

# University of West Georgia

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**



## Field Experiences Handbook

**Policies and Procedures**  
*Academic Year 2025-2026*

*Developing Educators for School Improvement*  
*The University System of Georgia \* Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution*

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## Welcome from the Dean

Welcome to the College of Education at the University of West Georgia! As the largest producer of educators in the state, we are proud that our graduates are making a big impact throughout Georgia as teachers, school leaders, counselors, speech-language pathologists, instructional technology specialists, and sports management professionals. They are exciting their students with cutting-edge technologies and leading efforts to improve educational policy and quality.

Throughout your career, the College of Education will be here for you – whether you are just starting your career journey or are a seasoned professional. We have classes at all levels, from undergraduate through doctoral study, and many programs are offered in a variety of formats including face-to-face, hybrid, and online. We continually upgrade our technology and curriculum to keep up with educational trends and ensure we are addressing real educational challenges.

I hope you can tell that the College of Education is on the move – it is where *passion* and *professionalism* comes together!

## Preface

The primary function of the Office of Field Experiences is generating professional connections between candidates and our partnering districts by finding quality field placement opportunities for future certified educators, our valued UWG candidates. Perceptions may differ greatly among these groups as to the best way to prepare **candidates\*** to become effective teachers. These varying perceptions include: (a) teacher education faculty whose focus includes subject matter concentrations, but whose emphasis is typically of the pedagogical and field experiences connections among them; (b) other university faculty whose focus is on content acquisition and the development of a solid knowledge base with little pedagogical preparation or field experiences; (c) public schools whose focus is to support the development of performance proficiency of a potential teacher and to provide valuable collaborative input through partner school activities; (d) the state certification agency whose focus is on individuals meeting certain criteria for certification purposes; (e) candidates whose focus is the best placement site for personal development; (f) accrediting agencies whose focus is on ensuring that programs meet standards of quality for educator preparation. An effective interface of the various groups engaged in teacher education is necessary if successful field experiences are to occur in all programs. Keys to this effective interface are communication and collaboration between the OFE and districts on behalf of our candidates.

Communication helps to ensure that all constituencies involved and/or affected by the program's operations are apprised of the current program in place and how it functions. To enable effective communication, the Office of Field Experiences maintains a publication: ***Educator Preparation Handbook***, containing policies and procedures, with particular attention to the capstone Internship experience.

**\*Candidates(s) means teacher candidates(s).** The term *candidate* is used throughout this handbook to refer to teacher education students; the term *student* refers to public school students. The use of these terms more clearly allows distinction between university students and pk-12 students. Use of the term(s) is also aligned with terminology of National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC).

As this handbook contains information and procedures in narrative forms, as well as formally adhered to, *all policies are indicated by italicized type.*

## TERMINOLOGY

The following are terms that will prove helpful for understanding the content of this handbook:

Candidate: A teacher education student.

Cooperating School System: A school district that cooperates with the university in providing field experience sites according to formal agreement.

Cooperating School: An accredited school that provides placement for the candidate.

Accessible accreditation:

- The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools ; [Institutions - SACSCOC](#)
- The Georgia Accrediting Commission; [Member Schools | Georgia Accrediting Commission](#)
- The Georgia Association of Christian Schools; [Georgia Association of Christian Schools | GAPSAC](#)
- The Association of Christian Schools International; [Find a School - Georgia | ACSI](#)
- The Georgia Private School Accreditation Counsel; or [Georgia Private School Accreditation Council Members](#)
- The Southern Association of Independent Schools [Member School Directory - SAIS](#)
- Bright from the Start Early Care and Learning Program Licensure; [BFTS Program Directory](#)

Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs): programs designed to prepare individuals for teaching or other educational leadership roles.

Field/Program Coordinator: Department faculty member assigned to ensure alignment of field experiences and course content.

Intern: The university student teacher in an internship Field Experience course as noted in the university course catalogue.

Internship: The full-time, semester long teaching experience under the direct supervision of a university/site-based supervisor and a supervising clinical educator within an accredited school.

Job-Embedded/Employment Type A or B:

- **Type A**: Student has a paid position as a paraprofessional or long-term sub within a class that aligns with their program, allowing them to use their employment as their required field experience. This position requires OFE director's approval
- **Type B**: Student has a paid position as a full-time educator under a provisional/non-renewable certificate applied for by their district upon hiring. This position must be in alignment with the student's program. This can be verified prior to applying for FE by logging into MyPSC and viewing the provisional certificate type. The type should be the same name as the program the candidate is completing.

Mentor: The teacher of record assigned to an employee (paraprofessional, long-term sub, or provisionally certified educator) in an accredited pk-12 school who meets the PSC requirements for supervisory responsibilities (3+ years of certified experience in the program in which the candidate is seeking certification **or** leadership certification) who agree to monitor and observe the student during

student teaching or internship within their job-embedded experience.

Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC or PSC): The state agency that administers policies pertaining to the preparation and certification of education personnel. The office also establishes and enforces standards of competent professional performance and ethical conduct for educators in Georgia. The website for the PSC is <http://www.gapsc>.

Site Administrator: The principal or person designated by the principal to coordinate field experience matters at the school site.

Supervising Clinical Educator (formerly Cooperating Teacher): The teacher of record in an accredited pk-12 school who meets the PSC requirements for supervisory responsibilities (3+ years of certified experience in the program in which the candidate is seeking certification **or** leadership certification) who agrees to monitor and observe a traditionally placed student teacher or intern.

System Coordinator: The person designated by the superintendent to coordinate field experience matters within a school system. This person should **only** be communicated with through the university. Students at **no time** shall reach out to the System Coordinator.

Traditional Placement: A placement arranged by the university on behalf of the student that satisfies PSC requirements for field experience and observation hours towards their program completion; unpaid placement.

University/Site-based Supervisor: The University of West Georgia representative who is responsible for supervising candidates.



## **SECTION 1: FIELD EXPERIENCES**

### **1.1 Types of Experiences**

Field experiences are an integral component of educator preparation programs (EPPs). Field experience provides productive and structured learning opportunities. Experiences are grounded in research that incorporates classroom practice throughout the preparation program. The goals of the field experiences at the University of West Georgia (UWG), College of Education (COE) include providing opportunities for the teacher education candidate to:

- a. Identify, observe and study relevant growth, developmental patterns, and behavior characteristics of children at varying stages of maturation.
- b. Observe differing personalities and methods of teaching both in and outside the candidate's area of specialization.
- c. Participate in planning, conducting, and evaluating learning experiences.
- d. Study the relationship of the teacher to other teachers, students, parents, administrators, other school professionals, and community members involved in the school program.
- e. Increase participation in non-instructional activities.

UWG has three basic levels of field experiences that allow the candidate to develop professionally in the knowledge, skill, and dispositions. <https://www.westga.edu/academics/education/ofe.php>

#### **Introductory experiences**

Entry level experiences that primarily consist of systematically structured observation and guided interaction with students in a classroom. They are a required component in each introductory course. Activities include guided observations in classroom settings, viewing videotapes of classroom settings, and reflecting on classroom observations. These experiences introduce the candidate to the contemporary classroom setting and help the candidate decide whether to pursue a career.

#### **Mid-level experiences**

Associated with methods of classes and focus on the knowledge and skills addressed in course objectives. Activities are designed to allow the candidate to begin developing teaching competencies. Time required in schools, qualifications of supervising clinical educator/mentor, and assessment techniques vary from program to program.

#### **Internship**

15-week student teaching, or capstone, experience. There are two major purposes for an internship. The first purpose is to provide time in a realistic setting for candidates to implement skills and knowledge gained in their course work and to demonstrate the professional dispositions outlined. The second major purpose is to assess the candidate's readiness for entering the teaching profession. Many candidates view internships as the most significant learning experience in their professional preparation, and many school administrators consider the internship assessment as the most important document in the portfolio of a teacher candidate.

## 1.2 Procedures for Placement Requests

### Undergraduate Program

Approval of application for placement for field experiences and internship is based upon the following:

- a. Admission to the Teacher Education Program, or approval by your program advisor.
- b. A grade point average of 2.5 overall in academic work completed for Physical Education majors; a grade point average of 2.7 overall in academic work completed for Early Childhood, Secondary, Art, Music, Foreign Language, Special Education.
- c. Successful completion of all field experiences undertaken prior to internship, including exhibiting responsible professional behavior at field placement sites and in interactions with peers, faculty, students, parents, and other school professionals.
- d. A grade of *C* or better must be earned in the teaching field (content), professional education, and Focus Area Field of Study (FOS) courses for the teaching field. If a grade lower than a *C* is earned, the course must be repeated and a grade of *C* or better must be earned before further consideration is given to a teacher candidate's eligibility for internship.

