jewelry 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 teachers who have tattoos are advised to make them as unobtrusive as possible.
6. Some school districts have "dress down" days. Student teachers may participate in these "dress down" days if they wish. Appropriate jeans or sneakers may be worn.

G. Candidates with Disabilities

Candidates with disabilities who require academic or environmental accommodations should notify both Eastern's Office of AccessAbility Services (OAS) and the Coordinator of Educational and Clinical Experiences before or during the student teaching application period. Candidates will be expected to provide the appropriate documentation of their disability.

The Education Unit will make every effort to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations for candidates 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 a student's actions and questions. All student teachers must demonstrate that they can adequately perform acts of instruction.

III. The Student-Teacher

A. The Scope of the Student Teaching Experience

The student teaching experience provides an opportunity for candidates to obtain practical experience with classrooms of learners under the guidance of experienced and competent school and university personnel. Student teachers begin with a brief period of guided observation and limited teaching assignments and then move gradually into full-time teaching responsibilities. Early Childhood student teachers pursuing two areas of certification, who may be placed in two classrooms during the term, may be expected to assume teaching and other varied responsibilities earlier in the semester than secondary student teachers with a subject area of certification.

In addition to classroom and school building responsibilities, student teachers will be required to attend and complete the Student Teaching Seminar.

Employment / Extracurricular Activities During Student Teaching

Student teaching is a full-time, challenging responsibility. Student teachers need to devote all their energies to their student teaching duties. They will be held accountable for all

instructional and other responsibilities to which they are assigned. Experience has indicated that employment or active participation in numerous extracurricular activities jeopardizes candidates' classroom performance. Student teachers are strongly discouraged from maintaining part-time or full-time employment. Student teachers are not permitted to leave their student teaching sites early to report to their places of employment or extracurricular activities during the semester. Candidates also should limit their participation in extracurricular activities to those for which they have an obligation.

B. Beginning the Student Teaching Term

1. Initial Meeting with the Cooperating Teacher

After student-teacher assignments are made, student teachers are expected to contact and meet their cooperating teacher. The candidate should share expectations, including the Handbook and evaluation instrument. Candidates are advised to dress appropriately for this occasion. Depending on the availability of materials at this initial meeting, students might obtain copies of teachers' manuals and other materials to be used regularly during the student teaching experience. It is the responsibility of student teachers to return all books and materials in satisfactory condition at the end of their student teaching placement in a given school.

In the initial meeting, students are informed about their teaching duties and other responsibilities during their placement and provided relevant information about the school and students. Students are advised to demonstrate initiative, enthusiasm, and willingness to learn from and work diligently with their cooperating teacher and other student teaching staff.

2. Responsibilities & Orientation Period

Each student's teaching experience is unique. Teaching responsibilities vary among student teachers depending on their instructional abilities and certification programs, cooperating teachers and student teaching sites, and university supervisors.

The first week of student teaching will be primarily an orientation period; however, some learning may occur. A list of suggested activities for the orientation period follows. In discussions with cooperating teachers and university supervisors, student teachers can determine which activities are relevant to their student teaching experience.

- Candidates who teach in the fall are invited to participate in the in-service meetings before the school year's commencement.
- Candidates should actively engage in school and district events.
- Candidates should review school policies and other information about the student teaching site to become knowledgeable about the school's philosophy, the general objectives of instruction for the district, and the community background of the P-12 students.

- Candidates benefit from establishing educational goals with their cooperating teacher and university supervisor.
- Candidates should observe their cooperating teacher's teaching techniques and classroom procedures, paying particular attention to strategies for managing homework, test, quizzes, and other student work.
- Candidates are encouraged to become familiar with students by learning their names and about their interests.
- Candidates should practice administrative routines such as maintenance, taking attendance and tardies, school schedule, duties, and grading platforms.
- **Candidates should learn about the school's emergency care procedures, safety procedures, and other relevant protocols by their cooperating teacher and university supervisor.**
- Candidates should discuss with their cooperating teacher pupils with Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs).
- Candidates should become acquainted with the textbook(s), reference materials, course outlines, and other instructional materials used by their cooperating teacher.
- Candidates should familiarize themselves with resources in the library, audiovisual department, and computer/technology resource room.

3. Teaching Schedule

After a brief orientation period (the length of which may differ by subject and grade level), cooperating teachers will give their student teachers regular teaching assignments. Most cooperating teachers gradually add to these first assignments, leading to the student teachers' take-over of full-time teaching and full-time management of other classroom responsibilities. Student teachers need to know the tentative schedule that their cooperating teachers have planned for their weekly teaching responsibilities. However, the actual program of teaching assignments will depend on each student's demonstration of their readiness to assume each new responsibility.

