UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA®

Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education

Clinical Practice Handbook

2025-2026

A Guide for Teacher Candidates,

USI Instructors, Principals,

Mentor Teachers, and Site Coordinators

University of Southern Indiana

Teacher Education Department

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www.usi.edu/science/teacher-education

Welcome!

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, ...who strives valiantly...who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause... --Theodore Roosevelt (The Man in the Arena)

Clinical experiences provide robust opportunities to develop practitioners through expertly mentored experiences in the field and through pedagogically designed practical experiences. This clinically based approach gives teacher candidates the opportunity to integrate theory into practice, to develop and test classroom management and pedagogical skills, to hone their use of evidence in making professional decisions about practice, and to understand and integrate the standards of their professional community.

Clinical experiences are an important time in the development of a teacher candidate. Teacher candidates must abide by all policies and procedures outlined for faculty and staff and must be mindful that they are guests in the school. Teacher candidates should consider it a privilege to be a part of the education of a student.

Clinical experiences can be rewarding, challenging, and overwhelming – all at the same time. The clinical experiences are divided into three different phases:

Exploration Phase: In the Exploration Phase, teacher candidates observe, work one-on-one with individual students, and/or explore the diverse ways in which individual students learn.

Analysis Phase: In the Analysis Phase, teacher candidates are assigned to a local school where they will work with designated teachers in a whole group, small group, or one-on-one setting. USI faculty members are available or on site to oversee and support the teacher candidates while giving formative guidance.

Synthesis Phase: In the Synthesis Phase, clinical interns are assigned to a 16-week placement in an elementary, middle, or high school setting. Using the co-teaching model clinical interns will be fully immersed in the daily work of teaching. Interns will participate in planning curriculum, delivering instruction, managing the classroom, assessing student learning, and reflecting on their daily experiences.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Becky Moore, M.A.Ed.

Director of Clinical Practice
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TEACHER CANDIDATE

Policies, Responsibilities, and Procedures

Policies

Attendance

Clinical Placement Attendance Policy

Mandatory Attendance Requirement

Attendance for all assigned clinical practicum days is mandatory and non-negotiable. Participation in clinical placements within P–12 school settings is a required element of teacher preparation, governed by state licensure requirements, accreditation standards, and university policy. Full attendance is a condition for continued placement and progression in the Educator Preparation Program.

Emergency Absence Procedures

In the event of a verified emergency (e.g., medical emergency, death in the immediate family), the following procedures must be strictly followed:

- **Advance Notification**
  The teacher candidate must notify all three of the following parties via USI email *prior to the start of the school day*:
    o The university instructor
    o The assigned P–12 mentor teacher
    o The Director of Clinical Practice
- **Official Documentation**
  Documentation verifying the emergency (e.g., hospital discharge summary, obituary, accident report) must be submitted to the university instructor and Director of Clinical Practice within **48 hours** of the absence. Failure to submit documentation within this time frame will result in the absence being considered unexcused.
- **Make-up Experience (if approved)**
  If the absence is deemed excused, the candidate may be eligible for a make-up experience. Make-up hours are not guaranteed, are dependent on P–12 school availability, and must be completed within the academic term. Final decisions will be made by the Director of Clinical Practice in consultation with the Office of Clinical Experiences.

Unexcused Absences

An absence without timely communication and official documentation will be considered **unexcused**.

- A **Disposition Alert** will be filed.
- A formal **meeting** will be convened with the teacher candidate, Director of Clinical Practice, and the course instructor.
- As a result of this meeting, one or more of the following actions may be taken:
  - Development and implementation of an **Improvement Plan** in accordance with the **Student Progress Review policy**
  - **Modification** of the candidate's clinical placement
  - **Temporary suspension** from the placement
  - **Revocation of clinical placement**

Reinstatement into a placement, if deemed appropriate, will be coordinated through the Office of Clinical Experiences and is not guaranteed.

Tardiness and Partial Attendance

Timeliness and full-day participation are professional expectations. The following procedures apply:

- **First incident**:
  - Written warning
  - Documentation in the candidate's professional file
- **Second incident**:
  - Disposition Alert
  - Meeting with Director of Clinical Practice and university instructor
  - Potential implementation of an **Improvement Plan**
  - Possible removal from the clinical placement

Repeated instances of tardiness or early departure may be treated as **unexcused absences**, with consequences as outlined above.

Policy Summary

To remain in good standing within the clinical placement, teacher candidates must:

- Be present and engaged for 100% of scheduled clinical days
- Follow all emergency communication protocols
- Submit required documentation for excused absences within 48 hours
- Complete any assigned make-up experiences, if approved
- Demonstrate consistent professional conduct, including punctuality, preparedness, and respectful communication

Failure to meet these expectations may result in removal from the clinical placement and the initiation of a Student Progress Review process. The decision to reinstate or relocate a candidate will rest with the Director of Clinical Practice in consultation with the Office of Clinical Experiences.

Children of Teacher Candidates

Children of teacher candidates may NOT accompany their parents to a clinical experience. This is strictly prohibited by the University of Southern Indiana.

Inclement Weather

Days when school is closed due to inclement weather do not count against the teacher candidate. The Time Log should indicate any scheduled observation days that result in a day closed due to weather/emergencies. The Director of Clinical Practice will determine whether inclement weather days need to be made up.

Calendar

Teacher candidates will follow the USI calendar for holidays and breaks. Check the school/district calendar for days that schools are not in session. Classes may meet on the USI campus when school is closed. USI instructors will provide information for individual course schedules. The Time Log should indicate any scheduled observation days that are missed as a result of the day the site/school is closed.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

Cell phones and other electronic devices should never be visible any time that a teacher candidate is involved in a clinical experience. If a teacher candidate anticipates an emergency call during the clinical experience, he/she should notify the mentor teacher at the beginning of the day. At no time when teacher candidates are in the presence of students should the teacher candidates be involved in texting, checking social media or email, or talking on a cell phone.

Email

Email should never be considered "private." Teacher candidates should only use a USI email account (not yahoo®, hotmail®, gmail®, etc.) when communicating with university instructors, site coordinators/principals, or teachers. At no time should a teacher candidate use his or her personal email account. **Teacher candidates should check their USI email account daily**. This email account is the main source of communication between USI faculty, staff, the Office of Clinical Experience, and the teacher candidates. **Not reading email is not an acceptable excuse for missing deadlines or failing to be aware of expectations, requirements, and critical information.** A teacher candidate's clinical experience may be delayed due to failing to check email messages.

Etiquette

Teacher candidates should address mentor teachers, site coordinators, instructors, and professors by title and not simply by his or her first or last name. For example, Dr. Sheila Smith should not be addressed as Sheila or Smith. The appropriate salutation would always be Dr. Smith. This type of etiquette encompasses both face-to-face, written, and/or electronic communication.

Gum and Food

Teacher candidates should at no time be chewing gum on school property or eating food during instructional time. Food should be consumed only during appropriate break/lunch times.

Educator Preparation Background Check Policy

In an effort to protect children from potential harm and to fulfill the expectations of P12 partner schools and agencies, all educator preparation programs require that inquiries into the personal background of each teacher candidate are completed and cleared prior to registering for any USI course that includes working with children under the age of 18, whether in-person or virtually. Candidates are financially responsible for fulfilling criminal background check requirements.

1. National Background Check through Castlebranch®: A teacher candidate must have a current, valid national background check from the USI endorsed company on file with the Office of Clinical Experiences (OCE) prior to registering for clinical experience courses. A national background check provides a comprehensive check showing felonies, misdemeanors, and sex offenses at the state and county level. USI considers a National Background Check through Castlebranch® valid for a period of five years unless the teacher candidate is taking an Early Childhood course. Background checks for Early Childhood courses must be completed every three years. Upon expiration, the teacher candidate must complete a new background check to continue with clinical experiences.

2. Indiana Expanded Child Protection Index through Castlebranch®: The Indiana Expanded Child Protection Index is a comprehensive check for allegations of child abuse or child neglect within the state of Indiana. USI considers an Indiana Expanded Child Protection Index through Castlebranch® valid for a period of five years. Upon expiration, the candidate must complete a new Indiana Expanded Child Protection Index to continue with clinical experiences.

3. USI Consent for Release of Information and Self-Disclosure Form: This form provides a comprehensive picture of any issues that the teacher candidate has faced. A new application must be completed and submitted each semester prior to beginning a new clinical experience.

Some P12 partner schools and agencies may require additional background inquiries at any time. For example, many early childhood facilities must comply with the state-mandated policy regarding fingerprinting. (Fingerprinting Checks through Castlebranch®).

Fingerprinting should be completed for any teacher candidate enrolled in an Early Childhood course with clinical experience who will spend more than 7 ½ hours in one month at a designated site.

