



Field Experience Handbook

The LeBron James Family Foundation
School of Education

The University of Akron

A resource for students who are engaged in field experience.

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School of Education
The Office of Student Teaching and Field Experience (OSTFE)
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Contact Information

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Location

Mailing Address	Physical Address
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Hours (School Year)	Hours (Summer)
8am – 5pm	8am – 4:30pm

Deadlines and Timelines

Prior to the start of the semester, the Field Office will secure field placements for each course Requiring field/clinical experiences. These placements will be emailed to the instructor at the start of the semester, along with information about the protocols to be followed for our students, and for our instructors. Instructors will contact the school where the placement was finalized to go over logistics and requirements for UA students. Instructors will also give their students the information of where the placement is and what days and times each student will go to complete their required field hours. Students will be required to meet with their assigned mentor teacher to introduce themselves to discuss requirements for the semester, and to follow any other requirements their instructor may have for the course. Failure to complete all required hours may result in not passing the course.



What is “field experience” or “clinical” and why are they important?

Field Experiences are early and ongoing practice opportunities to apply content and pedagogical knowledge in P-12 settings to progressively develop and demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Field experience placements are secured by The Office of Student Teaching and Field Experience, directed by University of Akron faculty, facilitated by teacher mentors, and are an integral part of education courses leading up to student teaching.

Clinical experiences are on and off-campus activities that provide teacher education candidates with opportunities to apply and demonstrate professional knowledge of theory to practice, skills, and dispositions through collaborative and facilitated learning in field-based assignments, tasks, activities, and assessments across a variety of settings. These include, but are not limited to, culminating clinical practices such as student teaching or internship. Clinical experience placements are secured by The Office of Student Teaching and Field Experience, directed by University of Akron faculty, facilitated by teacher mentors, and are an integral part of education courses leading up to student teaching. Activities include, but are not limited to, observing, tutoring, mini-teaching, lesson planning, and developing instructional materials. Clinical experiences may take place in public or non-public schools, or in community agencies approved by the University of Akron.

To support these activities, the OSTFE has developed relationships with local school districts and agencies based on the field experience needs of each course in the teacher education program. Specific prearranged agreements allow the OSTFE to ensure our students receive diverse and appropriate exposure to a variety of educational settings during the field experience portion of the teacher education program. Having pre-assigned placement locations for each course also expedites the matching and placement confirmation process. The timing of placements, however, is dependent upon the availability, response, and needs of our P-12 partner during a given semester. Our policy is to make placements based on the prearranged agreements with schools and agencies in the Greater Akron and surrounding areas.

The University of Akron, School of Education, is committed to providing clinical experiences that are developmental and sequential. This allows teacher candidates to have the opportunity to build upon their foundational base of knowledge, technology, diversity, and ethics and to facilitate their abilities as Educators as Decision Makers at every level of their professional education program.

The School of Education has identified four phases through which the candidates progress. The phases are defined so that the candidates can learn about learners, learn the principles of teaching, learn to apply the principles of teaching, and finally learn to teach.

PHASE ONE: LEARNING ABOUT LEARNERS: In Phase I, candidates are provided with field experiences which are primarily observational in nature. The candidates observe P-12 students within their system and the context of their learning or educational environment in the form of various school systems and board meetings. Students also observe P-12 students that are typically developing and those with exceptionalities. These observations take place in planned urban or suburban settings so that candidates can observe various aspects of diversity within the educational setting and how all aspects of the classroom environments as well as the characteristics of the learner impact student learning.

PHASE TWO: LEARNING ABOUT TEACHING: In Phase II, candidates are provided with the opportunity to learn about how issues such as careful classroom planning, assessment, diversity and social issues, and management impact student learning. In this Phase, candidates are provided with increased opportunities to combine theory and practice under the supervision and guidance of the university faculty person in conjunction with the classroom teacher. Candidates are provided with feedback on their performance and ability to utilize these skills to impact student learning in individualized, small group, or large group instruction.

PHASE III LEARNING TO APPLY THE PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING: In this phase, candidates increasingly learn about, apply, and synthesize information specific to their licensure areas. There is increasing emphasis upon connecting theory to practice.

PHASE FOUR: LEARNING TO TEACH: In the final phase, candidates are increasingly independent and responsible for application of theory to the day-to-day planning and decisions found in the educational setting. In this phase, they must demonstrate how they positively impact student learning as well as work collaboratively with parents/caregivers and colleagues.

Key Terms and Definitions

Key Term	Definitions	Use
AYA	Adolescent/Young Adult	When referring to licensure area
BCI/FBI	Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (Ohio) Federal Bureau of Investigation	Background check/report – REQUIRED for onsite experiences at school and agencies
ECITP	Early Childhood Intervention Teacher Program	When referring to licensure area
EC Form	Employed Candidate Form	Form given to instructor if you are working and seeking to do your field/clinical work at your work location during non-paid hours. Must be approved by your instructor (based on age group and type of experience needed for the course) to use this placement
PITP	Primary Inclusive Teacher Program	When referring to licensure area
SPED M/M	Special Education Mild/Moderate	When referring to licensure area
SPED M/I	Special Education Moderate/Intense	When referring to licensure area
OSTFE	Office of Student Teaching and Field Experience	Department name
P-12	Preschool through grade 12	When referring to public/private school partners

List of Courses That Require Field/Clinical Experience

5100:200	Intro to Ed	10
5200:215	Child Fam School	10
5200:325	Early Childhood Inclusive Practicum	33
5200:352	Teaching Math in Incl Primary Setting	10
5200:454	Inquiry Learning Primary Inclusion	35
5250:300	Middle Level Education	15
5250:333	Teaching Science ML Learner	15
5250:338	Teaching Social Studies ML	15
5250:342	Teaching Math ML Learner	15
5250:350	Teaching Lang. Arts & Media ML Learner	15
5300:330	Teach Adol/ML Lit.	30
5300:420	Instructional Techniques	50
5300:421	Field Tech Secondary	ST
5500:286	Teaching Multiple Texts	10
5500:308	EC/SPED Instr Design/Assess	30
5500:308	AYA Instr Design/Assess	30
5500:308	ML Instr Design/Assess	30
5500:430/530	AYA LA Clinical Teach I	50
5500:430/530	AYA SS Clinical Teach I	50
5500:430/530	AYA Sci Clinical Teach I	50
5500:430/530	AYA Math Clinical Teach I	50
5500:440	Literacy in Content Areas	20
5500:445	Assessment and Instruction	30
5500:458	Inclusive Field Experience	50
5500:628	Lit. Assessment Practicum	25.5
5610:448	Ind. Mod/Int. Ed. Needs	10
5610:450/550	SPED Prog. For Primary	40
5610:452/552	SPED Prog. For Secd/Trans.	20
5610:454/554	SPED Mod/Int. II	20
5610:456	Inclusive Field Exp. Mod/Int	50
5610:457	SPED M/M II	20

Field/Clinical Experience Decorum

Completing your field hours in the educational setting is an essential part of your program requirements. As a student from The University of Akron, you are always expected to demonstrate professional conduct and behavior consistent with that of educators. Professional behavior and a disposition that contributes to the learning environment will benefit both University of Akron students and our P-12 partner schools. Professional behavior may also enhance your chances for employment in that district or the ability to obtain references.

It is important that you follow the mandatory requirements noted below during field experiences and all times in school settings. These requirements provide operational definitions of professional behavior and expectations. If you believe you require special consideration, please speak to your course instructor about exceptions. Also, university instructors have discretion to intervene for unique situations that may not be described below. Failure to follow requirements for field experiences may result in such action as is deemed necessary and prudent, including but not limited to, removal from the field experience by the school, by the University, or both.

Attendance, Punctuality and Other School Policies

1. Take a copy of your current (within a year) BCI/FBI to the office of your field experience location. BCI/FBIs must be done YEARLY as you go through your Pre-Service training. You **MUST** give a copy to the school as it is required by the state of Ohio that all visitors, volunteers, have this documentation prior to working in the classrooms. **If you will be doing your Student Teaching within the year of securing your BCI/FBI**, ask the office where you are having them done to send copies of your documents to ODE (Ohio Department of Education) as they will then be on file when you eventually apply for licensure. **A copy should be sent to your address to allow you to use it in field and student teaching within a one-year time period.**
2. Be aware that some students have lost placements when they did not make timely visits to their field locations. Also, please be certain to complete your field work in the specified time block (if one is given) or complete them by the designated date given by your instructor.
3. Completion of all field experience hours **is required**. If you are ill, have a family emergency or other excused absence, you are to notify both your university instructor and the school. Vacations are not considered excused absences. Do not knowingly expose any school personnel or child to a contagious disease that may compromise the health of the PreK-12 students or staff. *Students not completing their field/clinical work for a specific course face failure of that course. The field component is required and mandatory as part of the Pre-Teaching Training.*
4. Students **may NOT make their own field/clinical placements**. SOE works to provide you varied clinical/field experiences, so you have a wide variety of learning experiences. If you are employed and your location fits the needs and requirements of your field work, you must secure permission both from your work site and your instructor (filling out the EC-Employed candidate form.) Remember, all field work is done during NON-PAID hours.
5. Take a copy of the expectations of your course to your placement and share with your mentor teacher so you can plan to meet the demands of your course during your experience.
6. Demonstrate punctuality. Be on time. Try to avoid disrupting classes by arriving after classes have started or before a class is finished. If possible, arrive and leave during class changes or

other transition times. It is understood that students may need exceptions due to conflicts between university time schedules and the field site time schedules. Notify your site and your university instructor/supervisor if you are going to be late. Sign in at the school office.

7. Go to the school only at your assigned times unless you have specific permission for an alternative time approved by your university instructor. ALWAYS sign in at the office.
8. Make certain that any documentation/signatures regarding the completion of the field hours are completed as instructed.
9. Observe all PreK – 12 school policies and procedures (e.g., adhere to school parking rules, follow copy machine etiquette, etc.).
10. Familiarize yourself with school disciplinary/medical/crisis procedures. If there is a question about your role, please seek clarification from the field site and/or the university instructor.
11. If at any time you are uncertain about requests made from your classroom instructor, inform your university instructor immediately.
12. Do not provide personal transportation to any PreK-12 students. Always maintain professional boundaries and do not arrange individualized, outside of school social activities with students or families. Chaperoning events with your mentor teacher, which are organized by your mentor, is acceptable.
13. Do not allow any PreK-12 student to follow your social media sites. Do not take pictures or post any information related to where you are doing your field experience.
14. Always wear your UA Student ID visibly and be ready to produce this if you are questioned. Wear any identification badge as required by the school.

Dispositions and Courtesy

1. Be courteous to **ALL** school personnel with whom you come in contact.
2. Remember, you are a representative of **The LeBron James Family Foundation School of Education**. Dress and act in a professional manner. **Do NOT text, type on your laptop, etc.** Many of our students have secured employment because of their professional performance done during field/clinical experiences. Remember, on your resume you can list your field placement location and hours and time frame under your experience section. As a new teacher it is important to show potential employers you have worked in, or volunteered, in school settings.
3. When asked to participate in an activity other than one specifically aligned with your university assignment, accept the request graciously. If the request is over and above expectations, be courteous and inform your university instructor for resolution.
4. Do not interrupt classes (e.g., when two or more university students are assigned to the same room, do not talk to each other or type on your laptop). Enter and leave the room quietly.
5. **Turn off your cell phone during your field experience.** Keep it in your car to limit distractions.
6. No food or beverages are permitted in schools or classrooms.
7. Be aware that any information you post on public internet sites is available to future employers and colleagues. Therefore, discretion is advised. Clean your social media. Placements have been lost because of poor judgment in posting on social media.

Appearance and Dress

1. It is always required that the student demonstrate an appropriate professional appearance and demeanor during the field experience. Consider each visit to the school as an informal “interview” for a teaching position.
2. Attempt to dress and maintain hygiene in a manner consistent with the educators, staff and administrators at your field site. Business attire is generally an acceptable standard. For example, it is required that the following items are **not** worn in the field sites: shorts, short skirts (shorter than mid-thigh), sunglasses, hats, flip-flops, bedroom slippers or clothing that gives the impression of pajamas, jogging suits, garments that don't meet in the middle and expose skin, any clothing with writing (other than small brand name logos or labels), any clothing that is too low, too short, too tight. Leggings and yoga pants should only be worn under a tunic or skirt. If you must ask someone if your outfit is appropriate, it probably isn't. If a field site teacher or administrator makes a recommendation regarding your manner of dress or hygiene, you are expected to cooperate to the best of your ability. Exceptions to these guidelines can be made with the approval of your university instructor.