An application for field experiences (FE Application /Qualtrics form) placement must be submitted to the Office of Field Experiences (OFE) by the established priority submission to ensure the most flexibility for placement options across all our partnering districts. Students who miss the priority submission date can submit a general application as close to the priority submission date as possible; however, several districts *do not accept placement requests after deadlines set by their district. This deadline is not negotiable and means the OFE will not be able to place students within that district.* Any application submitted after the priority due date may result in a delay in placement. Specific dates for application submission may be obtained from each area office in the College of Education, the COE Advisement Center, and from the Office of Field Experiences.

### Graduate Program

Approval of application for placement for practicum or internship is based upon the following:

- a. Completion of all certification courses, except internship.
- b. Achievement of grades of B or better in each course **or** an overall average of 3.0 on all graduate level course work attempted applicable to the field of certification; and earn a C or better in each undergraduate course.
- c. Acceptance of the Teacher Education Program
- d. Proof of Student Liability Insurance

### Traditional Placement Procedures

Every effort is made to place candidates in situations that will encourage optimal professional and personal growth as prospective educators. The assignment is made by the Office of Field Experiences in collaboration with the cooperating school system and the program coordinator, university/school-based supervisor, or course instructor. The OFE uses the information provided in the candidate's field experience application to find the most suitable placement for the semester. The OFE looks at the candidate's entire program from entry to field experience through graduation and forecasts future placements based on proximity, report day schedules, and professional growth opportunities. Candidates typically travel the furthest during their first placement because it is the shortest. The last placement is typically the closest placement. These goals are based, however, on availability. The OFE will strive to place students within 50 miles around the candidates provided address. The OFE also aims to place traditional candidates within at least two districts during their field experience.

Any requests for a change of placement must be initiated by completing the Hardship Placement Change Request form: <https://www.westga.edu/academics/education/ofe.php>

Assignments, except those in Educational Leadership, are initiated by requests from the Office of Field Experiences to superintendents or coordinators designated by the school system. All assignments are arranged to be consistent with policies, procedures, and negotiated agreements in place among cooperating schools and the University.

The OFE releases placements to students by *county* in order they are received back from the partnering districts. Students within the same cohort may receive their placement information at different times. Placement confirmations may be delayed depending on several factors, including late FE application submission, scheduled district breaks and holidays, and district set placement release procedures.

### General Guidelines

- a. Traditional candidates will not be assigned to the schools from which they graduated or where they attended during the last ten years.
- b. Traditional candidates will not be assigned to schools where relatives are staff members or students.
- c. Traditional candidates are assigned to one supervising clinical educator/mentor; two supervising clinical educators/mentors may be assigned by the partnering district, but both SCE/Mentor will work in tandem with each other to guide the candidate (the candidate will report to the same class each day). This regulation does not preclude the assigning of the candidate to other teachers for special experiences or as a member of a team.

**Restriction:** At no time shall a candidate contact these districts to complete observation hours: Gwinnett, Cherokee, Dekalb, Fayette, Cobb or Bibb. Failure to follow this procedure may result in removal and/or a suspension from your placement/observation hours. The application provides some additional information. If you have questions, contact the OFE.

It is essential that no one from UWG creates hardship or undue pressure on local school system faculty and administrators in arranging a placement. Failure to follow this procedure may result in a professional growth conference with the Director of the Office of Field Experiences.

An important consideration in making field placements is the need for students to experience diversity in the school setting. The Office of Field Experiences takes this, as well as the requirement for experience in a variety of grade levels, into account when making placement decisions. GaPSC-approved Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) shall ensure candidates complete supervised field experiences consistent with the grade levels of the certification sought.

- Birth through Kindergarten programs: Field experiences are required at three (3) age levels: ages 0 to 2, ages 3 to 4, and 5 (kindergarten)
- Elementary Education programs (P-5): Field experiences are required in three (3) grade levels: PK-K, 1-3, and 4-5
- Middle grades: Field experiences are required in (2) grade levels: 4-5 and 6-8.
- Certifications for P-12 programs: Field experiences are required in four (4) grade levels: PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12
- Secondary Education programs: (6-12): Field experiences in two (2) grade levels 6-8 and 9-12. (GaPSC Requirements 505-3-.01 (3)(e)(iii))

<https://www.gapsc.com/rules/current/educatorpreparation/505-3-.01.pdf>

Assignments are generally made with only Georgia public schools and area partner schools. The number of candidates needing field experience at any given time and the number of appropriate placements available control the distribution of candidates. University faculty collaborate in the selection of specific schools to be requested each semester. A match of the candidate's professional needs with the appropriate site and availability are overriding considerations in the final decision regarding a placement site.

The following serve as general guidelines in selection of Georgia cooperating schools:

- a. The school personnel support the teacher education program and are willing to enter a collaborative partnership with UWG in the professional development of teacher candidates.
- b. The school administration is interested in maximizing the professional growth of its staff and the development of the school program.
- c. The cooperating school exemplifies high standards of teaching and learning.
- d. The cooperating school has students, parents, faculty, and administrators who are enthusiastic about schooling.
- e. The school is accredited. *See terminology for public and private school's accreditation*
- f. The supervising clinical educator/mentor holds a Level 4 or higher certificate in his/her area of preparation.
- g. The school does not prohibit students from attending based on race, gender, religion, nationality, or academic ability, and it supports students with special needs.
- h. The school environment and assigned classroom fall within the "norm" to provide the candidate with a realistic internship experience for his/her area of preparation as it relates to certification.
- i. The school's major curriculum focuses on academic subject matter and is aligned with or like the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards or other standards as prescribed by the Georgia Department of Education.

Supervising clinical educators/mentors are selected in a process that involves the university, school system administrators, and cooperating school administrators. The following serve as guidelines for the selection. The supervising clinical educator/mentor:

- a. Must express an interest and desire to collaborate with the teacher candidate and faculty.
- b. Must have a valid clear renewable professional certificate in the field in which the candidate is preparing to teach; for supervision of speech/language pathology candidates, the supervising (cooperating) pathologist/educator must hold a Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC).
- c. Must have at least three years of successful teaching experience on a professional certificate. For interns, supervising clinical educator/mentor must have at least three years of successful teaching experience on a clear professional renewable certificate.
- d. Should be recognized for excellence in teaching and the ability to work with others.
- e. Must be recommended by the school principal.
- f. Must possess effective mentoring and supervisory skills.
- g. Must have an instructional load that is realistic and reflects an appropriate cross section of the student population. The placement must reflect the certificate field of the intern.

The traditional classroom setting is preferred. Teachers involved in nontraditional environments (Special Instruction Assistance, Early Intervention Program) may serve as excellent role models; however, it is important during the field experiences that candidates develop a familiarity with the traditional classroom, although the environment may vary from school to school.

The principal, supervising clinical educator/mentor, and university/site-based supervisor decide what is best for the teacher and the candidate for whom that teacher is responsible. Most supervising (cooperating) teachers work with one candidate during the academic year.

### **1.3 Job Embedded Field Experience**

#### **Policy Statement Candidates Seeking Job-embedded Field Experience with a Position as Long-term Sub or Paraprofessional (Employment Type A)**

*Candidates entering our initial certification programs after July 31, 2005, will be limited*

*to internships only in those grades and fields appropriate to the program in which they are enrolled. These grades are pk-12. These fields are Special Education General Curriculum or Adapted Curriculum, Secondary Education (in chosen content area), and Elementary Education. This means to qualify for job-embedded internship, candidates must be in the appropriate preparation program, hired with an appropriate non-renewable certificate, and teaching in the appropriate grade level and teaching field. In addition, initial non-renewable certification candidates applying for internship will be required to submit the following:*

- a. Field Experiences application
- b. Fully completed mentor document (uploaded to Field Experiences application)
  - This document requires the candidate to provide:
    - i. their preservice license number, which the OFE will verify during processing to ensure the certificate is in the same field the candidate is enrolled in
    - ii. observation hours request *for students employed in special districts (more information can be found under Observation Hours for Job-embedded Candidates-Requirements)*
    - iii. mentor information and credentials, which the OFE will verify during processing to ensure the certificate is in the same field the candidate is enrolled in

**Policy Statement Candidates Holding Non-Renewable Certification seeking Job-embedded Field Experience (Employment Type B).**

*Candidates entering our initial certification programs after July 31, 2005, will be limited to internships only in those grades and fields appropriate to the program in which they are enrolled. These grades are pk-12. These fields are Special Education General Curriculum or Adapted Curriculum, Secondary Education (in chosen content area), and Elementary Education. This means to qualify for job-embedded internship, candidates must be in the appropriate preparation program, hired with an appropriate non-renewable certificate, and teaching in the appropriate grade level and teaching field. In addition, initial non-renewable certification candidates applying for internship will be required to submit the following:*

- a. Field Experiences application
- b. Fully completed mentor document (uploaded to Field Experiences application)
  - This document requires the candidate to provide:
    - i. their provisional license number, which the OFE will verify during processing to ensure the certificate is in the same field the candidate is enrolled in
    - ii. observation hours request *for students employed in special districts (more information can be found below under Observation Hours for Job-embedded Candidates-Requirements)*
    - iii. mentor information and credentials, which the OFE will verify during processing to ensure the certificate is in the same field the candidate is enrolled in.

