



TEACHER EDUCATION FIELD EXPERIENCES



Field Experiences Guide



Dear TED Student,

Welcome to the field experience component of your teacher preparation program!

Through a series of placements, you will observe and explore the act of teaching. Gradually, you will take on classroom duties, like instructing small groups and teaching whole class lessons. This process culminates with the student teaching semester when you will be expected to assume full-time classroom leadership for multiple weeks. In this manner, field experiences will be an integral part of your undergraduate journey.

This guide provides information that you will need to complete your field experiences with success. Divided into three parts, it summarizes expectations, policies, and tips for success.

- **Part I: The Must-Do's**
- **Part II: Tips for Success**
- **Part III: Acknowledgement of Field Placement Expectations**

Please feel free to reach out to the OPPEO whenever needed! We are always available to answer your questions and to provide assistance when needed.

Sincerely,

George Vaites

George Vaites, Director
Office of Partnerships, Professional Experiences, & Outreach (OPPEO)
Shippen Hall 354
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Part I: The Must-Do's

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Submit Clearance Packet to OPPEO

The Basics

1. Students must submit a completed clearance packet to OPPEO, which contains the following items:
 - Clearance Submission Cover Sheet
 - Acknowledgement of Field Placement Expectations Form
 - Act 24 & Act 82 Arrest & Conviction Report Form
 - Act 34 Pennsylvania Criminal History Background Check
 - Act 114 FBI Clearance
 - Act 151 Pennsylvania Child Abuse Clearance
 - National Sex Offender Registry Clearance
 - Documentation of TB Test
 - Documentation of Act 126 Mandated Reporter Training
2. Clearance packets are printed and available in the OPPEO office. This item has specific directions that will ensure you apply for the correct clearances.
3. An electronic version of the clearance packet can be found here:
 - https://www.ship.edu/globalassets/coehs/field_experience/complete-instruction-and-information-packet-for-clearances.pdf
4. Without up-to-date clearances, you will **not** be able to complete the field experiences requirements that are part of many education classes.
5. It falls on you—the education major—to take the responsibility for submitting all required clearances and updating them as needed. Be proactive! Complete any needed updates **before** the first day of the semester.

Help from OPPEO

OPPEO is more than happy to help you with the submission of your clearance packet. Feel free to contact us or stop by the office to ask questions.

- Shippen 354
- 717-477-1487
- fieldexperiences@ship.edu

Computer Station: We have a computer set up in our office where you can complete your clearances. Many students use this resource, as they are able to receive helpful guidance in real time and in person.

If you have any issues or concerns about being able to obtain your clearances, please reach out to us.

Receive Placement Information

When you are taking a class with a field experience requirement, OPPEO will contact you with the relevant details. This includes the building name, the host teacher, and the host teacher's contact information. Generally, students receive this information in the early weeks of the semester.

- If any issues remain with your clearances, placement information will not be provided until the issues have been resolved.
- In some courses, placement information will come directly from the professor.

Contact Your Host Teacher

Unless directed otherwise, you should contact the host teacher through email after receiving placement information.

- Introduce yourself.
- Communicate your start week and coordinate a schedule that works for both you and your cooperating teacher.
- Ask the preferred method of communication with your cooperating teacher (e.g. phone, email, text).
- Express gratitude for the willingness of the teacher to host your field experience.

A letter of introduction is your opportunity to introduce yourself to your cooperating teacher and to make a good first impression. The email should be brief, positive, and free of spelling and grammatical errors (see below).

Example of Email Message to Host Teacher

Dear Ms. Smith,

Hello! I just learned that I will be coming to your classroom for my ECH 320 field experience. I am currently a junior enrolled in the PreK-4 program. I am very excited to work with you and your students.

My academic schedule permits field experiences on TT (10:00 a.m. – 1 p.m.) and all day on Fridays. Would these times be conducive to your teaching schedule? Also, what would be your preferred method of communication?

The goal is for our field experiences to begin no later than the week of September 13th or possibly earlier if we are able to get everything arranged with our cooperating teachers.

