

Student Teaching While Enrolled in the Teacher Assistant Program at The University of Southern Mississippi

Student teaching is the capstone experience of the elementary and special education teacher preparation programs at The University of Southern Mississippi. The Teacher Assistant Program (TAP) allows students to attend undergraduate teacher preparation courses while employed in a local school district. While many TA assignments are unique and require individual placement consideration (determined by the District, Principal, and Director of Educational Field Experiences), many TAs are allowed to remain in their classrooms to complete student teaching. However, it must be stressed that this is a district level decision, and you may not just assume that you will be allowed to remain in your current assistant position and get credit for student teaching. The following guidelines are in place regarding students enrolled in the TAP:

1. A Teacher Assistant enrolled in **Elementary Education** who is employed in a **regular classroom** may be allowed to remain in the current classroom with the approval of the principal, district office, and Educational Field Experiences. However, if the district or the principal require the TA to move from the current position, that is the district's prerogative.
2. A Teacher Assistant enrolled in **Special Education** who is employed in an **inclusion, resource, Learning Strategies, or Study Skills room** may be allowed to remain in the current classroom with the approval of the principal, district office, and Educational Field Experiences. However, if the district or the principal require the TA to move from the current position, that is the district's prerogative.
3. A Teacher Assistant enrolled in **Special Education** who is employed in a **SPED classroom with students who have a SCD (significant cognitive disability) ruling** may not remain in the current classroom. If this is the case, the TA would have to be placed in an approved (see #2 above) SPED classroom.
4. A Teacher Assistant enrolled in **the Dual Education Program** must complete one seven-week student teaching experience in a regular classroom and one seven-week student teaching experience in an approved (see #2 above) SPED classroom. **OR**, a Teacher Assistant

enrolled in **the Dual Education Program** may complete the entire student teaching experience in an inclusion classroom with the approval of the principal, district office, and Educational Field Experiences.

5. A Teacher Assistant enrolled in **Elementary Education** who is employed in any other setting beyond a traditional classroom will have to complete student teaching in a traditional classroom with the approval of the principal, district office, and Educational Field Experiences.
6. A Teacher Assistant enrolled in **Special Education or the Dual Education Program** who is employed in any other setting beyond an approved SPED classroom (see #2 above) will have to complete student teaching in an approved classroom with the approval of the principal, district office, and Educational Field Experiences.
7. Any other situation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and a decision will be determined by the Director of Educational Field Experiences.