The student teaching experience introduces students to the variety of tasks required of teachers. Students should use every opportunity to observe and participate in all the activities associated with teaching. Student teachers will be expected to become proficient at performing activities including:

C. Documentation of Student Teaching

Weekly Teaching Schedule

Student teachers inform their university supervisors weekly 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. Student teachers share their schedules and any changes with their university supervisors.

Clock Hours

Each week throughout the term, student teachers are expected to record their hours for student teaching using the Clock Hour Form found on their tk20 account. Candidates must show the actual hours for each area indicated (e.g., direct instruction, routine duties).

D. Planning

1. Lesson Planning

Student teachers must write formal lesson plans throughout the student teaching experience unless otherwise directed by the university supervisor. Candidates must follow the Education Department's lesson plan format when submitting lesson plans for coursework unless otherwise instructed.

**Cooperating teachers may prefer student teachers use the school district's format if it is comparable.

E. Evaluation of Teaching

- 1) Formative Evaluation – Student teachers must receive evaluation and guidance if maximum progress is achieved throughout the student teaching term. Cooperating teachers should provide written feedback frequently for student teachers, for example, after significant teaching experiences or after other essential assignments. Written feedback (1) allows students to reread cooperating teachers' comments for further reflection, (2) assists university supervisors in assessing the progress made by student teachers in between the supervisors' visits, and (3) provides documentation of candidates' work. The comments are the basis of daily or frequent conferences between student teachers and their cooperating teachers. Feedback generally includes areas of strength and suggestions for improvement. As student teachers progress, reflective questions can replace more directive comments to help students develop the critical skill of self-evaluation.

There are several effective ways for cooperating teachers to provide written evaluations of student teachers' instructional abilities.

In addition to ongoing types of formative evaluation, cooperating teachers are expected to complete student teaching evaluations at the midterm and final. The results are used at the midpoint for an in-depth conference emphasizing areas of strength and areas needing more improvement.

- 2.) Summative Evaluation – After the student teaching placement, cooperating teachers provide summative evaluations of their students' overall performance found on tk20.
- 3.) Evaluation by the University Supervisor – Throughout the student teaching term, university supervisors will observe their assigned student teachers on five to seven occasions. Supervisors complete evaluations of the observations using one of the university forms and submitting the report on tk20. The evaluations are the basis for conferences held between university supervisors and student teachers. Copies of the assessments are on tk20.

F. Grading

Teacher candidates will be evaluated in the following ways:

1. *Approximately once every two weeks*, the university supervisor will observe the teaching candidate. These observations will focus on the candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions (e.g., lesson planning, content area knowledge, teaching style, and classroom management). The supervisor will prepare a narrative record of their observations and share it with the teaching candidate at a post-observation conference. During this time, the supervisor will share strategies to help the student understand the strengths and areas of need in their classroom practice and offer guidance to help them improve all facets of their teaching.
2. The cooperating teacher, university supervisor, and the teaching candidate will complete an online midterm and final evaluation report. A link will be sent directly to the cooperating teacher. Both the university supervisor and teacher candidate will log in to their Tk20 account.

Credit for student teaching is the responsibility of the university supervisors as the assigned instructor. Grading decisions are based on supervisors' observations of students' work throughout the term, ongoing consultations with cooperating teachers, and written evaluations and proficiency ratings on the midterm and final assessments.

G. Professional Relationships

Professional Relationships with the Cooperating Teacher

Student teachers must work closely with their cooperating teachers who wish to assist and guide students as they prepare for their teaching assignments. While classwork during student teaching is a joint responsibility, cooperating teachers are the individuals who are ultimately responsible for the academic progress of their students. Close collaboration between cooperating teachers and student teachers is crucial to serving the students' interests in the classroom.

As guests in their cooperating teachers' classrooms, student teachers need to uphold and maintain their cooperating teachers' policies. Furthermore, student teachers need to remember that they are not in the school to judge their cooperating teachers; instead, it is the

role of the cooperating teacher to evaluate the work of student teachers. Students need to have their instructional plans and methods approved by their cooperating teachers before they are implemented.

Professional and Nurturing Relationships with P-12 Students

Student teachers need to maintain a friendly, nurturing but objective, and professional attitude towards students. Interest in students, their problems, and their needs is an essential mark of an effective teacher. However, the developing relationship between student teachers and their students should be professional, with student teachers remembering that they are responsible for everything in the classroom when they oversee the activity or instructional segment.