Thank you for your time and your willingness to host me in your classroom this semester. I am really looking forward to this experience and look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Mary Smith
PK-4 Major
Shippensburg University

Arrive Ready

When attending your field placement, bring the following items:

1. Copies of Your Clearances

- All field experience students are expected to carry copies of your clearances. Some districts may ask you for copies. For this reason, carry them with you when attending a field placement.
⇒ FYI: OPPEO can provide copies of your clearances. Stop by the office and kindly make this request. We are happy to help!

2. Government Issued Photo ID

- Most schools are now requiring all guests (including field experience students) to provide a photo ID, like a driver's license or state issued identification. Bring this item with you. Be ready to share it at the entrance.

3. Field Log (Provided by Professor)

- You are also expected to bring a copy of your field log upon which you are to record all of your field experience hours. You should carry it with you each time. Your cooperating teacher should sign this for you to return to your instructor at the end of the semester.

4. Course-Related Documents (Provided by Professor)

- Be sure to review directions from your professor regarding items or documents that you will need to bring to your field experience. This may include a letter from the professor to the host teacher, a letter of introduction from you to the host teacher, or a timeline of what can be expected during your experience.

Avoid Bringing Cell Phones & Electronic Devices

Leave your cell phones and electronic devices at home or in your car. Exceptions may apply when you need devices for the purpose of completing a course assignment.

- Cell phones are dangerous, because people often check them without realizing they are doing so. For this reason, your best bet is to leave your cell phone in the car.
- Host teachers occasionally express frustration with Shippensburg students who are texting on their cell phones when their attention should be on classroom events. ***Don't let this be you!***

Be Punctual & Attend with 100% or Near-100% Consistency

- 1. Arrive on time.**
 - If you're not 10 minutes early, you are late!
- 2. Be highly reliable with your attendance.**
 - If you say that you will be visiting every Tuesday from 1:30 to 3:30, make sure this happens with 100% or near-100% consistency.
- 3. With as much notice as possible, inform the host teacher any time you are not able to attend your scheduled visit.**
 - This should only happen for a legitimate reason, like an illness or emergency.
 - One absence a semester is typically not an issue.
 - When absences become excessive (2 or more), host teachers become frustrated and share their concerns with Shippensburg.

Be Courteous and Professional at All Times

- 1. Act in a manner that does not distract from instruction or negatively impact the effort of students, faculty, and staff.**
 - If problems emerge, meetings with the student and appropriate parties will be conducted and steps for improvement will be identified.
 - Examples of Problems: Attendance issues, tardiness, cell phone usage, inappropriate dress, becoming a distraction, etc.
 - Severe or repeated problems may result in the removal of the student from the field placement and/or future field placements.
- 2. Abide the Pennsylvania's *Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators*.**
 - Any teacher candidate who violates the Code may be removed immediately from their assignment by Shippensburg University or by school administrators.
 - As outlined in the Code, violations fall under non-criminal and criminal conduct.
 - Meetings with the student and appropriate parties will be conducted and decisions will be made with regard to the academic future of the student.
 - **Code Link:** <https://www.pspc.education.pa.gov/Promoting-Ethical-Practices-Resources/Ethics-Toolkit/The-Commission-Professional-Discipline-and-the-code/Pages/default.aspx>

Dress Appropriately

Your appearance influences how students and colleagues perceive and interact with you. As such, dress appropriately and observe high standards of personal grooming and cleanliness. You are a professional and will be treated as such.

Dress in a manner that is consistent with staff expectations for the school. This is typically referred to as Business Attire/Business Casual. Many school districts have their own dress code for teachers and professional staff; therefore, it is always best to ask at your specific location to be sure that you are not violating their specific dress code policy. Recommendations are:

- Dresses (no more than 2 inches above the knee).
- Skirts (no more than 2 inches above the knee).
- Slacks/Khakis/Dress pants.
- Blouses/Shirts (button down or polo).
- Closed-toe shoes/Open-toe shoes with heels/Dress shoes/Loafers.
- Sport coats/jackets.
- Ties (optional) – highly recommended for the secondary setting.

