Student Teaching

Handbook

Inquiry × Curriculum × Social Justice
Office of Teacher Education & School-Based Support Services
2006-2007
The Office of Teacher Education & School-Based Support Services aims to provide information, support and resources to faculty and students engaged in Professional Education Programs that lead to initial and professional certification.

Our purpose is also to work in partnership with faculty colleagues to address program, practice, research and policy issues relevant to the preparation of teachers and other educational specialists.

Our office also supports the work of externally funded programs, such as Peace Corps Fellows and Teacher Opportunity Corps, which focus us particularly on recruiting teachers for high needs schools. We strive to work closely with community school districts in an attempt to cultivate and sustain active ongoing initiatives, such as the Professional Development Schools Partnership, that help to enhance effective collaboration between Teachers College and the New York City public school system.

We invite you to visit us on the 4th floor of the library, Russell 400, call us at 212.678.3502, or email us at OTE@tc.columbia.edu if you need help with certification regulations and applications, student teaching and supervision materials and procedures, or other questions related to Professional Education at Teachers College. For specific program information, please contact the appropriate person indicated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speak first to:</th>
<th>For questions about:</th>
<th>At:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Teaching Coordinator</strong></td>
<td><strong>Student Teaching Placements In...</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug Greer</td>
<td>Applied Behavior Analysis</td>
<td>212.678.3282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee Darvin</td>
<td>Art and Art Education</td>
<td>212.678.3363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Hunt</td>
<td>Bilingual/Bicultural Education</td>
<td>212.678.6633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peg Cummins</td>
<td>Blindness and Visual Impairment</td>
<td>212.678.3878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Kretschmer</td>
<td>Deaf and Hard of Hearing</td>
<td>212.678.3803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicky Stavropoulos</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>212.678.3860</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicky Stavropoulos</td>
<td>Early Childhood Special Education</td>
<td>212.678.3860</td>
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<td>Childhood Education (1-6)</td>
<td>212.678.3856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Browne</td>
<td>English Education</td>
<td>212.678.3470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Wright</td>
<td>Giftedness</td>
<td>212.678.3849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia Broderick/Lynne Bejolán</td>
<td>Learning Disabilities</td>
<td>212.678.4124/8171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Karp</td>
<td>Mathematics Education</td>
<td>212.678.3842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ellen Rooney</td>
<td>Mental Retardation/Autism</td>
<td>212.678.3854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Renick</td>
<td>Music and Music Education</td>
<td>212.678.3981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristin Scrabis</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>212.678.3290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Riccio</td>
<td>Science Education</td>
<td>212.678.6603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Marino</td>
<td>Social Studies Education</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo Ann Nicholas</td>
<td>Speech-Language Pathology</td>
<td>212.678.3410</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russell Rosen</td>
<td>Teaching of ASL as a Foreign Language</td>
<td>212.678.3880</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Office of Teacher Education &amp;</strong></td>
<td><strong>Office of Teacher Education &amp; School-Based Support Services</strong></td>
<td>Certification and Reciprocity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School-Based Support Services</strong></td>
<td><strong>(OTE/SSS)</strong></td>
<td>New York State Examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supervision/Student Teaching Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers College Registrar</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teachers College Registrar</strong></td>
<td>Graduate Degree Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Aid</strong></td>
<td><strong>Financial Aid</strong></td>
<td>Student Loans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career Services</strong></td>
<td><strong>Career Services</strong></td>
<td>Teaching Positions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The Office of Teacher Education and School-Based Support Services has designed this handbook as a general resource for all those engaged in the student teaching experience - student teachers, cooperating teachers, university supervisors and faculty. As such, this handbook contains basic information and guidelines relevant to the overall student teaching experience at Teachers College, but is not intended to be program-specific. Please be sure to refer also to the materials and handbook developed by individual programs to help you with program-specific information related to student teaching and other important program or degree requirements.

This handbook begins by outlining the philosophical stances that underlie teacher education programs at Teachers College: an emphasis on inquiry and teachers as seekers of knowledge and life-long learners; attention to curriculum and the myriad instructional decisions that go into meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners; and an abiding commitment to social justice to ensure that all children and their communities are fully supported to reach their highest potential.

This philosophical framework informs the experiences and course work that student teachers will undergo throughout their studies at Teachers College, and helps to ensure intellectual and conceptual coherence within and across Professional Education Programs. Articulating this framework allows us to share our commitments and vision with both cooperating teachers and supervisors so they can fully appreciate our goals for teacher preparation at this institution, and can use these commitments as a springboard from which to engage student teachers in the vibrant dialogue of teaching and learning.

The handbook then moves to suggestions and guidelines designed to help student teachers, cooperating teachers and supervisors and support their work together. We also provide specific information about student teaching requirements, applying for certification in New York State and elsewhere in the U.S., describe necessary forms and deadlines, and include helpful web-sites, phone numbers and addresses.

The handbook closes with answers to frequently asked questions and offers some additional resources relevant to all new teachers in the appendices.

We hope that all of you will find this handbook an informative guide as you progress through the student teaching/mentoring experience together. Our best wishes for a productive and exciting semester.

Office of Teacher Education & School-Based Support Services
# Table of Contents

### Preface

1. A Conceptual Framework for Professional Education at Teachers College
2. The Student Teaching Experience
3. Essential Information About the Student Teaching Experience
4. Notes to the Cooperating Teacher
5. Notes to the University Supervisor
8. General Advice for Student Teachers
10. General Expectations for Student Teaching
11. Preparing for Student Teaching
12. Preparing for New York State Certification
15. Certification in other States (Reciprocity)
16. NYS Teacher Certification for International Students
18. New York City Licensure
19. Obtaining a Substitute Teaching License
20. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
21. Appendix A: Fingerprinting Information
A Conceptual Framework for Professional Education at Teachers College

Consistent with the College’s long tradition of serving the needs of urban and suburban schools in the United States and around the world, the vision and purpose of professional education at Teachers College is to establish and maintain programs of study, service, and research that prepare competent, caring, and qualified professional educators (teachers, counselors, psychologists, administrators, and others). This vision is based on three shared philosophical stances that underlie and infuse the work we do:

Inquiry stance: We are an inquiry-based and practice-oriented community. We and our students & graduates challenge assumptions and complacency and embrace a stance of inquiry toward the interrelated roles of learner, teacher, and leader in P-12 schools.

