

A GUIDE TO STUDENT TEACHING

A Professional Field Experience Handbook



Recommended for

- **Student Teachers**
- **Cooperating Teachers**
- **University Supervisors**
- **School Administrators**

<http://websites.pdesas.org/UPBTeacherED/default.aspx>

**Teacher Education Program
University of Pittsburgh at Bradford
300 Campus Drive
Bradford, PA 16701**

**Revised
March 2023**

Mission Statement of the Education Program

The University of Pittsburgh at Bradford is a student-focused and inclusive educational community dedicated to the education of students in a world of rapid political, economic, scientific, and cultural change. The Education Program seeks to provide pre-service teachers with specific content knowledge and sound pedagogical strategies enabling them to become responsible and productive citizens of a globally connected and sustainable world who value and embrace diverse perspectives and are innovative facilitators of learning.

The Education Program accomplishes this by:

- helping students acquire communication, information-gathering, critical thinking skills and technological proficiency.
- requiring education students to follow Pitt-Bradford's General Education curriculum requirements, the same requirement for all majors. This ensures every student graduates with an appreciation and understanding of the many other fields of study that affect our understanding of the human experience.
- promoting collaboration among classmates, faculty and master teachers and administrators in area school districts.
- providing cross-curricular collaboration within our program and with area school districts.
- providing field based experiences through the entire education curriculum.
- designing culturally affirming, relevant and sustaining learning experiences that will foster real world experiences.
- demonstrating the code of ethics required of educators.

The University of Pittsburgh at Bradford provides program completers with a foundation for lives that are both professionally fruitful and personally satisfying.

Mission Statement Revised February 2023

PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

Student teaching is the most challenging and exciting part of the Teacher Education Program at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford. It provides opportunities for direct involvement in the schooling of America's children and youth. It also requires future teachers to function simultaneously as **students of teaching and teachers of students**. All who "survived" student teaching under the scrutiny of veteran practitioners remember that playing two roles at the same time can be very stressful. This handbook has been developed to help reduce some of the anxiety, confusion and frustration that often accompany student teaching.

The handbook delineates the roles and responsibilities of Pitt-Bradford student teachers and the cooperating teachers and university supervisors who guide the novice professionals through their clinical experiences.

The handbook provides "guidelines," suggesting that **flexibility** is the key to a productive and rewarding relationship among all parties involved in student teaching.



This handbook is based upon the guidelines established by Dr. Rick Donato, Associate Chair, Teacher Certification and Dr. Phyllis Sheehy, Coordinator of Field Experiences, of the School of Education, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. It has been modified to fit the particular needs of the Pitt-Bradford program. Questions about the Pitt-Bradford Education Program or about student teaching should be directed to the director of the education program.

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Accreditation

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has approved all pre-service teacher education programs at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford.

Current requirements for certification:

- A baccalaureate degree
- 2.8 grade point average with no grade below a C- in any required course
- Completion of an accredited teacher certification program
- Passing scores on required basic skills assessments (if applicable) and the appropriate certification exams
- Current clearances if you have been away from the University for more than one year

Requirements for Student Teaching

Several requirements must be met prior to student teaching:

- Demonstrated satisfactory completion of ALL prerequisite courses
- Demonstrated satisfactory professional conduct as shown on the Education Program's Professional Disposition Inventory
- Earned a minimum overall QPA of 2.8 with no grade below a C- in any required course
- Been granted full admission status to the Pitt-Bradford Teacher Education Program
- Filed a formal application for student teaching with the Education Program by the announced deadline
- Taken a tuberculin test and filed the negative results with the Education Program
- Presented a valid PA State Police Criminal History Check, PA Child Abuse Clearance, and an FBI clearance obtained through the PA Department of Education's Cogent ID System. All three clearances must be on file with the school districts in which the student teacher is placed by the first day of each placement
- Enrolled in a health care insurance plan and completed a Field-Based Experience Emergency Card to be available while on site during each placement
- Possess the name badge required by the Pitt-Bradford Education Program

Length and Location

The Pitt-Bradford Education Program requires two full-time placements of 35 days each in two different school districts. Placements cannot be arranged in a school where immediate family members are employed or attending (i.e. children, parents, spouse, siblings).

