Welcome to Your Early Field Experience!

Early field experiences give you an inside look at teaching, and provide you with the opportunity to challenge prior beliefs and assumptions about teaching. Through these experiences, you will get to know more about yourself as a teacher: your strengths, weaknesses, and special interests - you may even find that you would prefer working with an age group or subject area that is different from what you originally expected.

It is important for you to keep in mind that the reputation that you build in your field experiences will travel with you as you progress through the teacher education program, and into the world of teaching. Preservice teachers are sometimes even offered a job based on their work in early field experiences! We are here to help you put your best foot forward.

This guide book provides a general overview of the policies, procedures, and expectations for you in this experience. Please read through it carefully, and let us know if you have any questions or concerns about this or any other aspect of your experience.

Welcome!

The Office of Clinical Experiences
The Six Guiding Principles of the IU School of Education:

**Knowledge**: be well-grounded in student development, the content areas that are central to teaching, and assessment strategies.

**Learning Environment**: create and nurture positive physical, social, and academic learning environments

**Personalized Learning**: understand ability levels, interests, and learning styles. Demonstrate instruction that reflects the diversity among all learners.

**Community**: understand and be involved in the academic learning community. Build and develop relationships within the school, corporation, and community.

**Reflection**: reflect continuously on all aspects of the teaching experience to identify ways for improvement as an individual, as a part of the school community, and as part of the teaching profession.

**Growth**: develop a philosophy of teaching and learning, which demonstrates continuous professional growth in values, commitments, and professional judgments.

Early field experiences help you build proficiencies in planning, instruction, and assessment in order to maximize student learning.
Before Your First Visit:

There are several things that you **must** do prior to your first visit to your host classroom:

**Complete your background check application, and any other required checks. Results must be delivered to your placement site on your first visit.** (Learn more: [http://go.iu.edu/1mNx](http://go.iu.edu/1mNx))

**Make initial email contact with your cooperating teacher. Use this conversation to:**

1. introduce yourself and send (attach) your formal introduction letter (*see page 4*).
2. confirm that you will attend on the initial reporting date, at the time specified by your placement coordinator.
3. verify the best way to communicate with your cooperating teacher (eg. phone, email, text).
4. set a time to discuss topics such as grading, philosophies, emergency procedures, and classroom management techniques.

To: <teacher’s email address>
From: <your email address>
Subject: IU field experience

Dear Ms. Jones,

Hello! I just learned that I will be coming to your classroom for my M403 high school math field experience. I am very excited to be placed with you, and to gain experience working with your students. I have attached a formal letter of introduction to tell you more about myself.

My understanding is that I will attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12 until 3 pm, for 7 weeks beginning next Tuesday, September 19th. Unless you tell me otherwise, I will see you then.

Thank you!
<Your Name>

**Take steps to prepare for your first day so that you set a positive tone for your experience. View our tips to Arrive Ready by visiting [https://goo.gl/kpPHgP](https://goo.gl/kpPHgP).**
Your Letter of Introduction

A letter of introduction is your opportunity to introduce yourself to your cooperating teacher and to make a good first impression. The letter should be typed in a standard letter format. It should be brief, positive (do not make negative comments about previous experiences/teachers/classrooms), and free of spelling and grammatical errors.

**Sample Letter:**

Date

Your full name
Your local address
Your local phone number
Your e-mail address

Dear Cooperating Teacher:

Write a paragraph that opens with a sentence in which you express your enthusiasm for your field experience. Then write a couple of sentences about your major and related interests.

Write a paragraph about your previous experience working with children. Keep it brief and positive.

Include a few (2-4) of your personal goals for this field experience.

**Examples:**
- To gain experience working with small groups
- To learn more about grading and gradebook strategies
- To learn classroom management strategies
- To learn more about lesson planning
- To work with students individually who need special help

Close with an expression of appreciation.

Sincerely,

*Your Signature*

Typed name
During Your Field Experience:

Early field experiences are designed to provide you with as much early exposure and experiences as possible prior to student teaching and your first teaching position. To have the best possible experience, be sure to:

👍 Maintain a positive, enthusiastic, and supportive attitude during your field experience.

👍 Participate actively, interacting with students (not your peers).

👍 Focus on the classroom - put cell phones and laptops away unless directly related to a class activity. Do not work on other assignments while in the field.

👍 Dress for success!

👍 Show up prepared, and when expected. If you will be late or absent, contact your supervising teacher and field experience instructor prior to your expected arrival time.

👎 Do not conduct research.

👍 Maintain professional boundaries. Never leave school grounds with a student or share personal contact information (including social media).

👍 Be discreet & maintain confidentiality in the classroom and outside of it.

👍 Communicate with your cooperating teacher - ask questions about teaching, classroom management, and students. Seek constructive feedback.

