FAQ
(Frequently Asked Questions about Supervising a BSU Student Teacher)

How will my student teacher be evaluated?
There are two types of evaluation that occur in a typical student teaching experience: 1. Evaluation for MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (MA DESE) Licensure using DESE forms and assessments 2. Evaluation for the practicum course using BSU faculty/departmental assessment tools (e.g. “the grade” given for the practicum course). Cooperating teachers (a.k.a. Supervising Practitioners) have a greater responsibility for the first type of student teaching evaluation which involves the use of tools, forms and rating scales mandated by the MA DESE.

What types of forms will I be required to complete in my role as a supervising teacher?
In 2003, the MA DESE implemented a Preservice Performance Assessment (PPA) tool for the evaluation of candidates seeking an initial teaching license. This assessment is required of all candidates seeking a MA initial teaching license. BSU developed a rubric to accompany this tool to ensure that candidates, supervising practitioners and BSU clinical faculty (a.k.a. Program Supervisors) understand what is meant by the numerical ratings associated with the tool. Both the PPA and the rubric can be found in the appendix of your handbook. It is the student teacher’s responsibility to provide evidence to support that they have met each of the MA Professional Teaching Standards listed on the PPA (supervisor field observations are also used as evidence). You and the BSU program supervisor will jointly determine the rating given to the candidate for each of the 5 standards. In addition to the PPA, you will also be asked to determine if the candidate has met the standards (by circling “yes” or “no”) on the final practicum report (form D).

What is my role in the student teacher evaluation process?
Many supervising practitioners express concern and confusion over their role with regard to student teacher assessment. The MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Education makes the important role of the supervising practitioner perfectly clear in terms of the evaluation of the practicum experience through the educator licensing regulations:
[603CMR7.04(4)] A practicum or practicum equivalent must be supervised jointly by the supervisor from the preparation program in which the candidate is enrolled and the supervising practitioner. The supervising practitioner responsible for the larger portion of the practicum or practicum equivalent and the program supervisor will together evaluate the candidate on the basis of the appropriate standards. The above evaluation refers to your student teacher’s eligibility for licensure. By contract, the BSU program supervisor is responsible for assigning the letter grade associated with their practicum course. However, many program supervisors solicit input from supervising practitioners regarding their student teacher’s letter grade.

How is my role different from that of the BSU program supervisor?
You and the assigned BSU program supervisor are expected to jointly evaluate your student teacher based on the MA professional teaching standards. Since you observe and work with your student teacher on a daily basis, you play a vital role in providing ongoing feedback to your student teacher.

What do we do when the BSU program supervisor and I disagree about the ratings on the PPA or the ability of my student teacher to meet the professional teaching standards?
The MA DESE encourages supervising practitioners and program supervisors to identify a “mediator” early in the practicum experience. Quite often the building administrator or, in the case of a high school, the department chair, is asked to serve in this capacity. According to MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Education regulations, “Disagreement between the supervising practitioner and the program supervisor will be resolved by the decision of a third person chosen jointly by them.” [603CMR7.04(4)]
Why do early childhood and special education student teachers only spend 8 weeks in their student teaching placement?

This question is asked all the time in our placement office. Early childhood and special education students are required by state regulation to complete two types of placements in order to be eligible for their specific licenses. According to current licensing regulations, candidates seeking an early childhood license must spend part of their practicum in a pre-kindergarten-kindergarten placement and the remainder of their practicum in a grades 1-2 placement. At least one of these two settings must include children with disabilities. Likewise, candidates seeking a special education license must distribute their practicum hours between an inclusive general education setting and a separate or substantially separate setting for students with disabilities. In addition to the licenses listed above, candidates seeking “all levels” licenses such as health, music, theatre, dance and instructional technology are also required to complete their practica hours at two different developmental levels (prek-6, 5-8 or 8-12). Therefore, the BSU field experience office must seek two placements that meet these criteria within the 15-week practicum semester.

Which calendar will my student teacher follow - BSU’s or our school calendar?

Once the student teaching semester has begun (usually the first day of day of university classes in the fall or spring semester), student teachers are required to follow the calendar of their placement school. During the spring semester, student teachers will observe February and April vacations in lieu of BSU’s traditional spring break in March. Also, if your school is closed due to inclement weather or for some other type of emergency, student teachers will observe that closing instead of the BSU class cancellation postings. A practicum calendar is included in your welcome packet and is also posted on-line.

What are the hours that my student teacher is expected to keep?

Student teachers are expected to observe the regular schedule for teachers in your building. At the very least, they are expected to arrive 20 minutes before the students and leave 20 minutes after students have exited the building. Student teachers can be asked to stay later for faculty meetings, planning, parent conferences and other types of professional obligations typically expected of inservice teachers.

What do I do if my student does not come to school dressed appropriately?

Student teachers are expected to seek out information regarding the dress code/policy of their assigned schools and adhere to it at all times. This policy is clearly stated in their Practicum Handbook. If your student teacher comes to school inappropriately dressed, you are encouraged to send him/her home to change.

When will I receive my course voucher and PDPs?

Course vouchers are issued annually by the College of Education and Allied Studies (generally in the month of April). Vouchers are issued in time to register for summer classes. If you need your voucher released sooner, please contact the field placement office (508) 531-1227. Per the “Memorandum of Understanding between Massachusetts State Colleges and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents” (6/12/80), tuition credit vouchers are delivered to your superintendent’s office (your name and your student teacher’s name will appear on the voucher). Your PDP certificate is provided in your supervising practitioner welcome packet.

Why do I only receive 15 PDPs for mentoring a BSU student teacher?

Due to a change in the MA Recertification regulations (December 1999), Educators are permitted to use up to 15 PDPs per year accrued while serving in the role of a “cooperating teacher” for the purpose of license renewal (Recertification Guidelines, MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, January 2000). Additional PDPs can be earned in your role as a supervising practitioner by participating in BSU’s Mentoring Beginning Teachers course.