Field Experience Practicum Handbook

Field experiences are vital components in all teacher education programs at Oklahoma Panhandle State University. They allow candidates to gain firsthand knowledge of how learning and teaching methodologies are being utilized by classroom teachers and to recognize complexities of working with diverse groups of children. The field experience practicum courses are meant to narrow the gap between theory and practice. It is designed to be a collaborative effort in which the mentor teacher(s) and university faculty work together in helping pre-service teacher education candidates make a smooth transition from the university classroom to the final phase in student internship.

The Practicum I course should be taken the semester after being admitted to the Teacher Education Program. The Practicum II course should be taken any semester between the Practicum I semester and the student internship semester. Other OPSU courses that require field experience (beyond observation) are Educational Psychology and Methods and Materials of Secondary Teaching.

Procedures

All OPSU candidates participating in the field experience practicum should:

1. Submit field placement request to Dr. Christi Roach (Field Placement Director). She will determine the school(s) and teacher(s) the candidate will be working with for the semester. Dr. Roach will contact the principal, who will assign a teacher as a mentor.
2. Contact the teacher assigned to set up first field experience date and time.
3. Be at school(s) a maximum of three (3) hours per week. A total of thirty (30) hours per semester for Practicum I and Practicum II; a total of twenty (20) hours for Educational Psychology; and a total of sixteen (16) hours for Methods and Materials of Secondary Teaching.
4. Participate in a variety of experiences within the classroom setting.
5. Complete prescribed individual plan set by the OPSU faculty instructor.
6. Complete daily log sheets and daily journals to submit to the OPSU faculty instructor for designated times due.

Expectations of this Experience

The OPSU teacher candidate should:

1. Spend a maximum of three hours per week in the school.
2. Cooperate fully with mentor teacher(s).
3. Be aware of school policies and follow them.
4. Assist the mentor teacher whenever possible.
5. Follow the mentor teacher’s rule of conduct.
6. Assist students as determined by the mentor teacher(s).
7. Dress and act professionally.
8. Follow the individualized plan of activities provided by the university instructor.
9. Keep a daily journal of events and activities during each visit.
10. Be aware that OPSU teacher candidates are public relations representatives of OPSU.
11. Plan and teach lessons prescribed by the individualized plan under direct supervision of the classroom teacher.
12. Be dependable by arriving on time and being present on assigned days. Please notify the mentor teacher(s) when an absence is necessary.

**The Mentor teacher should:**
1. Supervise teacher candidates as they assist with classes.
2. Explain purpose of activities.
3. Understand that teacher candidates are not trained to assume the responsibility of an entire classroom for a great length of time.
4. Provide opportunities to observe lesson planning and various uses of instructional materials and equipment.
5. Provide opportunities to learn about the major components of teaching.
6. Complete surveys, assessment of candidate and certify attendance.
7. Provide direction to other teachers or sources to help the candidate complete their individualized plan.

**OPSU supervisor/professor may:**
1. Supervise experiences with periodical visits to the school.
2. Provide information to help the candidates in their experiences.
3. Serve as a consultant for the schools and candidates.
4. Assess the candidate’s experiences through a variety of sources.

**Assessment of the Field Experience Candidate**

All candidates will maintain a daily journal documenting the observations and activities of each visit. Within the journal, the date and number of hours spent should be indicated. The journals will be turned into the instructor at designated times throughout the semester. A summary of the field experience will be turned in at the end of the semester.

The OPSU instructor and mentor teacher(s) will complete an assessment instrument concerning knowledge, skills and dispositions of the candidate.

Assignments made by the OPSU instructor during the semester may be part of the assessment process.