Clinical Experience Policies

Introduction

The purpose of clinical experiences is to give the candidate an opportunity to observe and have an experience in the real life context of today’s schools with the guidance of a cooperating professional and the benefit of feedback from an experienced external observer.

Clinical experiences offer invaluable opportunities for the candidate and they also provide the GSE with professional assessments of the candidate’s performance in the field.

Candidates enrolled in licensure programs in Portland State University’s Graduate School of Education (GSE) are required to meet regulations for Oregon’s state licensing board, Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC), and NCATE, PSU’s national accreditation agency.

Assignment of Clinical Experiences

• The GSE Field Placement Office (FPO) facilitates the placement of candidates in Curriculum and Instruction, Special Education, Counselor Education and Administrative programs. Decisions about placements are determined in collaboration with school districts and GSE faculty.

• Diversity: The GSE is committed to providing candidates opportunities to observe and practice in diverse settings. Diversity is found in all school districts and programs with which the GSE has contracts for placement, in terms of language, ethnic groups, socio-economic, gender, English language learners, disabilities and exceptionalities. Note: Candidates may not directly ask students about ethnicity or socio-economic status.

• Candidate Eligibility: To be eligible for placement, each candidate must be admitted to PSU and a program within the GSE, be registered for appropriate clinical experience course(s) and submit a clinical experience application which is found on the GSE website. This application needs to be typed and free of error. It will be forwarded, in part, to schools as part of the request for placement.
• Upon receipt of the required application, the FPO must follow each district’s protocol for identifying a school and cooperating teacher. **Due to the nature of the placement process and requirements by districts, candidates are not to have contact with a specific cooperating professional, principal, or district personnel, and are not to make any arrangements with a school district for a student teaching placement.** Please note that candidates may not practice in schools where family members work or study, in order to minimize role confusion and conflict-of-interest issues that can undermine professional growth, performance and evaluation. Established partnerships and professional relationships between PSU, specific schools and school districts are jeopardized if direct candidate contacts occur.

• The FPO may ask for candidate preferences in the location of clinical experiences, but preferred placement is not guaranteed.

• A candidate who refuses an assigned placement will not be able to be reassigned until all other candidates are placed for that term and may not have a placement until the following term, due to the large number of placements made each term and the needs of other candidates.

**Criteria for selection of placements:**

- The placement site is willing and able to provide learning experiences and assignments appropriate to the educational needs of the candidate and in accordance with the curriculum and program requirements of the GSE and TSPC.
- A qualified cooperating professional is available in accordance with GSE and TSPC requirements.
- The placement will fit the candidate’s needs in terms of content area and authorization level.

**Criteria for selection of cooperating professionals:**

- Holds the appropriate licensure for the assignment and have at least two years’ experience at that level.
- Supports the GSE program for which they have been assigned a candidate. See Roles and Responsibilities of the Cooperating Professional.
- Agrees to carry out the responsibilities of mentoring a candidate.
Internships:

A student of an approved institution who serves as a teacher, personnel specialist, or administrator under the supervision of the institution and of the school district in order to acquire practical experience in lieu of student teaching or supervised practica is called an intern. When candidates become interns prior to completion of their field experience(s), program faculty and/or candidates need to notify the Field Placement Office of the candidate’s employment status in the school district. Upon verification of employment, the Field Placement Office will send an internship contract, on behalf of the candidate and the program, to the school district and university contracts office for appropriate signatures. Internship contracts will be kept in the candidate’s file. The contract defines the responsibilities of all parties involved and includes language consistent with current Oregon Administrative Rules.

Guest Placements:

There are times when another university will request a guest placement for one of their candidates. The FPO will provide a copy of the guest placement contract and outline of expectations for all parties involved, and assist with placement and supervision of a guest candidate, if possible.

Roles and Responsibilities

Candidates:

Pre-Placement:

1. Meet professional behavioral standards as outlined in program handbooks and listed below:
   a. National Education Association’s Code of Ethics of the Education Profession
      (http://www.nea.org/home/19583.htm)
   b. Graduate School of Education Student Conduct Code
      (http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.education/files/media_assets/gse_handbook_student_conduct.pdf)
   c. Portland State University Student Conduct Code
      (http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.education/files/media_assets/gse_handbook_student_conduct.pdf)
   d. Be responsible to read and understand GSE’s Behavior and Performance Guidelines, found here:

2. Complete and submit the online clinical experience application, review these responsibilities, and enroll in TK-20, the Graduate School of Education's
comprehensive data system. Delays in any of these requirements could disqualify a student from acceptance for placement or delay the start of the placement.

