

# USU School of Teacher Education and Leadership Field Experiences Handbook



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School of Teacher Education & Leadership

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Dear Administrators, Mentor Teachers, and Students,

Welcome to the Utah State University Teacher Preparation Program! As the Director of Field Experiences, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to all of you. Our program thrives on the dynamic partnership between our educational institution and the schools in our community, and it is this collaboration that ensures our future educators are well-prepared to make a significant impact in the classroom.

To our esteemed Administrators, your unwavering support and cooperation are pivotal in providing our students with rich practical experiences. Your leadership and guidance within your schools create the environment where our teacher candidates can flourish and develop their skills. We deeply appreciate your commitment to nurturing the next generation of educators.

To our dedicated Mentor Teachers, thank you for opening your classrooms and sharing your expertise with our teacher candidates. Your mentorship is invaluable, offering hands-on guidance and insight that cannot be replicated in a traditional classroom setting. Your role in shaping the professional growth of our teacher candidates is crucial, and your efforts do not go unnoticed.

To our enthusiastic Students, congratulations on taking this significant step towards your teaching career. This journey will be both challenging and rewarding, and we are here to support you every step of the way. Embrace the learning opportunities that come your way and make the most of the practical experiences provided to you. Remember, every classroom experience brings you one step closer to becoming an exceptional educator.

This year promises to be an exciting one, filled with opportunities for growth, learning, and professional development. We encourage all of you to communicate openly, share your experiences, and support one another throughout this journey. Together, we can foster an environment of collaboration and excellence in education.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any member of our team. We are here to ensure that your experience in the Teacher Preparation Program is both enriching and successful.

Once again, welcome to the USU Teacher Preparation Program. Let's make this year an outstanding one!

Warm regards,

Sharla Hart  
Director, Field Experiences  
Teacher Education and Leadership



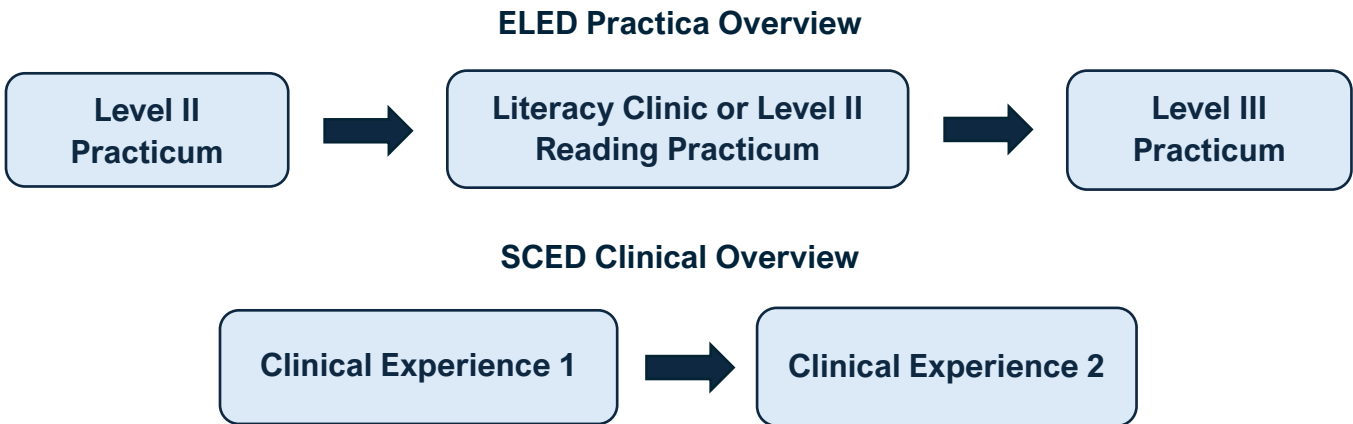
## FIELD EXPERIENCES OVERVIEW

### Teacher Education and Leadership Mission Statement

As a unit within the land grant institution of Utah State University, we geographically dispersed are part of one university. We acknowledge and appreciate the complex contexts that shape our work, and we are committed to furthering the cause of equitable educational opportunity for all students. We aim to prepare students to be informed and influential in local and global communities.

### Practicum and Clinical Experiences Overview

Students in the Elementary Education and Secondary Education program will complete a number of practical experiences before the student teaching semester:



*Please note:* The number of clinical experiences required is dependent on content area – two clinical experiences is typical, but some content areas will require three clinicals.

