

**Texas A&M University- Commerce**  
**Teacher Candidate Handbook**  
**EC-6 and 4-8**



**A&M**  
**COMMERCE**

## Table of Contents

Welcome.....	3
Definitions to Know.....	5
Performance Gates .....	7
Information for all the Teacher Candidate Participants.....	11
Teacher Candidate Expectations and Responsibilities .....	14
Management Tools .....	22
Program Success Expectations .....	22
Student Success in Educator Preparation Program .....	23
Appendix: Field-Based Forms .....	25

## Welcome to Student Teaching at Texas A&M University- Commerce!

Dear Teacher Candidate:

In the Fall 2020, the College of Education entered into an exciting new chapter of teacher preparation at Texas A&M University - Commerce. Our Educator Preparation Program is clinically intensive, competency-based program aimed at improving EC-12 student achievement, increasing teacher candidates' qualifications upon entry into their careers, and fostering within them the dispositions important for helping them remain and thrive in the teaching profession.

This revolutionary reform has been prompted by a new vision for teacher preparation in our College that is responsive to your needs as a teacher candidate, the students whom you will serve over the course of your career, our district partners, and accountability demands of governmental agencies. In the most extreme, I feel that this reform is a matter of highest priority for the future of our nation.

This reform marks a radical departure from traditional programs that prepare teachers. TAMU-C Educator Preparation Program will engage you in activities that are aimed at developing professionalism, and superior instructional competency. Reformed *coursework* will focus on helping you learn and apply the skills necessary for fostering student achievement. *Clinical experiences*, including extended placements throughout the program and a full year of student teaching, will focus on supporting you in your growth, and transition into your career. Through the use of video-capture technology, you will receive unprecedented feedback about your instructional competency; and through the use of a co-teaching model, gain experience that will find you, upon graduation, with the qualifications and skills equal or above that of a 2<sup>nd</sup>-year teacher. Combined, the elements of this reform will ensure that you are among the most effective new teachers in the State of Texas.

I heartily welcome you to the TAMU-C Educator Preparation Program, and thank you for your decision to serve our nation as a EC-12 teacher.

In service with you,



Teacher Candidates:

We are pleased and honored that you have chosen to be a part of our teacher education program!

Texas A&M University- Commerce has a long-standing commitment to excellence, and the College of Education, in particular, believes that our well-developed program will continue our tradition of excellence in preparation of tomorrow's teachers.

Student teaching is the capstone experience for a novice teacher. It is critical, challenging, and rewarding to all involved and a time of great professional growth. The student teaching experience typically has a lasting effect upon a teacher's outlook toward teaching and, as a consequence, greatly affects future generations of teachers and students.

As a Teacher Candidate, you will be putting into practice all that you have learned through your coursework and field experiences, while at the same time learning from two other sets of expertise—those of your Cooperating Teacher and Field Supervisor.

It is absolutely essential that Teacher Candidates, Cooperating Teachers, and Field Supervisors function effectively as a team during this student teaching experience. Good communication is vital to ensuring a positive experience for all involved. Ask good questions about your teaching, try new things, and study your environment . . . good teachers never stop being good learners!

Our best wishes for a powerful semester of learning as our graduates become the next generation of professional educators!

**~The Department of Curriculum & Instruction Team**

## Definitions to Know

- **Classroom Walkthrough (CW)** - Short (5-15 minute) observation that allows the field supervisor to collect a “snapshot” of information on co-teaching, professionalism, and overall development of the Teacher Candidate.
- **Cooperating Teacher (CT)** - The EC-12 classroom teachers in the partner school district who have agreed to have a Teacher Candidate in their classroom.
- **Field Supervisor**- A member of the university instructional team who works with the teacher candidate and Cooperating Teacher at an assigned public-school site.
- **Google Drive** - Online cloud storage service from Google that allows users to simultaneously create and edit documents in browsers, and create and share folders.
- **GoReact** - Video technology and online platform that enables teachers to record classroom interactions for observation and reflection.
- **Instructional Leadership Team (ILT)** - The ILT consists of the Cooperating Teacher, Teacher Candidate, and university field supervisor. The ILT is a major decision-making body for the Teacher Candidate that adjusts expectations based on the individual circumstances of the placement, and the Teacher Candidate’s strengths/weaknesses.
- **Intern Semester and Clinical Teaching Semester** - During the final year of the program, there are two semesters with specific courses consisting of seminars and extensive time in the field. During the intern semester, students report to their field placement with a single Cooperating Teacher for 2 full days each week for the first half of the semester and 3 full days for the second half of the semester, and attend weekly seminars. During the Clinical Teaching semester, students report to their field placement 5 full days each week including 8 seminar days scheduled throughout the semester.
- **Performance Assessment (POP Cycle)** - The evaluation process used at the Texas A&M University-Commerce. A POP “cycle” consists of (a) a pre-conference to review the Teacher Candidate’s lesson; (b) observation and scripting of the lesson by both the Teacher Candidate and Field Supervisor to gather evidence for evaluation; (c) post-conference meeting with the Teacher Candidate to review evidence, coach and assign ratings; and (d) uploading portions of lessons as directed by the Center Coordinator or Field Supervisor.
- **Performance Gates** - benchmarks that must be met in order to successfully complete the certification program.
- **Professional Growth Plan (PGP)** - Support tool created by field supervisors when issues arise with Teacher Candidates or when they are at risk of not meeting performance gates.
- **Seminars** - During the intern semester students will have weekly seminars at the designated campus location and, during the clinical teaching semester, students will have 8 seminars scheduled at the

designated campus location. The seminar course includes application and performance, learning opportunities, growth and development by applying theory and best practices to the classroom.

