

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS
AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS
EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS
(Revised September 2015)**

This memorandum of understanding (MOU) details the mutual understanding between the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) and the partner schools where College of Education (COE) candidates are placed for field experiences. For the purpose of this document, *supervised clinical practice* refers to the semester-long field experience that is typically completed in the candidate's final semester under the supervision of a school-based mentor with support from a university supervisor (e.g., Internship II). All other field experiences (e.g., Internship I, junior block, practicum) will be called *early field experiences*. A *partner school* is a school district that agrees to work with the UCA COE to build mutually beneficial relationships that provide placement sites and supervisory assistance for candidates enrolled in the UCA educator preparation programs. Originally developed by the UCA Field Experience and Clinical Practice Committee and approved by the UCA COE and the UCA COE partner schools, this document is revised as necessary to reflect changes in UCA policy, Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) guidelines, or the needs of the partner schools.

This MOU will remain in effect until revised or terminated, which can be initiated by either party by providing notice to the other.

Selection of Sites

The UCA COE department chairs, program directors, and field experience coordinators will work to select and develop mutually beneficial initiatives with partner schools (e.g., clinical experiences, professional development). The partner school selection process may involve visits to the schools by university personnel and consultations with school officials. Any initiatives or arrangements made between the UCA COE and the partner schools will be coordinated by the department chairs, program directors, and/or field experience coordinators and may include the placement of candidates for field experiences, provision of tutoring services for partner school students, and development and implementation of professional development for UCA COE faculty/staff and for P-12 school teachers and administrators.

Selection of Mentor Teachers for Supervised Clinical Practice for Initial Teacher Licensure

Criteria for mentors for early field experiences prior to supervised clinical practice (e.g., Internship II) are negotiable and will be determined by the partner school official(s) and the UCA COE Coordinator(s) of Field Experience. Selection of all mentor teachers is a shared responsibility of the partner school official(s) and the UCA COE Coordinator(s) of Field Experience. The following are guidelines for making selections of mentor teachers for **supervised clinical practice** (e.g. Internship II). Partner school officials are encouraged to select mentor teachers who demonstrate best practices in serving diverse student populations and who can provide substantive and regular formative observation feedback. Mentors should:

- Be fully licensed in the subject(s) they teach and have completed a minimum of three (3) years of teaching experience.
- Have taught at least one full semester in the building where they are currently assigned.
- Be fully trained in TESS – Teacher Excellence and Support System.
- Have received at least an overall proficient rating on their latest TESS performance review.
- Be actively engaged in school and professional communities (e.g. serve on committees, assume leadership roles, serve on ACSIP teams, etc.).
- Demonstrate positive student impact as evidenced by SOAR and/or benchmark scores.
- Agree to provide UCA supervisors and interns with feedback on a regular basis.
- Be able to attend an orientation seminar at the beginning of the semester or complete alternative orientation options (e.g., webinar).

Preference shall be given to teachers who are Nationally Board Certified or are seeking National Board Certification. Preference shall also be given to teachers who have completed advanced degrees or who are involved with or pursuing graduate study.

Selection of Mentor Teachers for Other Educator Roles

Selection of mentors for other educator roles (e.g., counselor, media specialist) is a joint responsibility of the partner school official(s) and the respective UCA COE Graduate Program Coordinator. We encourage districts to select mentors who demonstrate best practices for their fields, exhibit commitment to serving diverse student populations, have demonstrated a positive impact on their P-12 school environment, and who will provide substantive and regular formative observation feedback.

District Responsibilities

School administrators will recommend and/or approve the selection of mentors, taking into account the guidelines stated in this memorandum. University department chairs, program directors, and field experience coordinator(s) will be available to collaborate on the placement decisions.

UCA COE candidates should be treated as professionals and, likewise, are expected to follow all rules and regulations established by the school district. The school district has the responsibility to ensure that candidates are aware of all rules and regulations.

Procedures Regarding Initial Licensure Candidates as Substitute Teachers

A teacher candidate in a **supervised clinical practice** (i.e. semester-long, full-time internship) **may** act as a substitute teacher in his or her mentor teacher’s classroom only with **prior approval** from the university supervisor. This role can happen only if the mentor teacher, building administrator, and university supervisor are confident in the teacher candidate’s abilities to manage the classroom effectively. This substitute role is allowable for a **short-time** basis only. Before making this decision, many factors must be considered (e.g., teacher candidate’s abilities, classroom setting, number of students, and length of time in the placement). Teacher candidates may **not** be paid for serving in the role of substitute teacher. Candidates completing any early field experience may **not** serve in the role of substitute teacher.

University Responsibilities

The UCA COE is committed to collaborating with partner schools to create optimum learning opportunities for P-12 students and for its educator preparation candidates. To this end, UCA faculty will:

- Provide trained supervisors to work with partner school mentors and personnel.
- Be available to mentors, candidates, and schools to solve problems as they arise.
- Provide information, support, and professional assistance (professional development opportunities such as seminars, workshops, meetings) related to school and university initiatives.

University Responsibilities for Initial Licensure Candidates in Supervised Clinical Practice

In addition to the responsibilities listed in this agreement, for those who mentor initial teacher licensure candidates during their **supervised clinical practice**, the UCA COE will:

- Guide the initial teacher candidates through the completion and submission of assignments reflecting growth and learning on the UCA TESS summative evaluation.
- Enforce university and partner school policies in regard to retention of initial teacher candidates during the internship as noted in the UCA policy statement titled “Retention in Teacher Education.”
- Provide a \$200 stipend to each mentor teacher for a semester-long placement. **-OR-** In place of the stipend, mentor teachers may receive a 3-hour tuition waiver for enrollment in a graduate course. Mentor teachers are responsible for paying all fees associated with the course. The course must be taken within **one calendar year** from the time it is earned and may be taken during any semester, including summer.

The documents necessary to process the stipend payment or the tuition waiver must be submitted in a timely manner. Deadlines are critical and payment/waiver requests submitted after the established deadline may not be processed.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Mentors must choose their option carefully. Once an option is chosen, the choice is final. For example, if a mentor teacher chooses the tuition waiver, later s/he cannot decide s/he would rather receive the stipend. Once decided, the option cannot be changed.

School District

School Name (if applicable)

Partner School Administrator

Date

Dean, UCA College of Education

Date