

**SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY**

**DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL  
EDUCATION**

**PRACTICUM HANDBOOK**

The Programs in the Department of Special Education, College of Education, San Diego State University have been approved by the national Commission for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Student Conduct.....	3
Field Experiences in Special Education .....	4
Overview of Each Practicum.....	5
Early Childhood Credential Candidates.....	8
Internship Requirements .....	9
Selection of Practicum Placements .....	10
Desired Site/Program Qualities .....	11
Desired Mentor Teacher Qualities.....	12
Timeline for Assumption of Teaching Responsibilities .....	15
Responsibilities of the Credential Candidate .....	17
Responsibilities of the Mentor Teacher.....	19
Responsibilities of the University Supervisor .....	21
Responsibilities of the Practicum Coordinator .....	23
Entering the Profession .....	24
Frequently Asked Questions (University Supervisors).....	26
Frequently Asked Questions (Mentor Teachers).....	28

**Appendices:** **A.** Checklist of Items to Discuss at First Meeting of University Supervisor, Mentor Teacher and Student Teacher; **B.** Must Read Items; **C.** Terminology Defined



## INTRODUCTION

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### A GUIDE AND A RESOURCE

The student teaching practicum process can seem complicated and confusing. This handbook represents an effort to describe the process systematically and clearly so all who participate in it can easily understand the “big picture” and each of its elements. We hope you find the handbook “user friendly” and helpful.

Please use the Handbook as a guide and resource as you perform your particular role in the procedure. It may not answer all questions about the practical aspects of the credential programs, but it should clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations. Should you have questions not addressed in the handbook, feel free to bring them to the Practicum Coordinators or other faculty members of the Department of Special Education.

We recommend that you read over the information contained herein. If something is not clear, please ask for clarification. As you participate in the process, be sure to keep in mind that any feedback or suggestions based on experiences and observations you may have are welcomed. It is only in this way that the handbook and the program itself can be improved, integrated and developed to maximize effectiveness.



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## STUDENT CONDUCT

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Students preparing to become special educators are expected to conduct themselves ethically consistent with the Council For Exceptional Children *Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Practice* (Please see Appendices) as well as with SDSU's Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities. [Note: the latter can be found on the SDSU webpage: <http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/statement/index.html> ]

In this course each student is expected to contribute to a positive learning environment by being on time to class, not leaving class early, turning off cell phones and beepers, and, in all class-related interactions, treating others in a manner that is courteous and that promotes mutual respect and equality of others.

Further, students are expected to exhibit academic conduct that reflects the highest levels of honesty and integrity. The Student Disciplinary Procedures for the California State University specifically prohibit cheating or plagiarism and provide that such acts may result in a student being expelled, suspended, placed on probation or given a lesser sanction.

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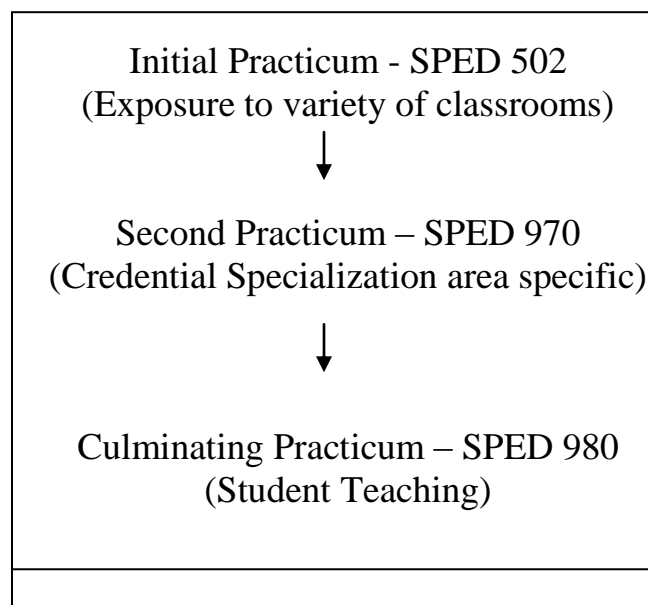
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## FIELD EXPERIENCES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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### THREE PRIMARY FIELD EXPERIENCES

The Education Specialist Credential Programs (Mild/Moderate, M/M; Moderate/Severe, M/S; and Early Childhood Special Education, ECSE) typically require three field experiences. The second and third practica build upon an initial 24 hours of observation (SPED 502) that candidates conduct in a variety of classrooms. This initial practicum is required for all undergraduate pre-education students as a part of the Liberal Studies major and/or the field work required in child development or early childhood programs.



## ***SEQUENCE OF PRACTICA***

The second two practica are a department-specific field experience sequence. It begins with the prerequisite undergraduate concentration in special education and continues through the subsequent course of study for Level I. It is designed to include opportunities to observe and participate in educational settings that serve students from diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial, and sociocultural backgrounds. Efforts are made to insure that practical experiences occur in school sites or settings where at least 25% of the students are from ethnolinguistically diverse backgrounds. These experiences correspond to the organization and structure of the credential program sequence.