### Student Teaching Overview

Student teaching is the capstone experience of the Utah State University teacher education program and provides an opportunity for students to continue academic and professional growth. More importantly, the student teaching semester is a crucial step in induction to the teaching profession.

Student teaching is a full-time, co-teaching experience. Initially, student teachers will observe the mentor teacher and assume partial responsibility for student learning. As the semester progresses, students will gradually take on more responsibility until they assume all teaching duties under the direction of a mentor teacher and university supervisor.



## **Purpose**

The purpose of each practical experience is to provide opportunities to develop and evaluate the major areas of teacher practice. Each practicum is designed to provide a gradual increase of responsibility in a classroom setting, leading up to the student teaching semester.

Student teaching requires the constant pursuit of productive curriculum plans, effective teaching strategies, and appropriate use of assessment to provide quality learning for all students. The experience includes formative and summative evaluation of the student teacher's competence in a school setting and is intended to facilitate taking theory into practice.



## PLACEMENTS

Teacher candidates are placed with the goal of providing them with the best possible learning environment. Student teaching must occur in a classroom where there is a teacher certified in the same content area who serves as a mentor teacher. **Under no circumstances** should a teacher candidate arrange their own assignment with a particular teacher or school.

Several factors are considered when determining a student's placement:

- *Student's Request*

The content, level, and school the teacher candidate requests on his/her application form is given sincere consideration. Student teachers may not be placed in a school they have attended or in a school where their siblings, children, or relatives attend or work.

- *Number of Student Teachers*

The number of students teaching in a particular content area during a given year affects the placement options. Also, mentor teachers must have at least three (3) years of full-time teaching experience.

- *Demands of the Public Schools*

The district's and individual school's needs determine final placements. Administration can accept or reject student teaching placement requests based on circumstances.

The final decision for placement of a teacher candidate is the responsibility of the Director of Field Experiences at USU. The director will consider a variety of factors, including those outlined above, to create an opportunity for success in student teaching.

### **International Student Teaching Placement**

Utah State University offers students the opportunity to student teach abroad during the second half of the semester. The countries, costs, and program requirements vary from semester to semester.

Current information about the International Student Teaching program can be found through the USU Office of Global Engagement (linked [here](#)) or by contacting Dr. Amanda Deliman ([Amanda.deliman@usu.edu](mailto:Amanda.deliman@usu.edu)).

*For information about substitute teaching, paraprofessional accommodations, and associate educator agreements, see policies on pages 8–9.*



## ELEMENTARY EDUCATION FIELD EXPERIENCES

Elementary Education students complete three practicum experiences before the student teaching semester, the goal of each being to provide progressively more complex teaching experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, and duration, as well as the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to be an exemplary teacher.

### Level II Practicum

Level II Practicum students can be expected to observe and work with small groups and individual students.

Expectations for Mentor Teachers	Hour/Day Requirements	Departmental Contacts:
Provide opportunities to observe and participate in the classroom as a beginning teacher-in-training.  Required documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timesheet</li> <li>• Final Evaluation Form</li> </ul>	44 total hours  (4 hours per week for 11 weeks)	Logan Faculty instructor: Dr. Emma Mecham <a href="mailto:Emma.mecham@usu.edu">Emma.mecham@usu.edu</a>  Statewide Faculty Instructor: Dr. Shireen Keyl <a href="mailto:Shireen.keyl@usu.edu">Shireen.keyl@usu.edu</a>  Office of Field Experiences: <a href="mailto:Karli.fish@usu.edu">Karli.fish@usu.edu</a>

### Level II-Reading Practicum for Statewide students (Literacy Clinic for Logan Campus students)

Level II-Reading Practicum students can be expected to work with small groups and individual students and to begin teaching whole-class lessons during the practicum experience.

Expectations for Mentor Teachers	Hour/Day Requirements	Departmental Contacts:
Provide opportunities to observe and participate in the classroom as a beginning teacher-in-training, building to whole-class teaching in reading instruction.  Required documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timesheet</li> <li>• Final Evaluation Form</li> </ul>	46 total hours  (4-6 hours per week for 10 weeks)  <i>Statewide configuration only</i>	Logan Literacy Clinic: <a href="https://cehs.usu.edu/teal/centers-and-labs/literacy-clinic/">https://cehs.usu.edu/teal/centers-and-labs/literacy-clinic/</a>  Statewide Faculty instructor: Dr. Marla Robertson <a href="mailto:Marla.robertson@usu.edu">Marla.robertson@usu.edu</a>  Office of Field Experiences: <a href="mailto:Karli.fish@usu.edu">Karli.fish@usu.edu</a>



### Level III Practicum

Level III Practicum students will begin to plan and teach whole-class lessons in science, math, social studies, and language arts.

