Guide for Clinical Practice

Introduction

This webpage serves as a guide to clinical practice for our teacher preparation programs in the College of Education, and our UGA/COE partner teacher preparation programs in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, the College of Family and Consumer Sciences, and the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences: Department of Dance, School of Art, and School of Music. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) defines clinical practice as "Residency (formerly referred to as student teaching) or internship experiences which provide candidates with an intensive and extensive culminating activity. Candidates are immersed in the learning community and provided opportunities to develop and demonstrate competence in the professional roles for which they are preparing." This guide does not address field experiences (observations and practica).

Teacher candidates are eligible for certification upon completion of clinical practice and all other program requirements. If you have questions, please feel free to contact the Office of Academic Programs.

Part I - Description of Clinical Practice

Clinical Practice provides candidates with an intensive and extensive culminating activity. Candidates are immersed in the learning community and provided opportunities to develop and demonstrate competence in the professional responsibilities for which they are preparing.

During the clinical practice, an increasing responsibility for working with individuals and groups of pupils is assumed by the teacher candidate through progressive involvement in a classroom or teaching situation. Clinical practice is done in a carefully selected school under the direct supervision of a mentor teacher and the general supervision of a UGA supervisor who is a specialist in the teacher candidate's teaching field. Through the guidance of the mentor teacher, teacher candidates practice instruction in general and in specific methods and subject matter.
content through engaging with learners in the classroom leading to full-time teaching. Teacher candidates are considered a professional in the school.

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) requires that all teacher candidates, except those in service fields, complete.

- **GACE Program Admission Assessment** (or exempt it)
- **Ethics Assessment**
- **edTPA**
- **Ethics Program Exit Assessment**
- **GACE Content Assessment(s)**

Students must also complete program-specific requirements.

**Purpose of Clinical Practice is to Develop:**

- Knowledge of the learning environment and professional requirements and expectations.
- Instructional skills, content knowledge, and professional and ethical behavior.
- Positive and professional working relationships with the UGA supervisor, the mentor teacher, school administration and staff, and school pupils and families.
- Awareness of current policies and initiatives of the profession at the local, state, and national level.

**Initial Requirements for Clinical Practice Placement:**

- A **pre-service certificate**.
- Completion of required pre-requisite courses and field experiences.
- A minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.50 or higher.
- A recommendation for clinical practice by the academic program.

**Clinical Practice Placement Considerations:**
Placement recommendations are made by the faculty in each academic program, based on their knowledge of appropriate mentor teachers and schools that they have determined will provide each teacher candidate with the best learning environment for his or her professional development.

Candidates are placed at the grade levels and in content areas which are compatible with the certification being sought.

Candidates may complete a portion of their clinical practice experience abroad through the Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching (COST) Program.

Some academic programs allow teacher candidates to indicate a placement preference; however, that preference cannot be guaranteed.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements must be established with the partnering school district.

Candidates must complete a full semester or the equivalent in clinical practice in SACS accredited schools.

Candidates in Birth Through Kindergarten programs may participate in clinical practice in regionally accredited schools or in pre-schools accredited by USDOE- or CHEA-accepted accrediting agencies (quoted from GaPSC Ed. Prep Rule: 505-3-.01).

Mentor Teachers must meet the following GaPSC requirements:

- Be professionally certified in the field of certification sought by the candidate
- Have a minimum of three years of experience in a teaching, service, or leadership responsibilities
- Have demonstrated, through formal evaluations, successful performance in the field of certification sought by the candidate

In cases where one or more of these requirements cannot be met, the Educator Preparation Program (EPP) and school must develop a plan to address the deficiencies. Please refer to the Educator Preparation Requirements and Standards document.

