



State University of New York at Oswego
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

**Teacher Education Field Placement
Policies for Practica & Student Teaching**

September 2003

Section 1. Assignment of Field Placements

- A. Field placements in teacher education are made in compliance with college policies for “Internships, Student Teaching, and Other Experiential Placements” found in the *SUNY Oswego Student Handbook*.
- B. To qualify for a required practicum or student teaching placement, the candidate must be admitted to a SUNY Oswego teacher education program; meet all program requirements; be registered for the appropriate field experience course(s); and submit completed forms or application on time.
- C. Candidates who require special accommodations in a field placement due to a disability must arrange such accommodations through the Disability Services Office (215 Swetman, 315-312-3358) prior to placement.
- D. All field placements are made through the Field Placement Office.
 - 1. Candidates should not contact schools or teachers directly to arrange placements. Established professional relationships among SUNY Oswego, specific schools and school districts, and other regional institutions of higher education are jeopardized if direct candidate contacts occur.
 - 2. The Field Placement Office may ask for candidate preferences in the location and/or scheduling of field placements, but preferred placement is not guaranteed. Field placements are made as close to the candidate’s preferred location or residence as feasible, given the quality and quantity of available placements, and the legitimate needs of other candidates, the schools, and college supervisors. Student teachers are not placed in school settings that they have worked in; attended as students; or where friends or relatives are employed, in order to minimize role confusion and conflict-of-interest issues that can undermine professional growth, performance, and evaluation.

- E. The Field Placement Office will notify candidates of their field placements by mail, supplemented by a telephone call or email if time is short. Candidates should report to the main office of the assigned school on the first day of their placement, and follow the school’s security procedures on all visits. Student teachers should contact their cooperating teacher soon after the placement is made to make specific arrangements for the placement to begin.
- F. A candidate who refuses an assigned placement will not be reassigned until the following quarter or semester, due to the large number of placements made each semester and the legitimate needs of other candidates.
- G. Candidates must arrange their own transportation to and from field placements. Time spent commuting to and from field placements cannot be applied to the time requirements of the New York State Education Department, the College, and/or the schools.

Section 2. Performance Requirements for Candidates in Field Placements.

- A. The first obligation of candidates is to protect the welfare, safety, and rights of students, who may be minors or individuals in circumstances of significant vulnerability; the second is to promote student authentic learning in a socially just environment as described in the *School of Education Conceptual Framework* (www.oswego.edu/education/conceptualframework.k.htm). The standards of professional behavior expected of all teacher education candidates are described in the “Professional Competencies for Teacher Education Programs” in the *SUNY Oswego Student Handbook*, and in the *New York State Code of Ethics for Educators* (www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/resteachers/codeofethics.htm).
- B. Candidates must successfully complete all program requirements that apply to field experiences, including those described in the college catalog; student handbooks/manuals; course outlines and syllabi; and other materials distributed by the department and/or faculty teaching courses in the program.

SUNY Oswego Field Placement Office
315-312-3098 fpoffice@oswego.edu

- C. Candidates must comply with school rules, policies, and procedures, including those concerning student safety and management/discipline; and teacher attendance, performance (appropriate to the field experience), and behavior. Candidate attire must meet the standard set by teachers in the school; be distinguishable from students; and comply with school dress code(s) for teachers and students.

Section 3. Field Placement Problem Resolution.

Despite good intentions, problems sometimes arise between the candidate and his/her cooperating teacher. If the problem cannot be resolved through discussion, the following steps should be taken, in the order listed, by the candidate, the cooperating teacher, and/or the school administrator:

- A. Contact the practicum course instructor or college supervisor. She/he will discuss the matter with each party individually, and may organize and facilitate a meeting among the parties.
- B. If no satisfactory resolution is reached, contact the department chair or other designated department representative. She/he will discuss the matter with each party, and determine the next steps to be taken either to resolve the issue or initiate other appropriate action.

Section 4. Violations of Criminal Law by Teacher Education Candidates. Candidates charged with violations of criminal law must report such charges immediately to the department chair, or to the Field Placement Coordinator (315-312-3098, fpoffice@oswego.edu) who will report such charges immediately to the department chair. Such candidates will be immediately suspended from participation in field placement experiences and/or suspended from the teacher education program until an evaluation and determination has been made concerning the seriousness of the offence or offences charged and the bearing, if any, that the criminal charges will have on the candidate's fitness or ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of the field placement or until the charges have been dismissed.

