

University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla
Teacher Preparation Program

Practice Teacher Orientation and Procedures Handbook

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Introduction

This *Practice Teacher Orientation and Procedures Handbook* arose as an initiative of the professors who coordinate and supervise the clinical experience of student teachers. Its main purpose is to provide a written resource that offers needed direction and support and to speed up the processes that guarantee a successful educational experience.

This stage in teacher preparation is important and essential in that the candidate¹ “models, polishes, and reaffirms the competencies developed during the course of studies carried out throughout his² professional formation.” (PRDE Circular Letter 10-2004-2005)

The complexity of this clinical process makes clear the need to offer rapid and effective guidelines that the student teacher can use to clarify his/her doubts or reaffirm his/her knowledge. This instrument provides a frame of reference for all who participate in this experience so they can carry out their work.

What is Practice Teaching?

Practice teaching is the clinical experience that offers the student teacher the opportunity to put into practice the knowledge and skills acquitted during his years of formal preparation. At the same time, it allows the candidate to show evidence of the development of the dispositions that enable him to work with the different situations that he will confront. Many factors enable this experience to be one of growth, reflection, and success. Among these we can emphasize

- Vocation
- Academic Formation
- Previous opportunities for field experiences to know the environment he will have to face
- Interpersonal skills
- Emotional intelligence
- Level of motivation and commitment
- Support of the supervision team

The candidate is an adult apprentice that is at a level of learning that permits him to make

¹ The term candidate is used to refer to the student teacher.

² The masculine pronoun is used throughout this document to refer to both the masculine and feminine gender.

his own decisions. For this reason, his mentors should be special people who are models of commitment, vocation, efficiency, patience, responsibility, and enthusiasm. The symbiosis between the candidate's qualities and those of his mentor result in a team capable of assuming the commitment necessary to improve the quality of life of our Puerto Rican children and young people through an effective pedagogical practice. These children and young people are worthy of and need teachers who are motivated, enthusiastic, intelligent, and assertive. That is how our student teachers should be.

Vision of the PPM—UPRAG

In accordance with the vision of the University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla, the PPM-UPRAG responds to the commitment of being a model of excellence by preparing teachers who are knowledgeable, reflective, and transforming professionals in continuous learning, with the capacity to modify educational processes within a global and democratic society, and who appreciate the Puerto Rican society.

Mission of the PPM—UPRAG

The mission of PPM-UPRAG is in harmony with the commitment of the University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla. The unit is committed to the preparation of highly qualified elementary and secondary teachers with sound knowledge in general education and in the principles, concepts, and processes of the discipline they plan to teach.

Philosophy

In harmony with its vision and mission, the PPM-UPRAG is grounded in a philosophical foundation that integrates the cognitive, humanistic and constructivist principles and is committed to developing a knowledgeable, reflective, and transforming teacher. These theoretical foundations are based on the ideas, schools, and research of Piaget, Dewey, Vygotsky, and Brooks and Brooks, among others.

Teacher candidates should be agents of change who promote social reconstruction, improve human coexistence, and exemplify respect for the values of a democratic and diverse society. Learning is geared toward methods of experimentation, research, planning, assessment, and participation. The PPM-UPRAG model for teacher education is structured around theoretical constructs, aimed at cultivating and promoting a professional who is a reflective practitioner and an agent of change.

The PPM-UPRAG embraces the following philosophical principles.

- Knowledge is an active process where the candidates are not just passive recipients of information, but active participants.
- Cognitive process is a result of the construction and interaction of the individuals with their environment to transform the teaching and learning experience in response to diverse cultural backgrounds and learning styles.
- Awareness of ethical and aesthetic values and appreciation of the Puerto Rican society and its relationship with other cultures promotes social commitment and responsibility.
- Technology literacy, as an innovative tool for education, empowers the individual; therefore, the teacher candidates are skilled in using a variety of technologies in instruction, assessment, and in their own research and professional development.
- Lifelong learning is ingrained in the teacher candidates so that they are committed to pursue knowledge, reflect, inquire, and generate changes that will contribute to the student's learning experiences.
- Cognitive development occurs as the individuals act on their ideas in societal settings and reflect on their own learning experiences.