Expectations for Mentor Teachers	Hour/Day Requirements	Departmental Contacts:
<p>Provide opportunities to lesson plan and teach in each required subject area and offer feedback on lesson planning and delivery.</p> <p>Required documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timesheet</li> <li>• Mid-block Student Self-evaluation</li> <li>• Final Evaluation Form</li> </ul>	<p>3 pre-practicum days, arranged by the student</p> <p>5 weeks of full-time* practicum</p>	<p>Logan Faculty instructor:            Dr. Max Longhurst  <a href="mailto:Max.longhurst@usu.edu">Max.longhurst@usu.edu</a></p> <p>Statewide Faculty Instructor:            Dr. Marla Robertson  <a href="mailto:Marla.robertson@usu.edu">Marla.robertson@usu.edu</a></p> <p>Office of Field Experiences:  <a href="mailto:Karli.fish@usu.edu">Karli.fish@usu.edu</a></p>

\*A full day of practicum is considered to be 30 minutes before the school day starts until 30 minutes after the school day ends.



## SECONDARY EDUCATION FIELD EXPERIENCES

Secondary Education pre-student teaching experiences in public schools are referred to as clinical experiences. These forty-five-hour experiences provide teacher candidates with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in real classrooms in public schools.

Secondary Education students typically take two or more clinical courses for their program of study. Since one purpose of clinical experiences is understanding of 7-12 grade teaching/learning environments, students will generally have both a middle school placement and a high school placement.

### Clinical Experiences

The goal of clinical experiences is for education students to begin to view the classroom and students from the perspective of a teacher. During these experiences, they should observe, practice and reflect on teaching strategies, classroom management and student engagement; they should focus on professional practices and student success.

Expectations for Mentor Teachers	Hour/Day Requirements	Departmental Contacts:
Provide opportunities for the student to observe and participate in the classroom as a teacher-in-training.  Required documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Evaluation Form</li> </ul>	45 total hours (minimum)	Office of Field Experiences: <a href="mailto:Anita.shuman@usu.edu">Anita.shuman@usu.edu</a>



## FIELD EXPERIENCE POLICIES

Teacher candidates are responsible for following the Model Code of Ethics for Educators. In addition to these ethical obligations, please see below program policies for all practical experiences.

### Absence Policy

Practicum-level teacher-candidates are permitted one (1) excused absence, and student teachers are permitted three (3) excused absences during the student teaching experience, for extenuating circumstances (*see full USU policy regarding excused absences [here](#)*).

- Teacher candidates do not have personal leave days.
- Teacher candidates must notify their mentor teacher(s) and university supervisor or practicum instructor as soon as possible *before* the absence.
- All non-school related appointments or commitments must be scheduled outside of contract time.

In extreme circumstances a student may need additional time away from their field experience duties. Additional time off must be approved by the Office of Field Experiences in advance and made up (for example, by adding additional days beyond the normal end date of student teaching).

### Substitute Teaching Policies

Practicum-level students are not authorized to substitute teach in their assigned classrooms. If the regular classroom teacher is absent, a substitute is required to be in the classroom with the practicum student.

- Practicum students actively employed as substitute teachers while completing practicum-level experiences may be considered for paraprofessional accommodations; however, substitute teaching hours may *not* apply towards practicum credit and will require a standard, designated classroom placement.

Student teachers are *only* allowed to substitute in an emergency in their assigned classroom(s) *if* given consent from the university supervisor, mentor teacher(s), and school or district administration.

- Student teachers should register as a substitute with the local agency if they wish to be paid as a substitute. Days spent as a substitute teacher may count toward the student teaching requirement.
- If the student teacher is not substituting and their regular classroom teacher is absent, a substitute is required to be in the classroom with the student teacher.



### **Paraprofessional Accommodations**

Practicum-level ELED students concurrently employed as a paraprofessional in the field are eligible to be placed in their own school of employment and position **IF** applicable, with formal approval of the school or district administration (indicated by a completed Paraprofessional Accommodation Form for each practicum experience).

*Please note:* As a full-time experience, the student teaching semester does not permit for students to also be employed as a paraprofessional.