The Student Teaching Triad

Pitt-Bradford's student teaching practicum is a collaborative venture directly involving the student teacher, cooperating teacher and university supervisor. The success or failure of student teaching hinges upon the quality of relationships developed within this triad. Each member of the triad plays an important role contributing to the total professional development of the prospective teacher. Moreover, these roles are interdependent, and there is much overlap in many areas. Therefore, it is essential that all members of the triad have a clear understanding of their respective and varied roles.

Cooperating teachers and university supervisors: enrich the student teachers' knowledge about theories and methods of instruction; demonstrate alternative styles of effective teaching; help student teachers design and evaluate instructional activities and materials; confer with and offer constructive feedback to student teachers on a regular basis; encourage student teachers to engage in reflective self-analysis and self-directed learning and sensitize student teachers to the many sociocultural factors that affect instruction and learning in the school.

GOALS OF THE STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- To provide an intensive period of growth in personal and professional attitudes, knowledge and skills
- To introduce the auxiliary services of the school and explain the relationships between these services and the total educational process
- To provide opportunities to observe and practice effective methods of instruction that will engage all students in the experience of learning
- To provide supervised experiences in planning instructional programs, designing curriculum materials, using various assessment techniques and experimenting with technology
- To provide planned experiences in analyzing teaching performances and using feedback from others to enhance and refine teaching skills
- To provide involvement in the academic and extracurricular activities of the school including the systems for students who need academic support
- To provide encouragement in the solving of practical problems by drawing upon appropriate theories of instruction and learning that reach a diverse population of 21st century learners
- To sequentially provide increasingly comprehensive and complex experiences leading to the assumption of complete responsibility for classroom instruction
- To permit the student teacher to demonstrate ability and potential to achieve the Pennsylvania Department of Education's teaching certification.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT TEACHER

- Follow the calendar and daily schedule of the cooperating school. This pertains to in-service days, orientation days, conference days and holidays.
- Provide the university supervisor with a complete classroom schedule.
- Clear every absence and its reason with the cooperating teacher by direct personal contact or a phone call. Send a follow-up email to the cooperating teacher, the supervisor and Education Program director. **Be sure to speak directly with the university supervisor if an observation is scheduled on the day of the absence.** The director of teacher education will determine if any absences will be made up.
- If a school district suspends face-to-face instruction for any reason, student teachers will continue with the placement and all teaching requirements using the instructional modality adopted by the school district.
- Establish positive working relationships with all personnel in the cooperating school and with the university supervisor.
- Perform the same teaching and non-teaching duties as the cooperating teacher. This includes attending faculty meetings, parent-teacher conferences, staff development programs, extracurricular functions, etc.
- Design and implement instruction. Lesson and unit plans must be prepared according to the school's template and submitted to the cooperating teacher prior to implementation. **Two lesson plans following the Pitt-Bradford format must be submitted each week to the university supervisor.**
- Prepare a time log for each week. **An electronic version has been developed and should be used. The time logs are cumulative; the final page should contain the total of all hours. Provide time logs to the university supervisor.**
- Schedule formal observation and conference periods with both the cooperating teacher and university supervisor.
- Successfully complete all professional tasks assigned by the cooperating teacher and university supervisor.
- Demonstrate skills to be a reflective practitioner. Self-evaluate all lessons on a daily basis. Use feedback offered by the cooperating teacher and university supervisor.
- Maintain a student teaching binder that includes: lesson plans; unit plans; lesson reflections; evaluations, etc. From the binder, develop a professional portfolio.
- Attempt to schedule a mock interview with the cooperating school's principal during each placement.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COOPERATING TEACHER

- Prior to the arrival of the student teacher, inform the learners that there will be another **teacher** in the room. Please avoid the label “student teacher.”
- Become acquainted with the teacher candidate and acknowledge him/her as a professional colleague.
- Familiarize the candidate with the classroom, lesson plan template, school and local community.
- Orient the candidate to the curriculum. Explain how the students’ experiences will be influenced by past and future activities within the classroom.
- Clarify the teacher candidate’s roles and responsibilities at the very outset of the placement. Tell the candidate exactly what is expected *and* why. Use the suggested university guidelines below to insure a smooth phase-in of the candidate into the classroom. *Note: It is appropriate, and encouraged, for the cooperating teacher to leave the teacher candidate alone in the classroom once the candidate is established.*

