

Clinical Experience Essential Handbook

For Student (Clinical) Teachers



Texas Lutheran University
Department of Education – Educator Preparation Program
Accredited by The Texas Education Agency (TEA)

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THE ESSENTIAL CLINICAL TEACHING HANDBOOK FOR STUDENT (CLINICAL) TEACHERS
Texas Lutheran University Office of Educator Preparation
Updated, Dec. 2025

Texas Lutheran University has a rich tradition of developing professional educators who are well-prepared for successful careers in the teaching profession. This clinical experience is the culminating requirement for the undergraduate teacher education and alternative teacher education certification programs at Texas Lutheran University. This experience will provide an opportunity for clinical teachers (student teachers or “teacher candidates”) to apply the theories and practices accrued through the courses provided by the Education Department for preparing future teachers. This final opportunity will provide a valuable experience for acclimating student teachers to the actual teaching profession. This clinical teaching opportunity will include the following activities: (a) attendance at class sessions associated with the Student Teaching course through TLU; (b) a minimum of 490 hours of clinical teaching that are earned within the parameters outlined in TAC (as per TAC requirement) [additional days will be assigned and attendance expected], and (c) additional responsibilities related to the clinical teaching experience. Note that when a Declaration of Disaster is in place by the Governor of Texas, some students may have an altered length of the placement depending on the reason for the Declaration of Disaster. The total number of hours per student will be determined in that situation with the TLU Director of Student Teachers.

This handbook has been prepared for clinical (student) teachers. The primary focus of this handbook is to outline responsibilities, guidelines, procedures, and legal requirements related to clinical teaching. The success of this clinical teaching semester will depend upon the cooperative efforts of all stakeholders in assisting clinical teachers during this critical part of their preparations for becoming future teachers.

It is our hope that the contents of this handbook will serve as a resource and provide an opportunity to make your involvement with this experience an enjoyable one.

The Texas Lutheran University Instructional Model for Student (Clinical) Teachers

Clinical teaching is the culminating experience of the teacher preparation program at Texas Lutheran University. It is a six-credit hour experience in a classroom of a public, and in some cases private or charter, school accredited by TEA. Single-placement clinical teachers are placed with one cooperating/ mentor teacher in one classroom for the entire semester (minimum 490 hours that is not less than an average of four hours each day in the subject area and grade level of certification sought, including planning periods, but not including lunch periods.). Split-placement (All-Level) clinical teachers are placed with one cooperating/mentor teacher for the first half of the semester and with another cooperating teacher for the last half of the semester.

Texas Lutheran University clinical teachers and intern teachers will use the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) Rubric as a guide to for supporting clinical teachers as the instructional model. In addition to providing a comprehensive picture of teaching, the T-TESS framework guides the growth of Texas Lutheran University education students throughout their coursework and field experiences. The teacher evaluation tool is currently endorsed by the Texas Education Agency. The Framework is aligned to the Educator Standards is supported by Texas Lutheran University as well. Experience with the Framework prepares clinical teachers for entrance into the public school system of Texas.

The Framework has a 5-point rubric that describes what effective teaching and learning looks like and sounds like in the classroom. The Framework was developed to describe the practice of a certified teacher in the classroom. Due to the guidance given in *§228.67 (c)*, “*Clinical teaching is successful when the candidate demonstrates proficiency in each of the educator standards for the assignment and the field supervisor and cooperating teacher recommend to the EPP that the candidate should be recommended for a standard certificate.*” At Texas Lutheran University, we value the use of the rubric with clinical teachers to reinforce growth towards highly effective instructional practices and to help us document that the clinical teacher is proficient in the educator standards.

The Student (Clinical) Teaching Assignment

The Clinical Teaching Practicum is the capstone field experience for our students working toward teacher certification. Student (clinical) teaching is a six-semester-hour experience in a classroom of a public, and in some cases private or charter school. Student (Clinical) Teachers are required to complete a clinical teaching experience for a minimum of 490 hours. Additional days will be assigned to students, and students are expected to be in their placement for the entire duration of the assigned placements. Single-placement Student Teachers are placed with one Cooperating/Mentor Teacher in one classroom for the duration of the semester. Split-Placement (usually All-Level) Student Teachers are placed with one Cooperating/Mentor Teacher for the first half of the semester and with another Cooperating/Mentor Teacher for the last half of the semester. In some situations, a Student Teacher's placement may be structured differently than previously described.

During this semester, students are “students of teaching”. It is a time of much learning, improvement, and growth, supported by the Cooperating Teacher and University Student Teaching Supervisor. All candidates for initial teacher certification student teach for one full semester. The Director of Student Teaching is the entity responsible for facilitating and monitoring this experience. This handbook outlines the program guidelines, policies, standard experiences, and participant requirements, roles, and responsibilities.

