

**POINT PARK** UNIVERSITY

# School of Education

# Student Teaching Handbook

Updated April 2025

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### **Brief History of the School of Education**

In 1963, Point Park College started the Early Childhood Education Program. In 2004, we became Point Park University. Since then, we have continued to grow, offering programs to prepare educators for all levels Pre-K - 12, including special education. In 2014, our first class of Doctoral Students entered the newly created doctoral program. We became the School of Education on September 5, 2018, and our programs, undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral have continued to expand. We now offer a wide variety of programs online as well as face-to-face.

### **Faculty and Staff Directory**

The School of Education continues to grow and prepare future, professional educators. A full list of The School of Education faculty and staff can be found: [School of Education Faculty and Staff](#) .

### **Applying to Student Teach and Placement Verification**

Prior to the student teaching semester (the semester before student teaching), School of Education students will receive email directions for signing up for Canvas Student Teaching. All candidates will register for the Canvas and follow the directions. Candidates are required to complete the Application for Student Teaching and submit the application in Canvas. All applications need to be typed and professionally prepared. Candidates are required to attend a group Zoom Meeting with Dr. Pascarella , Director of Student Teaching .

#### ***Pre-Student Teaching Requirements***

Student teaching is the last semester before graduation. Candidates need to meet the following requirements:

1. Admission to the School of Education \*
2. GPA 3.0
3. In addition to Student Teaching Practicum and Student Teaching Seminar, candidates may take one additional class while student teaching
4. Incomplete coursework from previous semesters needs to be completed and converted to a grade

\*Does not apply to graduate students

### ***Undergraduate Student Teaching Candidates***

- After candidates identify an area of Pittsburgh (north, east, south, or west) for student teaching, the area cannot be changed.
- Then Dr. Pascarella, Director of Student Teaching , will secure the student teaching placement. If a school district has expressed an interest in the candidate teaching in their district, the principal needs to send an email to Dr. Pascarella, Director of Student Teaching, at [kelly.pascarella@pointpark.edu](mailto:kelly.pascarella@pointpark.edu) requesting the student teacher.
- The Director of Student Teaching will have the final determination on the student teaching placement and assignment of the University Supervisor.
- Candidates are required to attend individual meetings with the Director of Student Teaching.
- The candidate is required to submit the following documents in Canvas prior to receiving their student teaching placement:
  - Clearances
  - TB test results
  - Mandated Reporter – Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse (completed when you apply to the School of Education)

### ***Graduate Student Teaching Candidates***

- Need to secure their student teaching placement
- The placement needs to be in the candidate's certification area, full-day, full-time the entire semester
- Use the letter from Point Park University to give to the school. The letter verifies that the student is from Point Park University and ready to student teach.
- The placement needs to be approved by the Director of Student Teaching . The Director of Student Teaching assigns the University Supervisor.
- Upload the Placement Verification form in Canvas
- Enter placement information into the Google Docs
- The candidate is required to submit the following documents in Canvas prior to approval to start the student teaching:
  - Placement information – Approved by Director of Student Teaching
  - Clearances
  - TB test results
  - Mandated Reporter – Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse

## **Student Teaching Abroad**

One of the options is for candidates to student teach abroad for part of the semester. When applying for student teaching, candidates can express their interest in this option. Student teachers need to complete 25 days of teaching experience in Pennsylvania, then the remainder of the experience abroad. Interested candidates will meet with Dr. Virginia Chambers (vchambers@pointpark.edu) for additional information that will help them to make a final decision.

### **[Student Teaching Abroad](#)**

## **Certification Exams**

**M.Ed. Secondary** students demonstrate content knowledge through passing the subject area Praxis exam prior to enrollment. However, **M.Ed. Secondary** students who have not yet passed their subject area Praxis exam must take the appropriate SUBJECT area PRAXIS exam **by the end of the third eight-week term in the program** to demonstrate content knowledge. **M.Ed. Secondary** student teachers must pass the content area PRAXIS exam or qualify for passing, prior to being permitted to student teach. Failure to meet the requirements may result in a student being dropped from the program.