First Placement:

- Week 1:** Observation and gradual taking over of teaching
- Week 2-6:** Take over; give the teacher candidate more responsibility
- Week 7:** Candidate may teach until the last day of the placement or cooperating teacher may resume teaching. If cooperating teacher resumes teaching, the candidate could observe in other classrooms.

Second Placement: Teacher candidate should be ready to teach with a minimum of observation.

- Provide ample opportunity to confer with and offer feedback to the teacher candidate each day. Communicate regularly with the university supervisor concerning the progress of the teacher candidate.
- Provide the candidate with encouragement.
- Engage the teacher candidate in reflection and self-evaluation. Ask the candidate to describe, evaluate, and correct his/her own teaching performance. Allow the candidate to interact with other teacher candidates and regular teachers in your school.
- Do a minimum of TWO written observations of your candidate EACH week. You may use forms available from the university or any format that is comfortable for you. The feedback must be in writing and should be followed by dialog with the teacher candidate. Evaluations must be copied by the candidate and submitted to the university supervisor.
- If conflicts or problems arise, discuss them **confidentially** with the teacher candidate and the university supervisor.
- Complete a mid-term and final evaluation of the teacher candidate. These forms are provided for you on the Pitt-Bradford Education Program’s website. Appointments should be scheduled to discuss the evaluations with the teacher candidate and the assigned university supervisor.

- If you support the candidate's entry into the profession, consider writing a letter of recommendation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR

- Interpret the university's student teaching policies, procedures, and requirements to all personnel involved in the practicum.
- Follow the basic principles of clinical supervision:
 - A. Establishment of a professional relationship between the teacher candidate, the cooperating teacher and you
 - All parties treated with respect
 - Open communication among all parties
 - Three-way conferences when possible
 - Supervisor visits arranged in advance
 - B. Observation
 - Collect data in an objective manner
 - Use behavioral descriptions
 - Identify patterns
 - Analyze to determine if objectives are being met
 - C. Observation Conference
 - Specific feedback supported from data
 - Strengths and areas of success
 - Areas needing improvement
 - Strategies for improvement
 - Focus for next observation
 - Original observation form to teacher candidate
 - Copy of observation form for the file
- Know the criteria to be used in assessing the teacher candidate's performance. The criteria are presented in the student teacher evaluation forms used at the mid-point and final evaluations.
- Observe the candidate's classroom teaching. Formal and informal data should be recorded on standard observation forms. Records should be made during and after the observation. To be most effective, this aspect of supervision should be done on a regular basis, usually weekly but a minimum of four times per placement.
- Conduct a conference with the teacher candidate following each observation session. Share the data with the candidate and the cooperating teacher. This will assist the candidate in evaluating teaching strengths and weaknesses in an on-going manner.
- Vary the types of feedback provided to the teacher candidate. There are many options: describe; ask questions; check for understanding; mix and match feedback messages to fit the candidate's level of competence.
- Plan with the teacher candidate and cooperating teacher specific areas that will receive attention in subsequent observations.
- Assist with both evaluations of the teacher candidate as needed.

STUDENT TEACHER EVALUATION

Written midterm and final evaluations must be completed for each placement. The University grade option for student teaching is: Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U). Standard evaluation forms are provided on the Education Program's website.

The preparation and sharing of the evaluations are left to the discretion of the parties involved. However, it is recommended that this be a **cooperative** venture and that the teacher candidate have the opportunity to offer comments and reactions about the written evaluation. **The evaluations should be completed prior to the meeting between the cooperating teacher, the teacher candidate, and the university supervisor.**

If the teacher candidate is performing unsatisfactorily at any time during a placement, the following procedures will be followed:

- A written report detailing unsatisfactory areas of the student teaching experience will be given to the teacher candidate by the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher.
- The university supervisor and the cooperating teacher, in conjunction with the candidate, will set a reasonable timeline for improvement of these problem areas.
- Inform the director of the Education Program of the unsatisfactory report and the recommended plan for improvement.
- If, at the end of the established time period, the candidate has not made satisfactory progress in the problem areas, the director of the Education Program will determine whether the student will be permitted to continue in the student teaching experience.