3. Disclose any information that may affect eligibility for placement.
4. Inform the FPO of any change in contact information, including address, phone number, email address, or name.
5. Successfully complete all program requirements that apply to clinical experience.
6. Submit application for background check and fingerprints to TSPC in a timely manner (instructions found here: http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.education/files/gse_fp_fingerprint_inst.pdf), along with fee for processing. In addition students are responsible to follow up on any additional TSPC requests for information. Candidates who have not completed this requirement or are denied fingerprint clearance will not be allowed in the field for clinical experience.
7. Be available for interview in person, or by phone, with cooperating professional and/or principal/program administrator if requested.
8. Check email regularly to learn about placement opportunities or confirmation. This is most often how the FPO will communicate with candidates.
9. Attend program orientations.

After Placement Confirmation:

10. Contact the cooperating professional after the placement is confirmed to make specific arrangements for the placement to begin. A preliminary visit to the school is strongly encouraged, if possible.
11. Find out about any additional security measures required for the district in which they are placed, and comply fully before placement begins.
12. Arrange transportation to and from clinical experiences. Assignments to schools will not be contingent on whether or not the candidate has access to a vehicle. The candidate will have to provide for his/her own reliable transportation and assignments will not be changed once they are contracted with the principals and cooperating professional, based upon transportation issues. Candidate should anticipate the cost of commuting as part of their academic expenses.
13. Become familiar early in the placement with the school’s/program’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, professional dress and personal conduct. It is also important that candidates comply with policies and procedures of PSU and the GSE. Professionally and competently perform all mutually agreed upon tasks as assigned by the cooperating professional.
14. Do not assume that the cooperating professional will put candidate program needs above those of the K-12 students because they have agreed to be mentor.
15. Always protect the welfare, safety and rights of students. K-12 student welfare comes above the needs of the candidate. See individual program student handbooks for policies on harassment and bullying.
16. Meet regularly with the cooperating professional to plan instruction and other required activities. Lesson plans must be approved by the cooperating professional in advance.

17. 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 relationships.

18. Make every effort to participate in and attend placement site staff meetings, conferences or seminars as requested by the cooperating professional. It is expected that the cooperating professional will exercise discretion in placing these demands on candidates.

19. Seek advice from university supervisor and/or cohort leader when unsure of how to proceed or if a concern arises that cannot be resolved with the cooperating professional.

20. Outside activities cannot negatively impact candidate’s ability to perform their responsibilities within the placement. Should outside activities hinder the performance of the candidate, an unsatisfactory grade may be assigned and the candidate may be removed from the placement.

21. All GSE candidates enrolled in student teaching courses are required to carry liability insurance. If necessary, this can be provided by the Oregon Education Association at a special student rate (http://www.oregoned.org/site/pp.asp?c=9dKKYMDH&b=487067)

Programs will:

1. Follow Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR: 584-017-0060) related to the adequacy of supervisor qualifications that reflect relevant accreditation, regulatory, professional and industry standards.

2. Reserve the right to decline to place a candidate, or to remove a candidate from a clinical experience if the candidate cannot meet relevant professional or regulatory standards or if the candidate’s performance is such that it could be harmful to themselves or others.

3. Ensure university supervisors are aware of and agree to abide by GSE policies.

4. Ensure candidates receive materials relevant to the clinical experience, including program handbooks, compensation information, evaluation forms, etc.

5. Ensure candidates are properly informed of their responsibilities to uphold PSU and GSE standards, and professional standards outlined on the student letter of understanding.

6. Provide written notice to any candidate who is asked to withdraw from a clinical experience due to inadequate performance.
Cohort Leader or Program Coordinator/Manager will:

1. Review student admission files for levels and prerequisites prior to meeting with the FPO.
2. Meet with the FPO before the placement process begins to review student requests and qualifications.
3. Notify FPO of change to any student’s program as it relates to placement.
4. Be available for consultation with cooperating professional regarding curriculum and field expectations.
5. Meet with cooperating professionals to ensure that learning opportunities are available and appropriate to the curriculum objectives and candidate needs.
6. Provide necessary support to the cooperating professional and the candidate to facilitate the provision of a learning experience as defined by the GSE program.
7. Maintain a close working relationship with the university supervisors assigned to their candidates who are in clinical experiences.
8. Assist with seminars and workshops to orient candidates, cooperating professionals and/or university supervisors.
9. Attend/facilitate meetings to resolve any problems in the field. The meetings should be held at the earliest sign of difficulty.
10. Assign the candidate grades for clinical experience on receipt of candidate performance evaluations.