## **OVERVIEW OF EACH PRACTICUM**

The initial practicum, **SPED 502: Field Experience in General and Special Education**, involves introductory observation and limited participation opportunities across a range of programs, ages and settings within both general and special education. **SPED 970: Practicum: Students with Disabilities in General and Special Education**, narrows this focus to the specific area of credential authorization and provides candidates with hands-on opportunities to apply the skills and knowledge they are learning in their credential courses. The culminating practicum, **SPED 980: Advanced Practicum**, extends the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge they are acquiring, intensifies the involvement and responsibility of the credential candidate, and requires demonstration of the competencies required for recommendation for the Education Specialist Credential.

The basic requirements for each practicum follow. Detailed and specific requirements are outlined in the course syllabus for each of the practica.

### **SPED 502: Field Experience in General and Special Education.**

This one-unit prerequisite field experience course is designed to provide a wide range of observation and participation experiences across a variety of general and special education settings. Candidates observe a variety of program models across a range of ages and grade levels, including early childhood special education. All candidates observe and, if appropriate, participate in both general and special education programs at primary,

intermediate and secondary levels as well as programs/settings in which infants and toddlers with disabilities are served, such as hospital, home, clinic, nursery school and school settings (both general and special education.) The potential settings reflect the following:

- Different ages (infants and toddlers; elementary, intermediate, and secondary; post-secondary);
- Different types of programs (infant/preschool, general education, special education inclusive programs, special education pull-out programs, special education special day classrooms, and special education related services programs);
- Different disability groups (i.e., learning disabilities, mental retardation, physical and health impairment, emotional impairment, visually impairment, hearing impairment, and autism).

Candidates are provided with observational protocols to guide their experiences and should acquire basic observational skills. They support or assist teachers and service providers in rudimentary ways that require little instructional skill or sophistication. Candidates keep reflective journals and, during the seminar portion of SPED 502, share and explore these reflections as they begin to build their personal understanding and philosophy of special education.

### **SPED 970: Practicum: Students with Disabilities in Special Education.**

The Level I, 4-unit practicum (SPED 970) is offered in separate sections for each of the credential authorizations. This practicum requires a minimum of 90 hours of participation in program settings. In most instances each M/M and M/S credential candidate is placed in a single school, and is guided by a credentialed mentor teacher who facilitates opportunities to complete semester-one course assignments in general education and special education programs within that school setting. The ECSE credential special education candidates are required to complete separate practicums in two settings, infant /toddler and preschool. These two practicums take place over two semesters. They are under the supervision of a credentialed special educator with infant/toddler or preschool experience. In some instances, other early intervention professionals provide guidance and supervision. ECSE candidates will not take SPED 970.

The first semester coursework (i.e., SPED 534, SPED 643A, SPED 647, etc.) provide instruction that includes application assignments to be completed in the practicum settings. During this semester, candidates work directly with individual students and, in some instances, small groups of students. In addition, candidates observe mentor teachers, parent conferences (as appropriate), student study teams, and IEP or IFSP teams. Some of the first semester course requirements may include self-videotaping of components of instruction in the designated setting, application of specific informal assessment principles, and application of specific behavior management strategies. Candidates are trained to record and analyze their own instruction and to gather instructional and behavioral data. Video and self-evaluation protocols may be presented in the periodic seminar meetings where the practicum faculty facilitates and extends candidate reflection on their experiences while applying their emerging knowledge and skills.

Candidates also develop professional dossiers that include reflective journals, sample assessments, sample behavior intervention plans, and sample lesson plans. During the seminar portion of SPED 970, students share experiences and explore reflections as they continue to develop their skills and understanding of special education.

### **SPED 980: Advanced Practicum in Special Education**

The 10-unit culminating practicum in Level I (M/M, M/S), spans 14 weeks. Candidates participate in the identified program settings five full days per week. During the first two weeks candidates orient themselves to specific site rules and procedures. They also use the time to familiarize themselves with classroom rules, procedures, curriculum, and individual student IEPs, as appropriate. Also during this time candidates shadow mentor teachers to observe and analyze teaching strategies, classroom management methods and daily teaching responsibilities. In specific instances when only four days of practicum are required, the fifth day may be utilized for intensive course instruction, specialized skill workshops and guided candidate reflections on their experiences. Candidates' responsibility for instruction increases over time, with their assuming full responsibility for all class or caseload instruction for a minimum of 10 consecutive school days.

As in SPED 970, there is specific course-required (i.e. SPED 648 & SPED 645) self-videotaping and self-analysis, with both the Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor guiding continued reflective analysis of classroom interactions and the candidate's instructional delivery. During this culminating experience, candidates participate, as appropriate, in

school/program site faculty meetings, student study team meetings, IEP/IFSP team meetings, parent conferences and, under the guidance of the Mentor Teacher, provide consultation to other educators at the school site.

### **Early Childhood Credential Candidates**

The culminating practica for ECSE credential candidates is configured differently to ensure that candidates have adequate time in infant/toddler settings as well as preschool programs. The culminating practica involve two 14 week segments. Candidates spend 14 weeks in an infant/toddler setting and a second 14 weeks in a preschool setting. These practica occur over two semesters

Responsibility for instruction increases over time at each setting, with candidates assuming responsibility for all class or caseload instruction for a minimum period of 10 consecutive school days at each setting. Supervised by a trained and experienced on-site early childhood special educator/early interventionist with support from the University Supervisor, they engage in self-reflection and self-evaluation activities. “Candidate Profiles” that identify student strengths as well as areas in which they need improvement are developed.