Legal and Ethical Issues

1. University assignments related to these experiences must be written in a professional manner. While the assignment may require a description or analysis of teaching methods or other classroom variables as they relate to your course content, you are not to critique personal characteristics of administrators, teachers, or students. You are not to make any statements that you cannot support with objective observational data. When writing reports, consider that what you write may be read by administrators, the teacher, other teachers, or parents. If you use terms and content that is unprofessional and could be considered insulting, it should not be written. For example, you should not describe any child with terms such as “dirty, lazy, obnoxious” etc. Consult with your field site teacher for suggestions regarding appropriate and professional writing if you are attempting to describe behaviors beyond the range expected of students in your setting.
2. Confidentiality is a *must*. In your observation reports, omit names of teachers, children, school or district information to maintain a professional policy of confidentiality. In addition, you are not to informally share any identifiable or confidential information with outside individuals such as your friends or family. Please familiarize yourself with FERPA laws and how they apply to professional communication in the P-12 setting. You are not to take any student records outside of the field setting. You must obtain permission if you anticipate taking pictures, videos, or recordings of any nature of the students in your classrooms, or at any school related activities/functions.
3. Be aware that you are a **mandated reporter**. If a situation arises, inform your instructor, field site teacher and University Supervisor immediately. You remain obligated to report any incident of suspected abuse or neglect. You are also under an obligation to report any statements or behaviors that suggest possible harm to self or others. Consult with the building administrator immediately if you are aware of situations which pose the possibility of risk and inform your university instructor.
4. Please be certain your social media is “clean” from anything which could be considered unprofessional (comments on your timeline, pictures, “like” pages which are inappropriate, etc.)

As stated above, the above requirements are not meant to include all possible situations or events that you may encounter when in your field settings. If any situation or event arises which gives you cause for concern, consult with your university instructor and/or field site teacher or administrator for clarification and direction. In addition, if the school setting has policy requirements not listed above, The University of Akron student is expected to comply with those expectations. If discrepancies exist between UA and school policies, the student should inform The University of Akron instructor and seek resolution.

Liability Issues Related to Field Experience

You are only permitted to be in the classroom with students under the supervision of your mentor teacher.

You should not be left alone to supervise students if your mentor teacher is not in the school. If your mentor is absent either a substitute or another faculty member serves as mentor during the absence.

You should not be expected to fulfill the role of a substitute teacher if your mentor teacher is out.

At times, situations may occur in a classroom, which require intervention of a professional, licensed teacher or administrator. You should refrain from intervening within these situations. Allow your mentor teacher or an administrator to handle the situation.

**Your mentor teacher should be aware of these requirements.*

What is “service learning”?

Service learning is a component of an educational program that helps prepare a student for the environment in which they will eventually work (i.e., school building). Service Learning is a volunteer type exposure where students go into the community and provide services or support, such as reading to students, while gaining valuable experience that can be applied to future educational opportunities. Although different from field experience, service-learning experiences help the student acknowledge the needs of the community as well as bolster the overall learning experience. Sometimes the definitions of ‘service learning’ and ‘field experience’ overlap, but the distinction is noted by your instructor in the course syllabus. This, too, can be added to your work experience on your resume.

** NOTE: Service-learning hours are not coordinated by the OSTFE.*

What paperwork do I need for my field experience?

BCI/FBI Documentation

If you are taking a course that requires field work, or student teaching, you are **REQUIRED** to have both a current BCI and FBI clearance. This is a mandated requirement from the school districts. Background checks must be completed each summer **prior** to the start of each academic year and are good for 12 consecutive months.

Note: You must present a copy to the school district(s) you are assigned to on the day you begin placement. DO NOT send a copy to the School of Education or Office of Student Teaching; it is your responsibility to manage your documents.

How to get your background check

To complete your BCI/FBI background check, we suggest searching online at www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/backgroundcheck to find the nearly 30 other Webcheck locations in Summit County or nearby. A possible location is: *People Check Services 101 5th St SE SUITE D & J, Barberton, OH 44203.*

What codes to use and where to send your background check?

Field Experience - Note: Any courses that require field hours, use the following codes and send to the following locations:		
FBI	3319 39	Public School District or Chartered Nonpublic School Employees and School Bus Drivers
BCI	3319 39B1	School Employees - non-teaching positions
<p>Note: Send copies of background check to your HOME address and to Ohio Department of Education (ODE) *DO NOT send copies to The University of Akron</p>		

Student Teaching - Note: For student teaching placement, use the following codes and send to the following locations:		
FBI	3319 39	Public School District or Chartered Nonpublic School Employees and School Bus Drivers
BCI	3319 39B1	School Employees - non-teaching positions
<p>Note: Send copies of background check to your HOME address and to Ohio Department of Education (ODE) *DO NOT send copies to The University of Akron</p>		

If you're unable to obtain your background check

If you do not have the required documents ready for when your field course or student teaching starts:

- You may not be able to complete the requirements of the course.

- We cannot waive this requirement and give you permission to start at the school. Once again, this is a mandated district policy.

If there is a violation on your record:

- If you have a misdemeanor on your record, and ODE says it will not prevent you from obtaining a license, school districts may not accept you in their schools and our office cannot guarantee placement for field and/or Student Teaching.
- If you incur a new violation that will be placed on your BCI and or FBI report once you have started the semester, you must report it to the Director of Teacher Education immediately.

If the student is from out-of-the-country, they must submit an Ohio Fingerprint Card. To secure this they must email ODE at educator.licensure@education.ohio.gov to request the card; complete the card, then submit it back to ODE for processing. This takes time so we advise out-of-country students to secure this during the summer months in preparation for the upcoming semester. This, too, must be done yearly. A copy of this document is taken to schools for field and/or student teaching experiences.

Field Placement Removal Process

If a teacher candidate is withdrawn from a clinical/field placement at the request of the school administration, the field site teacher, the course instructor or the Director of the Office of Student Teaching and Field Experiences, decision on how to proceed will be made on an individual basis by the parties involved in the removal. The possibility does exist for the entire experience to be repeated. Please also note that an additional placement is not always an available option. You should contact your instructor and the Field Services Director immediately, if you are in a situation where removal has occurred.

Additionally, all university policies regarding student conduct continue to be in effect during field experiences. Please refer to Code of Student Conduct at www.uakron.edu/sja.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What if I am taking more than one course that has field experience requirements?

A: SOE courses have different requirements (urban vs. suburban, early childhood vs. secondary, etc.), so you will likely have separate placements for each course. It is important for you to experience a wide variety of experiences as you complete your program plan. Additionally, these experiences should be listed on your resume under "Work Experiences." When applying for employment, or in the job interview, you should refer to your various field/clinical experiences and the skills you obtained through those experiences. Be aware of field requirements when making your course schedule as there is additional time, and additional locations you will be responsible for doing for EACH field course.

Remember, too, that you must arrange for your own transportation for your field work.

Q: I have a job. How can I do my field/clinical hours?

A: Unfortunately, the options for field placements that are in the evening are extremely limited. We have some after-school placements, but these are few and far between. Additionally, these sites usually allow you to complete 1-2 hours per week – not a feasible situation if you need to complete 50 hours of field/clinical experience. The best solution is to be creative with your time. Many UA students have completed their hours by observing every day during their lunch break. Others have rearranged their work schedules or taken a few days off work to complete their field hours. Teachers are usually flexible in allowing you to fit your field hours into your schedule. Please contact your instructor if you foresee a problem in complete all the required hours for your course.

Q: What if I am already teaching in a school building; can I complete my field hours there?

A: If you want to do your field hours in the district in which you work, you will need to complete the Employee Candidate Request Form (Appendix A). Once your course instructor has approved your request, you can begin your field hours. Please note that you must get approval through your instructor. **Remember, field/clinical hours must be during your NON-PAID time.**

You must be a full-time employee to be eligible for Employee Candidate consideration

Q: What do I do once I receive my placement?