- **TAMU-C Professionalism Rubric** - The tool used to holistically assess Intern and Teacher Candidate performance in the field and in seminars.
- **Teacher Candidate (TC)** – A Teacher Candidate is a student admitted into the teacher preparation program at the Texas A&M University- Commerce. Teacher Candidates may be in an “early phase” consisting of pre-teaching and developing teaching semesters that take place prior to the student teaching year; or in a “later phase” consisting of the final two semesters when they are completing the student teaching year.
- **Tk20 by Watermark** - College of Education and Human Services online data management system used for candidate and program assessment.

## **Terms to Know**

**Educator Preparation Program (EPP)**

**Field-based Program-** intern and clinical teaching placement at Texas A&M University-Commerce

**Standard Certificate-** EC- 6; 4-8; ESL supplemental; Upon applying for Certification, our candidates choose standard certificate.

## **Performance Gates/Progression through the Program**

### **Performance Gate One: Academic Advising (TSI/Course Completion Check/GPA)**

#### **\* Prior to Admission**

Student will meet with an Academic Advisor in Curriculum and Instruction Department to assure:

- Completion of a minimum of 45 semester credit hours of college coursework; COEHS Mentor Center provides course completion check
- Texas Success Initiative (TSI) requirements met
- Overall GPA of 2.75 as a prerequisite to ELED 300 and RDG 350
- Documented Early Field Experience Observation Hours (ELED 300/30 hours and RDG 350/15 hours)
- Degree Evaluation in My Leo (Degree Works) to verify courses and requirements still to be met throughout the student's program
- Review of core course work for appropriate grades and completion (usually after earning 54 hours of core and interdisciplinary courses)
- Co- and prerequisites met (See Table 1 on page 9)

### **Performance Gate Two: Admission to Educator Preparation Program**

- Students apply through Tk20 for admissions to the Educator Preparation Program. A Texas Education Agency (TEA) access fee is applied at time of application.
- Students enrolled in ELED 300 will complete a writing sample and upload into the Tk20 system for review by an assigned faculty member.
- The students will video themselves answering pre-determined interview questions. Professional dress and demeanor are expected. The video link will then be shared in Tk20 and evaluated by at least two assigned faculty members.
- The results of the admission to the Educator Preparation Program are recorded within the Tk20 system. Upon receiving the Acceptance Survey, candidates must complete the survey to finalize formal admission into the program by the deadline provided by the certification office. Students who are accepted into the program must submit their acceptance survey in TK20 by the communicated deadline. Students who fail to complete the TEA required TK20 acceptance survey within the designated timeframe will be removed from the list of accepted students. They will then be required to complete the full program application and meet all requirements again.

In the event that an applicant is not successful with admission into the program the following pre-mediation/remediation steps will occur:

- Students who do not meet the rubric score requirements or TEA screening requirements will be denied admission to the program.
- Students who do not meet admission requirements will be notified by department personnel to determine next steps and create a pre-mediation/remediation action plan.

- ❑ Students must reapply to the program and complete/meet all admissions requirements (writing sample, video interview, minimum GPA, application fee, etc.) in order to be considered for admission into the program.
- ❑ Students who do not meet the requirements for an offer of admission into the Teacher Education Program on additional application attempts will be notified by the advisor or designated departmental personnel of the application deficiencies.

**Performance Gate Three: Complete the coursework and benchmarks required in the junior year prior to beginning pre-clinical and clinical teaching placement:**

*All requirements for Admission to Professional Development Coursework must continue to be met and an official degree plan declared.*

- ❑ Completion of a minimum of 80 semester credit hours of college coursework
- ❑ Students who have completed EDCI 412 may be granted approval to take the ESL Supplemental exam upon meeting requirements by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. \*Certification exam authorization information can be found [here](#).
- ❑ Bilingual Generalist students meeting all requirements determined by the Department will be granted approval to take the BTLPT. \*Certification exam authorization information can be found [here](#).
- ❑ Completion of all Professional Development, Interdisciplinary Core, and Specialization courses that are required before Internship on Degree Evaluation. An overall GPA of 2.75 is required with no grade below “C” in each of these areas.
- ❑ Overall GPA of 2.75 is a prerequisite to RDG 360, RDG 370 and RDG 380.

**Performance Gate Four: Complete Application for Intern semester**

- ❑ Students must apply for their pre-clinical and clinical teaching placement in the field-based Teacher Education Program in the spring/fall semester prior to beginning the intern semester. The application process is an online process within Tk20 and available during a designated time the semester prior to the intern semester. Applications may not be processed past this date.

The application file will contain the following documents:

- A formal application / confirmation page
  - Application processing fee receipt
  - An autobiographical sketch (online submission process)
  - A signed commitment contract
  - A schedule of courses currently enrolled in and courses still lacking
- ❑ Students must meet all requirements under Performance Gate Three.
  - ❑ Departmental review and approval to interview and begin the intern semester. (If two or more separate faculty members file a Departmental Concern Form, a student may be prevented from interviewing or beginning the intern semester if a pattern of professional issues is documented.)