In all circumstances, be sure that you can reach and bend without exposing undergarments, cleavage, midriff, or backside. If in doubt when preparing for school, use the following guidelines:

- No short skirts or dresses.
- No shorts.
- No low necklines.
- No tight slacks.
- No spaghetti straps or tank tops.
- No exposed midriffs.
- No slogan T-shirts.
- No sweatpants or sweatshirts.
- Denim – Blue jeans are **inappropriate** in many school settings, except on “dress-down days.” If you participate in the dress-day days, jeans should be free of holes.
- No flip-flops. Note: Some schools do not allow open-toe shoes/sandals.
- No yoga pants.
- Leggings are not pants. Leggings can only be worn with skirts, dresses, or long shirts that extend to mid-thigh.
- **Offensive tattoos must be covered.**
- **Natural hair color only.** Note: Some schools have this in their overall district dress code.

Communicate with OPPEO

OPPEO and its staff members will communicate with you through university email. For this reason, it's essential that you check your email regularly and look for important messages.

- Email from OPPEO comes from the fieldexperiences@ship.edu address.
- On occasion, you may receive messages from a staff member's Ship address.
- **Suggestion: Create a folder where you can save all OPPEO-related messages for future reference.**

As needed, OPPEO may contact you by phone and through texting.

Please recognize that it is a professional expectation that you are reading and responding to OPPEO's communication in a prompt and courteous manner.

Address Problems

Most field experiences take place in a productive manner. At times, however, problems emerge. A host teacher may reach out to Shippensburg to discuss concerns. It is also possible that you may want to share concerns of your own. When such circumstances arise, OPPEO will make an effort to listen and to hear all perspectives. Your course professor, and possibly other University officials, may also be part of this conversation.

When problems emerge, an opportunity exists for professional growth. For this reason, any dialogue around a problem will include reflective questions and steps for improvement. As needed, the results of this conversation will be summarized in a written action plan.

Please recognize that significant and/or repeated problems in your field experiences may result in the discontinuation of current and future field placements.

Be Open to Feedback & Use it to Grow

You need not be perfect. However, you do need to be open to feedback and capable of using it to grow.

Recognize some of the important parts of the feedback/growth process that you will use in your career:

- The capacity to reflect on your own behavior
- The ability to hear and comprehend the perspective of others
- The skill of identifying steps for improvement
- The aptitude for implementing steps that lead to growth

Reflect on Ethical Practices & Professional Dispositions

Based on the instrument that measures candidates' professional dispositions in relation to the Apprentice Model Conceptual Framework, there are four categories that shape the ethical reasoning demonstrated by TED candidates within courses and as part of their TED major.

Tenants of TED Ethical Practice:

- Category I: Professional Learning and Ethical
 - The candidate demonstrates a commitment to his/her profession.
- Category II: Critical Thinking and Reflective Practice
 - The candidate demonstrates self-awareness and can identify/acknowledge his/her use of feedback to signify a comprehensive professional perspective.
- Category III: Leadership, Interaction and Collaboration
 - The candidate demonstrates a commitment to building relationships with peers, professionals, and the community and establishes a positive rapport with PK-8 students.
- Category IV: Stewardship for Diversity
 - The candidate demonstrates a commitment to diverse, inclusive, equitable and responsive environments.

As you complete field experiences from semester to semester, be thinking about your commitment to ethical principles and professional dispositions. **To what extent are you fulfilling the tenants that are listed above? In what ways might you grow and develop?**



Part II: Tips for Success

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See Learning as Changing Participation

Your field placements will grow in terms of their complexity. Initially, you will mostly be in the observer role. As you advance in your coursework, however, you will become more of a participant. For example, a professor may give you an assignment where you plan and teach a lesson. Likewise, the host teacher may invite you to assist with classroom tasks, like helping individual students or conducting a read aloud. This process culminates with the student teaching semester when you will gradually assume the duties of a full-time teacher. In this manner, learning can be observed in your changing participation, as you go from observer to observer-participant to student-teacher to teacher. Recognize that this transformation represents your learning.

Be Invested!

The more you give, the more you receive. This wisdom not only applies to life, but also to your field experiences. The more you show up to assigned schools with a proactive willingness to learn and to contribute, the more your knowledge and skillset will grow. In this spirit, here are some general strategies to adopt:

- 1. Smile! Maintain a positive, enthusiastic, and supportive attitude.**
- 2. Interact and actively participate with students and classroom activities.** Most host teachers will welcome your participation and initiative. In some cases, a teacher may prefer that you simply observe. If this is the case, that's okay! If you are unsure, simply ask.
- 3. Seize the moment, if asked!** Some host teachers will invite you to complete tasks that are not necessarily part of your course assignments. For instance, they may invite you to help with writing conferences, facilitate a class game, or even teach a lesson. Be ready to embrace such opportunities!
- 4. Communicate your willingness to help.** When you arrive at your placement, you can say things like, **"I know I'm here to observe, but is there anything that I can help you with today?"** At times, you can even be more specific, saying things like, **"I noticed some students seemed to be struggling during the independent work period. When this happens, would it be okay if I joined you in helping students?"**
- 5. Be ready to engage in discussion with your host teacher.** At the very least, you will talk about the course that you are taking and specific assignments that you need to complete. Recognize, however, that it is often helpful to go beyond these topics. For example, you might share your reasons for wanting to become a teacher. Likewise, you might ask any number of questions. *What advice*

would you give an aspiring teacher? How do you get students to listen to your directives? Such dialogue is invaluable to your learning!

Search for Teaching Tools to Make Your Own

Your time is coming! You will soon be the one in charge of the classroom. As such, it behooves you to spend your field experience hours looking for the tools of the trade that lead to teaching success. That is, the approaches, the techniques, and the strategies that will help you lead a classroom. In other words, what methods might you learn from your host teachers and make your own? In this spirit, strive to accomplish the following:

1. Look for instructional delivery techniques that can be employed when it's your turn to teach a lesson. Examples of these components include:

- Introducing lessons
- How the purpose of learning is communicated
- Raising a variety of questions
- The use of wait time
- How teachers use modeling and think-aloud techniques
- Applying the gradual release model (I Do, We Do, You Do)
- Giving process-oriented feedback
- The pace (or flow) of a lesson
- The use of high-participation strategies to sustain focus
- Concluding lessons
- How the purpose of learning is summarized

2. Look for classroom management techniques that can be employed when it's your turn to be in charge of the classroom. Examples of these components include:

- Communicating Expectations: What phrasing do teachers use? What non-verbal signals are employed?
- Enforcement of Expectations: What actions do teachers take when their expectations are not being met? How do they go beyond reminders?
- Captivating the undivided attention of students at key moments
- Being mobile and using proximity as enforcement techniques
- The Teacher Voice: Using a matter-of-fact tone when giving a directive.
- The Teacher Eye: Using non-verbal expressions to enforce expectations
- The use of logical consequences
- Helping students reflect on their behavior
- Helping students develop self-efficacy

Be Reflective

When attending your field experiences, strive to be reflective. Here are some questions that you might ponder:

- Is teaching right for me?
- What's my purpose for wanting to become a teacher?
- Within the education field, where am I best suited to be?
- What kind of teacher do I want to be?
- What does effective instruction look like? How do I know?
- How will I create a welcoming and safe environment?
- How will I manage behaviors with consistency and firmness?
- How will I build positive relationships with students and their families?
- How will I build my instructional delivery skillset, so that I can successfully engage individual students, small groups, and whole class environments?
- What skills and dispositions do I offer that will position me towards success in student teaching and beyond?
- What skills and dispositions might I need to develop if I'm going to be successful in student teaching and beyond?
- What feedback am I receiving? How can I take steps to grow in these areas?

***“A lack of self-awareness is poison.
Reflection and review is the antidote.”***

James Clear, *Atomic Habits*



Practice Professionalism—The Direct and The Indirect

Teachers, including field experience students, are expected to be professional at all times. But what does “professional” mean? Consider two dimensions:

The Direct

Some elements of professionalism are obvious and recognizable. This dimension tends to focus on behaviors that are clear violations of job expectations, school policies, and the law. An observer can easily determine whether these expectations are being met or not. Examples include:

- Fulfilling attendance and punctuality expectations
- Being fully prepared to teach assigned lessons
- Abiding the school dress code
- Knowledge of Pennsylvania requirements for continuing professional development and licensure
- Exercising integrity and ethical behavior, as described in the *Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators*

The Indirect

Some parts of professionalism are **subtle** and **indirect**. This dimension covers behaviors that are not necessarily violations of policy or the law, but rather actions that will get you into “hot water” and/or cast you in a negative light. Examples include:

- Appearing unorganized and/or disheveled when arriving
- Failing to say hello to office staff during the sign-in process
- Continuous complaining
- Gossiping about others (parents, colleagues, other student teachers, etc.).
- Never taking materials home for preparation purposes
- Rolling your eyes when receiving feedback
- Sharing TMI (Too Much Information) about your weekend with school colleagues
- Being overly opinionated at a faculty meeting and forgetting that you are a guest
- Remaining seated and only observing, even though the host teacher has encouraged you to walk around the classroom and assist students in need
- Being on your cell phone and texting when observing or working with students
- Struggling to get along with colleagues
- Failure to take ownership for mistakes or wrongdoing

Professionalism goes beyond the meeting of basic job requirements. It also includes your everyday behaviors and whether they uplift the work environment or distract from it.

Express Gratitude

You are encouraged to conclude your field experience by expressing gratitude. A thank you note that is hand-delivered or mailed does the trick well. Your message can be simple, acknowledging the time and effort involved, as well as what you learned from the experience.

If your experience was particularly positive and you made a strong connection to with the host teacher, you may also want to consider requesting a letter of recommendation to include in your portfolio.



Contact Us



Email:

fieldexperiences@ship.edu



Call:

717.477.1487



Search:

https://www.ship.edu/academics/colleges/coehs/office_of_field_services/



Stop By:

Shippensburg University
Shippen Hall - 354
1871 Old Main Drive
Shippensburg, PA 17257

Part III:
Acknowledgement
Form

Office of Partnerships, Professional Experiences, and Outreach
College of Education and Human Services
Shippensburg University
1871 Old Main Drive
Shippensburg, PA 17257-2299
Office 717-477-1487
Fax: 717-477-4012



Acknowledgement of Field Placement Expectations
(To be submitted with your Clearance Cover Sheet)

As an education major at Shippensburg University, I understand that there are many responsibilities to which I must attend in order to successfully complete the program and become a certified teacher in the State of Pennsylvania. I have read the Field Experience Handbook carefully and understand the content. I have read the guidelines concerning **clearance requirements, dispositions, field experience procedures, and the tracking of those field experiences**. I understand that I must be proactive and timely as I work to comply with the necessary field requirements outlined in this handbook to be **eligible** to continue through the program. **Failure to do so may result in removal from the teacher education program.**

I understand that I will have access to privileged and confidential information while participating in field experiences. I agree to maintain confidentiality and professionalism in all circumstances relating to the people I meet in the field, the school districts with which I participate, and the information and data with which I am entrusted. This statement of confidentiality encompasses all communication venues including on-line media such as email, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, blogs, etc. I recognize the appropriate channels by which I can communicate concerns relating to my participation in the field. I understand that the director of the OPPEO, my department chair, or education faculty/supervisors are all appropriate professional resources and will welcome my questions and concerns. Because the consequences of breaching confidentiality are potentially very costly to the individuals involved and to the education program, **I understand that my failure to abide by this statement may result in removal from the teacher education program.**

My signature below signifies my understanding and willful compliance with the policies and procedures established in this handbook, as well as the overall expectations of Shippensburg University and the Pennsylvania State Department of Education.

Printed Name: _____

Major: _____

Student ID #: _____

Anticipated Graduation Semester: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date Signed: _____

For OPPEO Use:

Date Submitted to Office: _____

Notes: