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Department of Teaching and Learning



Special Education Teacher Preparation Program

Practicum Handbook

Spring 2024

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Department of Teaching and Learning
Special Education Teacher Preparation
Program
2710 Crimson Way
Richland, WA 99354

Dear Teacher Candidates and Cooperating Professionals,

We are pleased to welcome you to the practicum experience in special education at Washington State University Tri-Cities (WSUTC) and hope that each of you will find an opportunity to learn and grow as educators.

The practicum experience is an opportunity for future special education teachers to take everything they have learned in the university classroom and put it into practice. It is also an opportunity for experienced educators to share their knowledge and experience with a new “practicing professional.”

This *Practicum Handbook* has been developed to prepare all members of the special education practicum team for a successful experience. It outlines the expectations and requirements of the program and the roles and responsibilities of its members. The *Appendix* includes all forms to be completed throughout the practicum experience.

We would like to thank each and every member of the practicum team for your ongoing commitment to the success of this experience. Your role is critical to the success of the program and the future special education teachers we serve.

We are looking forward to working with you throughout this practicum experience and into the future. Please do not hesitate to contact either of us with any questions, concerns, or feedback.

Best of luck in your exciting adventure,

Yun-Ju Hsiao

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College of Education Mission Statement

The College of Education addresses the needs of communities, individuals and educational institutions in a diverse society by promoting development of students, faculty, and staff through leadership, scholarship, and professional practice.

College of Education Conceptual Framework

The College of Education contributes to the theory and practice of the broad field of education, and dedicates itself to understanding and respecting learners in diverse cultural contexts. We facilitate engaged learning and ethical leadership in schools and clinical settings. We seek collaboration with diverse constituencies, recognizing our local and global responsibilities to communities, environments, and future generations.

Special Education Teacher Preparation Program Description

The Special Education Teacher Preparation Program (SETPP) at Washington State University Tri-Cities provides a cohesive and integrated set of courses and experiences designed to prepare pre-service and in-service teachers for P-12 special education teaching roles. The courses and experiences in the SETPP are aligned with the standards set forth by the Council for Exceptional Children and the competencies required by the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Special Education for entry-level special education teachers. Successful students demonstrate their competence through course work and two practicum experiences in the program.

As part of the program, students are required to complete two 2-credit practicum experiences. The practicum experiences are extremely important to a student's professional development. It is during the practicum that students continue to construct their knowledge about the Special Education profession. Students are given opportunities to build on the knowledge gained in course work by conducting assessments, planning for and providing instruction, demonstrating management approaches, and participating in collaborative activities with parents, teachers, teaching assistants, and students. Through supportive and positive school settings, practicum students enhance their skills and abilities in preparation for their future role as a Special Education Teacher.

This Handbook is designed primarily for WSUTC Practicum Students and their Cooperating Teachers. It provides a description of the Special Education Teacher Preparation Program, information on the expectations of practicum students, and an overview of the practicum supervision and evaluation process.

WSUTC Special Education Practicum Policies and Procedures

Attendance

Seminar #1: Friday, February 2, 2024, 3:30 P.M- 5:30 P.M, Location: TFLO 247

Seminar #2: Friday, March 22, 2024, 3:30 P.M- 5:30 P.M, Read Chapters 1-3,
Location: TFLO 247

Final seminar: Friday, April 19, 2024, 3:30 P.M- 5:30 P.M, Read Chapters 4-6,
Location: TFLO 247

Practicum experience begins when school begins. Practicum Students are responsible for notifying their Cooperating Teacher, University Supervisor, and other designated school personnel if they are going to be absent. If you are responsible for a lesson or student group, you must provide your Cooperating Teacher with your lesson plans and materials just as if you were planning for a substitute. All absences must be made up to the satisfaction of all involved.

Code of Professional Conduct

WAC 180-87 addresses the Code of Professional Conduct for Education Practitioners. Details can be found at: <http://www.k12.wa.us/ProfPractices/CodeConduct.aspx>.

University Syllabus Statements: <https://syllabus.wsu.edu/university-syllabus/>

Students are responsible for reading and understanding all university-wide policies and resources pertaining to all courses (for instance: accommodations, care resources, policies on discrimination or harassment), which can be found in the [university syllabus](#).

Professional Dispositions for Academic Progress (PDAP)

As an institution that prepares teachers, we owe parents, citizens and our state's P-12 students our best professional judgment and keenest observations when making assessments that could have profound effects in the future. The identification and evaluation of professional dispositions is part of WSU's professional responsibility: <https://education.wsu.edu/documents/2023/04/pdap.pdf/>
This document will be used to illustrate that teacher preparation students at WSU are demonstrating the professional dispositions expected of an effective P-12 educator while taking coursework during their program of study. This document is meant to be a flexible tool that can be used to support coursework-oriented guidance, for student reflection and goal setting, and for intervention when problems arise.

