

# Cooperating Teacher | ORIENTATION GUIDE

The importance of the Cooperating Teacher’s (CT) role in clinical experiences cannot be over-emphasized. The collaborative efforts between the University and the schools are critical to the success of field experiences. We value and appreciate the level of support provided to our students by the CT throughout the training process.

## ATTENDANCE

- Teacher candidates (TC) are expected to be at school every day that classroom teachers are required to report. Unfortunately, sometimes illnesses happen. General attendance guidelines are below:
- Student Teachers are expected to be at their placement every day and follow the school calendar. There are no vacations or personal days during student teaching.
  - Timeliness is critical! Student Teachers should allow adequate time for arrival on the first day of the experience, and all those thereafter. Student Teachers should make CT’s aware of known schedule changes well in advance.
  - Student Teachers may not leave the school premises during scheduled fieldwork time for any reason, unless prior approval has been given.
  - If a Student Teacher misses more than four days for extreme illness or family emergencies, they must make up those days in the field.
  - District snow days when staff do not report do not count against these four excused absence days.
  - Candidates with a total of more than 15 absences for any reason will receive "No Credit" for SPE 558 and the course will need to be retaken.

Absences should be recorded on the Weekly Reflections Form in SL&L.

FAQs:  
Q: May I use one of my four days to attend an audition for graduate school/job interview/etc.?  
A: No. The four days are available for serious illness or family emergencies only. They are not "free" days. You may use your one allotted Professional Development Day, however, with prior approval from your UC.  
Q: I have a pre-planned, pre-paid trip to that fall during student teaching. May I go and then make up the time?  
A: No. There are no vacations or personal days during student teaching. We make this clear at the Student Teaching Application Meeting and at Student Teaching Academy. It is the student teacher's responsibility to make sure travel arrangements do not interfere with their clinical experience.

## FROM CO-TEACHING TO LEAD TEACHING: A Gradual Release Approach

TCs should be professional, positive, and proactive from day one as a co-teacher and colleague. Over time, the candidate will assume greater responsibility of classroom duties. The Student Teaching Pacing Guide (on the back) provides a general overview of a candidate's progression over the semester.

## EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHER CANDIDATES

- While a Teacher Candidate has some experience within a classroom following their pre-service experience, they have yet to experience the full scope of the life of a busy teacher. Therefore, support and guidance will be needed during the onset of the Student Teaching Experience.
- Cooperating Teachers are encouraged to assist in the following areas:**
- Descriptions of the subject matter that will be taught and what aspects the TC will be responsible for executing.
  - Suggestions and tips for preparing learning activities and materials.
  - An idea of what has happened to date in the educational life of the pupils.
  - Aid in generating the broad goals which must be reached in curricular areas and in identifying resource materials.

## EARLY RELEASE FROM STUDENT TEACHING

- Teacher Candidates in their final semester of student teaching may receive an early release for employment as a long-term substitute teacher after completing 12 weeks of student teaching. The Director of Clinical Experiences will work with the building principal, university coordinator, and student teacher when considering extenuating circumstances or unique opportunities related to substitute teaching assignments. The Director of Clinical Experiences will consider approval after reviewing the following:*
- The student teacher has been offered a long-term substitute teaching position from a P-12 school to begin during weeks 13 through 16 of student teacher's clinical assignment.
  - The student teacher received a "proficient" or "distinguished" rating from the cooperating teacher on the mid- semester evaluation.
  - Written statement from the student teacher's assigned university coordinator that the student teacher has developed a plan to complete the required observations, evaluation and MDE surveys by the end of the semester.
  - All university work must be completed by the end of the semester.

## CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Formal observations are scheduled by the candidate with the UC in advance. Candidates shall share the date and time of expected visits with their host teacher. Lesson plans must be submitted to SL&L® at least 24 hours in advance of the formal observation. Observations will last a minimum of 30 minutes. At the conclusion of each observation, the UC will debrief with the TC for approximately 15-20 minutes (in a private area if available). The UC and the TC will discuss classroom management, instructional skills, strengths, weaknesses, and alternative classroom strategies. While on-site, the UC will also speak with the cooperating teacher for their feedback on the candidate's progress.

