



YORK COLLEGE OF PENNSYLVANIA

SCHOOL OF THE ARTS,
HUMANITIES, EDUCATION,
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
EDUCATION

Field Experience Handbook

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

FIELD SERVICES DIVISION

Field experiences for all Education Majors are coordinated and supervised through the Field Services Division at York College. For information, please contact us:

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Websites and Helpful Links:

York College of Pennsylvania

<https://www.ycp.edu/>

YCP School of Behavioral Sciences & Education

<https://www.ycp.edu/academics/schools/behavioral-sciences-education>

Field Experience and Student Teaching

<https://www.ycp.edu/academics/schools/behavioral-sciences-education/field-experience-student-teaching>

Clearances, Teacher Candidacy and Certification Information:

<https://www.ycp.edu/academics/schools/behavioral-sciences-education/field-experience-student-teaching#resources>

FIELD EXPERIENCE— *Stages*

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) 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. The PDE required competencies are addressed in all graded field experience coursework.

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 classroom 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.

All Education Majors must apply for Teacher Candidacy prior to moving forward in the program and registering for Field Experience Stage 3 and Student Teaching Stage 4 courses.

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).*

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 in all field experience stages 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 per district requirements.

All students must obtain the required clearances immediately upon acceptance and/or enrollment in an education course requiring a field experience component. Because many courses include embedded field experiences, students who lack the necessary clearances and miss required hours may be adversely affected, potentially preventing them from completing both their required hours and associated assignments. 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).

Keep the originals for yourself. A copy must be turned into the Education Office and the District prior to visiting the schools.

The clearances MUST be valid starting the first day of the placement UP TO AND INCLUDING THE LAST DAY OF EACH SEMESTER

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 to all education majors, to their YCP email address, at the time of registration with a link to the online application. 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. **In order to receive a placement, each student must complete a field experience application.**

Fall Application Availability: Open at the start of Spring registration

Spring Application Availability: Open at the start of Fall registration

Placement Process

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

- Assignments are influenced by many factors including: course and program requirements, student's certification area, student's prior field experiences, availability with partnering districts, etc.
- When possible, all candidates are placed within a 50-mile radius of the YCP campus and/or candidate's address of residence.
- Students are expected to provide or arrange their own transportation to their assigned placement.
- Priority is granted to area school districts with which we have Affiliation Agreements.

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 calendar days of receiving placement** to: initiate professional contact via YCP email, introduce themselves, and discuss an initial visit date and time.
- Familiarize themselves with district specific policies and guidelines related to clearances, location and/or training needed.
- Maintain consistent, professional communication, responding to cooperating teacher 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)
- 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 are 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 all emails within one calendar day.
- Follow district specific policies and guidelines related to clearances, location and/or training 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).
- 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. 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.
- All materials, lesson plans, and activities should be shared with and approved by the cooperating teacher at least 3 days prior to the lesson being delivered to students. The cooperating teacher may request items earlier than this and students must comply with the teacher's requests.
- Maintain confidentiality and good professional conduct at all times.

Field Experience Attendance

Each Teacher Candidate is expected to be in his/her assigned classroom on every day of the assignment. A Teacher Candidate who is ill or has an emergency should contact the Cooperating Teacher and College Supervisor as soon as possible.

- Field Experience Teacher Candidates who miss a scheduled field experience day are expected to make up the missed day(s). It is the responsibility of the Teacher Candidate to discuss the absence with the Cooperating Teacher and notify the Supervisor of Field Services.
- If makeup visit(s) are required, the Teacher Candidate is responsible for working with both the Cooperating Teacher to determine the makeup visit schedule. This date (s) should be included on the scheduling form as: "This is a make-up day" in the comment section.

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 Scheduling 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 compliance and supervision visits by the Field Services administrators.

Field Services Supervision Process:

- Students will *usually* be informed prior to visits and should make the Cooperating Teacher and the school office 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 written and/or verbal 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 on their assigned day and time, they should contact their Cooperating Teacher as well as email the Supervisor of Field Services.
- Students should display their York College identification card at all times. Most districts request students to wear them on a lanyard.
- Students must 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.

Substituting and Field Experience

Teacher candidates must be under the direction of a certified teacher and are not able to serve as a substitute teacher during the designated days and times of the field experience block. However, teacher candidates may choose to work as a substitute on days and/or times they do not have any classes, if they meet the required PA Department of Education requirements*. For example, a student who only has classes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday may choose to serve as a substitute on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The education major is responsible for completing the substitute teacher application process required by the school district, charter school, vocational-technical school, or intermediate unit in order to be financially compensated for substituting. Substituting is optional and would be done under the guidance of the school district.

*PA Department of Education has established guidelines for Prospective Teacher Substitutes (Act 86)- more information on this can be found here: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/data-and-reporting/school-staff/act-91-of-2021-guidance>

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.**

Department of Education Course Progression Policy

Students in the Department of Education must complete both Early and Advanced Field Experience courses as required in their respective programs. Students are permitted to repeat any Field Experience course (Early/Advanced) only once, and the total number of all repeated Field Experience courses (Early/Advanced) may not exceed two. At the discretion of the Chair of the Department of Education, a student may be determined ineligible to repeat a Field Experience course a second time. Should this occur, the student will not be permitted to remain enrolled in any certification program in the Department of Education. Exceptions are made only in circumstances of medical withdrawal.

Early Field Experience

In instances of violations to school district norms and policies and/or the Department of Education's dispositional and/or clearance policies, the student will be removed from the assigned Field Experience placement. If the semester course withdrawal date has not passed, the student may then withdraw from the Field Experience course. If that date has passed, the student will receive a final grade of 0 for the Field Experience course.

At the discretion of the Chair of the Department of Education, a student may be determined ineligible to re-enroll in the Field Experience course a second time. Should this occur, the student will not be permitted to remain enrolled in any certification program in the Department of Education.

While Early Field Experience is not specifically linked to a course, Early Field Experience is required to be completed with a final grade of 3 or higher. Any student whose final grade is less than a 3 must either re-enroll in Early Field Experience, if determined eligible to do so, or must change their major to a program outside of the Department of Education.

Advanced Field Experience/Advanced Courses

In instances of violations of school district norms and policies and/or the Department of Education's dispositional and/or clearance policies, the student will be removed from the assigned Field Experience placement. If the semester course withdrawal date has not passed, the student may then withdraw from the Field Experience course. If that date has passed, the student will receive a final grade of 0 for the Field Experience course.

At the discretion of the Chair of the Department of Education, a student may be determined ineligible to re-enroll in the Field Experience course a second time. Should this occur, the student will not be permitted to remain enrolled in any certification program in the Department of Education.

Additionally, as all Advanced Field Experience courses are inextricably linked to advanced courses in the student's designated certification program, failure to complete course assignments as required in the course or demonstrate appropriate professional development in planning, lesson execution, and reflection as expected by identified stage of field experience will negatively impact both the final grade of the associated course as well as the final grade of the Advanced Field Experience course. Any student who withdraws from the Field Experience course must also withdraw from the associated course(s) or they will receive a final grade of 0 in the course(s). Further, students are permitted to repeat any advanced course required in their Department of Education program only once, and the total number of all repeated advanced Department of Education courses may not exceed two.