School Calendar

The Practicum Experience follows the public school's calendar and not the WSUTC calendar. Should school be delayed or cancelled due to weather or there is no school on your scheduled day, you must find another time to make up the missed hours.

Statement of Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of higher education. As such, all members of the university share responsibility for maintaining and promoting the principles of integrity in all activities, including academic integrity and honest scholarship. Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. Students who violate WSU's academic integrity policy (identified in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 504-26-010(3) and -404) will fail the assignment (which could lead to fail the course), will not have the option to withdraw from the course pending an appeal, and will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

Washington State Competencies for Special Education Practicum

As part of their coursework for SpecEd 490/590, the student will:*

1. Communicate with school personnel, families and community members about the characteristics and needs of individuals with disabilities. (*Common Core 6.2.2*)
2. Use current information on assessments and evaluations to inform instruction. (*Common Core 6.2.4*)
3. Develop and select learning experiences and strategies that affirm and respect, family, cultural, and societal diversity, including language differences. (*Common Core 6.2.7*)
4. Collaborate with families, related service personnel and others in assessment of individuals with disabilities. (*Common Core 6.3.1*)
5. Maintain confidential communication and documentation about individuals with disabilities. (*Common Core 6.3.2*)
6. Create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment for all students that encourages self-advocacy, self-determination, and increased independence. (*Common Core 6.4.1*)
7. Collaborate and communicate with school personnel, family and community members to include and accommodate individuals with disabilities into various settings. (*Common Core 6.4.7*)
8. Use instructional time to positively impact student learning by designing and managing effective daily routines. (*Common Core 6.4.14*)
9. Direct, observe, and provide feedback to classroom volunteers and peer tutors. (*Common Core 6.4.16*)
10. Prepare lesson plans and organize materials, and monitor implementation of Specially designed instruction for self, others, paraeducators and general educators. (*Common Core 6.4.17*)
11. Design and/or provide instruction in a variety of educational settings including community based settings. (*Common Core 6.4.18*)
12. Demonstrate commitment to developing the highest education and quality-of-life potential of individuals with disabilities. (*Common Core 6.6.1*)
13. Uphold high standards of competence and integrity and exercise sound judgment in the practice of the profession consistent with the Council for Exceptional Children Code of Ethics. (*Common Core 6.6.2*)

* Practicum objectives are based the Washington Endorsement Competencies for Special Education P-12. <https://www.pesb.wa.gov/preparation-programs/endorsement-competencies/special-education/>

WSU-TC Practicum Student's Role and Responsibilities

The following guidelines are intended to help you get the most out of your practicum experience.

- Three to four weeks prior to the start of your practicum experience, you must confirm that you have the following on file with the Teaching and Learning Department: a background check and fingerprint clearance, a completed *Institutional Application and Character and Fitness Supplement*, and proof of liability insurance coverage. **These items must be received by the department before you may begin your practicum experience!**
- Contact your Cooperating Teacher, school Principal, and Practicum Supervisor to introduce yourself and express your appreciation for working with you. Exchange contact information and arrange an opportunity for all parties to meet prior to the start of the practicum experience. Be sure to provide your Cooperating Teacher and Principal with a copy of this *Handbook*.
- Create a weekly schedule that meets the needs of both you and your Cooperating Teacher, and that fulfills the required 45 contact hours per credit. Your scheduled time may include some planning time with the Cooperating Teacher, but the majority of the time should be in your assigned classroom when students are engaged in active learning. Complete the *Practicum Placement and Schedule Form (A-1)* and return to your University Supervisor at the start of your practicum experience.
- Meet with your Practicum Supervisor and Cooperating Teacher to develop goals for completion during your experience.
- When your Practicum Supervisor arrives for a visit, provide them with all materials you will be using including a lesson plan if you have one.
- In the event of an emergency, you must notify your Cooperating Teacher and Practicum Supervisor, preferably the night before, if you must be absent. Your Cooperating Teacher plans on your assistance in the classroom. Practicum hours missed for any reason, including weather, must be completed during subsequent weeks or will result in a grade of Unsatisfactory.
- Be on time. Complete the *Practicum Attendance Log (A-2)* with dates, times, and total hours.
- Dress like a professional educator. Observe the standards of the school. Exhibit the attitudes and actions of a teacher.
- As a Practicum Student, you are in a school to learn by working closely with the Cooperating Teacher. Follow their lead (e.g., arrive when they do, assist with supervision of cafeteria, playground, bus duty).
- Practice professional ethics. Demonstrate professional courtesy and confidentiality in your interactions with students, parents, and other professionals.
- Complete all required assignments for practicum experience and accompanying course. Keep all student information and data confidential. Do not use student names in your course work or class discussions.