This experience is of paramount importance to the future careers of Student Teachers, and, along with other criteria, must be completed successfully to receive recommendation to certify. Commitment to learning, growth, professionalism and open communication is critical. Questions and concerns should be addressed immediately by all parties, initially through Student Teaching Supervisor and, as necessary, through the Director of the Student Teaching.

Assignments are made by our partner school districts in collaboration with the Director of Student Teaching with care and attention to many factors. At no time should the Student Teacher contact a district directly as it violates our memorandum of understanding with our partners. Additionally, adjustments in assignments are not made after the Student Teacher begins except in unusual circumstances. No Student Teacher is to be reassigned without the prior approval of the Director of the Student Teaching.

Expectations of the Clinical Teacher

Clinical teachers will gain access to an introductory video or attend a meeting with the Director of Student Teachers prior to school placements begin to receive information about their role during the clinical teaching experience, as well as be expected to attend additional Texas Lutheran University class meetings or seminars during the semester. Texas Lutheran and clinical teaching faculty expectations for clinical teachers are outlined below. Additional information regarding expectations can be found in the Syllabus for Clinical Teaching and on the portal within the class.

Clinical Teacher Standard Experiences / Expectations

To maintain equity with assignments and workloads, Texas Lutheran University has established a set of common experiences for clinical teachers. Because of the context of the placements, the details of these requirements vary somewhat between elementary and secondary. Clinical teachers will receive specific information about these standard experiences from the clinical teaching faculty during the orientation meeting at the beginning of the semester. The major requirements are listed below.

Classroom Visit / Email of Introduction	Clinical teachers are encouraged to communicate via email with their assigned mentor teacher prior to the first day of clinical teaching if possible. This should not be done until the teacher candidate receives the okay from the Director of Student Teachers.
Observations of the Cooperating Teacher	Clinical teachers are expected to observe the Cooperating Teacher teach and manage the classroom environment, especially during the few days of clinical teaching, although we encourage clinical teachers to become actively engaged and to take on responsibilities as soon as possible. These opportunities provide excellent examples of effective teaching and learning. Even though the expectation is to begin through observation, the student teacher should very quickly begin to take over responsibilities within the class setting as the cooperating teacher and student teacher deem that the student teacher is able to do so with success, understanding that the cooperating teacher will continue to monitor and provide guidance during those opportunities to take risks within the classroom setting.
Reflections	Through regular reflections submitted to the Director of Student Teaching, the clinical teacher will assess his/her growth as a teacher and learner and reflect upon how to refine and expand teaching skills, classroom management techniques, and professional growth. Critical reflections will be regular basis and after lessons are facilitated by the clinical teacher. Additional reflections will be written after the attendance of specialized meetings and after a review of two videos of one's own teaching.
Timeline / Instructional Responsibility	<p><i>Timelines for taking over instruction.</i> Separate clinical teacher calendars have been provided by Texas Lutheran University that represent guidelines to help keep everyone on the same page and to ensure all requirements throughout the clinical teaching semester are met. The calendars are set up to represent the type of placement the clinical teacher is experiencing. The first two lessons should be co-taught with the cooperating teacher.</p> <p>Although we want the clinical teacher to be able to take on the role of a teacher independently and to demonstrate mastery of the educator standards, we also want them to learn the value in co-teaching. As of Sept. 1, 2024, co-teaching is a TAC requirement in law to help support the clinical teacher's learning. We also understand the positive impact this opportunity can have for all learners in the classroom setting. The timeline for clinical teachers to take the lead (independently or in a co-teach role) will be <i>individualized</i> based on each clinical teacher's experience and mastery of the educator standards, comfort level, and contextual reasons related to the placement. It may not be linear. For example, if it is determined that a clinical teacher needs additional support after taking over a role, then a step back may be warranted to provide the additional support needed before the role is released again to the clinical teacher. Please note that there is not a designated amount of time that a clinical teacher must teach independently – other than we need to know they are able to be successful by themselves and the students will be safe and continue to learn when they are the only educator giving the instruction and that they are able to demonstrate master of the educator standards (as per TAC). Another aspect we must consider is that at the end of the clinical teaching experience, the university supervisor and cooperating teacher need to have evidence that the clinical teacher is proficient with the educator standards as demonstrated through earning at least "proficient" on the T-TESS formatted evaluations utilized by TLU. Co-teaching opportunities can be spread out throughout the time you have with the clinical teacher.</p>
Co-Teaching Expectation	<i>Co-Teaching</i> [More information will be shared during the training.]

