



Student Teaching Handbook

Teacher Candidate Guide

Fall 2021 – Spring 2022

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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 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 problems 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
West Chester University



STUDENT TEACHING & COVID-19

You are beginning your semester of student teaching in a unique and unprecedented time. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every aspect of our lives.

Your student teaching assignment presents a unique opportunity as an educator. It also requires a heightened awareness of responsibility for you and for the school community where you will be teaching.

In the school where you are assigned you will be responsible for not only keeping yourself healthy, but as a member of that school community, observing all the protocols for disease prevention to keep the students, the teachers, and the staff of that school healthy, too.

You are reminded of these protocols to assist you with this significant responsibility:
Observe all the guidelines set forth by the school district for the health of the students and staff. (e.g. masks, social distancing, frequent hand washing)

The school district that has accepted you has an expectation of you as a Student Teacher. Additionally, they have an expectation of you as a participant in the observance of safe health procedures to keep the school environment free of COVID-19.

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:

- Observes classroom teaching strategies, techniques, procedures, student behavior, and classroom management techniques of the mentor teacher and other faculty members within the school.
- Presents an appropriate lesson plan for each assigned teaching situation **two days prior to the actual instructional period.**
- Evaluates student responses to the above activities.
- Evaluates himself/herself on the four domains of Danielson, including each sub-domain.
- Complies 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 A)
- 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.

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 Tk20. For more information about and to view the evaluation forms, please access the Professional Education Unit's tab on the Assessment and Accreditation webpage, <https://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialWork/assessmentAccreditation/assessmentResources.aspx>.

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.

To be eligible for a Pennsylvania Teaching Certificate, the teacher candidate must receive at least an academic grade of “C” for both student teaching courses.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR A PA CERTIFICATE

- Complete all of the academic requirements of a PDE approved educator preparation program at West Chester University as stated in the Academic Catalog
- Meet current PA test requirements established in the Academic Catalog
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be a citizen of the United States- or hold a valid immigration visa and file a “Declaration of Intent to Become a Citizen of the United States”; candidates applying for foreign language certifications are exempt from this regulation.
- Be a person of good moral character

Questions about any part of this process should be directed to the Office of Certification in 302 Recitation Hall, 610-436-2321.

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 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.

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 extra-curricular program. Teacher candidates are encouraged to assist with coaching, clubs, and other extra-curricular programs as long as the activities do not interfere with teacher candidate's teaching responsibilities.

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.

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.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

In the event that a teacher candidate behaves in an inappropriate manner, the Unit Dispositions Policy will be utilized to address the concern. The supervisor will assist the mentor teacher and principal in addressing the matter and will coordinate any disciplinary action which is taken against the teacher candidate either by university or school district officials.

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.

WCU DISPOSITIONAL EXPECTATIONS

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. When candidate behaviors do not meet professional expectations, the specific behaviors will be addressed through a process. Additionally, when candidate behaviors are a violation of University-wide policy, it will be filed with the appropriate University or College body. Information on professional disposition and requirements can be found at:

<https://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialWork/assessmentAccreditation/dispositions.aspx>

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.

QUICK REFERENCE

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF:

SITUATION: Illness, family emergency, funeral, etc.

ACTION: Notify your Mentor Teacher and 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: 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

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

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 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.

APPENIX A

CHECKLIST FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES

(As applicable to placement)

Learn Policies and Procedures

- ☐ District Level
- ☐ Building Level

Learn Daily Procedures

- ☐ Time teacher enter 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 B

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.

APPENDIX C

Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators

<https://www.pspc.education.pa.gov/Statutes-Regulations-Policies-Forms/Code-of-Professional-Practice-Conduct/Pages/default.aspx>

§ 235.1. Mission.

The Professional Standards and Practices Commission is committed to providing leadership for improving the quality of education in this Commonwealth by establishing high standards for preparation, certification, practice and ethical conduct in the teaching profession.

§ 235.2. Introduction

- (a) Professional conduct defines interactions between the individual educator and students, the employing agencies and other professionals. Generally, the responsibility for professional conduct rests with the individual professional educator. However, in this Commonwealth, a Code of Professional Practice and Conduct (Code) for certificated educators is required by statute and violation of specified sections of the Code may constitute a basis for public or private reprimand. Violations of the Code may also be used as supporting evidence, though may not constitute an independent basis, for the suspension or revocation of a certificate. The Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC) was charged by the act of December 12, 1973 (P. L. 397, No. 141) (24 P. S. § 12-1251—12-1268), known as the Teacher Certification Law, with adopting a Code by July 1, 1991. See 24 P. S. § 12-1255(a) (10).
- (b) This chapter makes explicit the values of the education profession. When individuals become educators in this Commonwealth, they make a moral commitment to uphold these values.

§ 235.3. Purpose.

- (a) Professional educators in this Commonwealth believe that the quality of their services directly influences the Nation and its citizens. Professional educators recognize their obligation to provide services and to conduct themselves in a manner which places the highest esteem on human rights and dignity. Professional educators seek to ensure that every student receives the highest quality of service and that every professional maintains a high level of competence from entry through ongoing professional development. Professional educators are responsible for the development of sound educational policy and obligated to implement that policy and its programs to the public.
- (b) Professional educators recognize their primary responsibility to the student and the development of the student's potential. Central to that development is the professional educator's valuing the worth and dignity of every person, student and colleague alike; the pursuit of truth; devotion to excellence; acquisition of knowledge; and democratic principles. To those ends, the educator engages in continuing professional development and keeps current with research and technology. Educators encourage and support the use of resources that best serve the interests and needs of students. Within the context of professional excellence, the educator and student together explore the challenge and the dignity of the human experience.

