THE ROLE OF COOPERATING TEACHER

The Cooperating Teacher is a crucial contributor to Teacher Candidates’ growth and development as novice teachers. Cooperating Teachers model effective teaching practices; plan collaborative teaching activities with Teacher Candidates; and assure that Teacher Candidates receives extensive experience in planning instruction, teaching, assessment, communicating with colleagues, administrators and parents. They provide regular, written feedback and help assess whether a Teacher Candidate should be recommended for licensure. Where Co-teaching is in place, the CT actively supports the TC in this work.

The relationship between a Cooperating Teacher and a Teacher Candidate is a complex one that takes different forms depending on the individuals and the specific school contexts.

Cooperating Teachers:

- Welcome the Teacher Candidate to the school through introductions to students and colleagues, providing a desk or other personal workspace (including a space to secure valuables), providing information about procedures and policies, and sharing information about the school’s culture
- Provide the Teacher Candidate with varied opportunities to work with students as early as possible, beginning with routine activities and working with individuals and small groups, gradually increasing their responsibilities to include collaborative planning and co-teaching with the Cooperating Teacher, and eventually assuming full range of classroom responsibilities
- Provide opportunities for the Teacher Candidate to implement educational activities as part of their program and course requirements
- Engage in collaborative planning with the Teacher Candidate as they take on more teaching responsibilities, and when they plan and teach the two Work Samples required by the State of Oregon. Cooperating Teachers need to provide some flexibility in the topic and content within their existing curriculum so that the Teacher Candidate can demonstrate their proficiencies in planning and implementing a unit of study and assessing student learning
- On a regular basis, observe the Teacher Candidate in a range of teaching contexts, provide written feedback, and allow time for post-observation conversations
- Plan regular times outside of the school day to meet with the teacher candidate for planning and feedback
- Are available to meet with the Teacher Candidate’s University Supervisor for scheduled conferences and occasional informal conversations
• Communicate promptly any concerns about a Teacher Candidate to the University Supervisor and Cohort Leader. Be available to attend meetings with appropriate stakeholders to address concerns about a Teacher Candidate who is struggling. The meetings should be held at the earliest sign of difficulty
• Complete appropriate evaluation forms prior to evaluative conferences
• If requested, write a letter recommendation for the Teacher Candidate

Who Becomes a Cooperating Teacher?

Cooperating Teachers have at least two years’ experience at the early childhood, elementary, middle level, or high school level and hold a valid license for their current assignments. The Graduate School of Education’s Field Placement Office, in cooperation with school districts and Cohort Leaders, arranges field placements for GTEP Teacher Candidates with Cooperating Teachers who meet State and program qualifications.

Reduced Enrollment Fee Privilege

In partial compensation for their work, Cooperating Teachers may take advantage of the Reduced Enrollment Fee Privilege for classes at Portland State University. School districts have developed their own policies to distribute the Reduced Enrollment Privilege. Districts are encouraged to make these privileges available to the Cooperating Teachers who supervise Teacher Candidates. Additional information about compensation is available upon request of the Graduate School of Education Office of Field Placement (fieldplacement@pdx.edu).