Cooperating Teacher's Role and Responsibilities

The following is a series of general suggestions and guidelines intended to help you make the practicum experience productive and meaningful.

- Introduce the Practicum Student to faculty, staff, and students as appropriate.
- Share with your Practicum Student your school's (e.g., schedule, routine, policies, rules), as well as your classroom expectations, routines, and so on.
- Include the Practicum Student in building activities when appropriate and arrange for the student to observe other teachers or programs whenever possible.
- Meet with the student early in the experience to assist him/her in developing goals for completion during the practicum experience.
- Assist Practicum Student in completion of assignments by becoming familiar with the expectations and objectives of the practicum experience.
- Provide the Practicum Student with background information on individual learners in your classroom. This enables the student to understand and implement the best strategies to meet the needs of each learner. Practicum Students are aware of issues surrounding confidentiality and are expected keep all student information and interactions confidential (i.e., using pseudonyms or initials for all classroom assignments).
- Involve the Practicum Students in as many teaching activities as possible (e.g., small group instruction, one-to-one tutoring, supporting inclusive activities, data collection). These activities help the students to practice their skills in a supervised setting while receiving constructive feedback to help them grow as a teacher.
- Provide Practicum Students with continuous, constructive feedback, both oral and written, on their performance including lesson planning, teaching behaviors, professionalism, and interpersonal relationships with students, parents, staff, and administrators. Demonstrate, facilitate, and encourage reflective thinking and practice by analyzing their strengths and areas for improvement.
- Maintain contact with University Supervisor throughout the practicum experience regarding student progress.
- Report any problems with the student's performance and/or behavior to the University Supervisor or Special Education Coordinator as soon as possible.
- Complete the *Practicum Evaluation Form (A-4 and A-5)* at mid-semester and at the end of the practicum experience, along with the *Professional Dispositions Evaluation for Field Experiences (PDEFE) (A-6)*. Return both forms to the University Supervisor.
- In many cases, the Practicum Student is not a certificated teacher and must be supervised at all times.

University Supervisor's Role and Responsibilities

The University Supervisor serves dual roles as both an observer/evaluator for the Practicum Student and as a liaison between the Practicum Site and the University. The University Supervisor's duties include:

- Meeting with the Practicum Student at the start of the semester to discuss practicum requirements and identify possible goals for the experience.
- Visiting the Practicum Student on-site at least once per semester per credit hour. The visit may include an observation of the Practicum Student working with students, or a conference with the Cooperating Teacher and/or Practicum Student to discuss progress and practicum requirements. The Practicum Supervisor will also provide the student with a copy of the *Practicum Observation Form (A-3)*.
- Meeting with the Practicum Student as needed throughout the experience.
- Contact the Cooperating Teacher periodically about student progress, address any concerns regarding the Practicum Student, and answer any questions about the experience in general.
- Conferencing with the Practicum Student, and the Cooperating Teacher if needed, at the end of the practicum experience to discuss the student's progress and accomplishments.
- Collecting and completing documents throughout the experience relating to the practicum experience.
- Evaluating Cooperating Teachers and schools regarding their effectiveness as field learning sites.

Suggestions for Cooperating Teachers and Practicum Students

Generally, students will begin the practicum experience with minimal responsibility for instruction, assessment, and management. Depending on the Practicum Student's knowledge and skills, responsibilities are added gradually. Some students come into the program with a broad range of experience and skills, and often have a teaching certificate already. These students are usually given more responsibility at the beginning of the practicum, with other tasks added at a quick pace. Other students will need more time to build their skills and abilities to instruct, assess, and manage students, and therefore, will take on responsibilities and complete tasks at a more gradual pace. Decisions about the Practicum Student's responsibilities should be made jointly with input from the Practicum Student, the University Supervisor, and the Cooperating Teacher.

