# Texas State University Student Teaching Handbook

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Texas State University has developed professional educators for over 100 years. With more than 30 educator certification programs across the University—making up almost 14 percent of our student body—Texas State is one of the largest traditional educator preparation programs in the country. The program includes rigorous academic coursework and extensive field experience, supported by robust research in teaching and learning.

The conceptual framework that guides the Texas State Initial Teacher Preparation Program is based on three intersecting themes:

- the democratic purposes and outcomes of education,
- cultural competency in teaching and learning, and
- the development of the education professional.

Foremost is our belief that education is fundamental to a democratic society’s survival. Extending this belief are notions that all children can learn and that educators can and do make a difference in the lives of children, and by extension, for the communities in which they teach and for society in general. An additional foundational perspective is that the important aspects of a teacher’s development mentioned above optimally occur within the authentic setting of the classroom and are mediated by expert guidance, critical reflection, and assessment (Adler, 1982; Chung, 2008; Clemson, 1990; Coleman, 1988; Counts, 1932; Darling-Hammond, 2014; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Dewey, 1916, 1923, 1938; Griffin, 1986; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Hammermoss, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005; Holmes Group, 1990; InTASC, 2011; Valdés, 1996; Ribich, Agostino, Barone, & Birch, 1982; Werner, Avila, Resta, Venglar, & Curtin, 1995).

Every semester, hundreds of Texas State University students progress toward their goal of becoming certified teachers, and every year, thousands of K-12 students learn in classrooms guided by our Texas State graduates.

The Texas State University Instructional Model

All Texas State University teacher certification programs use The Danielson Framework for Teaching as the instructional model. In addition to providing a comprehensive picture of teaching, the Danielson Framework guides the growth of Texas State education students throughout their coursework and field experiences. The research-based Danielson Framework is similar to the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), the teacher evaluation tool currently endorsed by the Texas Education Agency. The Framework is aligned to the Texas State Teacher Standards as well. Experience with the Framework prepares Student Teachers for entrance into the public school system of Texas.

The Framework has a 4-point rubric that describes what effective teaching and learning looks like and sounds like in the classroom. Though the Framework was developed to describe the practice of a certified teacher in the classroom, Texas State values the use of the rubric with Student Teachers to reinforce growth towards highly effective instructional practices. Student Teaching Faculty use the Danielson Framework and rubric when conducting observations and evaluations of Student Teachers. Post observation conferences and instructional discussions during seminars are grounded in the Framework’s language and indicators of development.
Framework Ratings

Student Teaching Faculty receive extensive training in the Framework in order to conduct observations and score the Framework’s components. Student Teachers are required to complete the online Danielson Framework Study prior to the beginning of the semester in which they teach, regardless of prior experience with the Framework. Cooperating Teachers can access an overview training of the Framework and are provided additional support through interaction with Student Teaching Faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Indicates little to no evidence of effective component demonstration. Rubric adjectives include “lack of,” “unclear,” “unaware,” “poor,” and “unsuitable.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Within this level, attempts are made, but results are inconsistent or minimal. Performance rubric descriptors include “partial,” “generally,” and “moderate.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Describes the expected level of performance. Descriptors include “consistent,” “frequent,” “successful,” and “smooth.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguished</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Indicates a classroom where the level of effective learning and teaching is “solid,” “seamless,” “skillful,” and “preventative.”</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Related Resources

All resources are available through the Resource tab of the Office of Educator Preparation website.

- The Danielson Framework for Teaching *(Note: NOT available on the OEP website. This link takes you directly to the Danielson FFT website. You will have to share contact information in order to download this document.)*
- Instructional Model for Education Students: Danielson Framework for Teaching

The Student Teaching Assignment

The Student Teaching Practicum is the capstone field experience for our students working toward teacher certification.