Curricular stance: Negotiating among multiple perspectives on culture, content, and context, our graduates strive to meet the needs of diverse learners, both students and other adults, in their school communities.

Social justice stance: Our graduates choose to collaborate across differences in and beyond their school communities. They demonstrate a commitment to social justice and to serving the world while imagining its possibilities.

The three philosophical stances provide the context for developing and assessing candidates’ proficiencies based on professional, state, and institutional standards. There are five TC standards:

Standard 1: Inquirers and Reflective Practitioners: Our candidates are inquirers/ researchers who have breadth of knowledge and a variety of tools to ask questions about educational environments. They reflect on and continually evaluate the effects of their choices on others (children, families, and other professionals in the learning community).

Standard 2: Lifelong Learners: Our candidates are continually engaged in learning and research. They take responsibility for their professional growth and seek/create learning opportunities for themselves and others.

Standard 3: Learner-Centered Educators/Professionals: Our candidates understand their subject matter/disciplines, learners and learning, and curriculum and teaching. They create learning experiences that foster development and achievement in all students.

Standard 4: Effective Collaborators: Our candidates actively participate in the community or communities of whom they are a part to support students’ learning and well-being.

Standard 5: Advocates of Social Justice and Diversity: Our candidates are familiar with legal, ethical, and policy issues. They provide leadership in advocating for children, families, and themselves in a variety of professional, political, and policy-making contexts.
The Student Teaching Experience

Informed by a strong focus on social justice, curriculum and inquiry, our mission is to prepare teachers who understand the political nature of schooling, are able to recognize and interrupt deficit views of children, and have the skills, knowledge and dispositions to advocate for all students so that each has access to the quality education and care she/he deserves.

However, learning to teach is much more than technical, i.e., a process of acquiring strategies and techniques. Instead, teaching to meet the complex needs presented by a diverse student population demands the ability to ask critical questions, to “invent” practice by learning from children and listening to them, and to operate from a stance characterized by capacity and possibility, not limitations and low expectations.

The student teaching experience provides pre-service teachers the space and opportunity to learn how to ask important questions about teaching and learning, come to know children and adolescents by observing and interacting with them consistently over time, apply newly acquired knowledge, theories, strategies and models in a variety of contexts within and across classrooms, and experiment with, design and adapt practice according to learners' needs.

As such, student teaching takes place in a wide variety of classroom settings located in an equally wide variety of schools including comprehensive public schools, alternative schools, schools within a school, theme or specialty schools, independent schools, urban and suburban schools and schools that are both large and small. Each student can expect to complete a minimum of two student teaching placements, each in a different grade level according to the requirements of the specific teaching certificate for which she or he is preparing. For example, if a student is working toward initial certification in childhood education—grades 1-6, one student teaching experience must be in grades 1-3, the other in grades 4-6. Students can also expect to be learning to teach in the discipline or subject area (English, mathematics, music, biology, etc.) for which they are seeking certification.

During the student teaching experience, pre-service teachers are guided and instructed by two key individuals—the cooperating or mentor teacher, and the university supervisor. While both work collaboratively to support the growth and development of the student teacher, each assumes a very specific role.

Cooperating teachers serve as mentors, models and instructors to student teachers. By welcoming a novice into their classroom, they demonstrate their willingness to guide student teachers in planning and implementing curriculum, afford them many opportunities to develop their personal teaching style and full potential, encourage questions as well as open discussion and dialogue, monitor and assess the many aspects of each student teacher's growth, and challenge, re-direct, question and explain according to the needs of the pre-service student.

University supervisors are resources for the student teacher as well as the cooperating teacher, and serve as liaisons between the university and the field. Supervisors act as critical friends by observing student teachers' work in classrooms with children/adolescents several times each semester, and providing feedback and suggestions to student teachers to help them improve, analyze or re-think their practice. In addition to providing oral and written feedback on lesson plans and their application, supervisors offer experienced and objective perspectives on overall classroom effectiveness, including classroom management, student response and the student teacher's presence and instruction in the classroom. In addition, supervisors work in concert with student teachers to identify specific areas of challenge or interest. In this way, student teachers are able to participate in their own learning and make decisions about particular goals they wish to address.
Essential Information
About the Student Teaching Experience

Student teaching comprises two related but separate processes. First, each student teacher must complete **at least 100 clock hours of field observations** in schools and classrooms prior to or in addition to student teaching. All 100 hours need not be completed in one term or one course; many of the programs at Teachers College require students to fulfill this requirement in two 50-hour blocks.

Second, New York State certification regulations specify that each student teacher must complete **at least two college-supervised student-teaching experiences** of at least 20 school days each; or at least two college-supervised practica with individual students or groups of students of at least 20 school days each. However, it is important to bear in mind that the 20-day requirement is merely a minimum; the amount of time each student teacher spends in each placement typically exceeds this minimum according to the requirements outlined by the program in which she or he is enrolled. As stated earlier, these placements should be in the appropriate subject area and grade level(s). For example, if students are completing a NYS approved certification program covering **ALL GRADES**, they should have at least one placement in grades K-6, and one in grades 7-12 in the appropriate subject area.

Each student teacher is assigned a university supervisor. This is typically an experienced teacher who is selected by the university to provide support, guidance and feedback to the student teacher over the course of the student teaching term. Supervisors visit and observe student teachers in their classrooms several times during the placement period. While the number of observations required may vary from program to program, the Teacher Education Policy Committee at Teachers College and the Office of Teacher Education and School-Based Support Services strongly and unanimously recommend **at least three observations per student teaching experience**. Supervisors will want to observe student teachers working with children/students in a variety of grouping configurations, subject areas and at different times of the day and week. Supervisors also meet with student teachers prior to each observation so lesson plans and instructional decisions can be reviewed and discussed, and they document and discuss their observations with the student teacher after each classroom visit as part of the feedback and assessment process. As liaisons between TC and the field, supervisors are key to student teachers’ ability to integrate and apply all they are learning with/to their practice.

