College of Education

Clinical Field Experience Handbook

Master of Arts in Autism Spectrum Disorder
Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction
Master of Arts in Gifted Education
Master of Arts in Reading with Emphasis in Elementary Education
Master of Arts in Reading with Emphasis in Secondary Education
Master of Arts in TESOL
# Table of Contents

Disclaimer .......................................................................................................................... 3  
Clinical Field Experiences/Practicums .............................................................................. 4  
   Conceptual Framework ................................................................................................. 4  
   Clinical Field Experience/Practicum Outcomes ........................................................... 4  
   College of Education – Learning, Leading, Serving Pledge ........................................... 5  
   Fingerprint Clearance ................................................................................................. 5  
   District Requirements ................................................................................................. 5  
COE Expectations and Academic Standards ..................................................................... 6  
   Clinical Field Experience/Practicum Violations ............................................................ 6  
   University Code of Conduct ....................................................................................... 7  
   Professional Dispositions ............................................................................................ 8  
   Student Disability Services and Special Accommodations ........................................... 9  
   Commitment to Diversity ............................................................................................. 9  
      Respect for the Diversity of Others ............................................................................ 10  
   Technology .................................................................................................................. 10  
   Participant Roles ......................................................................................................... 11  
Site Selection and Documentation of Clinical Field Experiences/Practicums .................. 13  
   Selecting a Clinical Field Experience/Practicum Setting ............................................... 13  
   Placement ..................................................................................................................... 13  
   Documentation ............................................................................................................. 14  
   Performance-based Assignment .................................................................................... 16  
   Informal Assessment ..................................................................................................... 16  
Practicum/Field Experience Fact Sheet ........................................................................... 16
Disclaimer

Grand Canyon University’s College of Education reserves the right to make changes of any nature to this handbook when they are deemed necessary or desirable. This handbook is for informational purposes and does not constitute a contract.

The Grand Canyon University Clinical Field Experience Handbook does not establish a contractual relationship; rather, the handbook sets forth academic and other requirements that a candidate must meet to be granted a degree and, in some circumstances, to continue to be enrolled at the university. While counselors and other Grand Canyon University personnel are available to guide the candidate with respect to the requirements, it is the ultimate responsibility of the candidate to fulfill the requirements.

Candidates should view the Academic Catalog for college and program specific information.
Clinical Field Experiences/Practicums

The clinical field experience/practicum is an opportunity for candidates to observe and participate in diverse educational settings, and to apply the theories and concepts learned in program course work. Faced with the challenge to meet the needs of PK-12 students and the national movement towards 21st century learning built around standards, a clinical field experience/practicum affords GCU candidates the unique opportunity for introspection, personal change, professional growth, and self-assessment, all of which will empower a sense of development as a professional.

Our expectation is for candidates to observe qualified, passionate master teachers demonstrate skill in the InTASC principles. Through these role models, our candidates will solidify principles from their coursework, by actively assisting teachers, facilitating group work, and when permitted, teaching lessons of their own.

Candidates are to accumulate experiences in classrooms at different grade and ability levels. Through clinical field experience/practicum, candidates are exposed to professional role models who work amongst diverse cultures, and will learn to recognize and meet the needs of students from different ethnicities, socioeconomic and language backgrounds, genders, and exceptionalities. The College of Education routinely reviews assessment data on candidates’ ability to work with a diverse population and continually works with a candidate to improve their practice and the institution’s field experiences/practicums.

Conceptual Framework

As candidates progress through their coursework, clinical field experiences/practicums are designed to move a candidate from an observer/candidate role to one of a more intentional leading role. Clinical field experiences/practicums are designed for completion while spending time in classrooms working with students in a variety of ways. Guidance is provided for many of the clinical field experiences/practicums allowing the learning experience to be directly connected and applied to building on the candidates’ foundational understanding. One-on-one as well as small and large group instructional activities allow the candidate to build on their understanding and skill in working with students while under the direction of the classroom teacher. Candidates will also build on their understanding of diversity by targeting specific student groups and reflecting on experiences from multiple perspectives.

