

POLICY: Professional Behavior Guidelines For Practicum Students

ADOPTION DATE:

These guidelines correspond with the list of Professionalism Standards appearing on the Evaluation of Practicum Student Checklist” form for students in the Severe Disabilities Program (“Direct Instruction Checklist” for students in the Mild/Moderate Program). In graded evaluations during practicum, the student is evaluated on each Professionalism Standard (M/M students: see “Other” on Direct Instruction Checklist). Any “No” or “0” score on one or more items will result in an immediate meeting with the student, supervisor, and cooperating teacher.

Maintains records daily (pupil’s and cooperating teacher’s).

Practicum students are expected to maintain up-to-date, organized, and legible records, and will complete all required record keeping before leaving the practicum site each scheduled day. Record keeping must be consistent with the cooperating teacher’s verbal or written direction. All records must contain a date and signature and/or name of the person producing the documentation. Practicum students must avoid leaving records in open areas of the classroom or in locations unknown to the teacher. If applicable, communicate to the cooperating teacher the location of records before leaving.

Maintains confidentiality of information/records.

Federal law requires educational agencies to guarantee each pupil basic privacy rights. To maintain these rights, agencies are required to have guidelines for collecting, maintaining, disseminating, and verifying the accuracy of information that they collect. As participants in public school programs, practicum students are legally required to maintain the privacy rights of pupils they instruct as well as other pupils in the classroom.

As a general rule, discussions about pupils should concern only their educational goals and appropriate instructional strategies. In addition, any references to a pupil should not include his or her name in order to preserve confidentiality. Do not discuss any pupil’s disabilities, academic or behavior problems, or any other attributes with fellow students, friends, or family. Exceptions to this policy are limited to discussions about educational goals and appropriate instructional strategies with the university supervisor, university instructor, cooperating teacher, or practicum partner.

Should an occasion arise in which you are uncertain about the appropriateness of sharing or providing information, the final decision should be made by your cooperating teacher and university supervisor. If you have questions, ask your advisor for the “Utah Guidelines for Confidentiality and Disclosure of Student Records.”

Adapts to changes in classroom routine.

Classroom routines change rapidly and sometimes abruptly. The practicum student must be prepared to change procedures, alter schedules, and modify lesson plans. Make immediate alterations based on the cooperating teacher’s verbal or written direction. Ask questions of the cooperating teacher for clarification.

As a university practicum student, you are expected to act and communicate as a professional. You are expected to be alert at all times. You are a guest in the school environment. It is unprofessional to make disparaging remarks about your cooperating teacher or his/her practices with fellow students, friends, faculty, or others.

It is unacceptable and potentially unlawful to be under the influence of any substance that impairs your ability to think, talk, move about, or remain awake at school. Language interpreted by school personnel or university supervisors as vulgar, abusive, or offensive language is unacceptable.

Dresses appropriately and maintains personal hygiene.

Practicum students are expected to maintain a neat appearance without any offensive body odor. Clothing should be modest, clean, and in good repair. The practicum student must dress in a way to be consistent with the dress of the majority of teachers and administrators in the same school. In all cases, unacceptable clothing consists of halter tops, shorts, thongs, flip flops, worn or ripped jeans, bare midriffs, and low-cut tops. Shoes should be selected to allow rapid movement between pupils, provide protection from chairs and heavy objects, and establish balance necessary for lifting. Hair should be clean and styled to be consistent with the style of the majority of teachers and administrators in the same school. Appropriate dress also requires wearing of a photo ID name tag unless the cooperating teacher requests it be removed in the classroom (if so, the ID must be worn in other school areas).

Responds favorably to constructive feedback.

The university supervisor's objective regarding the practicum experience is to provide the student with frequent learning opportunities so teaching skills significantly increase from beginning to end. To achieve this objective, the university supervisor, cooperating teacher, and other school personnel will provide performance feedback. Students are encouraged to ask questions for clarification. However, it is imperative the student accept feedback, acknowledge need for improvement, and immediately implement recommended changes.

Implements changes after feedback is provided.

After receiving feedback, it is imperative the practicum student implement changes as recommended. It is also important the student seek out the university supervisor, cooperating teacher, and other school personnel who initially provided the feedback to receive additional input on whether implementation is correct.

Arrives on time each scheduled day.

Practicum students are expected to be punctual and to attend every scheduled period. Absences are only acceptable for certain emergencies related to health, illness, or family, or for court appearance. Health impairment is a trauma requiring hospitalization, emergency attention from a physician, or emergency appointment with a physician. An illness is a debilitating health condition or communicable virus. A family emergency refers to death or hospitalization of an immediate family member. A court appearance is a court trial requiring testimony or jury duty. Excluded from the list of acceptable

absences are minor health concerns, weddings or other events involving family members, health problems of family members, illness of a child (unless prior approval is provided by the cooperating teacher), attendance at court trials without subpoena, conflicts with work schedule, etc. If questions arise, contact your cooperating teacher **PRIOR TO THE ABSENCE**.

Prior to an absence, practicum students must contact both the cooperating teacher AND the university supervisor to request the absence, describe the reason for the absence, and indicate the scheduled return date. When possible, practicum students should convey lesson plans, behavior intervention plans, or other preparations to the cooperating teacher prior to the absence (verbally or in written form). If applicable, students should contact their practicum partner to see if days can be switched to cover responsibilities on the day of absence. At minimum, practicum students will need to make up unexcused or excessive excused absences.

A practicum student is considered tardy if she/he is not present in the classroom or scheduled teaching location with the necessary teaching materials **AT LEAST 5 MINUTES BEFORE INSTRUCTION BEGINS**. For example, tardiness is defined as not present in the classroom with teaching materials at 10:25 for a 10:30 lesson.

Cooperating teachers must immediately report tardiness and unexcused absences to the university supervisor.

Maintenance of Practicum Placements

Placements in public schools are secured due to the willingness of cooperating teachers to allow students to instruct their pupils. Cooperating teachers must maintain their accountability for pupils' well-being. Thus, if the cooperating teacher feels his/her pupils are benefiting, the practicum student will remain in the placement. If the cooperating teacher feels it is not in his/her pupils' best interest to continue work with the practicum student, the placement may be terminated. If the cooperating teacher requests that a placement be terminated, a meeting between the cooperating teacher, university supervisor, and practicum student will be held to discuss the problem. Following this meeting, the university supervisor and chairperson of the undergraduate committee will meet to evaluate the reason(s) for termination. Resulting actions may include (a) seeking a new placement, (b) withdrawing from the course, or (c) failing the course.

Avoid Each of the Following Practices

Do not:

1. Give any pupil medication, prescribed or over-the-counter, unless you have received authorized instruction by the school district and your name appears on the health care plan for the individual pupil.
2. Physically handle pupils unless you have been authorized by the teacher to do so and physical assistance is an approved level of assistance for an instructional or behavior management program. (Note: Written documentation must be provided for Levels II-IV)

behavioral intervention according to USOE LRBI policy, as well as training for each teacher, practicum student, or other adult using Levels II-IV procedures.)

3. Photograph, video-record, or tape-record pupils unless approval has been received by the cooperating teacher and the pupil's parent/guardian.
4. Take pupils outside the school with you unless you have been approved to do so by the cooperating teacher.
5. Take anyone with you, without permission, into the school.
6. Offer to provide transportation for any pupil using your own vehicle.
7. Release any pupil to an adult claiming to be a parent, guardian, relative, or other responsible person (even if shown an identification) without first checking with the cooperating classroom teacher or the school office.