

****All candidates enrolled in a course requiring field experience are responsible for reading the following in its entirety.****

The field experiences within the education program have been designed to provide the teacher candidates with unique opportunities geared towards preparing them for their future role as teachers. The South Carolina Education Department requires that each candidate participates in a minimum of 100 hours of field experiences prior to student teaching. In order to ensure a quality experience that meets all state and university requirements, the following guidelines have been established.

1. **Clinical Committee Placement Policy**--*Approved 10/4/06*—In order to provide a variety of progressive experiences in multiple and diverse settings, all candidates for initial licensure will be placed in different PUBLIC school settings for all field experiences prior to clinical practice (student teaching). Candidates may be allowed to return to a previous placement for their clinical practice (student teaching), if placement at that school is available and if the school and FMU faculty are in agreement, but they cannot be assigned to a teacher of which they have previously worked. In addition, candidates will be placed in specific grade levels according to their major: Early Childhood Majors (Pk-3); Elementary (2-6); Middle (5-8); Secondary (9-12); and Art (K- 12).

2. **SLED Check**—Candidates wishing to receive a placement for a field experience MUST complete a SLED Background Check and receive a current SLED clearance at least once within a given academic year. SLED clearances must be received before placements can be initiated . SLED clearances submitted to the office of the Coordinator of Clinical Experiences (OCCE) in previous academic years may NOT be applied to the current semester, and updated forms within an academic year are required for any candidate who has ever been referred to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action and/or who has had previous SLED issues. A data base of SLED clearances are maintained by the OCCE but a duplicate copy of a candidate's submitted form is not available. Candidates should save an electronic copy and are encouraged to print at least two copies of their SLED clearance.

3. **Placement Process**—Only the Coordinator of Clinical Experiences will coordinate, seek approval for, and finalize placements for all field experiences. Candidates will submit placement request forms via LiveText (See Internship Timeline for due dates and procedures).All efforts will be made to accommodate a candidate's requested CITIES, however, because of a variety of reasons, placement preferences cannot be guaranteed. Please also note that placements in Florence are highly requested, but placement slots may be limited. Candidates should make sure their placement request form is filled in completely and submitted through LiveText ON TIME (see Internship Timeline). Failure to submit a complete and accurate request in a timely manner will impact the available placement options. Please note: Only approved placements may be used to satisfy field experience hours. Any placement not arranged through the Coordinator of Clinical Experiences will not count towards meeting course requirements. As districts/schools have their own approved protocol for placing interns, candidates must NOT contact any school personnel themselves. All contact will be made through the OCCE.

4. **Placement Changes**—Because of the agreement established between the school settings and cooperating teachers, once a placement has been approved and finalized, changes in placements cannot be made. Therefore, placement requests need to be made very carefully. If a candidate needs to drop a course with a field placement, the drop process cannot be completed until the candidate provides written proof that the cooperating teacher has been notified. An email to the cooperating teacher, with a copy provided to the course professor and the Coordinator of Clinical Experiences (contact the School

of Education office for appropriate email address), would be an acceptable means of written notification.

5. **Field Experience Hours**—Field Experience hours for each course are determined by the university. However, these hours help to ensure that all candidates are receiving the minimum state-mandated 100 hours prior to student teaching. Therefore, any student not completing all of the hours for each field experience prior to the end of the placement period will NOT receive credit for the course.

6. **Fulfilling Field Experience Requirements**—The course professor will provide information on what the expectations are for your field experience. Questions should be directed to him/her. However, the quality of the field experience is dependent on the candidate's ability to conduct him/herself in a professional, responsible manner. Candidates should take advantage of the wonderful opportunities during their time in our public schools. The more involved a candidate is during each experience, the more prepared he/she will be for student teaching.

7. **Paperwork during Field Experiences**—The course professor will provide information concerning the paperwork that is required for each field experience. However, it is the responsibility of the candidate to make sure that he/she submits accurate information in a timely manner. The candidate should keep accurate records of hours served IN THE CLASSROOM (not just arrival/dismissal time to the school) and should NOT ask the cooperating teacher or other school personnel to sign anything that is not up-to-date and current. Falsifying any documents will result in serious disciplinary actions which may include removal from the university and/or education program (see Student Handbook for more information).

8. **Completion of Hours**—In order for field evaluations to be sent to the cooperating teachers and returned to the office of the Coordinator of Clinical Experiences by the end of the semester, field experience hours MUST be completed by the designated date (See Internship Timeline for dates and procedures). Candidates need to plan for this deadline when scheduling his/her required hours, as NO hours earned after this date will count towards meeting the required hours.