Purpose

The purpose of the PPM-UPRAg is to prepare teacher candidates to serve Puerto Rican society as highly qualified teachers. The unit offers a curriculum that prepares highly qualified teachers in Elementary Education, English with Multimedia Technology at the Elementary and English with Multimedia Technology at the Secondary Levels. The program consists of a general education component and pedagogical content area courses which emphasize the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the teaching profession and the use of multimedia technology throughout the curriculum. The faculty of the PPM-UPRAg supports a learning community where the interaction and collaboration among candidates and peers provide opportunities to integrate knowledge with the pedagogical and professional components in clinical and field experiences in all learning communities. These experiences provide sufficient and ample opportunities for self-reflection and assessment of their role as educators in order to become well-rounded and competent professionals.

Goals

The goals of the unit are aligned with the vision and mission of the Institution. These goals provide direction for the courses, teaching processes, candidates' performance and dispositions,

services, and unit accountability. The teacher candidates:

1. Demonstrate content and pedagogical knowledge and are able to select and develop instructional strategies to plan, evaluate, assess, and transform student learning effectively.
2. Apply knowledge of differences in learning styles, cultural diversity, student population, family, and community contexts to develop effective learning experiences.
3. Evaluate the learning experiences continuously, in interaction with the faculty, peers, and the academic community, to become a reflective educator in search of opportunities to grow professionally in the pursuit of lifelong learning.
4. Apply the assessment process in teaching and learning practices.
5. Master and utilize the integration of technology as a facilitating and powerful creative tool in learning.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of the ethical values which reflect the social, historical, and philosophical foundations of the field.
7. Masters and applies the technological processes as a creative tool to facilitate teaching and learning.
8. Demonstrates knowledge of the ethical values that are proper to our society, historical moment, and the philosophical foundations of the educational field.

Calendar and duration

Practice teaching takes place during the candidate's last year of formal preparation. It is recommended that it take place during the last semester, since by then the candidate will have taken all of the courses that prepare him to assume this responsibility.

The candidate will dedicate all of the time that this effort requires that this experience be successful, as much for him as for the students he will impact. This clinical experience requires a minimum of 300 hours in a period comprised of the first official day of classes and the last official day of classes in the semester according to the academic calendar of UPRAg and the annual calendar of the Puerto Rico Department of Education.

Responsibility and accidental insurance

Student teachers will be covered by an insurance plan for responsibility and accidents while they are carrying out their practice teaching or are on functions related with the experience such as excursions, meetings, trainings and others. The practice supervisor will assure that the

student teachers fill out the required documentation and send it to the administrative director who will manage the same. Two documents will be returned to the supervisor: one to be turned in to the principal of the practice center and the other to be kept in the supervisor's files as evidence that the documents were filled out and sent. If a situation that merits attention arises, the student teacher will notify the cooperating teacher, principal of the center, and the university supervisor. The practice supervisor will refer the case to the administrative official. The administrative official will give orientation about the steps to be followed.

Logistics of the student teaching experience

Application

Candidates interested in carrying out their practice teaching will fill out an application. The applications can be found in the offices of the Department of Education and the Department of English.

Orientation Meetings

The chair of each department will program various meetings with the purpose of orienting the candidates to practice teaching. The chair will check the candidate's academic file and transcript to ensure that the candidate has met all the previous requirements and has the minimal GPA required by the Puerto Rico Department of Education in its Circular Letter 10-2007-2008 page 20 (GPAs for the year 2008-2008 is 2.50, for the year 2009-2010 is 2.80 and in the year 2010-2011 and later).

Practice Teaching Syllabus

The practice teaching syllabus offers a detailed description of the course, prerequisites, objectives, content, time distribution, instructional strategies, evaluation strategies, and bibliography. This will be handed out to the candidates who will read it and discuss it with them during the orientation week at the start of the course.

Orientation Week

During the first week of the semester, the student teacher will meet with the practice supervisor for four hours daily. After this, the candidate will carry out a study of needs,

establish the priorities that will allow him to refine his knowledge and skills to start the experience. The student teacher will identify his interests and preferences in relation to schools, grades, and subjects. To the degree possible, the student teacher will be located in the practice center that most needs his needs and preferences.

The attendance of the candidate during this week is compulsory. He will receive orientation about the process that will be developed during his practice teaching, including the documents to be used and how they should be applied.

Monthly Seminars

A minimum of three seminars will be programmed in each semester. These seminars will cover topics that contribute to the formation of the candidates. Attendance is compulsory.