- ❑ Before participating in the field-based interview sessions with ISDs, Teacher Candidate applicants are required to attend a general orientation in which the department and certification office representatives review requirements, provide information about district interviews, and answer questions or address concerns. Sign in sheets will be at each location and submitted to the Curriculum and Instruction Department for documentation. ***Attendance at one of the orientations is mandatory!***

Table 1 – Course Co/Prerequisites

Course	Co/Prerequisites	Exam Prerequisites	Overall GPA Prerequisites	EFE Hours
ELED 300	Pre or Co ELED 200	TSI Complete	2.50	30
RDG 350		TSI Complete	2.50	15
RDG 360	Pre/ELED 300 Pre/RDG 350		2.75	
RDG 370	Pre/ELED 300 Pre/RDG 350		2.75	
RDG 380			2.75	

A student who does not meet the established criteria for approval to begin student teaching may appeal to the Departmental Appeals Committee or to TEARAC for permission to begin intern semester or clinical teaching, with the following exceptions:

- A student may not appeal to begin a pre-clinical/clinical teaching placement if they have not completed a successful interview that resulted in a confirmed placement.
- A student may not appeal a “Departmental review and non-approval to interview and begin internship.” This occurs when faculty have professional concerns and complete two Department “Fitness to Teach” for Prospective Teacher Education Students Professional Behavioral Standards Evaluation Forms, which are filed in the department.
- A student may not appeal a low GPA.
- A student may not appeal a low Basic Skills Requirement score (Reading, Writing, or

Math).

However, a student may appeal a grade below a “C” only if (a) the student’s overall GPA is 2.75 or above and (b) the student’s department gives written approval for the student to appeal to TEARAC.

#### **Performance Gate Five: Successful Interview and Field-Based Placement**

- ❑ Prospective Teacher Candidates are required to attend an interview session with partner school districts organized by a field-based center.
- ❑ District interviews are held in the fall semester for spring placement and the spring semester for fall placement for Centers. An interview schedule will be posted on the Educator Certification website (tamuc.edu/teacher). The purpose of this interview session is to provide prospective Teacher Candidates with information about the various ISDs and to provide an opportunity for ISD personnel (often a team of the principal and Mentor/Cooperating Teachers) to identify prospective Teacher Candidates with whom they would like to work.
- ❑ Once each prospective Teacher Candidate has interviewed with the team from their first choice district, respective districts identify the applicants to invite to be Teacher Candidates in their districts. The students will be notified by phone or email of their assignments by the Center Coordinator or Educator Certification & Academic Services staff.
- ❑ If a student does not have a satisfactory interview then they will be notified by departmental personnel about next steps.

#### **Performance Gate Six: First Semester of Senior Year- EFE II (Intern- Preclinical semester)**

- ❑ Teacher Candidates who are enrolled in intern semester courses and meet all necessary requirements will be approved to take the EC-6 Core Subjects test by their particular Center Coordinator. \*Certification exam authorization information can be found [here](#).
- ❑ Pursuant to the Texas Education Code (TEC), §22.083, candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to employment as an educator; and pursuant to the TEC, §22.0835, candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to clinical teaching. Per TAC Title 19, Section 249.16 Pursuant to the Texas Occupations Code (TOC), Chapter 53, and the Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 21, Subchapter 8, the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) may suspend or revoke an existing valid certificate, deny an applicant a certificate, bar a person from being assessed or examined for a certificate, or take other disciplinary action because of a person’s conviction of a felony or misdemeanor or certain other criminal history. *If you have the potential to be ineligible because you have been convicted of an offense, it is in your best interest to request a preliminary criminal history evaluation.*

#### **Performance Gate Seven: Official Clinical Teaching**

- ❑ Teacher Candidates must be enrolled in appropriate concentration coursework.

- ❑ Teacher Candidates must have passed the EC-6 Core Subjects exam or Content Areas exam in order to begin clinical teaching semester.
- ❑ Teacher Candidates must maintain a 2.75 GPA in clinical teaching, successfully complete clinical teaching seminar courses with no grade below a 'C' and have all other requirements and benchmarks met.
- ❑ Teacher Candidates should take any remaining TExES exams needed for their level or subject areas of certification.

### **Performance Gate 8: Recommendation for Certification**

- ❑ Approval from the Instructional Leadership Team and Center Faculty for recommendation for certification.

## **Information for All Teacher Candidate Participants**

The ultimate goal of the Student Teaching experience is the preparation of an effective, skilled, and independent educator.

### **Field Experiences during Intern Semester and Clinical Teaching Semester**

Intern semester and clinical teaching semester require Teacher Candidates to be immersed in the profession of teaching at their target grade range. They will be placed in a classroom assigned to a Cooperating Teacher for two full semesters, and will be engaged in planning, teaching and assessing lessons for small and large groups of students. The field experience also includes preparing materials, meeting with other teachers or parents, completing practice teaching requirements assigned by their courses, and otherwise assisting the Cooperating Teacher in ways that provide experience with the complex work of teaching. In addition, Teacher Candidates will spend significant time developing the ability to reflect on what they are learning by documenting their learning in various ways.

### **Pre-Clinical Experience**

The objectives of the intern semester of the field-based program are twofold: (1) to learn about content, pedagogy, technology, classroom management, assessment and evaluation as they move from theory to practice through course content and seminars; and (2) to learn about schools, students, planning, and the teaching and learning process by working in a field-based setting with Cooperating Teachers. The assessment and evaluation of interns address performance in both the field-based and seminar setting. Teacher Candidates participate in weekly seminars and spend 2 full days in the field per week during the first half of the semester and 3 full days in the field during the second half of the semester.

## **Clinical Teaching Time Commitment**

We consider clinical teaching to be a full-time endeavor. Teacher Candidates are asked to make a commitment to this profession beginning now. We recognize that student teaching is a disruption to family life, work schedules, and leisurely habits; other professions admittedly require less time and fewer requirements outside coursework. However, we make no apologies for the rigor and the time commitment—we are preparing Teacher Candidates for one of the most demanding professions, as well as some of the most meaningful work that can be done.

Teacher Candidates will be in coursework or in the field full time, Monday through Friday, for the entire semester. Specific weekly schedules will be provided at the Student Teaching Orientation.