The student teaching experience is the only time in a teacher’s career when she or he works alongside a veteran teacher, receives constant guidance and feedback, and has the luxury to make mistakes/fail/falter/experiment/take risks without irreparable consequences for children/learners given the close support of a mentor. Thus, **paid teaching cannot be substituted in lieu of student teaching**, whether the student is working under an internship certificate or has secured employment on his/her own. Such substitutions will, unfortunately, create problems for students when they apply for certification through TC, because they will be assessed by NYS as not having completed all institutional state approved requirements.

**Internship certificates** are an option to students who are interested in paid teaching prior to program completion, have a commitment of employment from a specific school, and have fulfilled certain requirements. In order to apply and be recommended for an internship certificate, including a bilingual extension internship certificate, students must have …

---completed at least 50% of their course work, **including student teaching**,
---submitted an advisor’s written recommendation to the Office of Teacher Education & School-Based Support Services (Attn: Faride Suarez)
Notes to the Cooperating Teacher

First, thank you for working with a student teacher from Teachers College. Your willingness to open your classroom to our institution and our students attests to your commitment to the teaching profession and underscores the seriousness with which you assume your role as a mentor and teacher educator. The learning-to-teach process is complex and demanding; deep learning on the part of student teachers depends on the rich opportunities you can provide them within your classroom to experiment, practice, apply, create, revise and question. Below are some suggestions, guidelines and basic information that we trust will support the important work you do with our students.

Welcoming the student teacher to your classroom and school
All of us who are teachers remember our own student teaching experiences and the many worries we had about our own authority, ability, and place in the classroom. To make a successful transition into the field placement, student teachers need support adjusting to the routines and norms of the classroom and school, developing relationships with students and colleagues, and establishing themselves as “real” teachers. Below are some ways you can help your student teacher enter and blend seamlessly into your classroom:

- Talk to your students ahead of time about the second teacher who will be joining the class. Establish expectations for their behavior and interactions with this new teacher and answer questions they might have.
- Encourage your student teacher to learn the names and important background information of the students as quickly as possible. Perhaps the student teacher could also have a discussion with the class and share a little about her or himself.
- Be prepared to spend some time talking with your student teacher. Share your philosophy, talk about your teaching and working style, explain particular norms and conventions of practice that undergird your classroom but may be implicit and embedded, think aloud about the goals you have for your students that year. Encourage your student teacher to share in return... goals, fears, talents, previous experience, etc. Get to know one another.
- Introduce your student teacher to other faculty and personnel in the school.
- Provide a work area for your student teacher and a space for personal belongings.
- Acquaint your student teacher with curriculum materials, instructional supplies, teaching aids, and other available equipment or technology.
- Articulate the rules, regulations and practices of the school; share the school’s mission, as well as the services and programs that are provided.
- Add the student teacher’s name to the classroom door.
- Don’t forget to underscore confidentiality issues.

Gathering information and establishing channels of communication
- Exchange phone numbers and email addresses; discuss when and how you will communicate with one another outside school hours.
- Review program documents and student teaching guidelines together.
- Schedule at least one time a week when you both can meet to plan together and talk about what has been—and will be—going on in the classroom.
- Meet with your student teacher’s college supervisor as early in the term as possible and plan ahead for three-way conferences when you, the supervisor and the student teacher can discuss goals, needs and progress.
Planning for your student teacher’s growth and development over time

Learning to teach is not only complex, but should be deliberate and gradual. Think about how you will scaffold your student teacher’s learning and development over time so that she or he can gradually assume more and more responsibility and gain independence as a teacher. At the beginning of the experience, observation is particularly important so that student teachers learn to see classrooms and learners with new and ever more-informed eyes. Guide your student teacher to assume responsibilities in measured increments—beginning first perhaps by working one-to-one with students, then with small groups, on to larger groups or the whole class, moving on to the design and implementation of instructional sequences and unit plans and culminating in full or major responsibility for day-to-day teaching and long term/overall planning.

As you structure learning opportunities for your student teacher, consider your own role and how you will guide and assess her/his progress. Observe your student teacher regularly and offer feedback and suggestions designed to help him/her improve, reconsider, more deeply understand or revise practice. Share your own pedagogical decision-making with your student teacher so she/he can benefit from your “thinking” aloud. Finally, remain open to your student teacher’s ideas and create spaces for your student teacher to experiment with possibilities.

Inducting your student teacher into the teaching profession

There are many aspects of becoming a teacher that extend beyond direct interaction with and instruction of students. Think about knowledge, skills and experiences your student teacher will need to participate fully and productively in the school and the profession. For example, you may consider sharing assessment and record keeping techniques, involving your student teacher in grade/department/school meetings, or, when appropriate, including your student teacher in conferences with parents. You may also want to encourage your student teacher to attend after-school activities or events, or to become familiar with district policies, learning standards and specific guidelines surrounding the care and safety of students.

Assessing teaching readiness and fit

Any concerns you have about your student teacher’s teaching abilities and practice should always be shared with candor and care with your student teacher and the college supervisor. Often, timely intervention, specific feedback and additional support will help strengthen student teachers’ practice. In those cases where intervention and support cannot compensate for a poor match between the student and teaching, then the student teacher can be counseled (by faculty and the college supervisor, but with your insight and help) to consider options other than teaching that may be more suited to her/his skills and temperament. While these decisions are always difficult, they are our professional responsibility.

Teacher quality is one of the most critical issues currently being discussed both within and outside the profession. Ensuring teacher quality is the most significant responsibility you assume as a cooperating teacher. In order to confidently recommend a student teacher for certification, we depend on your intimate knowledge of your student teacher and your assessment of their practice. Preparing for this important decision requires careful observation, descriptive detail and documentation. Balancing support with evaluation is always challenging. Yet, learning to teach well requires that both are in place. Ultimately, you want to be sure that your assessment is fair but rigorous and that all student teachers are held to the highest standards of teaching quality.
Notes to the University Supervisor

First, thank you for working with a student teacher from Teachers College. Your willingness to work with us to support the learning, growth and development of pre-service students underscores your commitment to quality teaching and a qualified teacher for every child/adolescent. We know that supervision is a difficult responsibility to take on, given the need to delicately balance support and guidance with critique and evaluation. Supervisors are critical to student teacher success because they guide pre-service teachers to think not only about the “what” or “doing” of teaching, but also the “why” or thinking of teaching. As a supervisor you are responsible for moving new teachers from a focus on themselves to a focus on student learning. Teachers College depends on you—your careful observation, astute judgment, fair and candid feedback and informed assessment—to be able to confidently recommend our graduates for teacher certification. Below are some suggestions, guidelines and basic procedural information that we trust will support the important work you do with our students.