Clinical Field Experience/Practicum Outcomes

By the end of each clinical field experience/practicum, candidates will have accomplished the following:

- Successful mastery of specific course objectives as they align to professional teacher education standards;
- Demonstration of learning through artifacts; and
- Significant professional growth in pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
College of Education – Learning, Leading, Serving Pledge

In keeping with Grand Canyon University’s Christian heritage, in the College of Education we find our purpose and calling in teaching, and we seek to lead others to reach their God-given potential by integrating faith into our work.

We believe all students can learn and are deserving of highly effective, innovative, skilled, committed and compassionate educators who ensure that all of their students learn to the best of their abilities.

We believe education is a powerful tool to purposefully engage a multicultural, global community to make a difference in a changing world.

We believe in the spirit of servant leadership and are committed to serving all students within our local and broader educational communities, and to leading with creativity and innovation in our profession with a commitment to personal integrity, professional ethics, collaboration, and excellence for all.

As a Grand Canyon University College of Education, teacher candidate/teacher/educator I pledge to:

1. Enter my class as a professional educator, fully prepared every day.
2. Maximize learning for all students, inspiring them to achieve at their highest potential.
3. Approach teaching and learning for all students with the heart of a servant leader.
4. Be a culturally responsive educator, engaging with and advocating for social justice, and supporting each student and their unique learning needs.
5. Model personal integrity, professional ethics, collaboration, and excellence for all.
6. Be a lifelong learner to advance my commitment as a professional educator.

This pledge is made to affirm my commitment and devotion to learning, leading, and serving.

Fingerprint Clearance

Candidates seeking an Arizona Institutional Recommendation for teaching or administrative credential must have an Arizona Fingerprint Clearance Card, in addition to their own state’s fingerprint or background clearance documentation. Refer to the University Policy Handbook for additional information on fingerprint clearance requirements.

District Requirements

During the placement process, a candidate may be required to complete additional district requirements which will be completed at the candidate’s expense. These may include:

- Interview with school district officials (which may include writing samples)
- Submission of academic resume and/or transcripts
- Physical exam
• TB test
• School Board approval
• Additional background checks

COE Expectations and Academic Standards

The following expectations for candidates address the common issues and responsibilities of candidates who are currently in a clinical field experience/practicum and student teaching setting. The statements are designed to be reflective of the fundamental principles and values that are desired of a candidate and his or her professional and personal conduct in the clinical field experience/practicum and clinical setting (student teaching). The expectations clarify conduct unbecoming a candidate, which may subject the candidate to disciplinary action. By addressing these issues, we seek to respond to and clarify our expectations for all of our candidates who are representing themselves and Grand Canyon University in their role and work with students, cooperating teachers, supervisors, and school communities.

Candidates represent GCU’s value-based liberal arts institution. All candidates are expected to abide by the tenets of university citizenship and to show consideration and respect for the personal freedom and property rights of members of the civic, academic, and school community. Candidates are expected to abide by ethical, professional, and academic standards that are conducive to a positive learning experience. Refer to the Code of Conduct and Academic Standards section in the University Policy Handbook.

Dress according to professional attire expectations, which can be interpreted as:

• Women: Slacks (dress pants), skirts (mid-calf to about two inches above the knee), blouses, shells, cardigans, blazers, dresses
• Men: Dress pants, button down shirts, polo shirts (with a collar), blazers
• Not permitted: Attire that is see-through, short, tight, or shows too much skin, flip-flops, tennis shoes, jeans that are too loose fitting, ripped, or faded. Candidates must also follow the dress code of teachers at the clinical field experience/practicum site.

Clinical Field Experience/Practicum Violations

The following violations clarify conduct unbecoming of candidates in the College of Education. Candidates are expected not to engage in such action while in a clinical setting at a school or school district. The following is a non-exhaustive list of actions that are considered clinical practice conduct violations, for which candidates are subjected to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the university. Refer to the Code of Conduct and Academic Standards section of the University Policy Handbook.