§ 235.4. Practices.

(a) Professional practices are behaviors and attitudes that are based on a set of values that the professional education community believes and accepts. These values are evidenced by the professional educator's conduct toward students and colleagues, and the educator's employer and community. When teacher candidates become professional educators in this Commonwealth, they are expected to abide by this section.

(b) Professional educators are expected to abide by the following:

(1) Professional educators shall abide by the Public School Code of 1949 (24 P. S. § § 1-101—27-2702) other school laws of the Commonwealth, sections 1201(a)(1), (2) and (4) and (b)(1), (2) and (4) of the Public Employee Relations Act (43 P. S. § § 1101.1201(a)(1), (2) and (4) and (b)(1), (2) and (4)) and this chapter.

(2) Professional educators shall be prepared, and legally certified, in their areas of assignment. Educators may not be assigned or willingly accept assignments they are not certified to fulfill. Educators may be assigned to or accept assignments outside their certification area on a temporary, short-term, emergency basis. Examples: a teacher certified in English filling in a class period for a physical education teacher who has that day become ill; a substitute teacher certified in elementary education employed as a librarian for several days until the district can locate and employ a permanent substitute teacher certified in library science.

(3) Professional educators shall maintain high levels of competence throughout their careers.

(4) Professional educators shall exhibit consistent and equitable treatment of students, fellow educators and parents. They shall respect the civil rights of all and not discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, culture, religion, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, age, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, disabling condition or vocational interest. This list of bases of discrimination is not all-inclusive.

(5) Professional educators shall accept the value of diversity in educational practice. Diversity requires educators to have a range of methodologies and to request the necessary tools for effective teaching and learning.

(6) Professional educators shall impart to their students principles of good citizenship and societal responsibility.

(7) Professional educators shall exhibit acceptable and professional language and communication skills. Their verbal and written communications with parents, students and staff shall reflect sensitivity to the fundamental human rights of dignity, privacy and respect.

(8) Professional educators shall be open-minded, knowledgeable and use appropriate judgment and communication skills when responding to an issue within the educational environment.

(9) Professional educators shall keep in confidence information obtained in confidence in the course of professional service unless required to be disclosed by law or by clear and compelling professional necessity as determined by the professional educator.

(10) Professional educators shall exert reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions which interfere with learning or are harmful to the student's health and safety.

§ 235.5. Conduct.

Individual professional conduct reflects upon the practices, values, integrity and reputation of the profession. Violation of § § 235.6—235.11 may constitute an independent basis for private or public reprimand, and may be used as supporting evidence in cases of certification suspension and revocation.

§ 235.6. Legal obligations.

(4) The professional educator may not engage in conduct prohibited by the act of December 12, 1973 (P. L. 397, No. 141) (24 P. S. § § 12-1251—12-1268), known as the Teacher Certification Law.

(4) The professional educator may not engage in conduct prohibited by:

(4) The Public School Code of 1949 (24 P. S. § § 1-101—27-2702) and other laws relating to the schools or the education of children.

(2) The applicable laws of the Commonwealth establishing ethics of public officials and public employees, including the act of October 4, 1978 (P. L. 883, No. 170) (65 P. S. § § 401—413), known as the Public Official and Employee Ethics Law.

(4) ©Violation of subsection (b) shall have been found to exist by an agency of proper jurisdiction to be considered an independent basis for discipline.

Cross References

This section cited in 22 Pa. Code § 235.5 (relating to conduct).

§ 235.7. Certification.

The professional educator may not:

(4) Accept employment, when not properly certificated, in a position for which certification is required.

(2) Assist entry into or continuance in the education profession of an unqualified person.

(3) Employ, or recommend for employment, a person who is not certificated appropriately for the position.

Cross References

This section cited in 22 Pa. Code § 235.5 (relating to conduct).

§ 235.8. Civil rights.

The professional educator may not:

(4) Discriminate on the basis of race, National or ethnic origin, culture, religion, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, age, political beliefs, socioeconomic status; disabling condition or vocational interest

against a student or fellow professional. This list of bases of discrimination is not all-inclusive. This discrimination shall be found to exist by an agency of proper jurisdiction to be considered an independent basis for discipline.

- (2) Interfere with a student's or colleague's exercise of political and civil rights and responsibilities.

Cross References

This section cited in 22 Pa. Code § 235.5 (relating to conduct).

§ 235.9. Improper personal or financial gain.

The professional educator may not:

- (4) Accept gratuities, gifts or favors that might impair or appear to impair professional judgment.
- (2) Exploit a professional relationship for personal gain or advantage.

Cross References

This section cited in 22 Pa. Code § 235.5 (relating to conduct).

§ 235.10. Relationships with students.

The professional educator may not:

- (4) Knowingly and intentionally distort or misrepresent evaluations of students.
- (2) Knowingly and intentionally misrepresent subject matter or curriculum.
- (3) Sexually harass or engage in sexual relationships with students.
- (4) Knowingly and intentionally withhold evidence from the proper authorities about violations of the legal obligations as defined within this section.

Cross References

This section cited in 22 Pa. Code § 235.5 (relating to conduct).

§ 235.11. Professional relationships.

The professional educator may not:

- (1) Knowingly and intentionally deny or impede a colleague in the exercise or enjoyment of a professional right or privilege in being an educator.
- (2) Knowingly and intentionally distort evaluations of colleagues.
- (3) Sexually harass a fellow employee.

(4) Use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional decisions of colleagues.

(5) Threaten, coerce or discriminate against a colleague who in good faith reports or discloses to a governing agency actual or suspected violations of law, agency regulations or standards.

Cross References

This section cited in 22 Pa. Code § 235.5 (relating to conduct).