

VSU Clinical Practice Guidelines Information, Schedule, and Evaluations

Welcome to clinical practice! You have entered the most rewarding, challenging and important semester yet! Teachers are miracle workers and accept all children from every walk of life! They care for them, nurture them and teach them daily and you are to be commended for choosing such a noble profession! Best of luck as you begin your final journey to becoming a miracle worker!

This packet provides general information regarding the expectations of the clinical practice experience. It includes information on professionalism, attendance policies, lesson planning expectations, solo teaching schedule, evaluation, confidentiality, and forms which must be submitted. Your department will provide more specific expectations.

Professionalism

As a teacher candidate, you are expected to conduct yourself in the professional educator role as defined by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's Code of Ethics. The commission has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education professional. The code defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators, and assuring the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession. (*The Code of Ethics for Educators*, August 15, 2005). For the entire brochure please visit www.gapsc.com.

Standard 10: Professional Conduct - An educator should demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards. Unethical conduct is any conduct that impairs the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position (e.g., harassment of colleagues, misuse or mismanagement of tests, test materials or test items, uncontrolled anger, etc.) or a pattern of behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students (e.g., inappropriate language, physical altercations, inadequate supervision, inappropriate discipline, etc.).

This code must be followed. **Any violation of state or federal law and violation of this code of ethics must be reported to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and will lead to the removal of a student teacher or intern from the clinical practice placement.**

Social Network Sites

Participation in clinical practice is a privilege and carries with it professional responsibilities. As a future professional educator, you are expected to maintain high standards of personal and professional ethics at all times and in all settings. Social networking sites such as, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc., should represent your high personal and professional standards. If you have postings on any of these sites, you must remember that they are public and may be viewed by school personnel and students. If school personnel find your postings unprofessional they can request your removal from their school and may file a complaint with the PSC. This request will be honored immediately and a new clinical practice placement will not be identified until the following semester. **Additionally, do not post any P-12 students' pictures on your site.**

Your professionalism during the clinical practice experience is critical as evidenced by the fact that most unsatisfactory clinical practice experiences are the result of unprofessional behaviors. Some of these unprofessional behaviors are based on inappropriate relationships with students.

Additionally, please remember that you are a guest in the school in which you are completing your clinical practice experience. You are a representative of Valdosta State University, the Dewar College of Education and Human Services, and your department at the school site. You are placed as a student; please be cognizant of that role. Any concerns regarding interactions with or behaviors of your mentor teacher should be discussed through the appropriate VSU channels. Any teacher candidate who independently meets with a school administrator without prior consent of his/her supervisor, department head, director of clinical practice, or Dewar COEHS Interim Dean will not successfully complete clinical practice.

Attendance and Schedule

If you must be absent for an emergency or illness, notify your public school mentor as soon as possible **via the telephone**. However, if your mentor prefers other means of notification, follow the protocol for notifying him/her. Follow up with an e-mail or text message to your university supervisor to confirm the absence. If you cannot reach your mentor teacher via the telephone, call your school's main office as early as possible in the morning. For example, if you are ill in the evening, you should call the mentor then, so that he/she will be prepared for your absence! Make sure that you have written down your mentor teacher's contact number and the school's contact number and have these numbers with you at all times.

Appointments and other business matters should be scheduled outside of the school day. Teacher candidates are expected to adhere to the mentor's schedule including before and after school duties, club meetings, parent conferences (if appropriate), PTO meetings, or other activities. **Teacher candidates follow the schedule of the school to which they are assigned. You observe all breaks/holidays, etc., with your assigned school--NOT with VSU.**

While it is anticipated that teacher candidates who are placed in a school setting full time will complete a **minimum** of 600 hours and that teacher candidates who are placed in a school setting for less than a full time experience will complete a **minimum** of 300 hours during this experience, please recognize that these are **minimum** expectations. You are preparing to be a professional; please do not view this requirement as "completing my hours." Every teacher candidate is expected to attend school each day that school is in session (five days a week). The final day for clinical practice for ALL students is listed on the schedule page.