Elements of an observation

While Teachers College does not necessarily subscribe to a particular model of supervision, nor do we tightly regulate the supervision process, we do feel that an observation should constitute:

- A pre-observation conference to discuss the student teacher’s lesson plan and any other details pertaining to the lesson. This discussion could take place at the school site or over the phone one or two days beforehand. We suggest reviewing the student teacher’s lesson plan prior to your discussion so you can offer feedback and suggestions from an informed perspective.
- The observation of an actual lesson or teaching episode/interaction where the student teacher is actively engaged with learners. Your observation should last the entire period so you are able to gather assessment data from lesson initiation to closure.
- A post-observation discussion should follow the lesson. This meeting gives you and your student teacher the opportunity to review, reflect upon, and assess the lesson together. Through the use of careful questioning, you can help student teachers think about what they did and why, the decisions and pedagogical choices they made, and the consequences of their instruction on students’ understanding. Again, this discussion could take place at the school site (if convenient), at Teachers College, or over the phone.

The number of observations required by each program may vary, so be sure to check with the program with which you are working. However, the Teacher Education Policy Committee at Teachers College and the Office of Teacher Education and School-Based Support Services strongly and unanimously recommend a minimum of three observations per student teaching experience.

Protocols and scheduling

Like our student teachers, supervisors are also guests in cooperating teachers’ classrooms and in schools and representatives of TC. Thus it is important for you to acquaint yourself with school protocols governing entry into the school, dress and professional demeanor and cooperating teachers’ expectations. It helps to get a sense of the rhythms and schedule of the classroom in which your student teacher is placed, and to meet with the cooperating teacher to explain your supervisory role and discuss how and when observations will occur.

Maintaining high quality supervision

Below are some guidelines for ensuring that the supervision you provide your student teachers is beneficial to their learning:

1. Observe the student teacher on a regular basis and in a variety of situations/subjects.
2. Provide specific and descriptive feedback on the student teacher's execution of professional responsibilities (lesson planning, implementation and assessment, classroom interaction, maintenance of records).
3. Help the student teacher relate teaching theory to classroom practice (e.g., discuss reasons for selecting materials and methods).
4. Encourage good planning and organization.
5. Encourage independent, creative thinking in planning, use of materials, motivation, and teaching and assessment approaches.
6. Help the student teacher develop consistent classroom management practices conducive to learning, which promote respect for others and for cultural and linguistic diversity.
7. Encourage the habit of constant self-assessment, including post-lesson analyses, and the use of self-assessments for subsequent improvement.
8. Maintain a professional working relationship with the student teacher and cooperating teacher.
9. Encourage and support good rapport between the student teacher and her/his students.

Establishing channels of communication

Open communication between supervisors and cooperating teachers enhances and supports their work as colleagues and partners. Get to know the cooperating teacher. Exchange phone numbers to facilitate opportunities to touch base and discuss progress between observations. Encourage cooperating teachers to observe alongside you and to participate in subsequent post-observation conferences with student teachers. Share your insights and solicit theirs. While the observations you conduct are critical to student teacher development, they still represent snap-shots of practice. Developing a professional relationship with the cooperating teacher allows you to fill in the rest of the picture and triangulate observation data.

Assessing teaching readiness and fit

An important aspect of your supervision work involves assessing student teachers’ readiness for teaching and for certification. Learning to teach is never easy and most student teachers experience road bumps, a crisis of confidence and moments of questionable practice. Your candid assessment grounded in careful observation and descriptive, detailed documentation aids programs in designing additional (and appropriate) support structures and interventions if needed, and to make program adjustments when necessary. Like you, we know full well that all student teachers do not learn in the same way or at the same pace. Your work with student teachers helps us respond best to their needs. We also want our students to reach their potential as teachers, but we also want to be sure that candidates unsuited for the teaching profession are supported to consider other career paths. Thus, you will want to ensure that your assessment is fair but rigorous and that all student teachers are held to the highest standards of teaching quality.

Travel and visit reimbursement guidelines

1. Teachers College can only reimburse supervisors for travel from Teachers College to the school in which the student teacher is placed (e.g., a supervisor who lives in Rockland and travels to PS 87 on 78th Street will be paid for a round trip subway ride).
2. If public transportation is not used, please use the mileage guideline (i.e., $0.445 per mile).
3. Each visit to a student teacher’s classroom should cost no more than $10 round trip. Thus, 5 visits for a student will lead to a reimbursement amount of no more than $50 per student.
4. OTE/SSS is unable to reimburse travel expenses beyond $50 per student given our budgetary limitations. If expenses beyond the $50 limit are anticipated, please contact the program coordinator of the appropriate department before incurring the expense.
5. Supervisors are paid $100 per visit per student for a maximum of $500 or 5 visits per student per semester. Payment is processed at the end of each term after supervisors have submitted documentation indicating the number of visits according to the number of students supervised.

Supervision packets can be picked up and returned to OTE/SSS in Russell Hall, Room 400 or obtained at: www.tc.edu/ote; click on “Student Teaching”; click on “Supervision Appointment Form”
In order to achieve a seamless transition into each new classroom setting and ensure a successful and productive experience, it is necessary that each student teacher—you—pay attention to the following:

**Gaining familiarity with the classroom and school**
Each classroom is a unique context that brings together many different personalities, backgrounds, strengths, needs and norms. Gaining entry into this unique setting is facilitated when you:

- Observe in your cooperating teacher's classroom (and in the classrooms of other teachers, wherever appropriate) and confer daily with your cooperating teacher.
- Become acquainted with the institution, its resources and students.
- Study the scope and sequence of the curriculum.
- Assist with daily routines wherever appropriate and possible.
- Introduce yourself (or ask to be introduced) to colleagues of the cooperating teacher, principal, department chair, etc. (See Appendix B for additional guidelines.)