Field Placement Office will:

1. Coordinate clinical experiences and manage the administrative components of the placements, within PSU and with our partner districts.
2. Take reasonable steps to ensure that placements are diverse, safe and free from harassment and discrimination.
3. Ensure that clinical experiences meet the requirements of the state and the GSE program for which they are made.
4. Design, coordinate and implement the process for the placing of candidates in placement settings in consultation with the Associate Dean.
5. Communicate with placement sites and the GSE program faculty with respect to the development and maintenance of placements.
7. Review evaluations of clinical experiences to ensure high quality clinical experiences for candidates.
8. Maintain contracts will all partnering school districts and agencies.
9. Oversee compensation of all cooperating professionals who act as mentors during clinical experience.
10. Work with program faculty to provide program orientations for candidates.
11. Work with program faculty to provide orientations to cooperating professionals and university supervisors.
12. Oversee compensation for mileage reimbursement to university supervisors.
13. Field inquiries from potential university supervisors and forward to programs.
Site will:

1. Provide a cooperating professional who holds the licensure appropriate to the request, per state requirements.
2. Provide a learning atmosphere which includes the candidate as a member of the placement setting and as a learning professional.
3. Provide the necessary facilities so that the candidate may fulfill duties.
4. Inform the candidate of school policies and rules.
5. Notify the FPO at the earliest possible indication if they will be unable to fulfill the responsibility of the placement for any reason.
6. Notify the FPO of any change in cooperating professional for any reason.
7. Notify FPO if any problem arises with the placement.

Cooperating Professional will:

1. Make the candidate feel welcome through introductions to students and colleagues, provide a desk or other personal space, provide information about procedures and policies and the school's culture.
2. Provide candidate with varied opportunities to work with students as early as possible, in concert with program expectations.
3. Provide opportunities for the candidate to implement educational activities as part of their program requirements.
4. Plan regular times to meet with the candidate for planning and documented feedback.
5. Be available to meet with the candidate’s university supervisor for scheduled conferences and occasional informal conversations.
6. Guide the candidate in completing and carrying out work sample or other program requirements.
7. Complete appropriate evaluation forms prior to 3-way evaluative conferences.
8. Communicate any concerns to the university supervisor, cohort leader, or both.
9. If requested, write a letter of recommendation for the candidate.

University Supervisor will:

1. Attend meetings and orientations for university supervisors
2. Establish contact with cooperating teachers and principals/program administrators during the first week of clinical experience, explaining the structure and expectations of student teaching, and responding to questions
3. Make at least three supportive/evaluative visits to each student teacher each term. These visits will usually include observation of a lesson or activity, then meeting with the candidate to provide written and verbal feedback. For candidates seeking two authorization levels, at least one of these visits should be conducted at the 2nd level authorization placement. If a candidate needs more support, the supervisor should be prepared to visit more often and/or at greater length
4. Conduct at least two evaluative conferences with the candidate and cooperating teacher during each term of student teaching to complete the evaluation forms.
5. Complete the required evaluation forms online in TK20 by appropriate program deadlines.
6. Assist the candidate in planning and developing the work samples.
7. Assess the candidate’s work samples.
8. Respond to any concerns related to the clinical experience raised by the candidate or by school personnel and immediately share those concerns with the cohort leader or student advisor.
9. Read and become familiar with the GSE Instructor Handbook: Field Experience Supervision, found here: http://gse.pdx.edu/handbooks/instructor/field_exp.php
10. If requested, write a letter of recommendation for the candidate.

Evaluating Candidate Performance in Clinical Experiences

- The final grade for a clinical experience is assigned by the instructor/cohort leader, with input and recommendations from the university supervisor and cooperating professional, based on the academic and professional performance standards adopted by each program.

- A candidate who is asked to leave a placement by school personnel or is removed from a placement by the GSE for unsatisfactory professional performance may receive a no pass (NP) for the course.

- A candidate who does not make satisfactory progress in any field experience will receive a no pass (NP) will be required to register for an additional field experience, and to complete additional work before continuing in the field.

- Candidates have a right to appeal an academic failure of a clinical experience in accordance with the GSE appeal process as outlined in the GSE code of student conduct (http://www.pdx.edu/education/gse_students.html).

