

Directed Teaching FAQs

As a Teacher Candidate, you are a guest at your assigned school site and must always act as a professional, which includes ensuring professional attendance, disposition, and preparation. If you are the Teacher of Record (Intern) at your school site during Directed Teaching, you must simultaneously follow the requirements of your school and our program.

The following provides a truncated version of our formal policies for many FAQs we often receive. You are required to locate and read the full version of the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) online. Should you have any additional questions, contact your University Supervisor first, and then, if necessary, contact the [Office for Student Services](#) (OSS).

1. What do I do once I get my placement?

- a. We recommend you visit your assigned school site in advance. However, do not visit your Mentor Teacher unannounced or interrupt their teaching. This may only include driving by the school at the beginning of the school day so you can plan your commute, parking, and time needed to get into the school and to your classroom in a timely manner.
- b. You should find the best travel routes and determine where you can park before the first day of Directed Teaching.
- c. You can introduce yourself to your Mentor Teacher, receive any materials to help you prepare, and observe the classroom if you have time. Do not plan this until you set up a formal meeting with your Mentor Teacher before your visit. This is not guaranteed depending on your Mentor Teacher's schedule but recommended so you are prepared for the first day of your assignment. Do keep in mind that the Mentor Teacher has a busy teaching schedule and should never be interrupted while teaching or without notice.
- d. Please make sure your Mentor Teacher has a copy of the [Mentor Teacher Handbook](#) and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) online.

2. When should I start my assignment?

You must start your assignment on the date assigned to you by the Office for Student Services. Call the school for the start time and get there early on the first day. Teacher Candidates who, without permission, do not appear at their school site the first assigned day of Directed Teaching will have their Directed Teaching assignment terminated. This termination will constitute a failure of one semester of Directed Teaching.

3. What is the attendance policy?

These attendance policies apply to both Teacher Candidates working in a Mentor Teacher's classroom and Teacher Candidates that are teachers of record in their own classrooms (i.e., Interns). Directed Teaching is scheduled for the full 16-week semester (including finals week).

a. Daily Schedules

You are responsible for being present at your assigned school site each and every day of Directed Teaching following the required contract hours of your Mentor Teacher at your assigned school site.

b. Absentee and Tardy Policies

You may only miss three days during the entire semester (this includes teachers of record as well). Missing more than three days will most likely result in a failure of Directed Teaching. More than three late arrivals or early leavings may also lead to the failure of Directed Teaching.

c. Sign-in Policies

For students working with one or more Mentor Teacher:

Follow the school's required sign-in procedures for visitors.

For students who are Teachers of Record (Intern) in their own classrooms:

You are expected to follow school sign-in policies. We reserve the right to see your sign-in sheet should we suspect you of missing more than the allowed three days.

d. Unusual Schedules

You must also be present at the school site during standardized testing, final exams, and other days that result in different schedules. You will benefit from learning how to administer standardized tests and exams and can use any additional non-instructional time for long-term planning, tutoring, and other school site activities.

4. Whom do I notify if I need to miss a day of Directed Teaching, and what are my responsibilities for a missed day?

During your first week of school, you should exchange phone numbers with your Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor along with email addresses. If you know in advance you will be absent on a particular day, let both know and leave a lesson plan if you are responsible for teaching that day.

If you have an emergency the night before or morning of a school day, you must personally notify your Mentor Teacher, and, if you are responsible for teaching that day, be sure to email your lesson plan to the teacher in a timely manner.

Once you are teaching full time during your Solo Experience, you are as responsible for lesson planning as any regular teacher. It is unprofessional to leave your Mentor Teacher without a viable lesson plan.

5. If my Mentor Teacher is absent, must I go to school?

Yes, you must go to your school site with one exception. If your Mentor Teacher is attending a professional development workshop and you are allowed to go, you may also attend. You must notify your University Supervisor if this attendance interferes with their schedule to observe you.