Selection of practice teaching centers

In the selection of the centers the availability of cooperating teachers (Preparatory Course for Cooperating Teachers) and the disposition of the school principals and other administrative personnel are taken into consideration. The authorized practice centers will be selected from the area of Aguadilla or neighboring towns. The Puerto Rico Department of Education establishes the norms that regulate the organization and implementation of the practice teaching centers (Circular Letter 10-1004-2005). This circular letter stipulates that the following aspects should be considered in the selection of the schools that serve as practice teaching centers.

- have a faculty recognized for its professional and academic competence or that is evidenced by the results of the evaluations carried out, the strategies established for the cognitive and affective development of the student, the projects carried out and the quality of its activities,
- integrate the curricular standards of excellence in the planning of teaching-learning activities, demonstrate the implementation of the new pedagogical policy established by the Department of Education,
- establish strategies for the utilization of the services necessary in the integral development of the student in an adequate and effective manner,
- have a professional development program available for the cooperating teacher and the student teacher as determined by their particular needs,

- keep the necessary physical installations available according to the specific circumstances of the school nucleus,
- allow periodical classroom observations and other pre-practice experiences,
- offer needed technical assistance to the personnel using the resources of the school, district, and other levels of the system.

Internship in the practice center

At the end of the orientation week, the student teacher moves to the practice center. The location of the student teacher in the practice center is the responsibility of the university supervisor in coordination with the personnel of the practice teaching center. The student will receive an official document to be presented to the school principal.

The student teacher will begin the practice with the process of observing the cooperating teacher. The supervision team, together with the student teacher will determine the moment in which he will begin to offer his first class.

Hours and attendance

The practice teaching course is governed by the academic calendar of the University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla. The candidate will attend the practice center from Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. However, the nature of the teaching profession, the peculiarities of the specific practice center and the needs of the students require in multiple occasions that this time be greater (e.g. Open School, Night, professional meetings during the afternoon, excursions, decoration the room, special activities, parent-teacher meetings, etc.)

The student teacher will distribute his time in such manner that he can comply with the assigned tasks. Punctual and regular attendance to the practice center is required. The student teachers should arrive at least fifteen (15) minutes before the beginning of the school day. When he has to be absent or arrive late he is to notify the cooperating teacher in anticipation. He is responsible for giving the cooperating teacher the plan and materials to be used in the class for that day. If he is absent more than three times, he runs the risk of being required to withdraw from the course.

The school principal and the cooperating teacher will establish the place in which the

attendance list is located and will sign the entrance and exit hours. They will also record attendance on a form that will remain on the cooperating teacher's desk and will give it to the practice supervisor at the end of the semester.

General dispositions

- The course Practice Teaching will count as a full time academic load for the student teacher as established by Certification 1005-06-20 of the UPR-Aguadilla Academic Senate.
- Of this time, the practice teacher will dedicate a minimum of four (4) hours in the practice-teaching center.
- Attendance to orientation seminars is compulsory
- The student teacher will offer one class to a group and in the specified subject matter and will assist the cooperating teacher and/or his practice partner, if necessary and when time allows.
- The practice centers assigned by the supervising professor will be located in the area of Aguadilla and its neighboring towns.
- The student teacher will dedicate a minimum of 300 hours during the semester to practice teaching, including the seminars offered in the university.
- The student teacher should present, as a minimum, the following documents or their equivalent.
 - Professional notebook
 - File of lesson plans
 - Roll Book (grades)
 - Attendance register
 - Anecdotal record
 - Tabulation notebook
- The cooperating teacher will be in charge of the orientation, supervision, and evaluation of a maximum of two (2) student teachers per academic semester.

Practice teaching development process

The supervising professor, cooperating teacher, and school principal will develop a

process of follow-up, orientation, attendance, and evaluation of the student teachers. The evaluation of the student teacher's performance will be documented with the following documents.

- Formative Evaluation Instrument based on the competencies of the student teacher
- "Action Research Oriented Project" Instrument
- Instrument for the evaluation of the daily lesson plan
- Instrument for the final evaluation by the cooperating teachers
- Instrument for the organization of a monthly seminar (optional: to be decided by each supervisor)
- Attendance to the practice center, seminars, and meetings
- "Teacher Work Sample" Instrument
- Instrument to evaluate the candidate's final portfolio

The final grades of each student are compiled and analyzed by the practice supervisor.

The results demonstrate the candidate's level of development of the candidate and aid in reflection and revision of the process involved in practice teaching. The qualitative information that is gathered from the different reports complement the quantitative information obtained from the aggregated data of the evaluation instrument.

These documents are on the electronic page of the practice supervisor and can be printed by the candidate. Each supervisor also gives a copy of each document to the candidate during orientation week and explains how it is to be used.

Dress code

All future teachers should take care of their professional image and dress in an appropriate form at all times. They should pay attention to their hygiene and personal appearance. They should model appropriate dress in the school and, at the same time, orient their students about the importance of maintaining an appropriate personal appearance. For this reason, student teachers are required to observe the following dress code.

Females

- Use professional dress that includes a long sleeve or three-fourths sleeve blazer that
- reaches the hips, pants that are not loose fitting and that reaches the waist or a skirt that
- reaches one inch below the knees.
- Use appropriate clothes that cover the shoulders, abdomen, and bust
- Use clothes loose-fitting clothes
- Not have visible tattoos or body piercing (except for ear-rings)
- Not use caps or hats
- Not use jeans or tee-shirts
- Not have showy hair colors
- Use closed shoes for security
- Use simple accessories that do not call attention to herself
- Fingernails should be maintained clean, short, and with soft colors

Males

- Use long or short sleeve shirts (not polos, T-shirts or other type of non-dress shirt)
- Use loose-fitting clothes
- Not have visible tattoos or body piercing
- Not use caps or hats.
- Not use jeans or tee-shirts
- Use closed shoes
- Not have long hair
- Hair should be clean and well cut, beard (if any) should be clean and short

Responsibilities of the student teacher

The student teacher is an emissary who represents the University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla while he does his practice in the center. It is his responsibility to establish good relations with the administration of the center, with the cooperating teacher, with the school faculty, with the students and parents, and with the community in general. His professional conduct should demonstrate:

- objectivity in his actions,
- professional and personal growth and improvement,
- interest, initiative, creativity, enthusiasm, and commitment to teaching,
- participation and collaboration in school and community activities,
- human relations that demonstrate respect, courtesy, prudence, discretion, effective communication, collaboration, and reflection.

The experience of the student teacher can be visualized in three phases: observation, partial responsibility for the class, complete responsibility for teaching the class. The student teacher will gradually take charge of one group or class with all the responsibilities this process implies. The decision of when the student teacher is ready to assume this responsibility is taken in common agreement among the supervisor, the cooperating teacher, and the student teacher.

To assume this responsibility requires that the student teacher turn in three daily lesson plans in advance of the class, as agreed on with the university supervisor and his cooperating teacher. He should maintain his professional notebook as recommended by the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher. It is important that he retain evidence of all didactic and evaluative material. The student teachers is responsible for complying with all official documents, to keep this information up to date and organized, to turn in required reports on time and correct and hand in all student work in a reasonable time (three days). The candidate is responsible for the organization and administration of the classroom, for which reason he should maintain a physical and emotional environment that contributes to his students' learning. He should coordinate with the cooperating teacher the activities outside the school grounds and incorporate them into the learning process. The student teacher will develop a reflection process by means of a weekly reflective diary that he will complete in accordance with his practice supervisor's instructions.

The supervisory team

Each member of the supervisory team, composed of a university supervisor, a cooperating teacher, and a school principal, will be responsible to:

- facilitate the integration of theory and practice in situations of practice teaching,
- assist the student teacher in situations that occur in the practice teaching,

- provide opportunities for the student teacher to reflect over his pedagogical practice,
- stimulate creativity and innovation,
- stimulate, and offer support, research,
- offer training, seminars, conferences and demonstrations over a variety of means for planning, over teaching strategies and techniques, the use of educational technology, and others,
- orient the student teacher in the areas of planning, management and organization of the classroom, use of technology, mastery of the language of the subject matter, use teaching strategies and techniques, maintenance of professional records, participation in the community, and other topics related with the competencies of the student teacher,
- keep documents that contain evidence of the work carried out by the student teacher during the period of practice teaching,
- evaluate the student teacher at least three times during the period of student teaching

The cooperating teacher

According to Circular Letter 10-2004-2005 of the Puerto Rico Department of Education, the following should be taken into consideration is selecting cooperating teachers.

- aids in the integration and participation of students, school personnel, the parents, and other persons in the educational process,
- knows the Curricular Renovation Project of the Department of Education (2003) and has implemented it in the classroom,
- knows well the subject matter and course he teaches and the standards that guide them,
- has the preparation and certification corresponding to the area and level he teaches,
- has a minimum of two (2) years of experience and has passed the 45 hour preparatory course to serve as a cooperating teacher. This course is valid for five years, after which the teacher must take an upgrading course that covers knowledge in areas related to the public policy of the Department of Education, evaluation methods of the Faculty of Education with innovative projects and strategies for teaching and with practice teaching,
- know the profile and professional standards established for the teachers of Puerto Rico
- foster the development of human values encouraged by our educational system: solidarity, respect for human dignity, and comprehension of cultural diversity,
- be recommended as a cooperating teacher by the principal of the practice teaching center,

- demonstrate professional competence that is made evident in reports of visits, results of evaluations, strategies and techniques of teacher used, activities, projects, training, and others,
- have the capacity to communicate effectively through oral and written in Spanish and/or in English.

The cooperating teacher, in fulfilling his work, should participate in committees, study, and activities that contribute to professional improvement without interrupting or impairing his regular functions as a teacher in the Department of Education. It is hoped that he will be a reflective and innovative researcher in the curricula and in teaching strategies. He should exhibit the characteristics of an educator that follows humanistic and constructivist postulates.

The cooperating teacher, in his tasks of orientation of the student teacher, is obliged to:

- promote a professional attitude and exhibit the professional standards of teachers,
- promote the teaching vision and mission of the Department of Education and offer orientation about professional standards,
- facilitate and make visible the progressive and systematic adaptation of the student teacher to the school environment,
- share responsibilities with the school principal and the practice teaching supervisor in the organization of the student teacher's program of work,
- accept the cognitive-interactive paradigm by means of which learning occurs both in the student and in the teacher, and cooperate in its implementation,
- systematically orient the student teacher in the application of the principles that rule the processes of teaching and of learning,
- guide the student teacher so as to know the current curricular reform, the standards of excellence of the subject and of the professional materials,
- coordinate, together with the student teacher, the educational activities in agreement with the new pedagogical focus and the particular needs of the students,
- model didactic techniques adapted to the nature of the subject and the level and specific needs of the students,
- orient the student teacher in the preparation and use of files required in the fulfillment of his responsibilities,
- offer the student teacher the opportunity to know and/or use the services the school offers during the period of classes, such as the school lunchroom, orientation, social work, health, library, technological services, and others,

- provide the student teacher with opportunities to observe, identify, and solve problems,
- provide evidence about the execution of the student teacher using a variety of resources and authentic evaluation instruments,
- orient the student teachers on the laws and circular letters currently in force.

The school principal

According to Circular Letter 10-2004-2005, the functions of the school principals in relation to professional activities consist of:

- participate with the school superintendent or his representative and with the university coordinators of practice teaching in the selection of cooperating teachers,
- orient and inform about the practice center and its composition and social and physical environment,
- facilitate the professional development of the student teacher,
- participate in the planning, organizing and development of the professional activities designed for the student teacher in the practice teaching centers,
- sponsor the implementation of the educational policy of the Department of Education in the functioning of the practice teaching center and in the teaching process,
- promote the participation of the student teachers in the activities of the practice center,
- promote and sponsor that the practice teaching center develops the curricular model of the Department of Education within the context of the theoretical context established,
- Participate in the technical assistance and the evaluation of the work of the cooperating teachers and student teachers.

The function of the school principal in relation to the administrative aspects consists in attending adequately to the functioning of the Practice Teaching Program, prepare the reports required by the university that represents the student teachers, participate in placing the student teachers together with the cooperating teachers and the practice teaching coordinators, know the documents used for evaluating the student teacher's work, guarantee that the practice teacher includes the necessary time for orientation, observation, performance and analysis with the cooperating teacher; prepare and submit on time the reports required to process the payment of

the respective bonuses.

The function of the school principals in relation to the evaluation of the student teacher consists in observing the student teacher in his school work and analyzing the class or activity observed. He should also collect evidence and prepare the reports requested by the personnel in charge of practice teaching in the Puerto Rico Department of Education and in the universities.

The superintendent of schools

As established in Circular Letter 10-2004-2005, the superintendent is required to send to the universities the list of names of the school principals and the qualified cooperating teachers in each center. They should enable, in coordination with the school principals, the participation of the cooperating teachers in activities of the universities and other institutions. They are responsible for carrying out, in coordination with the school principal, activities and meetings aimed at the improved functioning of the practice teaching centers. They should also promote and enable the professional development of the cooperating teachers.

