

PRACTICA/CLINICAL EXPERIENCES IN EDUCATION

A practicum is a substantial guided school-based experience that relates theory and research a particular field of education to professional practice, leading to an initial license in education. Admission to a practicum is restricted to matriculated graduate students in educator licensure programs who have completed all prerequisite coursework, pre-practicum experiences and required Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL). Students completing practica are supported by college field supervisors and cooperating practitioners, who assess their performance based on the standards of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the specialized professional organizations of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Most practica are 300 hours and require participation in a group seminar to help students reflect on their learning and their practice. In addition to performance assessments, practicum students complete portfolios to document the success of their practicum experience.

A clinical experience is an advanced-level field experience of substantial length designed for educators holding initial licenses. Clinicals typically include an applied research project or other focus of individual applied study, and a group seminar.

Students apply for practica and clinical experiences to the Office of Licensure and Field Placement in the semester prior to the proposed experience. Applications require the signature of the program coordinator and documentation of previous coursework, pre-practica and MTEL results. Students must arrange for a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) review with their cooperating school or district prior to beginning a practicum. The OLFP is responsible for placing students in appropriate settings, for assigning field supervisors, for record-keeping related to students' practicum and clinical experiences, and for endorsing candidates for licensure.

Application

It is the responsibility of each graduate student to make application through the Office of Licensure and Field Placement to participate in the practicum/clinical in his/her particular area of concentration. This application must be completed at registration no later than one semester prior to the practicum in which he/she wishes to be enrolled and requires the signature of the program coordinator. Students will obtain the application form from the Office of Licensure and Field Placement.

Assignment of Students to Practicum/Internship Experience

It is the responsibility of the Graduate School to provide the best possible practicum experience for students enrolled. The Office of Licensure and Field Placement, in consultation with the practicum student and program coordinator, will make the necessary arrangements with the particular school director or agencies so involved.