THE CLINICAL EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

The clinical experience program at Kutztown University is a collaborative partnership. The mission of this program is to assure that you have a successful capstone experience in your pre-service teacher education program.

The university supervisors provide support, guidance and sense of continuity with the KU pre-service teacher education program. All supervisors are faculty members in the College of Education, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences or the College of Visual and Performing Arts at Kutztown University. The supervisors have basic education classroom experience and are certified in the area in which they supervise. A cadre of classroom teachers and librarians support and guide you from the field.

These partners work collaboratively in a wide variety of settings - public schools, private schools, parochial schools, and museums – to provide a high quality clinical experience. The Kutztown University service area includes more than 87 affiliated partners in the twelve counties immediately surrounding the university.

The university supervisor and the cooperating teacher collaborate regularly to observe critique, develop, and evaluate candidate’s skills. The university supervisor, as the professor of record for the clinical experience course, has the ultimate responsibility for assigning the letter grade for each of the clinical experience placements. However, frequent communication among the three partners is expected.
Clinical Experience Policies

Attendance The clinical experience program at Kutztown University requires completing two eight-week placements in a school. You are expected to attend all day, every day during your assignment, follow the school district calendar and your cooperating teacher’s daily schedule, and attend meetings, conferences and professional development programs that are required of your cooperating teacher. Your arrival and departure times are the same as those required of your cooperating teacher. You are required to attend an orientation program prior to reporting to your assigned schools and weekly practicum with your university supervisor. Practicum is scheduled on campus from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. every Tuesday for secondary, art, music and library majors. Elementary and special education majors meet from 4:00 to 5:00 every Tuesday; attendance is also required at an all-day professional development program. Early departure from the assigned school will be required on Tuesday to allow enough time for you to travel safely to Kutztown University.

Although daily attendance is expected, personal emergencies, serious illness, deaths within the family, attendance at professional conferences or job interviews may warrant an occasional absence. You do not have a specified number of sick days. Personal days are not allowed. Excused absences must have the approval of your supervisor, cooperating teacher and director of clinical experience. The university supervisor and director of clinical experience are the only persons who can approve an absence and the only persons who can decide if or how an absence will be made up. For an absence you must notify your cooperating teacher, university supervisor and the Clinical Experience office. The university supervisor and CE director must give prior approval of absences related to interviews or conferences. You are expected to develop plans and materials for any assigned lessons and deliver them to the cooperating teacher prior to the beginning of the school day on which the absence is to occur.

Academic Eligibility In order to be eligible for clinical experience, you must complete at least 90 credit hours including all required courses. These courses differ among the certification programs, but always include both content and methods courses. In addition, effective fall 2007, all teacher candidates, prior to clinical experience and practicum, must have taken or be registered for all PRAXIS II or Pennsylvania Educator Certification Tests (PECT) exams with official scores on file at KU. The College of Education complies with Chapter 354 of Pennsylvania’s General Standards for the Institutional Preparation of Professional Educators (2000).

Requirements for Clinical Experience and Practicum

Teacher Candidates must:

- Complete the professional semester and/or early field experience. This requires a satisfactory recommendation from field experience cooperating teachers and the KU coordinator/supervisor.
- Complete all courses in the major required for clinical experience and practicum.
- Maintain a minimum cumulative 3.0 GPA and in the major to receive PA teacher certification.
• Receive a positive recommendation from the department chairperson or screening committee.

Teacher candidates (including newly admitted, re-entry, & transfer students) must achieve a minimum of “C” in both assignments of clinical experience and practicum and have at least a four on the PDE 430 forms with no one area ranked below one to successfully complete the program.

Right to Appeal: Teacher candidates have the right to appeal decisions to the Dean of the College of Education who chairs the KU Council for Teacher Education.

U.S. CITIZENSHIP OR A WRITTEN DECLARATION OF INTENT TO BECOME A U.S. CITIZEN WITHIN SIX YEARS IS A REQUIREMENT FOR PA CERTIFICATION.

Background Checks Prior to approved placements in schools all candidates must present current background checks:

- Act 24  Arrest & Conviction Report
- Act 34  PA Criminal History Report
- Act 114 FBI Background Check
- Act 151 PA Child Abuse History Report

School districts are reluctant to accept teacher candidates whose background checks contain any entries regardless of whether those entries would prevent employment under the Pennsylvania School code regulations. Teacher candidates convicted of any offense during the clinical experience semester may be removed from their clinical experience assignment.

Grooming Conservative dress and good grooming are expected. The guideline for fashion should always be to dress for your next job. Good grooming includes avoiding the lingering aromas of smoking and alcohol. Drug use at any time will not be tolerated and will lead to the application of full legal sanctions. School administrators make personnel decisions that influence the teacher candidate’s future.

Health Status Prior to the beginning of the clinical experience semester, you must present verification of a screening for tuberculosis to the Office of Clinical Experiences and Outreach. A physician confirms that you are able to successfully perform the duties of a teacher and do not pose a threat to the health of others.

Liability Insurance Legal liability results from acts of negligence. A person is said to be negligent when failing to act as a reasonably prudent person would act under the same or similar circumstance. In order to protect yourself in the event of a claim of negligence, you must secure professional liability insurance coverage for clinical experience. Professional liability insurance is available to you through membership in the student chapter of the Pennsylvania State Education Association (SPSEA).

Observation and Evaluation Observing and evaluating your performance involves both the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor who write three formative (in-progress) evaluations using KU evaluation forms during each eight-week assignment.
Based on these formative evaluations, as well as other informal observations, the cooperating teacher writes a summative (final) evaluation using KU forms and the supervisor completes a Pennsylvania Statewide Evaluation For for Student Professional Knowledge and Practice (PDE 430) form.

