

# University of Tennessee-Chattanooga School of Education Field Experience Handbook

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*Requirements for Graduate and Undergraduate Students*



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## School of Education Mission Statement

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga School of Education is dedicated to the preparation of its graduates to positively impact the lives of all children and families through demonstrating excellence in content, professional practice, leadership and service.

### Field Experience Introduction

This guide is to provide information on the policies and procedures related to Field Experiences within the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's School of Education. Field experience is a highly-valued component of the Teacher Education Program (TEP), housed in the School of Education (SOE). Such experiences provide a critical role in Teacher Candidate preparation throughout coursework prior to Residency/Student Teaching.

Field Experiences provide early and ongoing practice opportunities to apply content and pedagogical knowledge in PreK-12 settings to progressively develop and demonstrate knowledge, skills, and dispositions. As Teacher Candidates (TC) progress in coursework, field experiences are designed to practice pedagogical knowledge. Teacher Candidates may have field experience placements in either a PreK-12 classroom or within community organizations working with diverse student populations. UTC values experiences where teacher candidates can work with students in one-to-one, small group, and large group instructional activities with direct oversight from a licensed teacher or mentor.

### Dispositions of an Effective Educator

*As a Reflective Practitioner, the Teacher Candidate will demonstrate a commitment to Performance, Professionalism, and Partnership by achieving the following goals:*

#### **Performance:**

- Exhibit an in-depth mastery of content knowledge.
- Use a variety of evidence-based instructional strategies to enable all learners to master content and its application.
- Use multiple methods of assessment to engage learners, monitor learner progress, and guide decision making to make data-informed decisions.
- Provide equitable learning opportunities for all learners.
- Create and maintain an environment for learning through effective classroom management and organization.
- Evaluate and integrate appropriate technology resources to facilitate student learning.

#### **Professionalism:**

- Adhere to a professional code of ethics and provide a positive role model to students and others in the profession.
- Recognize students' unique prior knowledge, life experiences, cultural differences, and interests as part of the context for student learning.

- Demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning and professional growth through reflection, seeking constructive feedback, and willingness to learn from others and past experience.
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively through a variety of methods.

**Partnership:**

- Collaborate with other professionals to improve the overall learning of students.
- Utilize a wide variety of resources in the school, family, culture, and community to facilitate student learning.

**Field Experience Eligibility Requirements**

Prior to participation in any field experience, students must adhere to the [TEP Checkpoint requirements](#). By participating in field experiences the TC acknowledges and understands all requirements in the TEP Handbook. It is the TC’s responsibility to ensure that all requirements have been met and appropriate documentation is on file with the SOE. The TC must notify the SOE immediately if at any point the TC’s status changes, as stated in the TEP Handbook

**Field Experience Policies and Procedures**

**Conduct:** All TCs must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and demonstrate the Dispositions of an Effective Educator. At all times, the TC should consider themselves preservice teachers. The TC must follow the rules of the school system or organization where placed, in addition to the University’s policies. At all times the TC must implement the mission of the SOE.

- **Cell phones:** Cell phones are not permitted for personal use during time in the field.
- **Technology:** TC’s should only bring and use laptop/tablets for use during class lessons if approved by mentor teacher. TCs are not allowed to use devices for personal use or to work on coursework while at their placement. TCs must adhere to the technology usage policy followed by the school district, community organization, or sponsor.
- **Social Media:** TC’s are not allowed to use personal social media for any communication with minors or parents of minors while at their placement. TCs should not post comments about their clinical experience, pictures of teachers, students, or events at their placement, or have any communication with parents or guardians. In addition, TCs are expected to remove any inappropriate pictures or commentary on their personal social media sites. TCs should make all social media accounts private during their placement. Information on any social media accounts will be reviewed for professionalism. Postings on your social media sites (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) deemed inappropriate or unprofessional by the SOE or placement site can lead to a disqualification hearing and removal from the clinical experience placement.
- **Professional Ethics:** The TC must model moral standards that are expected in the profession, such as confidentiality, fairness, honesty, trustworthiness, and integrity during the field experience. The TC must model a commitment to intellectual, moral and professional virtues. Defamatory comments about the following: placement, its students, staff, community, UTC’s TEP, and the SOE’s faculty and staff, will not be tolerated.

**Dress Code and Personal Hygiene:** TCs are expected to present themselves in a professional manner in all Clinical Experiences in regard to personal hygiene and appearance. At minimum the TC must adhere to the dress code at the placement site, but the following are examples of attire that are not permitted at any time: Yoga pants, anything see-through, short, tight, or low-cut clothing, flip-flops, strapless shirts, tights and sweater dresses, leggings worn as pants, or faded or ripped clothing. TCs are also required to maintain a high level of personal hygiene. Due to some individual's smell sensitivity, strong odors are not allowed. Strong smelling perfume and/or deodorant is also discouraged due to the distraction it may cause. TCs who violate dress code or are asked to leave due to inappropriate attire may be dismissed from the program.

**Attendance:** During Field Experience, candidates are required to follow the agreed upon schedules set by the placement and the course syllabus. Tardiness and early departures are not permitted and accurate documentation of field experience hours must be maintained. Documentation of the placement must follow the guidelines per the instructor's syllabus for the course. Attendance should be recorded on the Field Experience Time Sheet and school records, if required. See the SOE [forms page](#) for the Field Experience Time Sheet.

**Placement:** All Clinical Experiences must be arranged and/or approved by the Field Placement Coordinator per the course requirements and student learning outcomes. Courses that include field experiences require a background check, proof of current liability insurance, and a completed [Memorandum of Understanding](#). Instructors of such courses will only provide the field experience locations when these items are completed. The subsequent paragraphs list specifics on the policies and procedures of these items.

**Any student who fails to complete the background check, obtain insurance, submit the Memorandum of Understanding, and arrange the dates of the field experience by mid-term per UTC calendar will NOT be permitted to complete the field experience. Instructors also reserve the right to require an earlier deadline.**

If the field experience is in a Hamilton County Department of Education school, the TC must provide a signed HCDE Field Experience Approval Form. The TC must print out and complete the form, have signed by the course professor, and **drop off** with the Principal's Administrative Assistant. **Do NOT email Principals about your form or completing the field experience at his or her school.** This form remains on-file with the school. You may wish to keep a copy of the form for your records.

**Background Check and Liability Insurance:** Prior to being allowed to begin any clinical experience, a current, clean Tennessee background check and active liability insurance must be on file with the School of Education. Per State policy, Teacher Candidates shall be denied admission to teacher preparation programs and not allowed to complete clinical experiences if they have been convicted of any of the following criminal offenses ([as provided in the Rules of the Tennessee Board of Education 0520-2-4-.01](#)).

A background check is required to be completed and documented results on-file in the SOE prior to any field experience. At no time, may a TC be involved in a field experience unless it

has been confirmed by the SOE that the background check results are clear. Results are sent directly to the SOE, but it is the TC's responsibility to ensure that results have been received. When the background check is completed, the TC must retain the receipt in case there is an issue with the results being sent. Results are valid for four years so as long as the TC remains consecutively enrolled in the TEP unless otherwise required by the Director of the SOE. However, prior to being allowed to register for the Residency/Student Teaching/Induction Experience, the TC must have background check results no older than one year. Background checks completed by employers or agencies outside of UTC are not accepted for the purposes of the SOE requirement. TCs must follow the background check [procedures](#) for the SOE. Background checks collected by the School of Education may not be shared with another entity or with the TC.

Each student must provide proof of current liability insurance for the duration of the semester that it occurs. Liability Insurance must be purchased from one of the three providers listed below:

- Professional Educators of Tennessee (PET): Valid for one year at the time of purchase. Membership benefits include access to the professional organization.
- National Educators Association (NEA): Valid from September 1<sup>st</sup> (or at time of purchase)-August 31<sup>st</sup>. Membership benefits include access to the professional organization.
- Bursar's Office: Valid from June 1<sup>st</sup> (or at time of purchase)-May 31<sup>st</sup>. No professional organization affiliation.

The specific procedures and details of the process for completing background checks and purchasing liability insurance are found on the School of Education website under Student Resources at <https://www.utc.edu/school-education/studentresources/studentproced.php>

**Disclosure Requirements:** Candidates MUST provide full disclosure to the SOE within 5 days of any misdemeanor or felony conviction neglect that occurs after initial background check.

**Memorandum of Understanding:** The [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) is located on the SOE website and must be signed each semester a student is completing a field experience. Such MOU acknowledges that the TC has read and will follow the policies and procedures listed in this field experience handbook.

### **Field Experience Violations**

Teacher candidates are expected to adhere to all policies and procedures set forth by UTC's Code of Conduct <https://www.utc.edu/dean-students/student-handbook.php>, the School of Education, as well as the partnering school districts and organizations. Teacher Candidates who breach protocol for any of the following reasons may be dismissed from the School of Education program and may forfeit the opportunity to gain licensure:

- The appropriate school authority or community organization or sponsor requests that the candidate be removed.
- The immediate supervisor at the school or community site believe circumstances are

such to prevent either the development or maintenance of a satisfactory learning environment.

- Unethical behavior exhibited by the candidate (e.g., plagiarism, sexual harassment, inappropriate use of technology/social media, use of alcohol or drugs).
- Any evidence of a lack of sensitivity to multicultural situations is portrayed by the candidate (e.g., use of inappropriate terminology in reference to a particular ethnic group).
- A decision has been reached and documented with appropriate paperwork that the candidate cannot receive a satisfactory grade due to lack of professional growth and/or performance.
- Excessive absenteeism, tardiness, and/or failure to comply with established rules and policies on part of the candidate are evident.

Teacher candidates who are asked to leave their placement for any reason may be dismissed from the School of Education program. At the time of removal, the TC must meet with the Director, Field Placement Coordinator, and Course Instructor to determine if remediation is an option. The remediation plan will be set at this meeting. If remediation is not an option, the TC will not receive credit for the placement. If the TC does not satisfactorily follow the remediation plan, the TC may be removed from the TEP and not allowed to continue with the program in the future.

### **Field Experience Exceptions**

School of Education has approved sites for every course that requires field experiences. This ensures students are provided with opportunities to serve diverse students. Field experience hours for one course may not be used to satisfy the field experience hours in another course. Instructors **may** approve certain clinical experience exemptions to TCs who are **currently** employed in a PK-12 setting as a teacher, teacher assistant, or paraprofessional. Before approval is granted and any hours are completed, the TC must provide a typed letter on the organization's letterhead that discusses the TC's job responsibilities and hours to the course instructor. After the instructor receives this letter, the instructor will submit this documentation to the SOE Field Placement Coordinator for final approval. Exceptions will NOT be approved for any field experience hours completed PRIOR to the semester in which the course is taken nor for a location that was used previously for an exception.

### **Field Experience Forms**

All the following forms are found on the SOE Forms page linked below:

Field Experience HCDE Approval (if applicable)

Field Experience Parent Approval – Special Needs (if applicable)

Field Experience Time Sheet

Fingerprint Release Form

Memorandum of Understanding

Privacy Rights Form

<https://www.utc.edu/school-education/studentresources/forms.php>