The supervising professor

The supervising professor of the University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla is responsible for:

- identifying, evaluating, and selecting the practice teaching center for the participating student teacher and placing him in the center,
- turn in and discuss with the student teacher the models of the forms for classroom observation and other instruments that will be used,
- carry out a minimum of three formative evaluation visits to the student teacher, discuss the same with him, and establish a recovery plan in accordance with the findings and needs of the student teacher,
- grade the performance of the student teacher in accordance with the instruments in force,
- attend punctually all student teaching meetings,
- orient school principals and cooperating teachers,
- assist the cooperating teacher in offer help that the student teacher needs,

- support the student teacher at all times, using distinct means of communication such as telephone calls, e-mail, and other means,
- review evaluation documents completed by the cooperating teachers,
- discuss the evaluation instrument with the student teacher and school principal,
- discuss specific cases with the department chair of his department (UPRAg) and provide necessary follow-up,
- evaluate possible practice teaching centers for the future placement of candidates,
- pick up and turn in documents related with practice teaching,
- prepare and offer seminars to strengthen teaching needs,
- attend and participate in seminars,
- turn in materials, coordinate activities, announce and notify of workshops,
- serve as communicators and coordinators between the office of practice teaching, the candidates, and the practice teaching centers,
- attend extra-curricular activities developed by the schools or the university,
- advise the student teacher about problems specific to the school and the classroom,
- participate in initiatives aimed at achieving the objectives of practice teaching and of the faculty.

Student teacher formative evaluation process

The fundamental purpose of evaluation is to promote the professional development of the student teacher. Evaluation in student teaching is based on national competencies of accreditation associations for the preparation of teachers (NCATE), standards of the professional organizations and of the Puerto Rican Teachers (ACEI, TESOL, Standards of the Puerto Rican Teacher). The process starts with the identification of the outstanding abilities of the student teacher and in the areas in which he needs orientation in order to offer him recognition and necessary help. The supervisor coordinates the evaluation process of the student teacher, but needs the active participation of the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. The university supervisor is the person responsible for coordinating the process of evaluation of the student teacher by the supervising team. The documents designed for this process are the following:

- Student teaching evaluation
- Lesson planning evaluation
- Research oriented action project
- Teacher work sample
- Evaluation of the candidate's portfolio and roll book
- Final evaluation of the student teacher by the cooperating teacher

At the beginning of practice teaching, the university supervisor gives the candidate a copy of all the documents that he will use in the evaluation process. He can also obtain them on the supervisor's web page. The purpose of the evaluations is to identify the areas in which the student teacher needs to improve professionally and those in which he needs the help of the university supervisor or the cooperating teacher. It is important that the student teacher make notes of the recommendation of both members of the team. He will develop a brief plan with the purpose of making the necessary adjustments to show progress in the areas that were pointed out.

The candidate will be evaluated on the following competencies:

- knowledge of the principles, concepts, and processes that represent and are part of the structure of the course and can serve in different educational settings,
- knowledge of the classical and modern philosophies and their social and psychological implications in the practice of the candidate,
- ability to obtain, analyze critically, evaluate, and use information effectively for inquiry and decision making,
- mastery of language and communication,
- mastery of the methods, strategies and techniques for an effective teaching-learning process,
- knowledge and skills in the application of planning and the assessment of the academic achievement of the students,
- knowledge and effective use of technology as a tool in the teaching-learning process,
- knowledge of the ethical and esthetic values and respect for diversity to facilitate the academic achievement of all students,
- ability to interact effectively as a facilitator of teaching demonstrating professional behavior and commitment to life-long learning.

The student teacher should collect the necessary evidence to demonstrate his level of performance in the corresponding competencies.

It is recommended that the cooperating teacher use a variety of techniques and resources for the formative assessment of the student teacher such as observation, the portfolio, the reflective journal, interviews, special projects, classroom based research, and others.

The cooperating teacher will make periodic observations in the teacher candidate's classes. The university supervisor will keep evidence of these observations once they have been discussed. The supervisor will carry out a minimum of three (3) classroom observations during the semester. These should also be discussed and kept as evidence.

The classroom observations, both of the cooperating teacher and of the supervisor, will be gathered into one or various instruments designed for this purpose. The student teacher should know these observation instruments and discuss them with the practice supervisor at the beginning of the semester. They should also discuss their evaluations with the cooperating teacher and with the university supervisor.