Professional Relationships with Faculty and Staff Member

Student teachers need to meet and interact with as many faculty and staff members as appropriate and possible at the student teaching site. Professional acquaintances and contacts, and informal associations are essential as student teachers transition from candidate to the role of teacher. Faculty rooms are often conducive to exciting and professional discussions, but student teachers are wise to use discretion when voicing personal views.

IV. The Cooperating Teacher

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. Daily co-planning with cooperating teachers offers teacher candidates essential opportunities to develop proficiencies.

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 consider different school situations and are modified as necessary. A basic assumption underlying the guideline 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 guidelines or policies can be directed to the university supervisors of the Coordinator of Educational and Clinical Experiences.

B. Teaching Experience

Initial teaching assignments ordinarily involve duties involving only a portion of a class or relatively less complex teaching activities. However, student teachers from Eastern Connecticut State University have had several field/clinical placements or other teaching

experiences before the student teaching term. Many student teachers will be ready to advance to more complex assignments reasonably early in the semester. Student teachers can progress in their instructional responsibilities as rapidly as their cooperating teachers feel prepared. Development cannot occur without suitable opportunities for teaching, followed by reflection on the part of student teachers and conferences between student teachers and cooperating teachers.

1. Adequate Teaching Experiences

- a) Total Teaching Time – Student teachers need both continuity of teaching experiences and sufficient experiences during the student teaching term. They need adequate experiences with full-time teaching, observation, and reflection time to acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential for assuming their responsibilities as regular members of the teaching profession. Student teachers are expected to log their clock hours during student teaching to be reviewed and confirmed by the cooperating teacher.
- b) Take-over Student teachers should be progressing **toward four to six weeks of full-time teaching and classroom responsibility to receive credit**. The rapidity with which student teachers add new classes or subjects and related duties depends on the progress students demonstrate. Cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and teacher candidates develop a schedule of how and when their student teachers will assume responsibilities,

Student Teachers in Two Placements – Students who have been assigned two placements are generally ready to assume some teaching responsibilities from the beginning of their time in the second student teaching site. Moreover, second placement student teachers are expected to take full responsibility for the classroom and courses/subjects more quickly than student teachers in their first placement. Cooperating teachers who are uncertain about whether the teaching assignments are adequate for their student teachers should discuss this situation with their student teachers and the university supervisors.

2. Varying Instructional Strategies

Student teachers will benefit from experiences using various instructional strategies, procedures, technology, and materials. Not only does this approach develop students' teaching creativity, but it also allows them to discover the relative effectiveness of various strategies for different types of students, content, and class sizes. Considerable freedom may be afforded to student teachers who appear to be professionally ready for it. Still, cooperating teachers will need to use their good judgment in these situations based on their knowledge of their pupils and their student teachers' progress. At no time should such experimentation with strategies be permitted to stand in the way of students' progress since the needs of children and youth are of primary importance.

3. Conflicts Between Theory and Practice

Occasionally conflicts may develop between the educational theories that the student teachers acquire in their university course, their interpretation of given theories, and the classroom practices in a specific teaching site. Where conflicts appear to be developing, cooperating teachers need to prevent student teachers from becoming confused and frustrated. An informal discussion to clarify misunderstandings is often constructive. Applying educational theory to the classroom calls for professional insight the inexperienced student teachers don't usually possess. Therefore, cooperating teachers may wish to confer with the university supervisor if problems arise regarding this matter.

4. Additional Teaching Responsibilities

Within reason, student teachers should be allowed to participate in all phases of their cooperating teachers' work through actual experiences rather than only through observation. Listed below are suggested responsibilities and activities with which student teachers should become familiar.

- a) Evaluation Techniques – Students need to experience developing and grading rubrics, quizzes, and tests.

Students should take attendance, assist in recording grades, and preparing report cards.

School Duties – Student teachers should assist their cooperating teachers with activities such as bus duty, lunch duty, recess duty, study hall monitoring, the organization of a school event

- b) Meetings and Events – Student teachers should accompany their cooperating teacher to the various conferences, such as interdisciplinary meetings for special needs students, PTA meetings, extracurricular activities, and professional development experiences.
- c)

C . Conferences Regarding the Progress of Student Teaching

1. Conferences Between Cooperating Teachers and Student Teachers

In addition to the written feedback provided to student teachers' lessons, cooperating teachers should meet with their student teachers for daily conferences when there are few interruptions. The lesson or lessons evaluated during the day can be used as the basis for the discussion. Student teachers should be treated in a sensitive yet professional and candid manner in the conferences.