Practicum Students are placed in a variety of settings, from early childhood programs, to elementary resource Rooms, to transition programs. Due to the wide variation of practicum sites, there is a broad range of responsibilities that are possible and these will vary from site to site. Some of the responsibilities/activities that are appropriate for practicum students may include (but not limited to):

- One-on-one, small group, or whole group instruction
- Lesson planning
- Conducting observations and functional behavior assessments
- Implementing behavior plans
- Conducting informal and formal assessments with the supervision of the Cooperating Teacher
- Attending IEP, MDT, or IFSP meetings
- Providing functional skills instruction
- Aiding in inclusive settings
- Adapting and modifying instruction for students with disabilities
- Assisting the teacher with technology and curriculum design

Frequent and clear communication between the Cooperating Teacher and the Practicum Student is necessary. Scheduling brief regular meetings to discuss the practicum student's progress is recommended.

If the Cooperating Teacher has concerns about the Practicum Student's progress, placement, or skills/abilities, please contact the University Supervisor immediately.

SPEC ED 490/590 Course Requirements

Practicum Students registered for *SPEC ED 490/590 – Practicum Experience in Special Education* are required to attend three practicum seminars and develop and maintain a Practicum Portfolio. This Portfolio will be reviewed by the University Supervisor at the conclusion of the practicum experience and will be a major component in the successful completion of the SPEC ED 490/590 Practicum.

1. Required Text:

Martin, C. C., & Hauth C. (2015). *The survival guide for new special education teachers* (2nd ed.). Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Read three chapters for the second and third seminar. That is, Chapters 1, 2, and 3 for the second practicum seminar on March 22; Chapters 4, 5, and 6 for the third practicum seminar on April 19.

2. Schedules

This section should contain a copy of your practicum schedule, your assigned classroom's daily schedule, schedules for any specific students to whom you are assigned, a school calendar, and your Practicum Attendance Log. You are responsible for knowing what days you need to be at your site. Practicum hours missed for any reason, including illness or weather, must be completed during subsequent weeks or will result in a grade of Unsatisfactory.

Practicum Schedule Form due at 11:59 pm, Friday, February 9, 2024.

Practicum Attendance Log is due Friday, April 26, 2024.

3. Practicum Goals and Objectives

Include a copy of the goals you develop with your Cooperating Teacher and any evidence showing mastery of those goals. You can include these in your Practicum Reflection.

4. Practicum Reflection

Instructions:

- a. Write two reflective commentaries of your experiences in your SPEC_ED 490 practicum. One due at 11:59 pm, Friday, February 23, 2024. The other one due at the 11:59 pm, Friday, April 26, 2024.
- b. Your commentary should be a minimum of 4 double-spaced pages (double-spaced).
- c. Your commentary should address the following activities if possible. While it is ideal for you to experience all of these activities, it is not always possible.
 - One-on-one, small group, or whole group instruction
 - Lesson planning (Lesson plans/Planning/PLC)
 - Collecting data
 - Conducting a functional behavior assessment
 - Developing and/or implementing behavior intervention strategy(ies) and plans
 - Conducting informal and formal assessments with the supervision of the mentor teacher (informal, formal; formative, summative)

- Attending at least one IEP, MDT, or IFSP meetings (i.e., what does paperwork look like)
- Providing functional skills instruction (i.e., organizational strategies)
- Identifying a social skill appropriate for the age of students and providing instruction on the chosen skill
- Supporting students in inclusive settings
- Adapting and modifying instruction for students with disabilities (i.e., differentiated instruction)

5. Feedback

Include all feedback and notes you receive from your Cooperating Teacher and University Supervisor. Any suggestions given to you from your Cooperating Teacher or Supervisor should be recorded here. You should take notes during meetings with your Cooperating Teacher and also include them in this section of the Portfolio.

Midterm Evaluation due at 11:59 pm, Friday, February 23, 2024.

Final Evaluation due at 11:59 pm, Friday, April 26, 2024.

APPENDIX



Practicum Placement and Schedule Form

Name _____ WSUID# _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Semester _____ University Supervisor _____

Practicum Location (school/room) _____

Cooperating Teacher _____ Phone _____

Cooperating Teacher Email _____

Principal(s) _____

Secretary(ies) at front desk _____

Others you work with at the school:

Name	Position	Name	Position

Practicum Hours:

Day	Time(s)
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	

Best Time for University Supervisor to Visit/Observation _____

SpecEd 490/590 PRACTICUM ATTENDANCE LOG

Directions:

1. Fill in the **date, arrival and departure times, the amount of time** for that date, and document how your time was spent during each practicum visit. Be sure to have your **practicum teacher initial** this form at the completion of each visit.
2. You are required to visit your practicum site for a **minimum of 45 hours per credit** of practicum.
3. If you cannot visit your site on your scheduled day, **contact your practicum teacher and your practicum Supervisor as soon as possible** to arrange a make-up visit. This is a very important part of being a PROFESSIONAL!!

