



Quick-Start Guide

STUDENT TEACHING

OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION, PLACEMENT & LICENSURE
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN SCIENCES



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Dear Student Teachers, Cooperating Teachers and Supervisors,

I hope this message finds you well and excited about the journey ahead. As the Director of Field Experience, it is my privilege to welcome you to this transformative chapter in your professional development and to thank you for your commitment to shaping the future of education.

To our student teachers: Congratulations on reaching this milestone in your academic and professional career, the faculty and instructors have prepared you well! The field experience is a cornerstone of your teacher preparation, offering the opportunity to bridge theory with practice. It is a time to learn, grow, and discover your unique teaching style. Be open to feedback, embrace challenges, and remember that every interaction and lesson is an opportunity to refine your craft. Ask questions. Seek feedback. This is your chance to make a lasting impact on the lives of students while gaining invaluable hands-on experience.

To our cooperating teachers and university supervisors: Thank you for your dedication and willingness to mentor the next generation of educators. Your guidance, expertise, and encouragement play a pivotal role in the success of our student teacher candidates. As a mentor and supervisor, you provide not only professional support but also inspiration and perspective that will shape the careers of these emerging educators. Your partnership in this endeavor is deeply appreciated and critical to the success of this profession.

This experience is built on collaboration, mutual respect, and shared goals. As you embark on this journey together, I encourage open communication, flexibility, and a shared commitment to student success. Together, we can ensure a meaningful and impactful experience for all involved.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or our office with any questions, concerns, or support you may need throughout this process. We are here to support you every step of the way.

Best wishes for a rewarding and successful field experience. I am confident that this will be a transformative and inspiring time for each of you. Embrace this journey with passion and dedication, knowing that you are shaping the future – one student at a time.

Best,

The Director of Field Experience

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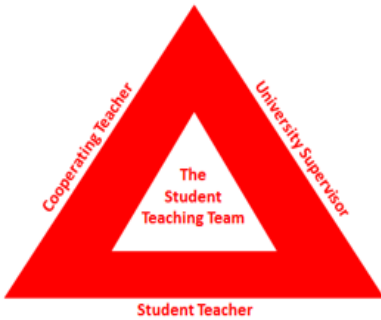
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The Student Teaching Team



The student teacher, university supervisor, and cooperating teacher work as a team to determine the pace at which the student teacher can progress through the experience. It is essential that this team create a partnership based on sound communication, honesty, and support throughout the experience. Student teachers are expected to progress through the early phases of

this experience to the point where they will take on the full-time responsibilities of being a classroom teacher. During the last component of the experience the student teacher will be transition the lead role back to the cooperating *teacher*.

Primary Student Teaching Team Responsibilities

Student Teachers

Student Teachers are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with that of a professional educator. Student teachers should:

- Become an integral part of the instructional staff at the school; seek innovative ways to contribute
- Prepare sound lesson plans and submit them to the cooperating teacher for approval well in advance of actual classroom teaching, and to the university supervisor as required, including substitute lesson plans needed for illness or other absences
- Proactively seek feedback and ask questions to deepen your understanding of the reasoning behind specific actions, lessons, units, and school programs
- Dress professionally as appropriate for the school culture and as a representative of the College of Education and Human Sciences
- Participate in open, honest communication with the cooperating teacher and university supervisor

Cooperating Teachers

Cooperating teachers have four primary responsibilities:

- Serve as role models/mentors
- Share expertise and experience,
- Encourage the developing professional to reflect on the educational process and,
- Define the student teacher's role in terms of their duties and responsibilities

University Supervisors

University supervisors provide guidance and support to the student teacher and cooperating teacher. Supervisors are expected to:

- Assist the student teacher and cooperating teacher in all phases of student teaching
- Make a minimum of five on-site visits to the student teacher to ensure adequate supervision and evaluation. ***ELED/SPED majors require a minimum of six on-site visits, 3 in each placement.*
- Provide specific feedback to student teacher(s) that is precise, immediate and will help to yield immediate improvement and growth
- Participate in open, honest communication with the cooperating teacher and student teacher; be available when needed
- When needed, serve as a liaison between the student teacher, cooperating teacher and the Director of Field Experience

***The full list of student, cooperating teacher and supervisor responsibilities can be found in the student teacher handbook*

