PROBATIONARY STATUS FOR STUDENT TEACHING

(Revised May 2016; Effective Fall 2011)

On occasion, teacher candidates have struggled in the professional education sequence to be effective and successful. Often, concerns are raised prior to the student teaching experience for a variety of reasons by faculty members from the Education Department and/or major areas of study. In other cases, field placement mentor teachers have identified areas of concern and/or recommended a teacher candidate "with reservations." In these cases, department policy mandates that students will be placed on probationary status at the start of the student teaching semester in order to carefully monitor their progress and provide additional, focused support. The purpose of this procedure is to provide a consistent and fair approach to the student teacher who is beginning his/her placement at some risk, while honoring the integrity of the department, College, school and profession. The procedure for establishing and implementing probationary status is as follows:

PROBATIONARY STATUS DURING THE STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE

1. Probationary Status Defined

"Probationary Status" means that a teacher candidate who has been identified to be at risk for a successful student teaching experience, but has met all other requirements is provided the opportunity to student teach under certain defined conditions and with full knowledge and understanding that failure to meet set standards could result in the termination of the student teaching experience. Probationary Status allows the student teacher to identify specific, performance goals and begin the student teaching experience. During the first, five weeks of the placement, the student teacher will receive additional, targeted support and feedback from the cooperating teacher and college supervisor. At the end of this period, the team will determine if the student teacher has met his/her goals and has also successfully demonstrated all expectations for student teachers at the 5-week mark.

1. Process for Determination of Probationary Status

During the Departmental approval process for student teaching, the Director of Student Teaching may recommend that a teacher candidate be placed on Probationary Status for student teaching. This recommendation will be based on departmental policy and/or recommendations from the Education Department and/or the student's major department of study. The Department will consider the circumstances of such a recommendation based on an examination of the teacher candidate's record, departmental recommendations and/or professional dispositions and performance in classes and in field placements.

3. Reasons for Probationary Status

A teacher candidate may be placed on probation for a number of reasons, some of which may be academic in nature and others of which may be non-academic or related

to professional dispositions and behaviors. Academic performance is based on grade point averages in the general curriculum, education coursework, and courses in the major and minor areas of study. Non-academic reasons for placement on probationary status include the limited or inappropriate display of professional dispositions and behaviors or mental or physical health issues.

A. Academic Reasons-The following examples of *academic-related* situations could result in the teacher candidate being placed in the student teaching experience on probationary status. This list is not limited the examples below:
    1. *Failure to maintain an adequate grade point average.* Teacher candidates in the Teacher Education Program are required to have an overall GPA of 2.75 or higher. Teacher candidates are required to have a 2.75 GPA or higher for education coursework as well as for the major and minor areas of study. GPAs will be reviewed at the point of application to student teaching as well as just prior to the onset of the experience.
    2. *Failure to earn a C+ or higher final grade for each education course (including field experiences) in Levels 2 and 3.* Courses must be repeated where the teacher candidate has failed to reach this standard.
    3. *Failure to secure a positive endorsement from the major department of study.* Teacher candidates receiving a "Recommended with Concerns" endorsement from his/her major department of study due to academic performance will be placed on probationary status.
    4. *Acts of academic dishonesty*. This would include, but is not limited to cheating, lying, theft of books or equipment and/or plagiarism.

B. Non-Academic Reasons-The following examples of *non-academic* situations could result in the teacher candidate being placed in the student teaching experience on probationary status:

    1. *Failure to abide by the "Statement of Commitment to Professionalism"*
    2. *An inappropriate attitude toward learning and supervision*. This could include, but is not limited to, a hostile, disrespectful or resistant attitude toward peers, faculty or placement supervisors.
    3. *Repeated failure to perform effectively or carry out one's assignment in field placement settings.* A "Recommended with Reservations" rating from a field placement mentor teacher will result in Probationary Status.
    4. *Repeated concerns about levels of professional dispositions and/or behaviors either in Education coursework, major/minor coursework and/or field placements.*
    5. *Failure to secure a positive endorsement from the major department of study*. Teacher candidates receiving a "Recommended with Concerns" endorsement from his/her major department of study due to issues with professional dispositions and/or behaviors will be placed on Probationary Status.
    6. *Failure to respect or maintain confidentiality*.
    7. *Chronic absenteeism from class or field placements*.
    8. *Inappropriate or disruptive behavior in the college course or related field*

experience.

9. *Behavior that is irresponsible, damaging, harmful or dangerous to the students in a field placement*.
10. *Documented chemical dependency or use of illegal drugs during the teacher candidate's course of study or field placement experiences*.
11. *Breaking a law in the field placement setting or conviction of a criminal activity during the course of study*. Prior misdemeanor and/or felony convictions must be reported to the Director of Student Teaching and may be cause for probationary status or dismissal from the program.
12. *Consistent mental or physical health issues* that affect the teacher candidate's performance repeatedly in coursework or field experiences. The teacher candidate will be advised to seek counseling, therapy or medical assistance whenever possible and appropriate.
13. *Other issues of a unique nature*.