Student teaching is a six-semester-hour experience in a classroom of a public, and in some cases private or charter school. During this semester students are a “student of teaching”. It is a time of much learning, improvement, and growth, supported by the Cooperating Teacher and University Student Teaching Faculty. All candidates for initial teacher certification student teach for one full semester. Approximately 150 schools in 55 school districts across Texas host our students for the student teaching experience. The Office of Educator Preparation is the entity responsible for facilitating and monitoring this experience. This handbook outlines the program guidelines, policies, standard experiences, and participant requirements, roles, and responsibilities.
This experience is of paramount importance to the future careers of Student Teachers, and, along with other criteria, must be completed successfully in order to receive recommendation to certify by the Office of Educator Preparation. Commitment to learning, growth, professionalism and open communication is critical. Questions and concerns should be addressed immediately by all parties, initially through Student Teaching Faculty and, as necessary, through the Director of the Office of Educator Preparation.

Assignments are made with care and attention to many factors. Adjustments in assignments are not made after the Student Teacher begins except in unusual circumstances. No Student Teacher is to be reassigned without the prior approval of the Director of the Office of Educator Preparation.

Expectations of the Student Teacher

Student Teachers attend Texas State seminars and meet with Student Teaching Faculty prior to campus placements to receive information about their role during the student teaching experience. Texas State and Student Teaching Faculty expectations are outlined below.

Student Teacher Standard Experiences

To maintain equity with assignments and workloads, Texas State University has established a set of common experiences for Student Teachers. Because of the context of the placements, the details of these requirements vary somewhat between elementary and secondary. Student Teachers will receive specific information about these standard experiences from the Student Teaching Faculty during the orientation meeting at the beginning of the semester. The major requirements are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Visit</th>
<th>Student Teachers are asked to visit their assigned classroom prior to the first day of student teaching if possible.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations of the Cooperating Teacher</td>
<td>Student Teachers are expected to observe the Cooperating Teacher teach and manage the classroom environment, especially during the early weeks of student teaching. These opportunities provide excellent examples of effective teaching and learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflections</td>
<td>Through regular reflections submitted to the Student Teaching Faculty, the Student Teacher will assess his/her growth as a teacher and learner and reflect upon how to refine and expand teaching skills, classroom management techniques, and professional growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Responsibility</td>
<td>Student Teachers and Cooperating Teachers will collaborate to develop a schedule for assuming instructional responsibility, using the appropriate Timeline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization System</td>
<td>Student Teachers will develop and maintain an organization system that should result in effective storage and retrieval of information and resources gathered throughout the semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Plans</td>
<td>As Student Teachers assume instructional responsibilities, they will be responsible for developing lesson plans. Lesson plan expectations differ between elementary and secondary. Specific lesson plan requirements will be shared by Student Teaching Faculty with Student Teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prior to observations, Student Teachers and Student Teaching Faculty will review and reflect on the lesson plan, focusing on the interrelationships between planning, instruction, the learning environment, and student outcomes.

After each observation by faculty, Student Teachers participate in a post-observation conference during which the Student Teacher is guided through a reflection on their strengths and areas for improvement.

After Student Teaching Faculty and Cooperating Teacher come to consensus about midpoint assessment of progress, the Student Teacher will participate in a midpoint conference with the Cooperating Teacher, discussing progress and setting goals for professional learning and growth in practice.

In preparation for the mandatory Texas State Job Fair, Student Teachers are expected to develop a professional resume.

The Student Teacher will complete a “Statement of Professional Responsibility” that details their demonstration of professionalism. This assignment will assist the Cooperating Teacher and the Student Teaching Faculty in measuring the Student Teacher’s demonstration of professional responsibility for the final evaluation.

The Student Teacher will participate in a final evaluation conference with the Cooperating Teacher and Student Teaching Faculty, where summative ratings using the Texas State Student Teaching Rubric will be shared.

Additional Expectations

- **Classroom Authority:** Texas State expects the Student Teacher to work within the context of the Cooperating Teacher’s classroom and campus and accept that the Cooperating Teacher has the ultimate responsibility for how the Student Teacher may operate in the classroom.

- **Campus Policies:** Student Teachers should know and follow the policies of the campus on which they are assigned. Cooperating Teachers are encouraged to share campus policy, as well as prompt and coach their Student Teacher when necessary.
Required TxState Meetings: Student Teachers are required to attend all Texas State Student Teacher orientation and training sessions, meetings, as well as the Texas State Job Fair and all Student Teaching Faculty meetings and seminars.

