Fall 2025

SPE 558 Early Childhood Special Education Clinical Experience

COOPERATING TEACHER

ORIENTATION GUIDE

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

Message from our Director of

CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Dear Cooperating Teachers,

Thank you for opening your classroom to a Central Michigan University teacher candidate. I recognize the demands on teachers continue to increase due to an ongoing educator shortage and rising need for social and emotional supports for all learners. Considering these factors, it is vital to prepare future teachers with the experiences and skills necessary to teach a diverse population of students and support the communities within which they work. At Central Michigan University, we rely upon partnerships with B-12 stakeholders to support, nurture, and coach novice educators during their student teaching internship. Your willingness to support the development of highly effective teachers is appreciated.

This document will provide information regarding your role as a Cooperating Teacher (CT) and what you can expect from your CMU Teacher Candidate (TC), the University Coordinator (UC), and related faculty over the course of the 12-week semester.

To ensure receipt of the quarterly newsletter from the Clinical Experience team, please add our email address to your contact list: **cmuedclinical@cmich.edu.**

Thank you!

Linda S. Weiss
Associate Director
for Clinical
Experiences

Fire Up CHIPS!

WEBSITE LINKS

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

Early Childhood (B-K/B-3)
Clinical Experiences Handbook

https://www.cmich.edu/docs/default-source/colleges/college-of-education-human-services/center-for-clinical-experiences/2024-25-ec-clinical-experiences-handbook.pdf?sfvrsn=97cc47a7_7

CMU TEACHERS ARE

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 follow the school staff calendar and be present every day, arrive on time, remain for the duration of the day, and communicate any schedule changes to the Cooperating Teachers (CT) and University Coordinators (UC) in advance. If the candidate must miss a day, they must call their CT and document the absence in SL&L. Candidates must prepare lesson plans for when they are absent from placement. Candidates missing over four days for extreme illness or family emergencies must make up time in the field. ONE unexcused absence, two late arrivals, or the combination thereof, may result in an action plan and/or a disciplinary referral and may be grounds for possible dismissal from the clinical field experience.

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. The TC will complete a self-evaluation and share the link with you via SL&L. We ask that you include specific examples of any professional areas where the candidate requires additional support to meet professional expectations.

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 responsiblefor 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.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Formal observations are video recorded by the candidate and submitted in GoReact. Lesson plans must be submitted to SL&L before or with formal observation. Observations will last a minimum of 15 minutes. At the conclusion of each observation, the UC will provide feedback in GoReact, then submit a final score in SL&L. We appreciate your assistance in ensuring the formal observation lessons can be done in an area free of noise and distractions due to the recording requirement.

CMU SUBSTITUTE TEACHING POLICY

The candidate may substitute teach for pay, upon district approval, for a maximum of 10 days throughout the 12-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.* They may only work as a substitute in their assigned placement.

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.

SEMINAR

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

- **Four Virtual Seminar Sessions** - Dates to be determined, attendance is mandatory.

Teacher Candidate Conference (TCC) - October 10, 2025

Each semester, the Clinical Experiences team holds a full day of professional development specifically for our TCs! 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.

Attendance at the conference is encouraged, but not mandatory, for online SPE 558 students. If the student chooses to attend, they will be excused on that day from their field placement. Some portions of the TCC will be live-streamed and recorded for those who cannot attend in person.

