



Student Teaching Handbook

Teacher Candidate Guide

Fall 2024 – Spring 2025

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West Chester University of Pennsylvania
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<https://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialWork/clinicalExperiences.aspx>

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THE STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Dear WCU Teacher Candidate:

Student teaching is the capstone project of your teacher preparation program. We are excited for you to begin this final phase of your education experience at West Chester. During this experience, you will continue to gain additional practical knowledge as well as an understanding of how educational theory connects to instruction in the classroom. You will plan and teach a variety of lessons and encounter the everyday and sometimes not so everyday issues related to education. It is a time to try your ideas and to listen and learn from your mentor teacher and the students. You will have an opportunity to grow both personally and professionally. Savor this time, enjoy each day's challenges and rewards, and reflect on all that occurs.

Remember, you are an ambassador from West Chester University. Your conduct and performance will not only demonstrate your skills, but also attest to the quality of the University you represent.

Best regards,
Office of Clinical Experiences and Candidate Services
West Chester University





My signature certifies that I have read and agree to abide by the contents included and referenced in the WCU Student Teaching Handbook (e.g., policies, requirements, expectations, etc.), and understand that CESW and/or WCU reserves the right to address issues not covered in the Handbook on an individual basis.

Student Teacher (Printed) _____

Student Teacher (Signature) _____

Date _____

WCU ID # _____

TEACHER CANDIDATE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

TEACHER CANDIDATE:

The successful outcome of the student teaching experience is dependent upon open communication and collaboration between the teacher candidate, mentor teacher and the university supervisor.

The basic roles and responsibilities of the teacher candidate are as follows:

- Observe classroom teaching strategies, techniques, procedures, student behavior, and classroom management techniques of the mentor teacher and other faculty members within the school.
- Present an appropriate lesson plan for each assigned teaching situation **two days prior to the actual instructional period.**
- Evaluate student responses to the above activities.
- Evaluate himself/herself on the four domains of Danielson, including each sub-domain.
- Comply with the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy established by the school district.

Teacher candidate requirements are as followed:

- Reviewing with the mentor teacher any and all applicable policies, codes or confidentiality issues related to the experience (See Appendix B)
- Assuming full responsibility for the class/schedule for a period of time to which the mentor teacher and university supervisor agree; the decision concerning how and when to increase a teacher candidate's classroom responsibilities should be a joint decision involving all three key participants- the mentor teacher, the teacher candidate and the university supervisor.
 - Begin with observation
 - Assist in reviewing student work and proctoring assessments
 - Assist the mentor teacher or department/grade level members with small tasks such as tutoring or teaching small groups
 - Progress to responsibility for instructing one or more subjects/classes
 - Proceed to full responsibility for instructing the class/schedule (if appropriate)

Progress in assigning new tasks will depend upon the readiness of the teacher candidate and the needs of the students. The mentor teacher should give consideration to the teacher candidate's satisfactory completion of tasks at each stage.

GENERAL RULES AND POLICIES FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES

TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

The first obligation of the teacher candidate is to fulfill as effectively as possible every role of the teacher. The teacher candidate is urged to participate as fully as possible in the activities of the host school. Student teaching is the culminating activity of the Teacher Education Program and is a full-time responsibility. The teacher candidate's actions have an impact, not only upon the teacher candidate, but also upon the students, the mentor teacher, the hosting school, and West Chester University. Therefore, the student teaching experience must take precedence over all other commitments.

ATTENDANCE WITHIN PLACEMENT

The teacher candidate is responsible for attending school the full teaching day. The teacher candidate reports to the assigned school at the same time the mentor teacher is required to report and is to remain until the end of the scheduled day (following the same schedule as the mentor teacher). Teacher candidates are expected to observe the same rules and punctuality which apply to the Mentor Teacher. Teacher Candidates follow the calendar of their assigned school/district.

Because of the value of this professional experience, teacher candidates are expected to participate in all aspects of teaching including, but not limited to attending parent-teacher conferences, workshops, faculty meetings, and other professional activities if permitted by the building administration.