If your Mentor Teacher is out for any other reason, you must go to the school site. The school will most likely place a substitute in the room. You can negotiate with the substitute, if you are ready, whether you teach the lessons for the day or not. State law prevents you from being the paid substitute for the day in that room. If the school site asks you to do so, you must contact your University Supervisor or the Office for Student Services immediately.

6. Do I have to attend school site professional development meetings on/for...?

a. Early release days or late start days

YES. Many schools release students early one day a week or start late so that teachers can attend professional development or staff meetings. You must attend those meetings, as they are part of the regular, contractual school day. Ask your Mentor Teacher to arrange permission for you to attend these meetings.

b. Pupil-free days

YES. Often, teachers get pupil-free days to meet for professional development or for conferences with parents/guardians. You must also attend those days as they fall into the regular school calendar.

c. After school meetings

IDEALLY. Occasionally, schools have after-school professional development or teacher meetings. If that event interferes with your Cal State, LA seminar or work schedule, you do not have to attend these school-based meetings that are not part of your Mentor Teacher's contracted schedule. But you should try at least once during Directed Teaching to attend after school events.

For Teachers of Record (Interns) working in their own classrooms:

Yes, to all three with one possible exception:

Of course, you must attend early release or late start and pupil-free days. However, occasionally, after school meetings may interfere with your Directed Teaching seminar. You should immediately let your school site administrator know of the conflict as our Directed Teacher seminar professors have attendance requirements they will not and cannot waive for Teachers of Record. School site administrators are supposed to support your completion of your credential. Show them your syllabus, if necessary.

7. What is my required daily teaching schedule?

You are responsible for being at your assigned school site all day long throughout your assignment. It is not up to you to decide or negotiate your schedules with your Mentor Teacher(s) or school site.

You and your Mentor Teacher will negotiate an instructional schedule. You are responsible for giving your Mentor Teacher a copy of the Mentor Teacher Handbook the first day of Directed Teaching or for referring them to the link on the [Office for Student Services](#) website. Many have not worked with Cal State LA students in the past, so this handbook will help them understand our expectations.

Typically, students observe the first week and begin to pick up a class period or content area each week. See the timelines in [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#) of this handbook to help plan accordingly.

8. Must I lesson plan every day?

For Traditional Student Teachers working with one or more Mentor Teachers:

YES, in fact, you are not allowed to teach any lesson or part of a lesson without a lesson plan. Your Mentor Teacher may or may not ask for one and may or may not use one him or herself. Regardless, you must plan. You should ask if your Mentor Teacher has a preference. If not, use a lesson plan format you learned within your credential program. If you do not know how to design an appropriate lesson plan, let your University Supervisor or Seminar instructor know immediately.

For Teachers of Record (Interns) working in their own classrooms:

Even if no one at your school site asks to see your lessons, we expect you to plan each and every day. You may follow the lesson plan standard of your school site but there should be enough details that an observer/evaluator can understand each and every step of your instructional plan for the lesson.

9. Who evaluates me?

Teacher Candidates MUST be formally observed a total of 6 times throughout the semester, one of those being during the Solo Experience during Week 15 or Week 16. Written feedback will be issued to the Teacher Candidate within 24-48 hours of the formal observation. A one-on-one meeting to discuss the written feedback will take place within the week in which the formal observation occurred.

Plans for subsequent observations will be made during the one-on-one meetings as a means of discussing rooms for improvement for subsequent observations as well as the TPEs the University Supervisor will be looking for at the next observation. An email confirmation for the next scheduled visit must be made between the Mentor Teacher, the University Supervisor, and the Teacher Candidate.

These observations can be completed one of three ways – in person, using a live virtual platform like Zoom, or using pre-recorded videos – as arranged by the University Supervisor.

Observation Timeline		
Observation #1	Week 2-4	<i>*If an additional observation is needed during week 14 or 15, the Teacher Candidate's final observation #6 of their Solo Experience MUST occur during Week 16 to offer additional time for growth toward mastery of the TPEs.</i>
Observation #2	Week 5-6	
Observation #3	Week 7-8	
Mid-Term Evaluation	Week 7 or 8	
Observation #4	Week 9-11	
Observation #5	Week 12-13	
<i>*If needed: Additional Observation</i>	<i>Week 14 or 15</i>	
Observation #6 – Solo Experience	Week 15 or 16	
Final Evaluation and Transition to Induction Plan	Week 16	

For all Teacher Candidates:

Your University Supervisor will observe/evaluate you at least six times. If you have not heard from your supervisor by the end of your second week of Directed Teaching, contact the Office for Student Services.

