

Supervisor Handbook

Teachers College, Columbia University

Office of Teacher Education & School-based Support Services

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Supervision packets can be picked up and returned to Russell Hall, Room 400

The Office of Teacher Education & School-Based Support Services aims to provide information, support and resources to faculty, staff and students engaged in Professional Education Programs that lead to initial and professional certification.

Our purpose is also to work in partnership with faculty colleagues to address program, practice, research and policy issues relevant to the preparation of teachers and other educational specialists.

Our office also supports the work of externally funded programs, such as Peace Corps Fellows and Teacher Opportunity Corps, which focus particularly on recruiting teachers for high needs schools. We strive to work closely with community school districts in an attempt to cultivate and sustain active ongoing initiatives, such as the Professional Development Schools Partnership, that help to enhance effective collaboration between Teachers College and the New York City public school system.

We invite you to visit us on the 4th floor of the library, Russell 400, call us at 212.678.3502, or email us at OTE@tc.columbia.edu if you need help with certification regulations and applications, student teaching and supervision materials and procedures, or other questions related to Professional Education at Teachers College. For specific program information, please contact the appropriate person indicated below.

Speak first to:	For questions about:	At:
Student Teaching Coordinator	Student Teaching Placements In...	
Renee Darvin	Art and Art Education	212.678.3363
Patricia Velasco	Bilingual/Bicultural Education	212.678.6633
Peg Cummins	Blindness and Visual Impairment	212.678.3878
Maria Hartman	Deaf and Hard of Hearing	212.678.3803
Timothy Ignaffo	Early Childhood Education	212.678.3860
Megan Lawless	Inclusive Elementary Education	212.678.3856
Mary Ellen Rooney and Amanda Mazin	Intellectual Disabilities/Autism	212.678.3880
Stuart Weinberg	Mathematics Education	212.678.3842
Robert Albright	Music and Music Education	212.678.3981
Sharon Phillips	Physical Education	212.678.3324
Jessica Riccio	Science Education	212.678.6603
Jo Ann Nicholas	Speech-Language Pathology	212.678.3410
Jo Ann Delgado	Teaching as Applied Behavior Analysis	212.678.3282
Russell Rosen	Teaching of ASL as a Foreign Language	212.678.3880
Sophia Sarigianides	Teaching of English	212.678.3164
Jennifer Cutsforth	Teaching of Social Studies	212.678.8343
Ellen Meier	Technology Specialist	212.678.3829
Barbara Hruska	TESOL	212.678.3286
Office of Teacher Education	Supervision/Student Teaching Records	212.678.4057/3502
Human Resources	Payment	212.678.3175
TC Operator	General Information	212.678.3000

A Conceptual Framework for Professional Education at Teachers College

Consistent with the College's long tradition of serving the needs of urban and suburban schools in the United States and around the world, the vision and purpose of professional education at Teachers College is to establish and maintain programs of study, service, and research that prepare competent, caring, and qualified professional educators (teachers, counselors, psychologists, administrators, and others). This vision is based on three shared philosophical stances that underlie and infuse the work we do:

Inquiry stance: We are an inquiry-based and practice-oriented community. We and our students & graduates challenge assumptions and complacency and embrace a stance of inquiry toward the inter-related roles of learner, teacher, and leader in P-12 schools.

Curricular stance: Negotiating among multiple perspectives on culture, content, and context, our graduates strive to meet the needs of diverse learners, both students and other adults, in their school communities.

Social justice stance: Our graduates choose to collaborate across differences in and beyond their school communities. They demonstrate a commitment to social justice and to serving the world while imagining its possibilities.

The three philosophical stances provide the context for developing and assessing candidates' proficiencies based on professional, state, and institutional standards. There are five TC standards:

Standard 1: Inquirers and Reflective

Practitioners: Our candidates are inquirers/researchers who have breadth of knowledge and a variety of tools to ask questions about educational environments. They reflect on and continually evaluate the effects of their choices on others (children, families, and other professionals in the learning community).

Standard 2: Lifelong Learners: Our candidates are continually engaged in learning and research. They take responsibility for their professional growth and seek/create learning opportunities for themselves and others.

Standard 3: Learner-Centered

Educators/Professionals: Our candidates understand their subject matter/disciplines, learners and learning, and curriculum and teaching. They create learning experiences that foster development and achievement in all students.

Standard 4: Effective Collaborators: Our candidates actively participate in the community or communities of whom they are a part to support students' learning and well-being.