Student Teaching Overview

Student Teaching is an essential component in the development of educators. It is the capstone of the preparation process for teacher education. In this final state of teacher preparation, student teachers apply theoretical knowledge in a real classroom setting, working under the guidance of an experienced mentor teacher. Given its significance, several requirements must be met before a student can participate in student teaching. The academic requirements, including courses of study and earned grades are identified in the UNL Undergraduate Bulletin. This experience helps develop

practical teaching skills, build confidence, and meet licensure or certification requirements. Student teaching will require:

- **Communication & Collaboration:** Frequent communication between the student teaching team (student, cooperating teacher, supervisor) is paramount to the success of a student teaching placement. Student teachers can expect to communicate and collaborate daily with cooperating teachers and frequently with university supervisors, including a minimum of five observations.
- **Professional Immersion:** Participating in the full scope of teaching responsibilities, including faculty meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and extracurricular activities, to fully experience role of a teacher. Student teachers are expected to fully participate in all roles of the cooperating teacher.
- **Observation:** Spending time observing experienced teachers to gain insights into classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement techniques.
- **Evaluation:** University supervisors will complete a formal evaluation at the midterm and again at the end of the semester. All members of the student teaching team should meet to discuss both evaluations. University supervisors will enter the formative and summative evaluations in Canvas.

Example of Student Teaching Phases

Phase 1: Weeks 1 & 2

- First student teacher team meeting (orientation)
- Observations, familiarize with environment

Phase 2:

1/4 mark

- 1st supervisor observation/post conference

1/2 mark

- 2nd, 3rd observations
- Formative evaluation
- Assuming instructional role

3/4 mark

- 4th, 5th observations

Phase 3: Last week

- Transfer all responsibilities back to CT
- Summative evaluation- final team meeting
- Observe other teachers

***Students Complete a ST survey, supervisors complete a supervisor survey*

Evaluations During Student Teaching

Observations

The university supervisor conducts a minimum of five (single endorsed) six (dual endorsed) observations during the student teaching semester. At least two of these observation documents will be added to the student's Canvas account.

Formal Evaluations

Formative: The formative evaluation, using the NDE Clinical Practice Rubric, acts as a progress update regarding the student teacher's performance in the first half of the placement. This is an opportunity to identify any concerns and to set goals for the remainder of the semester.

- Based on the discussion between the student teaching team, the university supervisor will determine official midterm evaluation scores and enter them in the online system.
- The formative evaluation is completed after the first half of the placement. **ELED/SPED will complete a formative for both the ELED and SPED placement.

Summative: The summative evaluation, using the same form, is completed at the end of the student teaching experience. This evaluation provides an assessment level of performance demonstrated by the student teacher. The summative evaluation should be the result of collaboration between the cooperating teacher and university supervisor.

- Based on the evaluation and the discussion of the student teaching team, the university supervisor will determine the official final evaluation scores and enter them in the online system.
- The summative evaluation is completed at the end of the placement. **ELED/SPED will complete a summative for both the ELED and SPED placement.

The Clinical Placement Evaluation Rubric and NDE Evidence Charts are useful tools for reference during the student teaching placement. These tools can be referenced to determine how students will be evaluated and what supervisors should look for while completing observations.

Student teaching forms, rubrics and assessment tools are available upon request or in the student teaching handbook.
<https://cehs.unl.edu/cehs/practicum-and-student-teaching/>

Observations, Feedback and Reflection

Pre-Observation Discussion/Observation Goals/Lesson Plans

The student teaching team take a few minutes prior to the observation to have a pre-conference, focusing on the following:

- Clarify Goals and Objectives
- Provide Context
- Define Focus Areas
- Identify Support Needs
- ***Complete, thorough lesson plans. These should be submitted to the University Supervisor at least 24 hours in advance.*

Feedback

Frequent, specific and immediate feedback is critical for the development of the student teacher, allowing them to acquire maximum benefits from their student teaching experience. Finding the appropriate feedback response that will not discourage a student's learning is crucial.

- Be selective regarding the amount of feedback and changes; too many can be overwhelming
- Create action steps for improvement
- Provide a model and/or example
- Provide ongoing support as needed throughout the semester

Reflection

Questioning to support reflection that is thought provoking, non-judgmental and encourages conversation and risk taking.

- What were your objectives for the lesson? How do you know your student's mastered them?
- Describe your transition strategies
- How did you keep your students engaged in their learning?
- Describe some strategies you see in your teaching. What do you wonder about the strategies you used?
- Share what you used to think about teaching reading in the beginning, compared to what you think now, after teaching reading for the past eight weeks
- Share any challenges you felt or observed during your lesson.
- Use "I noticed" or "I wonder" to help the student think in new ways or make connections

Criteria for Passing Student Teaching

Summative Evaluation Scores

Student teaching is graded on a pass/no pass basis. The grade is based on performance, reported by the university supervisor, as described on the final Clinical Practice Evaluation.

