

### **Field Experiences Overview:**

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. The experiences take place in collaborative, educational settings to give candidates an understanding of the values, cultures and working styles of learning communities (The Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2008).

The School of Education takes great pride in the level of extensive clinical and field-based experiences that undergraduate and graduate pre-service teacher candidates have prior to their certification. Students in teacher certification programs have many opportunities to experience the classroom setting and thus gain ample exposure and experience necessary for a career in education. Nearly every pedagogy-based course will have at least one clinical, field-based experience. This allows candidates the opportunity to put into “practice” the learned teaching skills and evaluate their PK-12 students first hand in preparation for their Student Teaching Experiences.

Teacher Education candidates are required to complete **190 hours of pre-service field experiences prior to their student teaching practicum**. Candidates may transfer up to 40 field-based hours from previous school-based experiences or experiences related to PK-12 teaching. Accepted hours will be evaluated and approved by the Administration in the School of Education.

During the differing field experiences prior to student teaching, candidates will experience a progressive increase of hands-on experiences. Each level of experience will become more intensive, requiring the candidates to gradually assume more responsibility in the context of the classroom. Listed below are the four stages of required field experiences.

#### **Stage I: Observation (20 hours):**

During the first stage of field experiences, candidates will observe in a variety of education and education-related settings. Candidates are required to be *active observers*, and to assist the classroom teachers wherever needed, such as helping to coordinate classroom activities and supporting individual learners. During this experience, the candidate will keep an observation log, which will be signed by the host teacher. Candidates will also complete written reflections based on his/her experiences. The candidates will meet weekly with the course instructor and discuss their experiences, as all field experiences are linked to current courses and practices.

#### **Stage II: Participating and Assisting (20 hours):**

This stage is also referred to as the “exploration” phase of the required field experiences. In this stage of field experiences, candidates are working with small groups as well as working with individuals. Through this experience, students learn about the school community, and carefully follow the policies and regulations of the school. Similar to the Observation Stage, candidates in this stage will also keep an ongoing log of their classroom experiences and connect theory to practice through their linked School of Education courses. Students will complete these hours in the context of their required courses for Adaptations and Accommodations for Diverse Learners.

**Stage III: Pre-Student Teaching (150 hours):**

During this third stage of field experiences, the candidate will further their skills in teaching small group and whole group lessons, under the supervision of a certified classroom teacher. At least one of the placements in the pre-student teaching stage will be in an inclusive setting. During the pre-student teaching experience, candidates will develop skills in creating learning communities, applying research-based pedagogy, designing standards-based lessons and units, integrating technology into instruction, classroom management and discipline, responsiveness to cultural diversity, identification of learning resources, and identification of current educational issues. The pre-student teaching experiences are closely integrated with course work. Pre-student teaching required elements include but are not limited to; reflective journal, lesson plans and observation and feedback by a university supervisor. The 150 required hours will be distributed through the candidates' required methods courses, depending upon the concentration chosen by the candidate [elementary (PreK-4), elementary education (4-8) or secondary education (7-12)].

**Stage IV: Student Teaching (minimum 420 hours):**

Student teaching is a full-time, 12-week field placement in a carefully selected school under the immediate supervision of a highly competent Cooperating Teacher, in selected cases a classroom-based adjunct clinical instructor, a Drexel University Field Supervisor and the general supervision of the Drexel University Field Experience Coordinator. It approximates full-time teaching and is viewed as a culminating experience that provides opportunity to demonstrate what was learned in the professional education courses.