STUDENT TEACHING PACING GUIDE

WEEK		Cooperating Teacher (CT) Actions	Teacher Candidate (TC) Actions
1-2	Observe and Assist	• Introduce teacher candidate to faculty and staff, offer TC to participate in PD and meetings as appropriate • Communicate with families the addition of a Co-Teacher • Determine the content to be taught • Co-plan and share materials with the TC • Collaborate with the TC to determine how co-teaching strategies will be used. **Review co-teaching video here** • Develop a consistent schedule for providing feedback to teacher candidate and planning for instruction • Provide a tentative daily class schedule to assist University Coordinators in scheduling observations	• Observe and assist • Communicate and co-plan daily with CT • Collaborate with the CT to determine how co-teaching strategies will be used in weeks 3 and 4 • Build relationships within the school community • Attend all meetings and professional development with the CT (for the duration of the experience). • Create a calendar of seminar requirements to share with CT • SPE TCs: begin collecting data for course assignments (access to IEPs, • MET reports, behavior plans, academic achievement data, etc.)
3-5	Co-Teaching	• Communicate expectations and develop a consistent schedule for providing feedback to teacher candidate • Determine the content to be taught • Co-plan and share materials with the TC • Begin adding responsibilities so the TC has experience planning and teaching each subject before full responsibility begins • Engage teacher candidate in planning, organizing, and implementing lessons for small groups of students • Begin to Invite TCs to sit in on Parent meetings and IEPs when appropriate	• Communicate and co-plan daily with CT • Engage students in learning by trying out each co-teaching strategy at least twice with the CT • Begin working with ancillary staff to support classroom learning • Gradually assume responsibility for opening and closing activities (calendar,schedule, attendance, organization, bellwork/exit tickets, end-of-day routines). Approximately 20% of the day. • Attend IEPs and Parent meetings to observe/listen where appropriate
		• Work with TC to determine the content to be taught • Provide guidance regarding content and standards to be addressed • Co-plan and co-teach with TC, support development of materials • Actively participate in co-teaching relationship • Begin adding responsibilities so the TC has experience planning and teaching each subject before full responsibility begins	• Work with CT to determine the content to be taught • Co-plan with CT, begin developing own materials • Continue practicing coteaching strategies 25% - 50% of the day • Collaborate with ancillary staff to meet the needs of all students
6-11	Lead Teach	• Co-plan and Support TC in developing role as instructional lead • Provide guidance regarding content and standards to be addressed • Facilitate solo teaching 50% - 75% of the day • Actively participate in co-teaching relationship • Conduct informal observations of TC to provide feedback on their instruction, classroom management, organization, etc. • Complete a Mid-Term Evaluation prior to the end of 6 weeks	• Work with CT to determine the content to be taught • Co-plan with CT, begin developing own materials • Plan and lead solo lessons 50% - 75% of the day • Collaborate with ancillary staff to meet the needs of all students • Communicate with families regarding student progress (phone calls, newsletters, P/T conferences, etc.) • SPE TCs: attend at least one IEP meeting with the CT during weeks 7-10
		• Support TC in role as instructional lead- development of lessons, classroom management, etc. • Facilitate solo teaching 75% - 100% of the day • Provide guidance regarding content and standards to be addressed • Conduct informal observations of TC to provide feedback on their instruction, classroom management, organization, etc.	• Determine the content to be taught • Plan and lead solo lessons 75% - 100% of the day • Collaborate with ancillary staff to meet the needs of all students • Meet weekly with CT to discuss progress and engage in self-reflection • Communicate with families regarding student progress (phone calls, newsletters, P/T conferences, etc.) • SPE TCs: attend at least one IEP meeting with the CT during weeks 7-10
		• Support TC in role as instructional lead- development of lessons, classroom management, etc. • Facilitate solo teaching 75% - 100% of the day • Provide guidance regarding content and standards to be addressed • Conduct informal observations of TC to provide feedback on their instruction, classroom management, organization, etc.	• Determine the content to be taught • Plan and lead solo lessons 75% - 100% of the day • Collaborate with ancillary staff to meet the needs of all students • Meet weekly with CT to discuss progress and engage in self-reflection • Communicate with families regarding student progress (phone calls, newsletters, P/T conferences, etc.)
		• Share the primary responsibilities of instructional lead • Co-plan and co-teach: CT resumes teaching 50% of the day in Week 11 • Provide guidance regarding content and standards to be addressed	• Share the primary responsibilities of instructional lead • Continue co-planning and co-teaching: TC reduces teaching to 50% of the day in Week 11
11-12	Observe and Assist	• CT resumes instructional lead for full day • Take back the primary responsibilities of instructional lead • Provide feedback to the TC and UC via the final evaluation and dispositions eval	• Return the primary responsibilities of instructional lead to the CT 100% • Finish scoring any assessments and entering grades into grading system • Ensure all materials have been returned to the building office • Observe and assist, via additional classrooms as possible • Complete final surveys in Taskstream and provide final feedback to UC • Write a thank you note to administrators and your teaching partners

