



GRADUATE STUDENT  
PRACTICUM GUIDE  
2023-2024

Office of Field Experiences  
Department of Learning & Teaching  
School of Leadership and Education Sciences

## Introduction

Congratulations on starting your journey to becoming a credentialed California K-12 teacher! We are so excited to have you in our program. As part of your first semester of graduate studies, you will be enrolled in Practicum (EDTE 551P) for your first field observations, which are observations in a K-12 school setting. The following guidebook will provide the information you need to make this a successful experience.

Throughout your program, you will have field-based experiences each semester that will support what you learn in your coursework and provide you with opportunities to observe and practice teaching. You can find additional information for each semester's fieldwork at <https://sites.sandiego.edu/dlt/field-experience/>

Sincerely,

Amanda Roth, Ph.D.

## Contact Information

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## Introduction to Field Experiences

One of the hallmarks of a teacher education program is the time spent not only learning through coursework, but also learning alongside experienced teachers in the field. Therefore, in addition to coursework at USD, your time in the teaching field serves as a cornerstone to your development into an effective teacher. The field experiences you complete during your program are intended to scaffold increasing teaching responsibilities and align with your coursework.

The field experience component of your teacher education program consists of robust experiences in both special education and general education, regardless of the credential(s) being sought, across every semester of the program. It is our belief as a faculty that all teachers can greatly benefit from a deeper understanding of the role of the Education Specialist, even if they are only credentialed in Multiple or Single Subjects.

Further, it is our mission to place you in diverse settings throughout your program. This diversity could mean different types of schools (i.e., public or charter), grade levels, socioeconomic makeup, districts, and percentages of students who are emergent bilinguals and/or special needs. For this reason, you should expect to be in a different setting each semester of your program.

## The Progression of Field Experiences

Placement	General Overview	Teacher Candidate Goals	Hours Required
<b>Semester 1: Practicum EDTE 551P</b>	Introductory experience in the field observing teachers and students and gaining an understanding of San Diego-area schools from the teacher's perspective	Observe a classroom setting and complete field-based assignments from course instructors	A minimum of 20-30 hours minimum across one term spread across 8 or more weeks
<b>Semester 2: Extended Practicum EDTE 552P</b>	Splitting weekly time with a general education and a special education teacher in observing and practice teaching small segments of learning	Observation and 4 observed practice lessons with supervisor feedback	20 hours per week for a total of 260 hours
<b>Semester 3: Student Teaching, first credential area EDTE 553P or EDTE 554P</b>	Practice teaching alongside an experienced teacher in your content area. You will be responsible for teaching a minimum of 20 days on your own within the credential area	Practice teaching with at least 20 days of solo teaching and 6 formal observations and feedback in Tevera	Full-time for the semester for approximately 455 hours
<b>Semester 4 (depending on your program): Student Teaching, second credential area EDTE 553P or EDTE 554P</b>	Practice teaching alongside an experienced teacher in your content area. You will be responsible for teaching a minimum of 20 days on your own within the credential area	Practice teaching with at least 20 days of solo teaching and 6 formal observations and feedback in Tevera	Part-time for the semester for approximately 150 hours

## **Fieldwork Setting Prioritization Statement**

As teacher educators, we embrace anti-racist pedagogy. This comes from an understanding that we, as teachers, are in a position of privilege and power to effect and impact change, to raise our voices in the face of intolerance, and to love our students fiercely with action, truth-telling, and by doing what is right.

We also embrace teaching which respects and supports students' cultural identities. We understand that to teach is also to learn, and that our students have as much to teach us as we have to teach them. We understand that as our country's consciousness continues to evolve, so must our own understanding of the world around us. With the acknowledgement that we are lifelong-learners comes the power of growth and opportunity in working toward a more just world.

Teacher candidates in the Department of Learning and Teaching demonstrate their understanding of social justice through their implementation of anti-bias/anti-racist (ABAR) and inclusive pedagogy and approaches by providing all students with equitable access to their curriculum during field experiences.

Teacher candidates have multiple opportunities to observe and work with culturally and linguistically diverse groups, such as students with disabilities, emergent bilinguals, and students from socio-economically diverse communities. We encourage candidates to view and treat students with dignity and respect and focus on their assets and funds of knowledge. The Department prioritizes field placements in districts and schools that reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of our communities.

Teacher candidates are able to identify intentional or unintentional behaviors related to social justice and anti-racist situations and are able to address them using restorative practices and other strategies to transform beliefs and dispositions. They are reflective about their attitudes and approaches.

Teacher candidates recognize students' assets and funds of knowledge and incorporate them in their planning and implementation of lessons. They are also able to facilitate courageous conversations about inequalities or inequities and prejudice in and outside the classroom. Administrators, faculty, supervisors, and cooperating teachers support candidates in their pursuit of pedagogy and environments that are conducive to promote anti-bias/anti-racist and inclusive pedagogy.

## **Practicum Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is Practicum?**

Practicum (EDTE 551P) is an opportunity for you to begin observing the role of a teacher from their perspective while you're also starting your education studies on campus. It will work out to only a few hours per week across the semester.

### **Prerequisites: What do I need to have completed before I can begin my placement?**

You must have a TB test and a Certificate of Clearance on file with the credential office before you can be in a K-12 school.

### **I enrolled for Practicum EDTE 551P. When does the course meet?**

EDTE 551P is not like a regular course—it does NOT have a class meeting time. It is on your transcript as a stand-alone course to signify your state-mandated field experience hours. However, it is field-based observation only and does not meet as a course.

### **If we don't meet as a class, when will I get to debrief my observations?**

You will discuss your practicum observations throughout your other courses. You will have assignments in your courses that you will need to complete in a school setting (for example, you might need to shadow a student for a few class periods, or sit in on an IEP meeting, etc.)

### **How will I get a Practicum school assignment?**

You will work with the Field Office to be assigned to a local school if you don't already have a connection with one. A google form will be emailed to you at the start of the semester, and you will complete that form in order to obtain an assignment based on your commute/ location, grade level preferences, etc. Please remember that this form is a request only; placements are made at the discretion of the field office team.

### **When will my placement begin?**

In the summer, placements will be made as quickly as possible for new candidates. Practicum placements will begin on or around October 1 for fall semester starts. This allows you time to complete the prerequisites and to get a firm understanding from your course instructors about what types of assignments you will need to complete.

### **How will I organize my 20-30 minimum hours across the semester?**

For your growth and development as well as for your course assignments, it's important to spread your Practicum hours across 8-10 weeks during the semester for fall semester candidates enrolled in EDTE 551P. Also, discuss your course assignments with your professors so that you have a firm grasp of what's expected of you. Please keep in mind that it is possible (although not likely) that you might need more than 30 hours at your site to complete your assignments.

### **How is Practicum graded?**

EDTE 551P is a Pass/Fail course. Your grade is entered by the instructor of record at the end of the semester, as long as you've submitted a time log of your 20 hours minimum to Tevera. It is a state requirement that we track your field hours and can verify a minimum number of hours in the field before you can become credentialed. You will submit a time sheet every semester.

**How are schools and classrooms chosen for placements?**

For each of your field placements, schools must meet specific criteria. First, they must be local in the San Diego area, and USD must have an affiliation agreement or memorandum of understanding on file with the district in order for you to be placed there. Next, the school must meet diversity criteria, including socioeconomic and ethnic diversity. Additionally, the classrooms in which you observe and later student teach must be diverse in student ability (such as having students with disabilities and emergent bilinguals). Some of the school districts we work with frequently include: San Diego Unified, Chula Vista, Encinitas, Santee, Cajon Valley, and the High Tech High network, among others.