Teacher Candidates are expected to be present and on time every day in their assigned classroom, during the teacher contract hours for that district—teachers work extensively before and after school. Nevertheless, we understand things (such as doctor’s appointments, illness, testing, etc.) may happen during the semester, and Teacher Candidates should contact their Field Supervisor and Center Coordinator to make arrangements for missing (See Attendance Policy for more information). Absences on any required day for any reason (excused or unexcused), are required to be made up before the end of the semester.

*\*\*Disclaimer\*\* Fall semester field experience (intern or clinical teaching) will begin with the district professional development schedule. This is no earlier than the first Monday after Summer II is complete. TCs who are in the intern semester during the fall will also be in the schools for the first full week of classes. Spring semester field experience begins with the university academic calendar.*

## **How Candidates are Placed with Our Partner School Districts**

The purpose of field experiences in the Educator Preparation Program is to provide authentic observational experiences and structured teaching practice in school settings. The goal, first and foremost, is for teacher candidates to gain experience in performing the professional dispositions required of teachers in Texas.

Our ability to place Teacher Candidates with an effective Cooperating Teacher so that they can learn the profession depends on our strong relationships with dozens of local school districts. These districts also place Teacher Candidates from other institutions, so it is vital that we communicate with the district representatives in a timely and organized manner.

- Prospective Teacher Candidates are required to attend an interview session with partner school districts organized by a field-based center.
- District interviews are held in fall for spring placement and the spring semester for fall placement for centers. An interview schedule will be posted on the Educator Certification website ([tamuc.edu/teacher](http://tamuc.edu/teacher)). The purpose of this interview session is to provide prospective Teacher Candidates with information about the various ISDs and to provide an opportunity for ISD personnel (often a team of the principal and Cooperating teachers), to identify prospective Teacher Candidates with whom they would like to work.

- Once each prospective Teacher Candidate has interviewed with the team from their first choice district, respective districts identify the applicants to invite to be Teacher Candidates in their districts. The students will be notified by phone or email of their assignments by the Center Coordinator or Educator Certification & Academic Services staff.
- If a student does not have a satisfactory interview then they will be notified by departmental personnel about next steps.

Our schools and Cooperating Teachers accommodate Teacher Candidates on a voluntary basis, so various grade levels or specializations may or may not be available on a particular campus during any given semester. Also, district partnerships occasionally change, even at the last minute; if this happens, Teacher Candidates will be notified as soon as possible so that they can make the necessary arrangements. Note that for a variety of reasons, Teacher Candidates cannot be placed at a school where any relative is employed or is attending.

It is our policy that Teacher Candidates do not contact school districts or individual schools directly to request a placement. Even if they happen to know a principal, and she has said she wants them to come teach for her, we must work through the district protocols. We are guests in our partner schools, and their normal and effective operation will be impaired if our candidates swamp them with individual requests.

The ability of our Teacher Candidates to complete the program—and their degree—in a timely manner is important to us. *Please check with your departmental advisor in the first week of each semester to review your eligibility to apply for field-based experience.*

## Texas A&M University- Commerce- Co-Teach Model

At the Texas A&M University- Commerce, we view the entire student teaching experience as a collaborative process between our Teacher Candidate and the school community. Although it is informative to see if a Teacher Candidate can function independently, our experience has shown us that the strongest preparation for our novice teachers is not time alone but rather constant modeling by an experienced Cooperating Teacher. Experience with lead or solo- teaching should not be interpreted to mean that the Cooperating Teacher must exit the room, nor should they be seen as a time for the Cooperating Teacher to disengage from the educational process.

The “co-teaching” model offers some helpful definitions of how the Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate might work together to share the planning, organization, delivery, and assessment, as well as the physical space:

<b>One Teach, One Assist</b>	One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other assists students with their work, monitors behaviors, or corrects assignments.
<b>One Teach, One Observe</b>	One of the advantages in co-teaching is that more detailed observation of students engaged in the learning process can occur. With this approach, for example, co-teachers can decide in advance what types of specific observational information to gather during instruction and can agree on a system for gathering the data.
<b>Team Teaching</b>	Both teachers are responsible for planning, and they share the instruction of all students. The lessons are taught by both teachers who actively engage in conversation, not lecture, to encourage discussion by students. Both teachers are actively involved in the management of the lesson and discipline.
<b>Station Teaching</b>	Both teachers divide the instructional content, and each takes responsibility for planning and teaching part of it. In station teaching, the classroom is divided into various teaching centers. The teacher and Teacher Candidate are at particular stations; the other stations are run independently by the students or by a teacher’s aide.
<b>Alternative Teaching</b>	In alternative teaching, one teacher manages most of the class while the other teacher works with a small group inside or outside of the classroom. The small group does not have to integrate with the current lesson.
<b>Parallel Teaching</b>	In parallel teaching, the teacher and Teacher Candidate plan jointly but split the classroom in half to teach the same information at the same time.

It is important to note that the Cooperating Teacher—the teaching professional—maintains the authority in pacing. When beginning a field experience, some Co-Teaching strategies are more appropriate than others. The Cooperating Teacher decides when to use which strategies.

## Teacher Candidates' Expectations and Responsibilities

The following are **expectations of Teacher Candidates**:

- Prompt, consistent, reliable attendance in the field placement, beginning prior to the start of the school day (beginning of teacher contract hours) and ending at the conclusion of teacher contract hours (4:00pm).
- Participation in all Cooperating Teacher in-service training throughout the school year, initiation of placement prior to the beginning of TAMU-C schedule (for fall semester), and return to classes when partner-district classes begin (for spring semester).
- Regular use of the Tk20 data management system for assignments and the Performance Assessment Cycle.
- Earnest efforts in the improvement of his/her instructional competency.
- Participation at weekly meetings, co-planning sessions, discussions about progression of teaching responsibilities, discussions about upcoming calendar and teaching events, and discussions about any issues related to professionalism.
- Work collaboratively with the Cooperating Teacher and the Field Supervisor to plan, deliver and assess instruction consistent with the co-teaching model, and consistent with the Teacher Candidate's progress through the teacher education program.

