

Field Experiences Guide Sheet

Congratulations! You are embarking on a field experience as part of your journey towards becoming a teacher. Pre-practicum field experiences are critical opportunities for you to observe and participate in a wide variety of school and community settings so that you can carefully examine school and community life and educational practices across a diverse range of contexts. Both in your coursework and in the field, you will be thinking about teaching and learning through the lenses of six overarching competency areas under which the faculty of the School of Education at Roger Williams University has organized the Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards (RIPTS):

1. Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning
2. Creating and Maintaining an Effective Environment for Student Learning
3. Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning
4. Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for All Students
5. Assessing Student Learning
6. Developing as a Professional Educator

This guide sheet is intended to help you understand the resources that exist in the School of Education at Roger Williams University to support you in the field, as well as your role and responsibilities during pre-practicum field experiences. Please be aware that all methods courses in the School of Education require students to participate in field experiences. Prior to beginning Practicum, you must demonstrate that you have successfully completed field experiences in both urban and suburban schools. The number of field hours required of you, and the assignments and their purposes are stated in course syllabi. Appropriate field settings are determined by faculty in the School of Education in conjunction with the Field Experiences Office.

Field experiences are arranged in one of several ways. Some faculty members choose to partner with one or two schools and organize whole or small group visits for students. Others ask students to find their own placements or to work with the Field Experiences Office to find appropriate placements. If this is the case, please come to the *Field Experiences Office on the second floor of the Main Library* between 8 AM and 4 PM, Monday through Friday to speak with Kim Leimer, Director of Partnerships and Field Experiences (kleimer@rwu.edu), or Lee Ann Cameron, Coordinator of Field Experiences (lcameron@rwu.edu). You will be asked to complete a Field Experiences Request Form so that we can suggest an appropriate, high-quality placement. Please be sure to attach a copy of your field assignment to your Field Experience Request Form. *The Field Experiences Office requires at least one week in advance to coordinate a placement.*

Once your placement has been determined, you will receive contact information for the school. It is your responsibility to contact the school administrator or cooperating teacher over the telephone to set up an initial meeting. At this time, find out whether the school requires a *criminal background check*, and if so, complete the attached paperwork, mail it to the appropriate agency, and bring your criminal background clearance document to your initial meeting.

At the initial meeting, it is essential that you share your field experience assignment with the school administrator and/or cooperating teacher, and jointly determine how you will carry out your plans (if you are not certain about your exact goals/responsibilities based on the course assignment, meet with your professor before your initial meeting at the school to clarify expectations). Be explicit with the school administrator and/or cooperating teacher about what you need to do: conduct an observation; interact with students, school personnel, and

families; co-teach a lesson; meet with the cooperating teacher during the span of a few planning periods; etc. *You must provide the Case Study Parent Permission Form to the teacher if your assignment requires a case study, and provide the Media Permission Form if your assignment requires you to film, record, photograph, or use e-mail or the internet with students. You may not engage in case study work or implement media projects with students until these forms are signed and returned to the school by parents or guardians.*

Take notes during the initial meeting as a record of your discussion, and provide a copy to the cooperating teacher as soon as possible via e-mail. Make sure to exchange contact information with the cooperating teacher, and ask him or her to tell you the most efficient way to get in touch before, during, and after the school day.

Based on the plan you create with the cooperating teacher, you are now ready to begin your field placement. Please be respectful and responsible when you interact with a partnering school site. Please keep in mind the following:

1. Be energized and alert! Teaching is a demanding profession, and you must be ready to positively engage all students for success.
2. Arrive 5-10 minutes ahead of time. If you will be late or absent, telephone the school at the main number and leave a message for the teacher.
3. Abide by the school/district dress code for teaching personnel. Dress professionally (business casual is usually appropriate in K-12 schools, but some schools may require men to wear ties). Necklines, waistbands, and hems should be discreet. Clothing and accessories that may distract young people should be avoided—remember, the focus is teaching and learning!
4. Maintain the stance of a learner. You will have the opportunity to observe/participate in a multitude of interactions between administrators, teachers, students, and families. Many of these will take you out of your comfort zone. Plan, act, and reflect, and do not make instantaneous judgments.
5. Everything you observe must remain confidential between you and your cooperating teacher, unless the physical and/or emotional health and safety of a child is in jeopardy.
6. Continually communicate with your cooperating teacher according to the plan you made at your initial meeting. Ask questions at the appropriate moment.
7. Take risks and make mistakes, and encourage students to do the same. Celebrate successes, both yours and your students'!
8. Contact the Field Experiences Office or your professor immediately if there is a significant issue with your placement with which you need help in problem-solving. The faculty and staff in the School of Education at Roger Williams University are committed to supporting your success. Just as you will strive to provide all K-12 students with the best possible educational experience, we strive to do the same in the School of Education!

Have a fantastic field experience!