When any of the background inquiries reveal issues that may be detrimental to a candidate's ability to obtain licensure or employment as an educator, the candidate's background materials are reviewed by the Educator Preparation Issues Committee who determine if the candidate may continue in a teacher preparation program by considering the following factors:

1. The nature and seriousness of the offense for which the individual was convicted.

2. The passage of time since the commission of the offense.
3. The relationship of the offense to the ability, capacity, and fitness required to perform the duties and discharge the responsibilities of an educator.
4. Evidence of rehabilitation or treatment undertaken by the individual that might mitigate against a direct relation to the ability, capacity, and fitness required to perform the duties and discharge the responsibilities of an educator.

In alignment with the expectations of partner P12 school districts and agencies, USI may dismiss an individual from any teacher preparation program immediately if USI has reason to believe that the individual: (1) is the subject of a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect; or (2) has pending charges for or has been convicted of an offense requiring license revocation per I.C. 20-28-5-8

USI Professional Dress Code

Teacher Candidates are expected to dress professionally every day. The standards for a "business casual" wardrobe serve as a good reference point. An appropriate professional wardrobe is conservative, not trendy. Teacher candidates must present a professional appearance to future employers, colleagues, parents, and P12students. The Teacher Education Department has a dress code for candidates in clinical experiences. Candidates are **required** to follow this dress code whenever they visit a school for clinical placements. Candidates who violate the dress code are subject to a disposition alert which could lead to removal from the clinical placement.

*Lack of professional appearance is considered a Professional Disposition.

When USI teacher candidates are in schools, they should be perceived as "professionals" not as "students."

Basic hygiene is assumed. Clothes should be clean, pressed, and fit appropriately. Candidates' hair and nails should be clean, neat, and appropriately groomed. Hair colors should be natural and not include colors that are a distraction from learning. For example: purple, green, pink, unnatural red, etc., hair styles should also not be a distraction from learning. Facial hair, if worn, should be clean and neatly trimmed. Jewelry should be subtle (see "Other guidelines"), as should cologne or perfume (keep in mind that many students have fragrance allergies). Artificial eyelashes, that distract from learning, should not be worn.

*School administrators have the final say in the appropriateness of the appearance of a teacher candidate assigned to his/her school.

Candidates in the exploration and analysis phase courses are required to follow the USI Professional Dress Code outlined in detail below. Teacher candidates must present a professional appearance to future employers, colleagues, parents, and students.

Name Tag

USI Photo Name Badge available in Eagle Access office for $5

- Must be worn attached to the shirt collar or on a visible lanyard
- Follow the Photo ID requirement at the clinical placement
- Students should not wear a USI Student ID badge that displays the student identification number

Shirts and Blouses

- No athletic type t-shirts or sweatshirts (with or without hoods)
- Shirts or sweaters must fit appropriately and not be too tight, too short, too baggy, etc.

Shoes

- Must be clean and appropriate for school environment
- Flip flops or sandals without a back strap are not permitted
- Tennis shoes or athletic shoes are **not allowed** unless teaching physical education
- Crocs® should not be worn

Trousers, Slacks, Skirts, or Capri-Pants

- Skirts and dresses must be at least knee-length
- No jean cut pants or denim jeans
- No "cargo" pants with multiple pockets on the legs
- No apparel that is torn, faded, wrinkled, too baggy, or too tight
- Leggings/Jeggings must be worn with a tunic-type top
- No flannel/pajama style pants
- No shorts of any kind (unless teaching physical education)

Other Guidelines

- No low cut or revealing clothing (midriff and cleavage must not show)
- No visible piercings other than subtle earrings in the ears – this includes septum nose rings, eyebrow, lip, tongue, or other piercings that would be a distraction to the learning process

Kappa Delta Pi (KDP) has a Professional Dress Closet in the Teacher Education Department. All items are $1.00. It is open daily. Access can be gained by checking in with Ms. Michelle Herrmann, Teacher Education Department Senior Administrative Assistant.

Disposition Alert Policy

The intent of the disposition alert process is to add to the assessment of students' professionalism and dispositions to become teachers and serves as a complement to the evaluation of students' academic performance. USI Teacher Education believes Professional Dispositions are skills like any other that can be developed. Therefore, frequent assessment and feedback, and using the alert process, if necessary, allows for early and effective intervention.

The disposition system addresses several needs, including the provision of (a) a systematic, consistent approach to assessing and supporting teacher candidates' disposition growth throughout their preparation, (b) a method for stakeholders (i.e., USI faculty/staff and school personnel) to report and remediate teacher candidates' misconduct, and (c) valid and reliable data

for EPP CAEP accreditation. The full policy can be found on the USI Teacher Education website [Faculty and Staff Resources - University of Southern Indiana.](#)

Social Media

While written and oral communication among peers is often casual and informal, it is imperative for teacher candidates to be mindful of professional expectations in this regard. Conventional English must be used in all written and oral correspondences with university instructors, principals, and teachers. Teacher candidates should not have any personal conversations with students via email, texting, cell phone, social networks, or other forms of communication. Most schools have policies regarding the use of email and cell phones by students and school personnel, and teacher candidates must adhere strictly to these guidelines. Teacher candidates are also reminded that their public image must be professional. This public representation of oneself includes social networks such as Facebook®, Instagram®, Snapchat®, TikTok®, etc. Teacher candidates should not "friend" students or the parents of students on their social networking sites. This is a breach of professional boundaries.

Clinical Practice Placement Termination Policy

When there is a problem with the teacher candidate's performance, attendance, and/or disposition, the situation will first be addressed by the course instructor and a disposition alert will be filed. If the problem continues or if it is more serious, the Director of Clinical Practice may suspend the teacher candidate's placement, and a Student Progress Review plan may be developed.

If the teacher candidate violates the USI Code of Conduct or any policies of the school to which he or she has been assigned, the USI Dean of Students will be involved in the decision about the teacher candidate's status.

A school district, principal, mentor teacher, course instructor or relevant USI teacher education personnel may suspend or terminate a clinical practice for reasons that are deemed serious in nature. In such circumstances, no Student Progress Review plan will be executed.

A teacher candidate, whose placement is ended by the P12 site/school or the USI Office of Clinical Experience, will not be placed in a different site/school/grade level for the remainder of the semester.

Responsibilities and Procedures

Time Log

Teacher candidates in the Exploration Phase and Analysis Phase must keep an accurate record of days and hours on the **Time Log, found in Watermark™**. Directions for filling this out can be found in the Appendix of this handbook. This Log in Watermark™ should be updated after each visit, and it is the teacher candidate's responsibility to maintain accurate records. Each log entry submitted can be approved/rejected by the teacher candidate's mentor or supervisor.

USI Consent for Release of Information and Self-Disclosure Form

This form provides a comprehensive picture of any issues that the teacher candidate has

faced. A new application must be completed and submitted each semester prior to beginning a new clinical experience. (see Appendix for link).

Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory

Professional dispositions are "the habits of professional action and moral commitments that underlie an educator's performance" (InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, p. 6). Professional dispositions are fundamental to effective teaching. This assessment process helps ensure teacher candidates develop the professional habits and ethical commitments necessary for success in the classroom and throughout their teaching career. These essential qualities shape how teacher candidates interact with students, colleagues, and the school community during their clinical practice.

Before the first clinical placement in the Exploration Phase, a teacher candidate must complete a self-assessment using the Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory in Watermark™. The complete Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory can be found in the Appendix for reference. During each field placement, both mentor teacher and university instructor will evaluate the teacher candidates' professional dispositions using the same inventory. If any disposition receives a "disagree" rating, the teacher candidate will meet with the university instructor to discuss areas for improvement and develop a Student Progress Review plan, as needed. If necessary, the student may be directed to go through the student progress review process which includes meeting with the Student Affairs Committee for improvement or dismissal from the program.

Competencies

Exploration Phase Competency Statements

Facilitating Learning (Individual, Small Group, Whole Group)

1. **Demonstrates Content Knowledge and Uses Academic Vocabulary**
   Displays foundational content knowledge and uses appropriate academic vocabulary to support student understanding.
2. **Internalizes and Uses Curriculum Materials**
   Uses curriculum materials with growing independence, referencing guides while beginning to adapt for instructional needs.
3. **Understands Students and Responds to Their Needs**
   Demonstrates awareness of students' backgrounds and individual needs, beginning to adjust instruction accordingly.
4. **Engages and Involves Students in Learning**
   Uses basic strategies to engage students and encourage participation during activities.
5. **Maintains Focus and Communicates Clear Objectives**
   Maintains instructional focus and communicates clear learning objectives in student-friendly language.
6. **Provides Clear Directions for Students**
   Gives directions that students can generally follow with minimal clarification.

7. **Uses Student Questioning to Support Learning**
Uses questioning strategies to check for understanding and encourage student thinking.

Domain 3: Professionalism

8. **Creates a Respectful, Well-Managed Learning Environment**
Establishes a respectful classroom climate and begins to implement classroom management strategies to support learning.
9. **Reflects on Teaching Practice**
Engages in basic self-reflection to identify strengths and areas for growth.
10. **Seeks and Applies Feedback for Improvement**
Demonstrates a willingness to receive and apply feedback from mentors and supervisors.