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Co-Teaching is an attitude... an attitude of sharing the classroom and student. Co-Teachers must always be thinking... <u>We're both teaching!</u></i> <p><u>Co-Teaching is defined as:</u> two teachers working together with groups of students – sharing the planning, organization, delivery, assessment, and reflection of instruction, as well as the physical space. Both teachers are actively involved and engaged in all aspects of instruction.</p>
<i>Co-Teaching</i>	<i>Co-Teaching Strategies / Definitions</i>
Co-Teaching Strategy	Definition
One Teach, One Observe	One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other gathers specific observational information on students or the (instructing) teacher. The key to this strategy is to focus the observation – where the teacher doing the observation is observing specific behaviors. It is important to remember that either (teacher candidate or cooperating teacher) could take on both roles.
One Teach, One Assist	One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other assists students with their work, monitors behaviors, or corrects assignments. The teacher assisting often lends a voice to students or groups who would hesitate to participate or add comments.
Station Teaching	The co-teaching pair divides the instructional content into parts. Each teacher instructs one of the groups; groups then rotate or spend a designated amount of time at each station. Often an independent station will be used along with the teacher led stations.
Parallel Teaching	Each teacher instructs half the students. The two teachers are addressing the same instructional material, using the same teaching strategies. The greatest benefit to this approach is the reduction of student to teacher ratio.
Supplemental Teaching	This strategy allows one teacher to work with students at their expected grade level, while the other teacher works with those students who need the information and/or materials re-taught, extended or remediated.
Alternative Teaching	Alternative teaching strategies provide two different approaches to teaching the same information. The learning outcome is the same for all students, however the avenue for getting there is different.
Team Teaching	Well-planned, team-taught lessons, exhibit an invisible flow of instruction with no prescribed division of authority. Using a team-teaching strategy, both teachers are actively involved in the lesson. From a student's perspective, there is no clearly defined leader – as both teachers share the instruction, are free to interject information, and are available to assist students and answer questions.
Combinations	Merging two or more strategies to better meet student needs.
Lesson Plans	Clinical teachers are responsible for using the TLU Lesson Plan format to create detailed lesson plans before each observation. This includes observations that are formal or informal from the university supervisor, as well as the observations done by the cooperating teacher.
Formal Observations	<p><i>Formal Observations</i> - Four formal observations (one placement) and six formal observations (two placements) followed by reflective conversations are a powerful way to guide the professional learning of your Student Teacher. Guidelines for formal observations are provided below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Conference Form: Students should complete the pre-conference form and submit it to the university supervisor prior to the observation. Time should be allotted to check in with the clinical teacher prior to the observation to facilitate dialogue related to the upcoming observation. Signatures by the university supervisor and the student document the completion of the pre-conference. This conference can be held in person or over the phone. • Formal Observation: The University Supervisor will conduct four formal observations (one placement) and six total formal observations (two certification areas and/or two district placements) using the T-TESS rubric as a guide for the evaluations. • Post-Observation Conference / Form: Clinical teachers are expected to reflect after the observation. The University Supervisor may either have the clinical teacher reflect and email the answers to the questions prior to the post-observation conference or this may be done immediately after the observation in the presence of the University Supervisor. This conference can be held in person or over the phone / by Zoom.

