



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
SECONDARY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

PRE-CANDIDACY FIELD EXPERIENCES

INTRODUCTION

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) [Framework for Secondary Grades 7-12 Program Guidelines](#), there are four stages of field experience, each progressively more intensive and structured. PDE suggests that the purpose of these field experiences is for students to gain insights into "the values, culture, and working styles of learning environments" and learn about "the socio-emotional, cultural, linguistic, and academic traits of students" (PDE, p. 15). Additionally, research on teacher preparation highlights the importance for programs to provide students with sustained field experiences in order to gain understanding of the ever-changing knowledge base of their content area and pedagogy, including approaches for addressing inequities and inclusion for all students in education (Zeichner & Bier, 2015).

The Department of Secondary Education at Kutztown University refers to the first stage of field experience as *Pre-Candidacy Field Experiences*. During these field experiences, students are observers and/or participants in a variety of education and education-related settings (e.g., classrooms, community organizations, professional development opportunities, tutoring programs). It is expected that these experiences occur with a focus on secondary schools (grades 7-12). These field experiences are meant to provide students with a broad scope of opportunities where they can learn as much as possible about learners and learning environments in the secondary setting.

Students enrolled in a Secondary Education teacher preparation program (those who are seeking a teaching certificate) are expected to complete their pre-candidacy field experiences by the time they reach 48 credits AND earn teacher candidacy. Successful completion of pre-candidacy field experiences requires *earning a minimum of 20 points*, across three different categories. Students are provided with a certain amount of choice in how to earn points, however, some tasks are mandatory. Students can complete these requirements in any order. Transfer students should meet with their respective Secondary Education advisor or the Secondary Education Department Chair to determine a timeline for completion of pre-candidacy field experiences and/or to evaluate field experiences completed prior to entry in the Secondary Education program at Kutztown University.

Students must document completion of their pre-candidacy field experiences and submit their work to Taskstream, a web-based electronic portfolio used by the College of Education to collect and assess clearances, assignments, and other instructional materials. An account is provided to all education students by the COE. Students should compile evidence of the completion of their pre-candidacy field experiences into a single Word document, and then upload the document to Taskstream. Students should not submit or upload anything to Taskstream until they have completed all the requirements for their pre-candidacy field experiences. The document titled "Walkthrough to Submit PCFE Hours" shows you the steps on how to complete this in Taskstream.

MENU OF OPTIONS

Below is a menu of options for students to select from to complete their pre-candidacy field experiences. As previously mentioned, some of these pre-candidacy field experiences are required. Students are responsible to obtain and have access to their background clearances, should they be requested. Additionally, students are responsible to collect and maintain appropriate evidence of their engagement with the pre-candidacy field experiences.

Section 1: Understanding the Profession of Teaching

Each student must complete ALL experiences listed in this section!

1. Visit the Kutztown University Career Development Center (Stratton, Rm. 113)

- **Task:** Learn more about what it takes to become a teacher. To schedule an appointment with a Career Coach in the Career Development Center visit www.kutztown.edu/handshake
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - Name of the career counselor and the date/time of your appointment
 - An overview of things you learned regarding becoming a teacher
 - An overview of resources available to you in seeking future employment
 - An overview of the career outlook for positions in your field

2. Attend a School Board Meeting

- **Task:** Learn more about the politics of education and broad decision-making processes by attending a school board meeting.
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - Name of the school district and site for the meeting
 - A list of key items on the meeting agenda
 - A description of how the meeting was organized / conducted
 - An overview of information presented at the meeting
 - A synopsis of key decisions made at the meeting and their potential impact

3. Interview a Secondary School Teacher

- **Task:** Complete a professional interview of a teacher who teaches in a secondary school setting (grades 7-12).
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - Teacher's name, school district and school where the teacher teaches, grade level(s) taught, and subject(s) taught
 - A list of the interview questions and the teacher's responses
 - The interview should have a minimum of five questions. For example, 'What change have you seen during your time at this school?', 'What was your inspiration for becoming a teacher?', etc.
 - An overview of information learned about the profession

4. Secondary School (Grades 7-12) Classroom Observation

- **Task:** Complete six (6) hours of classroom observation in a secondary school setting (Grades 7-12). The purpose of classroom observation is to acquaint the student with the role of the teacher, the nature of the learner, and classroom organization.