SEMINAR ATTENDANCE

In addition, each teacher candidate is required to attend a weekly professional seminar which is conducted concurrently with student teaching. The seminar is conducted by the university supervisor and is designed to consider practical problems encountered while teaching and to develop a functional understanding of Pennsylvania School Law. **Attendance and participation in the seminar are factored into the teacher candidate's final grade for student teaching.**

ABSENCES

Teacher candidates are permitted **five** days of absence for the entire semester. These absences may be used for illness, emergencies, conferences, or interviews. Absences for conferences and interviews should be cleared with the mentor teacher and the university supervisor at least two days in advance. **In the case of an absence, teacher candidates must notify their mentor teacher and the university supervisor of the impending absence as soon as it becomes apparent that an absence will be necessary.** The university supervisor and mentor teacher will keep a record of the date and the reason for each absence.

All absences from student teaching in excess of five days must be made up by the teacher candidate.

Arrangements for such make-up days must be made with the university supervisor and the mentor teacher. Student teaching grades and credits will be withheld until the make-up arrangement is fulfilled.

STUDENT TEACHING GRADE

The final grade for student teaching is determined by completion of all assignments and after consultation between Teacher Candidate, Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor regarding classroom performance on the Danielson Rubric.

The Danielson evaluation and the dispositions are completed in the Professional Education Unit's online assessment system called Anthology Portfolio. For more information about and to view the evaluation forms, please access the [Candidate Assessment Resources](#) on the Assessment and Accreditation webpage.

GUIDELINES FOR GRADES

- A** Clearly superior in planning, implementation, effectiveness, creativity, rapport with pupils and faculty. Lessons flow smoothly and accurately. Is able to manage the classroom and all duties of teaching in a seemingly effortless manner. Has developed an effective and consistent teaching style. Completes all seminar requirements actively and thoughtfully.
- A-** Plans, implements and evaluates lessons that are accurate, creative, and effective. Classroom management is superior or shows signs of becoming superior. Rapport with students and faculty is superior or shows much improvement throughout the assignment. Seminar participation and requirements are consistently well done.
- B+** Good, solid performance in classroom. Significant improvement in skill is noted. Shows indication of significant potential in skill development. Lesson plans, implementation, and evaluation are accurate, effective, and show creativity. Classroom management is effective. Seminar participation and requirements are well done.
- B** Good performance in classroom. Improvement in skill is evident and gives signs of true potential. Plans and implementation are accurate, effective and frequently creative. Classroom management shows increasing effectiveness as experience grows. Seminar participation and requirements are satisfactory.
- B-** Satisfactory performance in the classroom. Indicated areas of need show improvement in subsequent observations. Lesson plans, implementation and evaluation show improvement in accuracy and effectiveness. Classroom management is becoming more effective. Seminar participation and requirement completion are usually satisfactory.
- C+** Performance in the classroom is improving. Indicated areas of need are improving. Lesson plans and implementation show improvement with specific guidelines. Classroom management shows evidence of increased effort. Seminar participation and requirement completion seem inconsistent.
- C** Classroom performance shows the need for significant improvement in several areas. Lesson plans and implementation indicate the need for more accuracy, effectiveness or creativity. Seminar participation and requirement completion indicate a lack of understanding and/or commitment.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The extra-curricular program at each school site offers an excellent opportunity for a teacher candidate to gain needed professional experience in planning and directing an extracurricular program. Teacher candidates are encouraged to assist with coaching, clubs, and other extracurricular programs as long as the activities do not interfere with teacher candidate's teaching responsibilities.

TRANSPORTATION

Teacher candidates are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from their assigned school. Teacher candidates must not transport school students in any vehicle. This stipulation includes field trips and other activities.

STATE LAWS CONCERNING LIABILITY

Teachers and teacher candidates have been held legally liable by the Pennsylvania courts for the behavior of students under their direction. If a student is injured because of the negligence of either a teacher or teacher candidate, both the teacher and teacher candidate can be held legally responsible. For this reason, it is highly advisable for the teacher candidate to be protected by liability insurance. Such insurance is highly recommended and typically available through membership in the [Student Pennsylvania Education Association \(PSEA\)](#)/National Education Association (NEA) or through an insurance company.

INJURIES INCURRED WHILE STUDENT TEACHING

Teacher candidates are encouraged to maintain a health insurance program in case of an injury suffered while participating in the student teaching experience. Student insurance plans are available through the Student Health Services. Information regarding the insurance program may be obtained from the Student Health Services, Ground Floor, Commonwealth Hall, telephone: (610) 436-2509. If a teacher candidate incurs an injury while performing the duties of a teacher candidate, West Chester University will not accept responsibility for the medical care required to treat the injury. The school district to which the teacher candidate is assigned may or may not accept responsibility.