Deadlines and Acknowledgement Requirements: The OEP keeps Student Teachers informed of important submission dates and deadlines. It is the Student Teacher’s responsibility to meet deadlines when applying for graduation, exit exams and certification. In addition, Student Teachers must acknowledge their observations and final evaluation in the online ePortfolio system.

“Passing” Student Teaching: To successfully complete Student Teaching and receive credit (CR), a Student Teacher must receive a rating of “2” or higher on each of the final evaluation components.

Growth Plan: If a Student Teacher’s performance is in need of significant intervention in order for the Student Teacher to complete student teaching, the Growth Plan process will be initiated and the Texas State Office of Educator Preparation will be informed.
  ○ Ideally, the identification of areas needing significant improvement will occur early, leaving time for action steps to be implemented. Early and open communication between the Student Teacher, the Cooperating Teacher, and Student Teaching Faculty is critical.
  ○ Once it has been determined that a growth plan is necessary, a conference with the Student Teacher will be held. The Student Teacher will be responsible for the creation and enactment of the growth plan with guidance provided by the Cooperating Teacher and Student Teaching Faculty.

Professionalism

The Student Teacher is expected to demonstrate professionalism throughout their program, maintaining cooperative and collaborative relationships, complying with University, campus and school district policies, and conducting themselves ethically and with integrity.

  ● Texas Education Code of Ethics - In 2016 a new Code of Ethics was adopted by the State Board of Education. All preservice and in-service teachers are required to uphold all aspects of this code. To maintain accountability with the Texas Education Agency, Student Teachers must document that they have read and understood the Code of Ethics in their ePortfolio binders.

  ● Cooperative and Acceptable Work Ethic - As a guest at the host school and in the Cooperating Teacher’s classroom, the Student Teacher should work in a professional, cooperative manner with all that he/she comes in contact with. Although absences may occur, perfect attendance is expected of your Student Teacher. More information on absences appears in the Policy section of this handbook.

  ● Confidentiality - The Student Teacher is expected to know the campus policy on the use of confidential information that may be obtained through student records, conversations, or
other sources. Confidentiality regarding students, information about parents of students, or information shared with you must be maintained.

- **Dress Code** - Student Teachers are expected to present a professional appearance that reflects the transition from college student to educator. The Student Teacher is expected to dress appropriately and professionally at all times, complying with the dress code policy of the host school and district.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Related Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All resources are available on the Resource tab of the Office of Educator Preparation website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Texas Education Code of Ethics</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Texas State University Student Teacher Dress Code</td>
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**Student Teaching Policies**

This handbook section provides an overview of basic policies regarding the student teaching experience. This, in conjunction with the current Student Teaching Syllabus, provides specific guidance regarding program policy.

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<tr>
<th>Professional Liability</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Student Teacher is entitled to the same protection of law as the Cooperating Teacher and the principal in the school where s/he is assigned. The University does not provide the Student Teacher with liability insurance. Texas State requires that all Student Teachers obtain liability insurance coverage offered through organizations such as ATPE and TCTA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Liability insurance protection does not apply in cases where there is use of excessive force in the discipline of students or negligence resulting in bodily injury to students, nor does the protection apply to the operation or use of any motor vehicle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Administering medicine to a student is not permitted at any time, under any circumstance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student Teachers are not to drive their own cars to take students on field trips or to deliver them anywhere away from campus as they could be found liable for any accidents or injuries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Corporal punishment administered by the Student Teacher is not permitted at any time. The Cooperating Teacher should discuss school policy regarding this issue with the Student Teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cooperating Teachers should review the district and/or campus policies before leaving the Student Teacher alone in the classroom. In all situations, the length of time the Cooperating Teacher is out of the classroom should be brief early in the experience. It is important that a Student Teacher can manage classroom behavior and has a firm understanding of the classroom management expectations before being left alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Student Teacher should not be left alone on a playground or field trip with a group of students without a certified teacher nearby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substituting</td>
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</table>
| Student Teacher Absences | Perfect attendance is expected during student teaching. If the Student Teacher must be absent, the following restrictions apply.  