**Respecting the guest-host relationship**
Student teachers, University supervisors and other personnel from Teachers College are invited into public schools in the Tri-State area as guests of the host schools. Each school maintains individual regulations, procedures, instructional practices, professional philosophies and expectations with regard to student teachers' work within the school. As a student teacher, you should be aware that acceptance of an assignment indicates your: (1) understanding of this guest/host relationship; and (2) agreement to abide by the regulations, procedures, instructional practices and professional and personal expectations of the particular school to which you have been assigned.

**Observing protocols**
Become familiar with and abide by protocols in your school and classroom governing:
- the safety and care of children/adolescents
- emergency procedures
- dress, demeanor and professional behavior
- entering and exiting the building
- communication with homes, families and communities
- field trips and special events
- appropriate responses to students' personal, health or dietary needs.
Maintaining confidentiality
Student teaching places you in a privileged situation in which you are exposed to a variety of confidential information, such as student records, school and classroom problems, and teacher lounge conversation. Public exposure of confidential information is detrimental to the rapport that TC has established with the many schools in which it places student teachers and undermines trust in you as a professional.

Video-taping, audio-recording and photo-documentation
These practices, while valuable learning tools for the student teacher, may present some confidentiality and/or privacy issues in the classroom. If, within the context of TC course requirements/assignments, it is recommended that you engage in these practices, be sure to proactively discuss with your cooperating teacher the protocols for obtaining permission to tape and record classroom activities and children. If these practices are not permitted or permission is not granted, you will need to speak with your program coordinator about alternative strategies.

Attendance
Participation in the student teaching program requires a total commitment to the program, to the cooperating teacher, and most importantly to the students. In the case of necessary absences, it is important to call your cooperating teacher as soon as you know you will be absent, and then contact your supervisor if you feel it is necessary to do so.

On days that you are scheduled to be visited and observed by your supervisor, you should plan to be actively teaching and fully engaged with students. While teachers are responsible for a variety of other tasks, such as giving a test, grading papers or conducting sustained silent reading—all of which you should experience and practice—instruction and direct interaction with students is where you will be most challenged and when you will benefit most from a supervisor’s perspective and feedback. If you are going to be absent for an observation, please inform your supervisor as soon as possible.
General Expectations for Student Teaching

Although different programs have different emphases and specific requirements, the expectations below represent general expectations across Teachers College Teacher Education programs. As the forum for integrating and applying knowledge, skills, and dispositions acquired through your program, student teaching should enable you to:

- Become an astute observer of students
- Develop strong, supportive relationships with students and their families
- Create rich learning environments and opportunities
- Demonstrate your content knowledge and your ability to convey this knowledge
- Develop facility with planning and curriculum decision-making
- Enact curriculum & instruction appropriate for diverse learners in multiple subjects and settings
- Differentiate instruction to meet the needs of individual students and ensure access to learning
- Assess learners using multiple means or methods, & in relation to different instructional purposes
- Use a variety of culturally relevant materials, resources and technologies to support learning and instruction
- Develop a repertoire of classroom management strategies and insights
- Develop strong communication skills
- Collaborate with your cooperating teacher, other teachers, and your students
- Reflect upon and analyze your own teaching
- Demonstrate professionalism and dependability

Satisfactory completion of requirements
You are expected to complete all program and college requirements in a satisfactory and professional manner. Students who do not satisfactorily meet all program and college expectations and standards cannot be recommended for certification. While teaching is not for everyone and candidates may decide during their program or student teaching experience to consider different career options, the overwhelming majority of student teachers at Teachers College successfully complete their programs and achieve certification. We have every confidence in your ability to become a thoughtful, skillful and caring educator, and faculty and supervisors alike will strive to give you the support you need to meet the highest standards.
Meeting health regulations: All student teachers must take a tuberculin test before entering the classroom. NYS law requires that you test negative for tuberculosis before you can begin student teaching, and the only way to verify this is through a TB Tine test. This requirement is essential to ensure your health safety and the safety of the students with whom you will work.

You may go to Columbia University Health Services to be tested, whether or not you have university health insurance, or you may see your own personal physician. Since TB tine test results expire after a year, you will want to be tested shortly before you are to begin student teaching. Documentation of a tuberculosis test must be submitted to your program's student teaching coordinator to student teaching, using the form included in the Student Teaching Packet.

You may pick up a Student Teaching Packet from our office in Russell Hall, 4th Floor, Room 400, which includes:

- Student Teacher Data Sheet
- Medical Form for TB Test (goes to your program coordinator)
- Principal's Consent Form
- Record of Student Teaching Hours
- Student Teaching Grid of Hours

This packet is also available online at www.tc.edu/ote; click on “Student Teaching” and select the appropriate year.

As indicated, these forms are due at different times and should be submitted to our office accordingly. The due dates are indicated on each form. As stated earlier, the medical form is only required once before the start of student teaching each year (and if you fulfill all student teaching requirements during that year). Please note that a new set of all the other forms must be completed for each student teaching placement required for the certification(s) you are seeking.

Conducting field observations: NYS requires that all initial certification programs include a minimum of 100 clock hours of field observations. These observations are designed to help you become acquainted with schools and different school settings and are above and beyond the time you are required to spend student teaching. In some programs, these observations are completed prior to student teaching; in others, alongside but in addition to student teaching, etc. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the requirements in your program and to complete this important activity as soon as appropriate.

Becoming familiar with curriculum and standards: A good way to prepare for student teaching is to acquaint yourself with curriculum materials, literature and other relevant resources, and learning standards related to children or youth and specific subject areas. Gather recommendations for good literature to read ahead of time, review curriculum materials in your grade level/subject area, become familiar with the learning standards outlined by NYCDOE and by professional organizations such as NCTE or NCTM, and come to know some of the standards for teaching such as the INTASC standards, or those outlined by Teachers College. An essential aspect of good teaching is good planning and thinking; these activities will help you develop the habits of mind all good teachers demonstrate, and feel confident and more knowledgeable as you enter the classroom.
Preparing for New York State Certification

The goals you have been working toward are finally within your reach—graduation and teacher certification. Congratulations! Below are some steps you can take to ensure that you have all you need in place for the certification process to go smoothly. In addition, we have included a certification timeline below, as well as more detailed information about various certification types and regulations.