The evaluation forms for each student teaching placement will be placed in the candidate's permanent file as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Originals of the mid-term evaluations and PDE 430 forms must be retained by the university. A copy is given to the candidate.

The assignment of a final grade for student teaching is the responsibility of the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford. The Satisfactory (S) is awarded if a minimum of 770 out of 1000 points is accomplished. The Unsatisfactory (U) grade is earned if a candidate has failed to meet minimal performance standards for the practicum. Incomplete grades (I or G) are given only to those students who are unable to complete the practicum requirements because of extenuating circumstances.

Individuals who receive a U-grade or an "incomplete" are usually required to repeat all or part of student teaching. However, in some cases the director of the Education Program may not approve a repeated student teaching experience and will instead recommend that the student be dropped from the program. Input from cooperating teachers and the university supervisor is routinely sought whenever a student's status in the Education Program is in jeopardy.

ENTERING THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Student teachers must apply for graduation and certification. Before certification is earned, teacher candidates must pass the required exams for their certification areas.

The information provided in this section of the handbook should help to address commonly asked questions associated with leaving the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford and becoming a full-fledged professional teacher. For additional assistance, teacher candidates should consult their academic advisors.

Graduation

Students must file an application for graduation following the guidelines established by the registrar of the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford. It is the student's responsibility to complete and submit the application for graduation before the announced deadline.

Certification

Graduation from the program does not automatically result in teacher certification. An application for a Pennsylvania Instructional I Certificate must be submitted once a final GPA has been calculated and all certification exams are passed.

Applications for certification are completed online through the PA Department of Education's Teacher Information Management System (TIMS). Applications will not be endorsed until we have the following items in the permanent file:

- Current Clearances
- A Pitt-Bradford transcript that shows the degree has been awarded
- Passing scores for certification exams
- Cover sheet from application in PDE's Teacher Information Management System

The Instructional I Certificate (provisional certificate) is issued to persons whose primary responsibility is teaching. It is valid for six years in the field for which it was endorsed. The six-year time limit begins when the first contracted position is obtained.

Required Testing

The PA Department of Education requires all undergraduate certification program candidates to pass basic skills assessments, a series of three tests in Mathematics, Reading and Writing. The passing scores are also required for admission into a certification program at Pitt-Bradford. (*Post-baccalaureate applicants are not required to take the basic skills assessments.*)

For certification, Early Level (PreK-4) Education candidates will take the PECT tests. All K-12 and Secondary (7-12) candidates will take the required PRAXIS II exam(s) for their certification area.

The required tests are subject to change. Please confirm the test required for each certification by visiting the PA Department of Education's website at this address: www.education.state.pa.us. Select "I Would Like to Become Certified in PA" and then "Certification Testing."

Placement Service

One of the first tasks for a teacher candidate should be to develop a credential file to serve as a safe repository for important personal records (e.g., resume, transcripts, recommendations, teaching certificate, test scores, career goals statement, etc.).

The Career Services Office offers comprehensive services for students and alumni. In addition to assisting with credential files, Dr. Holly Spittler conducts workshops, evaluates resumes, announces employment opportunities, and arranges interviews. During each term, Dr. Spittler holds a briefing session with student teachers to explain the functions of the Placement Service, discusses cover letter and resume writing, interview strategies, and prepares students for their own job search. Dr. Spittler is also available to provide individual guidance and counseling for prospective teachers.

Letter of Verification

There is often a time lapse between the completion of program requirements and the issuance of the diploma and teaching certificate. During this period, most students are interviewing for teaching positions and employers will request verification of the completion of degree and certification requirements. Once the application for graduation is approved and requirements for certification are met, the director of the education program can provide an official letter of eligibility that can be shared with prospective employers.