*\* This table summarizes the teacher candidate responsibilities and expectations during the intern semester and clinical teaching semester.*

<b>Intern Semester</b>	<b>Clinical Teaching Semester</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Candidate must pass the Core Subjects certification exam prior to the start of clinical teaching.</li> <li>• Prompt, consistent, reliable attendance in the clinical placement, beginning prior to the start of the school day and ending at the conclusion of teacher contract time.</li> <li>• Adherence to the district calendar pertaining to professional development dates, holidays, and early dismissals.</li> <li>• Co-teaching in a manner consistent with Teacher Candidate progression through the Teacher Education Program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Candidate will complete the PPR (except for edTPA) and STR during this semester.</li> <li>• Prompt, consistent, reliable attendance in the field placement, beginning prior to the start of the school day and ending with the dismissal of students.</li> <li>• Participation of the Teacher Candidate in staff professional development days at the beginning of the academic school year.</li> <li>• Adherence to the district calendar pertaining to Professional Development dates, holidays, and early dismissals</li> <li>• Co-Teaching in a manner consistent with Teacher Candidate progression through the Educator Preparation Program.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular use of GoReact technology for Apply &amp; Evaluate assignments and the Performance Assessment Cycle.</li> <li>• Earnest efforts in the improvement of Teacher Candidate instructional competency</li> <li>• Participation in scheduled seminars</li> <li>• Participation in co-planning and discussion of any issues related to professionalism</li> <li>• Greater student achievement gains through the additional support of the Teacher Candidate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular use of the GoReact technology for assignment evaluation and the Performance Assessment Cycle.</li> <li>• Earnest efforts in the improvement of Teacher Candidate instructional competency.</li> <li>• Participation at seminars, co-planning sessions, maintain attendance record, discuss progression of teaching responsibilities, discuss upcoming calendar and teaching events, and discuss any issues related to professionalism.</li> </ul>
--	--

### Attendance Policy and Schedule

Teacher Candidates are expected to:

- Report to their assigned school for teaching responsibilities. The commitment for the intern semester is three full days per week. During the *first half* of the intern semester, **EC-6 and 4-8 Teacher Candidates will report to the field two days per week and seminar one day per week.** During the *second half* of the intern semester, **EC-6 and 4-8 Teacher Candidates will report to the field three days per week and seminar for a shortened period of time on one of those three days. Teacher Candidates will be in the field for the contract hours for teachers in that district.** During the clinical teaching semester, **Teacher Candidates will report to the field five days per week with the exception of 8 seminar days. Teacher Candidates will be in the field for the contract hours for teachers in that district.** Teacher Candidates are expected to check with the front office to sign in upon arrival and sign out at time of departure from the school (It is vital that we have accurate records of field attendance.).
- Participate in all activities in the school and the district, and to take part in after-school programs, special programs, PTA meetings, faculty meetings, and any other activities of the school as much as the Teacher Candidates are able.
- Follow the academic calendar of the assigned public-school district. Any changes or exceptions to this will be noted by the Center Coordinator.
- Be present and on time to their assigned campus except in cases of **serious illness** or other **extenuating** circumstances. In those instances, the Teacher Candidate must contact the Cooperating Teacher and Field Supervisor no later than the morning of the necessary absence AND prior to the required arrival time at the campus.

### Additionally

- Any days missed during clinical teaching due to illness and/or injury must be made up at the end of the semester. \*Plans for making up missed days and/or excessive absences due to extenuating circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis with the Center Coordinator and Field Supervisor.



- Excessive absences that interfere with the successful completion of clinical teaching may require you to be placed on a growth plan and/or dismissed from the program. Decisions regarding extenuating circumstances will be made in coordination between the TC, Cooperating Teacher, Field-Supervisor and Center Coordinator on a case-by-case basis.
- Notify your Field Supervisor anytime there is a change in plans due to early dismissal, assembly program, PTA meetings, unscheduled holidays, or any unforeseen event. Field Supervisors occasionally stop by unannounced and must always know where Teacher Candidates will be.

### **Monitoring Attendance in the Field Placement**

Teacher Candidates are responsible for maintaining an accurate record of their attendance using the *Daily Attendance Log* and requesting the Cooperating Teacher to initial each day. Teacher Candidate attendance will be monitored by the Field Supervisor through the use of the Attendance Log, feedback from the Cooperating Teacher, and Walkthrough Data.

### **Professionalism**

Teacher Candidates are expected to exhibit professionalism in all interactions with K-12 students, colleagues, campus personnel, Cooperating Teachers, Center Coordinators, Field Supervisors, TAMU-C faculty, staff, and during University seminars. During the student-teaching semesters, Center Coordinators will support Teacher Candidates in developing characteristics of a professional educator (Please refer to the Professionalism Rubric located in the Appendix).

Teacher Candidates will be evaluated on their professionalism on a continual basis throughout the semester. This evaluation will be informed by input from Cooperating Teachers, and by observations conducted by the Field Supervisors during walkthroughs, interactions, meetings and instructional sessions. Teacher Candidates will complete a self-assessment at each performance assessment using the online Professionalism Rubric.