Legal Aspects

The legal base on which the practice teaching process is founded are a series of circular letters and legal documents that guarantee the rights of all involved. These are:

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Law 107-110 of 2001, No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, has as its objective the improvement of the academic performance of students and a change in the cultura of the schools. This law is based on four pillars: the responsibility of the results, emphasis on what works and is based on scientific research, more options for parents, and better local control and flexibility. This law guarantees that the quality of teachers should be a priority.

Law 79 of August 23, 1989

This law establishes regulations for the Practice Teaching Program of the Department of Public Instruction of Puerto Rico. It repeals Law 78 of April 25, 1949, as amended. It confers on the University of Puerto Rico the faculty of selecting, in collaboration with the Department of Education, of selecting, outside the university campus and in populations close to the university,

Practice Teaching Centers for students of the School of Education.

[Memorandum practice teaching program implementation at the elementary and secondary level schools.](#)

This memorandum, dated August 5, 2009, establishes the requirements for the selection of the practice teaching centers and cooperating teachers selection, as well as the norms and procedures that apply to the functions of all people involved in the practice teaching, that must be observed at all times.

[Individuals with disabilities education act \(IDEA Law\)](#)

Law 105-17 of June 17, 1997 guarantees a public education free of cost and appropriate for people with disabilities. Signed on December 3, 2004 and went into effect July 1, 2005. The districts are not responsible for offering services to special education students whose parents enroll them in private schools outside the districts they reside. The academic teachers must be highly qualified (López, 2006).

[Regulations for the organization and functioning of the practice teacher centers](#)

These regulations approved in 1990, were adopted with the purpose of regulating the organization and the functioning of the practice teaching centers of the Department of Education in the University of Puerto Rico and the private universities accredited in Puerto Rico. These regulations contain the legal base, the title and applicability, the practice teaching program general objectives, establishment of the practice teaching centers, school superintendent functions, orientation and technical assistance, facilitating team functions, supervising practice teaching professor's additional functions, cooperating teachers additional functions, practice teaching center curriculum, bonus pay, general dispositions, definitions, derogatory clause and validity.

[Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA Law\)](#)

This is a civil rights law for people with disabilities decreed on July 26, 1990. The law proposes to eliminate discrimination towards this population and facilitate their inclusion in society. Its purpose is to eliminate discrimination at work, education, recreation and requires the use of facilities and services (López, 2006).

[Memorandum practice teaching program visits in the elementary and secondary schools.](#)

This memorandum, dated August 23, 2006, establishes that the institute for Teacher

Professional Development initial visits to the practice teaching centers in the elementary and secondary schools beginning academic year 2006-2007. The purpose for these visits is to evaluate the function and the fulfillment of the centers with the established norms and regulations that guide the practice teaching in Puerto Rico.

[Law on educational services for people with disabilities.](#)

Law 51 of June 1996 establishes rights for people with disabilities, between the ages of 0-21 years old, to receive a free and appropriate education. It establishes the Puerto Rico government agencies responsibilities in offering educational services for people with disabilities. The Secretary of Education is in charge of naming the Auxiliary Secretary of Educational Services for people with disabilities, who has administrative, fiscal and educational autonomy for the offering of educational services related to people with disabilities. Assistive Technology Act (ATA) Assistive technology is any object, equipment, system or product acquired commercially, adapted or constructed with the purpose of increasing, maintaining, or improving the functional capacity of individuals with disabilities. The legal base is the Assistive Technology Act of 1998/PL 105-394 (ATA), law of the Assistive Technology program of Puerto Rico dated August 31, 2000 (Law 264) and the Warranty of Assistive Technology law (Law 402).

[Integral Development of the Special Communities](#)

Law 232 of August 27, 2004, was created to offer social justice and equity to the special communities through a process of whole and community development. According to López (2006), this law taken to praxis in a responsible way offers a way for residents themselves to develop skills, attitudes, and a self organization that will permit them to become authors of their own economic and social being. In these special communities, in which thousands of Puerto Ricans live in conditions of extreme poverty and whose housing infrastructure is not the most adequate and where inappropriate conduct is observed, these problems affect the community as well as being reflected in the children's conduct in school.

[General orientation for Cooperating Teachers](#)

- The candidates will attend the schools five days a week, four hours daily.
- During the first month, the candidates will meet for as long as necessary with the practice supervisor. Later they will meet with the practice supervisor once a month.