**Observation Hours for Job-embedded Candidates**

Graduate candidates need to complete 10 observation hours in each grade band within their program field. Candidates who are employed do not need to complete hours within the grade band in which they are

employed.

*Requirements:*

SPED General Curriculum (hours must be in a collaborate or resource classroom): 10 hours in pk-2, 10 hours in 3-5, 10 hours in 6-8, and 10 hours in 9-12.

SPED Adapted Curriculum (hours must be in a self-contained classroom): 10 hours in pk-2, 10 hours in 3-5, 10 hours in 6-8, and 10 hours in 9-12.

SEED: 10 hours in 6-8, and 10 hours in 9-12

Students may request observation hours in their own district through principals **if not employed in a special district** (Bibb, Cherokee, DeKalb, Gwinnett, Cobb and Fayette). Students employed in a special district will request observation hours through the OFE using page two of the mentor document, which is submitted through the Field Experience application.

Students will likely need to request time off to complete the required observation hours. This is based on your district. The OFE suggests that students complete 10 hours of observation per semester of field experience.

Visit the OFE website for examples of completed documents and email templates for requesting observation hours in non-special districts.

**Restriction:** At no time shall a candidate contact these districts to complete observation hours: Gwinnett, Cherokee, DeKalb, Fayette, Cobb or Bibb. **Failure to follow this procedure may result in removal and/or a suspension from your placement/observation hours.** The application provides some additional information. If you have questions, contact the OFE.

**Candidates should monitor CourseDen for announcements regarding dates, times, and locations for orientation.**

**Internship orientation is typically held the week before or the week classes begin because interns report to their placements on the first day of classes. Please do not plan trips or appointments during these times**

## **System Agreements**

The University of West Georgia has a written agreement with each school system where candidates are placed. Specific procedures in obtaining approval for individual placements vary from system to system and are dependent upon variables such as system policy, size, and security needs.

## 1.4 Field Experiences and Internship

Each program involves several field experiences (usually referred to as Blocks or Practica) and a capstone experience (Internship). Candidates are responsible for obtaining transportation or making their own travel arrangements to the assigned field experience throughout the program.

### Application Submission Dates

Application/enrollment for field placements for all practicum, internship, and block courses must be completed through an established form released from the Office of Field Experiences. Field Experiences applications are due the semester prior to enrollment.

**Priority Submission for Fall Field Experience: third Monday of March**

**Priority Submission for Spring Field Experience: third Monday of October**

The General Submission Application opens the day after the Priority Submission Application closes. It is imperative that students submit their application as soon as possible to ensure efficient placing procedures can be followed.

### Internship and Practicum Fee Policy

*Each student enrolled in undergraduate courses will vary (over the course of the program). The funds will also be used for costs associated with field experiences such as evaluation materials and supervision travel. Should a student drop the course, the university's refund policy will apply. This fee is associated with these courses:*

*ART 4011*

*ECED 3282, 4283, 4284, 4286, 4287, 4288*

*FORL 4501, 4502, 4586*

*MUSC 3900, 4000, 4011, 4021, 4186, 4187*

*PHED 3670, 3671, 3675, 4686*

*SEED 4271L, 4238L (ELA) or 4243L (History) or 4240 or 4242 or 4243, 4286,*

*SPED 3750, 3751, 3752, 3753, 4751 or 4752, 4786, 4787*

*SPMG 4686*

*Each student enrolled in a graduate internship or practicum course will be charged a \$50.00 per credit hour fee. These funds will be used to fund supervision of these internships or practica. This fee is assessed each time a student is enrolled in one of these courses. Should a student drop the internship or practicum, the university's refund policy will apply. This fee is associated with these courses:*

*CEPD 6182, 6185, 6186, 6187, 6188, 6189, 8190, 8191*

*ECED 6288*

*SEED 6260, 7288*

*SLPA 6794, 6796*

*SPED 6766, 6776, 6792, 6793*

## 1.5 Pre-Service Certificate and Criminal History Background Check



### **Teacher Candidates - Pre-Service Certificate Requirement**

The Pre-Service teaching certificate is part of Georgia's tiered teacher certification system and is required for anyone participating in field experiences and student teaching in Georgia schools. It is designed to assure the safety of school children; provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice/demonstrate knowledge and skills; standardize the criminal background check process across the state for pre-service teachers, eliminating those who are not eligible or suited to the profession; and assist pre-service educators in understanding the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators and hold them accountable under the Code.

Application for the Pre-Service Certificate is included in the application process for admission to teacher education. Once your academic advisor has confirmed all requirements have been met for admission to teacher education, you will receive via email a checklist of instructions for applying for admission to teacher education, field experiences, and the Pre-Service Certificate.

**\*PLEASE NOTE: ALL undergraduate candidates, ALL candidates hired as paraprofessionals or long-term subs, and all MAT candidates who do not hold a provisional certificate are REQUIRED by the GaPSC to hold a preservice certificate. Candidates who do not meet this requirement may NOT enter public schools for field experience until the appropriate certificate is issued by GaPSC.**

### **Counseling Candidates Background Check Requirement**

All counseling candidates must have a criminal history background check completed and submitted to the Office of Field Experiences in order to receive an FE Code. **Without an FE Code, candidates cannot register for courses.** Criminal history background checks may be completed by any government law enforcement agency.

### **Self-Reporting for All Candidates**

*Please note: Candidates are required by the GaPSC to self-report any incidents of unethical behavior. It is recommended that any questionable incident be self-reported to the University of West Georgia College of Education Office of Field Experiences. This will ensure candidates are reporting appropriately and accurately. Candidates who fail to self-report may be dropped from the program.*

If at any time during the program, evidence arises to substantiate that a candidate has a criminal record, his or her placement will be suspended pending investigation. The candidate will be notified. **Under no circumstances will any candidate be considered for field placements or be permitted to begin field experience until the above requirements are met.**

## **1.6 Assessment of Candidate Learning**

The College of Education (COE) is committed to assessing the knowledge, skill, and dispositions of candidates seeking degrees and other credentials. We do so through a comprehensive assessment system designed to collect, analyze, and maintain information about the achievements of our candidates. Data collected through the COE assessment system are used to improve educational programs, thereby improving the knowledge and skill of our graduates. The assessment system documents what is being accomplished to candidates, faculty, staff, and other professional partners and stakeholders. Importantly, the data are collected, analyzed, and reported in such a way that external accreditors such as NCATE and the GaPSC can verify that graduates from the COE at the University of West Georgia possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be effective in their chosen fields.



The cycle of assessment begins with goals.

*What do we want candidates to know and be able to do, and in some instance believe, because of participating in COE programs?*

Each program in the COE has specific expected learning outcomes needed by effective educators and other professionals in their respective disciplines. Program faculty have developed or identified key assessments to help identify patterns and trends of achievement, strengths and weaknesses, related to these outcomes. The assessment data are reported to program faculty each year and serve as the basis for new or revised goals directed at program improvement.

This system parallels the models widely used in schools. Standardized and non-standardized assessments are administered to students, and the results of these assessments are then examined at classroom and school levels to identify areas that should be strengthened.

To manage the large amounts of assessment data for each program, the COE uses data collected through CourseDen and Qualtrics.

## **SECTION 2: CANDIDATES' PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **2.1 Standards of Conduct**

Candidates must follow all policies and procedures of the cooperating school. As representatives of both the university and the teaching profession, candidates are expected to maintain high standards of personal and professional ethics and are expected to adhere to Georgia's *Code of Ethics for Educators*. This code governs the professional conduct of educators in Georgia and is introduced in each introductory course. It is discussed several times during the teacher preparation program. Copies of the *Code of Ethics* may be obtained from the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) website, <http://www.gapsc.com/Ethics/CodeOfEthics.aspx>.

**NOTE: If a candidate is asked by a school or district representative (principal or district administrator) to leave the school and vacate the placement due to professional conduct or egregious instructional issues, OFE and the COE are NOT bound to seek a new placement for the candidate in the current semester. If the Professional Growth Plan Team determines a new placement is necessary, then and only then will a new placement in the current semester be sought. If a candidate is asked to vacate a placement for a second time, removal from the program is within the authority of the Program Coordinator and removal from the field is within the authority of the Director of the Office of Field Experiences.**

**The above note also applies to job-embedded MAT candidates.** Upon resignation or request to resign in lieu of termination, candidates **MUST** immediately notify their Program Coordinator and the Office of Field Experiences. After reviewing information and any documentation, the Program Coordinator and the Director of the Office of Field Experiences will determine if a traditional placement may be sought for the remainder of the semester, if the field experience will be considered incomplete, or if program dismissal is the appropriate resolution.

