

Texas Christian University  
Cooperating Teacher Handbook



Spring 2024

The Texas Christian University College of Education appreciates your willingness to serve as a Cooperating Teacher for our students.

Cooperating teachers hold a key position among teacher educators. Studies reveal that teachers describe their student teaching experience as having had a profound influence in determining the kind of teacher they will become. Cooperating teachers are in a unique position to induct newcomers into the profession and to pass on the “torch of experience” to those who will follow in their work and service. This responsibility is a highly significant one and we appreciate the commitment to this school community and university partnership.

Qualifications: TEA requires that cooperating teachers have at least 3 years of classroom experience, a valid SBEC certification, and evidence of contribution to student success. ([TAC §228.35](#))

The role of the cooperating teacher is to TEACH the candidate what they know about the teaching profession, COACH the candidate so that the clinical (student) teacher’s skills can develop in a supportive environment, and provide opportunities for the teacher candidate to REFLECT on the many aspects of the teaching and learning process. By encouraging the teacher candidate to analyze his/her own progress and identify problems with possible solutions, the transfer into the role of decision-maker in his/her own classroom will be more easily made. Providing a climate for open and honest discussion of questions and concerns will help to create an environment of growth and support system the teacher candidate needs in order to be successful.

## Educator Preparation Directory

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## Clinical Teaching – Roles and Responsibilities

### Role of Team Member: Clinical Teacher (Student Teacher)

Clinical teaching is a full-time job. This includes responsibility for the entire class plus any out-of-class responsibilities. Daily attendance and preparation should reflect the seriousness of this responsibility. Clinical Teachers are guests in the assigned school, and thus supporting and following all of the school policies is an expectation. In general, clinical teachers should expect to join the life of the school.

The clinical teacher will:

- Dress, talk, and act as a professional.
- Exemplify professionalism in dealing with confidential information.
- Apply professional ethics to relations with students, staff, special teachers, building and grounds maintenance staff, office staff, and other school community members.
- Assume responsibility for the quality of the experience, seek out new involvement possibilities, ask for new assignments or responsibilities as soon as possible, and display self-reliance, desire, enthusiasm and initiative.
- Take part in out-of-class activities such as PTA/PTO, faculty and professional meetings, book fairs, etc.
- Will not serve as a substitute teacher.
- Be on time and prepared each day, arriving when the cooperating teacher arrives or earlier and staying until the end of the cooperating teacher contract day.
- Notify the cooperating teacher and the TCU Field Supervisor as soon as possible if they are sick or in case of an emergency. Absences MUST be made up during the semester and documentation is required (doctor's note, etc.). Make-up days are a discussion with the Cooperating Teacher and TCU Field Supervisor in order to meet the required Educator Preparation Program and TEA Clinical Teaching days.
- Communicate with the TCU Field Supervisor about problems, progress and visitation/observation times. If there are ANY concerns or problems, discuss them with the Cooperating Teacher first. If the issues cannot be resolved in this manner, call, text or e-mail the TCU Field Supervisor immediately!
- Develop detailed written lesson plans in advance of delivery of lessons.
- Review and discuss the lesson plans with the cooperating teacher before the lesson begins.
- Observe the instructional strategies of the cooperating teacher and the classroom management techniques employed.
- Learn the names of the students in the assigned class or classes, as well as the relevant staff members of the school.

- Ask to test new ideas within the structure the cooperating teacher has established, making them available to the cooperating teacher several days in advance of a given lesson.
- Be continually involved in the self-evaluation process. This includes examining the goals and outcomes of each instructional activity, soliciting feedback with suggestions for improvement, and seeking immediate answers to problems.
- Develop artifacts for self-evaluation of your work, both formative and summative, via TCU Box.

### Role of Team Member: Cooperating Teacher

Within the first two weeks of the placement, a three-way conference is set to meet with your clinical teacher and the TCU field supervisor. Please review the following guidelines in anticipation of the conference so that you can ask for any clarifications.

