

University of Pittsburgh
Student Teaching Handbook
Guidelines and Policies
For
Student Teachers, University Supervisors, and
Mentor Teachers
Vision Studies Program

Revised Summer 2020

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Introduction

After completing coursework at the University of Pittsburgh, students enrolled in the Level II Student Teaching Practicum course are not only prepared but are excited to enter the classroom to put learning into practice!

The student teaching experience is your opportunity to learn how the art and science of teaching culminate in effective instructional practice. When teaching students with visual impairments, student teachers should

- test the theories which learned during your methods classes,
- begin to formulate your own educational philosophies about the teaching of students with visual impairments,
- experiment with instructional approaches to meet the needs of all learners,
- evaluate the effectiveness of various methods and approaches for individual students and whether they result in effective outcomes, and
- reflect on your own growth during this time period and how you can implement strategies and effective instruction.

These goals can only be accomplished within a supportive, well-established classroom environment (whether center-based or following the itinerant model), under the guidance of an experienced educator—your Mentor Teacher— who will provide supportive, constructive feedback as well as modeling of skilled, effective instructional practices.

The University of Pittsburgh has developed a Teacher Candidate Handbook that outlines all the School of Education policies for student teachers. This updated Vision Studies handbook provides some additional information for candidates for student teaching who are enrolled in the program to become a Pennsylvania certified teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI). Any questions or

concerns can be directed to the Vision Studies Program Coordinator, Frances Mary D'Andrea, fmd22@pitt.edu or 412-648-7329.

Mission-Vision of the Department of Instruction and Learning in the University of Pittsburgh's School of Education

We ignite learning. We strive for well-being for all. We teach. We commit to student, family, and community success. We commit to educational equity. We advocate. We work for justice. We cultivate relationships. We forge engaged partnerships. We collaborate. We learn with and from communities. We innovate and agitate. We pursue and produce knowledge. We research. We disrupt and transform inequitable educational structures. We approach learning as intertwined with health, wellness, and human development. We address how national, global, social, and technological change impacts learning. We shape practice and policy. We teach with and for dignity. We think. We dream. We lead with integrity. We are the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh.

Our cultural drivers, or values, are:

- Integrity and dignity
- Educational equity and justice
- A culture of respect, transparency, and accountability
- Educational excellence
- High-quality research and engaged partnerships
- Innovation and interdisciplinarity

Additionally, we have four strategic goals/priorities, and they are:

1. In our unwavering commitment to equity, justice, and innovation, we will ignite learning, pursue and produce knowledge, and advance educational excellence.

2. In our unwavering commitment to equity, justice, and innovation, we will forge and participate in research-practice partnerships and community engaged initiatives.

3. In our unwavering commitment to equity, justice, and innovation, we will boldly 3. recruit and retain highly effective and engaged students, faculty, and staff.

In our unwavering commitment to equity, justice, and innovation, we will create and

4. sustain a strong culture, infrastructure, and public identity. Doing so allows us to think, to dream, and to lead with integrity.

ACCREDITATION

The School of Education is a member of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) and the Holmes Group. The School of Education, as part of the University of Pittsburgh, is also accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

All pre-service teacher education programs at the University of Pittsburgh are housed in the Department of Instruction and Learning and have been approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Students who complete an approved teacher education program and demonstrate satisfactory performance on the Praxis I and II exams as well as receive a satisfactory rating on the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) 430 evaluation are eligible for the Instructional I teaching certificate.

The Vision Studies program specifically provides several options to prepare educators to work with students who have visual impairments. Students may take courses leading to:

- Certification as a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) with or without an M.Ed.;
- Single certification as a Certified Orientation and Mobility O&M Specialist (COMS) with or without an M.Ed.;
- Dual certification (TVI and O&M) with or without an M.Ed.

[Note: O&M certification is national and offered through ACVREP, not through the state of Pennsylvania. See <https://www.acvrep.org>]

Qualifications and Requirements for Student Teaching

Teacher candidates must meet several requirements at the end of the term prior to student teaching. To be eligible for student teaching, the candidate must:

1. Receive the recommendation of the faculty in the Vision Studies certification program as a person who possesses personal and professional qualities in accordance with the Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators.
2. Demonstrate satisfactory completion of ALL prerequisite courses in general education, professional education, and your Vision Studies program of studies. These include the specialized pedagogical theory, methods, laboratory, and practicum courses in the certification area.
3. Earn a minimum overall QPA of 3.0 in specialized theory, methods, laboratory, and practicum courses.
4. Register for the 5-credit course IL 2524 and discuss your placement with the Vision Studies program coordinator.