• Disorderly (unruly) interaction involving any individual outside of the classroom in a manner that could be perceived as inappropriate by any member of the site placement school, its extended community or university.
• Falsification, forgery, alteration, or invention of information, including, but not limited to, any document used for admission or eligibility to the university related to:
  o Admission or eligibility to Clinical Practice
  o Information regarding the site placement school, the district and/or personnel
  o Information regarding students
  o Information regarding curriculum content in the classroom

• Disruptive behavior in any form that creates a hostile or offensive educational environment for a student, cooperating teacher, university faculty supervisor, faculty or staff

• Failure to comply promptly with any reasonable directive from a cooperating teacher, university faculty supervisor, GCU course instructor, or staff

• Failure to cooperate with an investigation

• Possession, use, distribution, or behavior under the influence of alcohol or illegal or banned drugs or substances while on school property, or as part of any school-related activity

• Communication orally, in writing, or by use of any technological device, including, and not limited to any phone or computer device, outside the classroom in a manner that could be perceived as inappropriate by any member of the site placement school, its extended community or university

• Failure to maintain a professional approach to personal relationships with the students or the school community members

**Model of Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE)**

Grand Canyon University's College of Education has adopted the [Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE)](https://www.grandcanyon.edu/colleges/education/model-code-ethics-educators), put forth by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification.

**University Code of Conduct**

Grand Canyon University works to create an atmosphere of value-based education. All candidates who enroll in the University are expected to accept the responsibilities of the university citizenship and to show consideration and respect for personal freedom and property rights of members of the civic and academic community. Candidates are expected to abide by ethical, professional, and academic standards that are conducive to a positive learning experience. Please review the Code of Conduct and Academic Standards in the University Policy Handbook.
Professional Dispositions

Clinical field experiences/practicums serve as opportunities for candidates to build relationships with school districts, schools, school staff, and teachers. Through their actions and interactions with these individuals, they will make an impact and create an impression of who they are personally and professionally. Therefore, adapting to the preferred policies and procedures of the host school, such as dress code, scheduling, etc., is required of candidates.

Dispositions are the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and which affect student learning and achievement, motivation, and development, as well as the educator’s own professional growth. If sincerely held, dispositions should lead to actions and patterns of professional conduct. For GCU candidates, these dispositions flow from the University’s mission statement:

*Grand Canyon University prepares candidates to become global citizens, critical thinkers, effective communicators, and responsible leaders by providing an academically challenging, values-based curriculum from the context of our Christian heritage.*

A values-based education emphasizing community, character, and citizenship in the context of a Christian worldview seeks to teach, reinforce, support, and draw learners to contemplate certain foundational values that Christianity contends lead to a good life. These normative Christian values are integral to the development, maturity, and education of ethical and morally respectable citizens who continue on the path of lifelong learning and service. For candidates, this is manifested in the professional dispositions each carries into the educational community.

- **High expectations** – Educators should believe that all students could learn and should set and support realistic expectations for student success. These expectations should be communicated in positive ways.

- **Respect for the diversity of others** – Educators should be sensitive to individual learning and social needs of students and embrace the cultural diversity of the community. They should develop and maintain educational communities marked by respect for others. Educators should interact with their students, fellow educators, administrators, parents, and other community members with courtesy and civility, and establish relationships characterized by respect and rapport.

- **Fairness** – Educators should promote social justice and equity, maintain appropriate standards of confidentiality, and exercise fairness in all areas including assessment.

- **Professional conduct** – Educators should exercise sound judgment and ethical behavior. They should be a positive role model within their community.

- **Reflection** – Educators should recognize that reflection combined with experience leads to growth as a professional. Educators should be thoughtful about their professional practice, critically examine it, and seek continual improvement.

- **Curiosity** – Educators should promote and support curiosity and encourage active inquiry. They should be able to think innovatively and creatively, using critical thinking as a problem-solving approach.

- **Honesty** – Educators should model integrity by their words and actions. They should be forthright with others and uphold high standards of trust, character, and integrity.
Compassion – Educators should demonstrate professional friendliness, warmth, and genuine caring in their relationships with others while providing intellectual, emotional, and spiritual support.

Advocacy – Educators should promote positive change in schools and communities that benefit the welfare of others.

Dedication – Educators should be committed to the profession of teaching and learning. They should be professionally active, lifelong learners and seek opportunities for professional development.

It is important to treat every clinical field experience/practicum as a potential student teaching clinical practice placement or future job opportunity. Building relationships with schools in which candidates will serve their clinical field experience/practicum is important.