### **Associate Educator Agreements**

Student teachers may be hired and paid by Utah school districts at full pay. We do not allow student teachers to be paid less than full pay if they are working for the school district as teacher of record. *Please note:* This option is instigated by the school district, not the student teacher.

If you have specific questions, please contact Director Sharla Hart via email at [sharla.hart@usu.edu](mailto:sharla.hart@usu.edu).



## MENTOR TEACHERS

The mentor teacher facilitates the professional experiences of the student teacher and is an integral part of the student teaching experience. Mentor teachers are provided a small honorarium at the end of the student teaching semester.

A detailed timeline for the student teaching semester and further resources for mentor teachers can be found on the TEAL website (*see link under Important Resources*).

### Responsibilities

- Provide relevant experiences for USU students that may include, but are not limited to: observation, classroom activities, teacher responsibilities (all duties), parent/teacher conferences, and professional meetings.
- Support the teacher candidate as they demonstrate adequate knowledge of the content being taught, and provide actionable feedback concerning communication, management, planning, presentation, and assessment skills.
- Observe and critique the student teacher's performance on a frequent and continual basis.
- Support the student teacher in gradually assuming teaching responsibility.
- During the student teaching experience, provide actionable feedback, and complete one summative evaluation.

### Required Formative Observations and Feedback Forms

#### *Elementary Mentor Teachers*

Most Elementary Education student teachers will work with one mentor teacher during the student teaching semester. Mentor teachers should plan on providing feedback and conferencing with the teacher candidate throughout the placement. The teacher candidate will complete a feedback form five (5) times during the semester. This form facilitates reflective thinking, goal setting, and self-efficacy. One summative evaluation will be completed during the last week of student teaching.

Elementary student teachers who are working towards dual endorsement will have one 10-week student teaching placement and 5-week placement with two mentor teachers. Each mentor teacher should complete one formative observation and one Formative Feedback Form. One summative evaluation will be completed by the mentor teacher at the semester. The 10-week placement allows a student teacher time to complete the PPAT in one classroom.



### *Secondary Mentor Teachers*

Most Secondary Education student teachers will work with one mentor teacher. Mentor teachers should plan on providing feedback and conferencing with the teacher candidate throughout the placement. The teacher candidate will complete a feedback form five (5) times during the semester. This form facilitates reflective thinking, goal setting, and self-efficacy. One summative evaluation will be completed during the last week of student teaching.

Secondary student teachers who are working towards endorsement in both their major and their minor will have two student teaching placements and two mentor teachers. Each mentor teacher should provide feedback and conference with the teacher candidate throughout the placement. The teacher candidate will complete a feedback form five (5) times during the semester. This form facilitates reflective thinking, goal setting, and self-efficacy. One summative evaluation will be completed by each mentor teacher at the end of the student teaching experience.



## UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS

The primary role of the university supervisor is to serve as a liaison between the university and the school and to serve as an additional mentor and support to the student teacher during the student teaching experience.

University supervisors are given a small honorarium at the end of the semester and will be reimbursed mileage according to USU policies and procedures.

A detailed timeline for the student teaching semester and further resources can be found on the TEAL website (*see link under Important Resources*).

### **Responsibilities**

- Observe each student teacher and provide constructive criticism and positive feedback.
- Advise and coach student teachers when necessary.
- Advise the Director of Field Experiences or Department Chair of serious concerns with student teachers.

### **Required Formative Observations and Feedback Forms**

University supervisors should observe the student teacher three times and complete a Formative Feedback Form for each observation. A summative evaluation should be completed for each student teacher during the last week of the student teaching experience.



## EVALUATION PROCESS

### Overview

The student teaching requires observation and feedback of the classroom experience. This necessitates the involvement of the student teacher, mentor teacher, and university supervisor in an ongoing process of evaluation. Mentor teachers and university supervisors should be open and honest in providing timely feedback to the student teacher. Classroom teaching observations are designed to assist in the growth and development of a student teacher. Student teachers will be observed regularly throughout the student teaching placement by the mentor teacher and a minimum of three times by the university supervisor. A post-observation conference should be held at the end of each observation.

### Formative Evaluation

Mentor teachers and university supervisors routinely observe and provide informal feedback to student teachers throughout the student teaching semester. Teacher candidates will provide the Director of Field Experiences with documentation of observations and feedback a minimum of five (5) times during the semester. The number of formative observations required of the mentor teacher and university supervisor is outlined in previous sections of the handbook.