#### **Dress Code**

Candidates should be dressed and groomed according to professional standards. They must identify and comply with the adopted dress code of the assigned school. To ensure that candidates understand the dress code, expectations are clarified during class instruction prior to candidates reporting to schools. If there is doubt about appropriate dress codes, candidates should check with the supervising clinical educator/mentor.

## 2.2 Attendance, Punctuality, and Transportation

Regular attendance and punctuality are mandatory. It is important that candidates demonstrate an understanding of the importance of regular and punctual attendance. The candidate is expected to sign in and out at the school as required by the school and his/her program. If a candidate does not report when expected, this occurrence is deemed an absence. In cases of illness or emergencies, the candidate must notify the supervising clinical educator/mentor, the university/site-based supervisor, and the school's Office of Attendance. Irregular attendance and poor punctuality will be addressed immediately by the supervising clinical educator/mentor and university/site-based supervisor.

**More than three absences may result in a grade of unsatisfactory, and interns/candidates may have to repeat field experience or internship the next semester. If a candidate must repeat the field experiences, it will delay graduation.**

**The candidate is responsible for obtaining his/her transportation or making his/her own travel arrangements to the assigned field experiences throughout the program.**

## 2.3 Relationships

Professional acquaintances and contacts, formal and informal, are important to the transition from student to teacher. Although many school settings are conducive to interesting and professional discussions, candidates should exercise respectful discretion when voicing their personal views. Confidentiality is expected in all professional discussions. These discussions may give candidates access to confidential student and/or school information. It is important that this information be used only in professional circumstances. (See Section 2.7.)

## 2.4 Teaching During the Absence of Assigned Clinical Educator/Mentor

During the field experience/internship, there may be an occasion when the supervising clinical educator/mentor is absent from school. Sometimes, when this absence occurs, the candidate is called on to teach. ***State mandates require the presence of a certified teacher or a system authorized substitute.*** With one of those individuals in the room, and depending on the level of self-confidence, the candidate may accept responsibility for instruction. However, the authorized substitute or certified teacher holds ultimate responsibility for supervision of the students when the supervising clinical educator/mentor is not present.

If a student is offered a long-term sub position, they must notify the Office of Field Experience and get permission from a director to accept *if the candidate aims to use the position as a job-embedded field experience*. To support partner districts, OFE may work with districts and candidates to find appropriate solutions to balance the needs of candidates, certification requirements, and district/school staffing needs.

**NOTE: Requests for candidates to serve as long-term substitutes MUST originate with school or district leadership and must be communicated directly to the Director of Field Experiences by the principal or district office administrator.**

## 2.5 Reimbursement

Candidates may not receive compensation for duties that are a part of the field experience/internship unless directly authorized by the University, the College of Education, and the Office of Field Experiences through established procedures, processes, or programs. This criterion covers any work performed with students or any other aspect of school responsibility. (See Section 2.5.)

## 2.6 Confidentiality

Under the guidance of the supervising clinical educator/mentor, the candidate may have access to student records and/or other school records. It is important that this information be used in a professional manner and remain confidential. The candidate is reminded that the confidentiality of all student records is protected by the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA). ***Under no circumstances can information be released to or discussed with any unauthorized person.***

## **2.7 Statutes in the Classroom**

The traditional candidate has no legal, professional, or certificated status in school classrooms in Georgia. No legal action is on record that has established precedents regarding the clarification of this status. At all times, the supervising clinical educator/mentor maintains legal responsibility for pupils in his or her classroom. ***Candidates are reminded, however, that they can be held liable for negligent or intentional acts or omissions that result in harm to children in their care.***

In the beginning stages of the candidate's instruction, the supervising clinical educator/mentor should observe the entire time. From these observations, the supervising clinical educator/mentor will be in a better position to nurture the candidate's development. After the first couple of weeks, the supervising clinical educator/mentor may begin absenting him/herself as an observer for short periods of time.

Absenting oneself as the observer may be interpreted by the candidate as a vote of confidence. It is also a signal that the candidate is the authority figure while teaching. Absenting as an observer **does not** necessarily mean leaving the room. Leaving the classroom while the candidate teaches should be for short periods of time. A primary consideration for staying in or close by the classroom is the continuation of the teacher's legal responsibility for the students.

## **2.8 Dispensing Medications**

While the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to provide non-medical related services to students with disabilities and Georgia law permits educators to dispense and administer such medications, ***the immunities from liability that exist for certificated personnel and education agency employees do not extend to University of West Georgia teacher candidates participating in the field experiences.***

While it is important for teacher candidates to understand the process of administering medication, the liability issues surrounding possibly invasive and potentially injurious procedures require that the teacher candidate be a passive observer while the supervising clinical educator/mentor dispenses the medication or performs the related service. If the teacher candidate is asked or encouraged to dispense medications or perform related services, he/she must refuse to do so, citing possible exposure to liability should any adverse reactions occur. Remember, the immunity of the supervising clinical educator/mentor does not extend to the teacher candidate. The university/site-based supervisor must be notified if the teacher candidate feels pressured to participate in these activities.

## **2.9 Liability and Medical Insurance**

Educator candidates are not employees of the school system where they are placed and are not provided with any medical, accidental, or workman's compensation insurance. Teacher candidates are reminded that all students at the University of West Georgia are eligible to obtain healthcare coverage by visiting <https://www.westga.edu/student-services/health/insurance.php>. Candidates must obtain additional coverage in order to receive FE Codes which enable registration for classes.

Candidates, not the University of West Georgia, are responsible for acts committed while participating in professional clinical experiences. Keep in mind that financial penalties can be extreme, particularly when public school students are injured because of the candidates' negligent acts or omissions. Liability insurance may be obtained through Student Professional Association of Georgia Educators

(SPAGE) and/or Georgia Association of Educators (GAE). Information concerning these professional organizations is available from each Area in the College of Education, the Academic Advisement Center, and/or the Office of Field Experiences.

## **2.10 Classroom Management**

Classroom behavior management is an area in which most candidates have limited experience. Candidates will rely heavily on supervising clinical educator/mentor guidance in setting standards and limits in the classroom.

Early in placement, the supervising clinical educator/mentor should discuss and provide the candidate with a copy of the school and/or classroom discipline or behavior management plan. Candidates must ensure they are fully aware of the classroom behavior expectations for their students. The supervising clinical educator/mentor should specify to the candidate which discipline measures have been identified by the school as appropriate for administration by the candidate. **Candidates are NOT to use corporal punishment and are NOT to be called on to witness corporal punishment.** When substitute teachers replace the supervising clinical educator/mentor, they, **not the candidates**, have legal responsibility for discipline.

The following measures may help candidates build the type of teacher-pupil relationship that prevent behavior management problems:

- Respect the worth and dignity of the individual.
- Seek to attain a high degree of participation.
- Plan thoroughly.
- Learn and make use of names quickly.
- Be alert, keep your eyes open, and focus attention on the total situation.
- Plan for the use of freedom and responsibility of movement in classroom, corridors, and lunchroom.
- Exhibit poise, dignity, and calmness at all times.
- Stop little things before they gain momentum without undue emphasis on their seriousness.
- Be warm and friendly but firm.
- Above all- be consistent.

## **2.11 Additional Policies Regarding Field Experiences**

### **Courtesy Field Experience Placements**

University of West Georgia College of Education (COE) does not participate in “Courtesy Field Placements” with other Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs). A Courtesy Placement is defined as a candidate/intern field placement with another EPPs that includes a contracted supervision plan with the partnering EPPs.

### **Extended Absence from Field Experiences**

Three or more consecutive field days for candidates/interns. Extended absences should be for emergency situations **ONLY**. The supervising clinical educator/mentor, university supervisor/site-based supervisor, and the Director of Field Experiences **MUST** be notified by the candidate/intern as soon as possible regarding any extended absence **BEFORE** three days are missed in the field.

Any absence requires prior notification to the supervising clinical educator/mentor. The candidate should email, text, or call the supervising clinical educator/mentor as soon as s/he realizes an absence is necessary. The university/site-based supervisor should be informed of absences within 24 hours. The university/site-based supervisor will assist the candidate in planning make up time. If an absence extends beyond two consecutive days, the Office of Field Experiences must be informed. Under extenuating circumstances, extended absences may be made up but require the development of a make-up day plan. This plan must be developed collaboratively by the Program Coordinator, and Director of Field Experiences.