- Each candidate is responsible for teaching one subject. From Kindergarten to third grade, all candidates must teach Spanish. Mid-semester they may change to another subject. If the candidate is doing practice without a partner, the candidate may continue teaching Spanish. (This clause applies only to the candidates from the Department of Education, not for the English Department).
- When candidates arrive at the practice teaching center, the principal or the cooperating teacher will introduce them to all school personnel and will orientate them on the school work plan, dynamics and institutional culture as well as other important aspects. The cooperating teacher will orientate the candidate on the class, discipline, textbooks, guides, standards, etc. They will provide necessary books and documents. Candidates will observe classes no less than one week, from five to seven days or longer if necessary.
- The candidate will never be left alone with students in the classroom. If the cooperating teacher is absent, the candidate will stay at the library, office or classroom preparing teaching materials, grading, completing roll books, planning, etc. Candidates will never be with students unless there is a teacher present who will be responsible for any incident that may occur in the classroom. Candidates will never serve as substitutes for an absent teacher.
- It is required of candidates that they integrate within the school community and participate in professional meetings and school activities. In order to achieve this objective it is important that candidates be notified in advance. It is the practice centers principals' and cooperating teachers' responsibility to notify candidates.
- All unnecessary interruptions should be avoided. It is very difficult to maintain student attention with interruptions occurring.
- The use of cellular phones is not permitted in the practice centers. Candidates must set the example by not using their cellular phone. The official letter dated February 10, 2004, includes guidelines on this subject.
- Candidates are to hand in three lesson plans ahead of time as soon as they are to start teaching. Each day they will hand in one more lesson plan, thus always being three plans ahead. It is very important that the cooperating teacher check, make recommendations, and return plans to candidates so that they have sufficient time to make necessary adjustments and editing. In the binder there will be a section for the drafts and another for the final plan.
- Tests are to be written by the candidate. The cooperating teacher will make the pertinent corrections. After being approved, the candidate will rewrite the test, and the cooperating teacher will check that the test has no errors.
- It is the cooperating teacher's responsibility to make sure the candidate keeps the lesson plans and other documents up to date.
- The candidates will supply a notebook to the cooperating teacher so that the cooperating teacher can make daily observations. The cooperating teacher should make objective

comments on the sequence of activities, time management, materials used, achievement of objectives, etc. These observations help the candidate and are evidence of the support and follow up offered by the cooperating teacher. If no objective notes are made and the candidate was never told to improve in a specific area, the candidate cannot be penalized later on.

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Appendixes

University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla
Teacher Preparation Program

Receipt
Student Teacher

I, _____ student teacher of the University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla, student number _____ registered in the course Practice Teaching (course code) EDPE of the Department of _____, during the semester _____ certify that I have received a copy of the Practice Teacher Orientation and Procedures Handbook and that I agree to comply with the rules stipulated in the same.

Student Teacher

Date

University Supervisor

Date

Once signed, the supervisor will retain this page as evidence that the candidate received the document.

University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla
Teacher Preparation Program

Receipt
Cooperating Teacher

I, _____ cooperating teacher of the Teacher Preparation Program of the University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla in the practice teaching center in the city of certify that I have received a copy of the Practice Teacher Orientation and Procedures Handbook and that I agree to comply with the rules stipulated in the same in the areas related with the performance of my duties as cooperating teacher.

Cooperating Teacher

Date

University Supervisor

Date

Once signed, the supervisor will retain this page as evidence that the cooperating teacher received the document.

University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla
Teacher Preparation Program

Receipt
Cooperating Principal

I, _____ cooperating principal of the Teacher Preparation Program of the University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla in the practice teaching center in the city of certify that I have received a copy of the Practice Teacher Orientation and Procedures Handbook and that I agree to comply with the rules stipulated in the same in the areas related with the performance of my duties as cooperating principal.

Cooperating Principal

Date

University Supervisor

Date

Once signed, the supervisor will retain this page as evidence that the cooperating principal received the document.

University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla
Teacher Preparation Program

Receipt
Superintendent of Schools

I, _____ superintendent of schools in the educational region of
in the city of _____ certify that I have received a copy of the Practice Teacher
Orientation and Procedures Handbook and that I agree to comply with the rules stipulated in the
same in the areas related with the performance of my duties as superintendent of schools.

Superintendent of Schools

Date

University Supervisor

Date

Once signed, the supervisor will retain this page as evidence that the superintendent of schools
received the document.