<h2>Informal Observations</h2>	<p>Informal Observations. As per §228.101, field supervisors of candidates in clinical teaching, internship, and practicum assignments shall provide informal observations and ongoing coaching as appropriate and needed and, at a minimum, include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>At least three informal observations that are 15 minutes or more in duration per semester of the internship, clinical teaching, or practicum assignment;</i> • <i>The first informal observation must occur within the first six weeks of the clinical teaching or internship assignment and must be in-person;</i> • <i>Additional informal observations may be conducted virtually, either synchronous or asynchronous; informal observations of practicum candidates may be virtual, either synchronous or asynchronous;</i> • <i>Are informed by written feedback provided during post-observation conferences; and</i> • <i>Include observation and feedback on targeted skills.</i> <p>What will informal observations look like at TLU.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Informal Observation: As per TAC, the first informal observation will be done in person following the timeline listed in the clinical teaching calendar. The university supervisor will use the areas recommended for refinement in the first observation to help guide the focus for the first informal observation. The informal observation will be at least 15 minutes (or longer) in length. Feedback will be provided to the clinical teacher and the cooperating teacher. • Second and Third Informal Observations: The second and third informal observations will be done using an asynchronous format unless the university supervisor notifies you otherwise. The clinical teachers will be required to video record two of their lessons (one in the first half of the semester and one in the second half of the semester). The recordings of the lessons will be shared with the university supervisor for review and feedback. This will be done in the designated timeline noted in the clinical teaching calendar.
<h2>Evaluations / Checkpoints</h2> <p>Led by University Supervisors</p>	<p>All clinical teachers require some degree of support. Some may need very little guidance, and some may be reliant on your modeling and assistance for a longer period. Because you interact with your Student Teacher every day, you are in an excellent position to collaborate with clinical teaching faculty to provide evaluative information for the clinical teacher.</p> <p>There are opportunities for cooperating teachers and university faculty to collaboratively provide evaluative feedback to the clinical teacher. As per §228.101(b)(9), <i>in a clinical teaching experience, the field supervisor shall collaborate with the candidate and cooperating teacher throughout the clinical teaching experience and request and document feedback about the candidate from the candidate's cooperating teacher at least three times throughout the clinical teaching experience.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm Conference / Mid-Point Meeting- The mid-term meeting will serve as one of the required collaborative meetings between the university supervisor, CT, and clinical teacher. The meeting is designed to share strengths, goals/recommendations for improvement, and to determine overall progress towards completing the requirements to ensure proficiency of the educator standards and other TLU requirements expected within the clinical teaching experience. <i>This meeting will serve as one of the TAC required meetings.</i> • Growth Plan – For clinical teachers needing <i>significant intervention to</i>

	<p><i>be successful</i>, a growth plan process should be initiated at the Midterm meeting. The growth plan shall include targeted areas needing refinement as well as goals / measurable ways it can be determined whether or not the clinical teacher is making progress in meeting the goals set within the plan. If a growth plan is warranted or being considered, the Director of Student Teachers should be consulted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Evaluation - At the end of their experience clinical teachers are evaluated based on performance descriptors that take into account their role as a <u>teacher candidate</u>, using an evaluation based on the T-TESS rubric. The final evaluation meeting can either be a face-to-face meeting or done virtually and include the clinical / intern teacher, the cooperating/mentor teacher, and university clinical teaching faculty. <i>This meeting will serve as one of the TAC required meetings.</i> <p>“Passing” Clinical Teaching - To successfully complete clinical teaching and receive credit (CR), the clinical teacher must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully complete their minimum 490 hours [as defined by the parameters set forth in TAC] placement; • Receive a rating of “proficient” or higher on <u>each</u> of the final evaluation components. <i>[§228.67 (c). Clinical Teaching. Clinical teaching is successful when the candidate demonstrates proficiency in each of the educator standards for the assignment and the field supervisor and cooperating teacher recommend to the EPP that the candidate should be recommended for a standard certificate.]</i> • Earn a “recommended” status <i>[§228.67 (c)]</i> by both the cooperating/mentor teacher and the university supervisor on the final evaluation in the area noting that the clinical teacher has been recommended for the Standard certification based on the observations during the clinical teacher placement; and • Complete all requirements associated with student teaching as requested by either the University Supervisor or the Director of Student Teaching
Video of One’s Teaching / Self-Reflections	<p>Clinical teachers will video record a full lesson in their first placement (first half of the semester) and one in their second placement (second half). The lessons should be ones that are used for the CT observations. For each of the lessons, the clinical teacher is to reflect over the lesson using the T-TESS rubric as a guide. The video recording itself needs to be shared electronically with your University Supervisor within one day of the recording. <i>The video recordings of the lessons will be utilized by your university supervisor as two of your required informal observations. The documentation and discussion related to the CT observations will also serve as the TAC required meetings.</i></p> <p>It also needs to be saved on a USB drive to turn in at the end of the semester. Both videos should be submitted on the same USB drive, so make sure you purchase a drive that is large enough to hold two hours of video.</p>
Resume and Cover Letter	<p>In preparation for job fairs and applying for possible positions, clinical teachers are expected to develop a professional resume and cover letter that could potentially be adapted for use in future applications. This process will be covered in a clinical teacher seminar.</p>
Action Research Project	<p>Clinical teachers will complete an action research project that focuses on an unwanted student behavior, unless notified otherwise by the Director of Student Teachers. The poster from the project will be shared with others in a poster presentation format at TLU.</p>