During the practica seminars, the University Supervisor extends candidate self-reflection and self-evaluation and collaborates with the candidates in identifying individual strengths as well as specific areas that need development. This information, along with observations from the site supervisor and university supervisor form the basis for the “New Teacher Induction Plan” that is developed for each candidate in concert with the employing district following candidate completion of Level I of the Educational Specialist Credential.



## **Requirements Relative to the Internship Credential**

Candidates classified as Interns have been provisionally hired by a school district and are given essentially the same responsibilities as fully credentialed teachers. School districts typically assign a credentialed special education teacher to act as a mentor to support the Intern.

Interns generally participate in four semesters of practicum enrollment, including the culminating advanced practicum, SPED 980 (Advanced Practicum in Special Education). The teaching assignment of the Intern serves as the primary practicum setting while completing the required academic and practica course work.

Each Intern works with an Internship Support Provider (ISP) to assess his/her own background of experiences in general and special education. Based on this assessment, a cooperative plan for skill development is created to ensure that those skills not yet demonstrated are documented for the Intern. The intern obtains these experiences in the following ways: (1) observing and participating in other programs and settings at their school site; (2) spending periodic release days observing and participating in programs in other schools and settings (districts are required to provide 3 to 6 release days to the Interns); and/or (3) completing practica assignments during the summer school period. During the school year, an ISP assigned by the district is responsible for assisting each Intern. Interns provide documentation of all completed practicum assignments by the end of the first year.

At the beginning of the second year of the Internship Credential program a university representative and the district mentor meet with the Intern Support Provider, as appropriate, to review progress and to identify any supplemental practicum experiences that may be indicated. A revised plan is developed, and Interns are required to fulfill the requirements of this plan during the Fall term. During the second semester of the second year, Interns demonstrate competence in all program competencies as specified for the credential authorization area. During the practicum seminar, the University Supervisor works with the Intern to identify strengths as well as weaknesses that need additional development. This information serves as the basis for creating a "New Teacher Induction Plan" that is developed in concert with the employing district after the Intern completes the Educational Specialist Credential I portion of the credentialing process.



## **SELECTION OF PRACTICUM PLACEMENTS**

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The faculty of the SDSU Department of Special Education recognizes and appreciates the critical importance of the culminating practicum. Research has demonstrated that much more than the preceding and concurrent coursework; the culminating practicum experience has the strongest influence on the development of both the skills and attitudes of the emerging teacher. As the professional who observes and provides guidance to the candidates on a daily basis, the Mentor Teacher plays a uniquely important role in ensuring the depth and quality of this critical experience.

The Department has identified desired qualities for school sites, programs, and Mentor Teachers. These qualities serve as guidelines in selecting placements for the culminating practicum experience.

### *Desired Site/Program Qualities*

- ❖ Effective instructional practices with strong school leadership.
- ❖ A positive, accepting and encouraging environment for special education students, teachers, and programs.
- ❖ Where possible, more than one special education program located on site; having fully credentialed teachers for all special education programs at the site.
- ❖ Common philosophical orientation among the special education program/class/teacher and the SDSU Department of Special Education.
- ❖ School calendar consistent with a seamless, uninterrupted practicum experience for the teacher candidate. (Explanation: Generally, the Department will not select sites at schools or programs that are “off track” or otherwise not in session during a significant portion of the designated culminating practicum time period.)
- ❖ A student and teacher population that is culturally, ethnically, racially, linguistically, and economically diverse.
- ❖ A special education program that is consistent with contemporary “best practices” for educational programs for students with disabilities.
- ❖ School site promotes feeling of collegiality of staff.

## *Desired Mentor Teacher Qualities*

### **Professional Training and Experience**

- ❖ Education Specialist Credential in program area that candidate is seeking
- ❖ Experienced special education teacher; minimum 3 years; MA preferred

### **Interpersonal, Professional, And Supervisory Skills**

- ❖ Recognized for having good interpersonal and communication skills
- ❖ Demonstrates flexibility; e.g. allows candidate to try new instructional and management approaches
- ❖ Displays optimism and humor
- ❖ Familiar with district and school site policies and procedures, including special education procedures
- ❖ Respected member of school/district faculty
- ❖ Ability to work with other professionals and paraprofessionals
- ❖ Willing to allocate time necessary to provide appropriate student teacher support
- ❖ Understands the evaluation process/guidelines and willing to coordinate supervision/evaluation of credential candidate with the University Supervisor
- ❖ Communicates regularly with University Supervisor and communicates concerns and works with University Supervisor and candidate to resolve issues and assist in development of necessary skills
- ❖ Demonstrates skills necessary for working with parents and families to include individuals from ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds

## **Instructional Skills And Orientation**

- ❖ Demonstrates instructional skills consistent with those emphasized in credential training program at SDSU
- ❖ Demonstrates classroom management skills consistent with those emphasized in credential training program at SDSU
- ❖ Provides credential candidate opportunities to implement/practice new techniques and strategies introduced in training program at SDSU
- ❖ Creates opportunities for participation in general education program/experiences
- ❖ Demonstrates effective teaching practices supported by research:
  - Play based interventions
  - Maximizing allocated instructional time
  - Provides for one-one, small group, and large group instruction
  - Plans for and implements efficient transitions
  - Demonstrates knowledge of appropriate curriculums
  - Demonstrates effective teaching methodologies, e.g. direct instruction, mastery learning, cooperative learning, reciprocal learning, peer tutoring
  - Effective classroom organization and management skills
  - Effective classroom behavior management
  - Efficient data collection techniques
  - Systematic and sequential lesson planning, implementation, closure, and evaluation
  - Elicits high rates of student responses
  - Monitors student responses and provides corrective feedback
  - Provides high rates of positive feedback
  - Maintains appropriate instructional pacing
  - Maintains high rate of student engagement
  - Effectively monitors all classroom activities
  - Effectively evaluates student performance
  - Practices effective 2<sup>nd</sup> language teaching strategies
  - Effective/appropriate interactions with parents/families
  - Effective demonstration and modeling of concepts, rules, and strategies
  - Uses materials that are age appropriate

- ❖ Monitors student performance and communicates effectively with parents/guardians
- ❖ Monitors student performance consistent with IFSP/IEP/ITP goals and objectives
- ❖ Monitors student performance on an ongoing basis and in a manner that can be understood by others
- ❖ Demonstrates skills in administration of appropriate assessment instruments
- ❖ Demonstrates skills in interpretation of assessment results necessary for effective instructional planning
- ❖ Demonstrates skills in effectively planning for effective use of instructional assistants

## **TIMELINE FOR ASSUMPTION OF TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES – CULMINATING PRACTICUM**

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### **Candidates Working with Mentor Teachers – SPED 980**

Candidates working in a Mentor Teacher's classroom are expected to gradually increase their teaching responsibilities over the course of the semester. A suggested sequence for the assumption of these responsibilities is provided below for a fourteen-week practicum assignment.

#### **Fourteen Week Schedule**

- For Weeks One and Two, observe in class and assist in small group or individual instruction as assigned by the Mentor Teacher. Become familiar with school and program rules and procedures to include individual student working folders.
- In Week Three and Four, assume responsibility for conducting at least one small group instructional experience per day.
- In Week Five, assume full responsibility for a minimum of four days of planning and delivering instruction in at least one curriculum area (e.g., reading, math, social studies.) This is to be done in consultation with and under the supervision of the Mentor Teacher and should include plans for utilization of the teacher's aide. In addition, the candidate should plan and conduct the instruction of two small groups daily in other curriculum areas and assist the teacher in other ways as requested. The Mentor Teacher should provide specific feedback and assistance to the candidate.
- Beginning in Week Six, the Mentor Teacher should leave the room for some of instructional lessons, increasing the length of these absences over time.
- In Weeks Six through Nine, the candidate should continue to plan and conduct two small group instructional sessions a day and assume full responsibility for planning and delivering instruction in two curriculum areas. In addition, he/she should assume responsibility for recess, lunch and /or other non-instructional times. The Mentor

Teacher should monitor and evaluate these activities, providing daily feedback to the candidate.

- Beginning in Week Ten, and continuing through Week Fourteen, the candidate should assume responsibility for all instructional and non-instructional activities. He/she should utilize teacher's aide effectively, participate in parent/family conferences as deemed appropriate, and respond constructively to feedback from master teacher and university supervisor. During this period, candidate should have 10 full days of sole responsibility for all aspects of planning, scheduling, and delivering instruction, managing the classroom, and directing the instructional aide or volunteers.



## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CREDENTIAL CANDIDATE**

- ❖ Prior to beginning the practicum, review options for professional liability insurance through the California Teacher Association, the Council for Exceptional Children, or other carrier. The university does not provide professional liability coverage for students in placement and it is the candidate's responsibility to protect him or herself against any claims.
- ❖ Attend the orientation meeting. (Important credential information is shared at this time and all practicum requirements are reviewed.)
- ❖ Review the Code of Ethics of the Council for Exceptional Children, as well as district and school site policies and procedures; adhere to each of these (See appendix.).
- ❖ Establish positive working relationships with the master teacher and the classroom aide.
- ❖ Maintain confidentiality regarding students and their families.
- ❖ Candidates should consult with their University Supervisor and Master Teacher about designated arrival/departure times.
- ❖ Dress in a professional manner as reflected by the dress of other teachers at the school site. Jeans, sundresses, sweatshirts, shorts, sandals, hats, and brief tops typically are considered inappropriate.
- ❖ Prepare weekly lesson plans for all classes. Review them with the master teacher and maintain a Practicum Notebook that will be easily accessible to the university supervisor when he/she visits.
- ❖ The Practicum Notebook must contain lesson plans with "barebone" details of weekly planning, individual lesson plans, detailed lesson plans for sessions observed by supervisor, local site information, daily/weekly schedules, and other relevant experience information.
- ❖ Meet timelines set by master teacher and university supervisor.

