

**AUSTIN TEACHER PROGRAM  
GRADUATE “CLINICAL” HANDBOOK**

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## Foreword

The preparation of future teachers involves the collaboration of professional educators from both the college and the public school sectors. Since the graduate teaching experience is the capstone of the student's experiences in the Austin Teacher Program, it is important that all parties have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. This handbook is designed to provide information and guidelines for supervising teachers, principals and students in graduate clinical teaching experiences.

### Introduction to the Austin Teacher Program

The Austin Teacher Program (ATP) is a unique, innovative and flexible teacher education program. The five-year program culminates in a Master of Arts in Teaching degree and certification. All ATP Teachers (our title for 5th year students) have received Bachelor of Arts degrees and have completed the undergraduate phase of the ATP including coursework in their teaching field(s) (secondary teachers) or area of specialization (elementary teachers), and a series of education courses and field experiences organized to assist the students in developing professional competence.

Gordon's (1974) skill development ladder serves well to describe professional growth in the art of teaching, and provides a framework for understanding the organization of the ATP and for appreciating the value of a five year, developmental program. Gordon describes this growth as progressing from the "unconsciously unskilled," to "consciously unskilled," to "consciously skilled," to "unconsciously skilled." One advantage of a five-year program is that students have time to develop a pedagogical base by being involved in a variety of carefully planned learning and teaching experiences.

In the first undergraduate course, students are confronted with the complexities of education, thus making them aware of being "consciously unskilled" in the broad area of education. This awareness is further developed in the next course, during which students observe and experience for themselves the dynamics of teaching, thereby becoming aware of being "consciously unskilled." In the final undergraduate course, the students begin to make the transition from being "consciously unskilled" to being "consciously skilled" in regard to the selection and instruction of specific content. During these experiences students have accumulated an average of eighty hours of actual teaching experiences.

Students are admitted to the Austin Teacher Graduate Program only after meeting a series of rigorous criteria that include college grades, evaluations of performance in field experiences, and recommendations from faculty members.

In the graduate year, students engage in academic and professional studies focused on beginning professionals. The program culminates with a final semester of full-time teaching. The graduate teaching experience fosters the students' development toward becoming "unconsciously skilled" and functioning as professional educators.

While the ATP Faculty acknowledges that no two graduates are the same, there are common characteristics we desire our graduates to possess. These characteristics provide a set of specific goals that describe what is expected of graduates of the Program. Periodically throughout the Program, students are asked to evaluate their development toward these goals. Their self-evaluation, along with the ATP faculty's analysis of the student's progress toward these goals is considered in the decisions for admission to the Austin Teacher Program and to the Graduate Program.

## Goals for graduates of the Austin Teacher Program

1. The Austin Teacher draws from a strong beginning professional knowledge base of content, pedagogy, and assessment to provide relevant and meaningful learning experiences for all learners.
2. The Austin Teacher effectively uses a variety of resources, including technology, to plan, implement, and assess instruction.
3. The Austin Teacher acknowledges, appreciates, and appropriately responds to the diversity that learners bring to the classroom.
4. The Austin Teacher demonstrates effective professional and interpersonal communication.
5. The Austin Teacher demonstrates knowledge of the purposes and values of education and the often conflicting viewpoints regarding these.
6. The Austin Teacher demonstrates a commitment to continue learning and improving, to contribute to the profession, and to maintain professional ethics and personal integrity.

## Legal Status of Clinical Teachers

Clinical teachers are generally considered to hold the same status as regular classroom teachers. However, there are certain legal restrictions imposed upon them by the state in the following areas:

Corporal Punishment - Under no circumstances are clinical teachers allowed to administer corporal punishment. It is expressly prohibited by the state.

The actual text of the Texas School Code covering clinical teachers is found in Chapter 22, Subchapter B: Civil Immunity of the Texas Education Code. This section places clinical teachers in the same category as classroom teachers in terms of both immunity from civil liability and disciplinary proceedings for professional employees as described in section 22.0511 and 22.0512.

## Responsibilities of the Clinical Teacher

Clinical teachers are registered for the college semester and, therefore, will be in their teaching assignment for at least fourteen weeks/70 full days during which time they will follow the school calendar and schedule.

Austin Teachers are expected to follow the policies of the host school district and of the Austin Teacher Program. The Austin Teacher should consult with the clinical cooperating teacher concerning regulations and expectations of the particular campus, i.e. attendance records, lunch count, lesson plans, faculty meetings, grades, progress reports and report cards. Austin Teachers are expected to provide their field supervisor with copies of weekly lesson plans. The Austin Teacher is expected to let the Cooperating Teacher, Principal, and Austin College Field Supervisor know if for any reason they will not be able to teach for the day due to sickness or any other unforeseen occurrence.