At the beginning of the term, student teachers may need more prescriptive advice. However, as student teachers mature, they need to be guided toward self-evaluation. It is beneficial for cooperating teachers to ask guiding questions that students need to be asking themselves at some point: "Would you use the same approach/materials again with this lesson and this class?" "Why?" "Can you think of an alternative approach to this lesson that might be equally or more effective with this content or this group?" "I did not think that this part went well during the lesson. Why do you think there was the difficulty? What else could have been done?"

Frequently, student teachers are more critical of the overall lesson than are their cooperating teachers. Some student teachers may express their lack of self-confidence through defensive attitudes. However, student teachers need to become reflective, insightful, and honest about their performance to develop as professionals. This self-evaluation is the goal that cooperating teachers and university supervisors seek in their conferences with student teachers.

2. Conferences Between Cooperating Teachers and University Supervisors

- a) Ongoing Conferences – Cooperating teachers and university supervisors can confer student teachers' progress through conversations, telephone calls, written notes, and electronic messages throughout the student teaching term. Unless there are problem situations or questions that need to be answered on time, most conferences between cooperating teachers and university supervisors occur during the biweekly visits that supervisors make to observe student teachers.
- b) Special Conferences – If a student-teacher is not making satisfactory progress, the university supervisor must **be informed as soon as possible**, mainly if the student teacher's inability to complete the student teaching term. This contact is vital because the successful completion of student teaching is directly related to a student teacher's future as a professional educator. Many problems can be corrected easily and are handled promptly. Cooperating teachers may wish to arrange a private discussion with the university supervisor or desire a conference involving themselves, the supervisor, and the student-teacher.
- c) 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 particular student teacher, the university supervisor, and the principal of the respective teaching site. The cooperating teacher should not demean the student-teacher or predispose the student to failure by discussing the student's progress with other faculty members, staff, paraprofessionals, or other persons inside or outside the building.

D. Stipend for Cooperating Teachers

In appreciation for cooperating teachers' professional guidance during the student teaching term, the University offers a stipend to each cooperating teacher. Request forms are sent to the cooperating teacher's email. The stipends are issued within six weeks of the end of the semester.

IV. Administrative Personnel at the Student Teaching Site

A. Role of the Administrative Personnel

School administrators foster professional norms of competence and quality learning environments for teachers and students. Administrators do the following:

- Oversees the process of identification of quality placement classrooms for student teachers
- Include student teachers in scheduled meetings, orientation training, and staff development activities, as appropriate
- Serve as an intellectual resource for cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and student teachers
- Align organizational structures and help to reinforce the staged goals of school (e.g., ensures that cooperating teachers have access to available technology training and application within the classroom)
- Support supervisors, cooperating teachers, and others to improve instructional outcomes
- Involve student teachers as part of the community
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to help parents participate in and understand the goals of student teaching
- Work for continuous school improvement and the professional growth of administration, faculty, and student teachers

B. Selection and Qualifications of Cooperating Teachers

Teachers eligible to serve as cooperating teachers are subject to approval by school administration and the designated mentoring team. Among the criteria to consider in the selection process are the following requirements stipulated by the state:

- a) Cooperating teachers must have completed TEAM training, expected when otherwise mutually agreed upon with the University
- b) 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
- c) Cooperating teachers must be certified in the area that the student-teacher is pursuing;
- d) Cooperating teachers must have a record of positive impact of P-K-12 student learning; and
- e) Returning cooperating teachers must have a record of positive impact on the development of student teachers.

The following additional criteria are valuable in the choice of an effective cooperating teacher:

1. Commitment to the student teaching program at the Eastern Connecticut State University
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 the student teacher
5. Commitment to continuing professional development
6. Willingness to attend the University's cooperating teacher training and professional development sessions.

C . Principal's Relationships with University Faculty

Open communication needs to be maintained among principals, the Coordinator of Educational and Clinical Experiences, and university supervisors assigned to the buildings for which those principals are responsible. University supervisors and the Coordinator of Educational and Clinical Experiences welcomes comments and suggestions about the Eastern Connecticut State University student teaching program. Feedback from the principals is beneficial to the University's commitment to preparing exemplary teachers for the schools. Principals and other school district personnel are welcome to contact the Coordinator of Educational and Clinical Experiences and the university supervisors at any time regarding concerns that have arisen with student teachers or ideas for improving student teaching arrangements between the districts and the University.

D. Range of Expected Experiences

The experiences and abilities of student teachers vary considerably. Teaching assignments should expect maximum growth, building upon the strengths of the student-teacher while diminishing the weakness. **The Connecticut Common Core of Teaching standards** should guide experiences and best practices within the profession and general expectations for teachers within the school.