Candidates may be removed from a clinical field experience/practicum setting at any time if the mentor teacher, site administrator, or university administrator determines that the assignment is detrimental to anyone being served by the candidate or that the candidate would be better served by removal.

Student Disability Services and Special Accommodations

Candidates that require special accommodations for their clinical field experience/practicum must register with Student Disability Services at Grand Canyon University prior to their official placement. Candidates will be required to complete the steps to accommodations, which include submitting the Accommodation Request Form and providing supporting documentation of their disability. Determinations about what accommodations will be provided are based on the criteria outlined for Student Disability Services in the University Policy Handbook.

To begin the accommodation process, contact the Student Disability Office as follows:

Phone: 602-639-6342   Email: disabilityoffice@gcu.edu

In order to establish certain accommodations at the clinical field experience/practicum site, the University may need to disclose information regarding the student’s disability status. Notification of the approved accommodation may be provided to the clinical field experience/practicum site, the classroom teacher and/or to the school district in order to ensure that the accommodations are appropriately facilitated.

Commitment to Diversity

The College of Education promotes respect for and values the importance of community, diversity, and the rich, cultural tapestry of a global society. In the context of clinical field experience/practicum, the College defines diversity as placements that contain variance in any of the following:

- Students whose primary language is other than English;
- Grade or age level distribution of the school/class, district, or school demographic information (e.g., cultures, ethnicities, socioeconomic distribution represented);
- District or school academic performance ranking (e.g., adequate yearly progress, school report card, school label/grade);
• Stability of the community;
• Qualifications of the teacher;
• Gender (e.g., gender of the teacher, gender distribution of the class); and
• Students with exceptionalities (e.g., students who receive services for gifted education or as specified by an IEP, ADA Section 504).

Respect for the Diversity of Others
Educators should be sensitive to individual learning and social needs of students and embrace the cultural diversity of the community. They should develop and maintain educational communities marked by respect for others. They should interact with their students, fellow educators, administrators, parents, and other community members with courtesy and civility, and establish relationships characterized by respect and rapport.

The diverse faculty and administrative staff of the College of Education work diligently to create a culture of mutual respect and fellowship within the broader educational community. Candidates will have an opportunity to apply their knowledge of diversity, including students with exceptionalities, during their clinical field experiences/practicums and student teaching. They will have an opportunity to reflect on common practices when working with schools, communities, and students from diverse ethnic/racial, language, gender, and socioeconomic groups. Within the classroom and through varied clinical field experiences/practicums, candidates are taught to be professional models, and are encouraged to recognize and meet the needs of all pre-kindergarten to 12th grade students. Assessments will indicate that candidates are able to demonstrate and apply proficiencies related to diversity.

These proficiencies include:
• Embracing diversity in all individuals;
• Using a diverse perspective to cast light on global awareness;
• Encouraging diversity of thought and practice from others;
• Celebrating the potential of diversity;
• Knowing the backgrounds and cultures of students;
• Promoting respect and understanding among all cultures;
• Not tolerating or minimizing inappropriate behavior when observed; and
• Challenging students to report inappropriate behavior by providing a positive and supportive environment that allows students to feel safe in reporting inappropriate behavior.

Technology
Skilled application of technology by candidates is a competency expectation expressed by the College of Education. Every member of the College is expected to demonstrate a commitment to applied technology across all phases of their professional career. This commitment encourages
the use of technology to enhance academic learning and achievement. Applied technology in education is an integral part of 21st century learning and current instructional practices as a benchmark of excellence. Candidates are expected to use technology in every phase of their academic preparation. As such, it is incumbent on faculty to provide learning experiences that are driven by a deep commitment to infuse technology across the curriculum and to utilize it as a pedagogical tool for instruction. The commitment to technology is infused in each course.

**Participant Roles**

The following section addresses and defines the roles of all participants involved in threaded clinical field experiences/practicums.

- **Autism Spectrum Disorders Specialist Student (Master of Arts in Autism Spectrum Disorder):** The Autism Spectrum Disorders Specialist student is defined as the student who is actively enrolled in the College of Education program of study who works to fulfill all field experience requirements. The role of the Autism Spectrum Disorders Specialist student includes meeting the field experience assignment competencies, and submitting assignments that demonstrate applied learning. Before the capstone course, Autism Spectrum Disorders Specialist students must have completed all of the required coursework as well as all associated requirements listed in the University Policy Handbook.

- **Candidate:** The candidate is defined as the student who is actively enrolled in a College of Education program of study who works to fulfill all field experience requirements. The role of the candidate includes observing the classroom teacher, meeting the field experience competencies, and submitting assignments that demonstrate applied learning.

- **Classroom Teacher/Mentor Teacher:** The classroom teacher is defined as the teacher hosting the candidate in field experiences other than student teaching. The classroom teacher’s responsibility focuses on the students in his or her classroom, rather than on the candidate. The classroom teacher’s role includes modeling effective instructional practice, planning instructional lessons with students, and providing feedback on students’ performance.

- **Course Instructor:** The course instructor is defined as the university faculty member assigned to teach the course. Course instructors are responsible for implementing course assignments, as required through the curriculum, which relate to the candidate’s clinical field experience/practicum, particularly lesson planning and instructional design.

- **Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach Candidate (Master of Arts in Reading with an Emphasis in Elementary/Secondary Education):** The Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach candidate is defined as the student who is actively enrolled in the College of Education program of study who works to fulfill all field experience requirements. The role of the
Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach candidate includes meeting the field experience assignment competencies, and submitting assignments that demonstrate applied learning. Before practicum, Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach candidates must have completed all of the required coursework as well as all associated requirements listed in the University Policy Handbook.

- **Field Experience Counselors (FEC):** The Field Experience Counselor supports students in meeting COE specific supplementary requirements throughout their program. These requirements include, but are not limited to, fingerprint clearance, testing requirements, clinical field experiences/practicums, student teaching application, and Institutional Recommendation. In addition, the Field Experience Counselor verifies eligibility for clinical field experience/practicum, advises the candidate on clinical field experience/practicum requirements, and communicates with candidates needing clinical field experience/practicum assistance. The FECs will work in tandem with the candidates’ Student Services Counselor (SSC), and other offices on campus to facilitate completion of the candidate’s program of study.

- **Teacher Placement Counselor (TPC):** The Teacher Placement Counselor is defined as the university staff member who maintains district relationships and communicates with local school and district representatives to arrange student teaching. Additionally, the TPC communicates with the candidate regarding the student teaching placement, student teaching course, and student teaching roles and expectations.
Site Selection and Documentation of Clinical Field Experiences/Practicums

Selecting a Clinical Field Experience/Practicum Setting
Candidates are encouraged to be proactive regarding their selection of appropriate clinical field experience/practicum sites. Each course outlines appropriate clinical field experience/practicum sites. If candidates are experiencing difficulty identifying a placement and have exhausted the list, they should contact their course instructor or the Teacher Placement Counselor (TPC) for assistance.

Placement

1. Candidates must review the Clinical Field Experience Handbook, as well as, additional support materials related to completing clinical field experience/practicum requirements and dispositional expectations.

2. With assistance from the faculty and Field Experience Counselor (FEC), candidates must research and select appropriate settings to complete clinical field experience/practicums as required by the course curriculum.

3. Candidates are responsible for corresponding with schools and districts directly to secure selected clinical field experience/practicum placements. If the school or district requires university correspondence, the FECs may assist in requesting placement, although placements are not guaranteed.

4. If candidates are unable to secure appropriate placements, reference the Documentation section in this manual.

Upon request an official letter is provided by the FECs to the candidate confirming the candidate attends GCU, the candidate’s program of study, title of the current course, and the number of hours required for the clinical field experience/practicum. This letter authenticates the student’s eligibility to complete clinical field experience/practicum requirements within their school district.

FECs support the candidate in selecting an appropriate clinical field experience/practicum site based on the clinical field experience/practicum requirements identified in the Benchmark Assignment provided in the course.

Candidates should contact their FECs with any questions or concerns encountered at their site.