- **Please Note:**
 - To arrange for an observation, call the school of your choice and ask permission to observe at the school. Explain that you are a student enrolled in a teacher preparation program at Kutztown University and are required to complete six (6) hours of classroom observation.
 - Propose specific dates, times, grade level(s), and subject area(s) that you would like to observe. The contact person might be able to approve your request immediately or s/he might need to call you back in a few days to confirm the visit with the administrator(s) and/or teacher(s).
 - If you are forced to cancel your visit, please call the school as soon as you know that you cannot keep your appointment.
 - On the day of your observation, dress appropriately (business casual), arrive 10-15 minutes early, report to the school office, and introduce yourself. Explain why you are there (i.e. to observe Mr. Smith's class; arrangements were made with Dr. Jones, Principal). Bring copies of ALL of your clearances and be prepared to share them.
 - Certain schools may require a letter from the University. If you encounter this, please contact the Secondary Education Office.
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - Describe the students and the classroom.
 - What instructional methods / strategies did you observe? Were they successful? How do you know?
 - What did you learn from this experience?
 - How did this experience change / affirm your perception of teaching and learning?

Section 2: Developing My Understanding of Diversity

The Department of Secondary Education acknowledges the multiple facets of human diversity and defines diversity as differences among individuals and groups of people based on ethnicity, race, social class, gender, (dis)ability, language, religion, sexual orientation, geographical area, and other differences.

*Each student must complete **THREE (3)** of the experiences listed in this section!*

1. Secondary School (Grades 7-12) ESL Classroom Observation

- **Task:** Complete two (2) hours of classroom observation in a secondary school (Grades 7-12) ESL classroom. Additionally, read this piece ([Lander, 2019](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec19/vol77/num04/Seeing-Their-Strengths.aspx): <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec19/vol77/num04/Seeing-Their-Strengths.aspx>) and use it as a lens to discuss and further make sense of your observation.
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - Describe the students and the classroom.
 - What instructional methods / strategies / accommodations / differentiated instruction did you observe that were helpful to emergent bilingual students? Were they successful? How do you know?
 - What did you learn from this experience? How does this compare to information learned from the article?
 - How did this experience change / affirm your perception of teaching and learning with regard to emergent bilingual students?

2. Secondary School (Grades 7-12) Special Education Classroom Observation

- **Task:** Complete two (2) hours of classroom observation in a secondary school (Grades 7-12) Special Education classroom. This can be a classroom for only special education students or an “inclusion classroom” where the class is taught by both a content area teacher and a special education teacher. Additionally, read this piece ([Mandlawitz, 2016](http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/policy-priorities/vol22/num01/Special-Education-After-40-Years@-What-Lies-Ahead%C2%A2.aspx) www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/policy-priorities/vol22/num01/Special-Education-After-40-Years@-What-Lies-Ahead%C2%A2.aspx) and use it as a lens to discuss and further make sense of your observation.
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - Describe the students and the classroom.
 - What instructional methods / strategies / accommodations / differentiated instruction did you observe that were helpful to special education students? Were they successful? How do you know?
 - What did you learn from this experience? How does this compare to information learned from the article?
 - How did this experience change / affirm your perception of teaching and learning regarding special education students?

3. Attend a Diversity-focused Conference

- **Task:** Attend a conference (minimum 3 hours) where the focus is on better understanding the multiple facets of human diversity. The term diversity is defined in the introduction of this section. The conference does not need to have an explicit focus on education and may be held at institutions other than Kutztown University. Some examples of diversity-focused conferences held at Kutztown University include the College of Education’s ESL Conference, the Commission on Human Diversity’s Annual Conference, or the Frederick Douglass Institute’s Conference.
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - Evidence of your registration / attendance at the conference
 - 750-word reflection on the sessions attended, key points made at each session, and how information from each session has enhanced your understanding of diversity

4. Attend Three (3) On-Campus Cultural / Diversity-focused Lectures / Film Screenings

- **Task:** Attend three (3) on-campus cultural / diversity-focused lectures or film-screenings where the focus is on better understanding diversity. The term diversity is defined in the introduction of this section. The event does not need to have an explicit focus on education.
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - Evidence of your registration / attendance at the conference
 - For EACH event, a 250-word reflection that explains the purpose / focus of the event and how information from the event has enhanced your understanding of diversity