**General Placement Policies:**

- Candidates must be currently enrolled in the required course work during the clinical practice.
- Candidates may not take courses during the clinical practice, apart from those required for the clinical practice.
- Candidates may not arrange their own placements.
● Candidates may have to drive an hour or more one-way for a placement depending on availability of placement sites.
● Confirmed placements are final.
● Candidates are to follow the schedule of their assigned school for holidays and in cases of inclement weather.
● Candidates may not be placed in schools where they have relatives employed and must disclose relevant information on the field placement application to prevent such occurrences.
● Candidates are required to notify the Office of Experiential Learning if they are currently employed by a school district.
● Undergraduate candidates may not serve as employees of the school system during the clinical practice experience. Undergraduates employed as Paraprofessionals are required to take a leave of absence or resign from employment during the clinical practice experience. Scholarships are available.
● Candidates may not serve as substitute teachers during the clinical practice experience.
● Graduate candidates, who are currently certified, or employed on a provisional certificate, may apply for an Internship in Lieu of Clinical Practice placement. This request requires approval by the academic program, the school district, and the host school. This process is facilitated by the OSS.
● Candidates will receive clinical practice placement confirmations via email, and may contact their mentor teachers once they have received a confirmed placement.

Part II - The Responsibilities of the Teacher Candidate

The semester devoted to the clinical practice is a full academic load. No other course work is allowed during this semester. Teacher candidates are to be free from outside responsibilities so they can function as a full-time member of the staff in the school to which they have been assigned.

The following guidelines have been developed to guide the teacher candidate in having a successful clinical practice experience.

In general, teacher candidates are expected to:
Give clinical practice high priority as if one is an employee of the school.

Attend all after-school activities as required of a full-time teacher.

Show professionalism by being punctual, being dressed professionally, and by participating in all school functions and activities the mentor teacher is involved in, as appropriate.

Discuss with the mentor teacher and the UGA supervisor any possible absences in advance. Extensive absences cause disruption and lack of continuity in instruction, and should be avoided whenever possible to support the most positive learning environment for the students in the classroom.

Conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Teacher candidates are representatives of the University of Georgia and the school in which they have been placed.

Be acquainted with and adhere to the policies of the host school.

Adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regarding confidentiality and maintain confidentiality with regards to the partnering school, pupils and educational community except in cases where reporting is required by law.

Adhere to the guidelines of the Quality Assurance Contract.

Adhere to the Code of Ethics for Educators.

Adhere to the Mandated Reporter Guidelines.

Complete the edTPA assessment by the deadline.

Complete assignments in Foliotek.

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**Part III - The Responsibilities of the Mentor Teacher**

Mentor teachers provide on-site supervision to teacher candidates. The University of Georgia could not prepare quality teachers without the assistance and cooperation of our educational partners. The University of Georgia is most grateful to the schools and mentor teachers who give so freely of their time in assisting our students in becoming exceptional teaching professionals.

**Specific functions of the Mentor Teacher:**

- Prepare the children in the classroom for the arrival of the teacher candidate.
- Inform caregivers of the presence of a teacher candidate.
• Introduce the teacher candidate to school administration and staff.
• Provide the teacher candidate with school policies and procedures.
• Provide teacher candidates with access to confidential information concerning pupils in the classroom, as deemed necessary to support the education of the pupils in the classroom and the professional development of the teacher candidates.
• Incorporate the teacher candidate into school activities as appropriate.
• Provide a time to connect with the teacher candidate for planning.
• Provide supervision to the teacher candidate throughout the clinical practice.
• Complete the Foliotek Student Teaching Evaluation and Disposition Survey as provided by the UGA Foliotek administrator.
• Support the teacher candidate's efforts to complete edTPA and all program requirements.
• Provide information about the school policies, the curriculum, and the nature of the community to the teacher candidate.
• Inform the coordinator of any concerns.
• Recognize that teacher candidates are not to be left alone in the classroom.
• Notify UGA Supervisor in the case of extensive absences of the teacher candidate.

Mentor teachers can expect:

• To receive complete information from the UGA coordinator and/or UGA supervisor regarding expectations of the teacher candidate and scheduling of supervisory visits.
• The teacher candidate to have a pre-service certificate, including a clear criminal background check.
• The teacher candidate to demonstrate professionalism in all aspects of his or her work. Mentor teachers should contact the UGA supervisor or the coordinator with any questions or concerns.