## CMU SUBSTITUTE TEACHING POLICY

The candidate may substitute teach for pay, upon district approval, for a maximum of 15 days throughout the 16-week semester. *If you are interested in having your TC substitute teach for you, please make sure they contact their UC to fill out the proper form.*

General Education	SPE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weeks 1-5, the TC is allowed to substitute teach for the host teacher only for a maximum of 5 days.</li><li>• Weeks 6-16, the TC may be allowed to substitute teach for teachers building-wide for a maximum of 10 days.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weeks 1-8, the TC is allowed to substitute teach for the host teacher only for a maximum of 5 days.</li><li>• Weeks 9-16, the TC may be allowed to substitute teach for teachers building-wide (with administrator request) for a maximum of ten additional days.</li></ul>

## EVALUATIONS

**CPAST**  
Student teachers will be evaluated using the Candidate Pre-service Assessment of Student Teaching form (CPAST). This proprietary tool from Ohio State University is designed to provide actionable feedback to candidates during their final clinical internship (student teaching). The rubric (see a°ached form) includes both pedagogy and disposition criteria for assessing candidate skills. While the rubric will evaluate many of the criteria that our previous rubric based on the Danielson provided, the process for scoring the candidates will center around consensus scoring conversation at the for both the mid-evaluation and final evaluation. Your University Coordinator will meet with you towards the start of the semester to go over the process with you in detail, but the goal of this protocol is to provide increased feedback to the candidates and provide them skills in discussing their own practice, providing evidence, and establishing goals for continued growth. If you are interested in learning more, a brief video (10 minutes) on the CPAST can be found at this link: [CPAST training: mentor teachers and student teachers - Youtube](#)

## GRADING TEACHER CANDIDATES

Teacher candidates are assessed by their course faculty and assigned a grade for each course associated with the clinical placement. These course grades reflect information provided by Cooperating Teachers and the staff of the OEPP.

## PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

The CMU teacher preparation program focuses on providing teacher candidates with the required knowledge (content), teaching skills (pedagogy), and dispositions to have a positive impact on student learning. It is vitally important that TCs demonstrate professional attributes needed for success in the teaching profession. For this reason, you will be expected to complete two evaluations of your TC's professional behaviors.

## SEMINAR

To meet the needs of our TCs who are completing their student teaching in distant locations, seminar courses have been scheduled for six virtual sessions. Candidates are expected to share seminar dates with their CT at the beginning of the semester.

General Education Dates 12pm-4pm   Wed or Thurs (depends on the section enrolled)	Special Education Dates TBD
September 10 or 11	TBD
September 24 or 25	TBD
October 10 - TCC Friday	TBD
October 22 or 23	TBD
November 5 or 6	TBD
November 19 or 20	TBD

Seminar attendance is mandatory.

**Teacher Candidate Conference (TCC)**  
Each semester, the Clinical Experiences team holds a full day of professional development specifically for our TCs! This semester, the conference will be face to face. Engaging sessions are facilitated by P-12 practitioners, alumni, and faculty. Past sessions have included topics such as communicating with parents, educator self-care, classroom management, and differentiation.

*All Gen Ed Teacher Candidates and SPE Teacher Candidates who have not previously attended the TCC will be excused on the scheduled Friday to attend the conference. Candidates only need to attend the conference once.*