As the instructor of record for the clinical experience and practicum course, the university supervisor has the sole responsibility for assigning you a final letter grade for each assignment. Because of the guidelines established by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), copies of these evaluations will not be distributed to individuals or outside agencies without your written consent.

Your responsibility to the supervisor includes:
- Keep the supervisor informed of any difficulties encountered in the clinical experience.
- Provide a weekly schedule indicating when you will be teaching.
- Submit the weekly schedule at the beginning of practicum each Tuesday.
- Notify the supervisor if a major change is made to the schedule after it is submitted.
- Have plans for all lessons taught available for review since the last.

**Placements** The Office of Clinical Experience and Outreach will attempt to make placements within roughly a 30-35 mile radius of the KU campus. Your residence, transportation needs and family responsibilities will be considered whenever possible. Placements will not be made in schools which you attended, where your siblings or children now attend, or where you have been employed or where family members are currently employed.

**Professionalism** Pay attention to daily duties as assigned by your cooperating teacher and university supervisor. Clinical experience is a full-time responsibility and must take precedence over other commitments. You follow a full day, five day a week schedule and report to and depart from the school on the same schedule required of your cooperating teacher.

You must be prepared to spend additional time before or after school in order to plan with your cooperating teacher. You are expected to attend school open house programs, parent-teacher conferences, professional development programs, faculty meetings and other activities unless specifically prohibited by the school administration.

You are expected to maintain confidentiality during the clinical experience. Do not discuss confidential information about teacher candidates or school issues in public places with individuals that do not have a need to know. You are expected to be professional with administrators, teachers, and teacher candidates in the school or agency. Receiving calls on a cell phone during the school day is not an acceptable professional practice. Personal cell phones must be turned off during school hours.
Strike and/or Work Stoppage  You are expressly forbidden from participating in any activates within a school district during a work stoppage or strike. You should contact the Clinical Experience and Outreach Office for instructions as soon as such an event occurs. You are not to report to the schools during a work stoppage or strike, and shall not participate as substitute teachers, participate in picket lines, or similar activities.

If the work stoppage or strike lasts more than five days, the Office of Clinical Experience and Outreach will pursue placing you in another school district. Every effort will be made not to inconvenience you or the university supervisors. You will not be required to make up time lost due to a work stoppage or strike.

Teacher Candidates as Substitutes  The affiliation agreements that are signed by all schools and agencies working with KU teacher candidates state that: “The _______ (school district or agency) agrees that no teacher candidate shall be used as a substitute at any time during his/her clinical experience assignment. This provision recognizes that the teacher candidate is uncertified and by Pennsylvania law cannot function as a substitute teacher.”

In most cases, a substitute teacher must have a college degree and a valid Pennsylvania certificate to teach in Pennsylvania public schools. You do not hold a college degree and valid certificate, therefore your assignment as substitute teacher violates the school code.

In the event that a cooperating teacher is absent, a qualified substitute teacher must be assigned to his/her duties.

In the event of another teacher’s absence (not the cooperating teacher) you may not be assigned to cover that teacher’s classroom schedule or duties (i.e., lunch, hall, bus, or study hall). University policy prohibits your release to accept a teaching position prior to the successful completion of clinical experience. Receiving compensation for clinical experience is prohibited.

Withdrawal from Clinical Experience  The following procedure will be followed for any problem with the teacher candidate during his/her clinical experience:

- University supervisor will contact the chair of the department and the Director of Clinical Experience and Outreach to discuss the issue.
- The College of Education chair will meet with the teacher candidate and the university supervisor. Prior to this meeting within the department of Secondary Education the chair will contact the VPA or LAS chair of the university supervisor to inform him/her of the meeting.
- The problem might be remediated at this stage.
- If the teacher candidate needs to be removed from this clinical experience, the Director of Clinical Experience and Outreach will then notify the school of this decision.
- The Director may find another placement for the teacher candidate when one or two weeks remain in the clinical experience assignment.
Your Responsibilities to the Cooperating Teacher

- Contact each cooperating teacher as soon after receiving the assignment as possible.
- It is strongly suggested you make an appointment at the school and with the cooperating teacher before the first day of your clinical experience.
- Convey a sincere desire to learn, a willingness to cooperate and an appreciative attitude toward suggestions and constructive criticism.
- Review and strengthen basic content, principles of human growth and development, instructional design strategies, teaching techniques and classroom management strategies.
- Classroom management is ultimately the responsibility of the cooperating teacher.
- Discuss procedures in advance with the cooperating teacher.
- Present all lesson and unit plans to the cooperating teacher for review and approval.
- Plan a time for daily conferences (if possible) to discuss progress.
- Your cooperating teacher should review the procedure for closing school during weather emergencies.
- Accept and complete assigned tasks on time.
- Notify the cooperating teacher and university supervisor of any absence, as soon as it is known.
- The cooperating teacher needs everything necessary to cover your responsibilities prior to the beginning of the day of an absence.
- Make arrangements for classroom observations of other teachers with the approval and through the cooperating teacher.
- Return all materials and equipment promptly so that other faculty has access as needed.

Certification  The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has initiated an on-line application process for teacher certification known as the Teacher Information Management System or TIMS. It is available at www.PA-TIMS.com.

During your student teaching semester:
- Log on to the TIMS system, complete the application process, and pay the required fee electronically. There is also a physicians’ signature required. The TIMS system explains the procedures to follow to meet this requirement.
- After all requirements and obligations have been met, including GPA, PRAXIS/PECT or other certification scores, and degree conferral, the Dean’s office will verify through the TIMS web site that you have met all PDE requirements and your application will be processed by PDE.
- Following a satisfactory PDE review of your application, your certificate will be issued and mailed directly to you.