

# **Field Experience Handbook for Cooperating Teachers**



**Office of Field Placement and Licensure**

**Montana State University**

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A good teacher is like a candle—it consumes itself to light the way for others.  
 ~Author Unknown

## PART I: OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

All documents can be downloaded from the [Field Placement Website](#) unless otherwise noted.

### Participants: Overview and Abbreviations

- Teacher candidate (TC): ...an education undergraduate during his or her student teaching experience
- Cooperating teacher (CT): ...a host teacher who opens his or her classroom to a TC.
- Field supervisor (FS): ...an individual contracted by the university during student teaching to support the TC and CT and to assess TC progress—reporting early any concerns to the MSU Office of Field placement and Licensure.
- Office of Field Placement and Licensure (FPLO) team—The director and assistant director along with the licensing technician, who will assist TC, CT, and FS during clinical placement, and afterward provide for the TC a recommendation for licensure to the Office of Public Instruction. Montana's licensing agency.
- Clinical evaluator (CE): ...someone trained by the university to support and assess the teacher work sample
  - Teacher work sample (TWS): ...an analytic, authentic presentation of preparing, instructing, assessing, and reflecting on a five-lesson sequence done by a TC during student teaching.

**Timeline of the Student Teaching Experience:** (for more complete description, see [student teaching calendar](#))

Phase in, build teaching load, and phase out using co-teaching

**Pre-Week 1:**  
TC completes MSU and district requirements. Meets with CT/Admin to determine expectations, set goals, and discuss TWS focus.

**Weeks 1-2:** TC begins when CT starts; TC schedules initial meeting for TC & CT led by FS.

**Weeks 3-6:**  
Two formal observed lessons by FS (1 TWS lesson); one formal observation by CT.

**Week 7:** At midterm conference, FS & CT collaborate on midterm assessment with TC; set goals.

**Weeks 8-12:**  
Two formal observed lessons by the FS; 1-3 weeks of full TC teaching load; one formal observation by CT.

**Weeks 13-14:**  
TC observes other teachers; FS & CT complete final assessment; conduct closing conference with TC.

Teaching is the profession that teaches all the other professions. ~Author Unknown

## Assessment of the Student Teaching Experience:

### Formative Assessment:

1. ...Four observed lessons (one TWS lesson) by the field supervisor (FS) and at least two formal assessments (one TWS lesson) by the cooperating teacher (CT)... Please use the [DF Observation Tool](#) to document TC lessons. (Evidence will be cumulative through the semester; not every category will be observed during each lesson.) FSs and CTs should script evidence from observations and provide this documentation to TCs in a timely fashion. (TCs who have not received this evidence within 72 hours of an observation should contact the FS/CT—if not received within 7 days, contact the field placement office (406-994-4762).
- a. [Midterm Danielson-based Performance Assessment](#) (only submitted to the Field Placement Office if there are concerns with TC progress). FS and CT complete this during midterm conference collaboratively with TC, and use it to set goals for the remainder of the experience. (FS gives copies to CT and TC; if not received within 72 hours, TC will contact FS; if not received within 7 days, TC will contact the field placement office 406-994-4762). Please see the [Danielson-based Performance Assessment Rubric](#) for scoring descriptors. **If the teacher candidate scores a “1” (Unsatisfactory) in any category, the field supervisor will confer with the Office of Field Placement to develop a plan of improvement to support teacher candidate success.** For candidates demonstrating satisfactory progress, the FS and CT can sign the [Substitute Teaching Form](#) at the midterm conference. If no other issues arise, this form authorizes the teacher candidate to function as a regular sub in the placement classroom up to 5 days.

### Summative Assessment:

1. Professionalism (see TC duties, pp. 4-5): journaling, attending seminars, completing TWS module, submitting all quizzes, etc. (10% of the student teaching grade).
2. [Teacher Work Sample](#): an analytical reflection of a five-lesson sequence. Sections 1, 2, 4, and 5, are evaluated by on-campus MSU clinical evaluators. Section 3, (TWS lesson plans), is scored by cooperating teachers using the TWS assessment and completing only Section Three: TWS comprises 40% of student teaching grade. Please see the [TWS ABRIDGED for CTs](#) document for a one-page overview.
3. **Danielson-based Final Performance Assessment** (online submission via Qualtrics). Please see the [Danielson-based Performance Assessment Rubric](#) for scoring descriptors. FS and CT scores, while they do not have to be exactly the same, should reflect a collaborative, mentoring partnership. Their combined assessment scores comprise 50% of the final student teaching grade).

### Scoring of the Danielson-based Final Performance Assessment

Teacher candidates are expected to perform at "2" (Basic) levels in all graded categories by the end of student teaching. (Based on Danielson's recommendations for using the framework during student teaching, 4c and 4d, while marked, are not graded.)

The MSU Department of Education will address on a case-by-case basis any teacher candidate earning one or more "Unsatisfactory" ratings (1) in any category and/or receiving a mentor recommendation against licensure. This committee, under the supervision of the MSU Education Department Head, will conduct an individual review to resolve the final student teaching grade and to determine eligibility for Montana teaching licensure.

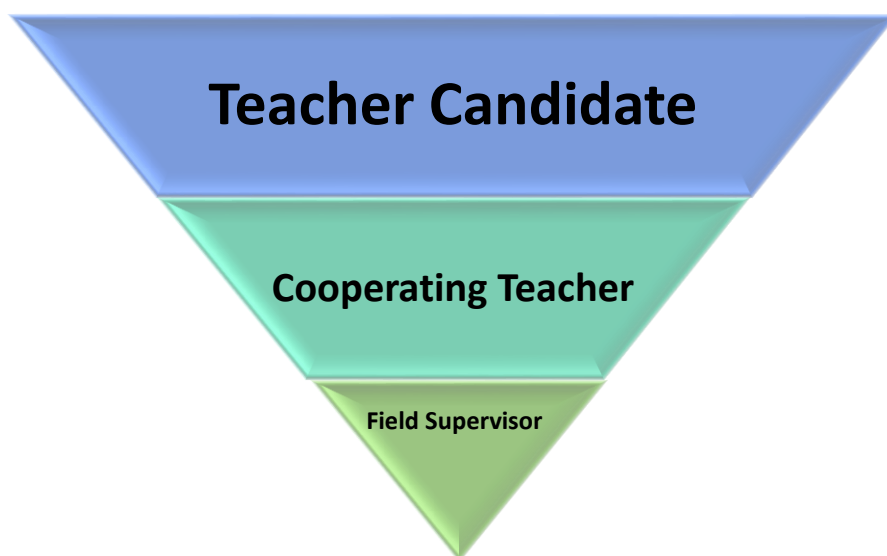
The grading scale for the Danielson Final Performance Assessment (below), is designed **only** for teacher candidates receiving a "2" (Basic) or above in all graded categories.

50-60=A  
45-49=B+  
40-48=B

## PART II RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT TEACHING PROFESSIONALS

Several professionals contribute to the success of the field experience, beginning with the **student teaching triad**, which comprises the teacher candidate, classroom cooperating teacher, and university field supervisor. Other key professionals include the school administrator, clinical evaluator, and the MSU Director of Field Placement and Licensure, along with other FPLO personnel.

### Student Teaching Triad



#### Teacher Candidate (TC)

The teacher candidate is a pre-service educator in his or her final semester of student teaching. As any professional, the TC must comply with the host school district's policies and procedures as well as with state and federal laws, including those related to confidentiality regarding students and their families. During student teaching, the TC represents not only MSU but is engaged in a 14-week job interview. Impressions made during student teaching follow the TC, even if he or she leaves the area. Thus, the TC is expected to exhibit professionalism in timeliness, dress, speech, collegiality, and student-centeredness.

#### Teacher candidate duties include:

1. Initiating first contact with both the cooperating teacher (CT) and field supervisor (FS) upon receiving their contact information.
2. Proactively consulting the CT and FS about scheduling the semester, planning the teacher work sample, and contributing to the classroom.
3. Coordinating the time/date for an introductory meeting with the TC and CT to be conducted by the FS.
4. Coordinating the times/dates of six, formal observed lessons, two to be completed by the FS prior to midterm (one TWS lesson) and two after midterm: one to be completed by the CT prior to midterm (TWS lesson) and one after midterm.
5. Coordinating the times/dates for the midterm conference and the final conference.
6. Fully participating in the placement classroom through the co-teaching model which may involve:
 

Observing	Parallel or supplemental teaching
Assisting	Stations
Alternative or differentiated teaching	Team teaching

## Cooperating Teacher (CT)

**The cooperating teacher hosts the teacher candidate in his or her classroom and serves as the primary mentor for the TC throughout student teaching. Cooperating teacher duties include:**

1. Reviewing the [Office of Field Placement and Licensure website](#) and [Handbook for Cooperating Teachers](#).
2. Preparing students and their parents/guardians for the arrival of the TC.
3. Providing a work desk or table for the TC, stocked with needed materials: seating charts, faculty handbooks, course outlines, curriculum guides, classroom texts, etc.
4. Orienting the candidate to classroom procedures (roll, lunch count, etc.) and to school policies (discipline, homework, emergencies, etc.).
5. Acquainting the TC with school facilities and teaching resources.
6. Introducing the TC as a welcomed colleague to other teachers and to students.
7. Assisting the teacher candidate in mapping out the entire semester's activities early to provide an overall picture of the field experience (See [Student Teaching Calendar](#)).
8. Supporting and collaborating on a teacher work sample topic and providing suggestions for factors the TC can research relevant to TWS teaching.
9. Discussing with the TC the dangers of inappropriate conduct and appearance, stressing the need for a friendly but professional relationship between the TC and students.
10. Reporting any TC concerns to the FS and/or [MSU Department of Field Placement and Licensure](#)
11. Including the TC in all appropriate professional development and out-of-classroom responsibilities (lunch duty, parent conferences, IEP meetings, etc.).
12. Working collaboratively and enthusiastically with the TC in planning, instruction, the teacher work sample, and assessment. MSU encourages the use of a co-teaching model.
13. Conducting two formal observations of the TC's instruction with constructive feedback via [DF Observation Tool](#); (one TWS lesson, one after midterm) copy goes to the TC.
14. Reviewing [Midterm Danielson-based Performance Assessment](#) at midterm conference with FS & TC.
15. Serving as a model of pedagogically sound and realistically appropriate knowledge, skills ethics, and dispositions. Using nurturing yet direct techniques, encourage and support the candidate in reflecting and developing into a competent beginning teacher.
16. Completing and submitting the **Danielson-based Final Performance/OPI Content Assessment**. (You will be notified to respond to link sent you near the end of the candidate's placement; this document is not on the website.) (Scores should reflect teacher candidate readiness to instruct in a first-year classroom as a competent beginning instructor—NOT as a master teacher.)

## Field Supervisor

**The field supervisor serves as a liaison among the school system, teacher candidate, and MSU, facilitating communication among all parties. Field supervisor duties include:**

1. Conducting an introductory meeting with the cooperating teacher and teacher candidate within 10 days from the first day of student teaching. Explain co-teaching model as necessary.
2. Leading a midterm conference during which FS collaborates with CT and TC to set TC goals and to create a combined, valid score on the [Midterm Danielson-based Performance Assessment](#). (Midterm is submitted to Field Placement Office **only** if there are scores of "1" or concerns about TC performance.)
3. After receiving FS link (sent automatically when CT completes his/her portion) FS checks to see that the CT has fully completed all parts of the **Danielson-based Final Performance/OPI Content Assessment**. (Scores should reflect teacher candidate readiness to instruct in a first-year classroom as a competent beginning instructor—NOT as a master teacher.) The FS then completes his/her portion of the assessment.

### **The Director of Field Placement & Licensure & the FPL Team:**

The Director of Field Placement & Licensure, along with the FPL team is responsible for the following tasks:

1. Submitting a request to the appropriate school official for the field experience placement.
2. Submitting to the building administrator a statement of the objectives of the field experience program and a clarification of the duties and responsibilities of the university and the schools.
3. Notifying the teacher candidate of the placement and providing the beginning and ending times of her/his assignment.
4. Updating the field experience website.
5. Arranging assignments of field supervisors for teacher candidates.
6. Maintaining an open line of communication with all placement participants.
7. Being responsible for payment to the cooperating teacher and field supervisor.
8. Recording the final student teaching grade.
9. Reviewing and advising when problems arise.
10. Recommending the teacher candidate for Montana Licensure when all requirements have been completed and the teacher education degree has been posted.
11. Maintaining records of program completion and licensure recommendation.

### **The School Administrator:**

The school administrator is responsible for the following tasks:

1. Selecting a capable cooperating teacher with no less than three (3) years successful teaching experience. (The MSU Department of Education strongly recommends selecting cooperating teachers from those who have experience and training in supervision).
2. Ensuring that the teacher candidate is made aware of:
  - a. the general philosophy of the school
  - b. the building and district policies and procedures
  - c. the organization of the school day
  - d. the use of cumulative and other school records
  - e. the daily attendance report and the policy on excuses
  - f. how are teachers evaluated
3. Contacting as early as possible the field supervisor and the MSU Director of Field Placement & Licensure if any serious concerns arise with the teacher candidate.
4. If possible, conducting one formal observation of the teacher candidate.

### **The Clinical Evaluator (CE)**

The clinical evaluator is responsible for the following tasks:

1. Read and contribute to the online Q & A support system for TWS questions.
2. Participating in CE trainings and collaborative scoring to increase reliability of TWS scores.
3. Support the entire TWS process by providing first-draft feedback.
4. Evaluating and grading the final TWS product.

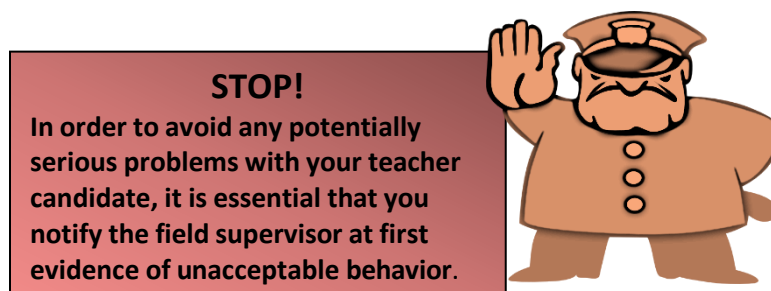
A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.  
~Henry Brooks Adams

### PART III: WORKING WITH A TEACHER CANDIDATE

Mentoring a teacher candidate is the heart of student teaching, and should be a fulfilling and enjoyable experience. Suggestions for structuring this endeavor have been grouped under six headings:

- I. Orientation
- II. Getting Started / Observation
- III. Induction to Teaching
- IV. Planning
- V. Teaching
- VI. Evaluation & Conferring

### PROCEDURES TO BE USED WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE



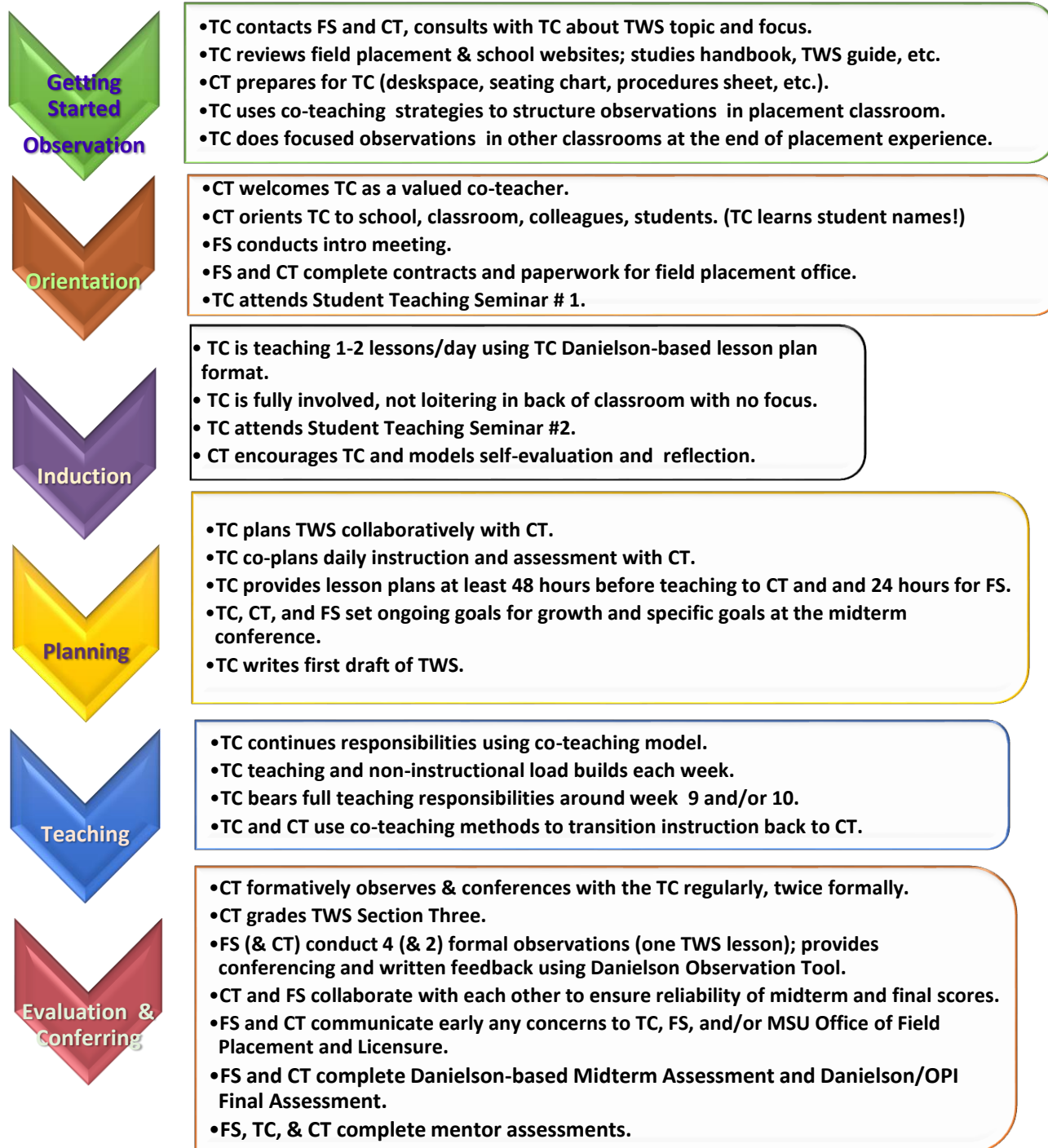
#### **Cooperating Teacher:**

Meet with the teacher candidate in a private setting and carefully review the problem or concern. Allow the teacher candidate an opportunity to express his or her perceptions. If there is no significant change in the problem, provide the teacher candidate with the concerns in writing. If this still does not provide a solution, then contact the field supervisor and set up a meeting. If this meeting does not produce the desired results, then contact John Melick, the MSU Director of Field Placement at (406) 994-6277).

*Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.*

— Paulo Freire

## Working with a Teacher Candidate: 6 Steps



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