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Cooperating Teacher SL&L Instructions – SPE 558

We have created an account for you in SL&L (Student Learning & Licensure). If you have previously used SL&L, please use the same log in link. If you do not have the link that was provided previously you may log in using this URL: https://sll.watermarkinsights.com/, clicking *"Forgot Password"* and resetting password using your school email address.

If you are new to SL&L, you will have received an email with a personalized link that automatically logs you in. This email will be from **"Watermark"**, which is the parent company of SL&L. Please check your spam/junk mailbox if it is not in your inbox.

In SL&L, you will be entered into a Student Teaching section. You will need to select the section name when you log into SL&L to access the activities (assignments). You will not be able to see any activity details until they complete their activity by submitting to you. Once your candidate submits their activity to you, you will see their completed works and will be able to assess at that time. As their Cooperating Teacher, you will be notified in SL&L via a bell in the upper right corner when the submission is ready to be assessed.

Within each activity, you will be able to view the directions to the student/candidate and the *Evaluation/Assessment Method* for the activity/assignment. You will need to click on the students name to view the activity details.

The evaluations that the Cooperating Teachers are expected to complete for each Teacher Candidate are the following:

1. **Dispositions Evaluation 1 & 2:** Teacher Candidates submit a self–evaluation to their Cooperating Teachers at two different points in the semester (around weeks 5-6 and 11-12.) The Cooperating Teacher will evaluate the candidate on a list of professional dispositions and behaviors by selecting "Distinguished", "Proficient", "Basic", or "Unsatisfactory".

2. **Mid-Progress & Final Student Teaching Evaluation (TC & CT [Mentor] Evaluation Feedback):** Teacher Candidates submit a self–evaluation to their Cooperating Teachers at two different points in the semester. The **Mid-Progress Evaluation** should be completed around weeks 5-6 and the **Final Evaluation** around weeks 11-12. Cooperating Teachers will score their candidate in each section by indicating either "Distinguished", "Proficient", "Basic", or "Unsatisfactory". **If the rubric item has not been observed yet, or it is not applicable, please select "N/A" for that item.

Teacher Candidates (Students) will initiate the submission process for these evaluations in SL&L. **As their Cooperating Teacher, you will be notified in SL&L via a bell in the upper right corner when the submission is ready to be assessed.**

To begin, simply make your selections directly in the grid on the right hand side panel or by clicking *"View rubric details"* and assessing within this larger view.

Revised 1/20/2025

Common Technical Issues

- SL&L works best by using the following browsers:
  - Firefox
  - Chrome
- If you are having difficulties accessing SL&L or assessing activities please clear your cookies and cached images "for all time," then try again. The platform tends to "jam" and needs a reset.
- Also, if you are using a MAC, please DO NOT use the Safari browser.

If you have any issues or questions regarding the process for these evaluations, please contact Sara VanAlstine, our SL&L Support Specialist, at CMUedPrep@cmich.edu.

You may also contact:
support@watermarkinsights.com

Detailed instructions for using SL&L as a CT/Mentor are attached, including screenshots.

watermark™
Student Learning & Licensure

Student Learning & Licensure (SLL) Mentor Instructions

*For the best way to access & use SLL: use a PC (not a MAC), use Chrome or Firefox browsers, and clear cookies & cashe.
*SLL does not like the use of the back or forward buttons.

Need help while working in Student Learning & Licensing (SL&L) or logging in?