Section 5. Evaluating Candidate Performance in Field Experiences

- A. The final grade for a field experience (satisfactory or unsatisfactory) is assigned by the college instructor, in consultation with the cooperating teacher, based on the academic and professional performance standards adopted by each program.

1. Candidates have a right to appeal an academic failure of a field placement in accordance with the College's Academic Appeal Process as set forth in the **SUNY Oswego Student Handbook**.
 2. A candidate who is asked to leave a placement by school personnel or is removed from a placement by the College for unsatisfactory professional performance will receive a failing grade for the course. A failing grade resulting from a request by school personnel to remove a candidate from a placement is not subject to appeal through the College.
 3. Candidates have a right to appeal the consequences of a professional failure of a field placement in accordance with the School of Education's Fair Process Policy & Procedures as set forth in the **SUNY Oswego Student Handbook** and www.oswego.edu/education/handbook.htm.
- B. The College is not obligated to provide a subsequent field placement to a candidate who has failed any field experience. Failing any field experience may result in immediate action to terminate a candidate from the teacher education program and to not recommend the candidate for certification. Alternatively, the College may require a waiting period and/or other remediation activities and assignments to be completed prior to assigning a subsequent field placement.
 - C. Any subsequent field placement that is permitted by the College after failing a practicum or student teaching experience requires repeating the entire experience in the subsequent placement.
 - D. The College will not provide a subsequent assignment to any candidate who has failed two field placements. Failing two field placements will result in terminating the candidate from the program.
 - E. The department chair or designee, in consultation with the college supervisor, cooperating teacher, and dean, may determine that a student teaching experience must be extended to insure that the student teacher has met the required standard of performance to pass the associated student teaching course. Under these circumstances, the student teacher must continue student teaching in a satisfactory manner on a full-time basis for the assigned additional period, which may be up to 7 weeks beyond the end of the original placement. Failure to do so will result in failing the student teaching course.

Section 6. Strike Policy. If a candidate is placed in a district that goes on strike, the following procedures should be followed:

- A. If a strike is anticipated or goes into effect, the candidate should notify as soon as possible the college supervisor/course instructor and/or the Field Placement Coordinator (315-312-3098).
- B. *Candidates are not to take part in any strike activities in the district.* Candidates should not enter the school building during a strike without first obtaining the permission of the cooperating teacher, the school administrator, and the president of the local teacher's union. If it is necessary for a candidate to enter the building, the cooperating teacher should assist the candidate in obtaining the approval of all required parties.

Section 7. Basic Responsibilities of Student Teachers. Basic responsibilities of student teachers include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Contact the cooperating teacher soon after the placement is made to make specific arrangements for the placement to begin. A preliminary visit to the school is strongly encouraged.
- B. Work with the college supervisor to meet all requirements outlined in the appropriate student teaching handbook/manual, course outline/syllabus, and other materials provided by the department or college supervisor.
- C. Become familiar early in the placement with the school's faculty and student handbooks. Comply with all school rules, policies, procedures, and standards, including those concerning student safety and management/discipline; and teacher attendance, professional performance, behavior, and attire.
- D. Become familiar early in the placement with classroom curriculum, materials, and management/discipline procedures.
- E. Meet regularly with the cooperating teacher to plan instruction and other required activities. Lesson plans must be approved by the cooperating teacher in advance.
- F. Work the same hours and schedule, and perform the same duties, as the cooperating teacher. The school district calendar is followed for the duration of the placement.

- G. Communicate and interact with school personnel, parents and families, and students in a professional, tactful manner that preserves confidentiality, establishes rapport, respects diversity, and supports appropriate collegial and student-teacher relationships.
- H. Gradually accept increased responsibility for the cooperating teacher's professional workload under the guidance of the cooperating teacher and college supervisor over the duration of the placement. The student teacher is expected to assume substantial or complete responsibility for the cooperating teacher's workload, as described in the program-specific student teaching handbook/manual.

