

# **Eastern Michigan University College of Education**



## **Student Teaching Handbook**

**Department of Special Education & Communication  
Sciences and Disorders**

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## **WELCOME!**

Eastern Michigan University was founded in 1849 as Michigan Normal School. It was the first teacher training institution west of the Alleghenies.

This handbook is prepared by the Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders to provide student teachers, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors the information they need to complete one of the most exciting and important parts of pre-service special education preparation: the undergraduate or graduate special education student teaching experience. We know that you will learn and grow during the course of this semester!

### **Professional Education Program Conceptual Frameworks Theme Statement**

Eastern Michigan University prepares caring professional educators for a diverse and democratic society.

### **Advanced Professional Educator Conceptual Frameworks Theme Statement**

Eastern Michigan University advanced professional education programs develop leaders who demonstrate inquiry, advocacy, and leadership in education for a diverse and democratic society.

### **Department Mission Statement**

Reach, Teach, and Inspire Students to Lead Change in a Diverse Inclusive Society.

### **Belief Statement**

We believe that:

- Teaching is our primary responsibility,
- Teaching should be enjoyable,
- Teaching should be conducted with dignity and respect for ourselves and others,
- Teaching should be responsive to real life needs,
- Teaching should be socially responsible, and,
- Teaching should contribute to the body of knowledge.
- We must strive for excellence and excellence is a goal, not an accomplishment.
- Communication is the essence of productive student-faculty relationships and is central to the teaching-learning process.
- Individual rights and mutual respect are necessary in the educational process.
- Learning is an ongoing, evolutionary process that is life long, and teaching provides direction, not a destination.

We further believe that it is our responsibility to:

- Prepare graduates who can be creative visionaries for the future,
- Prepare graduates to be responsive to real life needs,
- Prepare graduates to utilize state-of-the-art technical skills, and knowledge, and,
- Prepare graduates to engage in professional practices which are ethically and morally defensible

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact a special education faculty member at 734.487.3300 or the Office of Academic Services at 734.487.1416.

## THE STUDENT TEACHER

Student teaching is the most meaningful experience of the teacher preparation program. It represents the culmination of years of effort on the part of the student. This experience should aid in the development of educators who are knowledgeable, caring, and reflective decision-makers who can perform successfully in a diverse and technological society.

Knowledgeable: The student teaching experience adds to the store of knowledge students have acquired in their content classes. All special education students at Eastern Michigan University must have a special education major and a teaching minor or second major. Students apply content knowledge as they observe and interact in actual learning experiences.

Reflective Decision-Making: During the student teaching experience, student teachers should prepare lessons, analyze and reflect on them and make decisions about how the lesson relates to best teaching practice and student success.

Caring: Student teachers are placed in settings where the beliefs of the cooperating teacher and the school philosophy convey the caring notion that all children/youth are important and all children/youth can learn. Eastern Michigan University students are encouraged to seek a variety of ways to motivate children/youth and to enhance their self-image and self-esteem. Value is placed on the contributions children/youth can make to their own learning.

Diversity: Student teachers are placed in settings that reflect our pluralistic society and design lessons that meet the needs of all learners.

Technology: Student teachers demonstrate an ability to use instructional technology to enhance learning and personal/professional productivity.

Dispositions: Student teachers demonstrate professional dispositions: responsibility, teachability, commitment, initiative, collaboration, emotional maturity, appreciation of diversity, self-reflection, adherence to professional ethics, and student focus.

### Eligibility Guidelines for Special Education Student Teaching

1. It is up to each instructor to verify pre-clinical hours completed by students in his/her/their class. Both the number and level (either elementary or secondary) of hours need to be verified with the instructor's signature on the pre-student teaching hours card (orange card). Verification will not be reviewed again before student teaching, as long as students have the required hours. The use of the Classroom Teacher Evaluation form or its equivalent (such as time-in/time-out log) is strongly recommended.  
  
Students often earn pre-student teaching hours independently (unrelated to a class). In this case, have the on-site responsible person sign the back of the pre-student teaching hours card, and fill out the Classroom Teacher Evaluation Form. Please note that substitute teaching hours may not count toward the pre-clinical hours requirement.
2. All special education coursework must be completed before student teaching begins. This is especially true of any 400-level courses. Any exceptions must be made by the program area.
3. Pre-clinical hours need to be in both elementary and secondary, roughly 50 hours in each level, since endorsement is for both elementary and secondary.
4. Traditionally pre-clinical hours are not accepted if older than three years; however, each case needs to be considered individually by the student's program area.

## Qualifications for Student Teaching

The students enrolled in the program have arrived there as a result of self-selection and professional screening. The general background provided in both pedagogy and subject matter classes gives a basis for the vital fusion of theory and practice. Students enrolled in the student teaching program have:

- Completed their program and attained a minimum grade point average at Eastern Michigan University of 2.50 as well as a minimum grade point average of 2.50 in major and/or minor classes.
- Evidence of dispositions for being a successful teacher as evaluated by EMU faculty.

Student teaching is designed to be an integrative, capstone experience in a comprehensive program for the professional development of prospective special education teachers. This experience allows the student teacher an opportunity to:

- Implement and evaluate methods and theories of teaching
- Develop a repertoire of effective strategies
- Identify teaching strengths and weaknesses
- Learn to reflect on, analyze, and adapt his or her teaching
- Develop a personal teaching style

## Applying for Special Education Student Teaching

Special education student teaching is designed to be done in the final semester of your program (undergraduates) or endorsement (graduates). It can only be done if you have successfully completed your general education student teaching and all of your coursework.

The student teaching application is available online here: <http://app.emich.edu/student-teaching-application/views/>

The same application is used for both general education and special education student teaching but must be submitted separately for each experience. Keep in mind the following deadlines:

- January 15 for FALL student teaching; additional materials by August 1
- June 15 for WINTER student teaching; additional materials by December 1

In order to be complete, special education student teaching applications must include the following:

1. Personal statement
2. Statement of criminal convictions
3. Professional disposition (from SPCI 429/529, SPEI 401/501, SPLI 421, and/or SPAI 345)
4. Orange card(s) with pre-clinical hours (be sure to keep a copy!)

NOTE: Some of these will be submitted in person to the Office of Academic Services in 206 Porter.

### **Undergraduates (single *and* dual endorsement candidates):**

Undergraduate special education students doing special education student teaching need to enroll in SPGN 491, Special Education Student Teaching (12 credit hours). Special education student teaching is done full time for a full semester. All your coursework and pre-clinical requirements must be completed the semester before special education student teaching unless an exception has been made by your program area. These requirements are approved by the Office of Academic Services, which confirms that 150 pre-clinical hours (50 hrs. gen. ed./minor, 50 hours elementary special ed., and 50 hours secondary special ed.) are recorded on your pre-student teaching hours card (orange card). The Office of Academic Services will register you for SPGN 491 (12 credits). Make sure this is on your schedule by the beginning of the semester you intend to student teach. NOTE: The Office of Academic Services will not be able to register you for SPGN 491 if you have a "hold" on your account.

Undergraduates enrolling in SPGN 491 must attend a weekly student teaching seminar. Typically, this seminar is held on Wednesdays from 3:30-5:20 p.m., requiring students to arrange with their cooperating teacher to leave early enough to attend the seminar. Be sure to check each semester for specific day, time, and location of this seminar.

*Student teaching experiences only occur during FALL and WINTER semesters. There are no exceptions.*

### **Additional Information for Undergraduate Dual Endorsement Candidates:**

Undergraduates completing the program of study for two special education endorsements (e.g., CI and EI) still have only one semester of student teaching. Placements will either be in a single classroom that serves students in both of the endorsement areas or in two different classrooms (which could be in the same school, the same district, or in a different district). When changing classrooms, the student would complete 8 weeks related to their first endorsement area and 6 weeks focusing on their second endorsement.

### **Graduate Students:**

All graduate students complete some type of internship/practicum. All graduate students complete some type of internship/practicum. Students seeking their first endorsement in special education must register for SPGN 689 for 6 credits. This special education internship is done full time for at least 10 weeks. Students who have at least one special education endorsement and are seeking an additional endorsement register for SPGN 586 for 4 credits and will complete a 6-week practicum. All endorsement-related coursework and any applicable preclinical requirements must be completed prior to your special education internship or practicum. Please carefully check your program of study for your particular requirements. Also, carefully check your program of study for requirements that must be completed prior to your internship/practicum.