Lesson Plans

The preparation and submission of lesson plans is an important responsibility for teacher candidates. The plans must be done in a format acceptable to the mentor teacher and submitted by the deadlines he/she establishes. **If your plans are not submitted on time or are not of adequate quality, the mentor teacher should not allow you to teach those lessons; and he/she should notify your VSU supervisor. Failure to plan appropriately may well result in your removal from clinical practice and receiving an "unsatisfactory" grade.** Timely submission of the plans allows the mentor to not only review and approve the plans but, more importantly, to offer suggestions to improve the lessons and your teaching.

Teaching

Teacher candidates are expected to solo teach for at least three weeks, but most will do more than that. Each program specifies the minimum amount of time required for solo teaching; the three weeks is the college minimum requirement. The time and rate at which you assume teaching responsibilities depend on your performance and involvement early in the clinical practice experience. Co-Teaching is acceptable and encouraged throughout the entire semester. You need to become familiar with the

curricular content and materials, the students, your mentor's classroom procedures, and much more. **Look for opportunities to assist the teacher and to work with students early in the clinical practice experience to demonstrate your initiative and your ability to assume greater teaching responsibilities.** Solicit feedback from the mentor and VSU supervisor regarding your performance. Regularly reflect on your performance with the mentor teacher and ask for suggestions to improve. Teacher candidates who do not demonstrate skills required by the supervisor and/or mentor to allow the required amount of time for solo teaching prior to the end of the semester (including a gradual introduction and removal from teaching responsibilities) will receive a grade of "Unsatisfactory" for the clinical practice experience. **Remember, when you are applying for teaching positions later on, your mentor teacher will very likely be one of the references who will be contacted!**

Evaluations

During your clinical practice, you are required to complete three formative self-evaluations; two must be submitted through LiveText. However, your university supervisor and/or mentor teacher may evaluate you multiple times to ensure your success. Plan to complete your initial formative self-evaluation on the first day or two after you begin assuming teaching responsibility for a class. Inform your mentor when you plan to do this so that he/she can observe the lesson and be prepared to listen/discuss your reflections. This evaluation and subsequent discussion with your mentor will identify strengths and areas that need improvement.

Initial Formative Evaluation- submit your initial formative self-evaluation in LiveText by the due date listed on the schedule.

Mid Formative Evaluation- submit your mid formative self-evaluation in LiveText by the due date listed on the schedule.

Final Formative Evaluation- complete your final formative self-evaluation (but do not submit in LiveText) by the due date listed on the schedule.

Summative Evaluation – after consulting with you and your mentor teacher, your university supervisor will submit the summative evaluation in LiveText.

Evaluations must be submitted by the dates shown. These are "liberal" dates; that is, most of you should submit each evaluation well before the date shown. The initial and mid self-evaluations will be submitted through your LiveText account. Directions for submitting evaluations in LiveText are available at:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/coe/teached/formativesummative-evaluation-information.php>.

Your VSU supervisor is expected to make a minimum of five visits during your clinical practice experience; typically one or more of these visits is completed through videoconference technology (e.g., the initial orientation visit and the final visit for the semester). Your teaching will be evaluated by your supervisor a minimum of four times using the same forms that you will use for self-evaluation. Secondary supervisors may observe and evaluate at any time during the semester for additional feedback. These visits are usually requested by the primary supervisor. Your public school mentor teacher will also evaluate you three times using these forms. Your public school mentor teacher will complete the evaluations of you on the **website** provided in the Public School Mentor Teacher Guidelines packet. They should provide copies of their evaluations to you. Some departments may use additional departmental evaluation forms. (Their evaluations do **NOT** go into LiveText)

Questions about the LiveText evaluation system should be directed to the Center for Program Assessment, Analytics and Evaluation (cpaae@valdosta.edu).

Other Forms/Evaluations and the CSPI Survey

Please see the schedule for the date by which you must complete the following form: Teacher Candidate Field Experience Placement Form (Effective Spring 2012). One form should be completed for every field experience placement you have had for a class or a practicum at VSU or from another institution from which you transferred. You will only complete one form for each placement for each semester. Do not complete the form for clinical practice. It is a different form, and you will complete it at the end of the semester.

These forms will be completed through “Form” (top tab) in your LiveText account. After you complete the Field Experience Placement Form for one field experience, click “Take Again” to complete the second form and any succeeding ones.