- Ensure adequate continuity, class contact, and supervision of the clinical teacher program. The clinical teacher should be a part of a teaching team and not a consideration as a replacement for the regular classroom teacher.
- Define the clinical (student) teacher's role in terms of his/her duties and responsibilities. To accomplish this, you should:
  - Conference with the clinical (student) teacher early in the experience to clarify his/her developing role in your classroom.
  - Provide many opportunities for the clinical teacher to observe methods that are appropriate to the teaching profession.
  - Assist the clinical teacher in developing a professional attitude in all of his/her contacts with school and community.
  - Acquaint the student teacher with the campus and district policies and regulations.
  - Clarify the clinical teacher's responsibilities with respect to preparing lesson plans, securing and organizing appropriate materials, and other necessary activities; and
  - Advising the clinical teacher well in advance of the time when any lesson or unit is expected to be taught.
- Ensure the clinical teacher's induction in actual teaching is at a rate that seems appropriate for a student teacher. A helpful model is a 3-phase process:
  - The cooperating teacher directly models planning and lesson teaching,
  - The clinical teacher teaches a comparable lesson using the cooperating teacher's lesson plans, and
  - The clinical teacher plans and teaches a lesson, then a series of lessons.
- Make sure the clinical teacher has planned adequately before permitting to teach. Choose a time to meet daily with your clinical teacher to preview planned lessons and provide feedback and constructive criticisms.
- Keep the clinical teacher informed of progress, making constructive suggestions and criticisms, as necessary. Continue to coach and evaluate the clinical teacher on a regular

basis, even after the student teacher has taken over the teaching responsibilities completely.

- Assist the clinical teacher in reflecting on and analyze his/her teaching practice.
- Review the clinical teacher's daily activities, problems, and successes with the TCU COE field supervisor, who is available to provide assistance in your role of cooperating teacher, and partner with you in clinical supervision. He/she will make an initial visit; conduct four formal observations for clinical teachers assigned a full semester. Other informal visits may be un-announced and should occur bi-weekly, ensuring many opportunities to discuss concerns, but you should feel welcome to contact the supervisor at any time. Do not hesitate to ask for assistance or suggestions. Openly communicate with the TCU field supervisor to ensuring the immediate addressing of any problems or concerns.
- Participate in reviewing the weekly reflection report to describe each week's progress and participation. TEA requires a daily log of your clinical teachers' activities, and incorporate in the weekly report. The clinical teacher will help complete this form, and will share it with the TCU field supervisor weekly.
- If weekly progress becomes a concern, and/or if you have a concern with a clinical teacher's potential for success, you may initiate a supportive intervention using the TCU College of Education form, Academic Performance and Professionalism Warning (APPW). The concern may be academic or relate to the clinical teacher's professional attitude, demeanor, abilities, or preparation.
- If you have a concern with a TCU field supervisor, contact the Director of Field Experience and Community Partnerships directly via phone 817-257-7662 or email.
- At the midpoint (Approximately the 7th week) and at the end of the clinical teacher's assignment, please complete the Benchmark Evaluation Form to be shared with both the field supervisor and the clinical teacher.
- At the end of the placement, please write a letter of reference for your clinical teacher that will go in his/her permanent file and for job applications.

#### TCU Cooperating Teacher Professional Development

TEA and TCU COE require professional development (Cooperating teacher training) each semester that you host a clinical teacher. The program design allows that you may participate sufficiently to meet the minimum requirement to acknowledge your commitment to sponsoring a clinical teacher and the understanding of the TCU COE educator preparation program. We hope that you will learn about best practices for effective mentoring, with opportunities to give feedback regarding TCU's program, and you will receive professional development credit for further participating by completing additional modules. This professional development is accomplished during the initial 3-way conference scheduled by the TCU Field Supervisor

#### Welcome for Cooperating Teachers (Required)

Cooperating teachers will need to complete the Cooperating Teacher Application within the first 15 days of the TCU COE candidate's placement.

## Teaching Experiences

Discuss ideas and lesson plans prior to teaching all lessons. At the beginning of teaching experiences, full length lesson plans are required. If the cooperating teacher deems the clinical teacher is ready, then as new teaching responsibilities are added, the preceding lesson plans may be abbreviated into the form used by practicing teachers on the campus.