4. Notification Procedures

A. Teacher Candidate- The teacher candidate will be notified in writing of his/her probationary status. A follow-up meeting with the Director of Student Teaching will detail the conditions of the probation. The teacher candidate will be required to sign a contract (See Appendix G) indicating his/her acknowledgement of the conditions of the probation. The teacher candidate will also, with the aid of the Director of Student Teaching and possibly appropriate faculty or the college supervisor, create a set of behavioral goals and objectives to be put into place and achieved during the probationary period.

B. College Supervisor- The college supervisor will be notified in writing by the Director of Student Teaching of the student teacher's probationary status and the conditions thereof.

C. Cooperating Teacher- The cooperating teacher will be notified in writing by the Director of Student Teaching of the student teacher's probationary status and the conditions thereof.

D. Education Department- The Director of Student Teaching will notify members of the Education Department of a student teacher's probationary status.

5. Length of Probation

The length of the probationary period will be five (5) weeks, unless earlier termination of the placement is warranted based on a serious breach of school protocol or the request of the cooperating teacher or school's administration. It is also possible for the probationary period to be extended on a week-by-week basis to allow the student teacher to continue to make progress towards his/her goals.

At the end of three (3) weeks, the Director of Student Teaching will consult with the college supervisor and/or cooperating teacher to monitor the student teacher's

progress toward his/her goals and all other expectations of student teachers at this point in the student teaching experience. The team will determine if he/she is making adequate progress towards the stated goals as well as all other "normal" expectations of student teachers. The Director of Student Teaching will summarize the result of this consultation in writing to the student teacher.

In some cases, an extension of the student teaching experience beyond the required 16 weeks may be warranted, depending on the nature of the criteria and the student teacher's progress.

6. Support Process

a. During the probationary period, the assigned college supervisor will schedule weekly visits in the student teacher's school setting. The purpose of these visits will be to monitor progress towards the probationary goals, monitor overall progress towards the "normal" expectations of student teachers in the beginning weeks of the student teaching placement, observe the student teacher teaching in either a small or full-group setting, and confer with the cooperating teacher and student teacher. The college supervisor will provide suggestions and resources as related to the student teacher's goals in each meeting and in-between meetings as needed. In addition, the college supervisor will communicate his/her observations and conclusions to the student teacher and cooperating teacher following each visit in writing (See Appendix I).

b. At the end of the third week of the probationary period, the Director of Student Teaching will confer with the college supervisor and cooperating teacher to monitor the student teacher's progress toward his/her probationary goals and general progress in the student teaching experience. The student teacher will be informed of his/her progress towards stated goals and student teaching in general at this point (See Appendix I).

c. At the end of the fifth week of the probationary period, the college supervisor, in consultation with the cooperating teacher, will make a recommendation to the Director of Student Teaching on the status of the student teacher. The recommendation will be communicated in person and in writing (See Appendix I) to the student teacher by the Director of Student Teaching and/or college supervisor.

7. Criteria For Success

The Director of Student Teaching will provide written copies of the Probationary Status contract (Appendix G) to the teacher candidate, cooperating teacher and college supervisor. The contract will include the conditions necessary for successful completion of the probationary period. This notice will include:

A. specific criteria, including goals and objectives for performance
B. a timeline for implementation of the stated goals, objectives and performance measures

C. frequency and number of observations
D. weekly progress reports
E. the person or persons responsible for determining if such criteria have been met.

The teacher candidate will acknowledge, in writing, the receipt of and acceptance of such notification and conditions.

8. Determinations

At the end of the initial five-week period, the cooperating teacher and college supervisor, in consultation with the Director of Student Teaching, will make one of three determinations with regards to the Probationary Status designation:

A. The student teacher has successfully met all goals and has demonstrated all other "normal" expectations of a student teacher at this point in the student teaching experience. With this determination, the student teacher is free to continue the student teaching placement without any additional stipulations. The original designation of Probationary Status is further deleted from any future references. The student teacher will be notified of this decision by the college supervisor.

B. The student teacher is making steady progress towards his/her goals and other expectations of student teachers at this point in the student teaching experience, but will continue on Probationary Status on a week-to-week basis until goals and other expectations of student teachers have been fully met to the satisfaction of the cooperating teacher and college supervisor. At such time, the Probationary Status will be lifted and the student teacher will complete the student teaching placement without any additional stipulations. The original Probationary Status contract will be further deleted from any future references. The student teacher will be notified of this decision by the college supervisor.

C. The student teacher has failed to make adequate progress towards meeting his/her goals and/or normal expectations of student teachers at this point in the student teaching experience. Recognizing that the student teacher has a very limited probability of successful completion of the student teaching experience, the student teaching placement will be terminated. The Director of Student Teaching will notify the student teacher in person and in writing of this decision (See Appendix I).

7. Appeals Procedure

Students who have been placed on Probationary Status may appeal the decision to the Education Department. The process for writing an appeal is described on the Education Department's website at:
http://www.hope.edu/academic/education/Handbook/Appeals%20Process.pdf