



**YORK COLLEGE**  
OF PENNSYLVANIA

SCHOOL OF BEHAVIORAL  
SCIENCES AND EDUCATION  
EDUCATION

## Field Experience Handbook

*A Field Experience Guide for ALL Education Majors  
Participating in **Stages 1-3** of their Clinical Practice*



## FIELD EXPERIENCE— *Stages*

The Pennsylvania Department of Education designates four stages of field experience. Each stage is progressively more intensive and requires the candidate to gradually assume more responsibility. The experiences should take place in collaborative settings to give candidates a flavor for the values, culture, and working styles of learning environments. Field experiences are defined, as a range of formal, required school and community activities participated in by students who are enrolled in teacher preparation programs. Effective field experiences provide candidates with increasing exposure to schools, under the guidance of program faculty and trained teacher mentors (cooperating teachers) throughout the preparation program.

### Field Experience Stages

The following section describes the four stages of Field experience required for all certificate areas:

#### **Stage 1: Early Field Experience--Observation**

Students are observers in a variety of education and education-related settings appropriate to various grade level assignments. Observations should occur in a range of school and learning settings (e.g., urban, suburban, rural; high and low-performing schools) so that students have a broad experience.

#### **Stage 2: Early Field Experience--Exploration**

This is an experience in which the candidate works under the teacher's supervision during individual tutorials or with a small group of students. Activities can include reading, math, and other subject matter experiences, tutoring children, small group conversations, outdoor play, and monitoring classroom routines and procedures.

#### **Stage 3: Advanced Field Experience--Pre-Student Teaching**

This is the beginning of student teaching in which candidates teach small groups of students, in schools and early learning settings. This field experience is a combination of individual tutorials, small group, and whole class instruction at the selected grade level over the course of the semester. Students work with materials that they have prepared and created for classroom instruction.

#### **Stage 4: Advanced Field Experience--Student Teaching\***

YCP candidates are expected to complete one entire semester of full-time student teaching. Candidates will adhere to the calendar and schedule of the host school.

*\*More information regarding Stage 4, Student Teaching, can be found in the Student Teaching Handbook, on the Field Services website (see "Websites and Helpful Links" at the beginning of this Handbook).*

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## CLEARANCES

Clearances documents are required to be on file in the Department of Education Office (LS-134) prior to semesters where any field experience occurs. STUDENTS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO ATTEND ANY FIELD EXPERIENCE WITHOUT CLEAR and CURRENT CLEARANCES. “Clear” clearances mean that there are no offenses listed. IF any student has an offense/record on their clearances they must immediately contact their advisor and Chair of the Department of Education and will not be able to complete any field experiences until the offense is removed from their record. “Current” clearances mean that the date on the student’s clearance is less than one year from the current date. It is the Teacher Candidates’ responsibility to obtain and maintain clearances and documentation. A delay in obtaining clearances will result in a delay in obtaining a field placement.

The following documents are required clearances:

- Act 34 Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Background Check
- Act 114 FBI Fingerprint Clearance (Federal Criminal History Background Check)
- Act 151 Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Certification (Child Abuse Clearance)

Please note that specific documents may be required for specific placement assignments.

All students must obtain the required clearances immediately upon acceptance and/or enrollment in an education course requiring a field experience component. Since many courses include course-embedded field experience, students who miss required weeks of field experience due to lack of clearances may be negatively impacted. All students must renew clearances each year. It is suggested that June is the best month to do so, as the new clearances will be valid for the entire new school year, and it allows 4-6 weeks for the return of the Pennsylvania Child Abuse clearance. Students must retain the originals in their possession at all times. All clearances are valid for only one calendar year, including the FBI fingerprinting. The clearance forms and instructions can be obtained on our website (see “*Websites and Helpful Links*” at the beginning of this Handbook).

## FIELD EXPERIENCE— *Placement Process*

The Field Services Division places field experience student educators in area school districts, maintains Affiliation Agreements (MOUs) and collaborates with school partners to facilitate mutually beneficial endeavors for candidates, practicing teachers, and/or PreK-12 students.

### Field Experience Online Application

**All candidates must submit an online application to request a field experience each semester.** An email will be sent out after registration with a link to the online application. It can also be found on the YCP Field Experience website (see “Websites and Helpful Links” at the beginning of this Handbook).