Education Career Fair	The TLU Education Department will host a mini-education fair usually in the Spring semester and occasionally in the Fall. All clinical teachers are expected to attend the event if student teaching during the semester an event is hosted by the TLU Education Department.
Mid-Term Meeting	The clinical teacher will participate in a mid-term meeting with the cooperating teacher and university supervisor. This meeting will serve as one of the TAC required meetings that the university supervisor seeks progress information from the cooperating teacher.
Final Evaluation	The clinical teacher will participate in a final evaluation conference with the cooperating teacher and clinical teaching faculty, where summative ratings using the Texas Lutheran Student Teaching Rubric will be shared. This meeting will serve as one of the TAC required meetings that the university supervisor seeks progress information from the cooperating teacher.
Communication / Deadlines of Assignments and Actions	<p>Communication throughout the clinical teaching experience is critical to successful completion of the clinical teaching experience. All university communication takes place through TLU Mail. Clinical teachers are responsible for checking their email daily and responding appropriately. Additionally, communication and documentation will be found in the portal under the course and at times sent via text from the Director of Student Teachers and/or university supervisor.</p> <p>Clinical teachers are responsible for completing the required actions (assignments, uploads, etc.) in a timely manner. Your university faculty and cooperating teacher may incorporate phone calls and text as a means of further communication. Be sure to respond to all communication in a timely manner.</p> <p>Clinical teachers should refer to the course information on the portal to remain informed of important submission dates and deadlines. In addition, the Student Teacher will adhere to deadlines given by the University Supervisor and / or Director of Student Teacher. It is the Student Teacher's responsibility to submit requirements online on time and to meet deadlines.</p>
Classroom Authority	Texas Lutheran expects the clinical teacher to work within the context of the Cooperating Teacher's classroom and school and accept that the Cooperating Teacher has the ultimate responsibility for how the clinical teacher may operate in the classroom. Remember that a clinical teacher is a guest in the cooperating teacher's classroom.
Campus Policies	Clinical teachers should know and follow the policies of the school on which they are assigned. Cooperating Teachers are encouraged to share school policy, as well as prompt and coach their clinical teacher when necessary.
Required Texas Lutheran Meetings	Clinical teachers are required to attend all Texas Lutheran Clinical Teacher seminars, as well as the Texas Lutheran Job Career Fairs (if applicable), as well as any additional noted activities related to clinical teaching.
Professionalism	<p>The clinical teacher is expected to demonstrate professionalism throughout their program, maintaining cooperative and collaborative relationships, complying with university policy / procedures, school and district policies, and conducting themselves ethically and with integrity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Education Code of Ethics - All preservice and in-service teachers are required to uphold all aspects of this code. To maintain accountability with the Texas Education Agency, clinical teachers must document that they have read and understood the Code of Ethics. <p>Students are required to maintain professional behavior as an educator. As per 19 TAC Chapter §247, Educators have a Code of Ethics that must be</p>

	<p>followed. Students in the Education Preparation Program at TLU are expected to follow the Code of Ethics within TAC. Otherwise, the student may not qualify for a teacher certification as determined by the SBOE. TAC §249.14 provides specific guidance on when a violation of the Code of Ethics must be reported to the SBOE. A copy of the Code of Ethics can be found on the class portal and in the TLU Education Department Student Handbook, titled: Pathway to Teacher Certification at Texas Lutheran University.</p> <p>If a clinical teacher is in violation of the Texas Education Code of Ethics, the F.L.A.G. might be implemented. Depending on the outcome of the F.L.A.G. process, there is a possibility that the clinical teacher's placement may be terminated, which would result in having to repeat the course. When the Code of Ethics is violated based on the criteria noted with TAC §249.14, the violation must be reported to the SBOE. The clinical teacher will be temporarily suspended from the placement pending the outcome of the investigation. If the outcome does not impede the clinical teacher from returning to the classroom setting or affect the ability of the clinical teacher to obtain a teacher certification in the state of Texas, the student may return to active within the program. This may result in the need to repeat the clinical teacher semester.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical or Professional Concerns - In the event that a clinical teacher witnesses or experiences unprofessional behavior in the host school, the clinical teacher should first share the information with the cooperating teacher and then contact clinical teaching faculty for support and guidance and to document the situation being reported. • Cooperative and Acceptable Work Ethic - As a guest at the host school and in the Cooperating Teacher's classroom, the clinical teacher should work in a professional, cooperative manner with all who s/he encounters. • Confidentiality - The clinical teacher is expected to know and adhere to the school policy on the use of confidential information that may be obtained through student records, conversations, or other sources. Confidentiality regarding students, information about parents of students, or information shared with you must be maintained. • Dress Code - Clinical teachers are expected to present a professional appearance that reflects the transition from college student to educator. The clinical teacher is expected to dress appropriately and professionally at all times, complying with the dress code policy of the host school and district. This should occur even if the cooperating teacher or other teachers in the district do not always follow the dress code. Keep in mind that they already have a position, while the clinical teacher is working on making a positive first impression.
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Clinical Teaching Policies

This handbook section provides an overview of basic policies regarding the student teaching experience. This, in conjunction with the current Clinical Teaching Syllabus, provides specific guidance regarding program policy.