Teachers College teacher education programs are state approved. As such, Teachers College may recommend students for New York State certification upon successful completion of a degree program. Students are responsible for providing the necessary paperwork to OTE/SSS (Russell Hall, 400).

Taking advantage of resources at Teachers College: Our office is ready to help you with certification questions, so be sure to attend our open houses or set up a meeting with our Certification Officer. The Office of Career Services maintains job listings that you will want to review. They also offer workshops to help you develop an informative and appealing resume, acquire additional certification information, and hone your interviewing skills. Career Services also hosts numerous job fairs which give you the opportunity to speak with recruitment personnel from both public and private schools in NY and elsewhere. Remember to talk to faculty who also receive numerous job announcements and know much about schools in the area. Be sure to plan ahead as you consider recommendation letters.

Liberal Arts Requirements
There are certain requirements (usually covered in an undergraduate degree), including foreign language, math, English/language arts, social science and science, that are required both for your Master's at TC and for certification. It is vital that you check with your program advisor to find out more about these requirements, which ones you may need to fulfill, OR how many credits NYS will grant to you for taking certain CLEP (College Level Examination Program) tests. Usually, two semesters of a language or English are required, but you will need to confirm this with your program advisor. To fulfill these requirements, you can take the CLEP test in the appropriate subject area(s) instead of taking classes. More information on these exams, as well as registration information, can be found at http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/exams.html.

Completing all applications: Graduation and certification are related but separate processes, each of which requires a specific application. See the timeline below for detailed information.

Initial Certification Timeline—NY State

At the beginning of your program:
If you are in a program that is registered with NY State Education Department (NYSED) as leading to initial teacher certification, you should be fine in terms of the courses and student teaching required for certification, as long as you follow program guidelines and the advice of your advisor regarding what classes to take, student teaching placements, etc.

As you plan how many classes to take each semester, note that if you wish to graduate and begin teaching at the start of the next school year, it is best to plan to graduate in May of that year. This is because there are processing timeframes of several weeks for degree clearance at the Registrar’s office and the subsequent processing of your certification application at the Office of Teacher Education (OTE). Then, NYSED will need from several weeks to months to complete the certification approval process. Yes, it is possible for Summer A graduates’ applications to be processed in time to begin teaching in September. However, there is a much smaller window of time for turnaround, especially should any complications arise.

To enable you to begin a teaching position while your certification application is still in process at NYSED, our office will issue you an official letter certifying that you have completed a course of study
that leads to certification (but not that you are certified). However, it is vital that you follow this timeline in order to complete all of the requirements for certification in a timely fashion.

**Late in your 2nd to last semester:**
1. Register for the certification tests that you will need to take. Please consult our web site [www.ote@tc.edu](http://www.ote@tc.edu) or call our office if you are uncertain as to which tests to take. We have test registration and study materials as well.
2. Get fingerprinted. (packets available in OTE/SSS)
3. If you have not taken HBSS 4116—Health Education for Teachers, take the online Child Abuse and Violence Prevention courses: [www.violenceworkshop.com](http://www.violenceworkshop.com) ($50) & [www.childabuseworkshop.com](http://www.childabuseworkshop.com) ($39.95). (If taken together, you receive a $15 rebate on the Violence workshop)

**In the beginning of your last semester:**
1. Register with TEACH online services (instructions available in the OTE/SSS or online at [www.tc.edu/ote](http://www.tc.edu/ote) click on “certification and licensing”)
2. Fill out the data sheet for institutional recommendation (available in OTE/SSS or online at [www.tc.edu/ote](http://www.tc.edu/ote) click on “certification and licensing”) and turn in by:
   - March 1st if graduating in May
   - July 1st if graduating in October
   - December 1st if graduating in February
3. Turn in non-TC transcripts, child abuse workshop form, and school violence workshop form to the Office of Teacher Education with your data sheet (no money order; you pay the state directly online using TEACH)
4. File for graduation (green form) with the registrar’s office. Check [www.tc.edu/registrar](http://www.tc.edu/registrar) for exact deadlines.

*Keep a copy of everything you turn in for your own records.*

**In the middle of your last semester:**
1. Take the certification tests if you haven’t by now. OTE has exam preparation books which you can check out for up to three weeks.
2. Order your official transcripts (do not open the sealed envelopes) from all non-TC institutions

**A few weeks before the end of the semester:**
1. Turn in your student teaching record of hours and grid of hours to OTE
   *Keep a copy of everything you turn in for your own records.*

***Turning student teaching forms in late or incomplete will delay your graduation AND your certification***

**What happens after I turn in my certification application?**
Once the Registrar’s office has cleared you for graduation, meaning:
- Your grades are in and recorded by the Registrar’s office
- Your student teaching hours for all of your placements are turned in to the OTE and recorded by the Registrar’s office
- Any special Master’s projects and other degree requirements are turned in and recorded
- Any financial holds have been cleared with the Student Accounts office
- All library books and any other borrowed materials are turned in

Then, the OTE will begin processing your data sheet for institutional recommendation:
- Due to a high volume of applicants, this process can take 3-4 weeks because it entails a review of your application, academic records and verification that you have met NY State requirements for certification in the subject area for which you are applying.
- Once we have processed your data sheet for institutional recommendation, we will send you a letter stating that you have been institutionally recommended for the
specified area of certification pending fingerprint clearance and passing scores on NYSTCE exams.

- You may use that letter for employment purposes. We strongly recommend that you keep a copy of it for your records.
- We will electronically submit our institutional recommendation and will mail your materials to the New York State Education Department on your behalf. It usually takes months for them to send you your actual teaching certificate.

If you have not received the letter verifying institutional verification from OTE by a month after your classes are over and grades are turned in, kindly contact our office to inquire about the status of your certification recommendation.
Certification in other states

NY State has interstate reciprocity agreements with 41 other states. For a list of states, please go to [http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/teachrecother.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/teachrecother.htm)

- Reciprocity means that these states will accept the coursework that you have taken for a certification area in NY State toward the closest area of certification in that state.
- You will still need to get fingerprinted again, take their state certification teacher tests, and fulfill any additional requirements they may have for certification.