Analysis Phase Competency Statements

Domain 1: Planning (Individual, Small Group, Whole Group)

1. **Prepares Materials and Plans Effectively**
Prepares and organizes lesson materials in advance to support instruction, ensuring resources are accessible and aligned with lesson objectives.
2. **Develops Clear Learning Goals Aligned with Standards**
Crafts specific, measurable, and standards-aligned learning goals using clear, actionable verbs appropriate for student readiness.
3. **Designs Detailed, Aligned Lesson Plans**
Develops complete, structured lesson plans that incorporate appropriate instructional activities and aligned assessments to measure objectives.
4. **Uses Assessment Data in Planning**
Integrates assessment data and prior student performance to inform planning, showing awareness of diverse student needs and readiness levels.
5. **Designs Aligned Assessments**
Develops assessments that clearly align with learning objectives and effectively measure student understanding.

Domain 2: Instruction (Individual, Small Group, Whole Group)

6. **Communicates Learning Objectives and Expectations**
Clearly shares learning objectives and academic expectations, referencing objectives throughout instruction to maintain focus and student understanding.
7. **Demonstrates Content Knowledge and Uses Academic Vocabulary**
Delivers instruction with accurate, confident content knowledge, consistently using and reinforcing appropriate academic vocabulary.

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8. **Implements Varied, Aligned Instructional Strategies**
   Uses a range of instructional strategies aligned with objectives, balancing teacher-directed instruction with active student participation.
9. **Facilitates Student Engagement and Participation**
   Uses multiple engagement strategies to encourage broad student participation, fostering an interactive learning environment.
10. **Uses Effective Questioning to Promote Higher-Level Thinking**
    Incorporates questioning techniques that require students to analyze, explain, and apply concepts, promoting deeper understanding.
11. **Monitors Understanding and Responds to Student Needs**
    Consistently checks for understanding using varied methods, monitors student work, and adjusts instruction or provides clarification as needed.
12. **Manages Classroom and Uses Instructional Time Effectively**
    Implements effective classroom management strategies and maintains instructional focus, maximizing learning time.
13. **Balances Structure with Flexibility During Instruction**
    Follows the lesson plan while adapting instruction in response to student needs, demonstrating flexibility to support learning.

Domain 3: Professionalism

14. **Seeks and Applies Feedback for Professional Growth**
    Regularly seeks specific feedback on teaching practice, implements suggestions thoughtfully, and identifies areas for continued improvement.
15. **Reflects on Teaching Practice**
    Engages in ongoing, thoughtful reflection on teaching experiences, using insights to improve future instruction.

End of Term Procedures

As the clinical experience concludes, teacher candidates are expected to complete the following procedures in a timely and professional manner. These procedures are aligned with the expectations outlined in the *Teacher Candidate Policies, Responsibilities, and Procedures* and are required for successful completion of the course and program requirements.

Final Time Log Submission

- Teacher candidates must ensure that all hours and visits are accurately recorded in **Watermark™ Time Log**.
- All entries must be submitted **immediately following each visit** and must reflect the exact time spent on-site.

- Final Time Logs must be **submitted and ready for review** by the last scheduled day of the clinical placement.
- The mentor teacher and/or university instructor will approve or reject log entries as appropriate.

Feedback Observation Reflection

- Teacher candidates will complete a final **reflection** in conjunction with the **Feedback Observation Form**, addressing growth, instructional impact, and future goals.
- This reflection should be submitted through the designated platform (e.g., Watermark™, course LMS, or email, as directed) by the deadline provided by the course instructor.

Disposition Inventory Final Evaluation

- University instructors and mentor teachers will complete the **Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory** in **Watermark™**, evaluating the candidate's professionalism, collaboration, and responsiveness to feedback.
- If a teacher candidate has previously received a "disagree" rating in any area, a follow-up meeting and Student Progress Review plan must be documented prior to the end of the term.

Final Formative Assessment

- The university instructor will complete a **final evaluation** using:
  - *Exploration Phase: Teacher Candidate Formative Assessment*, or
  - *Analysis Phase: Teacher Candidate Formative Assessment*, depending on placement level.
- These assessments reflect performance across planning, instruction, and professionalism domains.

USI Consent for Release of Information and Self-Disclosure Form

- A new **Self-Disclosure Form** must be submitted each semester. Candidates must verify that this form has been completed prior to the final day of the clinical experience.
  - See Appendix for link

Confirmation of Professional Responsibilities

- Candidates must ensure that they have upheld the following throughout the term:
  - Adherence to the **USI Professional Dress Code**.
  - Maintenance of appropriate **communication etiquette** and timely responses via USI email.

- o   Strict **confidentiality** and professional use of technology and social media.
- o   Respectful interactions with all school personnel, students, and USI faculty.

Final Course Requirements

- Teacher candidates must review and complete **any additional end-of-course requirements** as outlined in their course syllabus (e.g., lesson plans, case studies, tutoring logs, video reflections, or collaborative assignments).
- All documentation and assignments must be submitted by the stated course deadline to receive final course credit.

Reminders

- Failure to complete end-of-term requirements may result in delayed course completion, disposition alerts, or academic consequences.
- Questions about any of the expectations should be directed promptly to the university instructor or Director of Clinical Practice.

MENTOR TEACHER

Policies, Responsibilities, and Procedures

Policies

Attendance

Absences

Teacher candidates are expected to attend all scheduled clinical experiences. If a candidate is unable to attend due to illness or extreme emergency, it is the teacher candidate's responsibility to notify the USI instructor, mentor teacher, and the Director of Clinical Practice via USI email prior to the scheduled arrival time.

It is the mentor teacher's responsibility to communicate any attendance concerns—such as unreported absences or patterns of missed days—to the university instructor.

*See Teacher Candidate Attendance Policy for full details.

Tardiness

Teacher candidates are expected to arrive on time and be present with students for the entire duration of the assigned clinical experience. If a candidate anticipates being late, it is their responsibility to notify the USI instructor, mentor teacher, and the Director of Clinical Practice via USI email prior to the scheduled arrival time.

It is the mentor teacher's responsibility to communicate any tardiness concerns—including patterns of late arrival or repeated incidents—to the university instructor.

Arrival and Departure

Teacher candidates are expected to follow the placement schedule as assigned by the Office of Clinical Experience. They are encouraged to arrive early to ensure punctuality and remain on-site for the full duration of their scheduled experience. If a candidate needs to arrive late or leave early due to extenuating circumstances, they must notify the USI instructor and mentor teacher via USI email in advance of the occurrence.

It is the mentor teacher's responsibility to communicate any concerns related to arrival or departure—including frequent late arrivals or early departures—to the university instructor.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

Cell phones and other electronic devices should never be visible any time that a teacher candidate is involved in a clinical experience. If a teacher candidate anticipates an emergency call during the clinical experience, he/she should notify the P12 teacher at the beginning of the session. At no time when teacher candidates are in the presence of students should the teacher candidates be involved in texting, checking social media or email, or talking on a cell phone. It is the mentor's responsibility to communicate cell phone and other electronic device violations to the university instructor.

Inclement Weather

Days when school is closed due to inclement weather do not count against the teacher candidate. The Time Log should indicate any scheduled observation days that result in a day closed due to weather/emergencies. The Director of Clinical Practice will determine whether inclement weather days need to be made up.

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Teacher candidates will follow the USI calendar for holidays and breaks. Check the school/ district calendar for days that schools are not in session. Classes may meet on the USI campus when school is closed. USI instructors will provide information for individual course schedules. The Time Log should indicate any scheduled observation days that are missed as a result of the day the site/school is closed.

Communication with Teacher Candidate

Teacher candidates shall use a USI email account (<u>not</u> yahoo®, hotmail®, gmail®, etc.) when communicating with university instructors, site coordinators/principals, or mentor teachers. This email account is the main source of communication among Mentor teachers, USI faculty, staff, the Office of Clinical Experience, and teacher candidates.

USI Professional Dress Code

Teacher Candidates are expected to dress professionally every day. The standards for a "business casual" wardrobe serve as a good reference point. An appropriate professional wardrobe is conservative, not trendy. Teacher candidates must present a professional appearance to future employers, colleagues, parents, and students. The Teacher Education Department has a dress code policy (page 14—Teacher Candidate section) for candidates in clinical experiences. Candidates are **<u>required</u>** to follow this dress code whenever they visit a school for clinical placements. Candidates who violate the dress code are subject to a disposition alert which could lead to removal from the clinical placement. It is the mentor's responsibility to communicate dress code issues to the university instructor.

Disposition Alert Policy

The intent of the disposition alert process is to add to the assessment of students' professionalism and dispositions to become teachers and serves as a complement to the evaluation of students' academic performance. USI Teacher Education believes Professional Dispositions are skills like any other that can be developed. Therefore, frequent assessment and feedback, and using the alert process, if necessary, allows for early and effective intervention.

