Policies

Attendance Policy
The clinical experience is comprised of a complete fifteen week semester. Assignments are divided into two approximately equal segments of seven and one half weeks each. A teacher candidate is expected to be in attendance at all sessions of every school day for the entire fifteen weeks.

There are no authorized absences. Illness, death in one’s family, interviews and emergencies are the only acceptable reasons for non-attendance. No cooperating teacher has the authority to excuse his/her teacher candidate except in the case of illness or extreme emergency. In all cases, the university supervisor must be notified as soon as possible.

A teacher candidate is charged with the responsibility of notifying both cooperating teacher and supervisor of pending absences as soon as possible. Requests for interviews or other exceptions must be approved in advance by both cooperating teacher and university supervisor. The supervisor and cooperating teacher are expected to keep a specific record of the date and reason for all cases of lateness or absence.

All absences must be made up during scheduled school or University vacation time or at the conclusion of the semester following the second assignment.

All teacher candidates must complete fifteen weeks of clinical experience.

Professionalism
Attention by the teacher candidate to daily duties, as assigned by the cooperating teacher, is a matter of professional responsibility as well as of academic expectancy.

Teacher candidacy is a full-time responsibility and must take precedence over other commitments. Clinical experience encompasses a full teaching day; each teacher candidate reports to and departs from the school on the same schedule required of the cooperating teacher. Because of their value to professional growth, teacher candidates are expected to attend parent-teacher conferences, in-service programs, faculty meetings and other activities.

A teacher candidate is expected to be professional at all times. Conversation, dress, manner, and relationships with administrators, teachers, and students in the school must be maintained on a professional level.

Strike or Work Stoppage
During a strike or work stoppage, teacher candidates must refrain from teaching or participating in school activities. Teacher Candidates are not to report to their respective schools. In such an event, teacher candidates are to maintain daily contact with their supervisor and the Director of Clinical Experience & Outreach. When the strike or work stoppage has been settled, teacher candidates will be informed by the University as to when to return to their school assignments.
**Tort Liability: Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate**

Legal liability results from acts of negligence. A person is said to be negligent when failing to act as a reasonably prudent person would act under the same or similar circumstance. It, therefore, is incumbent upon student teachers to be diligent and prudent in the performance of their duties.

A regular teacher is not liable for negligence occurring in his/her absence from the classroom when he/she leaves a teacher candidate in charge.

This opinion was provided for the Department of Education by the State Department of Justice. “In Pennsylvania, the rule is well-established by a long line of cases that a school district is not liable for negligence of its officers or employees in the exercise of governmental and educational function. When the regular teacher leaves the room in charge of a teacher candidate, his/her act is an act of the governmental functions of the school district.”

Liability insurance is available to teacher candidates through membership in the student chapter of PSEA. Liability insurance is also available from a variety of insurance companies and the local A.F.T..

**Substitute Teaching by Teacher Candidates**

Our Affiliation Agreement (February, 1997), with schools and agencies working with our teacher candidates states in the fifth provision of the Agreement:

\[ \text{FIFTH: “The _____________________________ (School District or Agency) agrees that no teacher candidate shall be used as a substitute teacher at any time during their clinical experience assignment. This provision recognizes that the teacher candidate is uncertified and by Pennsylvania law cannot function as a substitute teacher.”} \]

A substitute teacher must hold a valid Pennsylvania certificate to teach in Pennsylvania public schools. Since teacher candidates normally do not hold a valid certificate, their assignments as substitute teachers violate the school code.

**In the event that one’s cooperating teacher is absent, a qualified substitute teacher must be assigned to his/her duties.**

Teacher candidates should not be assigned to cover another teacher’s classroom schedule -- Lunch, Hall, Bus, or Study Hall Duty. However, they should assist their cooperating teacher with these duties when requested to do so.

University policy prohibits the release of the teacher candidate to accept a teaching position prior to successful completion of his/her clinical experience. Receiving compensation for clinical experience is also prohibited.