### **Graduate Alternative Student Teaching:**

Students who are already employed as a special educator in a school, such as under a temporary approval (that is, they do not have a special education endorsement but are employed in a school with an emergency certification), may be eligible to complete an Alternative Student Teaching experience. In this experience, they will student teach in their own classroom, under the direction of a university supervisor.

In order to do so, students need to apply for student teaching using the graduate student application by the appropriate deadline to the Office of Academic Services (206 Porter). Following the same deadline, you should complete an Alternative Student Teaching Application (form available online), and submit it to a faculty member in your program area for program area approval. All criteria on the application must be met. If approved, a copy will be shared with the Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders' Student Teaching Committee. In order to apply, student must:

- Be admitted to EMU's College of Education and/or the Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Have a valid Michigan Teaching Certificate in an area of general education
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0
- Have proof of completing all course requirements for certification in an area of special education
- Have completed 3 years teaching experience overall
- Be currently in a special education setting, before starting the alternative student teaching experience
- Have been employed as teacher of record for 1 year in the class where the alternative student teaching experience is desired, before starting alternative student teaching
- Teach within a 40 mile radius of EMU

As part of the application process, students must submit:

- A current vita
- A cover letter that includes a full description of the classroom and student caseload
- A letter of recommendation from the school's Special Education supervisor verifying the above information, including that the student is working in a special education setting and is eligible for special education endorsement in the disability area in which endorsement is sought, and that the supervisor supports the student's intention

Additional requirements may be required of graduate students doing an alternative special education student teaching experience.

Summer student teaching is an option for graduate students only. There is no undergraduate summer student teaching.

### **Student Teaching Calendar**

The student teacher's ability to make sound professional decisions is based on his or her ability to reflect on professional courses and to apply educational principles and techniques within the framework of a field experience. This section of the student teaching handbook outlines basic elements of the special education student teaching experience.

Within the semester that you student teach, student teachers are directed to follow the school district's calendar rather than the Eastern Michigan University semester and vacation schedule. The university student teaching calendar is available for student teachers, university supervisors, and cooperating teachers.

- Students teaching during the Fall semester must report to their placements on the first day of teacher meetings and orientation after the school district's summer break as scheduled by their district or earlier if so directed by their cooperating teacher.

- Students teaching during the Winter semester must contact their cooperating teacher and building administrator before the close of the Fall semester if a placement has been confirmed; Winter student teachers begin their placement on the first day of school following the school district's winter break.
- Any exceptions to these start dates must be authorized by the student teacher's university supervisor in collaboration with the cooperating teacher and school district.

The University assigns the last day of student teaching near the end of the semester for undergraduates and at 10 weeks for graduate students seeking initial special education endorsement, as agreed upon by your supervisor and cooperating teacher. Graduate students seeking an additional special education endorsement have a 6-week practicum. Excessive student teacher absences or identified needs may be reasons for a university supervisor to recommend an extension for the end date of a student teaching placement. **Note: The cooperating school reserves the right to terminate a student teacher's placement at any time with or without cause.**

### **Student Teaching Responsibilities**

Special education student teachers have the responsibility to behave in a professional manner while student teaching. This includes:

- Arriving on time or early each day, and staying for full days (except undergraduates on seminar day). (See Daily Schedule below)
- Notifying the cooperating teacher (and seminar instructor) and leaving teaching plans, if appropriate, for any absences. (See Absences below)
- Dressing and interacting in a professional manner. (See Professionalism below)
- Assuming increasing responsibility for academics and classroom management.
  - At the elementary level, the student teacher is expected to work in all content areas, equivalent to a full teaching/case management load, during the student teaching experience.
  - At the secondary level, the student teacher is expected to gradually take on responsibilities equivalent to a full teaching/case management load.
- Attending faculty meetings, in-service training opportunities, schools board meetings, PTSO meetings, and other school functions.
- Notifying the university supervisor if any problems arise that cannot be resolved in a timely manner.

#### **Daily Schedule:**

District policy and school administrators often determine expectations for teachers' arrival and departure times. Student teachers are expected to maintain the same daily schedule as their cooperating teachers. Notify the school and the university supervisor in the event of an impending late arrival. Undergraduate students are expected to attend student teaching seminar one afternoon per week (see course schedule for specific days and times) and may need early release time in order to attend.



Because student teachers are expected to remain at the school throughout the day, student teachers who reside in a campus dormitory may receive credit on their residence bill if they eat lunch at the cafeteria of the school to which they are assigned. Additional information is available at the Office of Academic Services (206 Porter).

### **Absences**

Consistent attendance is essential and absence from student teaching should be avoided. If a student teacher is ill, he or she must notify the cooperating teacher as early as possible; the student teacher must make arrangements to deliver lesson plans and materials for which he or she is responsible. Student teachers must also call their university supervisor immediately at his or her home or office.

**Absence for any reason or failure to notify the cooperating school and the university supervisor could result in an extension or termination of the student teaching placement. Absences may have to be made up at the discretion of the university supervisor.**

### **Professionalism:**

Student teachers are expected to behave professionally in all relationships with students, faculty, non-teaching staff, parents, and administrators. Student teachers must dress according to the professional standards established by the teachers with whom they work. Student teachers hold **guest status** in both the school building and the district at large, and should exhibit professional demeanor, a positive attitude, and a willingness to listen to and incorporate feedback throughout the student teaching experience.

### **Policy on Physical Restraint:**

It is the policy of the Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders that University students are not to be involved in the physical restraint of students during field experiences, including student teaching. Student teachers are not employees of any school district and, therefore, should not be involved in physical restraint procedures. A student teacher's evaluation is not to be adversely impacted by his/her/their following this policy.

## **Observations and Evaluations**

### **Observations:**

Over the course of the semester, the university supervisor will make approximately four (4) observations and will provide written feedback using approved observation forms (see the sample in the Appendix). Although the observation notes do not become part of the student teacher's permanent record, they can be an important resource to help student teachers improve their skills. Reflecting on the university supervisor's comments can be beneficial to increasing a student teacher's skills. Student teachers who are open and receptive to constructive feedback become more effective teachers.

### **Evaluations:**

The evaluation process includes information from the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor and helps student teachers know where they stand – what their strengths and weaknesses are, and what they might do to become even better teachers.

Midterm Evaluations (formative assessments, to help the student teacher improve skills):

- Cooperating teacher: Completes a formal online midterm evaluation of the student teacher's progress.
- University supervisor: Completes an online midterm evaluation of the student teacher's progress as well as a final evaluation at the end of student teaching.
- Student teacher: Completes an online mid-term evaluation. This is an important opportunity to reflect on what's working, what's not, and how to improve.

It is recommended that the student teacher and the cooperating teacher jointly review the formative evaluation for the maximum benefit of the student. The supervisor will then review all documents before turning them in. When the student is experiencing problems in the placement, it is expected that this process will be more thorough.

Final Evaluations (summative assessments):

- Cooperating teacher: Completes an online final evaluation at the end of student teaching.
- University supervisor: Completes a final evaluation in Via at the end of student teaching.

The final decision for evaluation and recommendation for certification rests with the university supervisor. Final evaluations become a permanent part of the student teacher's credential file.

### Grades:

#### Undergraduates

Grades are a little different for student teaching. They include:

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| • Credit, and recommendation for certification (Satisfactory)       | <b>SC</b> |
| • Credit, but <i>not recommended</i> for certification (Passing)    | <b>P</b>  |
| • No credit (Unsatisfactory performance)                            | <b>U</b>  |
| • Incomplete (Satisfactory, but did not complete semester)          | <b>I</b>  |
| • In progress (Satisfactory, but continuing into the next semester) | <b>IP</b> |
| • Withdrawal  | <b>W</b>  |

#### Graduates

Grades for SPGN 689 and SPGN 586 include **CR** (credit) or **NC** (No Credit)

## Experiencing Difficulty in a Placement

### Changing or Ending Placements:

In rare situations, a student teacher can be moved from one placement to another placement by the university supervisor, with the approval of the Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders. While student teachers sometimes request these changes, cooperating teachers might also initiate this request. Situations that seem to be difficult in the moment can often be resolved through open communication. University supervisors will work collaboratively with both student teachers and cooperating teachers to help them resolve concerns and difficulties. Remember, in your professional career you must learn to work with a variety of professional colleagues, families, and administrators. Student teaching is a time to practice this skill! Any student who leaves his/her/their placement will be assigned another placement by the placement coordinator.