Request to Change or Add Certificate Area	<p>Upon the written request of the candidate, an EPP may prepare a candidate and grant test approval for a certification area other than for which the candidate was initially admitted to the EPP - (TAC) §228.40(c). If a candidate wants to make a change or add an additional certification area, the candidate should contact the Certification Officer via email to arrange for a time to complete the required form.</p>
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Requirements for Getting Approved to Take a Certification Exam

Students are encouraged to begin their certification test preparation at least one semester prior to the semester for clinical teaching during a student teacher seminar class. Texas Lutheran University is currently using 240 Tutoring* for most of the TExES certification exams preparation. Certify Teacher is used as a secondary tier when needed.

Students are expected to complete **all** the components of the module related to their certification area(s) identified either from when the student was admitted into the program or through the degree plan that is currently followed for the bachelor's degree sought. If a student changes degree plans after being admitted into the program, the student should notify the certification officer to determine if an update in the ECOS system can be made. TExES certification exams need to match the current area the student is receiving training over within their degree and/or certification plans.

Completion of the module is designated when the instruction section of the module is completed 100%, two-thirds of the quizzes are completed, and at least a 90% or higher is earned on at least one of the three practice tests. For TLU, a minimum score of 90% is required for passing the practice test. *The current procedures for 240 Tutoring are such that you complete a certain percentage of quizzes before a practice test is unlocked. If the student earns at least a "90" or higher, the student should contact the Co-Certification Officer to grant test approval. While the student is waiting to take the TExES exams, the remainder of the module (including quizzes and practice tests) should be completed to ensure that the student is ready for the exam.*

It is highly recommended by the TLU Education Faculty and the faculty associated with 240 Tutoring, that students sign up for the TExES exam associated with the module within one – two weeks of completing the module. This is to ensure that the information is current in the students' mind. Otherwise, the student will need to complete additional training to be ready for the exam.

As per, §228.31, the EPP has the following obligations to ALL candidates.

(d) An EPP is responsible for ensuring that each candidate is adequately prepared to pass the appropriate examination(s) required for certification. An EPP shall determine the readiness of each candidate to take the appropriate certification examination of content, pedagogy, and professional responsibilities, including professional ethics and standards of conduct.

(e) The EPP shall grant test approval when the EPP determines the candidate is ready, or if the candidate is a completer. An EPP may make test approval contingent on a candidate completing additional coursework and/or training to show that the candidate is prepared to pass the test if the candidate is seeking test approval from the EPP in an area where the standards and/or test changed since the candidate completed all requirements of the EPP or if the candidate has returned to the EPP for test approval one or more years following the academic year of completion of all program requirements.

(f) Upon the written request of the candidate, an EPP may prepare a candidate and grant test approval for a classroom teacher certificate category other than the category for which the candidate was initially admitted to the EPP only if:

- (1) the candidate would meet the requirements for admission under §227.10 of this title (relating to Admission Criteria) in the requested certificate category;
- (2) the EPP provides coursework and training in the educator standards and test framework competencies related to the requested certificate category; and
- (3) the EPP ensures that the candidate is adequately prepared to pass the appropriate content pedagogy examination(s) required for the requested certificate category.