Note: Teacher candidates cannot serve as substitute teachers in the absence of the mentor teachers.
Part IV - The Responsibilities of the UGA Supervisor

The UGA supervisor serves as the main link between the university and the schools and is cooperatively involved in orientation, supervision, evaluation, and overall concern for the teacher candidate's development.

Specific Functions of the UGA Supervisor:

- Provide the mentor teacher with pertinent information about the teacher candidate as needed.
- Become acquainted with the faculty, pupils, school policies, curriculum, and facilities of the hosting schools.
- Cooperate with the school administration and mentor teacher in helping the teacher candidate to make the transition from a college student to a well-adjusted teacher.
- Consult with the mentor teacher about teaching strategy recommendations, offering suggestions to the candidate through the mentor teacher, or in joint conferences to provide clear, non-conflicting advice.
- Help teacher candidates to analyze their teaching behaviors through the use of video recorded observations.
- Explain expectations to both mentor teachers and teacher candidates.
- Be available as a resource person to the mentor teacher and teacher candidates.
- Work with the mentor teacher in evaluating the teacher candidate's teaching experiences and professional growth.
- Visit with the teacher candidate and the mentor teacher to observe the work of the teacher candidate, and to participate in conferences with the mentor teacher and the teacher candidate.
- Be responsible for submitting to the Office of the Registrar the final grade for the teacher candidate.
- Complete the Foliotek Student Teaching Evaluation and Disposition Survey as provided by the UGA Foliotek administrator.
Part V - The Responsibilities of the Academic Program

Faculty in the academic programs are responsible for the overall design of the educational program leading to Clinical Practice.

Specific Functions of the Academic Program:

- Work with the OSS in identifying cooperating schools and qualified mentor teachers.
- Provide field placement recommendations to OSS by specified deadlines.
- Provide an orientation for teacher candidates prior to the beginning of the clinical practice.
- Provide periodic seminars for teacher candidates.
- Designate a UGA Supervisor for each teacher candidate.
- Establish structure for the clinical practice.
- Ensure teacher candidates have met all requirements for clinical practice.
- Establish edTPA deadlines.
- Provide general support to teacher candidates, UGA Supervisors, and Mentor Teachers.
- Notify the OSS of any change in a teacher candidate's placement, or withdrawal from the clinical practice.
- Maintain documentation of the teacher candidate's performance in the department until the student has graduated and/or the certification process completed.

Part VI - The Responsibilities of Others Who Work with Teacher Candidates

The education of teacher candidates involves many people in cooperative effort. Although the mentor teacher and the UGA supervisor work more closely with the teacher candidate, the various school boards, superintendents, principals, and other administrators share with the College of Education the responsibility for maintaining a high quality clinical practice experience.
Responsibilities of the Superintendent and Board of Education:

- Coordinate with the OSS in maintaining MOU's that meet the educational needs of the school districts and the University of Georgia.
- Assist principals and mentor teachers in participating in educational opportunities that support effective mentoring of teacher candidates.

Responsibilities of the School Principal:

- Create a supportive environment for teacher candidates within the school.
- Support the mentor teacher in having necessary time for planning and conferences with the teacher candidate.

Note: Teacher candidates cannot serve as substitute teachers in the absence of the mentor teachers.

Responsibilities of the Office of Student Services: Field Experience and Clinical Practice:

- Work with academic programs to identify and establish partnerships with school districts.
- Work with P-12 partners to establish and maintain MOU clinical affiliation agreements to support the preparation of teacher candidates.
- Work with P-12 partners to establish procedures for requesting field placements.
- Facilitate field placements based on recommendations from academic programs.
- Verify that teacher candidates have the required documents for field placements.
• Finalize placement assignments and communicate confirmations to teacher candidates, mentor teachers and academic programs.