WCU SUBSTITUTE TEACHING WHILE STUDENT TEACHING POLICY

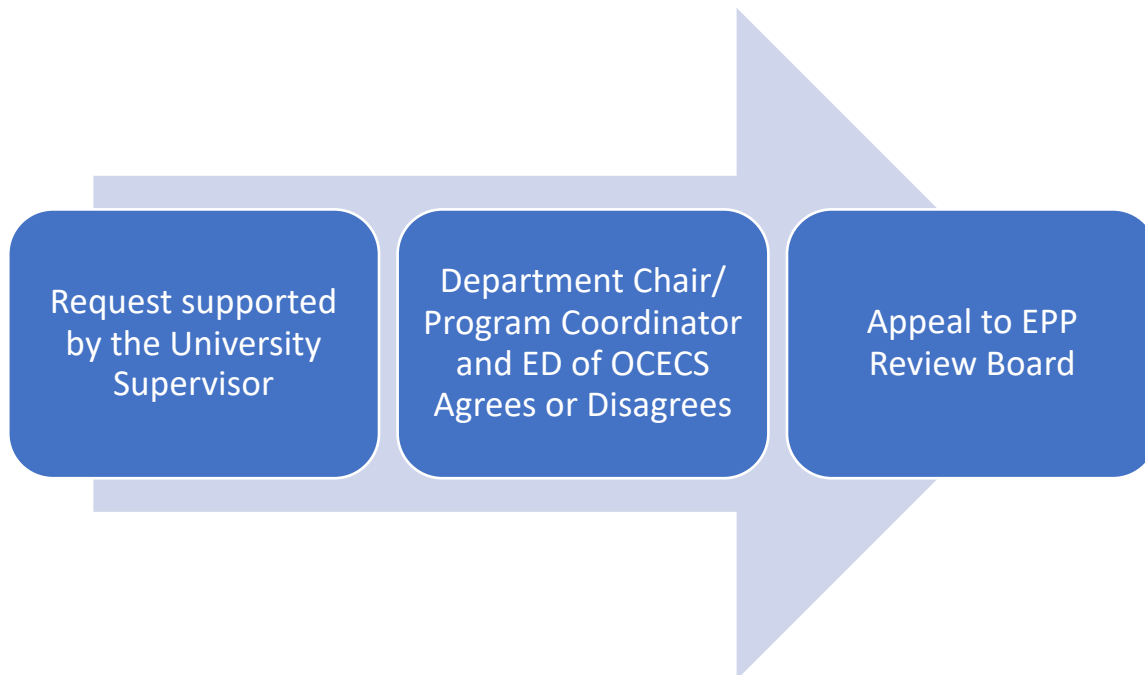
WCU's College of Education and Social Work policy, **relative to student teachers**, regarding Act 86 of 2016/Act 91 of 2021 permitting prospective teachers to act as substitute teachers are outlined in the following document. The policy applies to West Chester University student teachers during their assigned student teaching placement.

[*The Substitute Teaching Permit for Prospective Educators*](#)

NOTE: All decisions relating to student teacher readiness and responsibilities will be determined by the mentor teacher, university supervisor and student teacher.

CHANGE IN PLACEMENTS

The Office of Clinical Experiences and Candidate Services (OCECS) commits to finding a single student teaching placement for each Teacher Candidate per course. If a Teacher Candidate has a concern about their placement after the student teaching semester has begun, they should discuss their concerns with their University Supervisor. A change in placement/s will not occur before the beginning of the semester or because of differences in personality or teaching philosophies between the Teacher Candidate and the Mentor Teacher. If the Teacher Candidate communicates a significant placement concern, unrelated to personality differences or teaching philosophies, to the University Supervisor, the University Supervisor will discuss the circumstances with the field placement coordinator. The department chair/program coordinator will collaborate with the Executive Director of the OCECS to determine if the request would be granted. It is important to note that if a change in placement is granted, it is not guaranteed that another placement will be found that semester. A change in placement could delay graduation or completion of certification requirements. However, if a change in placement is denied, the Teacher Candidate may appeal the decision to the EPP Review Committee. The EPP Review Board will be led by the CESW Associate Dean and be comprised of the university supervisor or department chairperson, one member from Field Experience Committee, and one member of the Disposition Committee from a department in which the candidate's program does not reside. During this meeting the student will have an opportunity to present any additional evidence to support the appeal. The decision of the EPP Review Board is final.