### **Reporting and Background Requirements**

Candidates are required by the GaPSC to self-report any incidents of unethical behavior. It is recommended that any questionable incident be self-reported to the University of West Georgia College of Education Office of Field Experiences. This will ensure candidates are reporting appropriately and accurately. Candidates who fail to self-report may be dropped from the program.

If at any time during the program, evidence arises to substantiate that a candidate has a criminal record, his or her placement may be suspended pending investigation. The candidate will be notified.

### **Transportation**

The candidate/intern is responsible for obtaining his/her transportation or making his/her own travel arrangements to the assigned field experiences throughout the program.

## **Section 3 applies only to those candidates in their last semester of field experience (internship or final practicum)**

### **SECTION 3: GENERAL INTERNSHIP INFORMATION**

Internships are a vital component in preparation for becoming a teacher. It is that time when teacher candidates are directly involved in a sustained and concentrated period of training in a local school setting with the collaboration of the school district and under the authority of the College of Education of the University of West Georgia. This is the period when the teacher candidate is enabled to make practical use of the principles, methods, knowledge, and materials that have been developed or acquired in other university courses.

#### **3.1 Description of Internship**

Internship is the culminating component of the teacher preparation program. An internship is completed in a carefully selected school under the immediate supervision of an experienced supervising clinical educator/mentor and the general supervision of a university/site-based supervisor, who is a specialist in the candidate's teaching field.

During the semester, increasing responsibility for planning, organizing, and delivering instruction is assumed by the intern, when the supervisors deem it appropriate, leading to full-time teaching by the intern for a minimum of two consecutive weeks. Some programs require more than this minimum.

After the required full-time teaching period, the intern should continue to teach as a member of the teaching team. Full participation as a professional in the classroom continues until the end of the semester. Small group meetings, conducted by the university/site-based supervisor and/or school staff, are held at various times during the internship term. A final evaluative meeting is held on campus at the end of the semester.

**Attendance at all meetings is mandatory.**

### **3.2 Internship Team**

Three team members interact during internship: candidate, supervising clinical educator/mentor, and university/site-based supervisor. The team's focus is on the candidate and his/her development. The university/site-based supervisor and supervising clinical educator/mentor will significantly influence a candidate's professional development. Their responsibilities are described in later sections of this document.

The Internship Team begins by means of initial contact with the university/site-based supervisor during the orientation session that precedes the formal beginning of internship. Following that session, there will be several opportunities for interaction with the university/site-based supervisor.

The capstone experience of teacher preparation is the internship, an experience seen by many as one of the most exciting experiences in preparation for becoming a certified educator. Capstone refers to the culminating point in the initial educator preparation program. Interns should be prepared to commit themselves to hard work that will result in maximum growth.

The internship may be viewed as a critical stage of transition from the status of college student to that of a professional educator. It involves development in interpersonal, cognitive, and instructional processes. Interns must reflect on their attitudes, values, and feelings as well as grow in the thinking processes, the selection of content, and the development of teaching strategies.

Course work has offered a variety of ideas and opportunities for teaching. These concepts can now be applied, tested, and refined. Through these experiences self-confidence, professional attitude, and the joy of teaching can be nurtured.

A few factors and people influence the internship experience—students, supervising clinical educators/mentor, administration, faculty, general school atmosphere, university/site-based supervisor, and intern. These all contribute to the development and success of interns. The support of the internship team is available and will be a significant contributor to the success of interns. **It is important to remember that ultimately, interns are responsible and accountable for their professional development and growth.**

### **3.3 Required Meetings**

Internship Orientation is typically held the week before classes begin for the semester. This meeting is held in a general session with the Program Coordinator to review general policies and regulations for internships.

A planning meeting is held with the supervising clinical educator/mentor at a time convenient for school personnel prior to the first day of the internship. Candidates may receive this information from their supervising clinical educator/mentor. This is a time to anticipate needs and responsibilities for the entire semester.

Some items that are of general concern and that are suggested for discussion include:

- University/site-based supervisor's plans for school/classroom visits.
- Role of supervising clinical educator/mentor.
- Manner and time for completion of assignments.
- Evaluation and grading for interns.
- Professional ethics and conduct.
- Meeting schedule and obtaining professional references based upon internship experience

from supervising clinical educator/mentor and university/site-based supervisor.

Additional meetings are coordinated by individual university supervisors during the semester. The nature of these in-service meetings varies from program to program and supervisor to supervisor. Meeting expectations for the semester should be discussed with students at the Internship Orientation Meeting.

**Intern attendance at all meetings is required.**

### **3.4 School Orientation**

#### **University Supervision**

When several interns are placed in the same cooperating school, the administration of the school often provides orientation for the entire group. If this does not occur, the university/site-based supervisor should assume responsibility for introducing the intern to the school.

During orientation the intern should give the supervising clinical educator/mentor a copy of the course syllabus and expectations or requirements received from the university supervisor. (University supervisors have access to the syllabus through CourseDen.) Interns are responsible for downloading the course syllabus and for being knowledgeable of its contents.

The following suggestions may help with the school/site orientation:

- Introducing the intern to school administrators, faculty, and staff.
- Involve the intern in appropriate responsibilities from the very beginning.
- Explain policies and procedures for routine duties.
- Review the detailed list of expectations and requirements received from the university/site-based supervisor.
- Arrange for a tour of the building.
- Arrange for the intern to have curriculum guides and texts to review and begin to gather materials.

#### **School-based Supervision**

Candidates placed in schools who participate in the supervising clinical educator/mentor or site-based supervision model will have an orientation scheduled at the school led by the supervising clinical educator/mentor. Interns are responsible for downloading the course syllabus and for being knowledgeable of its contents. Interns should provide copies of the syllabus to their supervising clinical educator/mentor and/or site-based supervisor. Basic requirements for interns appear in *Section 1.1 Internship* of this handbook; additional requirements may be added to meet specific program expectations.

### **3.5 Teaching Responsibilities**

#### **Program Specific Assignments**

Each teacher education program and/or university/site-based supervisor has detailed requirements for assignments that best meet the competencies expected in the given program. These assignments and due dates are contained in the course syllabus or in the list of expectations given to the intern in the Internship Orientation Meeting with the university/site-based supervisor. General responsibilities are presented in the following sections.

#### **Full-Time Teaching Responsibilities and Expectations**

The internship is a 15 to 16-week field experience. Interns are expected to be involved in teaching and non-teaching responsibilities for the entire 15 to 16-week period. Generally, the supervising clinical

educator/mentor assists the intern in developing a timeline for the gradual increase of teaching and non-teaching responsibilities. This increase in responsibilities must lead to a minimum of two consecutive weeks of independent teaching of all subjects as well as responsibility for all non-teaching duties. Some programs may require more than this minimum and interns are strongly encouraged to gain as much teaching experience as possible during the internship to build the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be successful as future educators.

### 3.6 Professional Responsibilities

#### Schedule

Interns are expected to devote the full school day to teaching. The minimum school day should be determined by the arrival and departure times established for the teachers in the assigned school. Interns are expected to follow the same duty schedule as the supervising clinical educator/mentor. The intern should accompany the supervising clinical educator/mentor, **not substitute for the supervising clinical educator/mentor**, on duty assignments.

Participation in faculty meetings, PTA/PTO meetings, and other professional meetings is expected. Interns should participate as fully as is appropriate in extra-class and school-wide activities, such as field trips, club meetings, home visits, etc. **The intern is to follow the calendar established by the school system to which he/she is assigned, including holidays and breaks. The only dates set by the university that are applicable are the beginning and ending dates for the internship semester.**

Interns should not schedule, nor leave their school for personal appointments, such as doctor appointments, dental appointments, hair appointments, etc. Interns should also not return to the University of West Georgia campus to attend to any personal matters during school hours unless instructed to do so by the university/site-based supervisor or other university administrators. In special cases, in which the intern has completed all expected requirements and is performing well, interns may schedule a limited number of job interviews or attend a job fair with prior approval from their supervising clinical educator/mentor, principal, and university or site-based supervisor.

**NOTE: No more than 2 full days may be used for job fairs or interviews. Therefore, it is important to carefully schedule these events.**

#### Planning

Well-planned lessons are essential to good teaching. **Planning helps the intern to organize and allows the supervising clinical educator/mentor to check the congruence of instructional goals, activities, and assessments. ALL plans should be discussed and approved by the** supervising clinical educator/mentor **in advance.** Check with the supervising clinical educator/mentor to establish an acceptable time frame for submitting lesson plans. The recommended timeframe is at least 48 hours in advance to allow for any necessary lesson revisions if.

The details of the plans may vary according to the type of lessons and the requirements of individuals. Typically, interns begin with a longer format than the supervising clinical educator/mentor regularly uses. As the intern becomes more proficient, the supervisors will advise moving to a shorter format. The required lesson plan components are provided through program coursework. The guidance of supervising clinical educator/mentor and university/site-based supervisors is critical to the development and enhancement of candidates' lesson planning knowledge and skills. Lesson format should remain consistent between the supervising clinical educator/mentor and the intern to ensure the continued growth and progress of P-12 students.