This application ensures appropriate placement for the upcoming semester. Additionally, having the information in the application will allow the Department to track field experience placements. **Without applying for field experience, a student may not be placed. (See our website for the application)**

**Fall Application Availability: The week after registration for Fall**  
**Spring Application Availability: The week after registration for Spring**

### Placement Process

The Division of Field Services arranges all placements in conjunction with and at the recommendation of district administrators. Each school district has their approved internal processes which must be followed to request and confirm placements. Therefore, Teacher Candidates **are not permitted** to contact school personnel to arrange their own placement.

- Assignments are influenced by factors including: course and program requirements, student’s certification area, student’s prior field experiences, availability with partnering districts.
- When possible, all candidates are placed within an appropriate proximity radius of YCP campus and/or candidate’s address of residence.
- Students are expected to provide their own transportation.
- Priority is granted to area school districts with which we have partnership agreements in regard to field placements.

### Field Experience Placement Notification

Field experiences generally start within a month of the start of the semester. **Note: No candidate may attend a field experience without having submitted all current background clearances to the placement school and the College.** Information regarding clearances (directions, contacts, etc.) will be shared with students at this time. Prior to the start of the field experience(s), site assignments will be distributed through YCP email. All communications with candidates will be through the YCP email system. Candidates are responsible to check their YCP email regularly to stay alert to important announcements and information.

## FIELD EXPERIENCE – General Information

### Initial Field Experience Contact (by Student)

Upon receiving a field experience placement the YCP Student, also known as the Teacher Candidate, will be expected to:

- Contact the cooperating teacher within **3 days of receiving placement** to: initiate professional contact, introduce themselves, and discuss an initial visit date and time.
- Familiarize themselves with district specific policies and guidelines related to clearances, location and/or trainings needed.
- Maintain consistent, professional communication, responding to co-op emails within 24 hours.

### Field Experience Courses

All YCP education majors are required to schedule the appropriate early or advanced field experience courses as noted on their program planner. Any questions as to required coursework scheduling should be directed to the student's assigned academic advisor. Field experience practicum courses are scheduled in multi-hour "blocks". Students must use these scheduled blocks for field experience activities only- no other events should be scheduled at this time (e.g.- doctor appointments, work, sleeping, etc.). If a student plans to register for a field experience practicum course, they **MUST** also complete a field experience application (see "*Field Experience –Placement Process*" section of this Handbook).

*Each field experience practicum course includes:*

- On campus meetings (with Department of Education faculty)
- Field experience school visits at the assigned placement school(s) (often supervised by Division of Field Services administrators)
- Required activities/competencies to be conducted during the field experience visits
- Required assignments/discussions/etc. to be completed online
- A grade that will be reflected on the student's transcript. Grade criteria is shared by the field experience course professor and on course syllabus (e.g.- contributions during campus meetings, completion of online assignments, completion of all required field assignments, submission of all required field experience paperwork, frequency of placement visits, professionalism in the field, etc.).

### Field Experience Orientation

All students enrolled in a practicum/course that requires a field experience component must attend a mandatory orientation session at the beginning of the semester. Notifications about attending an orientation, as well as additional details, will be sent to candidates through their YCP email.

## FIELD EXPERIENCE— *In the schools*

### Field Experience Visits (by Student)

*After the initial meeting with the Cooperating Teacher the Teacher Candidate will be expected to regularly:*

- Maintain consistent, professional communication, responding to co-op emails within 24 hours.
- Follow district specific policies and guidelines related to clearances, location and/or trainings needed, attire, etc.
- Bring clearance copies, driver's license, and any needed books/materials to each visit.
- Establish and follow a regular schedule of visits to the school with the host Cooperating Teacher (while realizing the need for flexibility around the Cooperating Teacher's schedule as needed). Any changes due to emergencies must be communicated to the Cooperating Teacher in a timely manner.
- Keep their field experience practicum time block on their schedule free for field experience/ Department of Education activities.
- Complete a *Field Experience Attendance Log* entry for each field experience visit and ask the Cooperating Host Teacher to initial each entry (see "Field Experience" link under "*Websites and Helpful Links*" at the beginning of this Handbook to download this Log). The student must maintain this Log throughout the semester and submit it to their Field Experience Practicum Course Instructor near the end of the semester.
- Communicate course requirements and assignments to the Cooperating Teacher.
- Complete all course requirements, which fulfill PA Department of Education field experience competencies required for teaching certification.
- Consult with the Cooperating Teacher to plan activities. Cooperating Teachers may request that the YCP teacher candidate complete activities that are not included on the course syllabi (e.g.- create worksheets, read aloud, work individually with students, conduct small group activities, cut lamination, make copies, etc.).
- Solicit feedback from the Cooperating Teacher, especially during/after lessons conducted by the YCP teacher candidate. It is a good idea for the YCP student to provide the Cooperating Teacher with a "Field Experience Evaluation Form" at least once a semester. This form is a great springboard for discussion and reflection between the Cooperating Teacher and YCP teacher candidate (see "Field Experience" link under "*Websites and Helpful Links*" at the beginning of this Handbook to download this evaluation form).
- Maintain confidentiality and good professional conduct at all times.

### Field Experience Supervision (by the YCP Department of Education)

Teacher Candidates are supervised by the Field Services Division during Stages 1-4 to ensure that appropriate instruction, communication, conduct and professionalism are being demonstrated. Supervisors additionally provide support to our district partners and cooperating teachers regarding course requirements and student expectations in the field. The Supervisors will complete on-site observations of teacher candidates in their placements utilizing a walk-through supervision model and will provide timely and constructive feedback to our students and the course professors. Students are expected to complete the online ***Field Experience Schedule Form*** , weekly to identify the date, time, and location of their field experience (see "Field Experience" link under "*Websites and Helpful Links*" at the beginning of this Handbook). Responses collected on this form are checked by the Field Services Supervisor and are used to determine compliancy and supervision visits by the Field Services administrators.

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### Field Services Supervision Process:

- Students will *usually* be informed prior to visits and should make the Cooperating Teacher aware of a possible visit by a Supervisor.
- Once the form is submitted, any changes must be emailed to the Field Services Supervisor.
- During the visit, if a lesson is observed, students will be provided feedback in the following four areas: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instructional Delivery and Professionalism.

### Confidentiality

Teacher candidates are expected to maintain confidentiality at all times. Confidentiality laws protect school children. These laws require that students not use the actual names of children in assignments, nor discuss children by name in classes at YCP or any other situation outside their assigned school. Students should discuss the details of an issue regarding an individual child only with the cooperating teacher.

### Professional Conduct

- All communication (written and oral) should be error-free and done in a professional manner.
- Consistently maintain a schedule, attending the school during your field block. **Work and other obligations should not be scheduled during the field block.**
- If the Teacher Candidate will not be attending the field placement, they should contact their Cooperating Teacher as well as email the Supervisor of Field Services.
- Display your York College picture identification with you at all times. Most districts request students to wear them on a lanyard.
- Students should bring a copy of their PA Criminal Record Check and Child Abuse Clearance, and FBI Fingerprinting to their school on their initial visit. Students should always have current/clear clearances on file in LS134 and maintain clearance copies for themselves.
- Dress appropriately and abide by District/school rules and regulations.
- Students should not use any electronic devices during a field experience unless using such devices are part of the classroom activity.



## PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

The Education Department at York College of Pennsylvania is responsible for preparing candidates who have the required knowledge, skills, good moral character, and dispositions to become effective teachers. Therefore, the education and licensure program prepares students to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of beginning teachers. **Faculty and school personnel, as well as students, evaluate students at various points in the program and provide feedback regularly.**

Student Educator Professional and Personal Dispositions must be followed during the experience. **A Disposition Action Plan may be drafted, discussed and documented among faculty/staff along with the student, if a student educator is unable to meet these professional and personal requirements.** These behaviors include the following:

- a) **Competence in written and oral expression**
- b) **Professional attitude**
- c) **Personal enthusiasm**
- d) **Ethical, moral character**
- e) **Personal organization**
- f) **Ability to meet deadlines**
- g) **Good interpersonal skills**
- h) **Ability to accept and profit from constructive criticism**
- i) **Personal maturity**
- j) **Use of prudent judgment**
- k) **Class attendance**
- l) **Demonstrated professional growth in planning, lesson execution, and reflection at a level expected for the identified stage of field experience.**