### **Eligibility for a Second Student Teaching Experience:**

Student teachers are notified by their university supervisor at the time of their midterm evaluation if they are in danger of failing their student teaching. Expectations are set out in order to help the student teacher understand what is expected in order to pass student teaching. Sometimes students may be required to student teach a second time under special conditions.

Students need to understand the following:

- Recommendation for a second student teaching experience will be made by the university supervisor and approved by your Program Area Committee (Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders).
- Recommendation for a second student teaching experience is not automatic.
- Students may need to complete additional course work or alternative experiences as determined and recommended by the Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders prior to consideration for a second student teaching experience.

### **Student Teaching: Special Considerations**

#### **Student Teachers with Disabilities:**

Student teachers with disabilities should talk to their program area coordinator, university supervisor, cooperating teacher, and building supervisor to inform them of necessary supports and services.

#### **Substitute Teaching:**

In August 2020, the Michigan Department of Education issued a memo permitting student teachers to be hired as long-term substitutes when a district is having difficulty finding fully certified teachers to fill vacancies. In response, the Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders has issued the following guidelines regarding pursuing a long-term substitute (LTS) position when special education student teaching:

- Students must complete the Application for Substitute Teaching through the Office of Academic Services (206 Porter). District mentoring and University supervision are expected to occur in the LTS placement.
- No student may begin their student teaching assignment as an LTS.
- For those seeking a single endorsement:
  - You may only apply if the LTS position is in the same school or district as your current student teaching placement.
  - You must complete 10 weeks of student teaching in the original placement with satisfactory evaluations before beginning the LTS position.
- For those seeking two endorsements:
  - You must complete the full 8 weeks in the first endorsement with satisfactory mid-term and final evaluations.
  - You can apply to be an LTS to complete the 6 weeks in the second endorsement. This is not an option once you have started a placement for the second endorsement. Because the first placement is complete, the LTS application can be for the same school or district or for a different district. It is crucial that the second placement have at least two students with an IEP in the second endorsement area.

## The Student Teaching Experience

The student teaching experience consists of three phases, divided across the course of the semester. The three phases are Orientation and Observation; Participation and Instruction; and Transition and Reflection. Moving smoothly from one to the next and understanding what should be accomplished in each phase will be essential for the success of each student.<sup>1</sup>

### Phase I: Orientation and Observation (Week 1)

To begin, each student teacher should learn about and understand the school culture and the requirements of particular classrooms. Communicating openly and frequently during this phase with the cooperating teacher and other school personnel will help to ensure success. Student teachers should learn about a variety of practices and rules, including:

#### Teaching Responsibilities

1. Parent nights, open houses, faculty meetings, department meetings, committee meetings
2. Duties (bus, hallway supervision, lunch supervision)
3. Computer accounts, lunch accounts, parking pass information
4. Tour of the building

#### School Policies and Procedures

1. Student handbook (discipline and attendance policies, writing passes)
2. Teacher handbook (classroom policies regarding discipline, attendance, grading, passes, emergency procedures i.e. fire drills, school nurse procedures, universal precautions)

#### Classroom Policies and Procedures

1. Classroom rules and management plan (discipline referral procedures)
2. Recording absent and tardy students
3. Writing hall passes

#### Instructional Resources

1. Media center, computer labs, and technology coordinators
2. Computer use expectations
3. District and school websites
4. State standards for the course or grade level
5. Appropriate instructional materials
6. Lesson plan and student assessment expectations
7. Community resources to enhance instruction

#### Community and Student Needs

1. General socioeconomic and cultural background of the student population
2. After school student activities and opportunities for student teacher involvement
3. Parent involvement in the school, expectations to communicate and work with parents
4. Allergies or specific health/participation restrictions of any students
5. Responsibilities to special need students in class
6. Student reading levels and available support

Student teachers will also need to spend substantial time during this phase observing/assisting in the classroom, in order to understand the class and students, and to learn about the expectations of the cooperating teacher. It offers an opportunity to immerse oneself in the world of the classroom.

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<sup>1</sup> We gratefully acknowledge Indiana University's Office of Student Teaching, Bloomington, Indiana, for their kind permission to use materials from their Student Teaching Handbook for this section.

## **Phase 2: Participation and Instruction (approximately Weeks 2-12)**

Once the student teacher has become familiar with the classroom and the school, the student teacher will begin next to work collaboratively with the cooperating teacher. This may involve a variety of activities, from tutoring individual students, or doing small group work, to co-teaching the whole class. Other tasks may include grading, preparing materials or resources, and developing lesson plans, etc. This work occurs in the context of preparing to take on full responsibility for instruction.

Full instructional responsibility requires substantial commitments by both student teacher and cooperating teacher. The student teacher will need to commit to engaging in significant planning and delivery time, and contributing many resources. This will include teaching the whole class at various times during the day.

Most of the time spent in the student teaching experience will occur in this second phase.

## **Phase 3: Transition and Reflection (approximately Weeks 13-14)**

The final part of the student teaching experience ends with important opportunities for the student teacher. These include:

### Transition

1. Transition of instructional and non-instructional responsibilities from the student teacher back to the cooperating teacher.
2. Preparation of the pupils for the departure of the student teacher.
3. Return of instructional materials, keys, parking pass, grade book, grading, and any other items assigned by the supervising teacher.

### Observation

1. Complete observations of teachers in and out of the grade level or content area.
2. Observation of other types of activities/professionals in the school to gain insight into the whole school environment: counseling office, special education classes, club activities, athletics, etc.

### Reflection

1. Review and reflect on the observations and evaluations made by others, as well as self-evaluation opportunities.
2. Discussion of areas for continued growth and plans to address those areas.

## **Undergraduate Student Teaching Expectations**

### **Introduction**

In addition to their responsibilities at the placement site, special education student teachers may also need to attend seminars, prepare assignments, and attend meetings. At the beginning of the student teaching experience, student teachers will discuss with their cooperating teacher and university supervisor their goals for the experience. The university supervisor, with the cooperating teacher and student teacher, may put these goals in writing. At a minimum, special education student teachers will:

- Register for and regularly attend student teaching seminar, SPGN 491
- Maintain evidence of preparing for and organizing learning experiences (lesson plans or equivalent)

- Implement/teach and assess instruction or learning experiences
- Attend at least one IEP/IFSP/service plan meeting or equivalent (preferably more)
- Attend at least one building meeting
- Assume independent responsibility of a special educator in the setting for at least some time (four weeks recommended at minimum)
- Complete a final project

Descriptions of each activity are provided below. Individual program areas may have additional requirements specific to their program areas that are discussed separately.

### **SPGN 491 Seminar (Undergraduates Only):**

Student teachers must register for and attend weekly Student Teaching Seminar classes (SPGN 491). Check the course schedule for days and times, but plan on one afternoon per week (e.g., Wednesday, 3:30-5:20 p.m.) on the EMU main campus. The seminar schedule is designed to reduce conflicts with student teaching schedules; however, students may need to leave school early in order that day in order to arrive to seminar on time. Instructors understand that school responsibilities (including parent meetings, IEP meetings, and building meetings) may prevent students from attending a small number of seminar sessions. Still, every effort should be made to attend ALL seminar sessions. Students who are unable to attend individual seminar meetings should notify their seminar instructor.

### **Evidence of Preparing For and Organizing Learning Experiences:**

The role of a teacher requires organization and preparation. At the same time, not all special education settings are alike. Where appropriate, student teachers should prepare lesson plans. Where this is not appropriate because of the setting, students, environment, or expectations, student teachers should show written or other evidence of preparing for and organizing learning experiences. This evidence should be made available to the cooperating teacher and university supervisor, so they can provide constructive feedback. During the course of student teaching, a university supervisor will observe student teachers. For these observations, student teachers should prepare written plans (consistent with the learning environment) that include an introduction, objective, materials, body, and closing. These lesson plans should be given to the supervisor.

### **Implement/Teach and Assess Learning Experiences:**

After teachers organize and prepare for learning experiences, the next step is implementing those plans. For some special educators, this may mean teaching or co-teaching a class. For others, it may mean implementing support plans, vocational or community activity experiences, supervising or coordinating personnel, and other activities. University supervisors will want to observe student teachers delivering supports and services in environments appropriate to their students and activities.

### **Attend At Least One IEP/IFSP/Service Plan Meeting:**

An important part of special education is creating and developing individualized plans for students, taking the lead from families, and working collaboratively with school personnel and other support providers. These plans are called different things, depending on the age of the student and the kinds of learning experiences in which they participate. Student teachers should attend at least one of these planning meetings, and preferably more, to learn more about the process.

