Virginia Tech School of Education

Teacher Candidate Formal Observation

Read-Ahead & Observation Reference | Fall 2026

Welcome

Your observations and professional insights play an important role in supporting teacher candidate development and continuous program improvement. If you have used our observation instruments in the past, you will notice that this is a revised version. It was developed during the 2025–2026 academic year by School of Education faculty, administrators, and supervisors to improve clarity and alignment with program expectations. Because Fall 2026 is the pilot implementation, we welcome feedback on any issues, areas needing clarification, or suggestions for improvement.

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to support the teacher candidate's professional growth by identifying strengths and areas for improvement during internship and student teaching experiences. As such, your individual, identifiable responses will be shared with the Virginia Tech faculty involved in the teacher candidate's licensure area.

Who Completes This Assessment?

This evaluation will be completed by a) the university supervisor, b) the P-12 classroom teacher, and c) the teacher candidate (as a self-reflection on recorded lessons) once each during the internship and twice each during the student teaching placement. Other observations should occur but are not required to be submitted through Qualtrics.

Before You Begin

- Participants may wish to review this Word version before the observation and/or complete a printed copy during the observation; however, the observation scores must be entered into the Qualtrics Form within 24 hours of an observation being conducted.
- The Qualtrics form requires a password. The password can be found in the "Common Assessment links" document that was emailed to you; or, you can ask the university supervisor or Dr. Christine Christianson (cchristianson@vt.edu).

Formal Observation Cycle

The formal observation process includes a pre-observation conference, classroom teaching observation, and post-observation conference with teacher-candidate reflection. This evaluation tool is used for step 2 in this process.

Pre-observation: Before an observation, the teacher candidate should share the lesson plan with both the cooperating teacher and university supervisor for feedback and approval. You will be asked in this survey if this process has occurred.

Observation: The observer evaluates the classroom instruction using an evaluation instrument (i.e., this Qualtrics survey).

Post-observation: The observer and teacher candidate should discuss the lesson (with the cooperating teacher when possible), and the teacher candidate will submit a one-page reflection to the supervisor through email or Canvas as directed.

Pre-Observation Conference

Before the observation, the teacher candidate was expected to:

- Identify areas about which they wanted specific feedback during the observation, and
- Share the lesson plan with the university supervisor and the sponsoring teacher either in person or electronically.

This process should result in pre-observation feedback and/or conference.

Pre-Observation Question

Did the teacher candidate arrange and participate in pre-observation feedback/conference?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Using the Observation Instrument

This assessment has 16 statements grouped by their alignment to InTASC standards 1-8. You will be asked to rate each item using a scoring system of 0-4. Ratings are NOT equivalent to grades. They are used by supervisors for student progress indicators and by the Office of Academic Programs for potential program improvements. You will have the option to provide comments for your rating choices, particularly where an unsatisfactory rating is given.

Rating Scale

Ratings are not equivalent to grades. They are used by supervisors for student progress indicators and by the Office of Academic Programs for potential program improvements. Each rating is described below:

4 – Exemplary: Exemplary performance consistently exceeds expectations of a candidate in training. Practice is highly effective, student-centered, and may serve as a model for peers. Impact on student learning and engagement is clear and substantial.
3 – Proficient: Proficient performance consistently meets expectations of a candidate in training. Practice is intentional and effective. The candidate's instruction results in appropriate student engagement and learning.
2 – Developing: Developing performance partially meets expectations but is inconsistent or lacks sufficient depth, clarity, or effectiveness. Improvement is needed to ensure impact on student learning.
1 – Unacceptable: Unacceptable performance does not meet expectations. Practice is ineffective, inappropriate, or misaligned with professional standards and negatively impacts student learning.
0- Not Observed.

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2 Developing	Developing performance partially meets expectations but is inconsistent or lacks sufficient depth, clarity, or effectiveness. Improvement is needed to ensure impact on student learning.
1 Unacceptable	Unacceptable performance does not meet expectations. Practice is ineffective, inappropriate, or misaligned with professional standards and negatively impacts student learning.

0 Not Observed	Use when the practice is not observed during the lesson.

InTASC 1 | Learner Development

The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

ITEM 1

The teacher candidate creates opportunities for student engagement in developmentally appropriate ways that require explanation, sustained problem solving, and/or reflection.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for Item 1:

ITEM 2

The teacher candidate facilitates instruction that reflects students' needs in the development of motor skills, language skills, and/or socio-emotional skills.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 2:

ITEM 3

The teacher candidate adjusts instruction, grouping, and/or support based on the needs of individual students.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 3:

InTASC 2 | Learning Differences

The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

ITEM 4

The teacher candidate maintains high expectations while providing appropriate supports to ensure all learners can meet rigorous standards.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 4:

ITEM 5

The teacher candidate invites and affirms students' individual perspectives and experiences by using examples, discussion prompts, and/or materials.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 5:

InTASC 3 | Learning Environments

The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

ITEM 6

The teacher candidate establishes expectations for respectful discourse and interactions.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 6:

ITEM 7

The teacher candidate creates a supportive learning environment that promotes active engagement in individual and collaborative learning tasks.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 7:

InTASC 4 | Content Knowledge

The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

ITEM 8

The teacher candidate delivers accurate explanations of content using appropriate grade level academic vocabulary, procedures, and skills.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 8:

ITEM 9

The teacher candidate engages students in authentic ways of thinking, working, and problem solving that are appropriate to the content area.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 9:

InTASC 5 | Application of Content

The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

ITEM 10

The teacher candidate emphasizes key disciplinary ideas to activate students' prior knowledge by connecting new learning to what students already know or have experienced.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 10:

ITEM 11

The teacher candidate presents real-world problems that require students to connect concepts through collaborative problem solving.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 11:

InTASC 6 | Assessment

The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.

ITEM 12

The teacher candidate uses formative assessment or summative assessment during the lesson to check for understanding as evidence of student learning.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 12:

ITEM 13

The teacher candidate monitors learners' progress and provides actionable feedback that helps students understand next steps and/or how to improve.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 13:

InTASC 8 | Instructional Strategies

The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

ITEM 14

The teacher candidate uses a variety of instructional strategies that actively engage students in communicating their thinking and learning.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 14:

ITEM 15

The teacher candidate uses questioning and learning tasks that require students to explain their reasoning, analyze ideas, or justify their thinking.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 15:

ITEM 16

The teacher candidate selects instructional strategies that emphasize depth of content, making connections, and/or meaningful application.

4 Exemplary | 3 Proficient | 2 Developing | 1 Unacceptable | 0 Not Observed

Optional feedback for item 16:

Post-Observation Process

Ideally a post-observation discussion will occur with the candidate, supervisor, and the P-12 classroom teacher as well. Candidate, P-12 teacher, and university supervisor reflections should all be heard during the discussion, preferably in that order.

After the discussion, the candidate should write a reflection and submit it to the university supervisor by email (or other specified means, such as Canvas) within three days of the observation.

Instrument Notes

*In 2026, items related to InTASC 7 Planning for Instruction were removed due to the lesson plan being separately evaluated using its own rubric.

**In 2024, InTASC standards 9 and 10 were removed from the observation instrument due to challenges assessing these two standards during a live observation.