**General Requirements**  
- The Texas Education Agency requires a minimum number of days the Student Teacher must be in the classroom. Therefore, days missed will be made up after the last official day of student teaching, regardless of the reason, unless the Cooperating Teacher and university supervisor approve another arrangement.  
- The Student Teacher must notify both the Cooperating Teacher and the university supervisor of absences as soon as possible. Failure to notify may result in the termination of the student teaching assignment.  
- If absent, s/he must send plans/materials to the Cooperating Teacher if these were his/her responsibility for that day.  
- An “Absentee Form for Student Teachers” must be submitted prior to an absence for personal reasons and the first day back from an emergency absence (available on TRACS).  
- The Student Teacher is to be present at the school for the entire day (Exceptions are made to attend required Texas State or faculty meetings and seminars) and to follow the required start and end times for their campus. Lateness is inexcusable.  
- If at any time, in the judgment of the Cooperating Teacher and the university supervisor, the Student Teacher’s absences are excessive (more than three), the student teaching assignment may be terminated.  

**Absences Due to Personal Business**  
- TExES Exams: Student Teachers are encouraged to take their TExES exams prior to assuming total instructional responsibility. They are expected to schedule their TExES exams after school hours or on Saturday, if possible. A Student Teacher that must miss student teaching for a TExES exam will be required to submit an absence form and make up the absence.  
- Interviews: Absences for interviews should be limited, approved by Student Teaching Faculty, and must be made up.  
- Other: Student Teachers who are absent due to any other personal business must receive prior approval and must make up the absence.  

**Absences Due to Religious Holidays**  
It is the responsibility of each Student Teacher to notify the Cooperating Teacher and Student Teaching Faculty in advance when they will be absent from school for a religious holiday. The Student Teacher should obtain
| Calendar | **Work Days/Hours:** Student Teachers are to follow the campus staff calendar and work hours.  
- Although arriving early and staying late for meetings, team planning, and preparation for class is expected, returning for night meetings or weekend events should not be required.  
- Student Teachers will follow the calendar of the school district in which they are assigned. If the district has a holiday and the University is in session, the Student Teacher will have a holiday unless Student Teaching Faculty schedules a meeting or seminar. If the school has scheduled professional development days, the Student Teacher is required to participate unless specifically requested not to by the district or campus.  
- Cooperating Teachers and Student Teachers should familiarize themselves with the University Student Teaching calendar for mandatory meetings, due dates, and other information. A copy of the current semester’s calendar can be downloaded from the OEP website.  

**Inclement Weather:** In case of inclement weather closures or late starts, Student Teachers follow the staff hours and calendar of the district in which they are assigned.  
- If the district is closed or starts late due to inclement weather, the Student Teacher is expected to adhere to his/her assigned district’s expectations for staff, even if Texas State continues to hold classes.  
- If Texas State implements a closure or late start, but the Student Teacher’s district does not, the Student Teacher will comply with the district’s expectations.  
- Any days missed due to school being cancelled do not need to be made up if the district’s weather make-up day occurs after the last day of student teaching. If the district’s “weather day” falls within the Student Teacher’s official semester and the district is in session because of previous bad weather, the Student Teacher will attend that day. |

| Outside Responsibilities | During the student teaching semester, the Student Teacher’s first responsibility is to the students he/she teaches. Other obligations should not interfere with student teaching responsibilities.  
- Outside activities (e.g., employment, sports, sororities, fraternities) should be held to a minimum by Student Teachers during their student teaching experience.  
- It is recommended that no classes be taken concurrently with student teaching. If this is absolutely necessary, none should be scheduled before 5:00 PM.  
- No Student Teacher will be excused to leave early for work or for class. |
Related Resources
All resources are available on the Resource tab of the Office of Educator Preparation website.