Near the end of the semester, all teacher candidates will receive several other forms which **MUST** be completed. These must be completed by **the date identified in the schedule provided**. These include: the Field Experience form for clinical practice, a disposition survey, the Teacher Candidate Evaluation of the Mentor, the Teacher Candidate Evaluation of the VSU Supervisor, and the CSPI (Candidate Survey for Program Improvement). The Dispositions Survey is also through the “Forms” section in your LiveText account. You will complete this survey only **ONE** time. The teacher candidate is requested to describe his or her perceptions of the quality of supervision provided by the public school mentor teacher and the VSU supervisor during the clinical practice experience. This information is important to help improve the supervision process. Results of these evaluations are shared with your department heads only **AFTER** the clinical practice experience is completed.

The CSPI (Candidate Survey for Program Improvement) is designed to solicit your opinions about your preparation program and how well you believe that you have been prepared to teach.

For all teacher candidates all of these additional forms (disposition survey, mentor evaluation, VSU supervisor evaluation, and CSPI) will be sent to you through your LiveText account near the end of the semester.

FAILURE TO COMPLETE ANY REQUIRED COEHS ASSESSMENT OR FORM WILL RESULT IN THE STUDENT’S RECEIVING AN “UNSATISFACTORY” IN CLINICAL PRACTICE FOR THE SEMESTER.

E-mail

You will receive notices about completing all of the above forms/evaluations through your VSU e-mail account. You will also receive other reminders, notices, and information from me throughout the semester via your VSU e-mail account. **It is imperative that you check your VSU e-mail account DAILY. If e-mails are not responded to within 48 hours, a professional development plan may be issued.**

Confidentiality

During the clinical practice experience, you will have access to permanent records and other confidential information. The Georgia PSC Code of Ethics, Standard 7: Confidential Information, states: “An educator should comply with state and federal laws and local school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student records, unless disclosure is required or permitted by law. Unethical

conduct includes but is not limited to sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, personal confidences, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results.” You are expected to keep student records and school system information confidential.

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Clinical practice

As you are probably aware, clinical practice/seminar is graded on an “S” (satisfactory) or a “U” (unsatisfactory) basis. The clinical practice experience is challenging and a time of great growth but, unfortunately, not all experiences are successful. Students often ask how it is possible to “fail” clinical practice. The following list, while by no means complete, is how it can happen: inappropriate interaction with students, lack of command of content knowledge, failure to plan, frequent tardiness, frequent absences, lack of professional behavior, etc. If your ongoing performance during the clinical practice experience is not satisfactory, then the VSU supervisor and mentor will provide specific suggestions to guide your improvement efforts. Identified deficiencies or areas needing improvement must be corrected in order to achieve the grade of “Satisfactory.”

Please keep in mind, however, that clinical practice is still a learning process. The College of Education and Human Services does not place you in clinical practice expecting you to be a “perfect” teacher. If you were all already “perfect” teachers, you would not need to complete clinical practice. We do, however, expect to see you grow and learn during clinical practice. We do expect to see you **behave in a professional, responsible manner at all times** that reflects positively on VSU, on the College of Education and Human Services, on your department, and on yourself.

At the beginning of your clinical practice experience, you should take advantage of the expertise of your mentor and university supervisor and ask them any questions you may have. Teacher candidates should expect to receive a higher level of support from their mentors at the beginning of the semester; this support should fade as the teacher candidate demonstrates increased skill in planning instruction, delivering instruction, and assessing student learning. A grade of “Satisfactory” means that we are willing to guarantee your future employer that you have demonstrated appropriate content knowledge as well as appropriate skills in independent planning, teaching, and assessment.

Please feel free to call me or e-mail me with any questions or concerns you may have during the clinical practice experience. Please contact me through e-mail. (**Mrs. Jamie Bird, Director of Field Experiences and Clinical Practice, e-mail: jbird@valdosta.edu or 229-249-2779**). The Department of Field Experiences and Clinical Practice is located in the Dewar College of Education and Human Services Building, Room 2030.

For both the fall and spring clinical practice experiences, there is Career Day scheduled for potential employers to come to the VSU campus and interview our students for employment. In the past, we have had 40 or more employers come to recruit you for their schools. The career day date is included in the clinical practice schedule which follows, and **all teacher candidates are expected to participate in this activity. This is a mandatory session for all teacher candidates. Please make sure your mentor teacher is aware of this date.**

Substitute Teaching

Teacher candidates are **NOT** allowed to serve as substitute teachers during the semester they are enrolled in clinical practice.