Other states require verification of program completion or verification of education:
- either on a form they provide (Connecticut, New Jersey, etc.);
- or on an official letter from us (for ex., California).
- The states that have forms require you to fill out part of it and our office to fill out a part of it.
- Some states require OTE/SSS to send this form to them directly, others require you to send it to them with your other certification application materials. These instructions should be on the form.

Please see the Office of Teacher Education by the middle of your last semester to request completion of these forms or letters, and with any questions about reciprocity.

Please note that we cannot release a completed form or letter to you or to the state in which you are seeking certification until you have been conferred a degree by the Registrar’s Office. Please allow 10 business days processing time AFTER degree clearance for this form or letter to be completed for you.

If you have not received the form or letter from OTE by a month after your classes are over and grades are turned in, kindly contact our office to inquire about the status of your certification recommendation.

For specific information on certification requirements in other states, please visit: [www.tc.edu/ote](http://www.tc.edu/ote). Click on “Certification & Licensing”, then click on “Reciprocity”
NYS Certification for International Students

In New York State, you must have a certificate (either Provisional/Initial or Permanent/Professional) to teach in a public school. Certification means that the state has reviewed your credentials and certified you as eligible to teach. Teachers in Charter schools also require certification. Private or Independent schools, however, do not always require a teaching certificate.

Visa concerns:
Certification makes you eligible to teach, but it does not supersede your visa status. You also need an appropriate work authorization to teach in the schools. One option for F-1 students is Optional Practical Training, which provides an employment authorization for a maximum of 12 months. See “F-1 Employment and Practical Training” information at [www.tc.columbia.edu/~international](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/~international).

For information on work authorization sponsored by the NYC Department of Education, contact Mr. Sam Cheung in the International Recruitment Office. Phone: (718) 935-2803; email: scheung@nycboe.net or Janpeg Avignon, Director of International Recruitment, at (718) 935-2805, javignon@nycboe.net.

There are 2 types of teaching certificates: Provisional/Initial Certification and Permanent/Professional.

US citizenship is not required for New York State teacher certification. US Permanent Residence (“Green Card”) is required for Permanent/Professional Certification but not for Initial Certification.

Requirements for initial certification can be found at [http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert).

Certification through a Teachers College degree program requires:
1) Application for Certification (OTAPP-3, available at OTE/SSS in Russell 400)
2) Completion of a degree program that includes student teaching
3) NY State administered tests (see below)
4) Fingerprint clearance from New York State Department of Education (see below)
5) Detection of Child Abuse Course and School Violence Prevention Course (see below)
6) Application Fee ($50)

Certification through Individual Application (i.e., not through Teachers College):
If you completed your education in another country (or another U.S. institution), you may be eligible for New York State certification. New York State accepts certification from other institutions or agencies. You must meet the following requirements:

For Elementary teacher certification, you need to have an undergraduate liberal arts degree, including 30 credits of pedagogy—6 of which must be in the teaching of reading, plus student teaching.

For Secondary teacher certification, you need to have an undergraduate degree in the field you plan to teach (36 credits in the academic subject), and one year of foreign language study—plus 18 credits of pedagogy, and student teaching.

Certification in special subjects requires 12 credits of pedagogy, 36 credits in the subject, an undergraduate major in that field, plus student teaching.

All applicants applying as individuals must submit:
1) Application for Certification
2) Original credentials of formal schooling (and notarized translations where applicable) including official transcripts, copies of diplomas and certificates, etc.
3) NY State administered tests (see below)
4) Fingerprint clearance from New York State Department of Education
5) Detection of Child Abuse Course and School Violence Prevention Course
6) Application Fee ($100)

New York State Administered Tests:
These are 3 general tests, which all applicants for certification must take:
1) LAST—Liberal Arts and Sciences Test
2) ATS-W—Assessment of Teaching Skills-Written
3) CST—Content Specialty Test (varies)

There are also specific tests, depending on your field:
♦ If you are certifying in TESOL, you must take the English Language Proficiency test.
♦ If you are certifying in bilingual education, you must take the Bilingual Education Assessments (BEAs).
♦ To add a teaching area (that was not part of your program major) you must have sufficient credits in that area and take the appropriate Content Specialty Test.

Test preparation booklets (containing sample tests) and information about registering for the tests are available at OTE/SSS in 400 Russell Hall.

Additional requirements for Certification:
1) **Fingerprinting:** You must obtain fingerprint clearance from the NYS Department of Education. Fingerprinting packets are available at OTE/SSS.

2) **Two additional workshops** (not for credit) for two clock hours each:
   a. **Child Abuse and Maltreatment**
      This course is offered once a year at Teachers College, by the Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation (CEO&I). Cost is $55 and requires advance registration. Registration is available at the CEO&I office in 107 Main Hall, and on their website, http://www.tc.columbia.edu/ceoi under “Courses”. Their phone number is (212) 678-3987. The workshop is also available for academic credit through the Department of Counseling & Clinical Psychology, with additional requirements.

      For a complete list of providers who offer the course, go to http://www.op.nysed.gov/caproviders.htm

   b. **School Violence Prevention & Intervention**
      This workshop is offered twice a semester at TC, by the Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation (CEO&I). Cost is $55 and requires advance registration. Registration is available at the CEO&I office in 107 Main Hall, and on their website, http://www.tc.columbia.edu/ceoi Their phone number is (212) 678-3987. The course can also be taken for credit.

      For a complete list of workshop providers, go to http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/save.htm

**NOTE:** CEO&I offers both workshops at the reduced rate of $100.
New York City Licensure

Students wishing to work in New York City must obtain New York City licensure in addition to New York State Certification. Please note that requirements are always subject to change. Do consult your program advisor or OTE/SSS for details and with specific questions.

New York City Licensure/Appointment
A New York City regular license is a teaching credential issued by the NYC Department of Education to applicants who possess New York State certification and have successfully obtained employment with a New York City public school. Teachers College students who wish to work as school teachers in New York City are required to have a New York City License.