### **Lesson Plans and Assessments**

- Lessons should provide differentiation for students' needs (e.g., disabilities, language learning, etc.) and incorporate technology as appropriate.
- Technology should be used to collect, manage, and analyze student assessment data in order to determine when intervention is necessary and appropriate.
- Self-evaluation and reflection regarding the strengths of lessons and what you would change if you could do them over should occur regularly.

### **Total Teach**

- Clinical Student Teachers must have the opportunity to “total teach” for at least 4 full weeks. During this time, the clinical teacher would be responsible for all of the planning, preparation, teaching, and grading.
  - 1 Placement = teach 4 weeks during the latter part of your placement.
  - 2 Placements = teach 2 full weeks in each placement rotation.

### **Wrapping it up**

- It is encouraged to observe (at the campus or within the district with prior approval) in several other areas including special programs (e.g., reading, special education, ESL, etc.) during the last week of the placement.

## Recommended Cycle of Teaching and Classroom Duties

It is recommended the clinical student teacher gradually take on more classroom duties during the first half of the placement, and then gradually release duties back to the cooperating teacher before the placement ends. The following are suggested cycles of classroom duties.

### 7-Week Placement (Repeat for first and second placement)

Week	Classroom Duties
Week 1	Observe Cooperating Teacher
Week 2	Observe CT (75%) and co-teach or work with small groups of students (25%)
Week 3-4	Work with small groups of students (50%) and Total Teach (50%)
Week 5-6	Total Teach (100%) for at least 2 weeks
Week 7	Gradually Release teaching duties back to the CT and observe other special programs

### 14-Week Placement

Week	Classroom Duties
Week 1	Observe Cooperating Teacher
Week 2-3	Observe CT (75%) and co-teach or work with small groups of students (25%)
Week 4-5	Work with small groups of students (50%) and Total Teach (50%)
Week 6-8	Work with small groups of students (25%) and Total Teach (75%)
Week 9-12	Total Teach (100%) for at least 4 weeks
Week 13-14	Gradually Release teaching duties back to the CT and observe other special programs

## Observations/Evaluations and Visits

Regular communication and feedback through observations is an important part of the clinical teaching experience. Both the cooperating teacher and the TCU Field Supervisor have specific roles to play in observing and providing feedback to the clinical student teacher.

- The cooperating teacher will provide ongoing feedback to the clinical student teacher, including completing weekly evaluation reports in a timely manner, a mid-term, and/or a final student teaching benchmark evaluation.
- The TCU field supervisor will be in contact via e-mail, phone, text, or visiting the campus every week.
- The TCU field supervisor will formally evaluate a minimum of four 45-minute teaching experiences. Full-length typed, pre-approved lesson plans from the clinical teacher must be submitted 24 hours prior to the evaluation to the TCU field supervisor.



## Clinical Teaching Documentation Requirements

Responsibility	Weekly Reports	4 Formal Observations	Mid/End Benchmark	TEA Summary Report
<b>TCU COE Clinical (Student) Teacher</b>	Completes	Provides lesson plans	Reviews and signs	Reviews and signs
<b>Cooperating Teacher</b>	Collaborates & Signs	Approves lesson plans	Completes Mid and/or End	Reviews and signs
<b>TCU COE Field Supervisor</b>	Receives copies each week	Conducts Pre-Conference, Observation & Post-Conference	Receives copies at the end of each placement	Maintains and signs
<b>Campus Administrator / Principal</b>	May request copies	Receives copies throughout the semester	Receives copies at the end of each placement	Receives a copy at the end of the placement/ semester
<b>TCU Director of Clinical (Student) Teaching</b>	Has access throughout the semester to documentation via TCU Box and the COE server.			
<b>TCU Director of Accreditation, Certification &amp; Assessment</b>	Has access throughout the semester to documentation via TCU Box and the COE server.			

\*Maintain a copy and submit electronically (PDF format preferred) to the TCU Box. Include the last name of the candidate, first initial, assignment, semester (F=fall / S=spring) and year. Example: *Frog, Super OBS1 S2023*

\*All documentation is archived on the TCU-College of Education server for TEA / Certification