**Write Goals/Objectives For At Least One Student:**

Student teachers will be required to write goals and objectives for one of the students in their setting. These should be original, and based on observation and work with the student.

**Final Project (optional for some program areas):**

Student teachers may be expected to do a final project in the environment in which they are assigned. The project should be negotiated between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher, and should be something useful to the class after the student teacher is finished. Examples include posters, board games, behavior/motivation charts, scrapbooks, or teaching aids.

**Attend At Least One Building Meeting:**

Successful special educators work closely and collaboratively with regular educators, administrators, paraprofessionals, and other service providers. Understanding the culture of schools, and how they work, is important to the role of special educators. Student teachers should attend at least one or more building (or equivalent) meetings to learn more about how educational institutions work.

**Assume Independent Special Educator Role:**

Experiencing first-hand the roles and responsibilities of special educators is an essential part of student teaching. At some point during the experience, each student teacher should take on full responsibility of the classroom (with support and supervision of the cooperating teacher). Four weeks (approximately 20 days) in this role is a good place to start, depending on the goals, experience, and readiness of the student teacher. Student teachers and cooperating teachers work cooperatively to plan for this experience and should talk openly about what's working and what might be improved.

## **Graduate Student Teaching Experiences and Expectations**

Requirements and expectations for supervised graduate-level student teaching (SPGN 689 or other internship/practicum listed on your program of study) are similar to those for undergraduate student teaching experiences, with a couple of differences.

As with undergraduates, graduate interns should:

- Provide evidence of preparing for and organizing learning experiences
- Implement/teach and assess learning experiences
- Attend at least one IEP/IFSP/service plan meeting
- Write goals/objectives for a student
- Complete a final project
- Attend at least one building meeting
- Assume independent special educator role

## Insurance and Financial Aid

### Health Insurance:

Student teachers are not covered by the university for medical, surgical or hospitalization insurance and are responsible for the purchase and maintenance of their own health insurance. Student health insurance is available to undergraduate students taking six or more credit hours, as well as to all graduate students and visiting scholars. Although benefits are subject to change, policies are likely to include:

- \$50,000 coverage per sickness or injury
- 100% in-patient hospital expenses covered at PPO hospitals
- 100% covered expenses incurred at Health Services
- 100% prescription benefit at UHS for covered expenses

Detailed brochures describing current health insurance options are available at Health Services.

### Workers' Compensation:

School districts may be indemnified for workers' compensation claims made by student teachers. Any workman's compensation claim submitted to a school district by a student teacher must also be submitted in writing to the Office of Academic Services (206 Porter) within three days of the accident.

### Liability Insurance:

Beginning in Fall 2000, school districts in Michigan required student teachers to have \$1 million of liability insurance. Liability insurance must be purchased and maintained by the student teacher either from his or her own insurance provider or using a MEA/NEA Student Membership Application Form. The MEA/NEA form is available online at [www.mea.org/smea](http://www.mea.org/smea). Liability coverage through the MEA runs through June 30 of any year and would need to be renewed if your special education student teaching placement takes place in a Fall semester following your initial student teaching placement. Student teachers must provide verification of liability insurance in order to register for and begin their teaching assignment.

### Financial Aid Information:

Full-time enrollment requirements will be waived by the Office of Financial Aid under the following guidelines and as stipulated by program regulations:

- A minimum of 10 hours is required for all students enrolled in Student Teaching who receive the following types of financial aid: Supplemental Grant, National Direct Student Loan, College Work Study and EMU Scholarships.
- Student teachers enrolled in fewer than 12 hours are not eligible for the State of Michigan Competitive Scholarship. There are no exceptions according to regulations set by the Michigan Department of Education.
- Student teachers enrolled for 10 hours are considered as 3/4 time enrolled for Pell Grant. There are no exceptions according to regulations set by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Information regarding full-time enrollment requirements for students who receive other benefits (i.e., insurance, Social Security) must be verified with the specific agency and the Financial Aid Office.



The College of Education's Office of Academic Services does not waive financial aid requirements. Enrollment verification may be obtained from the College of Education, Office of Academic Services. Verification must be submitted to the Office of Financial Aid. Please contact the Financial Aid Office if you have questions regarding your eligibility for financial aid: 734.487.0455, [www.emich.edu/finaid](http://www.emich.edu/finaid)

### **Things to Think About As You Begin the Student Teaching Process**

This is an opportunity to begin your professional career on a good note. As you begin to work in schools, you have the same expectations as any other professional in that school. Here are some suggestions about how to think about your role as a student teacher. They come from student teachers, veteran educators, administrators, and university professors. Get off to a good start by following these recommendations!

1. Make appointments ahead of time to meet teachers. Don't just show up. Remember that their schedule is incredibly hectic – respect their time (and yours, too).
2. Be on time! It's such a simple thing but means SO much in how positively your experience will go. Be where you say you are going to be, when you say you're going to be there, no excuses.
3. Find out what cooperating teachers' expectations are. Remember that they have a tremendous amount of experience. LEARN from them.
4. Check in and check out of the school office on your visit. Observe all school expectations for student teachers (e.g., wear an ID badge, sign in each visit, etc.). This includes inquiring about dress code, as you are a guest in the school.
5. If you will be late or must cancel or need to change your schedule in any way, call the school and/or teacher and notify them of the change. This is VERY important. Doing student teaching is like having a job (the difference being, of course, that you're not getting paid ☺). Changing your schedule or not letting people know what's going on will have the same impact as if you had a paid job (in the real world, people get fired when they don't show up).
6. Dress in a professional manner. Of course, different classrooms and schools have different standards. Find out what they are, and follow them.
7. Adopt a professional attitude and demeanor. You are representing the university, our department, and beginning your professional reputation. You may be the only student teacher from Eastern Michigan University Special Education program that has ever been in that school. When people think of Eastern, they'll think of YOU. Act the way you want to be remembered.
8. Always try your best! No one can ever fault you for doing what you know is the right thing. And if it ends up not working, learn from that experience.
9. Communicate, communicate, communicate! So many concerns can be solved BEFORE they become a big problem by talking openly and honestly about them. Let people know if something is not working – don't hold it in.
10. Be open to constructive feedback. It can sometimes be hard to hear – but it's the only way you're going to learn how to do things better. When people are giving you difficult feedback, listen to what they have to say, try to understand it, and thank them afterwards.

11. Avoid gossip – about fellow student teachers, about cooperating teachers, about the university. It'll only come back to haunt you.
12. Ask questions! Find out why people are doing what they are doing.
13. Find out about the school rules and follow them. For example, if the school has a policy of correcting students in a positive fashion, do that. If the school rules say no touching of students, don't do that. Even if the rules make no sense, they are there for a reason. Your role is not to question them, but to follow them.
14. Ask your supervising teacher how the children should address you (first name, or using a title like Ms. or Mr.). Your job in student teaching is to LEARN, not to change the way people do things.
15. Plan ahead! Organization in classrooms means A LOT! Find out what the schedule for the classroom is, and try to figure out in advance what you're going to need and do in advance to follow that schedule. For example, some schools have rules about when to make copies and who can do that. Don't make copies at the last minute – do it well in advance so that you won't run into a problem.
16. Be nice to the office staff, the cafeteria staff, and the custodial staff. They have resources that you may need to access – it'll be easier to get help from them if they see you as a friendly person. Besides, they have often thankless jobs that often make or break schools – give them the respect they deserve.
17. Tell your supervising teacher if any awkward situation arises between you and a student or a staff member. NEVER give any personal information (address, phone number) about yourself or anyone else to a student.
18. Be friendly, be open to new ways of doing things, be flexible, and be open to change. Even if they don't do things the way you'd do them, that's an opportunity for you to learn. Find out why they do it that way. If nothing else, at least you'll know something you DON'T want to do.
19. Confidentiality is the law. Make no reference to specific students, professional agencies or schools in any public location...only generic comments when talking about your experiences. The only exception is when you are in a university classroom and the discussion of your experiences is used in an educational way. Even there, what you hear is to be kept confidential.
20. Be cautious when going to a school in evening/night hours. Ask about appropriate places to park that are well lit and safe.
21. Be sure you have thoroughly read the Eastern Michigan University Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders' Policy Statement on Student Involvement in Physical Restraint Procedures During Field Experiences.
22. A word or note of thanks after your student teaching experience is always appropriate – it can make a big difference for you (in getting a good recommendation) and for the University (teachers and the school will think, "Wow, they're really nice people there!" Well, and we are, aren't we?).