👍 Respect and follow established classroom policies and procedures.
Suggestions for Classroom Participation:

**BE INTERACTIVE.**
Spend the majority of your time working with children:

- Get up and move around; be productive.

*Never sit in the back of the room.*
- Shadow the children.
- Assume the role of an active participant, not an observer.
- Remind/help children stay on task.
- Help students complete work.

**BE PROACTIVE.**
Take ownership of your experience:

- Set your own goals for the experience and share them with your cooperating teacher.
- Offer your assistance; try to put yourself in as many different situations as possible.
- Where possible, try to collaborate with your cooperating teacher to adopt co-teaching strategies.
- Don’t spend all of your time grading; try to complete seatwork as quickly as possible so that you can spend time with the students.
Professionalism in Practice:

Professionalism is a term you’ve likely heard many times in your courses, jobs, and field experiences. Professionalism is made up of a variety of components including appearance, body language, words, actions, and inaction. A summary of some of the most important expectations and tips for demonstrating professionalism in the classroom can be found at [https://goo.gl/Mi9hYi](https://goo.gl/Mi9hYi).

Developing Active & Reflective Practices:

Actively participating in the learning process (as outlined on page 6), and utilizing reflective practices in both learning and teaching are important skills to develop during your field experiences. The presence and use of these skills will be assessed in your early field experience and your student teaching evaluations. They also play an important role in the completion of the edTPA student teaching assessment. How have you used active and/or reflective practices? What practices have you observed as a learner? How could you implement greater reflective practice moving forward?

Conducting Effective Observations

Whether it is your first early field experience, or just your first introductory week in a later experience, spending some time observing your cooperating teacher in action is an important part of your overall experience. By taking the time to note some specific aspects of instruction, environment, culture, and behaviors you can gain great insights into effective instruction. You may also gain a greater understanding of the depth of planning needed to become a strong and effective educator in your own right. What aspects of the classroom environment do you think are valuable to make note of when observing in a classroom? Visit [https://goo.gl/Gs2giA](https://goo.gl/Gs2giA) for our tips on conducting an effective classroom observation.
Co-Teaching Strategies:

In early field experiences, you will likely utilize One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One Assist; and possibly Station Teaching and Alternative Teaching. In later field experiences, you and your cooperating teacher may feel comfortable implementing others.

These methods are not designed to occur in any specific order; rather, they are designed to demonstrate the various ways pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers can work together to provide the best possible instruction coupled with opportunities for you to gain valuable teaching experience.
Wrapping Up:

At the end of your field experience, it is your responsibility to return the timesheet you were given at the beginning of the semester. It should be complete, and include the signature of your cooperating teacher. Your cooperating teacher will complete an electronic final evaluation of your performance, which will be factored into determining your final grade. View the areas of evaluation at https://goo.gl/cXMfvZ.

In addition to this responsibility, you are encouraged to conclude your field experience by mailing or hand-delivering a thank you note to your cooperating teacher. Your message can be simple, acknowledging the time and effort involved as well as what you learned from the experience. (Be sure your mailed note is delivered by following the tips found at https://goo.gl/7pp2P7.)

If your experience was particularly positive and you made a strong connection to your cooperating teacher, you may also want to consider requesting a letter of recommendation to include in your portfolio.

Dear Ms. Jones,

Thank you for opening your classroom to me and allowing me to work with your students this past 7 weeks.

I especially appreciate the time you spent with me helping me strengthen my skills in classroom management. This has been an area that I was really uncertain of, and your tips and feedback have helped me a great deal.

Sincerely,

Future Teacher
Early Field Experiences
Professionalism Agreement:
(For your records; sign and return next page.)

1. I understand that during my field experiences I am a guest in the classroom, as well as a representative of Indiana University. It is my responsibility to use this opportunity to learn more about teaching with the objective of becoming a more effective educational professional.

2. I agree to maintain professional, legal, and ethical conduct at all times. I agree to protect the confidentiality of the classroom, of the children, and of the teachers. I will not leave school grounds with students and will not share personal social media information, contact information with students. As a guest in an established classroom environment, I understand that my pedagogies and strategies must be used as a supplement to the teaching style of my host teacher.

3. I have read and agree to the procedures and expectations as outlined in the Early Field Experiences Student Handbook.

4. I understand that failure to comply with this agreement and policies in the handbook may result in the termination of my field placement & failure of the course.

Course Instructor                                                                 Course #

Date/Semester
Early Field Experiences
Professionalism Agreement:
(Please sign, remove page, and turn in to placement coordinator)

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________________________________________________________________________
Course Instructor                                      Course #

________________________________________________________________________
Printed Name                                           UID Number

________________________________________________________________________
Signature                                               Date
We’re here to help!

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