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A number of policies and procedures have been established to serve the best interests of the teacher candidate, the cooperating teacher, and the university supervisor. These guidelines are designed to enrich the student teaching experience for all parties involved.

Many local school districts have additional standards to regulate the personal and professional conduct of student teachers. If and when the teacher candidate is confused about whether to follow Pitt-Bradford's guidelines or those of the local school, the candidate should check with the cooperating teacher and the assigned university supervisor.

Attire and Appearance

Professional attire and appearance are expected at all times. No visible tattoos, no tongue, eyebrow, lip or nose piercings and no unnatural hair colors (blue, green, pink, purple, etc.) are acceptable for Pitt-Bradford teacher candidates. Men should wear slacks, shirt and tie. Women should select comparable clothing. Avoid tight-fitting garments and low-cut tops. Most cooperating schools have policies about dress and grooming as well. Pitt-Bradford's requirements may be more formal. Dress down days

may be observed, but the attire should not be too relaxed. Official Pitt-Bradford name badges must be worn at all times while student teaching.

Calendar

The teacher candidate must follow the calendar of the assigned cooperating school. In cases of conflict between university and school holidays, the public school calendar must be followed.

Classroom Observation Forms

Whenever a university supervisor observes the teacher candidate, the supervisor will complete a classroom observation form and place a copy in the candidate's file folder. These forms enable the supervisor to describe, evaluate and suggest improvements in the candidate's performance. They also identify the focus of subsequent observations.

Evaluation Forms

There will be midterm and final evaluations of the teacher candidate during each placement. Standard forms for assessing the candidate's personal attributes and professional competence are provided by the Education Program. The cooperating teacher completes the midterm form at the midpoint of the placement. Also at the midpoint, the teacher candidate will write a statement detailing goals for the second half of the placement. The cooperating teacher, candidate, and university supervisor will meet to share and discuss their perceptions of the candidate's progress and achievement.

The cooperating teacher and the university supervisor will complete the PDE 430 at the end of the placement. The teacher candidate will complete the PDE 430A. During the final week of the placement, the cooperating teacher, teacher candidate, and the university supervisor will meet to discuss the candidate's accomplishments during that placement. All mid-term and final forms must be signed by the teacher candidate, cooperating teacher, and the assigned university supervisor.

To meet university deadlines for reporting grades, the professor of the student teaching seminar must receive final evaluation forms by the last day of the student teaching placement. These forms are treated as confidential and private records. The final evaluation is permanently kept in the student teacher's permanent file. The forms are not released to the public but are routinely referred to by Education Program officials when it is necessary to verify a student's completion of a certification program.

Health Insurance

Student teachers are required to have health insurance coverage. The information must be on record in the student's permanent file in the Education Program office. For students who are no longer covered by their parents' policies, short-term insurance is available through local carriers and through the University of Pittsburgh. Student teachers must also complete a University of Pittsburgh at Bradford Field Experience Emergency Card and keep that information available while they are student teaching. This form should be the first item in the student's binder.

Illness

The cooperating teacher and director of the Education Program evaluate cases of student teacher illness on an individual basis. Consideration is given to the type, severity, and duration of the illness. When possible, the student teacher should submit written documentation from a physician to verify illness or alert the cooperating teacher and director of the Education Program of any other medical problems that may limit the student teacher's performance.

If a student teacher experiences a serious or prolonged health problem that renders him/her unfit to fulfill responsibilities, the placement will be terminated immediately. The student teacher will not be permitted to resume the placement until such time that documentation from a health care provider designated by the University is submitted stating the student teacher is fit to return.

Lesson Plans

Teacher candidates are expected to prepare written lesson plans. The format of the lesson plan may depend upon the subject, grade level, learner population being taught, and the school's lesson plan format; however, the accepted Pitt-Bradford format is generally used. As a rule, a complete lesson plan requires the teacher candidate to make decisions about: objectives; content coverage; PA academic or common core standards; assessment anchors; teaching styles; instructional materials; organization and management; integration of technology or other special criteria and evaluation criteria and procedures.

