Field Experience and Clinical Practice Standard

Special education candidates progress through a series of developmentally sequenced field experiences for the full range of ages, types and levels of abilities, and collaborative opportunities that are appropriate to the license or roles for which they are preparing. These field and clinical experiences are supervised by qualified professionals.

Supporting Explanation

Field experience sites are developed and enhanced over time through the building of strong relationships and partnerships between special educators in the field experience settings and the university special education faculty. Through collaboration and consultation, the placements of candidates are selected so as to provide developmental field experiences that support candidate learning. Field experiences are supervised and mentored by school- or site-based professionals who are certified or licensed in the special education areas for which the candidates are being prepared. In addition, field experiences are supervised and evaluated by university faculty.

Field experiences are designed to link theory to practice and provide rich, scaffolded, developmental, and graduated experiences with increasing responsibilities for prospective special educators. Field experience-based activities and assignments develop candidates’ knowledge and skills. Performance assessments of candidates as they interact with, instruct, guide, correct, and support individuals with exceptionalities in the field experience setting are ongoing and developmentally appropriate. Field experiences are structured and varied, and ensure the candidate has experiences with individuals with exceptionalities with the given set of specific exceptionalities across the age, grade, and severity ranges for which the candidate is being prepared. Candidates participate in field experiences across the preparation program. Field experiences are connected and sufficiently extensive and intensive for candidates to develop and demonstrate proficiencies in the professional roles for which they are preparing.

Site-based professionals, in addition to being certified or licensed in the special education areas for which the candidate is being prepared, are selected for their expertise and experience with the individuals and services for which the candidate is preparing. Site-based professionals demonstrate mentoring skills in supporting the learning of candidates. These site-based professionals effectively communicate with and support candidates in field experiences.