For traditional Teacher Candidates working with one or more Mentor Teacher:

You have at least two evaluators: your Mentor Teacher and your University Supervisor. Each Mentor Teacher must complete a formal evaluation.

For Teachers of Record (Interns) working in their own classrooms:

You have two evaluators: your Site Supervisor (Administrator: Principal or Assistant Principal) and University Supervisor.

10. What if I am concerned with my placement?

The Office for Student Services spends a considerable amount of time arranging placements and developing partnerships with districts and schools. As much as we try to honor your first or second choice, we cannot always do so as districts and schools do not always accept our placement requests. Only under extenuating circumstances will we change placements. You are to notify officials in the Office for Student Services at Cal State LA of your request once you have discussed concerns with your University Field Supervisor. You are NOT to make any contacts with other classrooms or schools on your own behalf.

We know that in rare occurrences matches between Teacher Candidate and Mentor Teacher are a challenge. Do not wait, as we will not make changes ever after the first two weeks of the semester. If you have concerns with your placement within the first two weeks of your placement, discuss the issues with your University Field Supervisor. Do not discuss any issues with anyone at your school site. Remember, that we cannot guarantee a new placement during the same quarter. We also do not change sites should you receive an unsatisfactory Mid-Term Evaluation.

11. How should I dress? Is there a standard Cal State LA dress code?

While Cal State LA does not have a formal dress code, we do require our Teacher Candidates to dress professionally and make a positive impression. You should follow the dress code for your school site. However, avoid being too relaxed in your dress should that be the trend at your school site.

12. How will I know if I did not pass Directed Teaching?

You will know by the end of the semester if you did not pass Directed Teaching. You must receive passing evaluations from both your Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor with no "Inconsistent" anywhere on either evaluation. If you receive a failing Mid-Term Evaluation by week seven or eight of the semester, that does not mean you will automatically fail, but it does mean that without significant changes, you may very well not pass.

The State of California allows a maximum of three attempts at Directed Teaching. A successful semester is defined as a full semester of Directed Teaching and evidence of attainment of all Directed Teaching competencies. Placements that are terminated at any time during the semester because of a student's unacceptable teaching, management, behavior, or professionalism are considered one failed attempt. Should this termination occur, the Office for Student Services would provide you with further policy details.

13. What do I do once I complete Directed Teaching?

The credential evaluation process includes the following:

- a. During the Teacher Candidate's last semester, usually by week 5-7 of Directed Teaching, the Teacher Candidate will submit an application for credential evaluation, which can be found at www.calstatela.edu/edcredential. It is recommended the Teacher Candidate turn in the application sooner rather than later because applications are evaluated in the order received.
- b. After submitting the application, the credential analysts in the Office for Student Services will review the Teacher Candidate's file and determine if all requirements have been completed. At this time, if there are any deficiencies a letter will be sent to the student. Common deficiencies are things like RICA test scores, edTPA scores, and CPR certification.
- c. As soon as grades post for that semester, the analysts will go back to each application (again, in the order received) and check the grades for the outstanding coursework.
- d. If all the requirements have been met at that time, the analysts will electronically recommend the Teacher Candidate for the credential to the Commission for Teacher Credentialing.
- e. The Commission then emails the Teacher Candidate at the email address they listed on the application. The Commission email will invite the Teacher Candidate to log on to the Commission's webpage, pay a fee, and answer several questions. After that time, the Commission will do a final criminal and FBI background check before issuing the credential.

We wish you well during this exciting, culminating experience of your teaching credential process. Should you have any additional questions, please first contact your University Supervisor and then, if necessary, the Office for Student Services at 323-343-4320.