Standard 5: Advocates of Social Justice and Diversity: Our candidates are familiar with legal, ethical, and policy issues. They provide leadership in advocating for children, families, and themselves in a variety of professional, political, and policy-making contexts.

The Student Teaching Experience

Informed by a strong focus on social justice, curriculum and inquiry, our mission is to prepare teachers who understand the political nature of schooling, are able to recognize and interrupt deficit views of children, and have the skills, knowledge and dispositions to advocate for all students so that each has access to the quality education and care she/he deserves.

However, learning to teach is much more than technical, i.e., a process of acquiring strategies and techniques. Instead, teaching to meet the complex needs presented by a diverse student population demands the ability to ask critical questions, to “invent” practice by learning from children and listening to them, and to operate from a stance characterized by capacity and possibility, not limitations and low expectations.

The student teaching experience provides preservice teachers the space and opportunity to learn how to ask important questions about teaching and learning, come to know children and adolescents by observing and interacting with them consistently over time, apply newly acquired knowledge, theories, strategies and models in a variety of contexts within and across classrooms, and experiment with, design and adapt practice according to learners’ needs.

As such, student teaching takes place in a wide variety of classroom settings located in an equally wide variety of schools including comprehensive public schools, alternative schools, schools within a school, theme or specialty schools, independent schools, urban and suburban schools and schools that are both large and small. Each student can expect to complete a minimum of **two student teaching placements**, each in a different grade level according to the requirements of the specific teaching certificate for which she or he is preparing. For example, if a student is working toward initial certification in childhood education--grades 1-6, one student teaching experience must be in grades 1-3, the other in grades 4-6. Students can also expect to be learning to teach in the discipline or subject area (English, mathematics, music, biology, etc.) for which they are seeking certification.

During the student teaching experience, preservice teachers are guided and instructed by two key individuals—the cooperating or mentor teacher, and the university supervisor. While both work collaboratively to support the growth and development of the student teacher, each assumes a very specific role.

University supervisors are resources for the student teacher as well as the cooperating teacher, and serve as liaisons between the university and the field. Supervisors offer experienced and objective perspectives on overall classroom effectiveness, including classroom management, student response and the student teacher's presence and instruction in the classroom. In addition, supervisors work in concert with student teachers to identify specific areas of challenge or interest. In this way, student teachers are able to participate in their own learning and improve, analyze or re-think their practice.

Participation in the student teaching program requires a total commitment to the program, to the cooperating teacher, and most importantly to the students. In the case of necessary absences, student teachers are required to call their cooperating teacher, and their supervisor as needed.

On days that student teachers are scheduled to be visited and observed by their supervisor, they should plan to be actively teaching and fully engaged with students. While teachers are responsible for a variety of other tasks, such as giving a test—instruction and direct interaction with students is where student teachers will be most challenged and will benefit most from a supervisor’s perspective and feedback.

Notes to the University Supervisor

First, thank you for working with a student teacher from Teachers College. Your willingness to work with us to support the learning, growth and development of preservice students underscores your commitment to quality teaching and a qualified teacher for every child/adolescent. We know that supervision is a difficult responsibility to take on, given the need to delicately balance support and guidance with critique and evaluation. Supervisors are critical to student teacher success because they guide preservice teachers to think not only about the “what” or “doing” of teaching, but also the “why” or thinking of teaching. As a supervisor you are responsible for moving new teachers from a focus on themselves to a focus on student learning. Teachers College depends on you—your careful observation, astute judgment, fair and candid feedback and informed assessment—to be able to confidently recommend our graduates for teacher certification. Below are some suggestions, guidelines and basic procedural information that we trust will support the important work you do with our students.

Orientation sessions

Starting in the Fall of 2006, orientations for new supervisors will be available through the Office of Teacher Education. Please call (212) 678-3466 or email OTE@tc.edu for the schedule.

Elements of an observation

While Teachers College does not necessarily subscribe to a particular model of supervision, nor do we tightly regulate the supervision process, we do feel that an observation should constitute:

- A **pre-observation conference** to discuss the student teacher’s lesson plan and any other details pertaining to the lesson. This discussion could take place at the school site or over the phone one or two days beforehand. We suggest reviewing the student teacher’s lesson plan prior to your discussion so you can offer feedback and suggestions from an informed perspective.
- The **observation of an actual lesson or teaching episode/interaction** where the student teacher is actively engaged with learners. Your observation should last the entire period so you are able to gather assessment data from lesson initiation to closure.
- A **post-observation discussion** should follow the lesson. This meeting gives you and your student teacher the opportunity to review, reflect upon, and assess the lesson together. Through the use of careful questioning, you can help student teachers think about what they did and why, the decisions and pedagogical choices they made, and the consequences of their instruction on students’ understanding. Again, this discussion could take place at the school site (if convenient), at TC, or over the phone.