Teacher candidates are responsible for submitting lesson plans to the cooperating teacher and the assigned university supervisor by a mutually agreed upon deadline. **Candidates may NOT teach lessons that have not been approved by their cooperating teachers.** Copies of all lesson plans should be retained by the teacher candidate in a section of the student teaching binder. **Two lesson plans following the Pitt-Bradford format are to be submitted to the university supervisor each week.**

Portfolio

The student teacher should develop a portfolio of professional accomplishments and activities associated with student teaching. The portfolio will be presented to cooperating teachers, education program faculty and future student teachers during the final student teaching seminar. Additional information for the portfolios may be found on the EDUC 1481 syllabus and will be covered in at least one student teaching seminar.

NOTE: Release forms, signed by students' parents or guardians, may be required to include students' work or photos in the portfolio.

Registration in Other Courses

Students should not enroll in other courses during student teaching. The director of the Education Program may grant exceptions to this, but such permission is given selectively, and only after a review of the student's record and planned course work suggests that such an exception is academically justifiable.

Seminars

Student teachers are required to attend student teaching seminars scheduled by the Education Program. Student teachers are expected to be on time for seminar and may leave school early on seminar days.

Snow Days

All classes at the university and at cooperating schools are held unless official notification of cancellation is given.

The student teacher should become familiar with the snow day policy of the cooperating school. If the school is open, even if Pitt-Bradford classes are canceled, the student teacher must report to school as usual. If the school district is closed and Pitt-Bradford is open, the student teacher must report for scheduled seminars.

Student teachers should consult with the cooperating teacher about how notification will be received if there should be an unexpected adjustment in the school schedule. Arrangements should be made to be included in advance notification. Snow days will not count against the 35 day requirement.

Staff Development

Teachers participate in many educational programs sponsored by local school districts and teachers' organizations. These staff development activities include orientation and induction programs for beginning teachers, as well as continuing education and in-service programs for veteran teachers. Student teachers are expected to take part in school-based staff development activities, especially those conducted for new teachers. Student teachers will be notified, in advance, if they are required to attend pre-student teaching orientation sessions at their assigned school.

Strikes and Walkouts

In cases where cooperating teachers participate in strikes, walkouts, or other labor-management activities that result in their absence from the classroom, the student teacher will return to the university campus until such problems have been resolved.

Substitute Teaching

The student teacher should not be used as a substitute teacher. If the cooperating teacher is absent from school, the school must provide a substitute teacher who may act as a surrogate cooperating teacher until the regular cooperating teacher returns. If the

substitute does not hold an Instructional I or II Certificate, the school should appoint an interim cooperating teacher to assume legal responsibility for supervision of the student teacher. In the event of prolonged absence by a cooperating teacher, the school should consider reassignment of the student teacher to another certified teacher in the same school.

Varsity Athletics

Participation in a Pitt-Bradford Athletic Program (or other student activities) during student teaching is strongly discouraged. Student teachers are expected to devote full time and energy to their assigned duties. The Education Program does not recommend participation in a full schedule of athletic practice and competition during student teaching.

Visitations

The assigned university supervisor will visit the cooperating school early in the placement. The student teacher should schedule subsequent visits with the university supervisor. Some visits for observations may be unannounced, but prearranged with the cooperating teacher.

Weekly Time Logs

Student teachers must complete a weekly time log that enumerates the clock hours devoted to teaching, observation, participation and conferences. The form requires signatures of the cooperating teacher and university supervisor. When the final weekly report is submitted for the student teacher's permanent file, it must give the cumulative clock hours devoted to student teaching activities.

The accurate completion and prompt submission of weekly reports are critical to the success of the student teaching practicum. These reports serve three purposes. First, they verify attendance at the cooperating school. Second, they let the university supervisor know whether the student teacher's time is being spent in appropriate ways. Third, they provide data about the actual clock hours devoted to teaching. **Prospective employers and departments of education in other states where an individual wishes to be certified may request information about actual teaching time.**

The time log and an explanation of the categories are available on the Education Program's website on the Student Teaching page.

Work and Family Obligations

Many student teachers have financial and family problems that result in stress during student teaching. Regardless, the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford and the cooperating schools expect full time devotion to student teaching. **Our best advice is not to register for student teaching unless work and family matters are manageable.**