Interns are required to plan, teach, and evaluate a minimum of a two-week sequence of lessons to complete the full-time teaching requirement. Students should refer to the course syllabus or list of expectations for specific program requirements. Interns follow the cooperating school's policies regarding submitting the plans to administrators for checking and for leaving plans with the supervising



clinical educator/mentor teacher's plans for the school archives.

### **Self-Evaluation**

The fundamental process required for every intern is constant self-evaluation. This is necessary for determining strengths and needs for future development. Self-evaluation should lead to a realistic awareness of one's capabilities and development as a teacher. Journaling is highly recommended and can be very helpful in self-evaluation and valuable to candidates as they progress to induction level teachers. The journal or log should be used only for the intern's personal reflection on the entire teaching/learning environment. The purpose is to become more aware of actions and to reflect on options of change which will increase professional development. Journaling is NOT required by OFE but may be required by university/site-based supervisors at their discretion.

### **Course Work While Completing Internship**

During the internship semester, educator candidates register for the appropriate internship credit hours and Internship Seminar. University of West Georgia permits students to enroll in one additional course during internship. However, teacher candidates are strongly discouraged from taking additional coursework. Anecdotal feedback from our graduates consistently indicates that this choice creates undue hardship and frustration that was impossible to predict prior to internship. The one additional course provision applies to candidates in education as well as in sports management.

*Non-degree candidates who hold non-renewable teacher certification* – may enter internship with up to 5 courses remaining in their program. Candidates will be allowed to take no more than two additional courses with each internship. Any additional courses may be taken after completion of both internships. Internship seminars will be treated as a part of internships and will not count as an additional course taken.

*Non-degree candidates who **do not** hold non-renewable teacher certification* – may enter internship with up to two courses remaining in their program. These courses must be content courses and not professional education courses. Candidates may take only one additional course with an internship. The remaining course may be taken after completion of internship. Internship seminars will be treated as a part of internships and will not count as an additional course taken.

### **Other Phases of the School Program**

It is important that the intern has an opportunity to engage in a wide variety of experiences that are a part of the teacher's responsibilities. Supervising clinical educators/mentors are encouraged to obtain permission before allowing interns access to confidential records or before including interns in parent conferences. Check with school administrators regarding appropriate procedures.

### **Grades**

The final grade for internship is satisfactory/unsatisfactory and is officially determined by the university or site-based supervisor but is a result of considerable collaboration between the university or site-based supervisor and supervising clinical educator/mentor. The final grade is based on the intern's performance during the entire semester. Continuous evaluation procedures demonstrate competencies on the *CAPS*, and periodic observations all provide a basis for determination of the grade.

Factors that should be considered in assigning grades include the following:

- Classroom performance as observed by the supervising clinical educator/mentor.
- University or site-based supervisor's observations.
- Completion of lesson plans and other assignments.
- Professional ethics and conduct.

- Interpersonal skills, and
- Demonstrated proficiency in the areas listed on the *CAPS* and other candidate evaluation forms as observed by the supervising clinical educator/mentor and university or site-based supervisor.

Specific factors are discussed by the university or site-based supervisor during the Internship Orientation Meeting. Interns earn a grade of Satisfactory (*S*) or Unsatisfactory (*U*). The grade of Incomplete (*I*) may only be assigned because of non-academic factors (example: prolonged illness).

### **Evaluation**

Continuous evaluation provides the basis for which a final grade is derived. It is important that the supervising clinical educator/mentor and the university or site-based supervisor provide frequent feedback to the intern. Ideas shared in the evaluations will help the intern to understand his/her progress more clearly and improve his/her teaching.

A midpoint conference of the internship team must be held to assess the progress of the intern. Progress should be measured against the criteria on the *CAPS*, which is completed at the midpoint and conclusion of the internship.

*CAPS* is the instrument used to assess teaching competencies in the areas of professional behaviors and dispositions, pedagogy and knowledge, and management. When completing the *CAPS*, assessment should be based on competencies demonstrated over time. The assessment should **not** be based on the observation of one lesson.

## **SECTION 4: DIFFICULTIES DURING FIELD EXPERIENCES**

Candidates are not expected to be perfect teachers. Challenges or difficulties are a natural part of the growth experiences in educator preparation program and/or field experiences and internship. Candidates are expected to address challenges immediately with their supervising clinical educator/mentor and their university or site-based supervisors.

Typically, the candidate will encounter and solve the challenge by following the guidance of the course instructor(s) and/or supervising clinical educator/mentor. On some occasions, the candidate's solution will not produce the desired result. The candidate, with the assistance of faculty and administration, will look carefully at the circumstances and collaboratively devise a written plan of action. Often, this will suffice.

Unfortunately, there are instances when no solution is reached. If it appears as though no solution can be found, the course instructor(s) and university or site-based supervisor refer the situation to the Program Coordinator and/or the Director of the Office of Field Experiences. A collaborative decision will be made, and recommended options will be presented to the candidate.

### **4.1 Procedures for Difficulties**

When the progress of a teacher candidate's professional development is less than should be demonstrated at a given point in the teacher candidate's experience, corrective actions should be implemented and the educator candidate's progress evaluated. Each department will use course instructor assessments, supervisors' observations and feedback, and documentation from the Program Coordinator, university supervisor/site-based supervisors, and/or the Director of the Office of Field Experiences to assess the educator candidate's status in the teacher education program. The following steps will be followed:

- The university supervisor/site-based supervisor and Department Program Coordinator, with input from the Director of the Office of Field Experiences (if warranted), will assess the concerns and develop a Professional Growth Plan (PGP) (See Guidelines for PGP, Section 4.3) The plan establishes expectations for the candidate and a timeline for demonstration of expected behaviors. If the plan involves a field placement, the supervising clinical educator/mentor and the site administrator may be informed of the provisions of the plan.
- The PGP committee will confer immediately with the teacher candidate to share the PGP and the accompanying timeline for completion of competencies and re-assessment. The PGP should be placed in the candidate's permanent file.
- At the designated point on the timeline for assessment of improvement, the PGP committee will review the candidate's progress. A written progress report of the plan will be submitted to the Director of the Office of Field Experiences at the end of the semester in which the plan was written.

#### **Options Following Development of the Professional Growth Plan:**

The following items are possible outcomes following the implementation of a PGP:

1. The candidate's progress has been satisfactory and continuous. Field placement continues; or
2. Candidate shows some improvement. An addendum to the PGP may be implemented. Continuance in courses and field experience will be determined based on provisions in the PGP; or
3. The candidate is not improving. An addendum to the PGP may be implemented or an alternative placement may be found. An alternative placement, if available, may be recommended with the following stipulations:
  - a. The alternative placement request must be confirmed with a school district, and a professional growth plan will accompany the candidate to that placement setting. If another classroom placement is recommended, the Program Coordinator and/or the Director of Field Experiences will present to the candidate the options concerning the timing and requirements for the placement
  - b. If an alternative placement cannot be confirmed, or if the candidate is already in an alternative placement, a failing grade of U, D, or F, is earned for each course associated with the field experience; or
4. If the candidate's progress has not been satisfactory and continuation in the program is no longer an option, a discontinuation policy is implemented, and the candidate receives a failing grade for each course associated with the plan (See Discontinuation Policy, Section 4.4.)

The educator candidate is informed of the decision, both in writing and in a conference, and informed of the right to appeal the decision.

## **4.2 Guidelines for Development of a Professional Growth Plan**

Below are guidelines for elements included in Professional Growth Plans:

- I. Concerns: Items of concern should be summarized under appropriate areas such as Required Professional Behaviors, Professional Behaviors and Dispositions, Pedagogy and Knowledge, or Classroom Management.
- II. Remediation: This section contains suggestions and/or required activities that will provide opportunities for the teacher candidate to grow in the area(s) outlined above.
- III. Expectations: This section contains specific behaviors that must be demonstrated by the teacher candidate and the time frame in that they must be demonstrated. These should be summarized in the same format as Section I.
- IV. Signatures: Include signatures of all who are present at the conference.
- V. Copies: Copies of the plan will be provided to the Department Chair and/or Program Coordinator and the Director of the Office of Field Experiences.