### **Performance Assessment of Teacher Candidates**

Performance Assessment of a Teacher Candidate is a collaborative process engaged in by the Cooperating Teacher, Field Supervisor, and the Teacher Candidate as a team, based on a series of formative and summative assessments.

Cooperating Teachers are encouraged to observe and have a discussion with the Field Supervisor based on the Teacher Candidate's performance. Performance assessment and feedback from both the Field Supervisor and the Cooperating Teacher are used to support the Teacher Candidate's overall growth in teaching performance. Additionally, Cooperating Teachers will complete the online Cooperating Teacher Progress Report at the midpoint of each semester.

Formal observations of teaching performance are preceded by a Pre-Conference meeting between the Field Supervisor and the Teacher Candidate and are followed by an in-depth Post-Conference meeting in which the

Field Supervisor provides specific, actionable feedback to the Teacher Candidate in areas of refinement and reinforcement identified during the performance assessment.

**For the Teacher Candidate in the clinical teaching semester, the performance assessment cycle (POP Cycle) consists of 3 steps:**

1. **Pre-conference:** Scheduled time between the Teacher Candidate and Field Supervisor for a pre-conference review of the lesson and the time for observing the specific lesson. The Field Supervisor, Cooperating Teacher, and Teacher Candidate schedule lesson evaluations with the first occurring prior to week 6, and the other two during the remainder of the semester. Teacher Candidates submit lesson plans, using one of the TAMU-C Lesson Plan Templates (see appendix), to the Cooperating Teacher and Field Supervisor **48 hours in advance of the Pre-Conference**. Both the Cooperating Teacher and Field Supervisor should review the lesson plan and provide the Teacher Candidate with suggestions/strategies/questions designed to improve the lesson. Teacher Candidates will acknowledge the pre-conference in Tk20.
2. **Observation:** Teacher Candidates will provide instruction on the appointed day and time to be observed by the Field Supervisor
3. **Post-conference:** Meeting between the Teacher Candidate and the Field Supervisor in a post-conference to review evidence, and identify areas for reinforcement and refinement at a designated time after the lesson observation has taken place. During the post conference, the Field Supervisor and Teacher Candidate analyze how a particular strength of the lesson **contributed to student learning** and discuss how the Teacher Candidate can continue to build on that area of strength in future lessons (*reinforcement*). They then analyze an element of the lesson that could be improved to maximize student learning and discuss how the Teacher Candidate can work to strengthen his/her practice in the identified area of *refinement*. Teacher Candidates will acknowledge the post-conference in Tk20.

**Professional Growth Plan Policy**

If a Teacher Candidate does not meet a performance gate, s/he will be at risk of receiving a failing grade for the course and being dismissed from the program. If a Teacher Candidate is at risk of not meeting a performance gate, the Field Supervisor will fill out a Professional Growth Plan (PGP) with the Teacher Candidate to determine next steps. Growth plans can also be created for issues such as professionalism, attendance, etc. PGPs should be submitted to the Teacher Education Office within 48 hours of meeting with the TC.

**Dismissal of Teacher Candidates from TAMU-C**

- Teacher Education Admission, Retention, and Appeals Committee (TEARAC): If a Teacher Candidate does not meet the established admission criteria, or is not satisfactorily pursuing certification, the student will be dismissed from Teacher Education Program. In addition, a TEARAC review of a student in reference to an academic or professional behavioral concern may be requested by Texas A&M University -

- Commerce or public-school personnel at any stage in the Teacher Education Program.
- Instructional Leadership Team (ILT): A Teacher Candidate may be dismissed from intern semester or clinical teaching semester by a recommendation to the principal from the student's field-based Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), consisting of the Field Supervisor, Cooperating Teacher, Center Coordinator, and Teacher Candidate. This recommendation will result in the Teacher Candidate no longer being retained in the Teacher Education Program.
- Principal (school placement): A Teacher Candidate may be dismissed from the intern semester or clinical teaching by a recommendation and letter from the principal of the school where the Teacher Candidate is placed. This may occur if the principal determines that it is in the best interest of K-12 learners or the Teacher Candidate that the field experience be terminated. This recommendation will result in the Teacher Candidate no longer being retained in the Teacher Education Program.

Reasons for dismissal from internship or residency and the Teacher Education Program may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Failure to meet course requirements
- Lack of progress in meeting the performance gates outlined in the Teacher Candidate Handbook
- Lack of progress or success on a growth plan
- Violation of the Code of Ethics and Standards for Texas Teachers
- Non-adherence to the Intern Commitment Contract
- Violation of school district and/or campus rules and regulations
- Excessive tardiness, absences, or failure to complete or make-up days missed in the field
- Failure to respond to feedback from the ILT

**Procedures for Removing a Student from Internship or Residency:**

- If dismissal is due to a violation of established admission or retention criteria, the Center for Educator Certification and Academic Services (CECAS) will notify the student in writing of the grounds for dismissal and due process.
- If dismissal is resulting from an ILT or school placement principal recommendation, a request to terminate the placement will be generated by the principal. The principal will send a letter to the Director of the NET CPDT/Educator Field Experiences and Certification. This letter will convey that it is in the best interest of K-12 learners or the intern/resident that the internship/residency field experience be terminated. After this occurs, the university liaison or site/center coordinator will schedule a meeting with the student, the university liaison, and the NET CPDT Director to inform the student of the decision to terminate the placement and dismiss the student.

## **Due Process Rights in the Field-Based Program**

Students who wish to appeal admission or retention criteria may schedule a meeting with the Teacher Education Admission, Retention, and Appeals Committee to ask that an individual exception be made. In some cases, an appeal to TEARAC will not be granted (see above). If an appeal is granted, TEARAC will review all documentation and any oral deliberation to determine if an exception should be made. If TEARAC determines that an exception should not be made, the student will not have the opportunity to re-enter the Teacher Education Program. If the student believes that the correct procedures were not followed, as written here-in, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services. The Dean's charge will be to determine if procedures were correctly followed. The Dean's decision is final.