Grievances

The College of Education and Human Services and the partner school agree that any situation in which the teacher candidate has a concern that he or she would like to formally pursue, the candidate should follow the following protocol: (1) Mentor Teacher, (2) University Supervisor, (3) Department Head, (4) Director of Field Experiences and Clinical Practice and (5) Dean.

GACE Content Assessment Requirement

All teacher candidates (with the exception of those teacher candidates in the middle grades/secondary MAT program) must take the appropriate GACE Content Assessment for their major prior to the end of the semester in which they are enrolled in student teaching or internship. Faculty in your program must recommend that you be made eligible to take the GACE content assessment, and the Dean's Office staff must make you eligible before you will be able to register for it. After you have been made eligible, you will need to go the GaPSC website (<http://www.gapsc.com/>) and click on the link in the top right-hand corner titled "Login/Register to MyPSC" to register for or access your MyPSC account. Make sure that you select the following option as your reason for testing: 2. You are enrolled in a Georgia-approved program in an undergraduate teaching field, or in Educational Leadership, Media, School Psychology, or Counseling. Be sure to affiliate with or claim Valdosta State University as the institution at which you are receiving your preparation. After you have created your MyPSC account, you will need to go to the GACE website (www.gace.ets.org) and setup a GACE account. You will register for the GACE Content Assessment through your GACE account. The scores for GACE tests are provided to Valdosta State University approximately one month after the test date. When registering for any test or assessment, make sure you choose the correct reason for testing; if an incorrect reason is selected, your test scores will not count.

Praxis II

Praxis II is required ONLY for Communication Disorders majors; registration must be completed on-line (www.ets.org) for Praxis II. When you receive your Praxis II scores, you must mail, bring, or FAX (229-333-5439) a copy of your score report (all three pages) to the Certification Office (if you haven't already done so). **Even if you listed VSU to receive a copy of your Praxis II scores when you registered for the test, this is not enough. You must still submit a copy of the three-page score report THAT ONLY YOU RECEIVE to the Certification Office. We must have your sub-test scores; and these scores appear ONLY on the three-page report that you receive. The test code for the Praxis II in Communication Disorders is 0330; the minimum passing score is 600.**

NOTE: You do NOT have to pass either GACE Content Assessment or Praxis II in order to complete clinical practice successfully and graduate, but you do have to provide documentation that you have taken the content assessment (Praxis II or GACE) required for your major. Teacher candidates who do not meet this requirement will receive an Unsatisfactory (U) in student teaching or internship for the semester and will not graduate. Do not EVER give anyone your official GACE or Praxis score report; either FAX a copy or make a copy and mail it.

Certification

Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) requires all educators to register at www.gapsc.com. Click on **Register MyPSC** and follow the instructions. If you have problems registering, please send an email to mail@gapsc.com or contact the GaPSC Call Center, which is open from 7:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday except for state holidays, at (800) 869-7775.

The final paperwork you have to complete for getting your certificate is the Verification of Lawful Presence (VLP) forms and the GaPSC Certification Application. The VLP forms contain specific instructions for completion and must be notarized and submitted to Ms. Renee Whitmer by the end of your clinical practice semester. Pages 1 & 2 of the Certification Application will be completed at the Clinical Practice Orientation meeting and page 3 will be completed at the Clinical Practice Exit meeting (see Schedule). The Certification Office sends your application, along with the GaPSC Approved Program Recommendation Form and an official transcript, to GaPSC to request that your certificate be issued to you. Before these forms can be submitted to GaPSC, the following **MUST** be completed: (1) your final grades [showing successful completion of clinical practice] must be posted on your transcript, (2) a final overall GPA that meets the minimum required for your program is noted on your transcript, (3) your degree is conferred and is posted on your official transcript, (4) if you took Praxis II, submission of a copy of your Praxis II scores [all pages] to Ms. Renee Whitmer (FAX 229-333-5439), and (5) you have posted passing scores on the required content assessment(s) for your program. Once your materials are sent to GaPSC, you may view correspondence from GaPSC regarding the status of your certificate processing and view/print your official certificate once issued using your **MyPSC** account.

The process of getting your certificate will take several weeks--be patient. Please check your **MyPSC** account before contacting the certification officer. Remember, too, that if you have any "holds" on your records, the Registrar's Office will not release a copy of your transcript to the Certification Office; therefore, your certificate will be delayed.