WCU RESTORATIVE ACTION PLAN AND AREAS OF CONCERN

West Chester University's Educator Preparation Programs value professional dispositions and requirements. These are essential for candidates and critical for professional educators. Candidates have opportunities to demonstrate professional dispositions and requirements in courses, their interactions with others, and school settings. If a concern occurs, the process for handling basic concerns (Level 1 and Level 2 concerns) is restorative and reflects the [PA Code of Ethics for Educators](#).

Areas of significant concern (Level 3 concerns) can arise at any time during a teacher candidate's preparation program: courses, clinical experiences, or student teaching. There are three ways a concern can be labeled a significant concern. First, a Faculty member, Department Chair, or Associate Dean can submit a significant concern form if there is a violation of the [Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators](#) (Code Chapter 235) and/or the [Professional Educator Discipline Act](#) (Code Chapter 237). A second way concerns become a Significant Concern (Level 3) is when a school (mentor teacher, school administrator, or school human resources representative) dismisses a Candidate from their placement. The Candidate must leave the school and immediately report to their University Supervisor that they have been asked not to return. WCU's EPPs also have the right to remove a Candidate from their assigned placement if there is a violation of Chapter 235 or Chapter 237. If an area of concern (by either the school district or university personnel) results in removal of the Candidate from the placement, the Candidate shall not return to their placement nor shall the Candidate be assigned to another placement, until the EPP Review Board's investigative process is completed. A third way a concern can become significant is when a Candidate has multiple Level 1 or 2 concerns or if restorative practices in Level 2 have been unsuccessful.

Significant concerns require a hearing with the EPP Review Board and can lead to denial of recommendation for certification and/or dismissal from the program.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The district always has the right to ask the student teacher to be removed from the assignment if they believe that the student teacher has violated any policy or procedure at either the district level or the building level as indicated on page 2 item 5 of the Standard Affiliation Agreement:

Professional Standards: Both parties to this agreement have a right and an obligation to insist on standards of professional decorum on the part of the Teacher Candidates that are consistent with applicable law and regulations, and the prevailing standards in the school community and the educational profession.

WITHDRAW/REMOVAL FROM STUDENT TEACHING

Removal from field experience or student teaching is a very serious matter. The district (mentor teacher, school, administrator, or district Human Resources representative) always has the right to ask the Student Teacher to be removed from the assignment, for any reason. If the Student Teacher is asked not to return to the school site and is dismissed from their placement, the Student Teacher must leave the school's facilities immediately and report this occurrence to their University Supervisor immediately.

This requires a Level 3 Area of Significant Concern to be submitted by the University Supervisor, Department Chair, or Associate Dean which requires an EPP Review Board hearing to be scheduled (please see the **WCU Restorative Action Plan and Areas of Concern** above).

WCU's Educator Preparation Programs (EPP) also have the right to remove a Student Teacher from their assigned teaching placement. When evidence is presented that indicates a Student Teacher's behavior is unacceptable due to violation of the [PDE Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators](#) or the [Professional Educator Discipline Act](#) removal from student teaching will result. In these cases, the University Supervisor in consultation with the Department Chair/Program/Field Coordinator will inform the Student Teacher that they are not to return to the school site and submit a Level 3 Area of Significant Concern which requires an EPP Review Board Hearing to be scheduled (See Restorative Action Plan and Areas of Concern Guidelines).

Pertinent information may be found here:

Restorative Action Plan and Areas of Concern Guidelines

https://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialWork/documents/Handbook_EPP_Restorative_Action_Plan_and_Areas_of_Concern.pdf

PA Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators

<https://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=/secure/pacode/data/022/chapter235/chap235toc.html&d=reduce>

Professional Standards and Practices Commission Actionable Misconduct

<https://www.pspc.education.pa.gov/Educator-Discipline-System-and-Reporting/Overview-Discipline-System/Pages/Actionable-Misconduct.aspx>

WCU Academic Integrity

<https://www.wcupa.edu/viceProvost/academicIntegrity.aspx>

WCU Student Code of Conduct

<https://www.wcupa.edu/policies/documents/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>

APPENDIX A

REQUIREMENTS FOR A PENNSYLVANIA PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE

In order to teach in a Pennsylvania public school, candidates must apply for a Pennsylvania Teacher Certificate through the PA Department of Education (PDE)'s online Teacher Information Management System (TIMS). ***Please follow all directions provided by the Office of Certification.***

It is strongly recommended that program completers apply, although they may not be planning to seek a position immediately or they may be planning to work in another state. In current practice, if a person applies for PA certification sometime in the future, that person must meet the requirements in effect at that time. New requirements could mean additional coursework, testing, and/or higher test scores to qualify for a certificate.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR A PA CERTIFICATE

Complete an approved education preparation program at the Bachelors, Graduate or Post Baccalaureate level in your subject area. Your initial teacher preparation program must include a student teaching experience.