	<p><i>(Note: The programs used for the test preparation is subject to change based on the discretion of the Educator Preparation Program at TLU.)</i></p>
<p>Exit Policy for Dismissal of Candidates</p>	<p>Violation of Handbook Expectations After students have formally been accepted into the Texas Lutheran University Education Program, they are expected to maintain the requirements as noted within the Education Department handbook, including the GPA requirement of 2.75 (undergrad) and 2.50 (Alt. Program) and the FLAG policy. An undergrad student that falls below the 2.75 GPA once in the program has one semester to become in “good standing” based on the 2.75 requirement; otherwise, the student will be removed from the program. Students also must earn at least a “C” or higher in the education classes to earn credit towards their degree / certification plan. If a student is found in violation of the TLU Education Department guidelines as identified through the FLAG process, removal of the program may be an option.</p> <p>In addition, the student is required to follow the expectations within the TLU University Student Handbook. If a student is suspended from the University because of a disciplinary reason that violates the TLU Student Handbook, the student will also be dismissed from the Education program. When a student is dismissed from the program due to GPA, a FLAG, or the suspension from the University, the student will be removed from the entity of Texas Lutheran University within ECOS.</p> <p>Changing Degree Plans If a student decides to change the degree plan and no longer seek a teaching certification, the student should notify the Certification Officer immediately through email to share the intention to exit the program. The email will serve as the notice to the Education Department, and the student will be removed from the entity of Texas Lutheran University within ECOS.</p> <p>Withdrawing from the University If a student decides to withdraw from the Texas Lutheran University as a student (even if only for a semester), the student should notify the Certification Officer immediately through email to share the intention to exit the program. This email will serve as the notice to remove the student from the entity of Texas Lutheran University within ECOS. If a student returns to TLU and wishes to continue to seek a teaching certification, the student should contact the Certification Officer to discuss options for readmission to the program.</p>
<p>Background Checks / Fingerprinting Requirements</p>	<p>For a new teacher, or one in a new district, a teaching background check is required. The Texas Education Code Section 22.083(b) authorizes the district to obtain criminal history record information on applicants being considered for employment with the district. The district requires everyone who is going to be in classrooms to be cleared through a criminal record check prior to being on campus. Some districts also may require fingerprinting to be done before the student can obtain a clinical teaching placement.</p> <p>Based on information recorded in a student’s criminal history, students may be ineligible for issuance of a certification upon completion of the Educator Preparation Program.</p> <p>Applicants have the right to contact TEA to request a preliminary criminal history evaluation from TEA [19 TAC §227.1(d)(3)] if concerns are present. TAC §227.1. (b) (1) pursuant to the Texas Education Code (TEC), §22.083, candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to employment as an educator; and</p>

	(2) pursuant to the TEC, §22.0835, candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to clinical teaching.
Professional Liability	<p>The clinical teacher is entitled to the same protection of law as the Cooperating Teacher and the principal in the school where s/he is assigned. The University does not provide the Student Teacher with liability insurance. Texas Lutheran requires that all clinical teachers obtain liability insurance coverage offered through ATPE. This liability insurance is free for students that are in the role of a clinical teacher that does not receive payment for the placement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liability insurance protection does not apply in cases where there is use of excessive force in the discipline of students or negligence resulting in bodily injury to students, nor does the protection apply to the operation or use of any motor vehicle. • Administering medicine to a student is not permitted at any time, under any circumstance. • Student Teachers are not to drive their own cars to take students on field trips or to deliver them anywhere away from school as they could be found liable for any accidents or injuries. • Corporal punishment administered by the Student Teacher is not permitted at any time. The Cooperating Teacher should discuss school policy regarding this issue with the Student Teacher. • As required by Texas Administrative Code, student teaching is a supervised placement. Student Teachers are not the teacher of record and should not be solely responsible for supervision of students. The Cooperating Teacher or another certified teacher should always be in close proximity and available.
Injuries at Clinical Teaching Site	If a clinical teacher is injured at a school, s/he should notify the Director of Student Teaching, the Cooperating Teacher, and the school principal. Because clinical teachers are not district employees, they are responsible for their own medical expenses.
Substituting	Texas Lutheran University clinical teachers currently are <u>not allowed</u> to substitute during the clinical teaching assignment under any circumstance. A clinical teacher may substitute after s/he has successfully completed all requirements as set forth for a clinical teaching semester, including meeting the state-mandated 490 hour-clinical teaching practicum, completing all days as originally arranged for the length of the clinical teaching placement, and completing all items noted within the portal. Students are <i>not</i> allowed to be hired as a substitute if requirements for the course are not completed and as noted previously, this includes staying in a placement as a clinical teacher until the last designated day pre-arranged for the clinical teaching placement. This date will be noted in the Clinical Teaching Calendar provided to the clinical teacher, university supervisor, and cooperating teacher. Keep in mind also that most districts require a training to be completed before someone can serve as a substitute in the district.
Clinical Teacher Attendance	<p>Perfect attendance is expected during student teaching. If the clinical teacher must be absent, the following restrictions apply.</p> <p>General Requirements</p> <p>The Texas Education Agency requires a minimum number of hours (490) the clinical teacher must be in the classroom. <i>Note that TAC has parameters as to what counts towards the hours.</i> Therefore, days missed</p>