The disposition system addresses several needs, including the provision of (a) a systematic, consistent approach to assessing and supporting teacher candidates' disposition growth throughout their preparation, (b) a method for stakeholders (i.e., USI faculty/staff and school personnel) to report and remediate teacher candidates' misconduct, and (c) valid and reliable data for EPP CAEP accreditation. The full policy can be found on the USI Teacher Education website <u>Faculty and Staff Resources - University of Southern Indiana.</u>

The Disposition Alert Form is completed by the student's faculty, and then the faculty member will meet with the student to create a Student Progress Review plan. The student will receive a copy of the form electronically and then respond to the form with a summary of the Student Progress Review plan. The completed form will then be routed to the faculty member, student, the Teacher Education Department chair, and the Department chair (if applicable). A copy of the electronic form will be saved in the Teacher Education Department for reference. Link to the <u>Disposition alert form.</u> It is the mentor's responsibility to communicate the need for a disposition alert and disposition issues to the university instructor.

Clinical Practice Placement Termination Policy

When there is a problem with the teacher candidate's performance, attendance, and/or disposition, the situation will first be addressed by the course instructor and a disposition alert

will be filed. If the problem continues or if it is more serious, the Director of Clinical Practice may suspend the teacher candidate's placement, and a Student Progress Review plan may be developed.

If the teacher candidate violates the USI Code of Conduct or any policies of the school to which he or she has been assigned, the USI Dean of Students will be involved in the decision about the teacher candidate's status.

A school district, principal, mentor teacher, course instructor or relevant USI teacher education personnel may suspend or terminate a clinical practice for reasons that are deemed serious in nature. In such circumstances, no plan for Student Progress Review will be executed.

A teacher candidate, whose placement is ended by the P12 site/school or the USI Office of Clinical Experience, will not be placed in a different site/school/grade level for the remainder of the semester.

Time Log

Teacher candidates in the Exploration Phase and Analysis Phase must keep an accurate record of days and hours on the Time Log in Watermark™. The USI Time Log is found in Watermark™. Directions for filling this out can be found in the Appendix of this handbook. This Log in Watermark™ should be updated after each visit, and it is the teacher candidate's responsibility to maintain accurate records. Each log entry submitted can be approved/rejected by the teacher candidate's mentor teacher. It is the mentor teacher's responsibility to approve/reject the time log entry submitted by the teacher candidate in Watermark™ weekly.

Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory

Professional dispositions are "the habits of professional action and moral commitments that underlie an educator's performance" (InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, p. 6). Professional dispositions are fundamental to effective teaching. This assessment process helps ensure teacher candidates develop the professional habits and ethical commitments necessary for success in the classroom and throughout their teaching career. These essential qualities shape how teacher candidates interact with students, colleagues, and the school community during their clinical practice.

The complete Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory can be found in Appendix B for reference. During each field placement, the mentor teacher will evaluate the teacher candidates' professional dispositions using the same inventory in Watermark™. Any disposition that is marked "disagree", the mentor teacher will write a comment about why that was selected. If any disposition receives a "disagree" rating, the teacher candidate will meet with the university instructor to discuss areas for improvement and develop a Student Progress Review plan, as needed.

Classroom Observations

The university instructor is responsible for completing three observations, at minimum. Two observations will be conducted in-person, and one will be conducted through a video platform, GoReact. The GoReact observation will be recorded by the teacher candidate and submitted to

the university instructor for review. Teacher candidates may be recorded for academic purposes only, in alignment with university assessment requirements. Agreements regarding recording permissions have been established with school sites in advance. In cases where recordings are not permitted by a site, alternative arrangements will be made. When necessary, the university instructor will complete three in-person observations in lieu of video submissions.

Required Trainings

Mentor teachers are required to complete the following trainings: Watermark System Training, which supports assessment and documentation processes; inter-rater reliability training for the Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory to ensure consistent and fair evaluation of candidates; and evidence-based Science of Reading training. Acceptable evidence of Science of Reading training may include completion of programs such as LETRS, Keys to Literacy, participation in professional development through the Indiana Learning Lab, district or school-sponsored literacy training, or earning a licensure literacy endorsement such as passing the ETS Praxis 5205.

End of Term Forms to be Completed

1. The mentor teacher will complete the Exploration/Analysis Program Evaluation in Watermark™.
2. Ensure all Time Logs in Watermark™ are verified and approved.
3. The mentor teacher will complete the Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory in Watermark.

Responsibilities and Procedures

Mentor teachers play a vital role in supporting and evaluating teacher candidates during their clinical practice. They are expected to demonstrate professionalism, provide guidance, and collaborate with university instructors to ensure a high-quality experience for all candidates.

Each semester, teacher candidates are required to complete the **Qualifying Credentials/Mentor Profile** form to ensure the Office of Clinical Experiences has current and accurate information on file. This form, linked in the Appendix, collects essential data related to background checks, certification status, and placement details, and must be submitted prior to the start of any clinical experience.

Professional Conduct and Communication

 Mentor teachers must communicate concerns related to attendance, tardiness, cell phone or electronic device use, or professional dress to the university instructor using USI email. They are responsible for reporting any behavioral or professional concerns that arise and for participating in the Disposition Alert process or Student Progress Review planning process if necessary. Mentor teachers are expected to model professionalism at all times and to help teacher candidates understand and follow school-site expectations, including arrival and departure

procedures, alignment with the school calendar, and appropriate responses to inclement weather. All professional communication must occur through USI email.

Training Requirements

To effectively support their role, mentor teachers must complete all required training. This includes Watermark™ System Training and inter-rater reliability training for evaluating professional dispositions. Mentor teachers must also complete Science of Reading training that is appropriate to the content area and grade level. Acceptable options include LETRS, Keys to Literacy, Indiana Learning Lab, district-sponsored professional development, completion of the ETS Praxis 5205, or other approved literacy training.

Assessment and Documentation

Mentor teachers are responsible for reviewing and approving or rejecting Time Log entries in Watermark™ on a weekly basis. They must complete the Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory in Watermark™, including written comments for any item marked as "disagree." In addition, mentor teachers are expected to complete midterm and/or final assessments of teacher candidates using Student Learning & Licensure (SLL) and any other required university rubrics. They should observe and assess lessons taught by the candidate using the provided tools and offer timely feedback. Mentor teachers must also sign or approve the Time Log in Watermark™ for each visit.

Phase-Specific Expectations

a. **Exploration Phase (Fridays: 7:30 am – 11:30 am)**
   During the Exploration Phase, mentor teachers are expected to remain in the classroom during all teacher candidate interactions with students. They must provide space and opportunities for teacher candidates to complete their clinical experience requirements. Mentor teachers should offer consultation regarding the developmental needs and characteristics of students and support the collection of artifacts for the candidate's case study, as applicable. At the end of the phase, they are responsible for completing a formal assessment of the teacher candidate using Student Learning & Licensure.

b. **Analysis Phase (Wednesdays: 7:30 am – 3:00 pm)**
   During the Analysis Phase, mentor teachers are expected to maintain regular communication with the teacher candidate and collaborate with the USI instructor to support the candidate's professional growth. For EDUC 398, mentor teachers are responsible for selecting and monitoring attendance of "Reading Buddies" using instructor-provided criteria. They must remain in the classroom with the teacher candidate and allow observation of reading and math instruction. Teacher candidates should be permitted to take notes during instruction and be given multiple opportunities

to teach small or whole group lessons. Mentor teachers should provide feedback following instructional activities, allow candidates to assume appropriate classroom and mentor duties, and model effective classroom management. Adequate space must be provided for instruction and student engagement. Mentor teachers should continue to support the collection of artifacts and assignments for the candidate's case study and coursework throughout this phase.

Gradual Release Model Timeline Suggestion (EXPLORATION)

Competency Domain	Month 1 I Do / Observation & Initial Practice	Month 2 We Do / Guided Practice & Feedback	Month 3 You Do Together / Supported Independence	Month 4 You Do Independently / Demonstrated Competency
Facilitating Learning				
Demonstrates Content Knowledge and Uses Academic Vocabulary	Observes mentor using accurate content and vocabulary. Begins to incorporate academic vocabulary in one-on-one settings.	Uses content vocabulary in planned small group activities with support.	Independently integrates vocabulary in small group and begins in whole group.	Demonstrates consistent and accurate use of content-specific vocabulary across settings.
Internalizes and Uses Curriculum Materials	Reviews and discusses curriculum guides with mentor. Begins using materials for basic planning.	Plans small group instruction using curriculum materials with mentor guidance.	Independently adapts curriculum for small group/individual needs.	Selects, adapts, and implements curriculum independently with fidelity and responsiveness.
Understands Students and Responds to Their Needs	Learns about students' backgrounds and needs through observation and discussion.	Begins to modify instruction with mentor input based on student needs.	Designs learning experiences that consider varied student backgrounds.	Independently adjusts instruction and materials based on student performance and individual needs.