**Graduate candidates PreK - 4, Dance, and Special Education PreK - 12** and **undergraduate candidates PreK - 4, grades 4 - 8, Dance, and Special Education PreK - 12** are encouraged to take the appropriate certification exams before or during student teaching. In order to earn the Instructional 1 Teaching Certification, candidates are required to pass the exams then apply in PDE TIMS for their teaching certificate. [Certification Testing Requirements](#)

## **Accessibility Services**

It is the intention of Point Park University to provide appropriate, reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Accommodations are coordinated through the Center for Student Success, located on the 5th floor of the West Penn Building. It is the student's responsibility to work with the Center for Student Success and provide information to the Director of Student Teaching. Accommodations cannot be provided retroactively. [Accessibility Services](#)

### **School District Policies and Procedures**

Point Park University School of Education has developed positive, professional relationships with school districts. When the school district accepts a student teacher, we realize we are guests in the building and are required to adhere to all school district policies and procedures. The university supervisors and the student teachers work cooperatively and collaboratively with the school district personnel to assure that the student teacher is following all district policies and procedures. We value our partnerships with the districts and realize how crucial these partnerships are to developing our future professional educators.

### **School District Calendar, Attendance, and Cooperating Teacher Schedule**

School districts have a board approved school calendar that is usually posted on their website. Student teachers are required to follow the school district calendar (not the University calendar). The expectation is that the student teacher is in school every teacher workday. Our aspiring teachers are required to follow the arrival and departure time of the cooperating teacher. They are required to arrive promptly and stay the entire teacher day.

Student teachers are required to maintain an attendance card. They need to sign in and out with the time daily on the attendance card. Weekly, the cooperating teacher will sign the attendance to verify the accuracy. The University Supervisor will check the attendance card weekly. Student teachers are required to make-up any days absent. In the event of an absence and before the start of the school day, the student teacher is required to contact their cooperating teacher and University Supervisor as soon as they realize they will be absent.

#### **[Attendance Card](#)**

### **Clearances, TB, etc. Required by the School District**

When the student teaching placement is confirmed, they are required to submit the following documents to the school district employee listed on the placement form:

- Child Abuse Clearance
- Criminal Clearance
- Fingerprint Clearance
- TB test results – follow the district requirement
- Other district require documents

The clearances are only valid for one year. The clearances need to be valid for the entire student teaching placement. Clearances are for employment.

## [Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse – Mandated Permissive Reporting in PA](#)

### [Applying for Clearance Information](#)

#### **Initial Meeting with Cooperating Teacher**

The University Supervisor will schedule an initial meeting via Zoom or Microsoft Teams with the student teacher and the cooperating teacher. This is a time for everyone to meet to discuss the expectations of student teaching and district requirements. The University Supervisor will find a list of required discussion items in Canvas Student Teaching. This will ensure consistent information is shared with all parties.

#### **Cooperating Teacher Role**

We value our partnerships with the cooperating teachers. They are crucial to teaching our student teachers and moving them from aspiring teachers to novice teachers who are ready to assume the role of the teacher in the classroom. The cooperating teacher should visit [www.pointpark.edu/coopteachers](http://www.pointpark.edu/coopteachers) to find all necessary documents and a short video that outlines their responsibility.

The cooperating teacher will:

- Complete the written Weekly Report for the student teacher each Friday, discuss the strengths as well as suggestions for growth, then give a copy to the student teacher. The student is required to upload this document to Canvas each week.
- Follow the pacing calendar
- Meet with the student teacher on Tuesday to review the lesson plans for the next week. On Thursday, review the written lesson plans, make suggestions for revisions, and approve the final, written lesson plans for the next week.
- Provide ongoing verbal feedback so the student teacher will continue to grow.
- Provide information to the University Supervisor so the supervisor can accurately reflect the student teacher's progress.
- Communicate with the University Supervisor as needed.
- Alert the University Supervisors of situations that need immediate attention.
- Type the Check Request form so they can be paid a stipend for working with the student teachers and return to [kelly.pascarella@pointpark.edu](mailto:kelly.pascarella@pointpark.edu). The stipends are paid at the end of the student teaching semester.



## Weekly Progress Report

### **Student Teacher Role**

The role of the student teacher is to grow and learn during the student teaching experience. Student teachers are required to:

- Follow school district policy and procedures
- Follow the cooperating teacher's schedule, workday, and the school district calendar
- Report to school for all instructional, clerical, and staff development days
- Maintain an attendance card and makeup any days absent
- Follow the pacing calendar
- Act respectfully and professionally always
- Always engage in student learning during the instructional day
- Write lesson plans and prepare materials (per the directions under lesson planning)
- Submit assignments in Canvas Practicum by the due date. Assignments are due on time.
- Remember, the cooperating teacher is an expert teacher, and the student teacher is a guest in the building
- Respond to the University Supervisor within 24 hours

### **University Supervisor Role**

The role of the University Supervisor is to provide ongoing support and recommendations so the student teacher will continue to grow.