Please contact our Student Learning & Licensing (SL&L) Coordinator at **CMUedprep@cmich.edu**

GLOSSARY

Term/Accronym	Definition
Section/Course	The current "shell" (DRF as called in Taskstream) aka 2024 Fall EDU ST Clinical Experience
Time Log	Attendance Log
Activity/Activities	Assignment(s)
SLL	Student Learning & Licensure
In Progress-Tab	Lists all the instructors active sections/courses
Members	Students, mentors, supervisors in that section
Mentors	Cooperating Teacher
Supervisors	University Coordinator
Instructor	Faculty/OEPP staff member
Shell	How we will refer to the Section/"DRF" (as called in Taskstream)
InProgress	Open section(s) you are assigned to
Assessment Title	Name of assignment
Assessment Panel	Shows a condensed way of evaluating/assessing assignment
Template	Specifically defines the requirements of the activity (assignment)
Timeline	For Instructors and Admins-Lists all closed sections/courses; For Students-shows their work, artifacts, completed assessments and activities awaiting assessment.
ePortfolios	For students: curate items from your (students) Timeline and elsewhere into custom ePortfolios that highlight your accomplishments. Only viewed by Student. Can be shared or made visible to others.
Profile	Your information aka-name, role, email, language, etc. Where you can change/update password.

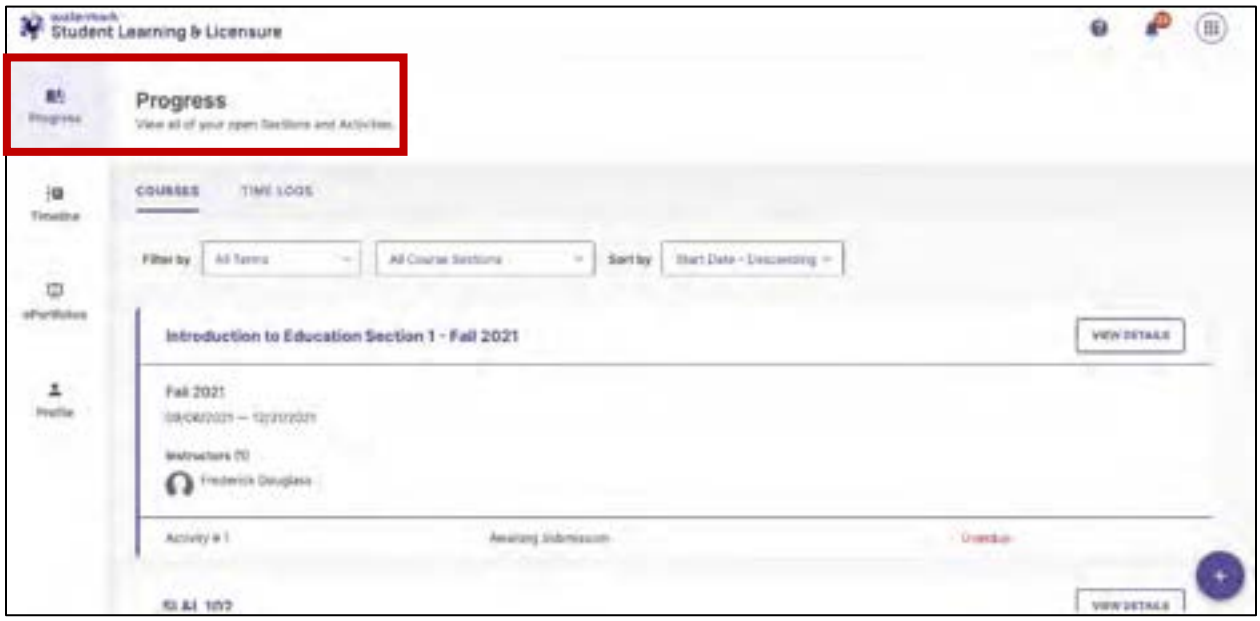
Mentor SL&L Training

How to Access Your Mentor Account (Logging In)

Access directly through link sent via email.