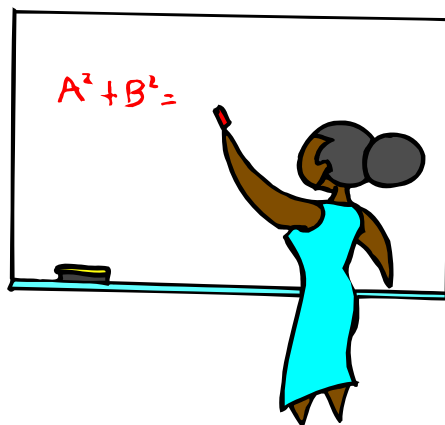
- ❖ Provide the University Supervisor with a schedule of weekly instructional and non-instructional activities for the classroom.
- ❖ As the University Supervisor will make both scheduled and unscheduled visits, it is important that the supervisor be informed on any changes in school or class schedule. As soon as the candidate learns of a change in the schedule, he/she should immediately inform the University Supervisor. Phone or email messages can be left at the number/address provided by the supervisor.
- ❖ Maintain open communication with both your master teacher and your university supervisor, discussing problems or concerns as they arise.
- ❖ Avoid school gossip and school politics. Maintain a friendly professional demeanor with everyone at your school site.
- ❖ Participate in parent-teacher conferences and make other family contacts as required by the University Supervisor and deemed appropriate by the Mentor Teacher.
- ❖ Attend all school functions (e.g., PTA meetings, IEP/IFSP meetings) and other school site events that your master teacher attends and/or that are required by your University Supervisor.
- ❖ Complete other assignments as assigned by the University Supervisor and attend all scheduled seminar meetings and conferences with supervisor.
- ❖ Engage in on-going self-evaluation and reflection, and maintain an open, non-defensive and productive responsiveness to feedback from the master teacher and university supervisor.
- ❖ Participate in a mid-term and final evaluation conference to assess competency development.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTOR TEACHER**

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- ❖ Attend orientation meeting for Mentor Teachers.
- ❖ Prepare the class for the candidate's arrival. Create an atmosphere of acceptance by introducing him/her as a fellow teacher and co-worker.
- ❖ Meet with candidate and develop plan that enables him/her to participate in all activities required by the university and to do so within the framework of the "Timeline" (presented previously).
- ❖ Assist the candidate in planning instruction **as it relates to IEP goals and objectives** and review all instructional plans developed.
- ❖ Observe and provide feedback (both oral and written) to the teacher candidate on a weekly basis. Set aside a regular time for conferring with the teacher candidate about his/her progress as a professional. Give suggestions for improvement, clarify your criteria for evaluation, and use the competency checklist and course requirements to guide the student's experience.
- ❖ Provide feedback to the University Supervisor **during supervisor visits and as needed**. Let the supervisor know immediately if the teacher candidate is having any difficulties. Communication among all members of the team is essential to the success of the program.
- ❖ Provide the teacher candidate with a copy of your school or program's Policy Manual, Faculty handbook, copies of textbooks, teacher's guides, appropriate instructional materials and other materials that will enhance his/her experience.
- ❖ Provide consultation on classroom routines, behavior management, special techniques for handling groups and special health needs.
- ❖ Demonstrate, discuss, model and evaluate teaching techniques and approaches.
- ❖ Require lesson plans from the teacher candidate, including daily, weekly, and long range/unit plans for the content areas for which they are responsible. Review and comment on lesson plans prior to

- ❖ Help the teacher candidate develop proficiency in the techniques of individual, small group, and large group instruction. This may include videotaping candidate as they deliver instruction.
- ❖ When feasible, provide an opportunity for the candidate to participate in collaborative and team planning activities in which you are involved with other teachers and staff.
- ❖ Assist the candidate in developing skills in working productively with other teachers and related services personnel at the school site.
- ❖ Facilitate the candidate's involvement in the array of professional teacher roles, including parent conferences, parent-teacher group meetings, school staff meetings, special school events and the like.
- ❖ Encourage self-evaluation and reflective practice by the teacher candidate.
- ❖ Complete the formal, written mid-term and final competency evaluations of the candidate and review each with the candidate. Both forms are advisory in nature and are to be shared with the University Supervisor.



## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR**

The University Supervisor's role is to support, advise, guide and professionally evaluate the credential candidate. The role is critical in assisting candidates throughout the culminating practicum. Equally important is the responsibility to insure that the candidate is well prepared, by virtue of their practicum experience, to take on a classroom of their own. There are many facets to the job of the University Supervisor. Here is a list of the most important ones. (Also, see the section on Frequently Asked Questions.)

- ❖ Familiarize yourself with the school and its programs and introduce yourself to the Mentor Teacher and the site principal.
- ❖ Provide the Mentor Teacher with copies of this handbook, competency check forms, other evaluation/feedback forms and other appropriate information.
- ❖ Provide regular evaluative feedback to the teacher candidate and give specific recommendations regarding the methods of the competency evaluation expectations.
- ❖ Make scheduled as well as unscheduled visits to observe the candidate. Review the candidate's lesson planning notebook during each visit.
- ❖ At the close of each observation, leave written comments for the candidate to review. If possible, meet at least briefly with the master teacher as well as the candidate following an observation before leaving a school site.
- ❖ Observe the candidate in the classroom regularly and as needed. Leave feedback forms with the candidate at the conclusion of the visit and have frequent face-to-face, telephonic, and/or electronic conferences with the candidate.
- ❖ Provide support and assistance that helps the teacher candidate to develop the skills and competencies required for the Specialist Credential.

- ❖ Confer regularly with the Mentor Teacher. Respond appropriately to concerns raised by the Mentor Teacher. Facilitate communication between the Mentor Teacher and the teacher candidate and assist in integrating the candidate into the culture of the school site.
- ❖ Complete the final evaluation of the competencies achieved prior to the end of the semester, doing so in conference with the master teacher and teacher candidate.
- ❖ Maintain careful records of all observations and contacts and submit these along with all evaluation forms and the completed final evaluation to the Practica Coordinator at the end of the semester, or sooner if indicated.



## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRACTICUM COORDINATOR**

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- ❖ Review applications to determine eligibility for culminating practica; correspond with applicants about status; inform candidates of date and place of orientation.
- ❖ Coordinate the identification of practica placements and maintain an on-going file of Mentor Teachers and University Supervisors.
- ❖ Conduct orientation meetings for Mentor Teachers university supervisors, and candidates. Disseminate relevant materials to each.
- ❖ Facilitate Directed Internship seminar meetings.
- ❖ Coordinate and support the activities of the University Supervisors, providing direct consultative assistance in instances where candidates are failing to meet competency.
- ❖ Collect and file all practicum rating forms, maintaining a record of each candidate's experience.
- ❖ Bring to faculty for consideration the names of any interns who experience significant difficulty such that they may be in jeopardy of receiving a NC grade. Inform department of all NC grades given.
- ❖ Distribute and collect candidate evaluations of practicum experiences.

## **ENTERING THE PROFESSION**

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### **Applying for the Credential**

In the beginning of the final semester of a candidates program of studies for the Level I Education Specialist Credential, the SPED area coordinator will conduct a preliminary application process meeting. Instructions will be given at this time that will assist candidates in the application process. If a candidate is unable to attend this meeting they should contact the College of Education Credentials Office to obtain directions for applying for the Specialist Credential. Candidates should do this early in their final semester so that the application process goes smoothly.

As a candidate who is completing a credential program at SDSU, you may utilize the services the Office of Career Services at SDSU. The Office of Career Services provides the following services:

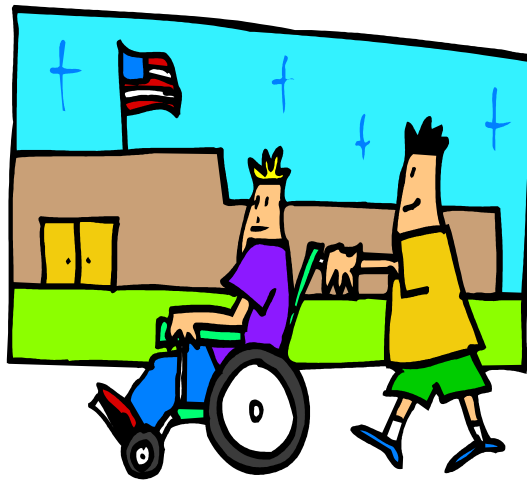
1. Develops listing of jobs for which you qualify, locally, within California or out of state.
2. Sends copies of your placement file to prospective employers at your request.
3. Offers workshops designed to help you write your resume and prepare for the interview process.
4. Schedules on-campus interviews with prospective employers.

Candidates have the option of including their final competency evaluation in their placement files. Candidates may request that either one, or both, evaluations are included. In the either case, a statement will be attached stating that the candidate received a final evaluation from both the Mentor Teacher and the University Supervisor.

### **Professional Organizations**

As a graduate student in Special Education, you are expected to have memberships in appropriate professional organizations. Organizations such as The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), The Association for individuals with Severe Disabilities, and the council for Learning Disabilities, have been established to improve the profession of Special Education and provide for the continuing professional development of their members.

The Student Council of Exceptional Children (SCEC) is the SDSU student chapter of the The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). As a preservice student, you are eligible to join at the student membership rate. The students you meet in the organization will be your colleagues in the profession you are about to enter, and your joint efforts will determine the future of the field and the nature, quantity and quality of services available to exceptional individuals. All members of CEC receive two journals: *Teaching Exceptional Children* and *Exceptional Children*. Contact the Department Office for the name of the faculty advisor.



# **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

(For University Supervisors)

## **HOW DO I MAKE SURE MY EMPLOYMENT IS OFFICIAL?**

You must first register with the university at the personnel department. Second, you must fill out forms provided through the Department of Special Education.

## **WHAT IS THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF VISITS THAT MUST BE MADE TO STUDENT TEACHERS?**

At least five visits must be made, four of which must be formal observations of the student teacher.

## **DO I GET PAID FOR MILEAGE?**

Yes. To receive payment you must submit a mileage form (provided by the SPED Department) before the end of the semester.

## **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT ONE OF MY STUDENTS IS IN DANGER OF NOT PASSING STUDENT TEACHING?**

Discuss the student with the Master Teacher and the Program Coordinator in the Department. A plan for how to proceed should be agreed upon. If a student is in danger of not passing, the possibility must be recognized and reported by the midpoint of the semester.

## **MUST I MEET WITH THE PRINCIPAL AT EVERY SCHOOL AT WHICH I HAVE A STUDENT TEACHER?**

No, but a note or phone message should be left for the principal to inform her/him that you will be coming on campus periodically to observe the student teacher. Every effort should be made to personally meet with the School Director/Principal.

## **HOW DO I OBTAIN MORE OBSERVATION OR OTHER FORMS SHOULD I NEED THEM?**

Request them from either the Program Coordinator in the Department or the Special Education Office. They can be made available for you to pick up or can be mailed to you.

## WHEN DO I TURN IN MY COMPLETED STUDENT TEACHER FORMS?

They must be turned in prior to the end of the semester. They can be turned over to the Program Coordinator in the Department. If you wish, of course, you may mail them in. A deadline date will be provided for you.