The number of observations required by each program may vary, so be sure to check with the program with which you are working. However, the Teacher Education Policy Committee at Teachers College and the Office of Teacher Education and School-Based Support Services strongly and unanimously recommend **a minimum of 3 observations per student teaching experience. It is important to spread out observations over the course of the student teaching period (beginning, middle and end). Bunching observation visits for the purpose of expediency or efficiency is inappropriate and does not fulfill the spirit or goals of supervision. Similarly, observing two or more lessons in a row and counting each lesson as a separate “visit” is neither condoned nor acceptable.**

Protocols and scheduling

Like our student teachers, supervisors are also guests in cooperating teachers’ classrooms and in schools and representatives of TC. Thus it is important for you to acquaint yourself with school protocols governing entry into the school, dress and professional demeanor and cooperating teachers’ expectations. It helps to get a sense of the rhythms and schedule of the classroom in which your student teacher is placed, and to meet with the cooperating teacher to explain your supervisory role and discuss how and when observations will occur.

Maintaining high quality supervision

Below are some guidelines for ensuring that the supervision you provide your student teachers is beneficial to their learning:

1. Observe the student teacher on a regular basis over time and in a variety of situations/subjects.
2. Provide specific and descriptive feedback on the student teacher's execution of professional responsibilities (lesson planning, implementation and assessment, classroom interaction, maintenance of records).
3. Help the student teacher relate teaching theory to classroom practice (e.g., discuss reasons for selecting materials and methods).
4. Encourage good planning and organization.
5. Encourage independent, creative thinking in planning, use of materials, motivation, and teaching and assessment approaches.
6. Help the student teacher develop consistent classroom management practices conducive to learning, which promote respect for others and for cultural and linguistic diversity.
7. Encourage the habit of constant self-assessment, including post-lesson analyses, and the use of self-assessments for subsequent improvement.
8. Maintain a professional working relationship with the student teacher and cooperating teacher.
9. Encourage and support good rapport between the student teacher and her/his students.

Establishing channels of communication

Open communication between supervisors and cooperating teachers enhances and supports their work as colleagues and partners. Get to know the cooperating teacher. Exchange phone numbers to facilitate opportunities to touch base and discuss progress between observations. Encourage cooperating teachers to observe alongside you and to participate in subsequent post-observation conferences with student teachers. Share your insights and solicit theirs. While the observations you conduct are critical to student teacher development, they still represent snap-shots of practice. Developing a professional relationship with the cooperating teacher allows you to fill in the rest of the picture and triangulate observation data.

Assessing teaching readiness and fit

An important aspect of your supervision work involves assessing student teachers' readiness for teaching and for certification. Learning to teach is never easy and most student teachers experience road bumps, a crisis of confidence and moments of questionable practice. Your candid assessment grounded in careful observation and descriptive, detailed documentation aids programs in designing additional (and appropriate) support structures and interventions if needed, and to make program adjustments when necessary. Like you, we know full well that all student teachers do not learn in the same way or at the same pace. Your work with student teachers helps us respond best to their needs. We also want our students to reach their potential as teachers, but we also want to be sure that candidates unsuited for the teaching profession are supported to consider other career paths. Thus, you will want to ensure that your assessment is fair but rigorous and that all student teachers are held to the highest standards of teaching quality.

Guidelines for Communicating with Student Teachers

1. Focus feedback on behavior rather than the person.

It is important that we refer to what a person does in the classroom rather than a personal trait. This focus on behavior further implies that we use adverbs (which relate to actions) rather than adjectives (which relate to qualities) when referring to a person. Thus, we might say a person "talked considerably in this meeting" rather than that this person is "a loudmouth."

2. Focus feedback on observations rather than inferences.

Observations refer to what we can see or hear in the behavior of another person, while inferences refer to our interpretation of the behavior (as in "you were defensive"). The sharing of inferences or conclusions may be valuable, but it is important that they be so identified.

3. Focus feedback on description rather than judgment.

The effort to describe represents a process for reporting what occurred, while judgment refers to an evaluation in terms of good or bad, right or wrong. The judgments arise out of a personal frame of reference or value grid, whereas description represents more neutral reporting.

