



# Field Experience Handbook for Initial Teacher Certification

Revised 06/04/20

## **UAB School of Education Mission Statement**

We are committed to developing and sharing knowledge to support education, health, and wellness professionals who serve diverse worlds in urban and rural contexts.

## **Vision Statement**

We are committed to enhancing our reputation by addressing global and local challenges in education, health, and wellness.

## **Value Statements**

We value:

Integrity, Respect, Diversity and Inclusiveness, Collaboration, Excellence and Achievement, Stewardship, and Accountability.

# Table of Contents

## **3 Field Experience Introduction**

### **4 Field Placement Policies**

- 4 Placement Procedures for Teacher Candidates
- 4 Procedures for Placement Requests
- 4 Cleared Criminal History Background Checks
- 5 Notification of Field Placements for Pre-Teacher Education Program Courses
- 5 Procedures for Documenting Field Experiences
- 5 Overview of Assessment of Professional Dispositions
- 6 Ethical Behavior

### **7 Field Placement Roles and Responsibilities**

- 7 Cooperating/Mentor Teachers
- 8 University Supervisor/Instructor
- 9 Teacher Candidate

# Field Experience Introduction

UAB is committed to complying with state and certification requirements. Per the 2019 Alabama State Department of Education's (ALSDE) Education Preparation Chapter, Alabama Administrative Code, prior to the internship, field experiences in all Class B, Alternative Class A, Class A, and Class AA programs should comply with the following:

- Include a variety of early and ongoing field-based contacts in diverse P-12 schools and other appropriate settings that are provided as a part of the instructional program available through observation, study of school situations, assisting in instruction, and supervised teaching that contribute to the understanding and competence of the candidate.
- Require extensive field experiences in diverse settings.
  - The ALSDE defines diversity as individual differences (e.g. personality, interests, learning modalities, and life experiences) and group differences (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, ability, nationality, language, religion, political affiliation, and socio-economic background).
- If permitted by UAB, individuals who are employed in positions appropriate to the area of their current program may complete field experiences on the job, but those experiences must be planned with specific purposes and assessments.
- Occur primarily in P-12 schools.
- At least half of the field experiences shall be in the candidate's teaching field or area of instructional support.
- For pre-kindergarten education programs, field experiences must span birth through age 4 in both child care and the Office of School Readiness programs.
- For early childhood education and early childhood special education programs, field experiences shall include placements in at least two of the three main types of early education settings [early school grades (K-3), child care centers and homes, and Office of School Readiness programs.]

# Field Placement Policies

## Placement Procedures for Teacher Candidates

Faculty members who teach courses requiring field experiences prior to student teaching will typically coordinate and secure the field placements for their courses.

### Procedures for Placement Requests:

- Teacher candidates are not permitted to make any field experience placement requests to schools. Requests must be initiated via the faculty member or instructor teaching the course, or the Office of Clinical Experiences.
- All field experience placements must be initiated via the school's principal unless the school is located in specific districts approved through the Office of Clinical Experiences.

### Cleared Criminal History Background Checks:

- Any candidate applying for admission to a State-approved educator preparation program shall be required to be fingerprinted for a criminal history background check through the Alabama State Department of Education to the Alabama Bureau of Investigation (ABI) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) pursuant to Act 2002-457.
- The candidate shall be fingerprinted by a service provider approved by the Alabama State Department of Education. Additional information about approved providers, fees, and procedures is available from the Certification Office.
- The candidate is responsible for the non-refundable, non-transferable fee.
- After being fingerprinted for a criminal history background check, verify that your criminal history background check has been posted on the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) teacher certification portal at:  
<https://tcert.alsde.edu/Portal/Public/Pages/SearchCerts.aspx>
- Provide the designated UAB instructor/staff with your "TCH #" from the ALSDE teacher certification portal.
  - For Pre-Teacher Education Preparation programs, background checks must be completed within the first three weeks of the semester with the possibility of administrative withdrawal for non-compliance.
  - The following statement should appear at the bottom of the portal webpage: "This individual has completed an ASBI/FBI criminal history background check and is suitable and fit to teach under state law."
- Information regarding approved providers for fingerprinting services, fees, and procedures can be found at:  
[https://www.alsde.edu/sec/ec/Pages/background\\_clearance-all.aspx](https://www.alsde.edu/sec/ec/Pages/background_clearance-all.aspx)
- Field placements cannot be secured without cleared criminal history background checks.
- A candidate whose suitability determination precludes admission to a State-approved educator preparation program has the right to due process procedures in accordance with the current Educator Certification Chapter of the Alabama Administrative Code.

## **Notification of Field Placements for Pre-Teacher Education Program Courses (i.e., EDF 362, ECY 300/600):**

### Steps in the Notification Process -

- Instructors will notify teacher candidates about the “Review of Placement Process” during the first week of the academic semester.
  - **Review of Placement Process:** Field placements occur with schools in the Greater Birmingham Metropolitan Area at schools with whom the School of Education has established mutually beneficial partnerships. UAB has the responsibility to place its teacher candidates in a number of diverse field experiences throughout their teacher education program, per the Alabama State Department of Education (i.e., to ensure that teacher candidates are capable of teaching students across the spectrum of race, socioeconomic levels, gender identities, and exceptional needs). Thus, placements are not necessarily close to a teacher candidate’s home.
- Instructors will be notified by the Office of Clinical Experiences (OCE) of placement information within one month of the start of the semester.
- The OCE will provide instructors with a spreadsheet detailing placement information (e.g., school, teacher name, teacher email, grade level).
  - Each placement school will also receive a spreadsheet detailing placement information relative to their school.
- Instructors will notify each teacher candidate of their placement information.
- All placements are firm and cannot be modified
  - Note: Teacher candidates are expected to uphold professional dispositions in all communications with instructors and the OCE, as noted in the Educator Disposition Assessment.
- Teacher candidates must establish contact with the teacher to set up field visits within one week of being notified about placement information.

### **Procedures for Documenting Field Experiences:**

- The course instructor will provide students with a field experience verification document, which must be signed by the cooperating teacher. The purpose of this document is to verify the completion of all field experience hours required in the course.

### **Overview of Assessment of Professional Dispositions**

- The professional dispositions of teacher candidates enrolled in initial and advanced programs are assessed in different ways, through the use of the Educator Disposition Assessment. Students should refer to their respective program’s handbook for additional information.
- A record of unsatisfactory dispositions must be completed in the event a pre-service candidate is not fulfilling his/her responsibilities.

## **Ethical Behavior**

The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE) can be accessed via this link: [https://www.nasdtec.net/page/MCEE\\_Doc](https://www.nasdtec.net/page/MCEE_Doc) - student teachers are expected to abide by this Code. Additional ethical guidelines specific to the student teacher are provided below. Failure to abide by this Code or the guidelines below may result in being removed from the internship or program.

The student teacher must:

- Exhibit satisfactory dispositional behaviors, including submission policies for edTPA. A record of unsatisfactory professional dispositions will be completed in the event a student teacher is not fulfilling his/her responsibilities. Unsatisfactory professional dispositions are grounds for removal from the internship and/or dismissal from the program.
- Maintain information received about students, families, faculty, or staff in strict confidence – any information or suspicions related to abuse should be immediately reported to the cooperating teacher, UAB Supervisor/Liaison, or Director of the Office of Clinical Experiences. Proof is not required, just a good faith belief that abuse occurred.
- Refrain from imposing personal, religious or political views upon the students and exhibit a broad- minded, inclusive attitude toward all individuals.
- Act impartially in dealing with students and constantly strive to be fair when judging students' actions.
- Employ disciplinary measures that conform to the instructions of the cooperating teacher.
- Know the school regulations and rules affecting students.

# Field Placement Roles and Responsibilities

## Role of the Cooperating/Mentor Teacher

Selection Criteria and Teacher Commitment:

- Hold certification at the appropriate level and/or content area for their present teaching assignment
- Verify teacher candidate's hours and completion of tasks
- Notify the university supervisor or instructor about any questions or concerns
- Demonstrate flexibility and (when applicable) willingness to share some responsibility for the classroom with the teacher candidate
- Provide frequent and specific performance feedback to the teacher candidate
- Assess the teacher candidate's instructional performance objectively
  - When applicable, complete the professional dispositions form and submit to university supervisor or instructor
  - Notify the university supervisor or instructor of any concerns or accolades
  - Sign or initial any field experience verification document(s) (e.g., field experience log)
- Help the teacher candidate become a reflective practitioner

## Responsibilities of the Cooperating/Mentor Teachers

The teacher candidate usually arrives at a school uncertain about his/her status and role at the school. S/he should be focused on the cooperating/mentor teacher, students, and the school.

**Before the Teacher Candidate arrives:**

- Provide an area in the classroom for his/her personal and professional items
- Prepare your students for the arrival of the teacher candidate
- Preview the general course requirements for the field experience and review any information provided by the university supervisor or instructor
- Know how to contact the university supervisor or instructor in case of any problems

**While the Teacher Candidate is at the school:**

- Introduce him/her to your class or classes in a manner which imparts professional respect from students
- When relevant and possible, introduce him/her to faculty and staff
- When relevant, provide him/her with a copy of the school/faculty handbook, and point out important policies
- Familiarize yourself with the tasks to be completed per the course requirements, including signature/initials on any relevant field experience verification document(s) (e.g., field experience log) and, when applicable, completion of any required evaluation assessments

## **Role of the University Supervisor/Instructor**

- All observation/field experience placements must occur at accredited P-12 schools
  - Ensure that teacher candidates do not make any observation/field placement requests
  - Unless the Office of Clinical Experiences is assisting with placement endeavors, initiate placement requests via the school's principal.
- Communicate with the cooperating/mentor teacher about the field experience requirement(s) that the teacher candidate must complete
- Collaborate with the appropriate P-12 staff to seek mutually agreeable solutions when problems arise
- Communicate clear objectives for both the teacher candidate and cooperating/mentor teachers
- Ensure that the teacher candidate has submitted a field experience verification document and, when applicable, his/her professional dispositions form
- Be accessible to the teacher candidate, cooperating/mentor teacher, and P-12 administrator for requested conferences and emergency visits/observations

## Role and Responsibilities of the Teacher Candidate

- Attendance and Punctuality
  - Research directions to the placement site
  - Arrive at the placement site 10-15 minutes early
  - Follow all visitor requirements (e.g., sign in at the main office)
  - Verify the contact information for the cooperating teacher during the first visit
  - Attend all expected and scheduled sessions
    - If an emergency arises, notify the cooperating/mentor teacher and the university supervisor or instructor prior to the start of the school day or as soon as possible
    - Complete the course required field experiences per the instructor's specifications
  - Complete a field experience verification document (e.g. a field experience log) documenting hours completed
    - Submit all verification documents or logs per the instructor's specifications
    - If a field verification document has not been provided by the instructor, use one of the field experience logs located on the Office of Clinical Experiences website
- Appearance
  - Dress professionally and appropriately for the school setting (e.g., no jeans, shorts, sweat suits, flip flops, etc.)
  - Maintain a clean and neat appearance at all times
  - Avoid clothing that is revealing in nature
  - Cover any tattoos and remove any facial piercings
- Ethical Conduct
  - Retain complete confidentiality regarding any information from or about the placement site, students, or school staff/faculty (Note: Any concerns regarding P-12 student well-being should be immediately reported to the cooperating/mentor teacher and university supervisor or instructor)
  - Demonstrate professional dispositions by avoiding negative comments about UAB, the placement site, staff, cooperating/mentor teacher, student, or student caretakers
  - Address placement site staff, students, and parents in a courteous manner
  - Accept criticism in a professional manner

Failure to comply with expected dispositional behaviors will result in an Assessment of Unsatisfactory Professional Dispositions form.

- UAB Forms and Documentation
  - Submit field verification document(s) (e.g., field evaluation log) per the instructor's specifications
  - Submit any course tasks per the instructor's direction