5. Interview a Special Education Teacher

- **Task:** Complete a professional interview of a special education teacher.
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - Teacher’s name, school district and school where the teacher teaches, grade level(s) taught, and subject(s) taught
 - A list of the interview questions and the teacher’s responses
 - The interview should have a minimum of five questions. For example, ‘What change have you seen during your time at this school?’, ‘What was your inspiration for becoming a teacher?’, etc.
 - An overview of information learned about the profession

6. Complete a Teaching Tolerance module

- **Task:** Go to this link and select one of Teaching Tolerance’s self-guided learning modules: <https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/self-guided-learning> Pick one that has a good amount of material, such as the one at this link <https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/critical-practices-for-antibias-education-instruction>
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - The title of the self-guided learning module and the link.
 - A picture of any activities you had to complete as part of the module.
 - A 250-word reflection that explains the purpose/focus of the module and how it relates to your thinking about diversity in US public schools.

Section 3: Developing My Professional Self

*Each student must complete **THREE (3)** of the experiences listed in this section!*

1. Attend a national, state, or regional/local education conference OR a university-sponsored or school-sponsored professional development

- **Task:** Attend a conference or professional development (minimum 2 hours) where the focus is on teaching and learning. Some examples include the Phi Delta Kappa Technology Mini-Conference and the PAMLE Middle Level Conference, both hosted at Kutztown University.
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - Evidence of your registration / attendance at the conference
 - A 500-word reflection on two sessions attended, key points made at each session, and how information from the sessions has enhanced your knowledge of the field of teaching

2. Complete an education-based online training / webinar from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Standards Aligned System (SAS)

- **Task:** The Standards Aligned System (SAS) is a comprehensive, researched-based resource to improve student achievement. SAS identifies six elements that impact student achievement: Standards, Assessments, Curriculum Framework, Instruction, Materials & Resources, and Safe and Supportive Schools. Schools and educators across Pennsylvania are supported in their efforts to implement SAS by the development of this state-of-the-art portal. You will need to register and then access the PD Center to register in a self-paced module. For information, visit www.pdesas.org
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - Evidence of your completion of the webinar / training
 - A 250-word reflection that briefly describes the purpose of the training / webinar and how information from the training / webinar has enhanced your knowledge of the field of teaching

3. Volunteer for an Organization (minimum 5 hours)

- **Task:** Volunteer for an organization of your choice. Your involvement in the organization should be of value to you professionally.
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - Explain the purpose of the organization

- Explain your level of involvement and how your involvement was of value to you professionally

4. Volunteer as a Student Facilitator

- **Task:** Volunteer as a student facilitator at one of the following events: Science Olympiad, Special Olympics, Coaster Quest (Thrill U), or another event approved by the Department of Secondary Education.
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - When and where was the event held?
 - How did you contribute as a student facilitator?
 - How was this experience of value to you professionally?

5. Teacher Professional Development at other websites

- **Task:** Several websites offer additional courses (similar to PDE, above) for professional development for teachers. Complete a training, such as from the site below, and provide evidence that you completed.
 - www.linkedin.com/learning
 - Create a one-month free trial that can be cancelled at the completion of a course or training. Type “education” into the search for learning modules, there are many offerings on teaching online, developing curriculum, and other topics.
- **Evidence:** Document the following information:
 - Evidence of course registration
 - Write a 500-word reflection on what you learned and how these topics can be incorporated in your future classroom

References

Pennsylvania Department of Education. (March 2012, reviewed October 2018). *The Framework for K-12 Program Guidelines*. Accessed at <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Teachers-Administrators/Certification%20Preparation%20Programs/Framework%20Guidelines%20and%20Rubrics/K-12%20Program%20Framework%20Guidelines.pdf>

Zeichner, K., & Bier, M. (2015). Opportunities and pitfalls in the turn toward clinical experience in US teacher education. In E. R. Hollins (Ed.), *Rethinking field experiences in preservice teacher preparation: Meeting new challenges for accountability* (pp. 20-46). New York: Routledge