## Applying for Graduation and Your Teaching Certificate

- Application for Graduation (UNDERGRADUATES ONLY)

If you intend to graduate at the end of the semester, remember that you must apply to graduate **within the first two weeks of the semester**. This will trigger your “graduation audit” – a check to make sure that you have met all of the requirements. Go to:

<http://www.emich.edu/registrar/graduation/apply.php>

- Michigan Test of Teacher Certification

If you have not yet taken and passed the MTTC in your area of special education, you must do this before you will be able to receive your special education endorsement. You can take it online throughout the year. Go to: [www.mttc.nesinc.com](http://www.mttc.nesinc.com) for more information.

- First Aid / CPR

Students must meet the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) requirements for First Aid and CPR certification. A list of qualified providers is available by searching the MDE web site ([www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)). Your certification must be current (less than one year old) at the time you apply for teacher certification. First Aid and CPR courses are also offered through the Snow Health Center at EMU. Documentation must be submitted to Records and Registration.

- Criminal History Statement

A current Criminal History Statement must be on file and submitted to 206 Porter two weeks before you anticipate completion of coursework: <http://www.emich.edu/coe/forms>

- Teaching Certificate

You must apply for your own teaching certificates. Please visit <https://mdoe.state.mi.us/MOECES/Login.aspx> to access this service.

- Application for Provisional Certification with Special Education Initial Endorsement (*for undergraduates as well as graduate students seeking their teaching certificate and initial special education endorsement*)

Please follow the MOECS (Michigan Online Educator Certification System). Go to: <http://www.emich.edu/coe/forms> for step-by-step instructions

- Application for Certified Teachers Seeking Additional Endorsement (*for graduate students who already have a teaching certificate and are adding an endorsement in special education*)

Please follow the MOECS (Michigan Online Educator Certification System). Go to: <http://www.emich.edu/coe/forms> for step-by-step instructions

- All special education student teachers must complete the Via Demographics Form (the same one completed during general education student teaching) and must respond to the online survey that will be sent out. (Student teachers must print the “ticket” they receive, verifying that they completed this and give it to their supervisor, which is required for grade submission. Your supervisor turns it in to 206 Porter.)

## THE COOPERATING TEACHER

Because cooperating teachers spend the most time in direct contact with the student teacher, they play a critical role in the preparation of new colleagues. Their contribution is vital to the success of Eastern Michigan University's special education endorsement program. This section of the handbook identifies some of the cooperating teacher's roles and suggests practical strategies for sequencing the student teacher's activities, for observation and conferencing, and for evaluation.

### Qualifications of Cooperating Teachers

Student teaching experiences are arranged through cooperative agreements between Eastern Michigan University and surrounding school districts and agencies. The University has specific criteria by which it selects cooperating teachers. These criteria generally include:

- A minimum of 3 years of teaching experience
- A Master's degree
- Endorsement in the area of special education in which the student teacher seeks endorsement
- A recommendation from the building principal or department head
- Demonstrated success in teaching children and youth with disabilities

Although the process for selection of cooperating teachers may vary from one school to another and some exceptions to the criteria may be made on a temporary basis, the overriding consideration is the cooperating teacher's desire to help special education teacher candidates develop as practicing teachers.

### Supporting the Student Teaching Experience

Below are activities in which the cooperating teacher may wish to participate during each phase of the Student Teaching Experience.

#### Phase 1: Orientation and Observation

*Orientation to the school and community:*

- Re-read the student teacher's autobiography and become acquainted with his or her background, interests, and special needs.
- Organize an introductory conference to share teaching philosophies and goals and to set the tone for a professional and collegial relationship.
- Help the student teacher to learn about the community.
- Acquaint the student teacher with school policies and procedures and provide him or her with a school handbook, if available.
- Verify and define, in writing, the extent of the student teacher's authority and responsibilities.
- Explain the school calendar and daily schedule. Establish a procedure that the student teacher should follow to notify the cooperating teacher of absences and tardiness.
- Note the dates of, and encourage the student teacher to attend, special events and activities including school board meetings, parent conferences, staff meetings, staff development opportunities, extra-curricular activities, school-wide or professional development events, and state, regional, or national subject-matter association meetings.

- Provide a list of all school staff and introduce the student teacher to school personnel.
- Give the student teacher a tour of the building, pointing out the location of supplies and equipment, the media center and other special facilities, and review special parking arrangements.
- Explain how to reserve or check out equipment; demonstrate its use.
- Help the student teacher to locate and learn about the nearest Intermediate School District and its services.
- Discuss appropriate classroom attire.

*Orientation to the classroom:*

- Prepare the students for the student teacher's arrival.
- Introduce the student teacher to the students.
- Provide the student teacher with a desk or work area in or near the classroom.
- Create an atmosphere in which the student teacher has a feeling of belonging.
- Explain classroom procedures and the role the student teacher is to take in implementing them.
- Share a plan for classroom management and discipline and tell why it works. Furnish a copy of the discipline procedures and consequences. Discuss other possible management ideas and discipline techniques. Encourage the student teacher to try out a variety of management strategies.
- Explain the curriculum and various plans for instruction. Give the student teacher copies of texts and materials, as appropriate.
- Provide a seating chart and distribute nametags.
- Provide an opportunity for the student teacher and the class to share things about themselves.
- Arrange times for each student to work individually and in small groups with the student teacher.

*General Observation:*

- Ask the student teacher to observe for specific teaching strategies or patterns of interaction rather than allowing the student teacher to simply watch the lesson.

## **Phase 2: Participation and Instruction**

At the beginning of this phase, the student teacher should team-teach with the cooperating teacher, should teach from the cooperating teacher's plans, and should begin to implement his or her own plans for short segments of instruction. Student teachers should gradually assume responsibility for additional content areas. Cooperating teachers should continue to supervise and model for student teachers.

Student teachers should take on increasing duties and assume the planning and teaching responsibilities for a significant portion of the day. Student teachers are expected to write formal lesson plans. Cooperating teachers should review all lesson plans enough in advance of their use so that student teachers can make necessary adjustments and revisions. Student teachers may also prepare and teach a unit of study during this stage of student teaching.

Students should be provided with specific feedback and recommendations for continued improvement and teaching success. Student teachers should evaluate their teaching and identify current strengths and weaknesses.

Student teachers should never be left completely alone in the classroom.

The activities suggested below may help to make this stage of the student teaching experience more interesting and rewarding.

- Encourage the student teacher to gather and organize ideas and materials. Share files and filing systems. Encourage him or her to establish a systematic professional materials file.
- Model a variety of teaching techniques and strategies. Demonstrate how to analyze and adapt lessons and encourage an atmosphere in which self-evaluation is valued.
- Allow the student teacher to take on increasing amounts of responsibility for planning and delivering lessons.
- Require that the student teacher make thorough daily lesson plans. Review these plans in advance.
- Encourage the student teacher to contribute new ideas to use in the classroom. Communicate the amount of freedom the student teacher has in making decisions. Allow the student teacher to use new methods and techniques, when possible. Discuss methods and procedures that can supplement existing classroom teaching techniques.
- Set aside a time each day to conference together. Take notes on and keep written records of these conferences for reference and evaluation.
- Conference with the student teacher concerning the content and organization of his or her instructional unit.
- Remind the student teacher to complete the mid-semester self-evaluation.
- Complete the mid-semester evaluation documenting the student teacher's progress; include a typed, written narrative or a list of strengths and concerns on this evaluation.
- Provide time for, and maintain communication with, the university supervisor.
- Contribute constructive criticism that will assist in improving the Eastern Michigan University special education professional preparation program.

### **Phase 3: Transition and Reflection**

Activities that may help student and cooperating teacher roles in this phase include the following:

- Assist the student teacher in making arrangements to observe teachers at other grade levels and in other subject areas.
- Expose the student teacher to professional publications and professional local, state, regional, and national organizations for special education teachers.
- Schedule and conduct a final interview in which the student teacher analyzes and assesses his or her teaching, summarizes the variety of teaching strategies he or she has used, tells what he or she has learned, and describes his or her attitude about teaching as a career.
- Complete the final evaluation documenting the student teacher's progress. The narrative portion of this evaluation should be word-processed.