*** If a student teacher is receiving unsatisfactory evaluations at any point during a placement, the university supervisor will work with the student and cooperating teacher to identify the areas for improvement and propose strategies to strengthen progress. If the evaluations continue to be poor, if growth is not evident, and/or if the student teacher cannot successfully complete their student teaching experience within the allotted time, the university supervisor will notify the Director Field Experiences, and the appropriate personnel will meet with the university supervisor and the student teacher to develop an improvement plan.*

Removal of a Student Teacher

Student teachers may be removed from their student teaching placement if their level of performance is unsatisfactory or if their conduct or behavior warrants such removal. When school officials, in consultation with the cooperating teacher, determine that a student teacher's performance is inadequate, they can request the removal of a student teacher. The Director Field Experiences will remove a student teacher when school officials make such a request. In some cases, school officials will make this request because the student teacher has violated important school policies; therefore, this transgression(s) also violates the policies of the College of Education and Human Sciences. The student teacher could also be subject to discipline by the university which could include dismissal from the program. If the request was prompted by an act or performance that does not violate university policies, the student may be removed from student teaching without further discipline.

Student Teacher Expectations

Detailed expectations for student teachers, cooperating teachers, university supervisors and building administrators can be found in the Student Teacher Handbook.

School Calendars

Student teachers are required to follow the calendar of the school district in which they are placed. This includes reporting to the placement on the **first teacher day** of the semester.

Dress Code

As representatives of the teaching profession and role models for students, student teachers are expected to present themselves in a manner that reflects professionalism, respect, and a readiness to engage in the responsibilities of the classroom.

Absences/Tardies

Student teachers are required to be in attendance, on time, and prepared every day, following the schedule established for the school faculty.

- Absences totaling more than three days (not including required university events or seminars) may be deemed excessive and may result in an extended student teaching experience or result in unsatisfactory performance and result in removal. ***For extended medical absences, a doctor's note may be required.*
- The student teacher must notify the cooperating teacher **and** university supervisor about an absence, before the absence occurs. **Student teachers are required to complete thorough lesson plans when absent.**

Social Media

Student teachers are expected to use social media in a responsible and professional manner, maintaining clear boundaries between their personal and professional lives. Content shared online should reflect the standards of the teaching profession, respect student privacy, and support a positive image as a future educator. Avoid posting content that could be seen as inappropriate, unprofessional, or that compromises student privacy. Students are required to read the district/building policy on the use of social media in and out of the classroom. When school related, utilize only district approved sites under the direct supervision of the cooperating teacher. Student teachers are not to post PK-12 student photos, work, descriptions or use social media for personal use while at school placement(s).

Student teachers should not engage with students on personal social media accounts and never share photos or information about students or the classroom without explicit permission. Remember, online presence can impact reputations and future careers in education.

Conferences/Working with Families

Student teachers are expected to actively contribute to conference preparation as part of a collaborative team. They should attend all parent-teacher conferences, with the goal of leading one or more whenever possible. Additionally, student teachers are expected to participate in all parent-related meetings and communications, including IEP meetings, phone calls with parents, before- and after-school meetings, intervention meetings, and similar engagements.

University Required Events

Student teachers will be required to attend a variety of UNL sponsored events during the student teaching semester, including but not limited to Professional Development Day and capstone seminars. It is the student teacher's responsibility to remind the cooperating teacher of the absence and to have prepared lesson plans or coordinate plans for the class in advance of any absence.

Lesson Plan Expectations

A variety of lesson plan formats may be used. Often, student teachers will utilize the district lesson plan format provided by their cooperating teacher and/or university supervisor. Each student teacher is responsible for writing lesson plans for each lesson, each week.

Substitute Teaching Process

In some situations, student teachers may substitute for their cooperating teacher. For student teachers to serve as a substitute teacher, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) must certify them as a "Local Substitute Teacher" and have met district requirements. Adherence to all the provisions identified by NDE and the school district are required. Please follow the guidelines for substitute teaching, outlined on the Student Teacher Substitute Process Form.