	<p>will be made up after the last official day of student teaching, regardless of the reason, until the student completes the minimum 490-hour requirement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clinical teacher is to be present at the school for the entire day (Exceptions are made to attend required Texas Lutheran University events, meetings, and seminars sponsored by the Education Department) and to follow the required start and end times for their school. Lateness is inexcusable. • The clinical teacher must notify both the cooperating teacher, clinical teaching supervisor, and Director of Student Teaching of absences as soon as possible. Failure to notify may result in the termination of the clinical teaching assignment. • If absent, s/he must send plans/materials to the cooperating teacher if these were his/her responsibility for that day. • An “Absentee Form for Clinical Teachers” must be submitted prior to an absence for personal reasons and the first day back from an emergency absence (available on the portal). • The state requires a minimum number of days for student teaching. If at any time the clinical teacher’s absences are excessive and prevent the clinical teacher from reaching the minimum requirements, the Education Department’s F.L.A.G. Process will be implemented, possibly resulting in the termination of the placement. The student will have to reapply for the opportunity to clinical teach in a future semester. NOTE: There is no partial credit for clinical teaching. • Note: Students that are ill or experiencing COVID related symptoms should not go to the campus. <p>Absences Due to Personal Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TExES Exams: Clinical teachers are encouraged to take their TExES exams prior to assuming total instructional responsibility. They are expected to schedule their TExES exams after school hours or on Saturday. A clinical teacher that must miss clinical teaching for a TExES exam will be required to submit an absence form and make up the absence. • Interviews: Absences for interviews should be limited, approved by Director of Student Teaching, and must be made up. • Other: Clinical teachers who are absent due to any other personal business must receive prior approval and must make up the absence. <p>Absences Due to Weather or other Emergencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the case of a district or public emergency (for example, serious weather events, safety lockdowns, etc.), clinical teachers must contact both their clinical teaching supervisor and the Director of Student Teaching within two hours of the event to ensure communication and safety. <p>Absences Due to Religious Holidays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the responsibility of each clinical teacher to notify the cooperating teacher and clinical teaching supervisor in advance when they will be absent from school for a religious holiday. The clinical teacher should obtain approval for scheduling a makeup day and work for this absence.
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Calendar	<p>Workdays/Hours: Clinical teachers are to follow the school staff calendar and work hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arriving early and staying late for meetings, team planning, and preparation for class is expected. • Returning for night meetings / family events is expected. • Clinical teachers will follow the calendar of the school district in which they are assigned – not the university calendar unless the Director of Student Teachers schedules a meeting or seminar. If the school has scheduled professional development days, the clinical teacher is required to participate unless specifically requested not to by the district or school. • Cooperating teachers and clinical teachers should familiarize themselves with the University Student Teaching calendar for mandatory meetings, due dates, and other information. <p>Inclement Weather: In case of inclement weather closures or late starts, clinical teachers follow the staff hours and calendar of the district in which they are assigned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the district is closed or starts late due to inclement weather, the clinical teacher is expected to adhere to his/her assigned district's expectations for staff, even if Texas Lutheran University continues to hold classes. • If Texas Lutheran University implements a closure or late start, but the Student Teacher's district does not, the Student Teacher will comply with the district's expectations.
Outside Responsibilities	<p>During the clinical teaching semester, the clinical teacher's first responsibility is to the students he/she teaches. Other obligations should not interfere with clinical teaching responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside activities (e.g., employment, sports, sororities, fraternities) should be held to a minimum by clinical teachers during their clinical teaching experience. • No clinical teacher will be excused to leave early for a practice, lesson, work, or for class – unless it is scheduled by the Director of Student Teachers.
Support Provided During Clinical Teaching	<p>The university supervisor, the cooperating teacher, and the Director of Student Teachers all play an instrumental role in helping the clinical teacher grow into a professional educator. The guidance and feedback given by them are based on years of experience and knowledge within the field of education. It is important to be open-minded to utilize them as a resource in your journey.</p>
Earning a Standard Teaching Certification	<p>Before Student Teachers can be certified in Texas, they must do the following*:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students are required to meet all requirements for Texas teacher certification in addition to all requirements for completing a university baccalaureate degree. Certification requirements for the state of Texas are subject to change at any time. 2. Students must successfully complete all necessary examinations for certification in Texas and pay all necessary fees. 3. Students must successfully complete the required fingerprinting process and background check. A negative background check could prevent certification.

	<p>4. Students must complete a certification application in the TEAL system and pay appropriate fees for each certification sought. The TLU certification officer will then recommend a student for certification upon verification of graduation and the successful completion of all requirements.</p> <p>*Subject to change based on the Texas Administrative Code (TAC)Fulfill all graduation requirements.</p>
Filing a Complaint with TEA	Information on Filing a Complaint <p>For issues or complaints about TLU's Educator Preparation Program, email the Texas Education Agency at generalinquiry@tea.texas.gov or fax your complaint to 512-463-9008 or mail to Correspondence Management, Communications Division, Texas Education Agency, 1701 North Congress, Austin, TX 78701-1494.</p>