Clearances

Before you can student teach, you **MUST** submit seven clearances to the Academic Records Specialist, Kelsey Cole, kcole@pitt.edu:

- a. a tuberculin test
- b. PA Criminal Record Check (Act 34)
- c. PA Child Abuse clearance (Act 33/151)
- d. FBI Federal Criminal History Record
- e. Arrest and Conviction form

- f. Allegheny County Mandated Reporter Law form
<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/mandated-reporter.aspx>
- g. Pitt Online Protecting Children from Abuse online course
https://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu/webapps/portal/execute/tabs/tabAction?tab_tab_group_id=_2_1

Important: You may not start your student teaching placement until these clearances are in place. For more information about these clearances, refer to Appendix B in the Pitt Teacher Candidate Handbook. The document is also uploaded in the student teaching area in Canvas.

Key Personnel

The clinical experience is a collaborative venture established between the University of Pittsburgh and the School District or Intermediate Unit (IU). Working to ensure the success of the collaboration, are the **student teacher**, the **mentor teacher**, and the **university supervisor**. The success of the student teaching clinical semester hinges upon the quality of social and professional relationships developed within this triad. Continuous three-way communication is critical for the triad's operational effectiveness. Read this handbook carefully and share the appropriate sections with your mentor teacher.

If issues or questions arise the first point of contact for individuals from the school districts should be your program coordinator for Vision Studies, Dr. D'Andrea, fmd22@pitt.edu.

Many other answers to questions related to graduation and certification can be found on the School of Education website:

<https://www.education.pitt.edu/student-services/student-services>

Currently, at the University of Pittsburgh the following individuals fill these important positions:

Dean of the School of Education	Dr. Valerie Kinloch	VKINLOCH@pitt.edu
Admissions and Enrollment Coordinator	Shelly Kinsell	skinsell@pitt.edu
Program Coordinator, Vision	Dr. Frances Mary D'Andrea	fmd22@pitt.edu
Director of Teacher Education	Dr. Michelle Sobolak	mjs26@pitt.edu
Academic Records Specialist	Kelsey Cole	kcole@pitt.edu
Field Services Coordinator	Elisabeth Estes	Elisabeth.estes@pitt.edu
Department Administrative Assistant	Allison Checkeye	amc343@pitt.edu

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT TEACHER

The student teacher has many personal obligations and professional duties during the student teaching practicum and clinical experience. The first of these is to make the transition from being a student to being a professional. It is our expectation that the student teachers **maintain a high level of professionalism** while at the field site; this means establishing an open and honest line of communication with the school and their mentor teacher/clinical instructor beginning with planning for and pre-arranging the first site visit. The following expectations will help ensure that the spirit of professionalism is maintained throughout the experience:

1. **Calendar:** Become familiar with and follow the calendar of the assigned field site. This pertains to in-service days, orientation days, conference days, holidays, and workshops. If your placement is with a mentor teacher who provides services itinerantly, follow the schedule established by the IU or

school district to ensure you are covering the mentor teacher's caseload and all the hours required by student IEPs.

2. **Schedule:** Follow the daily time schedule established for your mentor teacher and/or your cooperating school(s). Furnish the university supervisor with a complete classroom schedule as soon as possible, and upload it to TaskStream. Keep your schedule up to date if it changes during your placement.
3. **Time sheets:** Prepare a time sheet (weekly report) for each week of the student teaching experience and file weekly in TaskStream. THESE TIME SHEETS ARE CUMULATIVE. THE FINAL TIME SHEET SHOULD CONTAIN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ALL STUDENT TEACHING HOURS. Generally speaking, the student teaching placement lasts an entire semester (approx. 12–14 weeks).
4. **Upload required forms into TaskStream in a timely fashion.** Do not wait until the last minute to upload multiple documents but plan ahead to upload materials throughout the semester. All the forms that will be needed for you to use are available in Canvas after you have enrolled in the Level 2 Teaching Practicum course. Complete all professional tasks assigned by the mentor teacher and university supervisor.
5. **Attendance:** Maintain regular attendance. The student teacher is assigned to the field site on a full-time basis, five days per week for the entire semester (or, in some cases part of a semester). There is no designated number of sick days during student teaching, however days absent may need to be made up at the scheduled end of the experience. **If a student teacher needs to be absent from the field site he/she must report that absence to the university and to the field site and mentor teacher.**
6. **Absences:** Report every absence and its reason to the mentor teacher/clinical instructor through the school office or the preferred method established by the teacher, as early as possible. Report an absence to the university supervisor if it is on a day an observation has been scheduled. Any absence beyond two days should be reported to your program coordinator. Clear every absence through the mentor teacher.