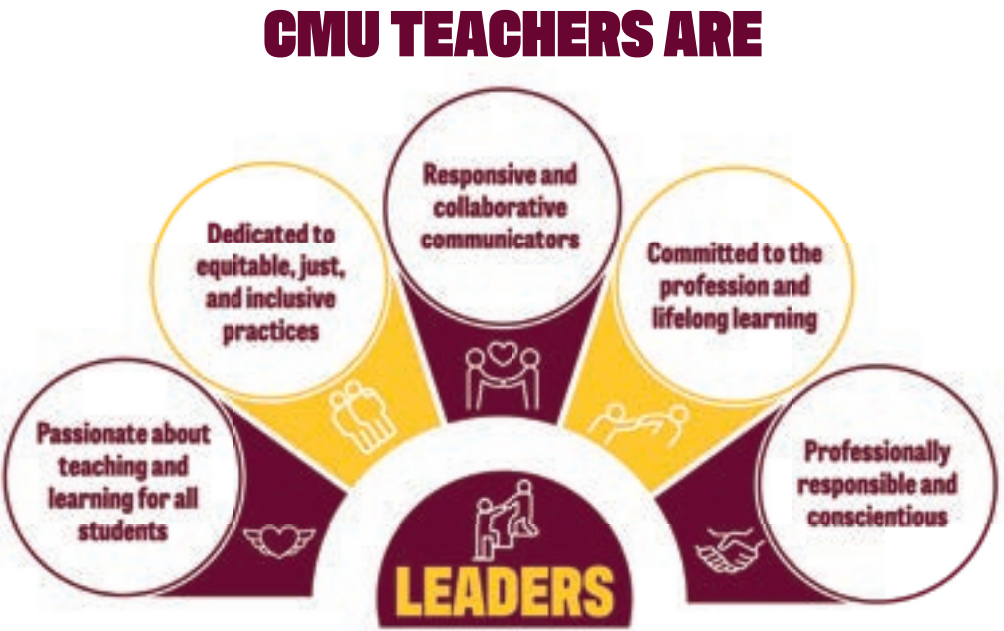
# WEBSITE

**Please Note:** A PDF version of the Clinical Experiences Handbook and Cooperating Teacher Orientation Guide will also be emailed to you. It is recommended that you bookmark the Clinical Experiences website on your browser for quick access.

## OEPP Website

[ehs.cmich.edu/oepp](https://ehs.cmich.edu/oepp)

- View the Clinical Experience Handbook
- Learn about OEPP Programs and Policies
- And more!





Message from our director of  
CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Esteemed Cooperating Teachers and Administrators,

At Central Michigan University, we believe teaching is a skill-driven profession that is not learned overnight or through one field experience. Great teaching develops through cohesive coursework with imbedded clinical experiences and supported by the knowledge of master teachers willing to share their expertise with novice candidates. Candidates are expected to wholly participate, reflect deeply, and grow as practitioners through their experiences working alongside skilled mentors.

We are grateful to our Cooperating Teachers, B-12 schools, principals, and child care directors who readily open their doors to CMU Teacher Education Candidates. Our Teacher Candidates are incredibly fortunate to be placed in environments that foster a co-teaching philosophy. CMU knows that the partnership it has with schools in the region is a critical component of its program. The CMU Teacher Education program would not function without the continued support and collaboration of school districts.

This guide will provide information regarding your role as Cooperating Teacher (CT), what you can expect from your Teacher Candidate (TC), and the role of the University Coordinator (UC) and related faculty during the student teaching experience.

We publish a quarterly newsletter for our B-12 partners. Please add our email address, CMUedClinical@cmich.edu, to your contact list to ensure you receive it. If you have any questions about expectations for the student teaching experience, please reach out to the UC or to the OEPP at any time.

We hope that your experience will be rewarding. CMU welcomes feedback regarding its Teacher Education Program. If you should have any issues, please do not hesitate to contact us as soon as possible.

FIRE UP!

*Linda S. Weiss*



Linda S. Weiss, Ph.D.

Associate Director of Clinical Experiences and  
Pathway Programs  
CMU Office of Educator Preparation Programs



STUDENT TEACHING PACING GUIDE

WEEK	Cooperating Teacher (CT) Actions	Teacher Candidate (TC) Actions
1-2	Observe and Assist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Observe and assist</li><li>Communicate and co-plan daily with CT</li><li>Collaborate with the CT to determine how co-teaching strategies will be used in weeks 3 and 4</li><li>Build relationships within the school community</li><li>Attend all meetings and professional development with the CT (for the duration of the experience).</li><li>Create a calendar of seminar requirements to share with CT</li><li>SPE TCs: begin collecting data for course assignments (access to IEPs, MET reports, behavior plans, academic achievement data, etc.)</li></ul>
3-4		
5-6	Co-Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Communicate and co-plan daily with CT</li><li>Engage students in learning by trying out each co-teaching strategy at least twice with the CT</li><li>Begin working with ancillary staff to support classroom learning</li><li>Gradually assume responsibility for opening and closing activities (calendar,schedule, attendance, organization, bellwork/exit tickets, end-of-day routines). Approximately 20% of the day.</li><li>Attend IEPs and Parent meetings to observe/listen where appropriate</li></ul>
7-8		
9-10	Lead Teach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work with CT to determine the content to be taught</li><li>Co-plan with CT, begin developing own materials</li><li>Plan and lead solo lessons 50% - 75% of the day</li><li>Collaborate with ancillary staff to meet the needs of all students</li><li>Communicate with families regarding student progress (phone calls, newsletters, P/T conferences, etc.)</li><li>SPE TCs: attend at least one IEP meeting with the CT during weeks 7-10</li></ul>
11-12		
13-14	Observe and Assist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Share the primary responsibilities of instructional lead</li><li>Co-plan and co-teach: CT resumes teaching 50% of the day in Week 13 and 75% of the day by week 14</li><li>Provide guidance regarding content and standards to be addressed</li></ul>
15-16		

Fall 2025

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION &  
HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF EDUCATOR  
PREPARATION PROGRAMS  
CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY