

Southwestern Illinois College

Department of Education

Field Experience Handbook



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Welcome Future Education Professionals!

We are excited to work with each of you as you embark on this transformative journey towards becoming educators.

Observation is a critical phase in your academic and professional development. It marks the transition from being a student in the classroom to assuming the role of an educator responsible for nurturing the minds of young learners. You will encounter diverse learners with unique needs and backgrounds, and it is through these experiences that you will truly understand the impact teachers can have on their students' lives.

This experience will provide you with invaluable insights that will shape your teaching career.

Throughout the education program, you will have the chance to work closely with experienced teachers, observing their classroom practices. These experiences will enable you to apply the knowledge and theories you have acquired during your coursework, while also encouraging you to develop your unique teaching style and approach.

We believe in fostering a supportive and collaborative learning environment for our future educators. You will be part of a dedicated team of educators who are committed to guiding and mentoring you during your journey. We encourage you to seek guidance, ask questions, and actively participate in discussions with your fellow SWIC classmates

Once again, welcome to the many fields of education. I look forward to witnessing your growth and the positive impact you will have on the lives of your students. If you have any questions or need support throughout this journey, please do not hesitate to reach out to any member of our team.

Best wishes for a rewarding and enriching field experience!

Sincerely,

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Field Experience Overview

Goals of the Field Experience Program

Experience:

1. To provide students with opportunities to gain practical field experience through observation, planning, and practice under the direction of a Southwestern Illinois College instructor.
2. To support students' development in awareness, knowledge, skills, and strategies to work effectively and ethically in a learning and teaching environment.

Classroom Management:

1. Develop effective strategies for maintaining a positive and inclusive classroom environment.
2. Learn to manage classroom behavior and create clear expectations for students.

Instructional Design:

1. Design and deliver engaging lesson plans that cater to diverse learning styles.
2. Incorporate technology and interactive activities to enhance learning outcomes

Differentiated Instruction:

1. Explore methods to adapt teaching techniques for students with varying abilities and backgrounds.
2. Create personalized learning experiences to address individual student needs.

Assessment and Feedback:

1. Gain experience in creating fair and reliable assessments to measure student progress.
2. Provide constructive feedback that supports student growth and improvement.

Collaboration and Communication:

1. Work effectively with colleagues, parents, and other stakeholders to foster a supportive educational community.
2. Develop strong communication skills for sharing information and insights with various audiences.

Inclusive Education:

1. Learn strategies to accommodate diverse learners, including those with special needs and English language learners.
2. Create an inclusive classroom that celebrates cultural differences and promotes respect.

Reflective Practice:

1. Cultivate the habit of reflecting on teaching experiences to identify areas of improvement.
2. Use reflection to refine instructional strategies and enhance teaching effectiveness.

Curriculum Development:

1. Participate in the development and alignment of curriculum with educational standards.
2. Explore methods for creating engaging and relevant learning materials.

Classroom Technology Integration:

1. Gain proficiency in using educational technology tools to enhance teaching and learning.
2. Discover innovative ways to integrate technology into lessons effectively.

Student Engagement:

1. Develop strategies to capture and maintain students' attention and curiosity.
2. Create a dynamic and interactive classroom environment that promotes active participation.

Classroom Assessment Techniques:

1. Explore a variety of formative assessment techniques to gauge student understanding in real-time.
2. Use assessment data to adjust teaching strategies and address learning gaps.

Cultural Competence:

1. Enhance understanding of various cultural perspectives and their impact on the classroom.
2. Create a culturally sensitive and responsive teaching approach that respects students' backgrounds.

Illinois Educator Code of Ethics

Preamble

Educators fundamentally believe that meeting the educational needs of each student is critical to the profession. The Illinois Educators' Code of Ethics is a set of core principles, values, and responsibilities that set expectations to guide practice and inspire professional excellence in relation to federal, state, and local policies, rules, regulations, and collective bargaining agreements. Illinois educators encourage the application of these core principles throughout the education community (n.d., Illinois Educator Code of Ethics).

Definition of an Educator

An educator is a person who holds or is applying for a certificate or approval or is enrolled in an Illinois pre-service education preparation program.

Principles

The Illinois Educator Code of Ethics contains five core principles which provide a foundation for the responsibilities and commitments of Illinois Educators.

1. Responsibility to Students
 - a. The Illinois educator is committed to creating, promoting, and implementing a learning environment that is accessible to each student, enables students to achieve the highest academic potential, and maximizes their ability to succeed in academic and employment settings as a responsible member of society.
2. Responsibility to Self
 - a. The Illinois Educator is committed to establishing high professional standards for their practice and striving to meet these standards through their performance.

3. Responsibility to Colleagues and the Profession
 - a. The Illinois Educator is committed to collaborating with school and district colleagues and other professionals in the interest of student learning.
4. Responsibility to Parents, Families, and Communities
 - a. The Illinois Educator will collaborate, build trust, and respect confidentiality with parents, families, and communities to create effective instruction and learning environments for each student.
5. Responsibility to the Illinois State Board of Education
 - a. The Illinois Educator is committed to supporting the Administrative and School Codes, state and federal laws and regulations, and the Illinois State Board of Education's standards for highly qualified educators.

What I need before my site visit

Mandated Reporter Training

Please use this link

<https://mr.dcfstraining.org/UserAuth/Login!loginPage.action;jsessionid=925459924E23C2D41F3281230B8766E1> and register.

If you have completed this training within the last 2 years, you can utilize that training. You will need to include your training certificate in your correspondence with your site.

Ask your district if there is any **ADDITIONAL** paperwork or processes you need to complete before your visit(s).

Some districts may require additional requirements before you are allowed on site. It is your responsibility to ask about these processes and have them completed at least two business days before your visit.

Background Checks

If your site requires one, YOU will need to go to the place they require to obtain one- so ask what their requirements are for observation. Usually, this is the ROE (Regional Office of Education).

Please make sure you know what you need to bring with you for your appointment. They will ask you where to send your results, but you can (and should) ask them for a copy of them as well. Make sure you do this before your visit. Bring a copy of your results (just in case), your class schedule (that shows you are in this class), the signed classroom observation confidentiality acknowledgement form, and a copy of your assignment.

Background Check Frequent Questions and Answers

1. Who is required to obtain a background check?

All teacher candidates enrolled in courses that require field experience.

2. What records are accessed through the background check?

Background checks screen for the following records: criminal history, sex offender registry, child abuse/neglect records, employee disqualification registry, child-care facility licensing records, and foster parent licensing records.

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3. When do I obtain a background check?

At the beginning of the semester and before the field experience begins.

4. How do I obtain a background check?

Follow the instructions above.

5. Who will pay for the background check?

Teacher candidates will pay for the background check. Once you complete the instructions above, you can access the information and request an updated background check if necessary.

6. What if a prior incident might affect my background check?

Please discuss this with your instructor for further guidance. Your site will ultimately decide if the offence would screen you out of the observation opportunity.

Policy for Field Experience Remediation

Teacher Candidates should display professional behavior at all times.

Concerns may include, but are not limited to:

Collaboration Issues: The ability to work together, especially in a joint intellectual effort.

Honesty/Integrity: The ability to demonstrate truthfulness to oneself and to others; demonstrate moral excellence and trustworthiness.

Respect: The ability to honor, value, and demonstrate consideration and regard for oneself and others.

Respect for the Learning Environment: Respect and seriousness of intent to acquire and support knowledge.

Emotional Maturity: The ability to adjust one's emotional state to a suitable level of intensity in order to remain engaged with one's surroundings.

Reflection: The ability to review, analyze, and evaluate the success of past decisions in an effort to make better decisions in the future.

Flexibility: The willingness to accept and adapt to change.

Responsibility: To act independently, demonstrating accountability, reliability and sound judgment.

Behaviors that are not resolvable through the remediation process may include, but are not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, sexual offenses, substance abuse, altercations with students, cooperating teachers, supervisors, or faculty members. Some behaviors may warrant immediate termination from the teacher education program.

If concerns about a teacher candidate arise, the process below should be followed.

1. The school district should contact the course instructor and provide information about the concern. If the course instructor and school district deem the concern resolvable, the course instructor will address the concern with the teacher candidate. The course instructor will document, share the information with appropriate parties, and provide an update to the school district.
2. If a school district requests that a teacher candidate be removed from the field experience, the course instructor will gather and document the information. The course instructor will contact the teacher candidate and appropriate parties to keep all abreast of the event.
3. If an instance where an improvement plan is necessary, the plan will be discussed collaboratively between appropriate parties, and implementation should begin immediately. The improvement plan should address goals, actions, and timeline – and not limited to.
4. The appropriate parties will reconvene to discuss the improvement plan process before the timeline ends.

5. If progress has been made, the teacher candidate may request and complete the field experience in a different school district.
6. If progress has not been made, appropriate parties will convene to discuss further options.

The improvement plan identifies areas needing improvement and includes the following components (not limited to).

- a. Areas needing improvement
- b. Implementation approaches
- c. Desired goals and outcomes
- d. Timeline with benchmarks
- e. Signatures of appropriate parties

Helpful information for Education Observations:

Classroom Observation Request Form

Date of Request: _____

Name of Individual Making Request: _____

Phone: (cell) _____ email: _____

Class name, prefix, number, and section: _____

Name of Site: _____

Proposed observation subject (age, content, skill):

Purpose of the Observation:

Preferred Visit Days and Times (please provide at least three options):

Length of time needed (please state reason if the observation is to be greater than 90 minutes):

Classroom Observation Confidentiality Acknowledgement Form

I, _____, enrolled in the _____ course, have requested to observe a classroom or program attended by students. I acknowledge that confidentiality laws are applicable. In exchange for permission to observe, I agree to abide by the following conditions:

1. During the observation, I will not address the teacher or support staff present, interact with students, or otherwise disrupt the environment.
2. During the observation, I will remain in the location directed by the teacher or staff.
3. I will not ask questions during the observation pertaining to the students in the classroom related to their services, disability, or achievement.
4. I will not seek to study or look at work samples from students other than the ones I am observing during the observation.
5. I acknowledge that I cannot disclose any student-identifying information to others related to the observation.
6. I acknowledge that school student record information, including all information related to the student including, but not limited to, disability, individualized education plan, is highly confidential information protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Illinois School Records Act, the School Student Records Act, the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Confidentiality Act, et. al. and that I have no right to access such information for students without permission. To the extent that I glean information related to another student's disability, educational needs, and/or educational program during the observation, I must maintain said information in strict confidence, and I may not disclose it to others.

Name of Observer

Signature of Observer

Date

If there are any issues regarding the aforementioned student, please contact the following Southwestern Illinois Coordinators:

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Helpful Documents for Practicum Students

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Host Teacher Letter for Field Experience

Dear Host Teacher,

My name is _____, student at Southwestern Illinois College. Teacher candidates at Southwestern Illinois College are required to complete X field experience hours. Thank you for allowing our students to complete their field experience in your school district and classroom.

At each field experience assignment, teacher candidates must complete the following:

1. The teacher candidate will provide the host teacher with a timesheet to sign for time verification.
2. The teacher candidate will provide the host teacher with an evaluation form of the teacher candidate.
3. The teacher candidate will keep a running Field Experience Journal to record their experiences.
4. Once the timesheet and evaluation form has been signed, the teacher candidate will submit it to Brightspace along with the Field Experience Journal.

Field Experience Suggested Activities:

- Assisting with routines and classroom maintenance
- Working with individual or small groups of students to improve study skills
- Helping plan classroom work and projects
- Monitoring recess or hallway activities
- Providing clerical assistance
 - Compiling data for records
 - Helping teachers prepare and keep records
 - Collecting and distributing materials for teachers and students
 - Helping to secure, prepare, and care for digital learning tools, library books, illustrative material, and other teaching aids used in the classroom
 - Working with students who need help with specific learning skills
 - Helping plan classroom work and individual and group projects
 - Assisting in the preparation of assessments

Evaluation of Teacher Candidate

Level of Demonstration	Distinguished 4	Proficient 3	Sufficient 2	Emerging 1	Insufficient 0
1. Teacher candidate asks questions to clarify the context of the classroom and better understand the teacher's role, student behavior, and procedures.					
2. Teacher candidate is respectful of the host teacher and keeps them informed about changes.					
3. Teacher candidate displays professional dress and behavior that does not disrupt the learning environment.					
4. Teacher candidate displays active initiative and seeks direction from the host teacher.					
5. Teacher candidate demonstrates enthusiasm and persistence.					
6. Teacher candidate demonstrates adaptability in various classroom situations.					
7. Teacher candidate establishes rapport with the building's host teacher, students, staff members, and community.					
8. Teacher candidate demonstrates appropriate written and oral communication					
9. Teacher candidate initiates tasks and requests opportunities to assist.					
10. Teacher candidate is respectful of the host teacher's time and demonstrates appropriate planning.					

Distinguished (4)	Proficient (3)	Sufficient (2)	Emerging (1)	Insufficient (0)
The teacher candidate exhibits exemplary, thoughtful, developmentally appropriate skills, behaviors, and dispositions.	The teacher candidate exhibits appropriate skills, behaviors, and dispositions.	The teacher candidate exhibited the skills, behaviors, and dispositions after the host teacher's guidance and support.	Skills, behavior, and/or disposition need improvement.	The skills, behavior, and/or disposition were expected but not displayed or not displayed appropriately by the teacher candidate.

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