

MERCER
UNIVERSITY

TIFT COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



**Cooperating Teacher Handbook
Pre-Practicum/Early Field Experiences**



Dear Cooperating Teacher:

Mercer University appreciates the willingness of classroom teachers to work with our prospective teachers. We are well aware that their classroom experience in the “real” world of teaching makes an invaluable contribution to their preparation for teaching. Our desire is that their time with you be mutually beneficial.

The primary purpose of this field experience is observation. We hope this field experience will provide opportunities for our students to observe certain aspects of child development, to observe how differences in child development are accommodated, to observe professional teachers in the daily routine of the school, to observe different teaching styles and strategies, and to enhance their interpersonal and professional skills in the school setting. A Student Observation Report is required during this experience. Our student should discuss with you what is required for this report.

In order to enhance further the usefulness of the student assigned to you and to make the observation experience more meaningful, we would like to offer the following suggestions* from which you may wish to draw ideas. These suggestions are not meant to be limiting; they are only suggestions. Please feel free to facilitate your student’s professional development as you deem best.

1. Work on bulletin boards.
2. Go over homework or test papers.
3. Tutor individual students.
4. Work with small groups.
5. Read stories.
6. Direct games and activities.

*The student should receive directions from you in conducting these activities.

As the Classroom Teacher, you certainly have the best opportunities for observation and evaluation. Based on your experiences with the Teacher Candidate placed in your classroom this semester, please rate the candidate on the professional dispositions. A description of the indicators to guide your assessment is included in the document. Further, at the conclusion of the fieldwork experience, we ask that you complete a brief evaluation form. A copy is enclosed with this packet. Also included in this packet are a copy of the syllabus for this field experience and various forms needed for completion of the requirements.

The University Supervisor assigned to your field experience student will contact you in the next several days either by e-mail or by phone. Please ask any questions and express any concerns that you have about the program or about the student who has been assigned to you. It is our goal to work with you as closely as we can to make the field experience as meaningful as possible. If you need the University Supervisor to come to the school for any reason, please do not hesitate to call him/her or to contact him/her by e-mail with that request.

Again, let me express the appreciation of the entire Tift faculty to you, to your principal, and to all who are involved in the important task of preparing teachers. Please feel free to contact me at any point during the semester. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

The Office of Field Experience
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Cooperating Teacher Responsibilities

Listed below are the primary responsibilities when working with a Pre-Practicum student.

- Work with the Teacher Candidate to plan the semester experience. (i.e., what days and times will the candidate be in the classroom?)
- Work with the Teacher Candidate and have him or her assist you with your daily responsibilities.
- Fill out the Final Evaluation at the end of the experience and review with the Teacher Candidate. Sign the Teacher Candidate's Time Log each week and at the end of the experience.
- Meet with the Teacher Candidate to share and discuss strengths and weaknesses throughout their experience.
- At the first sign of trouble, contact the University Supervisor.

The Cooperating Teacher or another school employee, including a substitute teacher, must be present at all times when the Teacher Candidate is in the presence of children inside or outside the classroom.

In addition to supporting all teacher candidate requirements listed above, we ask that all Cooperating Teachers:

- Build a trusting and supportive relationship with the teacher candidate and consistently provide helpful and encouraging feedback to candidates.
- Talk openly and honestly with the candidate when discussing and completing evaluation and assessment forms.

Helpful Information for Cooperating Teachers

All Mercer University's Teacher Candidates have been required to adhere to the following:

- At the first sign of an issue or potential problem, please contact the University Supervisor.
- The Teacher Candidate is expected to observe the schedule/hours planned with the CT at the beginning of the experience.
- The candidate will adhere to the same holiday schedule as the system to which the candidate is assigned.
- The candidate must sign in at the front office and wear Mercer nametag at all times.
- The candidate is required to contact the CT before all absences. The candidate is expected to make up all missed days at the end of the experience.
- The candidate may NOT serve as a substitute teacher and may NOT administer standardized tests. The candidate may work with a substitute for the CT when the CT must be absent.
- The candidate is expected to dress professionally at all times. No jeans may be worn even on days teachers may wear jeans. Candidates may wear school t-shirts on specified days if teachers wear school t-shirts on certain days.
- Be present with a school employee at all times when in the presence of children inside or outside the classroom.

Note: This is a semester-long course and candidates should observe/assist in your classroom at the scheduled time each week throughout the course.

For Further Information and Resources:

<https://education.mercer.edu/academic-programs/field-placement/cooperating-teachers/>