Observations typically last 30-45 minutes. You may use the electronic copy of the Student Teaching Evaluation Rubric (*see link under Important Resources*) to document your observation. Download and save the rubric to your desktop before you begin. You may want to take notes of your observation, although they are not required on the Student Teaching Evaluation Rubric (STER). After the observation, score the candidate using the rubric. Please review the STER and your observations with your student teacher. The student teacher is responsible for completing and uploading five (5) Feedback Forms to the student teaching CANVAS course in which they are enrolled. The Office of Field Experience reviews all Feedback Forms during the semester. This formative feedback provides insight into student teacher's progress and allows us to provide additional supports if necessary.

### Summative Evaluation

Near the end of the student teaching experience, the university supervisor and mentor teacher should each complete a summative evaluation and review the results with the student teacher. The summative evaluation is a required document for graduation and licensure. In addition to the grading rubric, the university supervisor and mentor teacher written comments at the end of the evaluation can serve as a letter of recommendation. All summative evaluations must be signed by the student teacher and the evaluator in order for the student teacher to pass student teaching, graduate, and be recommended for licensure.



## Scoring

To pass student teaching, the expected (i.e., required) level of performance on the on the Student Teaching Evaluation Rubric (STER) is two (2) or “demonstrates competency at expected level.” In addition, teacher candidates/student teachers are not expected to score a three (3) on any rows of the rubric; however, teacher candidates/student teachers are not succeeding if they score a zero (0) or one (1) on any row of the rubric. Thus, to succeed a total score must be 70 or higher (minimum of 2 on each item).

Final decisions about passing student teaching are made by the Director of Field Experiences, in consultation, if necessary, with students’ supervisors and mentor teachers.



## TIERED SUPPORT FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES

### Tier 1 Support

One important skill student teachers begin to develop during the student teaching semester is the ability to navigate and contribute to school culture and develop positive, professional relationships with colleagues and supervisors. Student teachers may find that they are unsure of how to handle particular situations, have concerns about their placement or questions about student teaching responsibilities, or encounter a special circumstance that must be addressed. In these situations, student teachers should first discuss their concerns with their supervisor and/or mentor teacher(s). Supervisors and mentor teachers may support you by:

- Identifying resources within the school.
- Facilitating communication with a colleague or principal.
- Providing insight or suggestions for navigating situations and relationships.
- Making necessary accommodations.

### Tier 2 Support

Occasionally, situations arise that need more direction or support from the Office of Field Experiences. Student teachers should use the SOS – Tier 2 protocol to initiate a coaching/collaboration meeting with the Director of Field Experience. Mentor teachers and supervisors may also use this protocol. The required forms for the SOS – Tier 2 protocol can be found on the TEAL website (*see link under Important Resources*).

### Tier 3 Support — Students at Risk of Failure

On occasion, student teachers may have insufficient instructional or classroom management skills, or lack the professional attributes or behaviors necessary for professional educators. When this occurs the mentor teacher(s), university supervisor, and director must decide whether a student teacher should continue in or pass the student teaching experience. The procedures outlined in the *Students at Risk of Failure* policy are designed to help the student teacher, mentor teacher(s), and university personnel in this process.

### Early Termination of Student Teaching/Internship

Student teaching placement and/or participation in the student teaching program may be terminated for cause by the building principal, school district human resources officer, or the Director of Field Experience for serious violations of law, school district or university policies, or for gross insubordination. Before termination occurs, every effort will be made to allow the student teacher/intern to correct the situation. It is the intent of the teacher education program to create a condition wherein each USU student can experience success; however, each student must accept responsibility for his or her own performance and conduct. A student



teacher may be offered a second placement if the Director of Field Experience deems it appropriate.

### **Assumption of Risk**

All classes, programs, and extracurricular activities within the University involve some risk, and certain ones involve travel. The University provides opportunities to participate in these programs on a voluntary basis. Therefore, students should not participate in them if they do not care to assume the risks. Students can ask the respective program leaders/sponsors about the possible risks a program may generate, and if students are not willing to assume the risks, they should not select that program. By voluntarily participating in classes, programs, and extracurricular activities, a student does so at his or her own risk. General information about University Risk Management policies, insurance coverage, vehicle use policies, and risk management forms can be found at <http://www.usu.edu/riskmgt/>.



## IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Direct links to the resources below and more can be found online at:

<https://cehs.usu.edu/teal/undergraduate/ofe>

- Model Code of Ethics for Educators
- Level II Practicum Handbook
- Student Teaching Evaluation Rubric
- SOS Form – Tier 1, 2, and 3 Protocol