A: Contact the location via email, phone, or both, right away. Don't delay, wait until a holiday break, or hesitate for any other reason before contacting the site or coordinator because this might result in a loss of the placement. Also, when calling your field site, be ready to discuss the days and times you would like to complete your field/clinical hours. Teachers are usually very flexible in allowing you to work out a schedule. Some teachers may also want to know exactly what you will be doing (observing, instructing, etc.) so be ready to discuss your course requirements. Also, make sure to have a copy of your current (within 1 year) BCI/FBI to supply to the field site.

Q: I haven't heard back from my mentor teacher. What should I do?

A: Remember to be patient; teachers are very busy with their classroom responsibilities. However, if it has been more than a week, try contacting them through another method (i.e. email instead of phone). If you still do not hear back after several attempts, it might be best to approach the site and ask to meet with your contact person. Remember, all field/clinical placements have been PRE-APPROVED though the specific protocols for that district/location.

Q: Do I have to keep a field log?

A: The OSTFE does not require a field log. Some instructors require you to keep a log and if this is the case, your instructor should provide you with that information. Always ask your instructor about what your requirements are for the field experience. The OSTFE does not have any information about individual course/instructor requirements and does not keep any field logs on hand, nor does the Field Office keep track of your specific field hours and what you did for that field work. You should keep track of this information for both your resume, and for your eventual Student Teaching Application.

Q: What if there is a problem with my placement?

A: Discuss the problem first with your course instructor. If the course instructor feels that the only viable option is to remove you from the placement, your instructor will contact the OSTFE immediately to begin the process of obtaining a different placement.

Q: What if I know someone who works in a school and they said I could do my field/clinical work with him/her?

A: By policy of the School of Education as well as requests from our P-12 partners, all field placements must be secured by the OSTFE. Any placements of 10 hours or more that have not been approved by the Field Services Office are not considered official placements and may not count toward the course requirements. We MUST follow the placement protocols for each district/location.

Q: I am an ECITP/PITP wanting to work moderate/intense children. Why aren't all my experiences in P-3/P-5 classrooms?

A: Understand that the nature of these M/I classrooms are demanding, and the students are often too easily distracted. Keep in mind there are already many adults in the room (Master teacher, various assistants, parent volunteers, handicap providers. Adding to that population often causes the students to become too distracted, or even fearful. Also, there may only be one ECITP/PITP teacher in a building, so whole class placements are difficult to obtain as we must secure placements in a wide variety of schools. Placements may be in Mild/Moderate, or even Inclusion classrooms.

Troubleshooting

What to do if....?

You cannot reach the contact person at your field experience location	Contact the contact person through a different means: email, phone call, visit Discuss the issue with your instructor
You cannot coordinate transportation to and from your field site	Discuss the issue with your instructor
You do not have a current copy of your BCI/FBI	It is no longer allowed for students to enter schools and be in classrooms without these documents. You WILL NOT be allowed to complete your required field hours and MAY not pass the course without a clean/valid BCI and FBI background check.
You have been removed from your field experience location	Discuss the issue with your instructor

APPENDIX A



The University of Akron Field Experience Placement Form for an Employed Candidate

**EC
FORM**

(Form to Complete Hours in a District in which the Candidate Works)

Request is for: Fall Spring Summer I Summer II Summer III

Teacher Candidate Information

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Student ID
Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Area of Licensure for degree (include
grade level range, and content area;
for example, AYA Math): _____

Course Information

Field Course Number: _____

Course Title: _____

Course Instructor: _____

Number of Field Hours Required: _____

District Information Regarding Placement

School district: _____

School: _____

Subject/Area of Placement
Special Ed., Math, Social Studies, etc.): _____

Teacher: _____

If this is a special education placement, is the
teacher a licensed intervention specialist?

Grade: _____

Yes No

I acknowledge that the student named above has informed me of the requirements of their required field observation, and hereby give my permission for said student to complete the hours of observation and/or instruction in the school listed above.

Principal or Supervisor's signature

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR COURSE INSTRUCTOR AS SOON AS IT IS SIGNED