7. **Lesson plans upon your absence:** If you are placed in a center-based program and you are absent, lesson plans should be provided to the mentor teacher for any assigned student or class you were to prepare (just as you would if you were a full-time teacher at that program).
8. **Punctuality:** Be punctual! Consistent tardiness is inexcusable and unprofessional.
9. **Collegiality:** Establish positive working relationships with all personnel in the field site and with the university supervisor.
10. **Attendance at meetings:** Perform the same teaching and non-teaching duties as the mentor teacher/clinical instructor. This includes attending faculty meetings, parent-teacher conferences, staff development programs, extracurricular functions, etc.
11. **Instruction:** Lesson and unit plans tied to Pennsylvania Chapter 4 Academic Standards and the child's IEP must be prepared and discussed with the mentor teacher prior to implementation. The lesson plans should follow the format given by the University of Pittsburgh or established by the mentor teacher. **No lessons should be taught without a prepared lesson plan.**
12. **Feedback from mentor:** Your mentor teacher is an experienced and certified TVI. Use the feedback offered by the mentor and university supervisor to improve your instruction.
13. **Formal observations:** Schedule formal observation and conference periods with the mentor teacher and university supervisor.
14. **Reflect:** Take time to self-evaluate your lessons on a regular weekly basis and implement the feedback provided by the host teacher and supervisor. Your mentor teacher's weekly observation form has space for your reflection after receiving feedback.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTOR TEACHER

The mentor teacher is an instrumental person in the student teaching triad, for he or she is in constant contact with the student teacher. It is essential that clear, honest communication occur between the student teacher, the mentor teacher/clinical instructor, and the university supervisor, focusing on the development and continuing progress of the skills and dispositions of the student teacher. Here are some suggestions for ensuring a smooth placement:

1. Prior to the arrival of the student teacher, inform the learners that there will be another TEACHER to help. Your students will take the lead from you in how they view and respond to the student teacher.
2. Become acquainted with the student teacher and acknowledge him/her as a professional colleague who has much to contribute to the classroom and the students' experiences.
3. There are three forms that require your signature. A copy of each of these will be uploaded by the student teacher into TaskStream.
 - a. Complete one **written formal observation per week** on the student teacher's performance using the checklist your student teacher will provide.
 - b. Sign your student teacher's **time sheet**.
 - c. In addition, verify the student teacher's **bi-weekly report form**.
4. You are also responsible for a **mid-term and final observations**. Consult with the supervisor in scheduling your completing midterm and final evaluation forms for the student teacher; your student teacher will provide you with the forms to use. The student teacher will upload these to TaskStream, and they will be used by the university supervisor to help determine the student teacher's grade.
5. Familiarize the student teacher with the classroom and school cultures as well as the local community.

6. Orient the student teacher to the curriculum and each student's IEP goals that are the responsibility of the teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI).
7. Clarify the student teacher's roles and responsibilities at the very outset of the practicum and student teaching experiences. Tell the student teacher exactly what is expected and why. Use the University guidelines to insure a gradual phase-in of the student teacher into the placement.
8. Provide ample opportunities to confer with and offer feedback to the student teacher each day. Try to offer feedback in a positive and constructive manner.
9. Becoming a teacher is a gradual process. Provide the student teacher with encouragement and support. Remember this can be an emotional and overwhelming time as the student teacher becomes acclimated to the classroom/caseload, lesson and unit design, caseload management, scheduling, working with families, individual student needs, and simply the excitement and stress that accompany teaching.
10. Engage the student teacher in reflection and self-evaluation. Using questioning, ask the student teacher to describe, evaluate, and modify his/her own teaching performance. The student teacher should be able to summarize supportive and corrective feedback given during any conference and set goals for the next lesson.
11. Confer with the student teacher and the university supervisor regularly concerning the progress of the student teacher.
12. If conflicts or problems arise, discuss them with the student teacher and the university supervisor quickly and honestly.
13. Maintain confidentiality regarding the work of the student teacher.
14. If you support the student teacher's entry into the profession, write a letter of recommendation for his/her University placement file.
15. Direct any concerns as soon as possible to the university supervisor as soon as possible.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR

The university supervisor is a team member who serves as a link between the university and cooperating schools. Your university supervisor may be a program faculty member or an adjunct instructor who is involved in teaching courses in our program. Your supervisor may be a graduate student pursuing a doctoral degree in education, who is a certified and experienced teacher working under the guidance of our full-time faculty. University supervisors will have access to TaskStream to provide feedback and assess the quality of the work uploaded by the student teacher based on the rubrics provided.

The university supervisor works closely with the student teacher and mentor. Your university supervisor will:

1. Interpret University policies, procedures, and requirements to all personnel involved in the student teaching clinical experience.
2. Know the standards (i.e., the criteria) to be used in assessing the student teacher's performance.
3. Observe the student teacher's instruction. Formal and informal data should be recorded on observation forms. To be most effective, this should be done on a regular basis throughout the semester, generally 4–6 times during the student teaching experience. However, if the student teacher is struggling, the university supervisor is to provide more support in and out of the classroom with observations, conferences, etc.
4. Confer with the student teacher following each observation. Share the data with the student teacher and mentor teacher. This will assist the student teacher in evaluating teaching strengths and weaknesses in an on-going manner and developing goals.
5. Vary the types of feedback provided to the student teacher. There are many options: Describe, evaluate, correct, ask clarifying questions, check for understanding, mix and match feedback to fit the student teacher's level of

development, and follow up on previous feedback and goals. Written feedback can also be provided to the student teacher via email to document progress; Midterm and final observation reports will be uploaded to TaskStream.

6. Plan specific areas that will receive attention in subsequent observations.
7. Conduct the periodically scheduled evaluations of the student teacher using the Midterm and Final Pennsylvania Department of Education-430 (formative and summative) forms provided in Canvas and TaskStream.
8. If feasible, conduct group seminars and allow student teachers to exchange ideas, feelings, and perspectives with their peers.
9. Keep the Coordinator of Field Experiences and specialty area program faculty informed of the student teacher's progress at appropriate times. Immediate notification is required when problems begin to surface.
10. If the student teacher needs to be moved to a new site, the university supervisor will remain the supervisor. This will ensure continuity of supervision, feedback, and understanding of progress.

Teaching Competencies

The primary mission of the University of Pittsburgh's teacher education program is to prepare individuals who can and will be exemplary teachers in our schools. Therefore, we have designed our programs so that teacher candidates will demonstrate the following teaching:

- Skills and dispositions for working with diverse and special needs students;
- The ability to map standards (state, national, and content-based) onto lessons and units;
- Knowledge of individual and cultural differences among learners and how these affect instruction and learning;

- The ability to plan and organize intellectually and developmentally appropriate instruction to appropriately challenge and supporting students' learning;
- The professional knowledge and performance skills required to implement best practices for instruction of students with visual impairments;
- Knowledge about and professional performance skills in classroom/behavior management, including the ability to provide supportive learning environments;
- Knowledge about and professional performance skills in appropriate procedures for student evaluation;
- The personal qualities (e.g., communication skills, flexibility, self-confidence, initiative, etc.) associated with effective teaching;
- The attitudes, dispositions, values, and skills required for being a reflective teacher and a self-directed, career-long learner;
- The personal codes of behavior indicative of a responsible member of a learning community.

In addition to these general proficiencies, individual programs have specific, content focused competencies that will be made available to the student teacher, the mentor teacher, and the university supervisor. The competencies for the Vision Studies student teaching program include evidence in five areas related to effective instruction of the Expanded Core Curriculum for students with visual impairments, and supporting the core curriculum through the use of effective accommodations:

1. Planning and preparation
2. Classroom/Learning environment
3. Instructional Delivery
4. Professionalism
5. On-going evaluation and improvement

See the PDE 430 evaluation forms and the rubrics in TaskStream for specific areas of expertise for which evidence will be required.

The Student Teaching Experience

In accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Education guidelines, certification programs at the University of Pittsburgh require a 12-14-week full-time assignment at one school site or multiple placements within the same school or at different school sites. The nature of each student teaching assignment is explained to local school districts when placement requests are made by the field placement coordinator.

Student teaching traditionally enables novice teachers to move through stages of increased responsibility for planning and implementing classroom instruction, being immersed in the work of an experienced TVI.

In addition, it provides opportunities to apply and evaluate theories of instruction and learning taught in university courses, as well as to benefit from the professional expertise and modeling of experienced, tenured teachers in the field. The ideal experience enables students to observe, analyze, start to plan, and then gradually practice teaching methods that are appropriate for specific subjects, grade levels, and/or learner populations.

However, we understand that a number of student teachers in the Vision Studies program are already teaching students with visual impairments with an "emergency certification" issued from PDE. In those cases, Pitt will work closely with the student teacher's employer to ensure that the student teacher is assigned a mentor teacher and has sufficient supervision to ensure that children on the caseload are receiving the instruction that is mandated by their IEPs.

The professional development of student teachers occurs in stages, beginning with observations during the Level 1 practicum for a calendar year prior to student teaching. The process continues with instructional participation and responsibility that gradually increases during the early weeks of a traditional student teaching placement, and then concludes with the student teacher assuming full responsibility for instruction. As noted earlier, student teachers with emergency

who are currently teaching a caseload of students with visual impairments will generally be allowed to keep their current caseload **but must be assigned a mentor teacher who is already a certified TVI.**

For those in a traditional placement, student teaching begins with an observation period during the first week or two of the placement. Ideally, the student teacher begins with activities that involve observations of the mentor teacher, the learners, other classroom teachers and specialists who work with the students, and the overall school environment(s). The following should be accomplished during this time:

- Read the school/district/IU handbook. Become familiar with general policies and procedures governing the professional conduct of teachers.
- Learn the routines for carrying out duties and supervisory assignments.
- Learn the names of students and their annual goals and objectives for vision services. Get to know their abilities, needs, and special talents.
- Observe methods used by the host teacher to create and maintain a supportive, encouraging, attractive, and safe environment.
- Observe how the mentor teacher and other practitioners create a community of learners and manage the learning environment.
- Observe how the mentor teacher carry out instructional duties including organization and providing materials, and creating an effective schedule.

Generally speaking and barring special circumstances, student teachers in a traditional placement should have full control of the caseload no later than the middle of the semester. Longer periods of solo teaching are strongly suggested.

All student teachers are expected to provide detailed lesson plans and instructional materials for formal teaching assignments. Such plans and materials should be presented to the mentor teacher at an agreed upon time before the lesson is to be taught.

It is crucial to note that all student teachers should teach with a prepared lesson plan.

Evaluation of Student Teaching

Student teachers are evaluated in two ways:

1. First, the candidate is evaluated by his or her mentor teacher and university supervisor throughout the placement.

- For student teachers who are already working with an emergency certificate and whose mentor teacher is not on site, establish a system by which the mentor teacher can provide feedback.
- The mentor teacher provides weekly feedback via the Mentor Teacher Observation form;
- The mentor teacher provide biweekly feedback via the Biweekly Summative form that documents the student teacher's growing competence during the placement;
- The university supervisor provides feedback on observations through in-person and electronic meetings (via, Zoom, telephone calls, etc.);
- Formal mid-term and final evaluations will be conducted by both the mentor teacher and the university supervisor.

2. The second way in which the teacher candidate is evaluated is on the Pennsylvania Statewide Evaluation form for Student Professional Knowledge and Practice (PDE 430).

- All candidates are required to collect evidence during the clinical experience to verify that they have demonstrated competencies in the four domains that are included in the PDE 430 Evaluation.
- It is the responsibility of the candidate to develop the electronic portfolio in TaskStream and keep it up to date.
- The supervisor will assess the TaskStream portfolio. Additional information and specific forms are provided in Canvas once students are enrolled in the Level II Student Teaching Practicum course, IL2524.

For other specific procedures related to grading and general policies and

procedures, candidates in the Vision Studies program will follow the guidelines that are explained in this handbook and the University of Pittsburgh Teacher Candidate Handbook.

PDE 430 – VISION STUDIES EDUCATION PROGRAM INDICATORS

I. Planning and Preparation

PDE 430 defines the category of Planning and Preparation as: Student teacher/candidate demonstrate thorough knowledge of content and pedagogical skills in planning and preparation. Student teacher makes plans and sets goals based on the content to be taught/learned, knowledge of assigned students, and the instructional context.

The Student teacher/Candidate's performance appropriately demonstrates:

- Knowledge of content
- Knowledge of pedagogy
- Knowledge of Pennsylvania's K-12 Academic Standards
- Knowledge of students and how to use this knowledge to impart instruction
- Use of resources, materials, or technology available through the school or district
- Instructional goals that show a recognizable sequence with adaptations for individual student needs
- Assessments of student learning aligned to the instructional goals and adapted as required for needs of students with visual impairments
- Use of educational psychological principles/theories in the construction of lesson plans and setting instructional goals

To demonstrate your competency in the areas of *Planning & Preparation*, *Instructional Delivery*, and *Professionalism* the following pieces of evidence are required to evaluate the above performance indicators of this category:

- Develop student demographic sheets: use pseudonyms for the students and classroom teachers (for confidentiality), school, grade, pathology with visual acuities, IEP goals. Also include anecdotal information such as the name of principal and secretary, student interests, and other relevant information that may be helpful to you to learn the school and student.
- Observation of Student 1 and 2 (if in traditional setting with mentor teacher)
- Master Schedule
- Weekly Schedule (see Weekly Schedule template in Canvas)
- Interpretation of an eye report
- Educational Functional Vision Evaluation
- Learning Media Assessment
- Individualized Education Plan goals and objectives
- Development, planning, and instruction of a unit plan
- Presentation of an in-service to school staff, educational team, or family members
- Evidence of progress monitoring
- Evidence of professionalism (e.g., resume, code of ethics, professional references, participation in professional development, and a contact log)
- Include 1-2 page narratives for planning, classroom/learning environment, instructional delivery, and professionalism.

Summative and Formative Observation forms required:

- Midterm
 - University and Mentor Teacher Observations
 - Lesson Plans
 - Instructional Planning and Preparation forms (matching submitted Lesson Plans)
 - Post-conference reflection including goals for professional growth

- Final
 - University and Mentor Teacher Observations
 - Lesson Plans
 - Instructional Planning and Preparation forms (matching submitted Lesson Plans)
 - Use of Resources (web sites, curriculums, books, etc.)
 - Post-conference reflection

Removal from a Student Teaching Site

Occasionally, a candidate may be removed from a school site. This request, when made by the mentor teacher or another representative of the clinical site, will be honored immediately, regardless of the reason given.

The university supervisor, candidate, Clinical Placement Coordinator, Director of Teacher Education or departmental faculty may also make requests for a candidate's removal from a clinical site. If such a request is made by a University representative, it should be after a reasonable attempt at addressing the issue(s) at hand (with increased observations, work plans with clear expectations for candidate improvement, and increased communication between the university and the school site when possible).

If a teacher education candidate is removed from their site for any reason, he/she is not to contact any site personnel (mentor teacher, principal, etc.) for any reason following notification of removal. University faculty or staff will obtain the candidate's personal belongings that remain at the site after removal and will return any district items that remain with the candidate.

The University of Pittsburgh reserves the right to decline re-placement to a candidate who has been removed from his or her placement site. In such circumstances, a candidate would be unable to complete the requirements for

teacher certification at the University of Pittsburgh, which may also negatively impact the candidate's ability to complete his or her degree program.

Any teacher candidate who is removed from a clinical site will not be permitted to register for any further university coursework requiring field experience.

General Policies and Procedures

A number of policies and procedures have been established to serve the best interests of the candidate, the mentor, the school site/district, and the university supervisor. These guidelines are designed to enrich the candidate teaching experience for all parties involved, including the children and youth who attend the schools where the practicum takes place. Many local school districts have additional standards to regulate the personal and professional conduct of candidates. If and when the candidate is confused about whether to follow Pitt's guidelines or those of the local school, he or she should check with the mentor and university supervisor. These are guidelines to follow, in extenuating circumstances, please consult with the Clinical Placement Coordinator regarding individual issues or circumstances.

Attire and Appearance

Professional attire and appearance are expected at all times. Pitt does not require a standard uniform for candidates, but most cooperating schools have policies about dress and grooming. The instructor and building principal are the best sources of advice on these matters; do not simply assume by following the lead of others in the building. Business dress is most appropriate. Tattoos should be covered. Piercings other than in the ear should be removed, if they are visible. Please distinguish yourself from your students by your attire.