Students who wish to appeal dismissal resulting from an ILT or principal recommendation may also schedule a meeting with the Teacher Education Admission, Retention, and Appeals Committee. The Committee's charge is to review the evidence to determine if professional judgment was exercised and if there was a rational basis for the decision. If the Committee determines that professional judgment was not exercised, or that there was no rational basis for the decision, the Committee will recommend that the ILT and/or principal reevaluate the decision. The reevaluated decision by the ILT and/or principal is final.

## **Retention in the Field-Based Program**

In order to be retained in the Teacher Education Program a student must do as follows:

- Continue to meet admission standards.
- Remain in good standing with their Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and school placement principal.
- Make satisfactory progress toward teacher certification.
- Students who change their degree to a non-teaching degree, will not be retained in the Field-Based program and will be administratively removed.
- Students who fail to continue with coursework working toward teacher certification will not be retained in the Field-Based program and will be administratively removed.

A requirement of the undergraduate teacher certification program is continuous enrollment and progress toward certification. Teacher candidates may be approved by the program to take a leave of absence due to extenuating circumstances. Acceptable extenuating circumstances include:

- Significant financial hardship
- Personal injury/illness
- Caring for a family member with personal injury/illness
- Birth/Adoption of a dependent child
- Death of immediate family member

## **Status of Retained:**

During a leave of absence, the teacher candidate's status in the program will be changed from "admitted" to "retained." When the teacher candidate enrolls in courses again they must contact the Certification Office to update their status back to "admitted."

### **Duration and Terms of Retention:**

A leave of absence is not to exceed two consecutive long semesters. Fall and Spring are considered long semesters. Teacher candidates will be administratively removed from the program, including records of active enrollment with TEA, in the event of:

- Failure to enroll in courses at the beginning of the designated return semester and/or
- Failure to notify the Certification Office that they have returned and enrolled in courses.

### **Removal Repercussions:**

In the event that teacher candidates are administratively removed from the program, they will be required to do the following in order to return:

- Go before the Teacher Admission, Retention, and Appeals committee for consideration to re-enter the program.
- Reapply to the certification program and complete all admission steps satisfactorily.

*\*This process may cause a significant delay in a student being able to continue certification coursework.*

## Management Tools



Tk20 is an electronic database used by teacher candidates to provide evidence they have mastered Texas Education Agency standards for the profession. Students maintain their program requirements as well as store their assessed coursework, field experience, binders and applications.

### Video Capture

Teacher Candidates will also score their own teaching using the TAMU-C Performance Assessment and bring their self-evaluation to share with their Field Supervisor at the Post-Conference. This practice promotes a reflective attitude toward professional performance and gives Teacher Candidates a structured way to gauge growth in effective teaching practices.

## Program Success Expectations

### Classroom Walkthroughs

The Field Supervisor will conduct walkthrough visits throughout the semester to provide ongoing feedback, coaching, and support. At each visit, the Field Supervisor will complete the Classroom Walkthrough Form to provide feedback to the Teacher Candidate.

### Clinical Teaching Seminars

Seminars will be guided by a syllabus created by the Center Faculty. During seminars, Center Faculty will continue to support Teacher Candidates' development of instructional proficiencies and professionalism, lesson planning, completion of assignments, and ethical and legal responsibilities associated with teaching. Seminars will also encompass content that is dynamic in the sense that Center Faculty will be in a unique position to identify and provide support in specific strategies associated with goals for instructional proficiency.

### Grading

Teacher Candidates are evaluated in a variety of ways including classroom performance, walkthroughs, written products, participation in seminars, analyzing data, and professionalism. Any Teacher Candidate at risk for not meeting any of the performance gates may have a Professional Growth Plan submitted to TK20.

All forms related to documenting the assessment of Teacher Candidates are uploaded to Tk20. Details on the other professional development and learning opportunities requiring Teacher Candidate work can be found in the seminar syllabi .

### Minimum Expectations for Supporting Struggling Teacher Candidates

Once students are determined to be struggling, clear, actionable guidelines will be discussed and documented in the PGP as per our Student Success criteria. Field Supervisors will make contact with their Teacher Candidates and/or Cooperating Teacher to check on the Teacher Candidate's progress. Demonstrated lack of growth in struggling areas will result in escalation of student success processes and meetings with the Center Coordinator to help facilitate opportunities to demonstrate further growth and success.

## **Student Success in Educator Preparation Program**

The Educator Preparation Program comes to its culmination with a series of experiences called student teaching. This experience is one that has disparate tasks, skills, relationships and professional attributes that must be brought together for successful completion. During this process, Teacher Candidates are supported through a team composed of the Cooperating Teacher, the Field Supervisor, and university faculty members. Teacher Candidates exhibiting specific difficulties with professionalism, academic, and teaching requirements will follow an intervention process with the goal of supporting all Teacher Candidates toward program success, to the extent possible.

### **Recommendations for Teacher Candidates:**

- Prepare, prioritize, and organize your time effectively
- Read your Teacher Candidate Handbook carefully and review any questions with your Field Supervisor.
- Plan for full-time commitment to student teaching. Intern semester and Clinical teaching semester are a full-time, daytime commitment, between coursework and field requirements, and you are urged to consider it as full-time employment in order to give this semester the appropriate time allocation. This is the capstone event in your preparation, so do not sabotage your success by attempting to do too much. You are strongly encouraged to avoid taking classes, other than those required on your degree plan, or working at another job during these challenging and rewarding semesters. Plan now for YOUR success by making all arrangements possible to provide yourself with time to succeed.