You may apply for the New York City license through your New York City public school after you are recommended for New York State initial certification and have been appointed by the New York City Department of Education.
Obtaining a Substitute Teaching License
(Occasional Per Diem)

Holders of a B.A. degree who have not yet received teaching certification are eligible to apply for a substitute teacher license in New York City. A substitute teacher may teach at any grade level and any subject area for a period of up to 40 days in an academic school year. Individuals who wish to exceed the 40 day limit for substitute teaching or renew the license for the following year must take six credits of professional education courses by the end of the academic school year (i.e., August 31) in which the individual served as a substitute teacher.

Note: Professional education courses are defined as study in instructional planning and assessment, knowledge of the learner, instructional delivery, and the professional environment. Professional education courses are those specifically for individuals preparing for a career in teaching, administration, or pupil personnel services. These courses must be part of a teacher education program at an institution of higher education offering a baccalaureate or higher degree. Semester hour credit for student teaching is not applicable to professional education requirements.

To obtain a NYCDOE Substitute License, take the following steps:

1. Pick up a substitute teaching packet at the Office of Teacher Education/ School-Based Support Services (OTE/SSS) on the 4th floor of the TC Library. Packets are also downloadable at the New York City Department of Education website (type in “Substitute Teacher Application” within the search field).

2. Obtain your official transcripts from all institutions of higher education you have attended (copies are acceptable).

3. Obtain 2 references. Please see the NYCDOE reference form in the Substitute Packet.

4. If you have taken a TB exam or have had a Chest X-ray within the past 6 months, please include proof of results. If not, please have your personal physician or Columbia University Health Services (in John Jay Hall) administer and fill out the Tuberculosis Test Information Form in the packet.

5. Obtain a $50 Postal Money Order (at a local post office or at Hartley Chemists at 120th and Amsterdam Avenue).

6. You must complete the fingerprinting process. If you have already been fingerprinted for New York State, you will not need to be fingerprinted again. Fill out the OSPRA 103 form to transfer your information to the NYCDOE. Download the OSPRA 103 at: http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/msword/ospra103.doc. If you have not been fingerprinted, please be ready to pay a $115 fee (by money order, personal check or MC/Visa Credit Card) payable to the NYCDOE. Bring your completed application, all fees and accompanying documents to Room 102 at 65 Court Street for fingerprinting.

7. Bring completed forms and your money order to the New York City Board of Education at 65 Court Street, Brooklyn 11201, ROOM 405. You may also mail them to the address listed on the packet if you have already completed all the above.
FAQs

Q: What do I need to do before student teaching?
A: First, contact your student teaching department coordinator, and then pick up a student teaching packet from the Office of Teacher Education/ School-Based Support Service on the 4th floor of the TC Library.

Q: Can I student teach even though I have not taken the TB Tine Test?
A: NO. STATE LAW requires all persons to take a tuberculin test before entering the classroom.

Q: Where can I go to take a TB Test?
A: Columbia University Health Services offers a test to both insured and non-insured students OR you may go to your own personal physician.

Q: When should I get fingerprinted?
A: We recommend that you get fingerprinted 4-6 months before you are to receive your certificate and license.

Q: Where can I go to get fingerprinted?
A: You must go to the local police precinct in your neighborhood, even if your residence is out-of-state. Be sure to submit your New York State fingerprint packet to Albany, NY. Packets are available at the Office of Teacher Education in Russell 400. Teachers College will offer free fingerprinting during Security Awareness Week, Spring semester.

Q: When should I take the LAST and ATS-W and CST exams?
A: Exams are NOT given on a monthly basis. We recommend that you complete the LAST as early as possible and the CST if you have an undergraduate degree in your certificate subject area. We recommend that you take the ATS-W once you have teaching or student teaching experience. You must pass all exams at least 4-6 weeks prior to your graduation date. Registration bulletins are available at the OTE/SSS and online. Avoid registering for the exam at the last minute so you do not have to pay the additional $30 late fee or $70 emergency fee on top of the $88 test fee. Please note that the CST in certain subject areas are not offered frequently. To register online or for more information, go to www.nystce.nesinc.com.

Q: Which ATS-W test should I take?
A: As regulations change frequently, please check the NY State Education Department’s website: www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/index.html (click on “Certification” then “Search Certification Requirements”).

Q: Can I take a teacher certification exam even if I am not in New York?
A: NYSTCE exams are given in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, and Washington D.C. areas only. Please check the bulletin for current dates. Out-of-State test sites are only available once a year during the spring.

Q: How can I prepare for the teacher certification exams?
A: LAST, ATS-W and several CST preparation guides are available in our Teacher Resource Center. Guides are also available online.

Q: Do I need to take the ATS-P (video)?
A: If you have Initial Certification and wish to apply for Professional Certification, do not register for the ATS-P video exam. If you have Provisional certification and wish to apply for Permanent Certification, you must register for the ATS-P.

Q: What is the difference between obtaining a certificate versus a license?
A: A certificate will allow you to teach at the state level. Licenses are only required for those who intend to teach in New York City public schools. You may obtain a license once you are New York State certified AND have obtained a position with a New York City public school.

Q: Where can I go for help with the teacher certification process and reciprocity?
A: Feel free to drop by our office on the 4th floor of the TC library and speak to OTE/SSS staff. Or call 212.678.3502.
Appendix A: Fingerprinting Information

The Office of Teacher Education & School-Based Support Services recommends the following in relation to fingerprint clearance:

1. **PICK UP FINGERPRINTING PACKET**

   FROM THE OTE/SSS IN RUSSELL HALL 400 OR

   Contact:

   Office of School Personnel Review and Accountability
   
   NYS Education Department
   
   987 Education Building Annex
   
   ALBANY, NY 12234

   Phone: (518) 473-2998
   Fax: (518) 473-8812
   E-mail: OSPRA@mail.nyced.gov

   Website: http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/appform.htm

2. **Take the packet to your local police precinct. If your area of residence is near Columbia University, go to Police Precinct # 26:**

   Location: 520 West 126th Street
   
   New York, New York 10027
   
   Tel. (212) 678-1311

   It is best to call ahead to make an appointment or to find out what the current drop-in hours are.

   Cost:

   $16.00 for rolling ink fingerprints
   $99.00 for processing of application (send with application)

   Please take the following items:

   Fingerprinting packet
   State Issued ID (ex. Drivers License) or Passport
   $16 Money Order for the cost of fingerprinting