Email Policies

In communicating by email with faculty, instructors, or professionals at the field site, it is essential that the emails are courteous and show awareness that you are communicating with professionals. Email messages should not suggest an informal relationship with a professor, parent, professional colleague, supervisor, mentor, etc., but rather should respect professional protocol in writing. It is a professionalism expectation that all teacher education candidates will return university and site-based emails within 24 hours during the school week and within 48 hours on the weekend.

Email is never to be assumed to be an official correspondence. You may not convey absences to the school site via email but should phone the mentor teacher personally to discuss the nature of the absence. Also, remember that email is not confidential correspondence. When you write an email, remember that it may be saved, distributed, made public – with or without your knowledge.

Social Media

Teachers are often held to higher standards than the general public; therefore it is important for all teachers to know their public internet presence. After a candidate determines his/her public internet presence, any potentially offensive language or pictures should be removed. While the candidate may not consider content offensive or questionable, consider that a potential administrator, colleague, parent, or student may be viewing and judging the content. Prior to entering a teacher education program, candidates should ensure their social media presence is set to private.

Also, teacher candidates are not to interact with students on social media, through personal email, cell phone calls, or text messages. All electronic communication should occur through district or university email or district approved social media accounts. Communication through the phone should be conducted on district telephones. No exceptions will be made, and removal from the program may result from breaching this policy.

Lastly, teacher candidates are not permitted to post any pictures of students, school activities, or identifiable student work on social media; nor can these be

used as part of a portfolio for hiring purposes. Teacher candidates are not permitted to post about their student teaching or internship experience on social media. Students and school sites should not be identified publicly in any way.

Student Confidentiality & Contact

Teacher candidates are not permitted to interact with students outside of the clinical placement. Students should not have contact with students or families outside of official school communication carried out via district or Pitt email or the district phone service. Personal relationships between teacher candidates and students are prohibited.

You are responsible to maintain the confidentiality of all the students you work with in field placements related to your coursework at the University of Pittsburgh. When writing or doing assignments for courses or speaking about your field experience and the students you work with, use pseudonyms (not initials) for students', teachers' and schools' names. In public, it is your responsibility to keep written assignments and any other materials bearing the names of students, teachers or staff secure from the view of others.

In addition, you are responsible to maintain the confidentiality of students in your school sites. You should only speak about students with other school personnel who are directly involved with the student. This may include your mentor teacher, school support staff, academic support teams, administration, etc. No teacher candidate should speak about students in shared spaces (teacher work room, lunch rooms, etc.) as confidentiality in shared spaces cannot be assumed.

Teacher candidates and teachers are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of all students they work with. No teacher candidate should speak about a student's IEP, 504 plan, work with a guidance counselor/social worker, immigration status, work with CYS, etc. in front of other students or school personnel. All teacher candidates should seek the guidance of their mentor teacher and supervisor in regards to student confidentiality and how best to support individual students to maintain confidentiality and provide the best support for all students.

Student Video/Audio Release Form

Dear [Parent/Guardian],

I have enrolled this school year in a program at the University of Pittsburgh to enhance my skills as an educator. My coursework requires that short video and/or audio recordings of lessons taught in your child's class be submitted. Although the video/audio recordings involve both the teacher and various students, the primary focus is on the teacher's instruction, not on the students in the class. In the course of recording, your child may appear/be heard on the recording. Also, at times during the year, I may be asked to submit samples of student work as evidence of teaching practice, and that work may include some of your child's work. No student's name will appear on any materials that are submitted.

The University of Pittsburgh may use and distribute my video/audio recording(s), my comments, and my classroom materials for assessment, professional development, and accreditation purposes. So, for example, the recordings might be discussed in a class for future teachers, and accrediting agencies might check to see that we have such discussions, but the recording will not be displayed on a website or otherwise distributed to the general public. The form below will be used to document your permission for these activities and limited uses.

Sincerely,

Video Recording and Student Work Permission Slip

Student Name: _____

Teacher Name: _____

School: _____

School Address: _____

I am the parent/legal guardian of the child named above. I have received and read your letter regarding the program of study in which you participating at the University of Pittsburgh, and agree to the following (please mark below in the box that corresponds):

I DO give permission to you to include my child's image on video and/or audio recording as he or she participates in a class and/or to reproduce materials that my child may produce as part of classroom activities. No last names will appear on any materials submitted by the teacher.

I DO NOT give permission to video or audio-record my child or to reproduce materials that my child may produce as part of classroom activities.

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

Print Parent or Guardian Name: _____

Date: _____