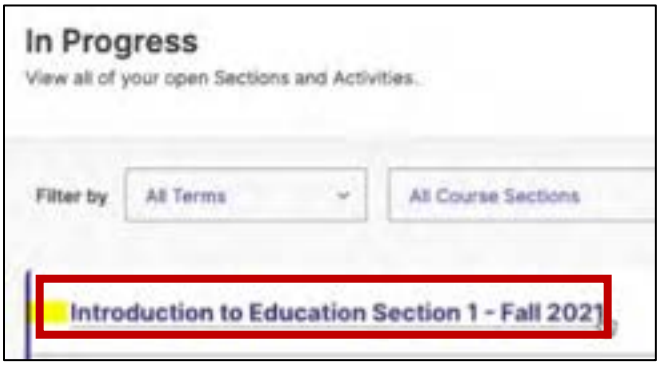
Click the link in your email notification - Once you are assigned as a mentor/cooperating teacher by a student's university, you will receive an email notification with a unique link that will take you directly into your SL&L account without having to enter login information. If you do not receive this email or have accidentally deleted it, contact CMU's SL&L Support at CMUedprep@cmich.edu.

You will then be taken to your accounts 'In Progress' page, which lists all courses you are part of.



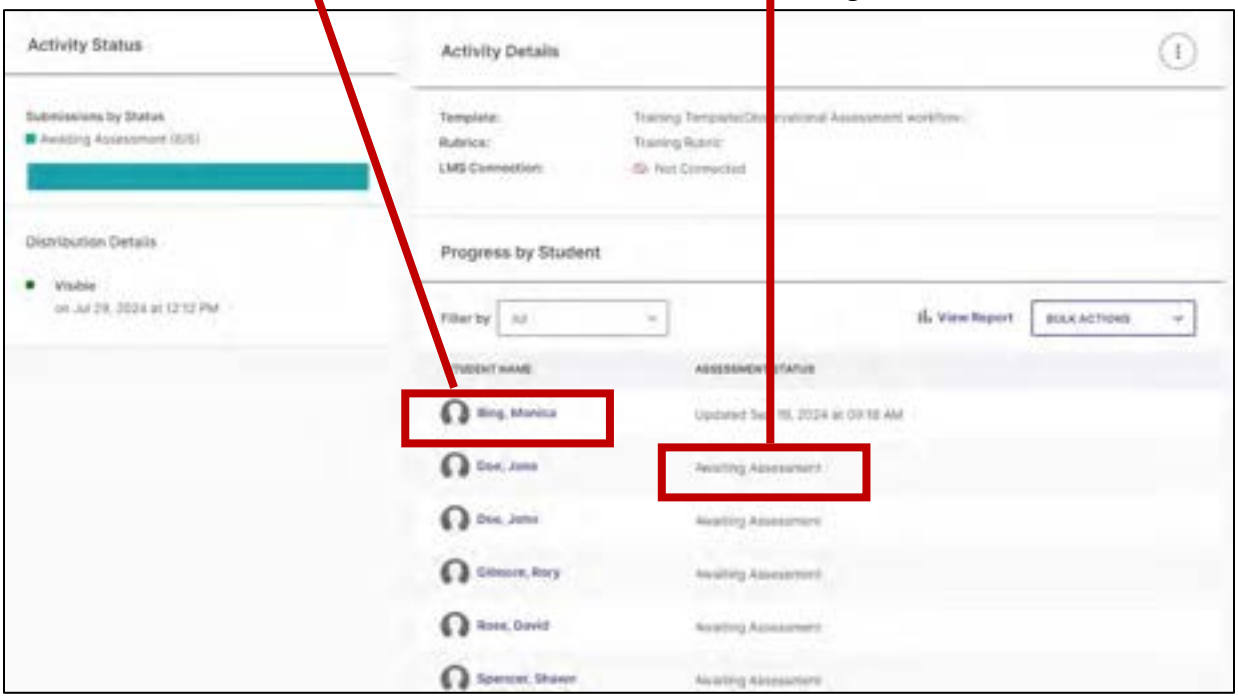
Accessing your course and assessments:

1. Click on the individual section (course):



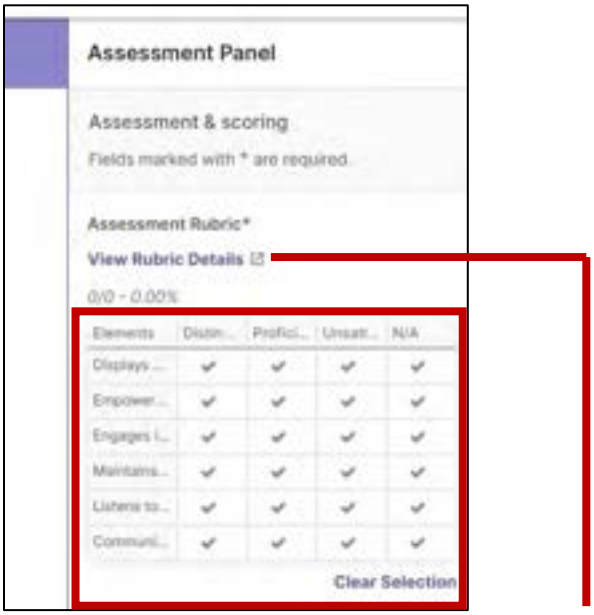
2. Click on the assignment name:

3. Click on the student's name whose assessment status is, "Awaiting Assessment":

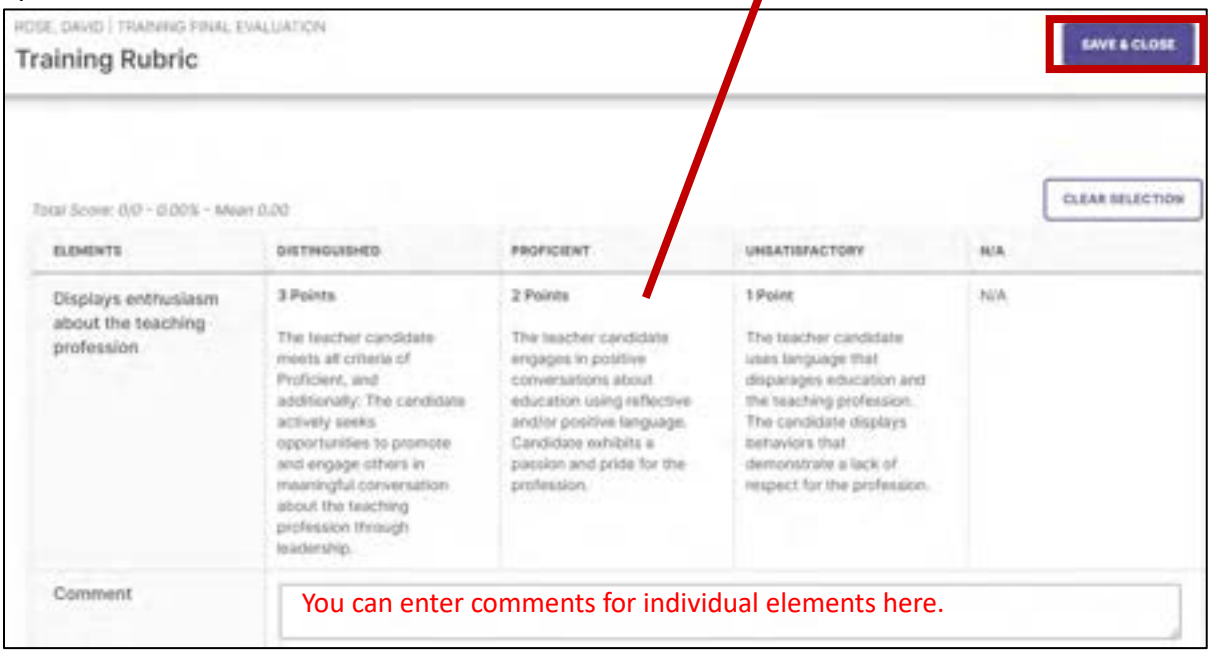


4. You can access Rubric's one of two ways:

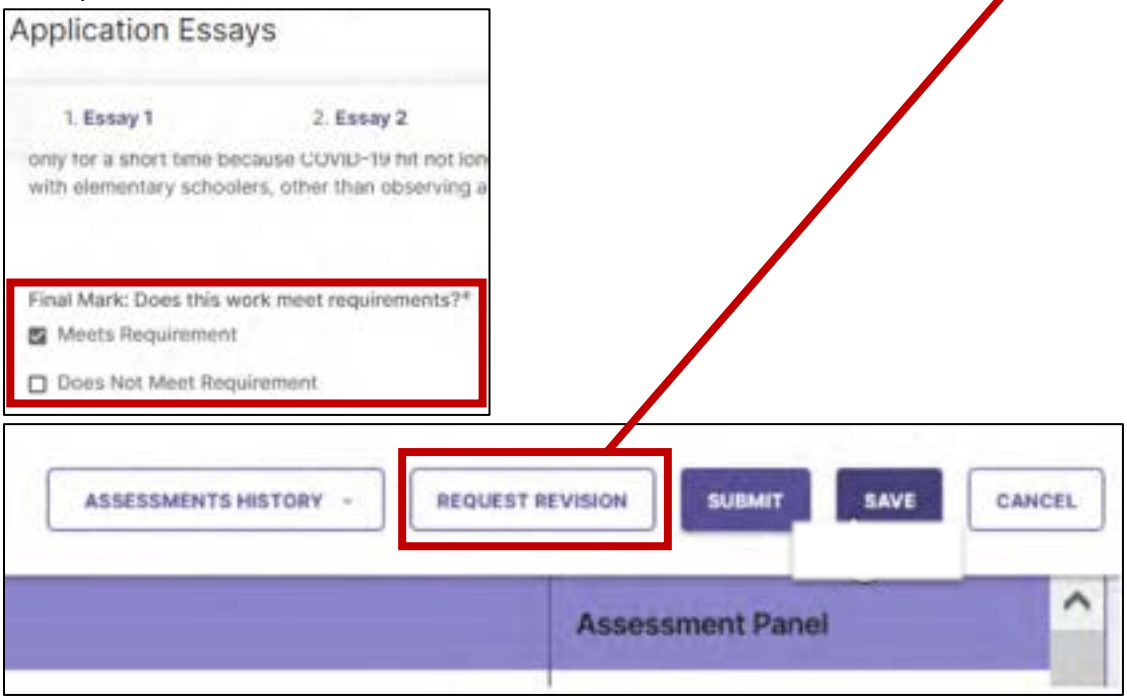
a. Clicking the appropriate check mark for each element in the small graph to the right-



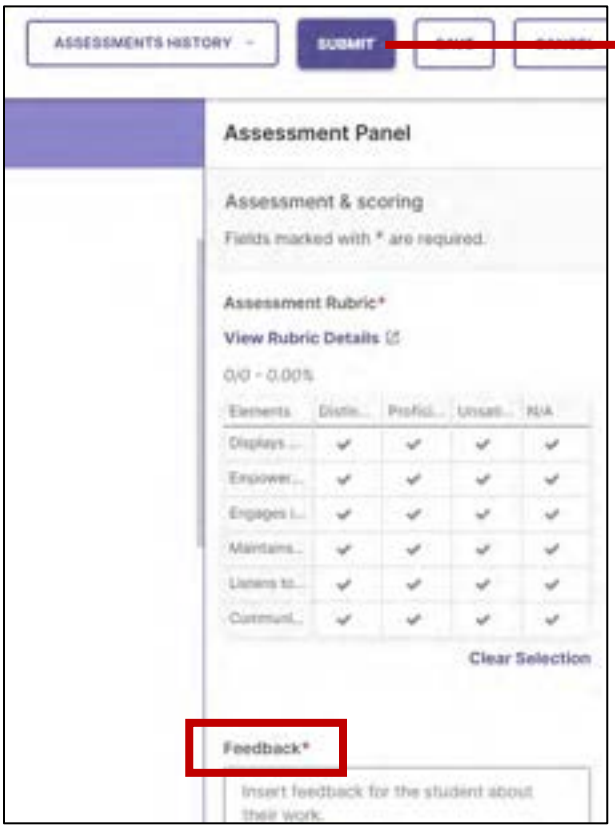
b. Opening the Rubric in full, clicking "View Rubric Details" & selecting appropriate options – then click "Save & Close":