### **4.3 Discontinuation Policy**

There are circumstances that warrant discontinuing the candidate's admission to teacher education program and/or field experience placement. The termination of the admission to teacher education program status and/or the field experience placement may be immediate when the actions of the teacher candidate present a negative impact on the learning environment or on the safety of the students, or when the actions of the candidate do not conform to responsible professional conduct as outlined:

- in the Code of Ethics adopted by the Professional Standards Commission; or
- in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the College of Education; or
- as determined by university faculty, site administration, Program Coordinator, or the Director of Office of Field Experiences

In such circumstances, the following actions may be taken:

1. The university/site-based supervisor and the Program Coordinator and/or the Director of Field Experiences confer immediately with the teacher candidate to be sure that he/she is aware of the seriousness of the situation and to provide the teacher candidate with an opportunity to present additional information.
2. The university or site-based supervisor and the Program Coordinator, and if applicable, the Director of Field Experiences reviews the data and decides to either allow the candidate to continue in the teacher education program or be removed from the teacher education program.
3. The candidate is informed of the decision, in writing and in conference by the Program Coordinator and/or the Director of Field Experiences.
4. The Program Coordinator, advisor, appropriate faculty member and/or the Director of Field Experiences discuss with the candidate other career alternatives, available campus support resources, and/or options for a second opportunity in the teacher education/educator preparation program. The candidate is informed of the appropriate procedures for appeal.

## NOTES:

- Unprofessional acts and/or acts which pose a safety risk may result in immediate termination of the admission to teacher education/educator preparation program status, application for admission to teacher education/ educator preparation program, and/or field experience placements
- If a candidate is asked by a school or district representative (principal or district administrator) to leave the school and vacate the placement due to professional conduct or egregious instructional issues, OFE and the COE are NOT bound to seek a new placement for the candidate in the current semester. If the Professional Growth Plan Team determines a new placement is necessary, then and only then will a new placement in the current semester be sought. If a candidate is asked to vacate a placement for a second time, removal from the program is within the authority of the Program Coordinator and removal from the field is within the authority of the Director of the Office of Field Experiences.
- **The above note also applies to job-embedded MAT candidates.** Upon resignation or request to resign in lieu of termination, candidates MUST immediately notify their Program Coordinator and the Office of Field Experiences. After reviewing information and any documentation, the Program Coordinator and the Director of the Office of Field Experiences will determine if a traditional placement may be sought for the remainder of the semester, if the field experience will be considered incomplete, or if program dismissal is the appropriate resolution

## SECTION 5: THE UNIVERSITY OR SITE-BASED SUPERVISOR (SBS)

### 5.1 Internship

The role of the university/site-based supervisor is a critical, active responsibility in the field experience and internship process. Often this function is viewed as facilitative. Facilitation is certainly one feature of responsibility—serving as mentor for the candidate and building collegiality with the supervising clinical educator/mentor and school administrators. However, specific responsibilities may be divided into three areas: instructing, counseling, and evaluation. The following suggestions will help identify roles for each of the three areas.

### 5.2 Interacting with the University/site-based supervisor

Communication is critical to a beneficial experience for all members of the field experiences/internship team. The university/site-based supervisor should arrange frequent opportunities for communication. However, if needs for communication arise at other times, the supervising clinical educator/mentor or any administrator of the cooperating school should not hesitate to contact the Director of the Office of Field Experiences at 678-839-6083.

### 5.3 Interacting with the supervising clinical educator/mentor

Communication is critical to a beneficial experience for all members of the field experiences/internship team. The university/site-based supervisor must take the initiative to arrange frequent opportunities for communication with the supervising clinical educator/mentor. The university/site-based supervisor may call upon the Office of Field Experiences or Program Coordinator when there appears to be a need for a third party to help facilitate communication.

The university/site-based supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the supervising clinical educator/mentor receives materials provided by the department at the beginning of each semester. Materials may be in electronic form.

## **Observation/Conferencing Expectations**

The university/site-based supervisor is expected to complete a minimum of two observations in which interns are provided written positive feedback and constructive criticism.

Written feedback and constructive criticism should foster self-evaluation and reflection. Beginning with ... "Why do you think there was progress (or difficulty) here?" allows the candidate to begin seeking the answer to the most important question "Why?" Asking for rationales for decisions made by the candidate will also foster self-evaluation. Additional suggestions are to paraphrase; to accept non-judgmentally; to clarify (Let me see if I understood you correctly .....); or to extend (Tell me more about .....). Conducting a conference in this manner takes longer but may be more effective in developing the candidate's self-evaluation skills. Reactions to written work, preferably in writing, in regard to grammatical structure, organization, substance, relevance, and comprehensiveness are as important as responses to teaching.

## **Instructing**

The university/site-based supervisor should:

- Serve as a resource person for the candidate, supervising clinical educator/mentor, and principal.
- Model and interpret Georgia's *Code of Ethics*.
- Provide suggestions for classroom management, lesson planning, and instructional strategies.
- Provide the context for internship meetings.
- Establish and maintain professional and ethical working relationships with the cooperating schools. Contact the supervising clinical educator/mentor prior to the arrival of the intern.
- Remain in communication with the principals of schools where interns are assigned to ensure satisfactory coordination of the program.

## **Counseling**

The university/site-based supervisor should:

- Confer with the supervising clinical educator/mentor as often as warranted.
- Emphasize the importance of ethical and professional conduct.
- Confer as soon as possible with the candidate concerning the observations made.
- Emphasize the importance of handling certain problems and school situations with reticence and strict confidence.

## **Evaluation**

The university/site-based supervisor should:

- Observe the candidate teaching in the classroom
- Provide feedback on the candidate's performance following each observation.
- Keep adequate and accurate records on each candidate; Use appropriate evaluation to arrive at midpoint and final grades for field experiences.

## **School Visits**

**Introduction** - It is expected that university/site-based supervisors will meet with the supervising clinical educator/mentor prior to the arrival of the candidate and will observe

each candidate. The length of visits/meetings may vary but should include ample time to discuss internship progress with the supervising clinical educator/mentor and candidate.

**Midpoint Conference** - The university supervisor/site-based supervisors should schedule a midpoint conference with the candidate. The conference should identify teaching and professional strengths and areas needing further development in the remaining weeks of field experience.

#### **5.4 University Supervision Travel Deadline(s)**

All university supervisors' travel vouchers must be submitted in compliance with the University Travel submission guideline <https://www.westga.edu/administration/business-and-finance/controller/travel-services/index.php>. All travel reimbursements must be received no later than 30 days after the travel. Travel at the end of the semester must be submitted by the close of the third business day after the last day of classes each semester.

### **SECTION 6: THE SUPERVISING CLINICAL EDUCATOR/MENTOR (FORMERLY KNOWN AS COOPERATING TEACHER)**

The supervising clinical educator/mentor interacts continuously with candidates and interns and is vitally important in field experiences. In fact, literature clearly indicates that the role of the supervising clinical educators/mentor is the most influential one for candidates and interns. It is the supervising clinical educator/mentors' daily guidance that will most facilitate the professional growth of candidates and interns. The guidance will not only be in teaching procedures and techniques, but also in selecting activities, gathering resource materials, and providing professional insightful relationships with students.

The role of the supervising clinical educator /mentor fluctuates among roles of mentor, confidant, counselor, role model, instructor, and supervisor. In fact, often a strong and lasting friendship develops between these two members of the team. Because of the varied nature and intensity of these roles, particular care must be given to maintaining the objectivity of supervision.

The pages that follow are provided with the intent of offering structure to the supervision and to generate some degree of commonality for the University of West Georgia's diverse field experience and internship situations.

#### **6.1 Selection of Supervising Clinical Educators/Mentor**

*See Section 1.2. Procedures for Placement Requests.*

##### **Supervision Responsibilities**

Because the supervising clinical educator/mentor is present, this team member is the critical link in the observation-mentoring cycle leading to professional growth. To assist in this supervision task, each teacher education program may provide expectations, procedures, and/or forms for use. The following suggestions may be used in addition to specific expectations from individual programs.

##### **Preparing for the Candidate:**

The responsibility for a good beginning must be shared by all members of the field experience/internship team. This section deals with suggestions for supervising clinical educators/mentors.

- Inform parents that an intern will be in the room.

- Discuss with students who is coming and why, their part in preparation, and advantages of having a "second teacher."
- Provide a desk or area where the intern may keep books, papers, supplies, etc.
- Prepare a folder of materials that contains school schedules, emergency procedures, faculty handbook, discipline policies, etc.

### **Observation and Record Keeping**

The supervising clinical educator/mentor should maintain daily and/or weekly notes on the candidate's instructional and professional behavior in chronological order. These notes offer a good reference source in determining midpoint and final evaluations. They will also provide clear systematized information for conferences with the university or site-based supervisor.

The candidate should receive ongoing feedback about the knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of education professionals. The feedback from the observation notes should include positive comments as well as the constructive criticism feedback to accelerate performance improvement. In instances where another technique may have been more effective, suggest alternative ways of teaching the same content.