### **Collaborating with your Field Supervisor:**

- Give your Field Supervisor a schedule of your public-school class days as well as a typical daily schedule for your placement class. The schedule should also show the grade level for each period (for secondary), the conference period, and lunchtime. (See the Sample Weekly Schedule in the Appendix).
- Provide a copy of your Attendance Log as determined by your ILT.
- Lesson plans for required observations must be sent by email to the Field Supervisor at least 48 hours before your observed lesson on the TAMU-C Lesson Plan Template or any other TAMU-C approved lesson plan template.
- Complete and submit forms as required and noted in Student Teaching Handbook and Syllabus.
- Your Field Supervisor has other Teacher Candidates, and you will likely need to be flexible when you schedule your observed lessons. Know that your Field Supervisor is quite experienced in the operations of schools and understands that scheduling a lesson is tricky and must be worked out with your Cooperating Teacher.

### **Collaborating with your Cooperating Teacher:**

- Make sure that you send an introductory email to your Cooperating Teacher prior to meeting him/her.
- Introduce yourself in person and do your best to show that you WANT to be there and WANT to be a teacher.
- Communicate the days that you will be in your Cooperating Teacher's classroom; give your CT a calendar showing these days. It is especially important that you take responsibility for reminding your CT frequently when you will be there and when you will not. He or she will not have your schedule at the top of their minds, yet it is vital that they know where you are.

- Remember that you are a guest in this classroom, and your Cooperating Teacher’s policies, habits, and wishes always apply. You will have your own classroom soon enough!
- Have a thorough discussion with your Cooperating Teacher regarding school and classroom policies. Consider that this will be an ongoing discussion throughout the semester as you learn enough to ask better questions. It is better not to assume anything—if you don’t know—ask!
- Arrange with your Cooperating Teacher for working and storage space in the classroom. Again, don’t assume that you can put your personal belongings anywhere you like.
- Make sure your Cooperating Teacher has all of your contact information, including multiple emergency contacts. Ask the best method in which to contact your Cooperating Teacher in an emergency—text, email, call.

**Familiarizing yourself with the School:**

- Review school and district websites.
- Make a trial run to your campus before the first day you are required to be there.
- Get the policy handbooks of the school and district and read them.
- Follow the dress code of the school; clothing should be neat and professional. See the dress code policy on the main TAMU-C Teacher Education Handbook online.
- Introduce yourself to the front office staff and make efforts to communicate with them regularly and pleasantly.
- Identify where resource materials are located in your school. During the first several days, plan to visit these places and familiarize yourself with the various materials and technology available.

**Taking Initiative:**

- Discuss housekeeping responsibilities with your Cooperating Teacher. Find out if there are duties you could perform starting the first week—some Cooperating Teachers will ask you to participate in classroom and/or school duties and others will wait for you to volunteer.
- Ask for a class roster and memorize each student’s name.
- Pay attention to clues about each student's academic progress, interests, ways to engage, and frustration points.
- Become familiar with all textbooks used in your classroom. Ask if you could take them home some weekend and sit down and read them. Do the same with curriculum guides.
- Find out about any extracurricular activities you will be expected to attend.
- Set aside time to confer daily with your Cooperating Teacher (and get your attendance log signed at that time). Ask for feedback.

**Other Requirements:**

- If not already passed, complete Certify Teacher or 240 Tutoring, share score report with Center Coordinator, and get approval from Certification Office to register for TExES exam(s).
- Stay healthy, seek positive people in your life, work hard, and remember the people and reasons that inspired you to be a teacher!



## **Rule on Substitution**

*Teacher Candidates in Intern Semester MAY serve as substitute teachers only in the following situations:*

- TCs may substitute teach for the district only on days that are not required field placement days (ex: Thursdays and Fridays) during the intern semester.
- TCs in Clinical Teaching may substitute teach **only after** all TEA-required clinical teaching days have been completed (at the end of the clinical teaching semester).
- Follow district and TEA guidelines for substitute teaching.

## **Appendix: Field-based Forms**

**NOTE ON ONLINE FORMS:** *All forms located in D2L and/or TK20. Center Coordinators will provide further direction about forms during intern semester and clinical teaching semester.*

### **Attendance Log**

The Teacher Candidate brings this form to the Cooperating Teacher to initial as determined by the ILT.

### **TAMU-C Cooperating Teacher (CT) Progress Report**

This form is completed during the intern semester at the midterm and end of semester. During clinical teaching the form is completed at the midterm.

### **TAMU-C Cooperator Teacher (CT) Final Evaluation Form**

This form is completed at the end of clinical teaching.

### **Classroom Walkthrough Form**

This form is filled out by the Field Supervisor for every walkthrough visit to provide Teacher Candidates with ongoing feedback (online).

### **TAMU-C Lesson Plan Templates- (located in TK20)**

These are the approved lesson plan formats for the required observations each semester of student teaching.

### **Pre-Conference (Located in TK20)**

The Teacher Candidate and Field Supervisor will use these forms to ensure effective Pre-conferences take place for each Performance Assessment.

### **T-TESS Evaluation Form (Located in Tk20)**

Evaluation form used by Field Supervisor during Formal observations.

### **Professionalism Rubric**

This form is completed by the Field Supervisor and Teacher Candidate independently at each performance assessment (D2L and Google Classroom).

### **FERPA Release Form**

This is required by TEA for each Teacher Candidate so that written feedback can be provided to campus administrators and Cooperating teachers. Teacher Candidates will need to complete the form in order to satisfy student teaching requirements.