
UVM Distance Student Teaching Request

ITEM: Shall the VSBPE approve the request from UVM to allow for distance/out-of-state student teaching placements until June of 2025, at which time UVM will report back to the Board?

AGENCY RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the VSBPE approve the request from UVM to allow for distance/out-of-state student teaching placements until June of 2025, at which time UVM will report back to the Board.

BACKGROUND: The VSBPE approved UVM's prior request to place student teachers out of state in May of 2021. That request was valid until 2023, when UVM was due to report to the Board on how those experiences went. Since that time, UVM has not had any candidates that wanted to be placed out of state, but they do now, and are requesting an extension of the original request for two academic years.

RATIONALE: Thorough documentation has been submitted attesting to how UVM will remain in compliance with VSBPE Rules, and as the Board has previously granted UVM's request, it seems logical to allow them another opportunity to try this experiment, especially as the technology now exists to conduct observations remotely and meet with candidates over Zoom or Teams.

Distance or Out-of-State Student Teaching Placements Context

In May 2021, the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators gave temporary approval to the University of Vermont to allow candidates to complete their student teaching in distance or out-of-state placements, as the need arose. As a part of the initial approval, UVM agreed to report back on the impact of the pilot before placing students in remote settings in the fall of 2023.

Due to a variety of reasons, no UVM candidates opted to take advantage of this flexibility over the two years that the policy has been in place. Nonetheless, UVM is seeking to maintain this flexibility moving forward. Additionally, we now have students who are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity. Below, we have outlined the written policy required under VSBPE Policy N10 (Policy on Student Teacher Placement with a Non-Vermont Licensed Cooperating Teacher).

University of Vermont Department of Education Policy on Distance or Out-of-State Student Teaching Placements

Policy Overview

Student teaching internship placements for initial licensure at distances greater than is practical for in-person supervision (including out-of-state locations) are permissible under certain conditions. Students seeking distance or out-of-state placement will apply; those applications will be reviewed to ensure alignment with the guidelines that follow.

Reason for the Policy

This policy aims to partially readdress national educator shortages with particular attention to those that disproportionately impact specific regions (e.g., rural) by allowing maximum flexibility for student internship placements. Evidence indicates that interns often pursue teaching positions in the schools and/or districts where they complete their student teaching. Additionally, the policy aims to limit interns' financial burden by reducing their living expenses by allowing them to live with family or access other living arrangements while they complete their internships.

The field experiences for all licensure programs in the UVM Department of Education (DOE) require alignment with Vermont Agency of Education requirements to recommend education preparation candidates for licensure. There are specific requirements for length of time, university supervisor qualifications, mentor teacher qualification selection, and training to maintain our national accreditation and good standing with state education agencies.

Procedures

1. Candidates interested in a distance or out-of-state internship shall indicate their interest in the academic year prior to their internship through the student teaching application.
2. Mentor teachers will be identified through the collaboration of the school districts and the Director of Community Collaboration in the geographic area where the student requests a placement. The candidate may suggest a site, but final approval rests with the Director of Community Collaboration in consultation with the program in which the candidate is seeking endorsement.
3. Requirements for selection of a mentor teacher will be consistent with current UVM DOE policy:
 - a. The mentor teacher must have three or more years of full-time teaching experience.
 - b. The mentor teacher must have an active comparable endorsement in the intern's area of concentration.
 - c. The mentor teacher must display exemplary professional dispositions.
 - d. The mentor teacher must display strong mentoring skills, including:
 - i. Willingness to provide consistent, constructive feedback to the candidate
 - ii. Availability to attend all evaluative meetings and complete evaluations required by the program
 - e. The mentor teacher must be recommended by the supervising administrator.
 - f. Additionally, the mentor teacher must meet requirements for mentoring in state of placement as outlined by SARA (State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements).
4. The Director of Community Coordination will work with the candidate and site administration to determine if the placement is appropriate for the candidate.
 - a. The candidate and mentor teacher will meet remotely to determine if there is compatibility.
 - b. Upon determination of compatibility, UVM and the cooperating school district will agree to and sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as outlined in UVM DOE policy.

- c. A UVM faculty member will serve as the supervisor.
 - i. The candidate will be observed every 10 days to remain in compliance with Rule 5924.4.
 - ii. Candidates may be observed by the UVM supervisor using remote platforms such as Swivl or Teams or through videos submitted to the UVM supervisor.
 - iii. Current UVM assessments of candidate and performance, program improvement, and accreditation will be completed consistent with current practice.

Assessment

To ensure continued quality of placements, UVM DOE will include the following in assessing distance and out-of-state internship placement practice:

1. Students, mentor teachers, and supervisors will complete an additional survey at the conclusion of the placement to guide improvements to distance and out-of-state placements.
2. All students who take advantage of the distance or out-of-state flexibility will be noted on the UVM ROPA annual report.
3. UVM will report back to the VSBPE in June 2025 on student participation in distance and out-of-state placements, learning from those placements, and alterations to program design based on that learning.

The Director of Educator Licensure and the Director of Community Collaboration bear responsibility for the operations of the policy.