- Student Teacher Absence Form

Hosting Student Teachers: Cooperating Teachers

The Cooperating Teacher is a critical figure within the student teaching experience, acting as a mentor and day-to-day guide during a Student Teacher's placement. A brief summary of the roles and requirements of the Cooperating Teacher are outlined below. Detailed guidance can be found in the Cooperating Teacher's Resource Guide, available on the OEP website.

| Training | ● Complete the Cooperating Teacher online training module (suggested).
|          | ● Review the Cooperating Teacher Handbook.
|          | ● Attend an orientation meeting with Texas State Student Teaching Faculty.
| Mentoring| ● Welcoming the Student Teacher (ST) to your classroom and building a trust relationship.
|          | ● Introducing the ST to your classroom, school, staff, and district.
|          | ● Encouraging and supporting the ST.
|          | ● Facilitating the professional learning and growth of the ST. This should include dialogue, co-planning, observation/feedback, and collaborative problem-solving.
|          | ● Planning for and facilitating the assumption of instructional responsibilities by the ST.
|          | ● Collaborating with ST to complete various Standard Experiences.
|          | ● Collaborating with ST Faculty to promote/monitor progress of the ST.
| Standard Experiences | ● Parent Letter - Review and approve the letter of introduction your ST will send home to your classroom parents.
|                      | ● Class Background Study - provide pertinent information regarding students, school, procedures, schedule, etc.
|                      | ● Total Teach Timeline - co-create a plan for gradual release of teaching responsibilities to the ST.
|                      | ● Student Work Reflection - provide input for ST submission of the student work reflection.
|                      | ● Midpoint Conference - share midpoint ratings with the ST and co-create goals and action steps.
|                      | ● Final Evaluation Conference - Participate in the summative conference with the ST and Student Teaching Faculty.
| Evaluations | ● Collaborate with ST Faculty to determine ST progress during Midpoint Conference.
|             | ● Collaborate with ST Faculty to determine final evaluation ratings at end of placement.
Guiding the Student Teacher: Student Teacher Faculty

Student Teaching Faculty are another critical figure within the student teaching experience, acting both as a mentor and a facilitator of professional learning and growth in practice. Student Teaching Faculty have extensive experience in observing, mentoring, and training, and are committed to partnering with the University, the school, the Cooperating Teacher, and the Student Teacher to create the best possible experience during the student teaching placement. Faculty duties encompass working with Student Teachers within the district/campus environment, providing external support and training, and completing all required Texas State documentation. A brief summary of the roles and requirements of University Student Teaching Faculty are outlined below.

| Training | ● Complete all required training, including but not limited to the Danielson Framework for Teaching (FFt) online training (Teachscape), Danielson FFT calibration training, and TEA required trainings.  
|          | ● Attend all mandatory Office of Educator Preparation trainings and meetings.  
|          | ● Provide orientation training for Cooperating Teachers and campus administrators per guidelines. |
| Mentoring | ● Facilitate the professional learning and growth of the ST. This should include dialogue, co-planning, observation/feedback, and collaborative problem-solving.  
|          | ● Collaborate with ST to complete various Standard Experiences.  
|          | ● Collaborate with Cooperating Teacher to promote/monitor progress of the ST. |
| Standard Experiences | ● Conduct a Student Teacher Orientation meeting prior to the beginning of the placement window.  
|          | ● Conduct a series of seminars focused on Danielson Framework for Teaching, domains 1, 2, and 3, as well as resume building.  
|          | ● Ensure completion of tasks and assignments outlined in the Student Teacher Standard Experiences.  
|          | ● Conduct 4 formal observations, 3 of which must be 45 minutes or longer.  
|          | ● Facilitate pre and post observation conferences for each formal observation. |
| Evaluations | ● Collaborate with Cooperating Teacher to determine ST progress during Midpoint Conference.  
|            | ● Collaborate with Cooperating Teacher to determine final evaluation ratings at end of placement. |

Final Recommendations

Before Student Teachers can be certified in Texas, they must do the following:

- Take/pass all required TExES exams. Specific information is posted on the OEP webpage.
- Apply for teacher certification online. Guidelines are provided on the Office of Educator Preparation website.