### **Beginning Experiences**

These experiences should prepare the candidate to participate in the classroom without misgivings related to methodology and content. Professional standards and ethics should be maintained throughout beginning experiences to set the tone for the entire experience. These suggestions may help:

#### ***For all candidates:***

- Guide the candidate in analyzing and evaluating observations.
- Assist the candidate in recognizing and overcoming any undesirable traits that impact on their professional responsibilities.
- Acknowledge the candidate's ideas and encourage initiative.
- Assist the candidate in efficiently performing routine duties and in keeping records.
- Review the candidate's daily lesson plans and make constructive suggestions. **ALL lesson plans must be approved by the supervising clinical educator/mentor prior to the intern teaching the lesson.**
- Discuss the school and/or classroom discipline plan. The supervising clinical educator/mentor should specify to the intern which discipline measures have been identified by the school as appropriate for administration by interns.

#### ***For interns:***

- Increase teaching responsibilities gradually as soon as the intern shows evidence of readiness.
- Plan a semester schedule which specifies an increase in teaching responsibilities: subject by subject or period by period.

## **SECTION 7: GEORGIA CERTIFICATION**

### **7.1 Procedures for Applying for a Certificate**

Approximately four weeks prior to graduation or program completion, candidates will receive an email from the Office of Educator Certification (Kathy Jones, Certification Official)



explaining the process for obtaining certification. If there are questions after reviewing the content of this email and any attached documents, candidates may contact Mrs. Jones at [kjones@westga.edu](mailto:kjones@westga.edu) or 678-839-6109.

***It is highly recommended that candidates establish Georgia certification regardless of the location of employment or possible employment. Most states have educator certification reciprocity which means more broad acceptance of coursework and/or degrees.***

### **College Recommendation for Certification**

All teacher education programs at the University of West Georgia are accredited by National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and approved to lead to certification by the State of Georgia. The certification of UWG's graduates based on the university's recommendation is authorized by Rule 505-2-.16 which states:

- (1) The Professional Standards Commission may certify applicants who have completed state approved educator preparation programs in any state under the following conditions:
  - (a) The educator preparation program was approved by the state approval authority in a state that approves teacher preparation programs, the educator preparation program was approved for the field in the recommended area of certification, and the program held approval status during the year in which the applicant completed the program.
    1. In the specific field of Speech and Language Pathology, the PSC shall accept ASHA-approved programs that are not state-approved but are completed at PSC-accepted accredited institutions.
  - (b) The applicant has completed all state-approved program requirements and has been recommended for certification by the official authorized to make such recommendations.
  - (c) The recommendation for certification is in a field recognized by the Professional Standards Commission. If the recommendation is in an area recognized in Georgia as an endorsement only, the applicant will be issued a professional certificate in that field.
- (2) Georgia state-approved programs shall include all course work specified in Special Georgia Requirements, outlined in PSC Rule 505-2-.20. However, the content assessment is not considered part of the approved program but is a separate state requirement for certification. Georgia state-approved programs may recommend an individual who has completed all program requirements, to include the Special Georgia Requirements, except for the content assessment. Without the completed assessment, the individual will not be eligible for any certificate unless requested by a Georgia employing school system. Upon such a request, a one-year Waiver certificate may be issued."

### **Validity Date**

The certification validity date is the date when a certificate is first valid. Validity periods and dating of certificates are governed by PSC Rule 505-2-.23 as follows:

Validity periods for certificate fields are used in conjunction with types and titles to determine certification classification category. Certificate fields are issued with specific validity periods depending upon this classification. (Rule 505-2-.02).

- (1) Initial Clear Renewable certificates are valid for five years and determine the subsequent renewal cycle. Fields added to the Clear Renewable category will retain the same expiration

date as the original; the beginning validity may vary depending upon the date requirements for the field are completed. (For example, when an individual with a 5-year certificate adds a new field at the end of the third year, to maintain the same base expiration date the new field will initially be valid for only 2 years. The credits used to add to the new field may then be used to renew both certificates for the next 5-year cycle. )

- (a) The validity period for all other certificates will vary depending on the outstanding conditions required to obtain the Clear Renewable. These requirements will be outlined in correspondence from the certification office at the time of issue.
  - (b) At the request of an employing school system, the PSC may extend the validity period of selected certificates for up to one additional year as a waiver certificate.
- (2) The effective date of a certification level or field validity period is governed by the date the complete application package is received by the PSC Certification Division.
- (a) Certificates shall not normally be backdated prior to July 1 regardless of the date requirements are met if the complete application package for the transaction is received on or after July 1. For the validity period to be prior to July 1, the complete package must be received in the certification office prior to that date.
    - 1. If the superintendent of an employing school system submits a written statement verifying that all salary adjustments will be paid using only local funds, the PSC may backdate a certificate validity date or level prior to the July 1 date.
  - (b) The beginning date of Clear Renewable certificates will be determined by the route to certification.
    - 1. Certificates based on completion of an approved degree program shall be effective from the date the institution certifies on the official transcript that all degree requirements were completed or July 1, whichever is more recent.
    - 2. Certificates based on completion of an approved program by an applicant who already holds a degree shall be effective from the date all program requirements were completed or July 1, whichever is more recent.
  - (c) The beginning validity date of all other certificates will follow the rules outlined for Clear Renewable certificates with the following exception:
    - 1. Any certificate issued to an individual who becomes employed on or after January 1, will be valid from the first day of the month in which employed.
  - (d) Certificates are dated to expire on June 30 of the last year of validity (which will vary depending on the certification classification/category)

At the University of West Georgia, the validity date is the official graduation date for each term or the date the last certification requirement was met, whichever is later.

## **7.2 Professional Standards Commission**

Functions relating to the preparation and certification of school personnel are housed in the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and its Executive Secretary. The PSC establishes and enforces standards for teacher education programs which lead to Georgia certification, rules for Georgia educator certification, and standards of competent professional performance and ethical conduct for Georgia educators.

The following numbers and addresses will assist in communication with the PSC:

Mr. Matt Arthur, Executive Secretary  
Georgia Professional Standards Commission  
200 Piedmont Avenue, Suite 1702  
Atlanta, GA 30334-9032  
404-232-2500 (Certification Division)  
PSC Website: [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com)

## Privacy of Information

Privacy of Information is protected under Rule 505-2-.33 of the PSC Certification Rules states:

- “(1) The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), is a federal law regarding an individual’s right to privacy; the Buckley/Pell amendment (Privacy Act) sets extensive guidelines for the release and subsequent use of information from post-secondary education records.
- (2) Education records, once released by an institution, are the property of the student and may be released only for a specific purpose (i.e., employment or certification). The organization receiving the transcripts is responsible for protecting the document owner’s privacy. The Certification Division will not, without the applicant’s authorization, release any information not considered public record under Federal and State Law.
- (3) Information will not be released to the spouse, parent, sibling or children of an individual without specific authorization. Confidential information, such as test scores and grades on transcripts, will not be released.
- (4) The Certification Division, while maintaining microfilm and electronic copies of original transcripts, cannot copy or provide copies of transcripts to individuals or to other offices, agencies or institutions except in cases of criminal or a PSC Ethics Division investigation.”

## 7.3 Authority O.C.G.A. 20-2-200

### Criminal History Background Check

An applicant for certification in Georgia must comply with the ethical standards of the profession. When applying for a Georgia educator certificate, applicants must respond to the following questions:

1. Have you ever had an adverse action (*i.e. warning, reprimand, suspension, revocation, denial, voluntary surrender, disbarment*) taken against a professional certificate, license or permit issued by an agency **OTHER THAN the Georgia Professional Standards Commission?**
2. Are you currently the subject of an investigation involving a violation of a profession’s laws, rules, standards or Code of Ethics by an agency **OTHER THAN the Georgia Professional Standards Commission?**
3. Have you ever received a less than honorable discharge from any branch of the armed services? (*If “yes”, provide a copy of form DD214.*)
4. Have you ever left an employment position (*retired, resigned, been dismissed, terminated, non-renewed or otherwise*) while under

investigation?

5. Are you currently the subject of an investigation involving sexual misconduct or physical harm to a child?
6. Are you the subject of a pending investigation involving a criminal act?
7. For any **felony** or any **crime involving moral turpitude**, have you ever:
  - Pled guilty.
  - Entered a plea of *nolo contendere*;
  - Been found guilty.
  - Plead guilty to a lesser offense.
  - Been granted first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt.
  - Participated in a pre-trial diversion program.
  - Been found not guilty by reason of insanity; or
  - Been placed under a court order whereby an adjudication or sentence was withheld?
8. Have you ever been convicted, or pled to a lesser offense for any sexual offense?
9. Have you been convicted of a drug offense (felony or misdemeanor) **after July 1, 2008**, while holding any professional certificate, license or permit?

***I affirm that all information is true and correct. I hereby give permission to the Professional Standards Commission to obtain copies of any criminal and personnel records relating to me which are held by any local, state or federal government agency or private entity. I authorize any such agency or entity to release those records to the Commission.***