## DO I HAVE TO ATTEND THE SUPERVISOR MEETING THAT OCCURS PRIOR TO THE START OF STUDENT TEACHING?

Yes. At the meeting you will be given observation forms, mileage forms, information about your students, and you will be informed about new developments and requirements. Also, questions and useful topics are discussed.

## WHAT DO I DO IF I FIND THAT A STUDENT'S PLACEMENT IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR THE STUDENT TEACHER?

Contact the Program Coordinator in the Department immediately. It may be possible to make the change to a more appropriate placement.

## HOW MANY WEEKS MUST THE STUDENT BE IN HIS/HER PLACEMENT?

For all SPED 980 students, a minimum of 14 weeks, exclusive of vacation time, is required. Early Childhood candidates serve two placements of 14 weeks each.

## AM I REQUIRED TO HOLD MEETINGS WITH MY STUDENT TEACHERS AT AN OFF SCHOOL SITE?

Although not a formal requirement, we strongly suggest you hold one or two meetings with your student teachers as a group at an off-school site location. Experience demonstrates that these meetings are valuable and appreciated by student teachers. They provide an opportunity for all to interact, ask questions, discuss and share problems and solutions in an informal atmosphere. It also allows the supervisor to provide helpful information and advice to all.

# **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

(For Mentor Teachers)

## **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT THE ABILITIES OF MY STUDENT TEACHER?**

The first thing to do is to make a list or description of your concerns. You need to document exactly what the student's behavior is that is of concern. You should also discuss your concerns with the student teacher to give him/her a chance to improve. Also, contact the University Supervisor and describe your concerns regarding the situation. If the behavior is egregious let the supervisor know immediately.

## **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY STUDENT TEACHER DOESN'T SHOW UP AT SCHOOL AS EXPECTED?**

First, be sure you have discussed with the student teacher what procedure to follow if he/she cannot be at school. Later in the day phone the student teacher if you have not heard from him/her and inquire into the situation. Keep track of absences and if they are excessive let the University Supervisor know.

## **SHOULD I ALLOW MY STUDENT TEACHER TO TRY ANY TEACHING METHOD, TECHNIQUE OR IDEA THAT HE/SHE WANTS, EVEN THOUGH I KNOW IT IS INEFFECTIVE?**

Your good judgment is important here. Student teachers need to be allowed some latitude for trial and error in their learning and therefore should be given opportunities to try it their way. However, if you feel what the student teacher is proposing could be harmful to students or their learning, you obviously would need to say no. Sometimes it is appropriate to discuss methods of evaluating the effect or consequences of what the student teacher wants to do so results can be objectively assessed. Also, you can suggest alternative approaches for the student to try.

## **TO HOW HIGH A STANDARD SHOULD I HOLD MY STUDENT TEACHER?**

As with any learning, at the beginning the learner is susceptible to making mistakes. This needs to be allowed for. More importantly, however, is the question of whether or not the student teacher learns from and corrects the mistakes. It is also important to remember that you cannot expect new teachers to be as proficient as yourself. It will take more experience and time to reach your level of expertise. That said, it is reasonable to expect the student teacher to perform well, to try, to question,

to make a good effort, to improve, show initiative and demonstrate a desire to improve.

#### **DOES MY SCHOOL DISTRICT OR THE UNIVERSITY PAY MY STIPEND FOR MENTORING A STUDENT TEACHER?**

Although funds for mentoring student teachers comes from the University, the school district is responsible for actually paying teachers. Contact your school district's certificated personnel or payroll office for details on how and when your stipend will be paid to you.

#### **DO SCHOOL VACATIONS SUCH AS SPRING VACATION COUNT TOWARDS THE TIME MY STUDENT TEACHER IS SUPPOSED TO SPEND IN MY CLASSROOM?**

No, local school vacation time does not count toward the time student teachers are expected to spend in their assignment as a student teacher. Students must complete be in the classroom for 14 weeks. Vacations, both those granted by the School District and/or the University do not count toward this time.

#### **ARE STUDENT TEACHERS ALLOWED TO VIEW THE IEP AND OTHER CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS REGARDING STUDENTS?**

Yes. Acting as an officially appointed instructor in the classroom they may view confidential student records on a need to know basis.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM UNABLE TO PROVIDE EXPERIENCES COVERING A PARTICULAR COMPETENCY THE STUDENT IS EXPECTED TO MEET?**

If the competency can reasonably be met in another classroom at the school site, it may be met in that location. If there is no chance for the competency to be met it can be so noted on the final evaluation form. You should inform the University Supervisor as well. However, very few competencies should go unmet.

#### **AM I OR IS THE UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STUDENT TEACHER'S FINAL PRACTICUM GRADE?**

The University Supervisor is responsible for the final practicum evaluation. Grading is done on a pass/fail basis. Nevertheless, the final evaluation is done with consultation among the University Supervisor, the Mentor Teacher and the Student Teacher.

#### **IS IT REALLY NECESSARY FOR ME TO ATTEND THE MEETING FOR MASTER TEACHERS THAT IS HELD PRIOR TO THE STUDENT TEACHER JOINING MY CLASS?**

Yes. You will receive many tips and helpful information by attending. Also, it can make a big difference in your knowledge of how to handle various situations and helps you better understand your responsibilities as a Mentor Teacher. Handouts are provided which can make your mentoring experience more enjoyable and productive.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **CHECKLIST OF ITEMS TO DISCUSS AT FIRST MEETING WITH MENTOR TEACHER AND STUDENT TEACHER**

Note: Each individual University Supervisor may have items beyond the following list to cover at the first meeting. However, the items below are fundamental and should be either discussed or referred to .

- \_\_\_ Make sure you have full and correct personal data from both the master teacher and student teacher. (names spelled correctly, home phone, addresses, etc.)
- \_\_\_ Provide your phone numbers, address, etc. (A business card helps here.)
- \_\_\_ Get school phone number and address.
- \_\_\_ Obtain starting and ending times of their school day and school schedule.
- \_\_\_ Obtain, if possible, a copy of Mentor Teacher's daily/weekly classroom schedule.
- \_\_\_ Review student's responsibilities and the plans outlined in this manual.
- \_\_\_ Make sure Mentor Teacher understands his/her responsibilities toward the student teacher as outlined in this manual.
- \_\_\_ Review salient points in the handbook with both Mentor and Student Teacher.
- \_\_\_ Describe your observation process.
- \_\_\_ Discuss evaluation process for the semester (your planned and unplanned observations, ongoing master teacher observations, self-evaluation, mid-point evaluation and end of practicum evaluation).
- \_\_\_ Make any assignments you may have for the student teacher.
- \_\_\_ Give student teacher an idea of what you will be looking for as you make your observations. For example, general lesson plan provided, lesson management, positive reinforcement of students, number of student responses obtained, quality of transitions, error correction procedures, direct instruction techniques, pacing, responsiveness to your suggestions, etc.
- \_\_\_ Discuss off-campus informal seminar meetings with other student teachers.
- \_\_\_ Set up dates for your observations.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **MUST READ ITEMS**

This manual is meant to serve three constituencies: Student Teachers, Mentor Teachers and University Supervisors. Although each group is welcome to and, indeed, encouraged to read the entire manual, there are certain sections which are necessary reading for each group. These are referred to as “Must Read” items. Below is a list of those items.

#### **STUDENT TEACHERS**

- Student conduct
- Overview of each practicum
- Timeline for assumption teaching responsibilities
- Responsibilities of the credential candidate
- Entering the profession
- Items for first meeting

#### **MENTOR TEACHERS**

- Student conduct
- Overview of each practicum
- Selection of practicum placements
- Desired mentor teacher qualities
- Timeline for assumption of teaching responsibilities
- Responsibilities of the mentor teacher
- Frequently Asked Questions – for Mentor Teachers
- Items for first meeting

#### **UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS**

- Student Conduct
- Three primary field experiences
- Overview of each practicum
- Requirements related to Internship Credential
- Selection of practicum placements
- Desired Mentor Teacher Qualities
- Frequently Asked Questions – for University Supervisors
- Items for First Meeting

## APPENDIX C

### TERMINOLOGY DEFINED

**CEC Code of Ethics** – Please read the pages referring to this in your handbook.

**CEC Standards of Practice** – Please read the pages referring to this in your handbook.

**Cooperative Group** – Any small group of students wherein the students work together on learning projects of some type. Does not necessarily refer to formal Cooperative Learning.

**Correction Procedures** – Procedures used during instruction for correcting errors made by the student. Different kinds of errors may need different procedures for correction.

**Criterion Referenced Assessment** – Assessments which are administered to determine whether the student has achieved some agreed upon standard. As an example, teachers who administer tests provided at the end of textbook chapters are using Criterion Referenced Assessment. Such assessment is distinct from Norm Referenced Assessment.

**Curriculum Based Assessment** – Assessment of student progress in the specific curriculum being taught in the classroom.

**Displaying Data** – Showing data collected in a graphic manner. Examples are charts or graphs showing scores or progress over time. This does not include simply showing numerical data.

**Firming (student learning)** – The process, while one is teaching, of ensuring by testing and questioning that students have understood and learned well whatever is being taught.

**Formative** – Refers to assessment of student learning or progress WHILE the student is being taught the skill or information.

**High Rates (of student responding)** – Depending on the type of lesson, this term refers to eliciting frequent responses from all students such that not only do all students get to respond, but respond frequently. For example, in a small group of four students a high rate of responding would be all students responding 5 to 15 times in one minute.

**Norm Referenced Assessment** – Assessment done using any test that has been normed on a large group of students. Included here are such tests as the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – Revised (WISC-R), Woodcock- Johnson III, Peabody Individual Assessment Test – Revised, and the assessments mandated for all students by the State of California.

**Peer Mediated** – The deliberate use of a student's classroom peer(s) to assist in teaching an academic or social skill.

**Range of Settings** – This term refers to teaching or functioning in various instructional conditions. Examples of settings are, one-on-one instruction, small group instruction, entire class instruction, outdoor (vs indoor), Etc.

**Social Amenities** – This is a general term encompassing such things as positive recognition of other professionals, friendly conversation, acknowledgement of other's accomplishments, participating in group endeavors, assisting others as appropriate, appreciation of other's duties, establishing generally positive relationships, Etc.

**Summative** – Refers to assessment of student learning or progress AFTER a unit of the curriculum has been taught or completed.