4. Focus feedback on the sharing of ideas and information rather than on giving advice.

By sharing ideas and information we leave the receivers free to decide for themselves in the light of their own goals, in a particular situation at a particular time how to use the ideas and information. When we give advice, we tell them what to do with the information, and in that sense we take away the freedom to determine the most appropriate course of action as well as reducing their responsibility for their own behavior.

5. Focus feedback on exploration of alternatives rather than answers or solutions.

The more we can focus on a variety of procedures and means for the attainment of a particular goal, the less likely we are to accept prematurely a particular answer or solution which may or may not fit a particular problem.

6. Focus on the situation or problem, not the behavior.

If an issue or problem arises, please speak openly with the student teacher about your concerns. In some cases, scheduling problems can be prevented with a confirmation phone call (not email) 1-2 days prior to the visit.

Travel and Payment FAQs

Please use the information below as a guide for payments and reimbursements for visits to student teachers. Questions and concerns can be directed to (212) 678-3466 or OTE@tc.edu.

Q: What do I need to do after being hired?

A: Obtain an authorized signature from a staff member in the Office of Teacher Education (OTE) in Russell Hall, Room 400 on the “Post Hire Form” if you are a brand new employee at TC OR the “Change Form” if you have previously worked at Teachers College but not as a student teaching supervisor. If you are hired after the semester has started, you must fill out and submit paperwork to OTE and HR within two weeks after being hired.

Q: How often should I visit a student teacher?

A: The number of required observations is set by each department. However, the Teacher Education Policy Committee and the OTE unanimously recommend a minimum of 3 visits per placement.

Q: When and how do I get paid for observations of student teachers?

A: Supervisors are paid \$100 per visit with a maximum of \$500 per student teacher per semester. (The minimum number of required visits is set by each department.) Dates of visits must be recorded in the chart provided in the OTE supervision packet. **Please note: Payment will be received approximately 6-8 weeks after all completed paperwork has been turned into OTE. This time is needed as payment requests travel from OTE to the Office of the Vice President. Requests then move to the Office of the Controller and finally to Human Resources. Once the check is generated it is sent back to our office and immediately mailed to you. We appreciate your patience. Payment questions can be directed to Human Resources at (212) 678-3175.** Payments are made at the end of each semester unless a financial hardship requires immediate payment. Please contact Claudette Chung at (212) 678-4057 or at chung@tc.edu for further assistance.

Q: Will I be reimbursed for travel expenses?

A: Yes, supervisors are paid a maximum of \$50 per student teacher per semester. If expenses beyond the \$50 limit are anticipated, please contact the program coordinator and OTE before incurring the expense. A separate check is mailed for travel expenses; it is not part of the check sent for payment of observations.

Q: When and why must receipts for travel be submitted?

A: Teachers College policy states that receipts must be turned in with a request for reimbursement. Receipts should be submitted by the end of each semester. Receipts MUST be submitted in the academic year in which the travel expense was incurred. Requests will not be honored after the end of the applicable fiscal year which occurs in August at Teachers College. If public transportation is not used, please use the mileage guideline of 58.5 cents per mile. **OTE does not reimburse for taxis or parking expenses.**

Q: What if I don't have receipts?

A: OTE will accept a pamphlet or publication with the fare printed on it if a receipt cannot be produced. All requests for reimbursements must be substantiated with proof of the amount paid which is required for auditing purposes.

Guidelines for Obtaining a New York State Initial/Professional Certificate

Students must:

- **Take 2 Workshops:**
 - Child Abuse Identification
 - School Violence Intervention & Prevention
 - **OR** have taken the **HBSS 4116** course at TC
- **Pass 3 New York State Teacher Certification Exams (NYSTCE)**
 - ✓ Note: Exams should be taken and passed no later than the last semester prior to graduation. Information can be found at: www.nystce.nesinc.com
 - Liberal Arts and Science Test (**LAST**)
 - Assessment in Teaching Skills-Written (**ATS-W**) – (elementary or secondary)
 - Content Specialty Test (**CST**)
- **Obtain Fingerprint Clearance**

Certification Recommendation Requirements:

- Submit the "Student Teaching Record of Hours and Grid of Hours" for each placement to Russell, 400
- Submit an Institutional Recommendation Data Form (IRDF) to Russell, 400

NYSED - TEACH Online Services System (to be done during last semester at TC):

- Students are to:
 - Go to the NYSED website: www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/
 - Apply electronically for a certificate(s) through the TEACH website (Paper applications no longer exist)