Special Education Practicum Observation Form

** to be completed by University Supervisor

Practicum Student _____ School _____

Observer _____ Classroom/Subject _____

Date _____ Time _____ Activity/Lesson _____

What is being observed?

_____ Whole class lesson _____ Small group instruction _____ Other: One-on-one

Strengths	Areas for Growth

Classroom Management Praise and Suggestions/Notes:

Observer signature: _____ Date: _____

Washington State University Tri-Cities College of Education
Activity Observation Form for SPEC_ED 490

A-4

Mentor teacher: This is an **optional** observation form for you to share your wisdom and thoughts about how our teacher candidate does for a particular lesson/activity in your classroom. If you happen to have a chance to use this form, the teacher candidate in your classroom will submit a copy to the university supervisor or Program Coordinator with the Candidate Evaluation Form at the end of the semester. Thank you very much for doing this! We appreciate it.

Teacher candidate: _____ Date of observation: _____

Mentor teacher: _____ District/school: _____

Subject/grade level: _____ Observation #: 1 2 3 4

What activity is being observed?

Interactions with students:

Lesson plan feedback:

What are the students saying and doing?

How is the teacher candidate managing the classroom?

Suggestions for improvement or things to try next:

What is the teacher candidate doing well?

Other:

Special Education Practicum Mid-Semester Evaluation
**** to be completed by Cooperating Teacher**

Rating Scale

- 1 = Unmet
- 2 = Emerging
- 3 = Proficient
- 4 = Excels
- NA = Not applicable
- NO = Not observed

Practicum Student _____

Cooperating Teacher _____

Practicum Site _____

Semester _____ **Date** _____

Common Core Knowledge & Skill Standards	Overall	Comments
¹6.0 Common Core: Skills and Instructional Methodology		
6.2.2 Communicate with school personnel, families and community members about the characteristics and needs of individuals with disabilities.		
6.2.4 Use current information on assessments and evaluations to inform instruction.		
6.2.7 Develop and select learning experiences and strategies that affirm and respect, family, cultural, and societal diversity, including language differences.		
6.3.1 Collaborate with families, related service personnel and others in assessment of individuals with disabilities.		
6.3.2 Maintain confidential communication and documentation about individuals with disabilities.		
6.4.7 Collaborate and communicate with school personnel, family and community members to include and accommodate individuals with disabilities into various settings		
6.4.14 Use instructional time to positively impact student learning by designing and managing effective daily routines.		

<p>6.4.16 Direct, observe, and provide feedback to classroom volunteers and peer tutors.</p>		
<p>6.4.17 Prepare lesson plans and organize materials, and monitor implementation of Specially designed instruction for self, others, paraeducators and general educators.</p>		
<p>6.4.18 Design and/or provide instruction in a variety of educational settings including community based settings.</p>		
<p>6.6.1 Demonstrate commitment to developing the highest education and quality-of-life potential of individuals with disabilities.</p>		
<p>6.6.2 Uphold high standards of competence and integrity and exercise sound judgment in the practice of the profession consistent with the Council for Exceptional Children Code of Ethics.</p>		
<p>Current responsibilities of the Practicum Student:</p>		
<p>Strengths and Needs:</p>		

Goals for remainder of the practicum experience:

Cooperating Teacher Signature/Date

Student Signature/Date

Special Education Practicum Final Evaluation
**** to be completed by Cooperating Teacher**

Rating Scale

- 1 = Unmet
- 2 = Emerging
- 3 = Proficient
- 4 = Excels
- NA = Not applicable
- NO = Not observed

Practicum Student _____

Cooperating Teacher _____

Practicum Site _____

Semester _____ **Date** _____

Common Core Knowledge & Skill Standards	Overall	Comments
¹6.0 Common Core: Skills and Instructional Methodology		
6.2.2 Communicate with school personnel, families and community members about the characteristics and needs of individuals with disabilities.		
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6.4.16 Direct, observe, and provide feedback to classroom volunteers and peer tutors.		
6.4.17 Prepare lesson plans and organize materials, and monitor implementation of Specially designed instruction for self, others, paraeducators and general educators.		
6.4.18 Design and/or provide instruction in a variety of educational settings including community based settings.		
6.6.1 Demonstrate commitment to developing the highest education and quality-of-life potential of individuals with disabilities.		
6.6.2 Uphold high standards of competence and integrity and exercise sound judgment in the practice of the profession consistent with the Council for Exceptional Children Code of Ethics.		
Additional Comments or Recommendations:		

Cooperating Teacher

Student Signature/Date