Section 8. Attendance While Student Teaching

- A. The beginning and ending dates of student teaching placements are established by the official college calendar and/or the department within the framework established by the college calendar. Between these dates, the student teacher is required to:
 - 1. Be at the placement every day that school is in session and/or teachers are in attendance and follow the vacation schedule of the school district to which they are assigned.
 - 2. Work the same hours and schedule, and perform the same duties, as the cooperating teacher.
 - 3. Attend school faculty meetings, parent meetings, extracurricular activities, and all other events where teacher participation is expected by the school district, unless the cooperating teacher and/or school administrator determines otherwise.
- B. The student teacher should expect to be in attendance each day school is in session. However, in case of absence or tardiness due to illness or other unavoidable emergency, the student teacher must:
 - 1. Call the college supervisor, the cooperating teacher, and the school as soon as possible, but no later than one hour before school starts on the day of an absence.
 - 2. Arrange delivery to the cooperating teacher of all materials that the student teacher possesses that are necessary for instruction on the day of the absence.
 - 3. Follow school district policy for reporting and documenting teacher tardiness and absence to school officials.

Section 9. Outside Employment or Coursework While Student Teaching. Student teaching is a full-time responsibility. Therefore, employment outside the school or additional coursework while student teaching is strongly discouraged. Student teachers are not permitted to arrive late or leave the school early to accommodate such activities. Should employment outside the school or additional coursework while student teaching hinder the performance of the student teacher, an unsatisfactory grade may be assigned and the student teacher removed from the placement (see Section 5).

Section 10. Substitute Teaching by Student Teachers. The maximum benefit of student teaching accrues when the student teacher works under the direct supervision of a certified cooperating teacher, an unlikely circumstance in the usual substitute teaching situation. On the other hand, the student teacher can benefit from the opportunity to assume full responsibility for the classroom if he/she has the confidence of the cooperating teacher and has demonstrated the necessary competence. Substitute teaching may be permitted under the following carefully controlled conditions:

- A. Substitute teaching will be permitted only in the classroom to which the student teacher is assigned, and only during the later part of either placement after the student teacher has demonstrated the necessary competence. Student teachers may not substitute for a teacher other than his/her own cooperating teacher.
- B. An assignment to substitute teach for more than one day must have the prior approval of the college supervisor, the department chair, the building administrator, and the cooperating teacher. The building administrator must verify that the student teacher is legally permitted to function as a substitute teacher under school district policy. No student teacher will be permitted to accept a full-time substituting position.
- C. Compensation for substitute teaching is governed by school district policy and is at the sole discretion of the school district.

Section 11. Legal Aspects of Student Teaching

- A. All full-time undergraduate and graduate students at SUNY Oswego, including those enrolled in student teaching courses, are required to carry accident and hospitalization insurance covering themselves, which is available to a group rate through SUNY Oswego's Auxiliary Services.

- B. Student teachers are covered by New York State Education Law §3023, which requires that each school district “save harmless and protect all teachers, practice or cadet teachers... from financial loss arising out of any claim, demand, suit or judgment by reason of alleged negligence or other act resulting in accidental bodily injury to any person, or accidental damage to the property of any person within or without the school building, provided such teacher, practice or cadet teacher... at the time of the accident or injury was acting in the discharge of his duties within the scope of his employment or authorized volunteer duties and/or under the direction of said board of education....” A student teacher who is involved in any such accident must immediately inform his/her cooperating teacher and school administrator, and notify the college supervisor as soon as possible thereafter. A student teacher who is served with a summons, complaint or other legal process involving an incident which occurred during the course of their student teaching placement must immediately forward a copy of the legal papers to the school administrator and the college supervisor.
- C. Student teachers are covered by New York State Education Law §3001, which states in effect that a school district may permit a practice or cadet teacher enrolled in an approved teacher education program to teach a class without the presence of the certified teacher in the classroom provided the classroom certified teacher is available at all times and retains supervision of the practice or cadet teacher.
- D. New York State Social Services Law §413 require school officials “to report or cause a report to be made ... when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before them in their professional or official capacity is an abused or maltreated child....” Student teachers who become aware of such information must consult with his/her cooperating teacher and school administrator immediately, and notify the college supervisor as soon as possible thereafter. The cooperating teacher and school will assist the student teacher in the event that the individual designated by the school district to report matters of abuse or neglect determines that a report should be filed.
- E. Student teachers are covered by New York State Education Law §409-a, which requires that eye safety devices be worn as required in shops or laboratory settings, including but not limited to those used in teaching science, technology, and vocational subjects at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.