## Observation Techniques and Strategies

During the Participation and Instruction phase, it is important that the cooperating teacher observes and gives daily oral feedback and frequent written feedback to the student teacher. Cooperating teachers might find it helpful to experiment with the observation systems outlined below. Cooperating teachers should keep a careful record of their observation notes.

### Observation Strategy 1:

Planning and delivering a lesson requires many different skills. Presenting, reflecting on, and seeking to improve all of these skills at once is often overwhelming to student teachers. It is sometimes useful to help the student teacher focus on a single aspect of the teaching process and to direct observations and coaching over several days toward just that area. Specific areas to consider include:

- Mastery of subject matter
- Writing and stating clear objectives
- Giving clear, age-appropriate, step-by-step directions
- Maintaining classroom control
- Maximizing student participation and active involvement
- Encouraging higher level questioning and thinking skills
- Student-teacher and student-student interaction
- Planning for individualized instruction
- Utilizing technologies to provide access to the application of principles of universal design
- Application of principles of differentiated instruction
- Planning a unit
- Assessment
- Record keeping
- Use of materials and technology
- Any areas on the EMU midterm and final evaluation form

By clearly defining one or two purposes or focal points for each observation and by tracking specific progress in those areas, the cooperating teacher allows the student teacher to analyze and experience success in specific aspects of his or her teaching.

### Observation Strategy 2:

When scripting a lesson, the cooperating teacher writes down in as much detail as possible what the student teacher and the students say and do. Once the lesson is completed, the cooperating teacher and student teacher review the script, looking for:

- Patterns in teacher or learner behavior,
- Cause-and-effect relationships, or
- Other repeated teaching strategies and their consequences.

Together, the cooperating teacher and the student teacher analyze the patterns and draw conclusions about particular strategies and activities.

## Conferencing Techniques and Strategies

Student teachers particularly appreciate working with a cooperating teacher who is available to respond to questions and concerns, who gives detailed and constructive feedback, and who provides sustained support and coaching. During the pre- and post-observation conference, the cooperating teacher can provide this kind of assistance. In addition, the conference provides the student teacher with a much-needed opportunity to analyze and reflect on his or her teaching. Taking time to help the student teacher to develop these life-long reflective skills is considerably more important than coming up with a “quick fix” for a particular situation or lesson.

Cooperating teachers are encouraged to conference with the student teacher on a daily basis both before (pre-conferencing) and after (post-conferencing) the lesson. During the conferences, cooperating teachers should:

- Review the goals and objectives for the lesson
- Discuss strengths and recognize progress and success
- Discuss weaknesses or areas of concern
- Make specific suggestions for improvement
- Offer encouragement
- Set clear, specific pedagogical goals for subsequent lessons

### Pre-Conferencing:

Pre-conferencing allows the observer and the student teacher to agree on the goals and purpose of the observation. Cooperating teachers may wish to use the following questions to guide a pre-observation conference.

- Determine the topic of the lesson and where it fits in the sequence of lessons (*“What do you have planned for today? What lesson am I going to observe? How does this lesson fit in with what has already been taught? What do the students already know about this topic?”*).
- Determine the purpose of the lesson (*“What do you want the students to know or be able to do by the end of the lesson? What is the objective for the lesson today?”*).
- Ask the student teacher to preview his or her teaching strategies (*“How do you plan to accomplish this?”*).
- Ask the student teacher to explain how he or she will know if the objectives have been accomplished (*“What evidence will you need to know if students have achieved the goal? What will students do to show you that they have learned the material?”*).
- Clarify the observer’s role (*“What would you like me to specifically look for? What kind of information would you like me to gather? How would you like me to collect information about your lesson today?”*).

### Post-Conferencing:

The post-observation conference should take place as soon as possible after the observation. Cooperating teachers may wish to consider the following general ideas when scheduling and conducting a post-observation conference. Cooperating teachers should:

- Give the student teacher time to reflect and analyze his or her teaching before beginning the conference.
- Hold the conference in a private area where it will not be interrupted.



- Allow sufficient time to discuss specific teaching strategies as well as to discuss general issues and concerns.
- Establish a positive tone that indicates respect and support.
- Frame the conference around specific topics, objectives, strategies, and techniques drawn from the lesson.
- Follow a critical judgment with specific suggestions for improvement and strategies for predicting and analyzing the effect of the suggested behavior.
- End the conference on a positive note with a summary of current strengths and a plan of action for remediating areas of concern.

### **Scripting the Conference:**

Sometimes it helps to have a script for the conference, to give it structure and coherence. Here is one format that cooperating teachers may wish to follow.

- Open the conference
  - Plan a greeting statement that sets a pleasant tone (*"I really enjoyed being in your class today."*).
  - Preview the conference (*"We are going to spend some time reflecting on the lesson you just taught and then . . ."*).
- Restate the objective
  - Ask a question that invites the student teacher to restate the objective on the lesson (*"It would be helpful if you could restate your objective for this lesson."*).
- Analyze the lesson
  - Ask a question that will help the student teacher to reflect on the instructional skills that were effective in promoting learning (*"What aspects of the lesson helped students to understand?"*).
  - Ask a question that will help the student teacher reflect on what did not go well or what he or she might do differently (*"If you were going to teach this lesson again, what might you do differently? Why do you think this aspect of the lesson didn't go well or needs to be changed?"*).
  - Ask a question to find out how satisfied the student teacher was with the lesson (*"How satisfied were you with the lesson today?"*). Ask a question to narrow the focus of the conference to isolate and address a particular concern (*"What did you do to keep the students actively involved in the lesson today?"*).
- Relate the lesson to larger goals and objectives
  - Ask the student to relate this lesson to the unit of study as a whole, or to state/national standards (*"How did your lesson reflect state or national standards for the teaching of . . .? Which standards were met? How might you change the lesson to reflect more of the opportunities to learn outlined in the standards?"*).
- Conclude the conference
  - Ask the student teacher to summarize the conference and to state his or her goals for improvement (*"What will you do differently when you teach this lesson again?"* *"How can you put this idea into practice in the lesson you have planned for tomorrow?"*).

### Questioning:

Recall, comparison, and inference questions help student teachers to cite specific examples and justify their teaching and their feelings about their teaching.

- Recall question: “How did you feel about the lesson? What did your students do to make you feel this way? What did you do to make you feel this way?”
- Comparison questions: “Do you feel that your lesson went as planned? What aspects of the lesson went according to your plan? You planned to . . . how did that work out? What aspects of the lesson varied from your plan? You wanted students to . . . what happened? Is that what you expected? You were going to . . . but instead you . . . Why? If you were to do one thing the same in a future lesson, what would it be? Think back to other times when you taught . . .”
- Inference questions: “What did you do that helped students to be successful? What might explain the number of students who did (did not) meet the objective? Why do you think the lesson turned out this way?”

### Conferencing with the Outstanding Student Teacher:

Sometimes a cooperating teacher finds it difficult to suggest areas needing improvement for student teachers who learn quickly, who are well-organized, who have well-developed planning and teaching skills, and who show enthusiasm, “with-it-ness,” and empathy from the beginning of the student teaching experience. However, even an outstanding student teacher wants to improve.

Cooperating teachers may wish to consider the following ideas when conferencing with a strong student teacher.

- Focus on developing the student teachers’ self-analysis and evaluation skills.
- Be sincere in any requests that the student teacher demonstrate new ideas or techniques.
- Encourage the student teacher to undertake new challenges.
- Provide support and praise. Often strong student teachers expect too much of themselves.
- Plan innovative, team-taught, or multi-disciplinary lessons and projects that require two strong teacher leaders.

### Conferencing with the Student Teacher in Difficulty:

If the student teacher is not making satisfactory progress, contact the university supervisor immediately. The university supervisor will contact faculty in the Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders to officially document these concerns. The cooperating teacher should also notify his or her building principal.

In such instances, it is critical that:

- The cooperating teacher keep detailed, written anecdotal records with dates describing the areas of concern
- The cooperating teacher’s mid-semester evaluation reflects his or her concerns. If it is possible that the student teacher may not be recommended for certification, some performance competencies **must** be marked in the **Very Limited** range.

When working with a student teacher in difficulty, the cooperating teacher should:

- Schedule frequent conferences with the student teacher.
- Plan the conference ahead of time, noting specific information to be shared and how that information is to be presented.
- State any concerns in very specific terms.
- Support each concern with specific examples from the lesson.
- Develop a written plan for action and remediation in conjunction with the university supervisor.

### **Evaluation of the Student Teacher**

Eastern Michigan University views the evaluation of the student teacher as a shared responsibility involving the university supervisor, the cooperating teacher, and the student teacher. Although each of these persons is expected to make a distinct contribution to the evaluation process, the cooperating teacher will bear the major responsibility for on-going coaching and day-to-day evaluation because of the unique relationship and time involvement. Still, **the final decision for recommendation for endorsement rests with the university supervisor.**

There are three basic reasons for evaluating student teachers. The evaluation process:

- Assists the student teacher in recognizing his or her strengths and notifies him or her of areas in need of improvement.
- Helps the student teacher to develop and refine self-evaluation and self-analysis skills.
- Formally addresses the instructional and professional competence of the student teacher and provides input into the certification decision.

Formalized evaluation is a necessary component of any teacher certification process. Formal evaluations must be completed honestly and professionally. Cooperating teachers must use the mid-semester and final evaluation forms provided by the university to evaluate the student teacher.

#### **Mid-Semester Evaluation:**

- The mid-semester evaluation is a tool to notify the student teacher of his or her progress, strengths, and weakness; it must be completed in writing.
- The mid-semester evaluation is designed to help student teachers to focus on specific areas where improvement is needed and to make specific plans for the remainder of the semester.
- The **Unacceptable** and **Acceptable** areas on the continuum should be regarded carefully. Cooperating teachers should ask themselves if they are *truly* satisfied with the student teacher's performance or if they feel that the student teacher is not making satisfactory progress. If a cooperating teacher has concerns or questions about the student teacher's progress, it is imperative that the corresponding areas on the mid-semester evaluation be marked in the **Unacceptable** areas.
- A typed narrative or list of strengths and concerns should accompany the cooperating teacher's mid-semester evaluation.
- Mid-semester evaluations must be reviewed with the university supervisor before final signatures are entered. This is very important in the event of **Unacceptable** performance.

- Cooperating teachers should discuss the performance rating for each item on the evaluation with the student teacher at the mid-semester time, making certain that the student teacher understands areas in which his or her performance is rated in the **Unacceptable** areas.
- Because the mid-semester evaluation is a diagnostic tool, comments written in the text portion of the mid-semester evaluation may be re-stated on the final evaluation.
- The mid-semester evaluation will be removed from the student teacher's file once the final evaluation is submitted.

### **Final Evaluation:**

- Final evaluations must be reviewed with the university supervisor before final signatures are entered in the event of **Unacceptable** performance.
- Cooperating teachers must discuss the performance rating for each item on the evaluation with the student teacher at the end of the semester.
- The narrative accompanying the final evaluation should be typed.
- The university supervisor will make the final decision regarding recommendation for endorsement.

## **THE UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR**

University supervisors fill an important role in student teaching. They serve as a liaison with the school, university, and student teacher; work as a coach and mentor to the student teacher; and evaluate the student teacher's progress and learning over the course of the semester.

### **Liaison**

As a liaison, the university supervisor ensures that there is clear, open, and constructive communication between the university, the school, the cooperating teacher, and the student teacher. Because finding placements for student teachers is an often difficult job, the university supervisor works to support the needs of schools and cooperating teachers. University supervisors see schools and cooperating teachers as, in part, their customers, and try to help them whenever possible.

Other liaison functions include:

- Providing materials to student teachers, cooperating teachers, and other school personnel
- Orienting student teachers and cooperating teachers to the student teaching program, acquainting them with their roles and responsibilities
- Providing cooperating teachers with detailed information on their roles and duties
- Supporting the cooperating teacher's efforts to guide the student's professional development
- Meeting with student teacher and cooperating teacher at the beginning of the semester to help them establish goals for the student teaching semester
- Reminding and help the cooperating teacher to arrange opportunities for the student teacher to observe other classes and teachers
- Reminding the cooperating teacher that the student teacher must prepare for and teach for an extended period of time
- Thanking the cooperating teacher, school staff, and school administrators at the end of the student teaching experience for working with the student teacher and EMU

## Coach and Mentor

In addition to ensuring that cooperating teachers and schools have a positive experience during the student teaching process, the university supervisor acts as a coach and mentor to the student teacher. In that role, the university supervisor should:

- Ensure that the student teacher has completed activities and met expectations outlined in this handbook.
- Ensure that the student teacher makes a satisfactory adjustment to the school or other setting, and makes good progress to each added responsibility in the setting.
- Conduct a minimum of four observations of the student teacher (undergraduate) and three observations of the intern (graduate). Each observation must be scheduled ahead of time (at least one week in advance) with the student and cooperating teacher. Observations should be a minimum of one hour, with time for observing at least 30-45 minutes, followed by time for conferencing with the student teacher, as well as the cooperating teacher if desirable. Observations should occur on a day and during a time when the student teacher is actively engaged in instructional, programming, or service delivery activities.
- Complete written notes using observation forms that are shared and discussed with the student teacher. Notes should be signed by the university supervisor.
- Provide **supportive** and **constructive** feedback to student teachers about lessons, planning, and reflection.

## Evaluator

The university supervisor conducts a written mid-semester and final evaluation of the student teacher, collecting and submitting observation notes and evaluation forms, managing the evaluation process, and determining the final recommendation for certification. Responsibilities include:

- Completing a mid-semester evaluation. The process includes completion of a student self-evaluation and cooperating teacher evaluation, as well as conferencing with the student teacher and cooperating teacher. University supervisors should complete their own evaluation; only rarely will the evaluations done by cooperating teacher and university supervisor show substantial differences. A signed copy of all evaluations should be given to the student teacher. A final copy of the mid-semester evaluation should go to the College of Education's Office of Academic Services, and the Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders. Remember that documentation is necessary whenever there is any doubt about the eventual recommendation for certification.
- Completing a final evaluation. This evaluation becomes part of the student teacher's permanent record. The process includes completion of a cooperating teacher evaluation, as well as conferencing with the student teacher and cooperating teacher. University supervisors should complete their own evaluation; only rarely will the evaluations done by cooperating teacher and university supervisor show substantial differences. A signed copy of all evaluations should be given to the student teacher. A final copy of the mid-semester evaluation should go to the College of Education's Office of Academic Services for undergraduates, and the Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders.

- Determining the student’s final grade and recommendation for certification.

Undergraduate grades (for SPGN 491) include:

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| ○ Credit, and recommended for certification (Satisfactory) | <b>SC</b> |
| ○ Credit, but not recommended for certification (Passing)  | <b>P</b>  |
| ○ No credit (unsatisfactory performance)                   | <b>U</b>  |
| ○ Incomplete   | <b>I</b>  |
| ○ In Progress  | <b>IP</b> |
| ○ Withdraw   | <b>W</b>  |

Graduate student grades (for SPGN 689 or SPGN 586) include **CR** (credit) or **NC** (No Credit).



### Checklist for University Supervisors – Special Education

Items	Yes	No
1. <b>Observation forms</b> (four for each student, due at the end of semester)		
2. <b>Travel forms</b> (through concur)		
3. <b>Completion of supervisor surveys for MDE</b> (Zoomerang, due at end of semester)		
4. <b>Verification of student teacher surveys for MDE</b> (Zoomerang, due at end of semester)		
5. <b>Online Midterm Evaluations</b> (Student teachers, supervisors, and cooperating teachers)		
6. <b>Final Evaluations</b> (Via for supervisors; online form for cooperating teachers)		
7. <b>Verification of student teacher diversity information on Via</b> (they give you a “ticket” to verify)		
8. <b>Remind students to complete Civil/Criminal Convictions Form</b> (by end of semester)		
9. <b>Cooperating Teacher Information Form</b> (and W-9)		

## CEC Initial Level Special Educator Preparation Standards

### CEC Initial Preparation Standard 1: *Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences*

#### **1.0 *Beginning special education professionals understand how exceptionalities may interact with development and learning and use this knowledge to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities.***

- 1.1 Beginning special education professionals understand how language, culture, and family background influence the learning of individuals with exceptionalities.
- 1.2 Beginning special education professionals use understanding of development and individual differences to respond to the needs of individuals with exceptionalities.

### CEC Initial Preparation Standard 2: *Learning Environments*

#### **2.0 *Beginning special education professionals create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments so that individuals with exceptionalities become active and effective learners and develop emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self-determination.***

- 2.1 Beginning special education professionals through collaboration with general educators and other colleagues create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments to engage individuals with exceptionalities in meaningful learning activities and social interactions.
- 2.2 Beginning special education professionals use motivational and instructional interventions to teach individuals with exceptionalities how to adapt to different environments.
- 2.3 Beginning special education professionals know how to intervene safely and appropriately with individuals with exceptionalities in crisis.

### CEC Initial Preparation Standard 3: *Curricular Content Knowledge*

#### **3.0 *Beginning special education professionals use knowledge of general and specialized curricula to individualize learning for individuals with exceptionalities.***

- 3.1 Beginning special education professionals understand the central concepts, structures of the discipline, and tools of inquiry of the content areas they teach, and can organize this knowledge, integrate cross-disciplinary skills, and develop meaningful learning progressions for individuals with exceptionalities
- 3.2 Beginning special education professionals understand and use general and specialized content knowledge for teaching across curricular content areas to individualize learning for individuals with exceptionalities
- 3.3 Beginning special education professionals modify general and specialized curricula to make them accessible to individuals with exceptionalities.

### CEC Initial Preparation Standard 4: *Assessment*

#### **4.0 *Beginning special education professionals use multiple methods of assessment and data-sources in making educational decisions.***

- 4.1 Beginning special education professionals select and use technically sound formal and informal assessments that minimize bias.
- 4.2 Beginning special education professionals use knowledge of measurement principles and practices to interpret assessment results and guide educational decisions for individuals with exceptionalities.
- 4.3 Beginning special education professionals in collaboration with colleagues and families use multiple types of assessment information in making decisions about individuals with exceptionalities.
- 4.4 Beginning special education professionals engage individuals with exceptionalities to work toward quality learning and performance and provide feedback to guide them.

## **CEC Initial Preparation Standard 5: *Instructional Planning and Strategies***

### **5.0 *Beginning special education professionals select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies<sup>6</sup> to advance learning of individuals with exceptionalities.***

- 5.1 Beginning special education professionals consider an individual's abilities, interests, learning environments, and cultural and linguistic factors in the selection, development, and adaptation of learning experiences for individual with exceptionalities.
- 5.2 Beginning special education professionals use technologies to support instructional assessment, planning, and delivery for individuals with exceptionalities.
- 5.3 Beginning special education professionals are familiar with augmentative and alternative communication systems and a variety of assistive technologies to support the communication and learning of individuals with exceptionalities.
- 5.4 Beginning special education professionals use strategies to enhance language development and communication skills of individuals with exceptionalities
- 5.5 Beginning special education professionals develop and implement a variety of education and transition plans for individuals with exceptionalities across a wide range of settings and different learning experiences in collaboration with individuals, families, and teams.
- 5.6 Beginning special education professionals teach to mastery and promote generalization of learning.
- 5.7 Beginning special education professionals teach cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills such as critical thinking and problem solving to individuals with exceptionalities.

## **CEC Initial Preparation Standard 6: *Professional Learning and Ethical Practice***

### **6.0 *Beginning special education professionals use foundational knowledge of the field and the their professional Ethical Principles and Practice Standards to inform special education practice, to engage in lifelong learning, and to advance the profession.***

- 6.1 Beginning special education professionals use professional Ethical Principles and Professional Practice Standards to guide their practice.
- 6.2 Beginning special education professionals understand how foundational knowledge and current issues influence professional practice.
- 6.3 Beginning special education professionals understand that diversity is a part of families, cultures, and schools, and that complex human issues can interact with the delivery of special education services.
- 6.4 Beginning special education professionals understand the significance of lifelong learning and participate in professional activities and learning communities.
- 6.5 Beginning special education professionals advance the profession by engaging in activities such as advocacy and mentoring
- 6.6 Beginning special education professionals provide guidance and direction to paraeducators, tutors, and volunteers.

## **CEC Initial Preparation Standard 7: *Collaboration***

### **7.0 *Beginning special education professionals collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, individuals with exceptionalities, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways to address the needs of individuals with exceptionalities across a range of learning experiences.***

- 7.1 Beginning special education professionals use the theory and elements of effective collaboration.
- 7.2 Beginning special education professionals serve as a collaborative resource to colleagues.
- 7.3 Beginning special education professionals use collaboration to promote the well-being of individuals with exceptionalities across a wide range of settings and collaborators.



## CEC Special Education Professional Ethical Principles

Professional special educators are guided by the CEC professional ethical principles, practice standards, and professional policies in ways that respect the diverse characteristics and needs of individuals with exceptionalities and their families. They are committed to upholding and advancing the following principles:

1. Maintaining challenging expectations for individuals with exceptionalities to develop the highest possible learning outcomes and quality of life potential in ways that respect their dignity, culture, language, and background.
2. Maintaining a high level of professional competence and integrity and exercising professional judgment to benefit individuals with exceptionalities and their families.
3. Promoting meaningful and inclusive participation of individuals with exceptionalities in their schools and communities.
4. Practicing collegially with others who are providing services to individuals with exceptionalities.
5. Developing relationships with families based on mutual respect and actively involving families and individuals with exceptionalities in educational decision making.
6. Using evidence, instructional data, research, and professional knowledge to inform practice.
7. Protecting and supporting the physical and psychological safety of individuals with exceptionalities.
8. Neither engaging in nor tolerating any practice that harms individuals with exceptionalities.
9. Practicing within the professional ethics, standards, and policies of CEC; upholding laws, regulations, and policies that influence professional practice; and advocating improvements in the laws, regulations, and policies.
10. Advocating for professional conditions and resources that will improve learning outcomes of individuals with exceptionalities.
11. Engaging in the improvement of the profession through active participation in professional organizations.
12. Participating in the growth and dissemination of professional knowledge and skills.

## High-Leverage Practices in Special Education

McLeskey, J., Barringer, M-D., Billingsley, B., Brownell, M., Jackson, D., Kennedy, M., Lewis, T., Maheady, L., Rodriguez, J., Scheeler, M. C., Winn, J., & Ziegler, D. (2017, January). *High-leverage practices in special education*. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children & CEEDAR Center.

### Collaboration

- HLP 1 Collaborate with professionals for student success.
- HLP 2 Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals and families.
- HLP 3 Collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services.

### Assessment

- HLP 4 Use multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of a student's strengths and needs.
- HLP 5 Interpret and communicate assessment information with stakeholders and to collaboratively design and implement educational programs.
- HLP 6 Use student assessment data, analyze instructional practices, and make necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes.

### Social/Emotional/Behavioral Practices

- HLP 7 Establish a consistent, organized and respectful learning environment.
- HLP 8 Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior.
- HLP 9 Teach social behaviors.
- HLP 10 Conduct functional behavioral assessments to develop individual student behavior support plans.

### Instruction

- HLP 11 Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals.
- HLP 12 Systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal.
- HLP 13 Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals.
- HLP 14 Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence.
- HLP 15 Provide scaffolded supports.
- HLP 16 Use explicit instruction.
- HLP 17 Use flexible grouping.
- HLP 18 Use strategies to promote active student engagement.

**Instruction** *(cont.)*

- HLP 19 Use assistive and instructional technologies.
- HLP 20 Provide intensive instruction.
- HLP 21 Teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings.
- HLP 22 Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior.

## SPGN 491/689: Special Education Student Teaching – Assessment Tool

### University Supervisor

### Mid-term and Final Evaluation

STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ENDORSEMENT AREA \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Rationale:**

This is a department-wide, standard assessment implemented in every section of SPGN 491/SPGN 689. The Department of Special Education & Communication Sciences and Disorders views the evaluation of student teachers as a shared responsibility involving the university supervisor, the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. The cooperating teacher bears the major responsibility for on-going coaching and day-to-day evaluation because of the unique relationship and time involvement.

**Purpose:** There are three basic reasons for evaluating student teachers.

- Assists the student teacher in recognizing strengths and areas in need of improvement.
- Helps the student teacher develop and refine self-evaluation and self-analysis skills.
- Addresses the instructional and professional competence of the student teacher and provides input into the endorsement award decision.

#### **Final Evaluation (Summative Assessment)**

- Final evaluations must be reviewed by the cooperating teacher and university supervisor before signatures are entered in the event of any ***unacceptable*** ratings.
- Cooperating teachers and university supervisors must discuss the performance rating for each item on the evaluation with the student teacher at the end of the semester.
- The narrative accompanying the final evaluation should be typed.
- **The university supervisor will make the final decision regarding recommendation for endorsement.**

**Via Note:** It is the responsibility of the university supervisor to upload the final evaluation data to the individual candidate's Via account.