***Substitute Process available upon request or in the Student Teacher Handbook.*

Code of Ethics

During student teaching, regardless of location, student teachers are held to the College of Education & Human Sciences, University of Nebraska, and the Nebraska Department of Education's Professional Code of Ethics. Criminal convictions, as well as other non-criminal behaviors that pose unacceptable risks for teachers and the students in their care, violate the Code of Ethics. Such actions may also reflect poor judgment, a lack of professionalism, and disregard for personal reputation, the integrity of the College, and the teaching profession—potentially calling into question a student's suitability for a career in education. Teaching is a profession that requires its candidates to be individuals of the highest integrity. The College reserves its prerogative to evaluate students' fitness for the profession in its discretion, so that safety in the classroom, the reputation of the College, and the best interest of the student, are all recognized and promoted. Should the College, through the reasonable exercise of the judgment of its team members, determine that a student's individual behavior represents a lack of integrity, questionable moral/ethical character, or otherwise indicates a potential of risk to young persons and others in the educational community, the College of Education & Human Sciences may deny entry to or dismiss such a student from any program which leads to certification or to service of children in a community agency. Students will be expected to meet Nebraska standards for personal and professional fitness, as described in the Nebraska Department of Education, Application for Teacher Certification. The consequences for unprofessional, unethical, or risky behavior will differ given the unique circumstances involved in each matter.

Background Checks and Criminal History

Screening criteria is determined by standards set by the Nebraska Department of Education in Rule 20 and 21. Student teachers that have an offense that would preclude them from receiving a NE teaching certificate will be contacted immediately for next steps. Students who have an offense that would NOT preclude them from receiving certification but had not previously reported to the Office of Accreditation, Placement & Licensure, as reported on the Criminal Self Disclosure Form, may be contacted for consultation.

Accommodations for Student Teachers

If a student teacher requires assistance or academic accommodations during student teaching, they must first contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, in 117 Louise Pound Hall, prior to the start of their student teaching placement. Once eligibility for services has been determined, **it is the student teacher's responsibility to communicate with the Office of Accreditation, Placement & Licensure about the accommodations, prior to the start of the student teaching placement. Further, it is the student's responsibility to communicate all accommodations with their university supervisor and the cooperating teacher.** Services will remain confidential, and every attempt will be made to accommodate student needs.

Reporting Child Abuse and/or Neglect

Nebraska state law mandates that all adults report child abuse and neglect. Adults **MUST** report when an adult has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or observes such child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which reasonably would result in abuse or neglect...-Nebraska Revised Statute 28-711

Student teachers should share any suspected abuse or neglect with their cooperating teacher, guidance counselor and/or school administrator.

Reports can be made to this tollfree number:

1-800-652-1999 (Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline), If it is an emergency, call 911.

Confidentiality

Under the Family Educational Right to Privacy, (Buckley Amendment), students have specific rights associated with confidentiality. Partner Schools entrust the field experience students with the responsibility for safeguarding those rights. Therefore, it is imperative that all field experience students understand the importance of maintaining student confidentiality. Any information to identify a student must be carefully omitted in any conversation with anyone other than the university supervisor, cooperating teacher or principal.

Uncomfortable/Unsafe Situations

If you find yourself in a situation where you are being harassed, or something occurs that makes you feel unsafe, it is important for you to take immediate actions.

- Excuse yourself from the environment. Keep your comments short and to the point. “Excuse me, I need to go now.” If it’s a school safety issue, follow school protocol to keep everyone safe.
- As soon as you are out of the environment, contact your supervisor and the Office of Accreditation, Placement & Licensure.

Certification

To fulfill a teaching contract, a prospective teacher must be certified by the state where they plan to work. State certification is not automatically granted upon graduation; it must be initiated by the teacher candidate. Information on applying for certification and ordering transcripts will be provided during the student teaching semester.

Many states issue teaching certificates based on certification from the student’s home state. It is highly recommended that students obtain a Nebraska Teaching Certificate, even if they do not plan to use it immediately. Delaying the application process may result in having to meet any new certification requirements in place at the time of application.

How to apply for your Nebraska teaching certificate:

Apply online to the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE). Click on “TEACH Dashboard Login” on the left side of the page. You will make payment when you apply.

Important Student Teaching Resources

Student Teacher Handbook - <https://cehs.unl.edu/cehs/practicum-and-student-teaching/>

Nebraska Department of Education- <https://www.education.ne.gov/>

Nebraska Certification- <https://www.education.ne.gov/tcert/>

OneSource Background Checks- <https://onesourcebackground.com/>

College of Education and Human Sciences- <https://cehs.unl.edu/>

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