- The GSE is not obligated to provide a subsequent clinical experience to a candidate who has failed any clinical experience. Failing any clinical experience may result in immediate action to terminate a candidate from the program and to not recommend the candidate for licensure. Alternatively, the program may require a waiting period and/or other remediation activities and assignments to be completed prior to assigning a subsequent clinical experience. Additional expectations will be put in writing and shared with all appropriate program personnel.

- Any subsequent clinical experience that is approved after failing a practicum or clinical experience requires registering for the clinical experience course and repeating the entire experience in the subsequent placement.
• The GSE will not provide a subsequent assignment to any candidate who has failed two clinical experiences. Failing two clinical experiences will result in terminating the candidate from the program.

**Policies Regarding Leave:**

If a pre-service candidate cannot complete clinical experience on schedule, s/he will need to refer to department policies regarding request for leave of absence.

**Student-initiated Leave of Absence:**

Occasionally it becomes necessary for a candidate to take a leave of absence from the program, due circumstances beyond his/her control (ie., called up to military duty). In those instances, the candidate must request a leave of absence in writing. If a written request is not submitted, candidate may not be eligible for re-entry.

How to request a leave of absence:

• Check with program/department regarding “request for leave of absence” process.
• Indicate reasons for requesting leave, anticipated return date, and include all appropriate signatures.
• Copy of this request need to go to: FPO, Cohort Leader, Program Coordinator, Chair and student file.

When requesting a return to the program, candidates will:

• Reactivate TK-20 file/submit “request to return” in writing by the deadline established by the program department.
• Copy of this request need to go to: FPO, Cohort Leader, Program Coordinator, Chair and student file.
• Resubmit new student teaching application no later than the next deadline for submission, or as directed by the department.

**Program-initiated Leave of Absence/Termination:**

There may be occasions when a program requests that a candidate take a leave or be terminated. The concerns could include candidate’s academic or behavioral performance. See GSE code of conduct for process relating to these circumstances:

If a candidate chooses to appeal a decision of the committee, the GSE’s appeal process is outlined here:

The University’s appeals process can be found here:
http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct

Clinical Experience Problem Resolution

In rare instances during clinical experiences it may become necessary for a candidate to be transferred to another assignment or it may become necessary to discontinue the clinical experience. Despite good intentions, problems sometimes arise between the candidate and his/her cooperating professional. If the problem cannot be resolved through discussion, the following steps should be taken by the candidate, the cooperating professional, FPO, supervisor, program coordinator and/or the school administrator. School partners will receive detailed information from each program on whom to contact the minute a concern arises.

• If a cooperating professional has a concern about a candidate, they should contact supervisor and/or cohort leader. The cohort leader will notify the program coordinator. A meeting and/or performance review will be arranged (see Section IV, A. of the Behavior and Performance Guidelines found here: http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.education/files/gse_handbook_student_conduct.pdf) in a timely manner between candidate, cohort leader or program coordinator, and supervisor. The department representative, in consultation with the cooperating professional and university supervisor, and with input from the student, will design a plan of action with a timeline to remedy those concerns, if necessary. A copy of any written plans (or meeting minutes) will be sent to the program coordinator, FPO and student file. The university supervisor and/or cohort leader will keep records of progress or lack thereof. Cooperating professionals will be encouraged to keep written documentation of any issues that arise. If the concerns cannot be remedied, the department chair and/or program coordinator will determine candidate’s eligibility to remain in the program and/or need for a new placement, and notify university supervisor and FPO of the final determination. If the Cooperating Professional’s concerns are in regard to unprofessional behavior on the part of the candidate, see Behavior and Performance Guidelines, VI., A. found here: http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.education/files/gse_handbook_student_conduct.pdf
• **If, after all efforts at remediation have occurred, or there is an emergency whereby the site requests that the candidate be removed,** it will be done so immediately. The department chair or program coordinator will review the circumstances and develop a plan of action which may include termination from the program. Program coordinator will notify university supervisor and FPO of the final determination.

• **If a candidate requests a change in placement,** the cohort leader and/or program coordinator, university supervisor and cooperating professional will meet to address concerns. A plan of action will be designed to remedy those concerns, and the FPO, cohort leader, supervisor and program coordinator will all be copied. All initial efforts shall be directed toward resolving the problem at the site. If the concerns cannot be remedied, the department chair and/or program coordinator will determine need for a new placement, and notify university supervisor and FPO of the final determination. This action will be contingent upon the availability of another approved clinical experience.