1. Complete an approved education preparation program at the Bachelors, Graduate or Post Baccalaureate level in your subject area. Your initial teacher preparation program must include a student teaching experience.
2. Meet all Certification Testing requirements established by the PA State Board of Education.
3. Meet all other requirements established by the PA Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators.
4. Submit an online application for certification via PDE's TIMS – MyPDESuite – with the state-mandated minimum grade point average of 3.0 or higher (or equivalent)
5. Receive the recommendation of your preparing college/university

The PA Department of Education considers the PDE430, the PA statewide evaluation form for student professional knowledge and practice, which is part of the WCU Professional Education Unit-wide assessment, necessary for certification. WCU translates this content into the Assessment Management Software through the Danielson Framework evaluation, the Unit-wide assessment, and Candidate Signature Page. WCU University supervisors must complete the Danielson Framework evaluation so that candidates can review and complete the Candidate Signature Page assignment. Final ratings must be satisfactory, which means a minimum of 2 (Basic) in each category. Completion and minimum scoring requirements for both the Danielson Framework evaluation and Candidate Signature Page are required to earn an institutional recommendation for certification.

**Note:* assessments are subject to change within the time span of one's University career due to changing requirements at national, state, and local level; and candidates may still be required to meet requirements.

Questions about any part of this process should be directed to:

Office of Certification
302 Recitation Hall, 610-436-2321.

APPENDIX B

CHECKLIST FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES

(As applicable to placement)

Learn Policies and Procedures

- District Level
- Building Level

Learn Daily Procedures

- Time teacher arrive and leave (AM/PM)

Mentor Teacher Supervisor Duties

- Recess
- Restrooms
- Halls
- Assemblies
- Study Halls
- Cafeteria Duties
- Buses
- Before/After School Duties
- Other Duties

Classroom Procedures

- Attendance
- Lunch Count
- Daily Announcements
- Opening Exercises
- Schedule for Special Area and Support Classes
- Procedure to send and receive messages
- System used to dismiss students to other classes, recess, lunch and fire drills
- Procedures for dismissal
- Method used to distribute, collect and store curriculum and instruction materials
- Procedures to obtain supportive technology and equipment

Classroom Forms and Records

- Attendance
- Excuse Notes
- Lunch count forms
- Hall pass forms/ Lavatory passes
- Health pass forms
- Grading forms and system
- Report forms and report cards
- Discipline forms
- Health Records
- Permanent Record forms
- SAP, IEP, ER
- Other special forms

Student Information

- Names
- Ability Levels
- Methods for grouping and flexibility of the groups
- Special seating arrangements
- Special health and physical needs of students (consult District Confidentiality Policy)
- Appropriate home and family information (consult District Confidentiality Policy)
- Procedures for involving counselors and/or parents

APPENDIX C

QUICK REFERENCE

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF:

SITUATION: Illness, family emergency, funeral, etc.

ACTION: Notify your Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor

SITUATION: Running late (transportation/car issues, overslept, etc.)

ACTION: Notify School

Notify Mentor Teacher

Notify University Supervisor

SITUATION: In-service Day, Back-To-School Night, Parent Conferences, Field trips

ACTION: Attend with Mentor Teacher if principal permits

Notify University Supervisor

SITUATION: Inclement Weather

ACTION: Refer to District website for information regarding change in school schedule due to inclement weather

Notify University Supervisor

SITUATION: Teacher Candidate is asked to teach/supervise students without certified teacher supervision (i.e. lunch, hall or bus duty, study halls, or supervision of a field trip without presence of Mentor Teacher)

ACTION: Refer Administration/Mentor Teacher to WCU policy

Notify University Supervisor

SITUATION: Covid Related Changes (e.g. Teacher candidate contracts COVID or tests positive, Teacher Candidate is exposed to someone who tests positive, your classroom/school status changes (quarantine, closing, etc.)

ACTION: Notify Building Principal

Notify University Supervisor

Follow Building/District Protocols