5. Assessing with NO Rubric, select “Met…”. If it does not meet select “Request Revision” at the top.



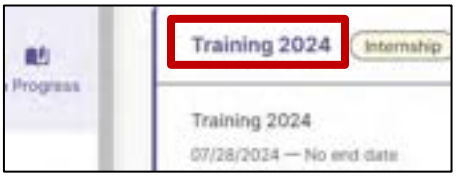
6. You can add general Feedback for assignement in whole, if any. If none click “Submit”:



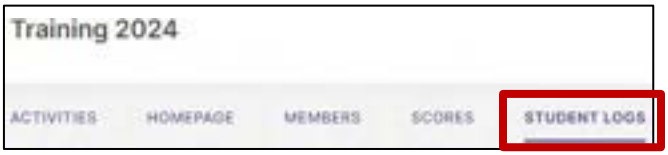
Approving or Rejecting Student Time Log Entries

****NOTE: THE TIME LOG FEATURE IS NOT USED IN SPE 558**; ABSENCES ARE RECORDED IN WEEKLY REFLECTIONS.

1. Click on the course title:



   a. Click on the 'Student Logs' tab to view any students who have recorded log entries:



   b. To view a student's time log entries, click on the students name:

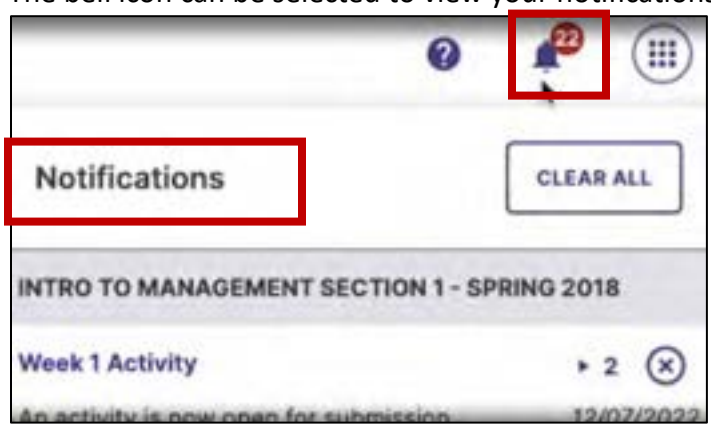
   c. On the students log entries list, click the green check mark to approve, or the red 'X' to reject.

   d. If you want to approve all or a group of entries, click the purple 'approve selected entries':

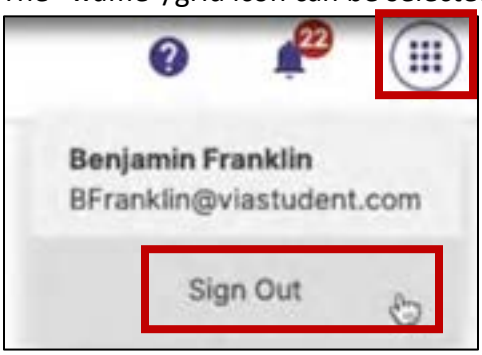
Helpful Tips

Upper right corner icons

1. The bell icon can be selected to view your notifications



2. The “waffle”/grid icon can be selected to successfully log out



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