• **When the university supervisor, cohort leader or program coordinator** becomes aware of a problem that may necessitate moving the candidate, they will initiate an on-site conference with the candidate and the cooperating professional. The building administrator and/or program department chair may be included. The problem will be defined, and a written plan of assistance (see Behavior and Performance Guidelines, IV., B. found here: [http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.education/files/gse_handbook_student_conduct.pdf](http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.education/files/gse_handbook_student_conduct.pdf)) with timeline will be developed in consultation with the student, cooperating professional and university supervisor. A copy will be sent to the program coordinator and the FPO. The university supervisor and/or cohort leader will keep records of progress or lack thereof. If the problem cannot be remediated within a specified period of time, as outlined in the plan of action, a meeting will be held with the university supervisor, candidate, department chair and/or program coordinator, and the cooperating professional to determine next course of action. If necessary, a performance review may be requested (see Behavior and Performance Guidelines, IV., A. found here: [http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.education/files/gse_handbook_student_conduct.pdf](http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.education/files/gse_handbook_student_conduct.pdf)). The university supervisor should bring a copy of the plan of assistance, an explanation of why it was not successful, all supervisor observations, evaluations and records and all cooperating teacher and district input. The university supervisor or program coordinator will provide a written determination of the candidate’s status in their program to the FPO.

• **If the site has a concern about a supervisor:** The cooperating professional or school administrator should contact the cohort leader with their concerns. The cohort leader will notify the appropriate department chair so appropriate action can be taken. If the supervisor is working in more than one program, those department chairs will also be notified. The FPO will be kept apprised of any changed of
supervision. And the department chair will share information with the school administrator about the status of the supervisor.

• **Site Responsibility:** Notify the candidate’s university supervisor or cohort leader the minute a concern arises. Cooperating professionals in the field will be encouraged to keep written documentation of any issues that arise. If additional intervention is needed, the cooperating professional along with the university supervisor and candidate will work to resolve any problems that arise before considering change of placement. In the event that the issues are not resolvable, the candidate’s program coordinator, cohort leader or university supervisor will contact the FPO with a copy of the written determination of the candidate’s status in their program. If the site administrator requests removal of the candidate, it will be done immediately.

• **Candidate Responsibility:** If a candidate believes there is a valid reason for a change in clinical experience, s/he will notify the cohort leader. The cohort leader will meet with the candidate and supervisor to define the issue and develop a written plan, if necessary. Additional meetings with the above, program coordinator and/or department chair, and the cooperating professional will be scheduled, if needed, to implement a plan. The cohort leader will notify the FPO of any potential concerns with the placement. The candidate will not pursue any change or adjustment to their placement on their own. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in dismissal from the program. The candidate is expected to carry out his/her assignment in a professional manner until the placement issue is resolved.

• **Supervisor Responsibility:** The university supervisor has a multitude of responsibilities with regard to the candidate’s successful completion of field requirements. In addition to those noted above, the university supervisor will immediately notify cohort leader, program coordinator and FPO if a problem arises between candidate and cooperating professional, or others at the site. The supervisor will participate, by invitation, in meetings with the cooperating professional, candidate, cohort leader, principal, department chair, and/or program coordinator.

• **Cohort Leader Responsibility:** The cohort leader plays a central role in the orchestration of the successful field experience. This happens through communication with the candidates, university supervisors, school partners and FPO. In the event of a problem in a field placement, the cohort leader will be involved in facilitation of meetings with the university supervisor, cooperating professional, and candidate to determine if the placement is salvageable. The cohort leader is responsible to provide immediate written information to the program coordinator, university supervisor, department chair and FPO if a change in placement is needed.
Medical Leave of Absence


Violations of Criminal Law

• Candidates charged with violations of criminal law must report such charges immediately to the department chair, or to the Field Placement Coordinator, who will report such charges immediately to the department chair.

• Such candidates will immediately be suspended from participation in clinical experiences and/or suspended from the program until an evaluation and determination has been made concerning the seriousness of the offense or offenses 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 clinical experience or until the charges have been dismissed.

Strike

• If a strike goes into effect in a public school system that has agreed to host a candidate, the candidate is not permitted to be present at the school site.

• During a strike candidates must inform the cooperating professional and principal/program administrator that candidates are not permitted to be present while the strike is in effect. The candidate must notify their university supervisor when the strike goes into effect and ask the cooperating professional to inform the candidate when the strike has ended.

• Should a strike impact a candidate’s clinical experience, the FPO will request a waiver of student teaching requirements as outlined in OAR 584-017-0042.

Security Clearance

• In addition to the state and program requirements for background clearance before any clinical experience, some school districts require additional security measures.
• Candidates are required to find out about any additional security measures required for the district in which they are placed, and comply fully before placement begins.