- Meet with the cooperating teacher and student teacher via an initial Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Review the expectation for student teaching. The list can be found in Canvas Student Teaching.
- Check the student teacher's weekly submissions in Canvas and provide meaningful feedback.
- Observe the student teacher at least 4 times (2 times before mid-semester and 2 times after mid-semester). Supervisors may observe face-to-face or virtually.
- In cooperation and collaboration with the cooperating teacher, write the formative mid-semester PDE 430 then the final PDE 430 which leads to a final grade in student teaching. The drafts need to be shared with the cooperating teacher before reviewing with the student teacher. This will ensure accuracy. Meet with the student teacher to review the mid-term and final PDE 430.
- Attend supervisor meetings.

- Notify the Director of Student Teaching regarding any barriers to the student teacher meeting the expectations and assist in problem solving to maximize the student teacher's success.

### **Pacing Calendar**

The student teacher and cooperating teacher are expected to use the Point Park University pacing calendar as a guide. This guide will allow student teachers to gradually assume the responsibility to teach for an entire day. It is recommended that the calendar is printed, and dates inserted for easy reference. The links to the calendars are:

[Single Placement Calendar](#)

[Split Placement Calendar](#)

### **Professional Dress**

There is an expectation that student teachers dress appropriately in a manner that is consistent with school professional staff expectations. Student teachers are aspiring professionals, and their dress needs to reflect business attire or business casual. Ask the cooperating teacher about the school district dress code for teachers and professional staff. If there is a school district policy, read and follow the policy. There is an expectation that student teachers follow district policies and procedures. Jeans, yoga pants, sweats, etc. are not appropriate professional attire. Your attire helps form first impressions about you as a teacher. Your student teaching is the longest interview of your career.

### **Cell Phone Use**

Student teachers should share their cell phone number with the cooperating teacher and University Supervisor. This will improve communication. Do not share your cell phone number with students or parents. Do not take calls from students or respond to text messages from students.

Student teachers are not permitted to talk and text during the instructional day. The cell phone should be turned off during instructional time. Student teachers are required to follow school district policy for cell phone use by professional employees.

### **Email**

Student teachers are required to check their Point Park University email at least one time a day and respond within 24 hours. They are not to respond to parents or students without talking with the cooperating teacher first. If the school district issues a temporary email address, student teachers should use that email address only for any approved school correspondence. Before responding to students or parents, talk with the cooperating teacher and follow their guidance.

### **Facebook and Social Networking**

You are now at the beginning of your professional career. Remove any unprofessional posts or pictures from your social media accounts. Edit your social networking pages to remove any images or posting related to salacious, illegal, or personally controversial activities. Do not friend students or parents before, during, or after your student teaching. Do not post information about your students, parents, other professionals, or the school district. Determine your place in social networking sites based on what you would talk openly about in class with an administrator present.

Often school administrators will search social media sites for prospective student teachers and employees. If something inappropriate is found, this could negatively affect a candidate's student teaching placement or future employment.

### **Athletics, Extracurricular Activities, and Employment During Student Teaching**

The student teaching semester is extremely demanding and a full-time job. It requires the undivided time of the student teacher. The greatest portion of time and energy needs to be devoted to the student teaching experience. There is an expectation that student teachers spend a great deal of time each night planning and preparing for their teaching. Student teachers are not permitted to alter their student teaching schedule to participate in athletics, extracurricular activities, or employment.

### **Orientation**

Orientation is scheduled at the beginning of the student teaching semester. Student teachers are required to attend the entire orientation session. The goal of orientation is to review expectations of the student teaching semester and answer all questions, so the student teacher is well prepared for the professional semester.

### **Practicum Canvas**

Student teachers are required to submit the following documents weekly in Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday:

- In week 1, the student teacher is required to submit the teaching schedule and the school calendar
- Cooperating teacher weekly report for the prior week
- One lesson plan from the prior week with the corresponding reflection
- All lesson plans for the next week
- Entire attendance card signed by the cooperating teacher

48 hours (about 2 days) before a scheduled observation, the student teacher is required to upload the corresponding lesson plan so the supervisor can review the lesson plan and provide feedback. After the observation, the University Supervisor will upload the Lesson Observation Rubric. The University Supervisor will upload the mid-term and final PDE 430s to Canvas after reviewing with the student teacher.

### **Planning, Preparation, and Instruction**

As professional educators, the primary focus is student learning and achievement. Student teachers are required to meet with the cooperating teacher on Tuesday to discuss next week's lesson plan. On Thursday, well developed, written lesson plans are required to be submitted to the cooperating teacher for feedback, revisions, and final approval. Student teachers are required to use the Point Park University lesson plan format. The approved format and the guidelines are found in Canvas. This provides the sole source for the entire semester's lesson plans. The student teacher is not permitted to teach without a cooperating teacher approved lesson plan. [Bloom's Taxonomy](#)

### **Classroom Environment**

Student teachers should build positive, professional (teacher-student) relationships with students. There is an expectation that the students engage in learning for the entire instructional day/period. The student teacher needs to always manage student behavior. During the instructional time, the student teacher should use proximity control and positive reinforcement to manage student behavior and engagement. The student teacher will follow the cooperating teacher's procedures and expectations for student behavior as well as follow district policy and procedures. A well-developed lesson plan leads to better classroom management.

### **Supervision of Students**

Students, faculty, student teachers, and staff need to be always safe. Students need to be supervised by a school district employee. Student teachers cannot be left with students without a school district employee providing supervision unless the student teacher has a university approved substitute teaching permit and is school district approved.

### **Professionalism**

Student teachers need to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Teaching is a profession. Adhere to the PA Code of Professional Practices and Code of Conduct for Educators. Any student teachers whose behavior is considered unprofessional by the cooperating teacher, University Supervisor, Principal, Director of Student Teaching , or Founding Dean of the School of Education may be removed from the placement and not permitted to continue the path to teacher certification.

#### **[PA Code of Professional Practice and Code of Conduct for Educators](#)**

The student teacher is expected to:

- Assume primary responsibility for your progress
- Maintain ongoing, open communication with the cooperating teacher and University Supervisor
- Establish positive, professional relationships with all school district personnel
- Adhere to all school district and school policies and procedures
- Always present themselves professionally
- Embrace the student teaching experience as an opportunity to grow and accept constructive feedback
- Go the extra mile
- Take time to thank those who assist you in many ways
- Build positive professional teacher-student relationships
- Be prepared

### **Evaluation of Student Teachers**

Student teachers are evaluated using the following formative assessments:

- Weekly Progress Report and daily verbal feedback from the cooperating teachers
- Observations by the University Supervisor (Lesson Observation Rubric)
- PDE 430 – mid-semester

The final PDE 430 leads to a grade in student teaching. Student teachers need to earn at least a one in the four domains of teaching to apply for an PA Instructional 1 Teaching Certificate. Below is the grading scale based on the score on the final PDE 430:

- 10 – 12 points = A
- 7 – 9 points = B
- 4 – 6 points = C
- 1 – 3 points = D
- 0 points = F

[PDE 430](#)

[Weekly Progress Report](#)

[Lesson Observation Rubric March 2022.pdf](#)

### **Substituting Teaching While Student Teaching**

Point Park Student Teachers are required to follow the Point Park University Teacher Education Act 91 of 2021 Substitute Teaching while Student Teaching Policy. The policy is attached. You need prior approval from the Director of Student Teaching before substituting and are required to submit your local substitute teaching permit in Canvas, Practicum. Your first step is to talk with your university supervisor. Days substitute teaching cannot be counted toward the required number of days for student teaching.

[Substitute Teaching Policy](#)

### **Seminar**

Student teachers will register for the Seminar class. It is the expectation that the student teacher follows the seminar schedule and completes all required assignments. One major assignment related to the seminar class is the development and presentation of a professional portfolio. During the student teaching experience, the student teacher should start to collect artifacts that relate to the four domains of teaching. Further guidelines regarding the portfolio will be provided in the seminar class.

### **Resolving Conflicts**

From time to time, conflicts may arise during the student teaching experience. When there is a conflict, the student teacher should attempt to problem solve with the cooperating teacher first. If this does not satisfactorily resolve the conflict, the student teacher should talk with their University Supervisor. If the conflict is still not resolved, the student teacher needs to

communicate via an email with the Director of Student Teaching . Our goal is to resolve any conflicts quickly, so the student teaching experience is successful.

### **Books, Materials, and Supplies**

All school district books, materials, and supplies must be returned to the cooperating teacher. Student teachers may need to reimburse the school district for lost or damaged books, materials, or supplies. University grades cannot be released until everything is returned to the school district.

### **Dismissal from Student Teaching**

When a student teacher is dismissed from student teaching, the student teaching placement ends immediately. The student teacher will not be granted another placement that semester. The student teacher may follow the university policy to request a withdrawal as outlined in the university catalog. Given the assignments in the Seminar Class are dependent on student teaching experiences, the student teacher would be advised to request a withdrawal in the Seminar Class.

When the student believes he/she can meet the expectations of student teaching, they may contact the Director of Student Teaching to apply for student teaching in the semester before they plan to student teach. They will be required to register and pay for the appropriate credits related to the Student Teaching Practicum and Seminar.

All student teachers are required to follow the expectations outlined in the University Catalogs as well as the Academic Integrity Policy. Please see the link below.

[Course Catalog](#)

### **Labor-Management Disputes**

If student teaching is interrupted by any labor-management disputes (strikes, sit-ins, demonstrations, riots, walkouts), notify the University Supervisor immediately so the School of Education can provide guidance.

### **Letter of Reference**

Student teachers should request a letter of reference from professional educators who can attest to their skills as a teacher. The cooperating teacher and University Supervisor are two professionals who are appropriate references.

### **Pittsburgh Education Recruitment Consortium (PERC Job Fair)**

The PERC Job Fair is scheduled in the spring of each school year in the Pittsburgh Area. All School of Education graduates as well as student teachers are invited and encouraged to attend. Employers interview and hire educational professionals in a wide variety of disciplines many times on-site. This is an excellent job opportunity for our School of Education students and graduates.

[PERC Job Fair](#)

### **Applying for PA Level 1 Certificate**

Candidates can apply for their Level 1 Teaching Certificate through the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Teacher Information Management System - [TIMS](#) after completing the following:

- Student teaching experience
- Earn at least a 1 in each of the 4 domains of teaching on the PDE 430
- Degree conferred by the Point Park Registrar's office
- Passing Score on the certification exams
- Earn a minimum GPA of 3.0

### **Celebration of Student Teaching**

We are looking forward to celebrating your successful completion of your student teaching and graduation from Point Park University at Celebration of Student Teaching which is scheduled the Friday evening before commencement. Additional information will be provided during the student teaching semester. It is our sincere hope that you, your cooperating teacher, and a family member will join us for this very important event!



### **What Is Next**

It is important you apply for graduation through the Point Web Portal. Through this application process, final degree audits are conducted by the registrar's office. Additionally, if you are attending commencement, regalia can be ordered. Your diploma will be mailed to the address you provide in the graduation application, by the registrar's office, after degrees have been conferred.

***Please remember to keep in touch with the School of Education faculty and staff. We want to hear about your successes. These are the stories we provide to marketing for our website to showcase our alumni and their accomplishments. We look forward to having your story posted!***

Upon graduation, you are a Point Park University Alumni. Consider signing up for the Alumni Association. [Alumni Association](#)

After PDE issues the Level 1 Teaching Certificate, candidates can add instructional areas to their certificate through testing. PreK - grade 4 candidates can add grades 5 and 6 by successfully passing the required exams. Below is the link to PDE regarding Instructional Add-Ons, Point Park University Graduate Program, and moving from Level I to Level II Certification.

[Adding Grades 5 and 6](#)

[Instructional Add-Ons](#)

[Point Park University Graduate Education Programs](#)

[Level 1 to Level II Certification](#)

### **Nondiscrimination**

This policy affirms Point Park University's commitment to nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and the pursuit of diversity. Point Park University does not discriminate on the basis of: sex, race, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, age (40 years and over), ancestry, individuals with disabilities, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, height, weight, genetic information, marital status, caregiver status or familial status and such discrimination is prohibited in the administration of any of its educational programs, activities or with respect to employment or admission to the University's educational programs and activities.

This policy is in accord with local, state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Pittsburgh Human Relations Act. Inquiries regarding these regulations and policies, or complaints, should be referred to Point Park's vice president of human resources at phone number 412-392-4727, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, or both. Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to Point Park University's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, or both. Point Park University's Title IX Coordinator is Stephanie Stark Poling, [sstarkpoling@pointpark.edu](mailto:ssarkpoling@pointpark.edu), 412-392-3980, 201 Wood Street, Student Center, Room 104(A), Pittsburgh, PA 15222.

Point Park University's Title IX nondiscrimination policy and grievance procedures can be located at: <https://www.pointpark.edu/studentlife/titleix/index>.

Reports of violations of this policy, including reports of conduct that may constitute sex discrimination, or complaints of sex discrimination under Title IX can be filed via the Incident Reporting Form online at [pointpark.edu/incidentreport](https://pointpark.edu/incidentreport) and will be processed by the University Office of Compliance and Integrity. Complaints may also be emailed to [oci@pointpark.edu](mailto:oci@pointpark.edu).