Because the graduate teaching experience is strenuous, Austin Teachers are strongly discouraged from holding any other job or taking on any other responsibilities during their teaching experience.

Concurrent with the graduate teaching experience, Austin Teachers return to campus for a seminar course, Instructional Strategies and Literacy in the Content Areas. The weekly seminar provides an opportunity for Austin Teachers to share their classroom experiences, and the faculty coordinator designs experiences to extend students' pedagogical knowledge. Requirements for this course are directly related to the graduate teaching experience and are designed to assist the student in gaining the most from this experience.

Among the requirements for this course are:

1. A reflective journal to be submitted as directed on the course syllabi, to the faculty coordinator.
2. The development of both short-range and long-range lesson plans, in dividing objectives, materials, procedures, and assessment methods. Austin Teacher graduate clinical teachers should work closely with their cooperating teachers in creating lesson plans. The Austin Teacher should provide the college supervisor with a copy of the lesson plan when they observe.
3. Participation in a pre-conference prior to formal observations and scheduling/completing a post-conference within 48 hours of each formal observation.
4. Mandatory attendance dates for all ATP Teacher Candidates:
  - a. An in-service program on Wednesday, December 8, 2021 from 9 am to 4 pm.
  - b. Weekly seminar meetings beginning on Wednesday, January 5, 2022. These meetings will be scheduled for each Wednesday from January 5- April 1, 2022 from 5:30 - 8:30 pm.
  - c. A full day PPR Preparation Inservice on Friday, February 18, 2022 from 9:00 am -4:00 pm.
  - d. A full day Finals Day on Friday, May 6, 2022.
5. Completing readings and other assignments as appropriate.
6. Preparation of a portfolio to be shared during the final Austin College in-service day during finals week.

***The Austin Teacher Program is committed to graduating competent, professional teachers. Consequently, students in their graduate clinical teaching experience will be held to high***

*standards of performance. If either Austin College or the cooperating school believes a student is not performing satisfactorily and remediation is not successful, the student may be withdrawn from the practicum.*

### Role of the College Field Supervisor

Although the school is the environment in which the Austin Teacher gains experience, it is nevertheless the responsibility of the college supervisor to ensure that those experiences are compatible with the aims and goals of the Austin Teacher Program. Therefore, a major responsibility of the college field supervisor is to communicate those aims and goals to the clinical cooperating teacher. In addition, the college field supervisor is responsible for:

- monitoring the progress of the Austin Teacher and providing support
- making several visits to the Austin Teacher's classroom
- conferring individually with the Austin Teacher after observations
- informing the mentor/cooperating teacher of special strengths of the Austin Teacher
- informing the mentor/cooperating teacher of special concerns about the Austin Teacher for the purpose of remediation
- coordinating the completion of forms and evaluations
- conferring with the clinical cooperating teacher and/or principal periodically
- evaluating the Austin Teacher's performance, formatively and summatively (1 informal visit and 4 evaluations).
- evaluating Austin College Teacher's weekly lesson plans.

### Role of Mentor/Cooperating Teacher

The role of the Mentor/Cooperating teacher is crucial in the development of prospective teachers. Each supervising teacher should:

- be willing to complete a short presentation set on Mentoring Clinical Teachers
- be willing to serve as a mentor to the Austin Teacher by providing support, opportunities, encouragement, advice, and when necessary, addressing concerns openly

(List of possible activities/content to address will be provided)

- staying in contact with the college field supervisor, advising them of any problems as they occur
- returning evaluation/observations (sent electronically) in a timely manner
- verifying student teacher attendance (calendar)
- certified or qualified for certification in the areas being taught.
- demonstrating the professional attitudes necessary to lead Austin Teachers
- demonstrating enthusiasm and originality as a classroom teacher

### Role of the Principal

The role of the principal with the Austin Teacher, as with any teacher, is to support the teacher and to

serve as an instructional leader. Other responsibilities of the principal in relation to the clinical teacher include the following:

- confer with the clinical cooperating teacher and the Austin Teacher about his/her teaching experience
- if possible, conduct one appraisal using the district's approved process.