Clinical field experience/practicum sites must be consistent with clinical field experience/practicum requirements, the candidates’ desires for skill development, and future certification or licensure criteria. If the candidate cannot complete clinical field experience/practicum hours within the designated perimeters, he or she will need to contact the course instructor for the necessary documentation for a clinical field experience/practicum site modification.
Although not an exhaustive list, these sites may be available year-round:

- Public, private, and/or parochial or religiously-affiliated schools (both Title 1 and non-Title 1)
- Boys/Girls clubs
- After school programs
- Head Start
- Commercial learning centers, e.g., Sylvan, Huntington, Kumon
- Tutor Time, Child Time, or other licensed preschool settings
- U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service English classes
- Community college remedial courses
- YMCA and YWCA
- Jewish Social Services, Catholic Social Services, Lutheran Social Services, or other community-based continuing education opportunities
- Summer camp programs
- Private formal tutoring classes with a certified teacher
- Virtual schools with a certified teacher
- Home school networks with a certified teacher

The following sites may provide useful information:

- State department of education websites
- Arizona Department of Education: [http://www.ade.state.az.us/](http://www.ade.state.az.us/)
- National Association for Year-Round Education: [http://www.nayre.org/schools.html](http://www.nayre.org/schools.html)

**Documentation**

As candidates progress through their clinical field experiences/practicums, professional practices will be reviewed, formulated, and refined based on the increased development and demonstration of competencies grounded in the professional knowledge and skills of the field. This process is the essential ingredient for professional growth, as it will lead the candidates from students to
professionals/practitioners. Through the relationships maintained with instructors, peers, and other professionals, personal, philosophical, ethical, and theoretical beliefs will be actualized.

Significant decisions and choices will be determined by the candidates’ analytical and behavioral approaches to the clinical field experience/practicum. It is paramount that timely, accurate documentation of activities be maintained using the required forms and documents.

Clinical field experiences/practicums will be documented by the candidates using the Clinical Field Experience Verification Form. Refer to the syllabus for details on completing this form.

Verification of the clinical field experience/practicum will include the following:

Section 1: Date and Time Spent

Section 2: Identify Activities as an Observer and/or Participant: The candidate clearly identifies the activities observed and/or engaged in.

Section 3: Reflection: The candidate addresses any assigned prompts and the benefits of the clinical field experience/practicum to development and growth as a teacher.

Section 4: Diversity: The candidate checks each descriptor of diversity that applies to the clinical field experience/practicum.

Section 5: Contact Information: The candidate includes their name, email, and phone number for verification.

Completed Clinical Field Experience Verification Forms will be uploaded to the LoudCloud classroom for evaluation and the hours will be calculated into the course grade. Please note that clinical field experiences/practicums will increase in complexity throughout the program and will require more direct interaction with students.

Incomplete hours may result in up to a 20% deduction for a related assignment.

- 0-99% completed = 20% module deduction
- Candidates must complete all required clinical field experience/practicum hours within the course timeframe. Candidates have until the end of the course to complete and submit the required hours. All required clinical field experience/practicum hours not completed within the course timeframe are subject to the assignment deduction AND must be made up prior to the end of the next course.
- Clinical field experience/practicum hours are mutually exclusive. Candidates must complete all required hours per each course – double-dipping will not be allowed.
- Failure to complete all clinical field experience/practicum hours required within the program of study may result in ineligibility for the Clinical Practice portion of the program.

The data entered into this document is subject to a verification audit. Candidates who engage in fabricating, falsifying, forging, altering, or inventing information related to practicum/field experiences, internships, clinical practice, and/or any associated documentation may be subject to sanctions for violating GCU academic integrity policies, which may include expulsion from GCU.
Performance-based Assignment

Benchmark assignments serve as reflective evaluations of the candidates’ ability to meet the required expectations of the educator preparation program, as outlined by the Arizona Department of Education and Arizona Revised Statutes. Each standards-based assignment is accompanied by a rubric to provide feedback on candidate achievement of core competencies.

Informal Assessment

Throughout the clinical field experience/practicum, the candidate will be in direct contact with a classroom teacher, who will provide informal feedback and modeling. Candidates should contact the GCU course instructor to discuss progress, offer suggestions, help resolve problems, and provide vital mentoring functions.

Practicum/Field Experience Fact Sheet

Practicum/field experience requirements are dependent on the program of study, as well as, program version. Contact your Student Services Counselor for questions regarding your individual program of study and/or program version. The Practicum/Field Experience Fact is located within the Practicum/Field Experience section of the Student Success Center.