

Cooperating Teacher & Mentor Teacher Requirements



Sul Ross State University
Department of
Education 2024 - 2025

Department of Education & Undergraduate Program Professors

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Dear Cooperating/Mentor Teacher:

Thank you for your service as a mentor to SRSU student teachers. Your role is critical in the development of the student teacher's perceptions and perspective of teaching. Student teachers have worked very hard to reach this point in their education and your enthusiasm and optimism will be contagious.

All of us at Sul Ross State University have set high expectations for our teacher candidates. We know that you will too, while guiding them and providing the appropriate level of support needed to allow student teachers to develop their own philosophy of teaching.

We look forward to the partnership with you throughout the semester and are available at any time to discuss concerns or thoughts about the student teaching experience. Again, thank you for your participation in this experience, and we all look forward to a productive and successful semester.

"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." -Benjamin Franklin

Student Teacher, Clinical Teacher, Student Intern...

What's the Difference?

- Student Teacher
 - Traditional, undergraduate
 - 14-week, unpaid placement w/cooperating teacher
- Clinical Teacher
 - Graduate student enrolled in postbacc program
 - 14-week, unpaid placement w/cooperating teacher
- Student Intern
 - Student enrolled in the SRSU Master of Education – Alternative Certification (M.Ed. Alt. Cert) program.
 - Seeking teacher certification through an alternative route
 - Teacher of Record, paid, 1-year internship w/mentor teacher



Cooperating Teacher or Mentor Teacher: Which Are You?

- Cooperating Teacher
 - If you have been assigned a student or clinical teacher, you are referred to as the Cooperating Teacher
- Mentor Teacher
 - If you have been assigned to oversee a graduate level, you are referred to as the Mentor Teacher



What does a Cooperating Teacher or Mentor need to know and be able to do?

I. The Cooperating Teacher/Mentor:

- 1 . Has theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching and learning for both adults and children.
- 2 . Understands learning in both children and adults.
- 3 . Identifies the range of learning and performance problems and successes.
- 4 . Models specific strategies with diverse students to overcome learning and performance problems and encourage success.

II. Understands the theoretical and practical aspects of mentoring, observation of novice educators, and providing feedback.

1. Stays in frequent contact with the novice
- 2 . Provides professional guidance for the novice
 - a. Identifies a range o f problems and successes
 - b. Provides strategies for improvement
- 3 . Provides specific feedback t o the novice in a timely manner for professional improvement or growth

III. Understands the functions and methods of K- 12 public and private schools.

- 1 . Models professional ethics, classroom discipline strategies, and time management techniques.
- 2 . Models various teaching strategies with diverse students in K- 12 schools.
- 3 . Models lesson planning, material selection, and assessment of K- 12 students.
- 4 . Models professional communication skills with colleagues, parents, students, and community members
- 5 . Guides the novice in understanding school culture.

IV. Is responsible in executing his o r her professional responsibilities.

- 1 . Models best practices in the classroom
 - a) Models maintenance o f accurate records
 - b) Models advocacy for students
 - c) Models service to the school
 - d) Models reflection
 - e) Models continued professional development
 - f) Models flexibility
- 2 . Provides frequent informal coaching for the novice
- 3 . Communicates with the novice, the field supervisor and the campus principal about the progress o f the novice.

Providing Feedback

Providing student teachers and interns with feedback is a critical component of the overall experience and is essential for growth. While feedback can be a very meaningful tool, delivered in the wrong manner it can produce counterproductive results. Below are some tips provided by Karen Irmsher for providing student teachers and interns with constructive feedback:

- Focus on observable behavior without attaching judgment, accusations, or generalizations.
- Feedback should be timely.
- Although immediate feedback is optimal, sometimes the situation is not appropriate.
- Paraphrase when possible. For example:
 - What I hear you saying is...
 - Tell me what you mean when you...
 - Do I understand correctly that you mean...?

The Role of the University Field Supervisor

- Each student, regardless whether they are a Student Teacher, Clinical Teacher, or Student Intern, will be assigned a University Field Supervisor.
- The University Field Supervisor will work in conjunction with the Student Teacher, Clinical Teacher, or Intern to schedule site visits to conduct observations.
- The University Field Supervisor must adhere to the following observation requirements:

Student/Clinical Teachers:

- Four, FORMAL, 45-minute observations with an Interactive Conference.
- Three, INFORMAL, coaching sessions of 15 minutes or more

Student Interns:

- Three, FORMAL, 45-minute observations with an Interactive Conference for the Intern's first semester, and two, formal, 45- minute observations with an Interactive Conference, second semester.
- Three, INFORMAL, coaching sessions of 15 minutes or more each semester.

Additional observations may be scheduled at the discretion of the University Field Supervisor , as needed.

University Field Supervisors

- Dr. Jeanne Qvarnstrom jqvarnstrom@sulross.edu
- Dr. Diana Rodriguez drodriguez5@sulross.edu
- Ms. Melissa Wash melissa.oliver@sulross.edu
- Ms. Lisa Estrada lisa.estrada@sulross.edu
- Dr. Melissa Wesney melissa.wesney@sulross.edu
- Dr. Maria Gear maria.gear@sulross.edu



Code of Ethics

A copy of the Code of Ethics for Texas Educators can be found in the Student/Clinical Teacher handbook. It is important that students frequently review the code and adhere to its contents.



Attendance & Punctuality

- The importance of both attendance and punctuality are heavily emphasized throughout the Teacher Education Program. Students are taught to never leave their cooperating teacher unprepared and always plan ahead for an absence.
- Detailed information regarding absences can be found in the Student Teacher Handbook.



Cell Phone/Electronic Device Use Policy

- Student/clinical teachers will refrain from using their phone or other electronic device during instructional times, unless directly related to the delivery of instruction and lessons. Personal use of phones, tablets, and/or laptops will be prohibited unless prior arrangements have been made between the cooperating teacher and the student/clinical teacher.
- The cooperating teacher has been advised that any student/clinical teacher using electronic device in an unauthorized manner (without prior approval or related to classroom instruction) must adhere to the following:
 - 1st Offense: Verbal reminder of the electronic use rules during instructional hours.
 - 2nd Offense: Formal removal from the Teacher Education Program.
 - Students will be advised to drop the Teacher Education Program and change to a Non-Certification Degree.

Evaluation of the Student/Clinical Teacher

- The Cooperating Teacher will complete observations throughout the placement of the student/clinical teacher.
- The Student/Clinical Teacher is responsible for facilitating the exchange of paperwork between the Cooperating Teacher and University Field Supervisor.



Evaluation of the Intern

Mentor Teachers will be required to conduct three evaluations of interns each semester for a total of 6 evaluations for the year.

All Interns are assigned to the district as the Teacher Of Record; therefore, they are responsible for all required district evaluations, ie. T-TESS.

If the Mentor Teacher ever has reason to believe that satisfactory progress is not being made towards certification by the Intern, it is the responsibility of the Mentor Teacher to contact the University Field Supervisor.

Student Teacher & Interns School Day TAC 228.2

§228.2

The new definition of school day specifies that conference periods, lunch periods, professional development, and extracurricular activities do not count as part of the school day for purposes of determining the length of a clinical teaching or internship experience. Candidates are required to complete 490 hours of student teaching.

§228.101(b)(5)(A) requires, at a minimum, *field supervisors must provide informal observations and ongoing coaching, informed by the areas identified for improvement in the formal post-observation conference, at least three times per semester for at least 15 minutes for candidates in clinical teaching, internships, and practicum assignments*, and must include observation and feedback on targeted skills.

§228.101(b)(5)(B), requires that the *first informal observation must occur within the first six weeks* of the clinical teaching or internship assignment and *must be in person*, while providing flexibility for the remainder of informal observations to be conducted in person or virtually.

Resources for Mentors and Mentees

<http://www.teachers.net/gazette/FEB09/portner/>

McGee, Inger Evette. “Developing Mentor Teachers to Support Student Teacher Candidates.” In *SRATE Journal* Vol. 28.1 (2019) 23-31.

Curcio, Rachelle and Alyson Adams. “The Development of Mentoring Partnerships: How A Shared Learning Experience Enhanced the Final Internship.” In *SRATE Journal* Vol. 28.1 (2019) 1-8.

Izadinia, Mahsa. “From Swan to Ugly Duckling? Mentoring Dynamics and Preservice Teachers’ Readiness to Teach.” In *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* Vol. 42.7 (2017) 65-83.

Strieker, Toni et al. “Using Discourse Analysis to Understand the Relationships and Practices of Pre-Service Co-Teachers.” In *Georgia Educational Researcher* Vol. 14.1 (2017) 40-67.

*Cooperating/Mentor Teacher,
Please fill out Department of Education Verification Form
and send to AlpineEducation@sulross.edu.

Note:

The verification form can be found as an attachment to this email.