

Department of Inclusive Childhood Education

Field Placement Procedures and Guidelines

Implementation Date: Fall, 2008

Field placement experiences in teacher education programs provide many learning opportunities for teacher candidates, including:

- Deepening candidates' ability to integrate theoretical and research-based knowledge and teaching practice
- Providing diverse settings that allow candidates to be exposed to a range of learners, settings, and curricula; to practice and develop pedagogical skills; and, to reflect on their growing knowledge, understandings and skills
- Experiencing a developmental continuum of clinical experiences while under the guidance of professional practitioners: participating in active observation, working one-on-one with students, working with small groups of students, working with whole classes
- Analyzing their own practices and beliefs as they engage in action research, and develop their abilities to become reflective practitioners.

The following guidelines are in place for field placements in the Department of Inclusive Childhood Education in order to support the learning of our teacher candidates in all of the above mentioned areas.

1. Field placements need to be done over the course of an *entire* semester.

Teacher candidates' knowledge grows developmentally over a semester. As candidates' knowledge base expands over a semester, they are able to make deeper and more complex theoretical connections at the end of the semester than they were able to at the beginning. In coursework where candidates are learning about specific pedagogical skills and strategies, the semester-long structure of the field placement is critical to candidates' ability to apply and practice the full range of skills and strategies they are learning.¹

2. Individual classroom visits for field placement should not extend beyond a four hour block of time, without prior approval from course instructor.

¹ For example, if candidates finished all their field placement hours in the first week of the semester they would be at a huge disadvantage – they would not have been exposed to the vast majority of course content and so their ability to make connections between theory and practice, and to apply pedagogical skills and strategies would be extremely limited.

For those field experiences that are designed for the purpose of providing opportunities for focused observation of teaching and learning, and/or application of pedagogical skills and strategies, smaller (two to four hours/visit) and more frequent classroom visits are beneficial to candidates' information processing and reflective analysis.²

3. Over the course of a candidate's program, field placements need to be with a range of learners across the developmental level of the certificate(s), and in a variety of school settings. Teacher candidates in graduate programs should complete no more than 50 hours of fieldwork in any one teacher's classroom without prior program director approval.

Teacher candidates will be certified to teach at all levels, and all learners, within the range of the certificate being sought, therefore, field placements need to represent that range.

4. Teacher candidates in graduate programs *may* complete up to two-thirds of their field placements in job-embedded and/or job-referenced placements. Some undergraduate teacher candidates may also qualify to do this at the discretion of the Program Director.

Job-embedded and job-referenced³ field placement opportunities are designed to support teacher candidates who are already working in schools. In order to ensure that teacher candidates have a diversity of experiences, field placements will be provided in a range of settings and with a range of learners appropriate to the certification program in which the candidate is enrolled.

5. Teacher candidates' performance and professionalism in field placements will be evaluated.⁴

Feedback from program faculty and professionals in the field can inform teacher candidates' understanding of their developing knowledge, understandings and skills and areas for potential growth.

Please also see the following additional supporting documentation:

- Levels of Field Placement document
- Standards of Field Placements
- Department of Inclusive Childhood Education Field Placement Rubric
- Department of Inclusive Childhood Education Professionalism Rubric

² For example, if teacher candidates completed their field placements in "eight hour" blocks their ability to process and reflect on all the information they are observing could be compromised. In addition, if candidates were trying to collect diagnostic information about learners, analyze the data, and design appropriate instruction this would be challenging to complete in fewer larger blocks of time, rather than smaller more frequent blocks.

³ See Nazareth College Guidelines describing appropriate settings and administrative approval process for job-referenced and job-embedded placements.

⁴ If a candidate's performance and/or professionalism in field placements is not at an acceptable level, it may impact a candidate's academic status and/or continued enrollment in teacher education program.