The focus of the student teaching experience should be on **quality and not quantity** to support student teachers' growth toward becoming effective educators who can positively impact the learning, growth, and development of Pre-K-12 students.

Student teachers will assume responsibility commensurate with ability and will probably begin teaching one class. A student teacher should maintain a reasonable schedule to experience teaching all subjects for which the cooperating teacher is responsible and expand their repertoire of instructional competence.

The student teacher's assigned classes/subjects changed periodically to gain more experience and adjust to varied class sizes, abilities, and personalities; if a student-teacher is successful, they may benefit from teaching classes of other sections or subjects.

While co-teaching is encouraged, near the end of the experience, as success and confidence are evident, student teachers should be assigned to teach the cooperating teacher's entire schedule for four to six weeks.

F. The Professional Development Plan

Suppose a candidate is rated unsatisfactory or is recognized as needing improvements by a supervising faculty, cooperating teacher, or a school principal. In that case, the candidate must be provided with a professional development plan with the approval of

CARE. The professional development plan serves as an additional support mechanism to foster growth and represents an intervention to assist the candidate in meeting the student teaching proficiencies. The professional development plan is not a punitive action; however, if adequate growth is not demonstrated, the candidate may be in jeopardy of dismissal from the program.

The professional development plan shall consist of clear guidelines for improvement to include, at minimum, goals, rationale(s), activities, milestones, resources, and a statement of consequences if evidence of growth is not adequately demonstrated.

While the professional development plan is for use during field practicums and clinical experiences, it may be implemented at an appropriate time during a program of study. However, if initiated by faculty during any clinical experience, the professional development plan is typically offered no later than the mid-point of a placement. Each professional development plan is individualized, and the final approval rests with CARE. A copy of the plan shall remain on file with the Education Unit.

VI. Candidate Learning Outcomes

Domain I: Intentional Teaching: We believe that intentional teaching and its important corollary — intentional learning — necessitate viewing learning as the predetermined and actively sought goal of education

- Candidates demonstrate a positive and reflective disposition towards intentional planning and teaching practices that are appropriate for diverse learners
- Candidates demonstrate the ability to identify discipline-specific content knowledge and skills, develop and implement evidence-based, inclusive instructional practices that engage all students and improve student achievement
- Candidates develop effective classroom environments that nurture collaborative learning and self-efficacy
- Candidates identify and utilize educational technology and other digital resources to enhance the learning experience of all students and to transform their own instructional practices
- Candidates develop and integrate learning experiences that require students' use of critical thinking skills, problem-solving, and diverse forms of communication

Domain II: Data Literacy: We believe that data literacy offers a dedicated pathway towards understanding the abilities and needs of all students and offers a means to improve students' growth and development across all curricular areas

- Candidates use and/or adapt/design qualitative and quantitative assessments that directly align with the learning goals of content in the discipline
- Candidates organize, analyze, interpret and graphically display data on student growth
- Candidates triangulate data from multiple sources to determine student learning and guide planning and teaching

- Candidates use both classroom-wide and individual student data to understand learning and development and to inform and adjust instruction
- Candidates analyze student data — including pre-and post-instruction assessments — to determine the impact of their teaching
- Candidates demonstrate reflective and interpersonal abilities to become active members of a data team
- Candidates demonstrate a positive disposition toward data collection and articulate its importance in teaching and learning

Domain III: Cultural Competence: We believe that cultural competence includes both understanding and appreciating cultural, learner, and linguistic diversity but also practicing a pedagogy that views school-family relationships as partnerships in learning

- Candidates demonstrate deep caring, commitment, and empathy for children and families of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds
- Candidates articulate the positive influences of culture on students' learning and development
- Candidates demonstrate culturally responsive teaching by incorporating the strengths, interests, histories, and needs of families of diverse cultures in their planning, teaching, and assessment
- Candidates adapt teaching and learning experiences to the linguistic, social, and learning styles and needs of children of diverse backgrounds
- Candidates honor all family languages and understand the importance of preserving language as a fundamental part of culture
- Candidates proactively promote positive cross-cultural peer relationships and openly and directly address instances of bias as they arise in the classroom
- Candidates apply their knowledge of culture in their communication with and involvement of families in school
- Candidates monitor and address their own cultural biases and recognize and articulate the influences of their own families and cultures on their beliefs and professional practices

Domain IV: Professional Practice and Leadership: We believe that across all coursework and clinical practices, our candidates must demonstrate compassion and dedication to all students that are earnest, professional, and mindful.