### Time-Table and Suggestions for Induction of the Clinical Teacher

For clinical teaching assignments, the expectation regarding assigning responsibilities is: Give the Austin Teacher enough responsibility to make it challenging but not so much as to make it distressing. Austin Teachers already have a good deal of classroom observation and teaching experiences. It is expected that the clinical teacher will assume total responsibility for the teaching assignment for at least eight weeks. The Austin College Field Supervisor generally comes to the clinical teacher's classroom during the first couple of weeks of the assignment. This visit is not designed to be a formal observation, but a time of assessing the classroom environment, visiting with the Mentor Teacher as to goals for the assignment, and supporting the Clinical Teacher. The Austin College Field Supervisor will come at least an additional four times for formal observations. It is expected that after all observations, the Clinical Teacher will meet with the observer (The Austin College Field Supervisor and the Mentor Teacher) to discuss the observation. The suggested schedule for the clinical teacher to assume responsibility of the class:

**First Week** - Orientation, observation and participation. Non-teaching duties may be taken over such as checking roll, grading, etc. By Thursday or Friday they might start teaching on a limited basis. This may include working with individuals and small groups. They should also begin reviewing all materials and guides for the purpose of preparing their course/semester outlines.

**Second Week** - Have plans ready for one class and begin taking full responsibilities for it. Continue preparing plans for remaining teaching responsibilities.

**Third Week** - Add teaching responsibilities as readiness warrants. Mentor teacher should be readily available during these next two weeks.

**Fourth Week** - Continue adding full teaching responsibilities.

**Fifth through twelfth Weeks** - By this time the clinical teacher should have assumed a full load of responsibility for teaching. Naturally, the mentor teacher retains ultimate authority over all that is to occur, and it is expected that the clinical teacher will continue to consult with the mentor teacher about all plans. It is very important during this time to allow the clinical teacher the latitude to "try his/her wings", even at the risk of failing. Continued communication between the mentor teacher, the field supervisor, and the clinical teacher is crucial.

**Last Two Weeks**— Clinical teacher will gradually relinquish teaching responsibilities (i.e. Relinquish one class period, then two class periods) back to the mentor teacher. Observe other classrooms as time permits.

**Note:** The clinical teacher will also need to take their PPR exam this semester. *These will be considered an "excused absence" from clinical teaching, and the Mentor Teacher will need to teach those days.*

## Evaluation of the Austin Teacher

Evaluation is an on-going process. The mentor teacher and college field supervisor will provide the Austin Teacher with formative evaluation through post-observation conferences and other informal feedback. It is also important to document both formative and summative evaluation. For that reason, evaluations of the candidates' performance are to be completed by the college field supervisor and the mentor/cooperating teacher. We encourage the cooperating teacher to observe and provide feedback throughout the graduate clinical teaching experience. We ask that there be a minimum of 4 official lesson observations and 3 evaluation forms on the student teacher's overall teacher characteristics.

*The ATP field supervisor will send the cooperating teacher an e-mail, with a link to the forms that are to be completed close to the approximate dates. The forms can also be found at the following links:*

<http://www.austincollege.edu/atp-graduate-teacher-observation/>  
<http://www.austincollege.edu/atp-graduate-teacher-evaluation/>

**When you submit the form, you will receive a confirmation copy in your email. Please print and review these forms with the teacher candidate.**

*The table below shows when each form is due and explains details about each:*

Lesson Observations	Due date	Evaluation	Due Date
Observation 1	Jan 24 - Jan 28	Evaluation 1	Friday, Feb 4
Observation 2	Feb 14 - Feb 18	Evaluation 2	Friday, Feb 25
Observation 3	Mar 21 - 25		
Observation 4	Apr 4 - Apr 8	Evaluation 3	Friday, Apr 15

**Observation I** is your observation of an individual lesson. The observation should be completed the first third of the field experience. **Evaluation I** is an evaluation of teaching characteristics the teacher should exhibit. This evaluation should be reviewed with the clinical teacher, and completed by the fourth week of the field experience.

**Observation II** (of an individual lesson) **and Evaluation II** (an evaluation of teaching characteristics the teacher should exhibit). These are to be completed at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> week.

**Observation III** is your observation of an individual lesson. This observation should be completed between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> week of teaching.

**Observation IV** is your observation of an individual lesson. **Evaluation III** is your overall evaluation of the teaching characteristics of the teacher and these should be completed at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> week clinical teaching experience.

Specific plans of action should result from any problems noted in the first three observations or first two evaluations. The final evaluation should reflect what can confidently be certified about the Austin Teacher. It serves as a prediction of future performance. The mentor/cooperating teacher will be asked to recommend a grade of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory (no credit) for the field experience.