NOTE: Both of the GACE Content Assessment tests required for your major must be taken and passed before you can be recommended for certification. For most teacher candidates, the GACE Content Assessment consists of two tests. For candidates in Middle Grades Education, a content assessment consists of only one test. This means that Middle Grades Education candidates must pass the content assessment for both concentration areas before being recommended for certification.

When you get to the website, click on "Check Certification Status," and then enter your first and last name. The process of getting your certificate will take several weeks--be patient. Remember, too, that if you have any "holds" on your records, the Registrar's Office will not release a copy of your transcript to me; therefore, your certificate will be delayed. All questions regarding certification may be directed to **Ms. Renee Whitmer, Room 2105, 229-249-2786.**

Some Clinical practice Dos and Don'ts

Dos	Don'ts
Show initiative – offer to help, get to know the students early in the semester	Text message when in classroom or in meetings
Turn off your cell phone in the classroom or in a meeting (in case of emergency situation, silence it)	Talk on your cell phone when in classroom or in meetings
Prepare in advance – lesson plans must be approved by your mentor before being taught	Fail to plan in advance or not have formal, written plans available when teaching
Prepare thoroughly – you should have command of the subject matter being taught	Teach erroneous content – you will be much less likely to do so if you prepare thoroughly and have extensive written plans to follow
Follow professional protocol – address issues through the appropriate chain of command.	Independently meet with a school administrator without prior consent of your supervisor, department head, director of clinical practice, or Dewar COEHS Dean
Communicate appropriately and professionally (and often) with your mentor	Delete any VSU email (even if you don't recognize the name – e.g., briangerber, mfuller, lminor)
Communicate appropriately (and positively) with your students	Forget to consider potential issues with facebook, myspace, twitter, etc. accounts.
Call the school/mentor if you must be absent	Fail to notify your mentor if absent
Email or call your supervisor if you must be absent	Fail to notify your VSU supervisor if absent
Follow school policies and Georgia code (law)	Have weapons (including knives with blades of 2”) on school property
Have high expectations for your students (we have high expectations for you as well)	
Maintain confidentiality of student information	Disclose FERPA-protected student information
Work hard	Consider this the “downhill slide”
Enjoy and learn!	Forget to ask for support if needed, especially in the beginning of the semester

****It is the responsibility of each student to read this handbook in its entirety. This is the agreement between the instructor and the student; failure to read and understand this document is no excuse for failure to meet and/or complete the course requirements contained within. If you have any questions or if you do not understand any part of this document, contact the FECP Office at 229-333-7834.***

Teacher Candidate Guidelines

As the teacher candidate, I have:

- ___ Attended teacher candidate orientation; obtained teacher candidate and mentor information packets.
- ___ Attended departmental meeting on orientation day; obtained information on seminars.
- ___ Given mentor teacher his/her information packet.
- ___ Obtained mentor's phone number and school's phone number.
- ___ Completed Dispositions Survey.
- ___ Completed Field Experience Form for EACH field experience in my program.
- ___ Solicited feedback from mentor for suggestions on how I can assist in the classroom.
- ___ Begun learning students' names and studying curriculum materials for mentor's class(es) in preparation for teaching responsibilities.
- ___ Prepared lessons for mentor as required--submitted on time and with high quality.
- ___ Solicited suggestions for improving planning or teaching.
- ___ Completed the initial formative self-evaluation of teaching; shared results with mentor and VSU supervisor.
- ___ Revised lesson plans, content, and strategies to focus on areas targeted for improvement.
- ___ Scheduled the solo teaching period and discussed schedule/plans with VSU supervisor.
- ___ Midterm – Completed mid formative self-evaluation. Discussed progress with mentor and VSU supervisor; identified areas for further improvement.
- ___ Discussed activities to follow solo teaching with mentor and VSU supervisor.
- ___ Completed final formative self-evaluation. Shared results with mentor and VSU supervisor--discussed the final grade.
- ___ Completed evaluation of my mentor teacher and my VSU supervisor and completed Candidate Survey for Program Improvement (CSPI).
- ___ Reminded my mentor teacher to complete all of his/her on-line evaluations on me.
- ___ Attended one Teacher candidate Exit Meeting and completed Certification Application.