

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT FIELD WORK PRACTICUM

2021-2022

Abstract

This handbook provides policies and practices necessary for the success of all undergraduate students enrolled in SOLES Department of Learning & Teaching course work.

Dear Undergraduate Students,

Congratulations on starting your journey to becoming a credentialed California K-12 teacher! We are so excited that you have decided to take credential coursework as you explore the teaching pathways.

Throughout your semesters, you will have field-based experiences that will support what you learn in your Department of Learning and Teaching coursework and provide you with opportunities to observe and practice teaching. In addition to this handbook, you can find additional information for fieldwork at https://sites.sandiego.edu/dlt/field-experience/

Sincerely,

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Director of Field Experiences
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Introduction to Practicum 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.

Further, it is our mission to place you in diverse settings throughout your courses and program. This diversity could mean different types of schools (i.e., public or charter), grade levels, socioeconomic makeup, racial and ethnic composition, 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.

Prerequisites

If you are taking credential coursework requiring Practicum, you must meet with James McCarty, the Credential Analyst, and complete your Certificate of Clearance (CoC) prior to entering K-12 schools. This clearance includes a background check as well as a TB test to help schools verify that each candidate is safe to work with children in the classroom. You only need to complete the CoC once. Please maintain your own documentation of required paperwork as well.

What is Undergraduate Practicum Field Experience?

Practicum experiences will be required each semester you enroll in teacher education courses. The goal is to support your coursework assignments, where you will utilize your experiences to complete projects and papers, but also this is a CA State requirement as you prepare to earn a credential. You must complete these Practicum observation hours as well as a successful student teaching placement prior to applying for a credential.

During Practicum, you will spend your time observing in a classroom. Frequently, you will be invited (or you can even be proactive and ask about this!) to be an active observer. This means that instead of sitting in the back of the room taking notes, you might walk around and interact with students, ask questions, and assist as they work on assignments and group tasks during your time at the site. Active observation is always strongly encouraged, since you are building your way toward student teaching and becoming a credentialed teacher in the future.

Undergraduate Practicum Hours by Course

Please see the chart below to determine how many field hours you will need to complete per methods course. The foundational courses (EDTE 300P, 310P, and 311P) do not have a specific practicum placement associated with them. If you are taking one of these at the same time as one of the methods courses below, you can complete any course assignments during the same placement hours. If you are taking a foundational credential course only, consult with your professor at the beginning of the semester to determine how your assignments will be completed.

Please note that hours are cumulative, meaning that if you're enrolled in two courses that each list 20 hours each, you need to complete 40 hours total that semester. However, undergraduate students enrolled in three or more courses in one semester would only need to complete 50 hours maximum for that semester, which works out to about five hours per week for ten weeks.

Course ID	Course Title	Required Practicum Hours*
EDTE 301P	Methods for Language and Literacy	20
EDTE 302P or 304P	Elementary or Secondary Methods I	20
EDTE 303P or 305-309P	Elementary or Secondary Methods II	20
EDTE 312P	Methods for English Learners	20
EDTE 313P	Positive Behavior Support for Families, Schools and Communities	20
EDTE 317P	Assessment	20

*Please note that these are the minimum hours required for each course. Depending on your course assignments, it is possible for a student to need to spend additional hours at their site.

Requesting a Field Placement for Practicum

Each semester when you're enrolled in a course requiring a Practicum experience, you will need to formally request a placement. To do this, you will need to visit the Field Experiences website (https://sites.sandiego.edu/dlt/field-experience/) and complete the google form survey located in the "Practicum" section within the first few weeks of each semester.

If you are tutoring, volunteering, or have another connection to a school, you will be able to detail that in the google form so that a determination can be made about whether you can complete your Practicum hours at that same site. In most cases, students can complete their hours at sites they are already connected to. However, the site must have appropriate levels of student diversity, English Language Learner students, and special education students in order for you to complete some assignments. Some of the school districts we work with frequently include: San Diego Unified, Chula Vista, Encinitas, Santee, Cajon Valley, and the High Tech High charter network, among others.

Please note that your Practicum observation hours must be separate from your paid work at any school site (e.g., tutoring).

All hours for Practicum must be logged (see the practicum hours log template on the Field Experiences website) and emailed at the end of each semester to fieldadmin@sandiego.edu. Again, please remember that hours requirements are set by the State of California, and we must be able to verify that you have met the requirements both for the successful completion of USD programs as well as for state credentialing.

Guidelines for Practicum Hours

Your total Practicum hours for each semester should be divided equally among 8 or more weeks of the semester. This means that if you have a 20-hour Practicum, you should spend about 3 hours per week at your site. Typically, you would work this out with your assigned site to be one morning or afternoon per week, for example, every Tuesday morning in a particular classroom. In this way, the school and teachers know when to expect you, how long you'll stay for the day, and will have a consistent schedule for you.

When you're at the site, it's a great idea to see the same class each week. In this way, you as an observer will have a chance to see the same students experiencing learning over the course of at least 8 weeks. This will greatly impact your ability to complete assignments and make observations of teaching and learning during your Practicum hours.

Students are not permitted to complete their hours within a condensed time frame (for example, you cannot complete all 20 hours in only one week to merely "get it done"). The goal of Practicum is to assist your development as a future teacher and support what you're learning in courses. To that end, the consistency of your observations over time is highly encouraged.

What is Student Teaching?

Once you complete the necessary Practicum hours and coursework, you might be ready to move into a Student Teaching placement semester. Student Teaching is a state-required, culminating field experience where you will be in the classroom full-time alongside an assigned cooperating/guide/mentor teacher in your credential area. During this time, you will be assigned a field supervisor who will formally observe you at least 6 times throughout the course of the semester. As per state requirements, you must "solo teach" at least 20 days during Student Teaching and successfully master the CA Teacher Performance Expectation Standards. More information about this experience can be found in the Student Teaching Handbook.