Revised 08.06.25

Engages and Involves Students in Learning	Observes strategies used to engage learners. Tries brief engagement strategies (e.g., attention-getters).	Practices using engagement strategies during small group lessons.	Selects and uses age-appropriate engagement strategies independently.	Uses multiple, effective engagement strategies to involve all learners consistently.
Maintains Focus and Communicates Clear Objectives	Observes how objectives are introduced and lessons are paced.	Practices writing and stating objectives with mentor feedback.	Delivers instruction with clear objectives and pacing in guided settings.	Clearly communicates objectives and maintains lesson focus independently.
Provides Clear Directions for Students	Models and repeats directions with mentor assistance.	Practices giving directions for small tasks and revises based on student responses.	Gives multi-step directions in small and whole group with some reminders.	Gives concise, effective directions that students follow with minimal need for clarification.
Uses Student Questioning to Support Learning	Observes mentor's questioning techniques and participates in debriefs.	Practices asking recall and basic comprehension questions.	Uses higher-order questions with support and prompts.	Independently uses a variety of questions to check understanding and promote thinking.
Domain 3: Professionalism				
Creates a Respectful, Well-Managed Learning Environment	Observes mentor's classroom expectations and interactions.	Begins implementing classroom procedures with supervision.	Maintains classroom expectations with growing confidence.	Consistently promotes a respectful environment and manages student behavior effectively.

Reflects on Teaching Practice	Participates in guided reflection conversations with mentor and supervisor.	Identifies successes and challenges in lesson delivery; begins journaling or written reflections.	Reflects on student learning outcomes and instructional effectiveness.	Independently identifies strengths and areas for growth and sets goals for improvement.
Seeks and Applies Feedback for Improvement	Listens to feedback and participates in debriefs.	Begins implementing feedback in lesson revisions and teaching.	Proactively seeks feedback and applies it to planning and instruction.	Consistently incorporates feedback into professional practice with minimal prompting.

Gradual Release Model Timeline Suggestion (ANALYSIS)

Competency Domain	Month 1 I Do / Observation & Initial Practice	Month 2 We Do / Guided Practice & Feedback	Month 3 You Do Together / Supported Independence	Month 4 You Do Independently / Demonstrated Competency
Domain 1: Planning				
Prepares Materials and Plans Effectively	Observes mentor preparing materials. Assists in gathering resources for lessons.	Prepares materials for small group lessons with feedback.	Prepares and organizes materials for individual and small group lessons independently.	Prepares and organizes all materials in advance for whole group instruction aligned with objectives.
Develops Clear Learning Goals Aligned with Standards	Reviews mentor's objectives and standard alignment.	Drafts learning goals with mentor support and edits for clarity.	Creates measurable goals aligned with standards for supported lessons.	Develops clear, measurable, standards-aligned goals independently across lesson formats.

Designs Detailed, Aligned Lesson Plans	Reviews mentor lesson plans and planning templates.	Drafts lesson plans with mentor support using structured templates.	Creates full lesson plans with aligned activities and formative checks.	Independently designs well-structured, fully aligned lessons with objectives, activities, and assessments.
Uses Assessment Data in Planning	Reviews assessment data with mentor and discusses implications.	Uses sample data to inform small group lesson planning.	References current student data to adjust lesson plans and groupings.	Independently integrates assessment data into planning for targeted instruction.
Designs Aligned Assessments	Reviews mentor-designed assessments and their alignment to objectives.	Drafts formative assessments aligned to specific learning goals with support.	Designs exit slips and other checks aligned to planned instruction.	Develops aligned formative and summative assessments to evaluate student learning.
Domain 2: Instruction				
Communicates Learning Objectives and Expectations	Observes how mentor communicates objectives and expectations.	Practices stating objectives at lesson launch with mentor input.	States and references objectives during instruction with increasing fluency.	Consistently communicates and revisits objectives to guide learning throughout instruction.
Demonstrates Content Knowledge and Uses Academic Vocabulary	Observes mentor modeling academic language and content delivery.	Practices using content-specific vocabulary during small group lessons.	Incorporates accurate vocabulary in both planned and spontaneous instruction.	Demonstrates consistent and confident content knowledge and vocabulary use.
Implements Varied, Aligned	Observes instructional	Implements modeled	Chooses and adapts	Uses a variety of aligned

Instructional Strategies	strategies used across groups and content areas.	strategies during small group lessons.	strategies based on student need and instructional goals.	strategies to support all learners during instruction.
Facilitates Student Engagement and Participation	Assists in engaging students with attention strategies and prompts.	Leads parts of lessons using modeled engagement techniques.	Designs and delivers lessons using participation strategies.	Independently facilitates consistent student engagement and interaction.
Uses Effective Questioning to Promote Higher-Level Thinking	Observes mentor's questioning techniques and student responses.	Asks planned comprehension and analytical questions during lessons.	Uses questions to probe understanding and support metacognition.	Uses varied questioning strategies to promote critical thinking and discussion.
Monitors Understanding and Responds to Student Needs	Watches mentor monitor work and give timely feedback.	Uses simple checks for understanding (e.g., thumbs up, quick write).	Monitors student progress during instruction and adjusts support as needed.	Consistently uses data and observation to adjust teaching in real-time.
Manages Classroom and Uses Instructional Time Effectively	Observes routines, transitions, and time management strategies.	Practices implementing routines with mentor support.	Maintains focus and pacing with occasional guidance.	Independently manages time, transitions, and student behavior efficiently.
Balances Structure with Flexibility During Instruction	Follows scripted plans and observes mentor flexibility.	Begins to adapt plans in the moment with prompting.	Balances planning with responsiveness to student needs.	Adjusts instruction smoothly in real time to maximize learning outcomes.
Domain 3: Professionalism				

Seeks and Applies Feedback for Professional Growth	Receives feedback and engages in reflection discussions.	Implements feedback into revised plans and lessons.	Seeks specific feedback and applies it to instruction.	Regularly requests and integrates feedback to grow professionally.
Reflects on Teaching Practice	Participates in reflective conversations and debriefs.	Writes brief reflections on teaching experiences with guidance.	Analyzes successes and challenges independently and identifies adjustments.	Engages in thoughtful, consistent reflection to improve instructional practice.

Quick Reference: Mentor Teacher Responsibilities

- Completes Qualifying Credentials/Mentor Profile –emailed from the Director of Clinical Practice
- Communicate the following issues to the university instructor:
    - Attendance issues
    - Tardiness issues
    - Cell phone or electronic device violations
    - Professional dress code concerns
    - Need for a Disposition Alert and/or disposition issues
- Approve or reject weekly Time Log entries submitted by the teacher candidate in Watermark™
- Complete the Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory in Watermark™, including comments for "disagree" ratings
- Use USI email for all official communication
- Support candidate understanding of:
    - Arrival/departure expectations
    - School and USI calendars
    - Inclement weather procedures
- Complete the following required trainings:
    - Watermark System Training
    - Inter-rater Reliability Training for the Disposition Inventory
    - Science of Reading training (e.g., LETRS, Keys to Literacy, Indiana Learning Lab, ETS Praxis 5205)

UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTOR

Policies, Responsibilities, and Procedures

Policies

Attendance

Absences

Teacher candidates are expected to attend all scheduled clinical experiences. If a candidate is unable to attend due to illness or extreme emergency, it is the teacher candidate's responsibility to notify the USI instructor, mentor teacher, and Director of Clinical Practice via USI email prior to the scheduled arrival time.

It is the university instructor's responsibility to follow up on any attendance concerns reported by the mentor teacher—such as unreported absences or patterns of missed days—and to document or address them as appropriate.

*See Teacher Candidate Attendance Policy for full details.

Tardiness

Teacher candidates are expected to arrive on time and be present with students for the full duration of their assigned clinical experience. If a candidate anticipates being late, it is their responsibility to notify the USI instructor, mentor teacher, and Director of Clinical Practice via USI email prior to arrival.

It is the university instructor's responsibility to address any tardiness concerns reported by the mentor teacher and to determine whether further documentation or intervention is necessary.

Arrival and Departure

Teacher candidates are expected to follow the placement schedule assigned by the Office of Clinical Experience. If a candidate needs to arrive late or leave early, they must notify the USI instructor and mentor teacher via USI email in advance.

It is the university instructor's responsibility to address any repeated or unexcused late arrivals or early departures reported by the mentor teacher.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

If a teacher candidate uses a cell phone or other electronic device inappropriately during the clinical experience, the mentor teacher is responsible for reporting the incident to the university instructor.

It is the university instructor's responsibility to follow up with the teacher candidate and determine whether further action (e.g., coaching or a disposition alert) is needed.

Inclement Weather

School closures due to inclement weather do not count against the teacher candidate. The closure should be documented in the Watermark™ Time Log.

It is the university instructor's responsibility to monitor clinical hours and determine, in collaboration with the Director of Clinical Practice, whether time needs to be made up.

Calendar

Teacher candidates will follow the USI calendar for holidays and breaks. If a scheduled placement day or observation falls on a school closure, instructors will work with candidates to make adjustments.

It is the university instructor's responsibility to monitor calendar alignment, communicate any course-related schedule updates, and assist with rescheduling as needed.

Communication with Teacher Candidate

Teacher candidates must use their USI email account for all communication with instructors, mentor teachers, and university staff. It is the university instructor's responsibility to model professional communication and use USI email for all correspondence.

USI Professional Dress Code

Candidates are expected to adhere to the USI Teacher Education professional dress code when participating in clinical experiences.

It is the university instructor's responsibility to address any mentor-reported dress code violations and determine whether a disposition alert should be filed.

Disposition Alert Policy

When a mentor teacher reports disposition concerns or disposition alert requests, it is the university instructor's responsibility to initiate the Disposition Alert process. This includes completing the alert form, meeting with the teacher candidate to develop a Student Progress Review plan, and ensuring appropriate documentation is shared with the Teacher Education Department Chair and any relevant parties.

Clinical Practice Placement Termination

If the teacher candidate's performance, attendance, or conduct continues to be problematic or violates policy, the university instructor will consult with the Director of Clinical Practice regarding potential suspension or termination of the placement. In cases of serious misconduct, no Student Progress Review plan will be implemented, and placement may be immediately ended.

Time Log

Teacher candidates are responsible for maintaining accurate Time Logs in Watermark™. Mentor teachers approve or reject log entries weekly. It is the university instructor's responsibility to monitor time log completion and mentor approval, and to follow up with either party if concerns arise.

Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory

Both mentor teachers and university instructors will complete the Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory in Watermark™ during the placement. If any item is marked "disagree," a comment must be included, and the university instructor should meet with the candidate to address concerns and create an improvement plan, if necessary.

Required Training

University instructors are required to complete training related to all responsibilities associated with supervising and evaluating teacher candidates during clinical placements. These trainings ensure consistency, reliability, and alignment with accreditation expectations and program standards.

Required training includes:

- **Watermark™**: Training on how to access and complete required documentation in the Watermark system, including reviewing time logs, submitting evaluations, and monitoring candidate progress.

- **GoReact**: Training on the GoReact platform for reviewing teacher candidate video submissions and providing time-stamped, targeted feedback.
- **Observation Rubric and Feedback Form**: Training on how to conduct observations using the university-approved rubric and how to provide clear, constructive written feedback aligned to clinical expectations.
- **Debrief Sessions**: Training on conducting structured debrief conversations with candidates via Zoom or Microsoft Teams, including guidance for recording and storing the meetings for program documentation.
- **Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory**: Training on evaluating candidates using the disposition inventory in Watermark™, including how to provide actionable comments and collaborate on Student Progress Review plan if necessary.
- **Teacher Candidate Summative Assessment**: Training on completing the end-of-semester summative evaluation of the teacher candidate's performance and professional growth.
- **Exploration/Analysis Program Evaluation**: Training on completing the program evaluation form in Watermark™ to document the candidate's overall experience and the quality of the placement.
- **Science of Reading**: Training or evidence of understanding related to the Science of Reading, which may include participation in LETRS, Keys to Literacy, Indiana Learning Lab modules, district-based literacy training, or passing the ETS Praxis 5205 or equivalent. University instructors are expected to be able to recognize and support Science of Reading-aligned instruction during observations and in their feedback to candidates.

Responsibilities and Procedures

Each semester, teacher candidates are required to complete the **Qualifying Credentials/Mentor Profile** form to ensure the Office of Clinical Experiences has current and accurate information on file. This form, linked in the Appendix, collects essential data related to background checks, certification status, and placement details, and must be submitted prior to the start of any clinical experience.

Classroom Observations

Teacher candidates may be recorded for academic purposes only, in alignment with university assessment requirements. Agreements regarding recording permissions have been established with school sites in advance. In cases where recordings are not permitted by a site, alternative arrangements will be made. The university instructor will communicate in advance with the Director of Clinical Practice to determine a mutually agreed upon alternative.

University instructors are required to complete three observations per candidate:

- Two in-person
  - Round 1—end of September
  - Round 2—end of October
- One via GoReact
- Round 3—end of November

For each observation, the instructor must:

- Complete the Formal Observation Feedback Form
- Conduct a virtual debrief session with the candidate via Zoom or Microsoft Teams
- Record and save each debrief session for program documentation

Gradual Release Model Timeline Suggestion (EXPLORATION)

Competency Domain	Month 1 I Do / Observation & Initial Practice	Month 2 We Do / Guided Practice & Feedback	Month 3 You Do Together / Supported Independence	Month 4 You Do Independently / Demonstrated Competency
Facilitating Learning				
Demonstrates Content Knowledge and Uses Academic Vocabulary	Observes mentor using accurate content and vocabulary. Begins to incorporate academic vocabulary in one-on-one settings.	Uses content vocabulary in planned small group activities with support.	Independently integrates vocabulary in small group and begins in whole group.	Demonstrates consistent and accurate use of content-specific vocabulary across settings.
Internalizes and Uses Curriculum Materials	Reviews and discusses curriculum guides with mentor. Begins using materials for basic planning.	Plans small group instruction using curriculum materials with mentor guidance.	Independently adapts curriculum for small group/individual needs.	Selects, adapts, and implements curriculum independently with fidelity and responsiveness.

Revised 08.06.25

Understands Students and Responds to Their Needs	Learns about students' backgrounds and needs through observation and discussion.	Begins to modify instruction with mentor input based on student needs.	Designs learning experiences that consider varied student backgrounds.	Independently adjusts instruction and materials based on student performance and individual needs.
Engages and Involves Students in Learning	Observes strategies used to engage learners. Tries brief engagement strategies (e.g., attention-getters).	Practices using engagement strategies during small group lessons.	Selects and uses age-appropriate engagement strategies independently.	Uses multiple, effective engagement strategies to involve all learners consistently.
Maintains Focus and Communicates Clear Objectives	Observes how objectives are introduced and lessons are paced.	Practices writing and stating objectives with mentor feedback.	Delivers instruction with clear objectives and pacing in guided settings.	Clearly communicates objectives and maintains lesson focus independently.
Provides Clear Directions for Students	Models and repeats directions with mentor assistance.	Practices giving directions for small tasks and revises based on student responses.	Gives multi-step directions in small and whole group with some reminders.	Gives concise, effective directions that students follow with minimal need for clarification.
Uses Student Questioning to Support Learning	Observes mentor's questioning techniques and participates in debriefs.	Practices asking recall and basic comprehension questions.	Uses higher-order questions with support and prompts.	Independently uses a variety of questions to check understanding and promote thinking.
Domain 3: Professionalism				

Creates a Respectful, Well-Managed Learning Environment	Observes mentor's classroom expectations and interactions.	Begins implementing classroom procedures with supervision.	Maintains classroom expectations with growing confidence.	Consistently promotes a respectful environment and manages student behavior effectively.
Reflects on Teaching Practice	Participates in guided reflection conversations with mentor and supervisor.	Identifies successes and challenges in lesson delivery; begins journaling or written reflections.	Reflects on student learning outcomes and instructional effectiveness.	Independently identifies strengths and areas for growth and sets goals for improvement.
Seeks and Applies Feedback for Improvement	Listens to feedback and participates in debriefs.	Begins implementing feedback in lesson revisions and teaching.	Proactively seeks feedback and applies it to planning and instruction.	Consistently incorporates feedback into professional practice with minimal prompting.

Gradual Release Model Timeline Suggestion (ANALYSIS)

Competency Domain	Month 1 I Do / Observation & Initial Practice	Month 2 We Do / Guided Practice & Feedback	Month 3 You Do Together / Supported Independence	Month 4 You Do Independently / Demonstrated Competency
Domain 1: Planning				
Prepares Materials and Plans Effectively	Observes mentor preparing materials. Assists in gathering resources for lessons.	Prepares materials for small group lessons with feedback.	Prepares and organizes materials for individual and small group lessons independently.	Prepares and organizes all materials in advance for whole group instruction aligned with objectives.
Develops Clear Learning Goals	Reviews mentor's	Drafts learning goals with	Creates measurable	Develops clear, measurable,

Aligned with Standards	objectives and standard alignment.	mentor support and edits for clarity.	goals aligned with standards for supported lessons.	standards-aligned goals independently across lesson formats.
Designs Detailed, Aligned Lesson Plans	Reviews mentor lesson plans and planning templates.	Drafts lesson plans with mentor support using structured templates.	Creates full lesson plans with aligned activities and formative checks.	Independently designs well-structured, fully aligned lessons with objectives, activities, and assessments.
Uses Assessment Data in Planning	Reviews assessment data with mentor and discusses implications.	Uses sample data to inform small group lesson planning.	References current student data to adjust lesson plans and groupings.	Independently integrates assessment data into planning for targeted instruction.
Designs Aligned Assessments	Reviews mentor-designed assessments and their alignment to objectives.	Drafts formative assessments aligned to specific learning goals with support.	Designs exit slips and other checks aligned to planned instruction.	Develops aligned formative and summative assessments to evaluate student learning.
Domain 2: Instruction				
Communicates Learning Objectives and Expectations	Observes how mentor communicates objectives and expectations.	Practices stating objectives at lesson launch with mentor input.	States and references objectives during instruction with increasing fluency.	Consistently communicates and revisits objectives to guide learning throughout instruction.
Demonstrates Content Knowledge and	Observes mentor modeling academic	Practices using content-specific vocabulary	Incorporates accurate vocabulary in both planned	Demonstrates consistent and confident content

Uses Academic Vocabulary	language and content delivery.	during small group lessons.	and spontaneous instruction.	knowledge and vocabulary use.
Implements Varied, Aligned Instructional Strategies	Observes instructional strategies used across groups and content areas.	Implements modeled strategies during small group lessons.	Chooses and adapts strategies based on student need and instructional goals.	Uses a variety of aligned strategies to support all learners during instruction.
Facilitates Student Engagement and Participation	Assists in engaging students with attention strategies and prompts.	Leads parts of lessons using modeled engagement techniques.	Designs and delivers lessons using participation strategies.	Independently facilitates consistent student engagement and interaction.
Uses Effective Questioning to Promote Higher-Level Thinking	Observes mentor's questioning techniques and student responses.	Asks planned comprehension and analytical questions during lessons.	Uses questions to probe understanding and support metacognition.	Uses varied questioning strategies to promote critical thinking and discussion.
Monitors Understanding and Responds to Student Needs	Watches mentor monitor work and give timely feedback.	Uses simple checks for understanding (e.g., thumbs up, quick write).	Monitors student progress during instruction and adjusts support as needed.	Consistently uses data and observation to adjust teaching in real-time.
Manages Classroom and Uses Instructional Time Effectively	Observes routines, transitions, and time management strategies.	Practices implementing routines with mentor support.	Maintains focus and pacing with occasional guidance.	Independently manages time, transitions, and student behavior efficiently.
Balances Structure with Flexibility	Follows scripted plans and observes	Begins to adapt plans in the moment with prompting.	Balances planning with responsiveness	Adjusts instruction smoothly in real time to

During Instruction	mentor flexibility.		to student needs.	maximize learning outcomes.
Domain 3: Professionalism				
Seeks and Applies Feedback for Professional Growth	Receives feedback and engages in reflection discussions.	Implements feedback into revised plans and lessons.	Seeks specific feedback and applies it to instruction.	Regularly requests and integrates feedback to grow professionally.
Reflects on Teaching Practice	Participates in reflective conversations and debriefs.	Writes brief reflections on teaching experiences with guidance.	Analyzes successes and challenges independently and identifies adjustments.	Engages in thoughtful, consistent reflection to improve instructional practice.

Required End-of-Term Tasks

University instructors are responsible for ensuring that all end-of-semester documentation is accurately completed and submitted in Watermark™ and other designated systems (i.e. GoReact, Blackboard). These tasks are essential for verifying candidate progress, program quality, and accreditation compliance.

Required end-of-term tasks include:

- **Approved Time Logs**: Confirm that all teacher candidate time logs in Watermark™ have been accurately completed by the candidate and approved by the mentor teacher.
- **Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory**: Complete the instructor version of the Disposition Inventory in Watermark™, including comments for any areas marked "disagree." Ensure the mentor teacher version is also submitted and reviewed.
- **Teacher Candidate Summative Assessment**: Submit the final performance evaluation of the teacher candidate in Watermark™, assessing readiness and alignment with program standards.
- **Observation Rubrics and Feedback Forms**: Ensure all observation rubrics and written feedback forms have been completed and uploaded for each observation conducted.
- Complete the **Clinical Experience Progression Log** and upload to Watermark™

- **Debrief Session Recordings**: Upload or securely store recordings of all debrief sessions conducted via Zoom or Teams for documentation and review purposes.
- **Final Course Documentation and Grades**: Submit final grades in the university system and ensure all required documentation is completed in accordance with departmental and registrar timelines.

University Instructor Expectations

EXPLORATION PHASE (Fridays: 7:30 am – 11:30 am)

- Completes Qualifying Credentials/Mentor Profile –link in Appendix
- Send an introductory email and informational letter to mentor teachers and candidates before or at the start of placement.
- Provide teacher candidates with tools, materials, and instructional support to prepare for clinical experiences.
- Offer in-class guidance and instruction related to the Case Study.
- Maintain regular communication with both teacher candidates and mentor teachers.
- Conduct a minimum of three observations per teacher candidate:
  - Two in-person at the placement site.
  - One via video submission through GoReact.
- Visit placement sites regularly to observe instruction and provide immediate, specific feedback.
- Grade course-related assignments and evaluate the Case Study project (as applicable).
- Complete the Teacher Candidate Summative Assessment in Watermark as outlined in End-of-Term Procedures.

ANALYSIS PHASE (Wednesdays: 7:30 am – 3:00 pm)

- Completes Qualifying Credentials/Mentor Profile –link in Appendix
- Conduct the same observation schedule as the Exploration Phase:
  - Two in-person visits and one GoReact video submission.
- Make additional visits as needed, especially if concerns arise.
- Observe lessons and student interactions, taking anecdotal notes on strengths and areas for growth.
- Provide targeted, specific feedback after each observation.
- Share observation notes and guide reflection based on candidate needs.
- Lead discussions to support planning and intervention strategies, especially for reading instruction.
- Offer feedback on instructional practice, lesson implementation, and professional behavior.

- Provide content and guidance in the following areas:
  - Instructional methods and classroom management
  - Literacy instruction (including secondary literacy, if applicable)
  - Reading assessment, data analysis, and intervention planning
- Evaluate lesson plans and the use of evidence-based, systematic, and explicit instruction.
- Complete a disposition inventory for each candidate.
- Conduct the Teacher Candidate Summative Assessment in Watermark.
- Maintain ongoing communication with teacher candidates and mentor teachers.
- Collaborate to address concerns and support the clinical experience.

Teach Now – Transform Tomorrow

Clinical Internship Expectation Checklist & 9-Month Gradual-Release Timeline
(August–April; May used for wrap-up, licensure paperwork, and graduation)

Gradual-Release Timeline

Month & Attendance Pattern	Intern's Instructional Responsibility	Cooperating Teacher's Role	University Supervisor Support
AUG (EVSC calendar) Full days	- Read and sign USI Clinical Practice Handbook -Complete Consent to Disclosure -Attend all PD & faculty meetings -Assist mentor teacher with setup and preparation of classroom for first day of school. -Conduct focused observations (classroom routines, management, literacy & math blocks) -Build rapport with students	Model routines; debrief daily, approve entries in Time Log weekly (for entire year)	Communicates with Clinical Intern and Cooperating Teacher electronically -Schedule Triad Meeting
SEP M, W, F	-Assist individuals & small groups -Teach/assess 1 mini-lesson per week	Provide written feedback; co-plan mini-lessons	-Supervisor observation #1 with feedback
OCT M, W, F	-Plan & teach 2 small-group lessons per week -Introduce one assessment tool	Gradually release group instruction; observe & coach	-Supervisor observation #2(GoReact) with feedback
NOV M, W, F (to Thanks-giving)	-Co-teach whole-class lessons (≤ 50 % of day) -Begin parent communication (newsletter blurb, conference shadowing)	Jointly score assessments; model family communication	Supervisor observation #3 with feedback
DEC USI finals	-Reflect & set spring goals -Finalize unit plan for takeover weeks	Approve goals & unit outline	Teacher Candidate Summative Assessment
JAN (USI calendar) Full days	• Resume with review activities & routines • Teach 1-hour block daily	Provide real-time coaching	Supervisor observation #1

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FEB Full days	• Lead 60–70 % of instructional day • Assume duties: morning work, dismissal, grading one subject	Step back; intervene only as needed	Supervisor observation #2(1 is recorded GoReact) Supervisor observation #3
MAR Full days	**Full Takeover (15–20 consecutive days)** • Plan, instruct, assess & manage entire day • Conduct at least one family contact	Observe, document, confer post-lesson -Midterm assessment	Supervisor observation #4
APR Full days	• Sustain lead-teacher role 50 %+ of day • Complete edTPA/Capstone & Case Study • Mentor small-group projects	Return selected duties; co-teach transition lessons	Supervisor observation #5
MAY **(wrap-up)**	• Ensure time log is accurate, Watermark™, disposition, self-reflection	Approve clinical intern's documentation in Watermark™; complete final disposition evaluation	Clinical Internship Final Assessment (Watermark™)

Clinical Intern Expectation Checklist

Professionalism
□ Follow EVSC calendar in Aug; USI calendar Jan–May
□ Arrive on time, dressed professionally, every assigned day

Instruction & Assessment
□ Meet monthly teaching targets in timeline above
□ Use required, approved EdTPA lesson template
□ Collect, analyze, and act on student data for at least two assessments per term

Family & Community
□ Draft one newsletter and one parent email or conference script with cooperating teacher approval (Spring--during Clinical Internship Semester)
□ Respect FERPA/confidentiality at all times

Coursework Integration and Application
□ Utilize methods, strategies, and content from previous courses to classroom practice
□ Submit required EdTPA—follow EdTPA deadlines as outlined in the seminar instructor's calendar.

Documentation

□ Upload hours weekly to time log in Watermark™; obtain approval from Cooperating Teacher weekly.

□ Submit GoReact video, self-analysis, and feedback with University Supervisor as scheduled.

Cooperating Teacher Checklist

- Completes Qualifying Credentials/Mentor Profile –link in Appendix
- Provide orientation, workspace, and curricular materials by first week of August
- Co-plan and gradually release instruction per timeline
- Observe and provide written feedback (minimum once bi-weekly)
- Complete mid-term and final evaluations; approve time log weekly
- Complete disposition inventory

University Supervisor Checklist

- Completes Qualifying Credentials/Mentor Profile
  –link in Appendix
- Conduct 3 observations (2 in person + 1 GoReact or 3 in person)--Fall
  - Two in-person
    - Round 1—end of September
    - Round 2—end of October
  - One via GoReact
    - Round 3—end of November
- Conduct 5 observations (4 in person + 1 GoReact or 5 in person)--Spring
- Provide feedback (written and recorded) for each observation
- Coordinate remediation plan if any observation is rated "unsatisfactory"
- Complete Clinical Internship Final Assessment in Watermark

Role of the Director of Clinical Internships

The **Director of Clinical Internships** provides essential support throughout the Teach Now– Transform Tomorrow experience by:

- Advising and guiding interns, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors through the full-year placement
- Maintaining open communication with all stakeholders (interns, faculty, university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and school partners)
- Assisting with any issues, conflicts, or questions that arise during the internship

- Overseeing placement logistics
- Serving as a liaison between USI and EVSC to ensure a successful partnership

Handbook Disclaimer: Preliminary Version Notification

This edition of the **Clinical Placement Handbook** is considered a **preliminary version** and is being shared for planning and informational purposes only. It is not the final, binding version of the document.

The **final version of the Clinical Placement Handbook** will be reviewed, approved, and distributed by the Office of Clinical Experience. Once finalized, the final version will supersede all previous drafts or versions. All teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and university instructors will be expected to adhere to the final published version once it is released.

Any policies, procedures, or expectations outlined in this preliminary handbook are subject to change, clarification, or revision prior to final publication. The University reserves the right to make such changes as deemed necessary to remain compliant with institutional policy, professional/personal liability, accreditation standards, or state and federal law.

Questions or concerns regarding content in the preliminary version should be directed to the **Office of Clinical Experience**.

Appendix

Qualifying Credentials/Mentor Profile

--Link HERE

Consent for Release of Information and Self-Disclosure Form

—Link here

Clinical Experience Time Log Instructions

—Link here

Watermark Instructional Handbook

--Link Here

—USI Webpage Link here

Indicators for Observations (Exploration, Analysis, Synthesis)

--Link Here

Teacher Candidate Disposition Inventory

Professional Dispositions are defined as "the habits of professional action and moral commitments that underlie an educator's performance" (InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, p. 6).

The following professional dispositions have been adopted by the Teacher Education Department at the University of Southern Indiana and are aligned to the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standard R1. The Teacher Education Department has determined that the following dispositions are essential for an effective teacher.

Teacher candidates are rated with respect to their adherence to the exhibited competencies or their deviation from them.

Rating Responses
- **Agree** (optional comment) - The teacher candidate consistently exhibits components of this disposition.
- **Disagree** (required comment) – The teacher candidate seldom exhibits components of this disposition.
- **Not Observed** (optional comment) – The teacher candidate has not had the opportunity to exhibit the components of this disposition.

Please remember that teacher candidates are rated with respect to their level of acceptable behavior or their deviation from it. A rating of *Not Observed* would be chosen for a student who has not had an opportunity to exhibit that behavior. Therefore, no positive or negative rating can be assigned to that

disposition. If a rating of ***Disagree*** would be chosen for a student, a comment is required explaining why this rating was chosen. This inventory is aligned to the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standard R1. An overall rating of agree or higher is expected. Candidates who do not meet the expectations for this assignment must meet with the instructor to develop a professional growth plan and the practicum could be extended one semester.

Rating Responses
- Agree [optional comment]
- Disagree [required comment]
- Not Observed [optional comment]

The teacher candidate demonstrates a commitment to the teaching profession and adheres to continuous development as a professional. The teacher candidate:

1. Demonstrates high expectations for self and P-12 students. **InTASC Standard 1: Learner Development**
2. Demonstrates patience and compassion by providing appropriate wait time for student responses and offering positive reinforcement to P-12 students experiencing difficulty during the learning process. **InTASC Standard 2: Learning Differences**
3. Communicates respectfully and responsively in diverse environments without imposing personal or cultural values. **InTASC Standard 3: Learning Environments**
4. Actively seeks out new information and innovative, evidence-based teaching strategies. **InTASC Standard 4: Content Knowledge**
5. Demonstrates the ability to maintain cognitive capacity (attention, focus, memory, and processing speed needed to understand complex information) in university and P-12 classrooms. **InTASC Standard 4: Content Knowledge**
6. Analyzes, synthesizes, integrates concepts, and problem-solves to formulate assessment and educational judgments. **InTASC Standard 5: Application of Content**
7. Demonstrates the ability to work with frequent interruptions, to respond appropriately to unexpected situations, and to be flexible in rapidly changing circumstances. This includes demonstrating flexibility during the learning process. **InTASC Standard 7: Planning for Instruction**
8. Organizes time and materials, prioritizes tasks, performs several tasks at once, and adapts to changing situations and environments. **InTASC Standard 7: Planning for Instruction**
9. Demonstrates appropriate use of technology during meetings, classes, and clinical experiences. **InTASC Standard 8: Instructional Strategies**
10. Demonstrates an awareness of appropriate social boundaries between P-12 students and educators and adheres to those boundaries. **InTASC Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**
11. Thinks analytically about educational issues and reflects thoughtfully on their practices. **InTASC Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**
12. Demonstrates compliance with federal and state laws and all USI handbook policies. **InTASC Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**
13. Adheres to USI's academic integrity policy. **InTASC Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**
14. Expresses themselves effectively in written and oral English to communicate concepts, assignments, evaluations, and expectations with members of the learning community, such as Teacher Education faculty, P-12 students, parents, administrators, and other school and community personnel. **InTASC Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**

15. Maintains P-12 student confidentiality, disclosing information only for professional purposes or as legally required by law. **InTASC Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**
16. Demonstrates a calm demeanor and effective coping strategies in stressful environments and addresses issues of concern professionally. **InTASC Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**
17. Maintains appropriate personal hygiene and dresses professionally, adhering to guidelines outlined in the applicable USI handbook. **InTASC Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**
18. Consistently meets course and clinical experience policies and requirements. **InTASC Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**
19. Is punctual and maintains regular attendance for professional commitments, including classes and clinical experiences. **InTASC Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**
20. Seeks assistance promptly from instructors and supervisors. **InTASC Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**
21. Responds appropriately to constructive criticism from instructors and supervisors. **InTASC Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**
22. Functions effectively in a collaborative team, whether with peers, P-12 students, parents, other school personnel, or community members. **InTASC Standard 10: Leadership and Collaboration**

Lesson Plan Template

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA USI Lesson Plan Template			
Teacher Candidate Name		Date or Lesson #	
Subject		Grade Level	
List state academic content standards (include number and text) and underline discipline content to be learned IDOE Standards page		Learning objectives aligned to unpacked content standards (must be specific and measurable using your identified assessment)	
1.			
2.			
Assessment	List the assessment and if it is formative or summative. Describe evaluation criteria, including plans to provide feedback to students and to guide instruction. If only formative, list when summative assessment occurs in lesson segment that assesses the content objectives of the lesson (e.g., unit quiz after lesson 4).		
Purposeful Instructional Strategies	Describe targeted supports (instructional strategies) used to teach content and how they are relevant to the topic(s) in this lesson.		
Time Frame	List in intervals each step of the lesson (e.g., 0-5 minutes, 6-15 minutes, etc.)		
Learning Task: Introduction	List in numerical steps (with narrative support) the positive procedures getting students' attention, exploring their misconceptions/preconceptions in a positive way, connecting to previous lesson(s), and/or for relating the lesson to the culture of students. *NOTE: It is recognized that you might not do all of these in each lesson.*		

Learning Task: Lesson Body	List in numerical steps (with narrative support) instructional strategies, learning tasks, and/or activities to be used. The learning plan should be detailed enough for a substitute teacher to follow.
Learning Task: Closure	Describe the procedure for reviewing the lesson content (looking for misconceptions and content learning) and previewing the next lesson.
Differentiation, Accommodations, or Modifications to Planned Instructional Supports and Assessments	List instructional strategies, planned supports, and assessments that you plan to employ meet the needs of students (individual and groups) in order for each student to demonstrate content learning and movement towards mastery? *NOTE: It is recognized that you might not do all of these in each lesson.* Examples include students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students, students with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students)
Instructional Resources and Materials	List resources and materials needed to teach lesson.
Research or Theoretical Base	List researched-based framework for the curriculum and/or teaching strategies in learning plan.
Citations for All Materials	List citations including teacher-made materials.

Teacher Candidate Disposition Alert

—Link here

Formal Assessment Forms

—Link here

Final Evaluation Form

- o Exploration Phase Final Assessment

  —Link here

- o Analysis Phase Final Assessment

  —Link here

Formative Observation Feedback Form

—Link here

Clinical Experience Progression Log

—Link here

Clinical Practice Handbook Signature Page

Clinical Practice Handbook Signature Page Link