



SCHOOL OF  
EDUCATION

# Quick Start Guide

for Early Field Experiences





SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
**CLINICAL EXPERIENCES**  
Office of Teacher Education

## 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 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 guidebook 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

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# The Six Guiding Principles of the IU School of Education

IU future educators should:

## Knowledge



... be well-grounded in student development, content areas, 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 this diversity.

## Community

... understand and build relationships within the academic learning community.



## Reflection



... continuously reflect on teaching experience to identify ways to improve.

## Growth

... develop a philosophy of teaching & learning that demonstrates continuous professional growth.



## 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:** [go.iu.edu/24wj](http://go.iu.edu/24wj))

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

- ① introduce yourself in the body of the email and attach your formal introduction letter (see next page).
- ② confirm that you will attend on the initial reporting date, at the time specified by your placement coordinator.
- ③ ask for 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.

**Make** transportation arrangements to and from your designated school. If you will be participating in a carpool, be sure to extend the same courtesy and level of respect as you do in your placement.

**Take** a “test drive” to your placement site before your first visit!



For tips on carpooling, go to:  
[www.wikihow.com/Carpool](http://www.wikihow.com/Carpool).

**Make** sure you're all set for your first day by reviewing our Tips to Arrive Ready, located at [go.iu.edu/24wx](http://go.iu.edu/24wx).

## 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 (**see next page**).

## Sample Email:

Dear Ms./Mr. <cooperating teacher last name>,

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 work with you and your students. I have attached a formal letter of introduction to tell you more about myself. If possible, I would like to set up a time to meet with you to discuss your philosophies, policies and procedures prior to the start of my experience. If this is OK, please let me know what times work best for you. Also, what would be your preferred method of communication?

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>

## Sample Letter:

Date

Your full name

Your phone number

Your e-mail address

Dear Ms./Mr. <cooperating teacher last name>:

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. Be sure to include a few (2-4) of your personal goals for this field experience (**see next page**).

Close with an expression of appreciation.

Sincerely,

*Your Signature*

Typed name

## Examples of Possible Field Experience Goals:



- ✓ To gain experience working with small groups.
- ✓ To learn more about grading and assessment strategies.
- ✓ To learn classroom management strategies.
- ✓ To learn more about lesson planning.
- ✓ To explore ideas regarding differentiated instruction.

## 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.

*Interact* and actively participate with students (not your peers).

*Focus* on the classroom - put cell phones and laptops away unless directly related to a class activity.

*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.

*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.

# What do you do if

## ... you suspect child abuse and/or neglect:

You are responsible for reporting suspicions promptly using the following protocol:

1. Prepare written documentation regarding all observations, conversations, or other details that led to suspicion of abuse and/or neglect.
2. Contact the Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-800-5556 as soon as possible.
3. Following this call, contact the Office of Clinical Experiences and assigned university supervisor.
4. The Office of Clinical Experiences will then contact the respective school principal and/or school administrators, and the IU Safety Office.

### Important Contacts & Information

Indiana Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline: 800.800.5556

Office of Clinical Experiences: 812.856.8503

Additional Information: [www.in.gov/dcs/2971.htm](http://www.in.gov/dcs/2971.htm)

## ... you are harrassed or find yourself in an uncomfortable/unsafe situation:

If you find yourself in a situation where you are being harassed, or something occurs that makes you feel unsafe, it is important for you to take immediate action:

1. Excuse yourself from the environment. Keep your comments short, and to the point. "Excuse me, I need to go now."  
\*(If the incident is a school safety issue follow school protocol to shelter, etc... and keep all safe.)
2. As soon as you are safely out of the environment, contact your field experience supervisor, course instructor, and the director of early field experiences immediately. They will advise you of what steps to take next.
3. Complete a Bias Incident Report with the SoE.

... a student vomits, develops a bloody nose, or you encounter other bodily fluids:

You should avoid contact with any bodily fluids, and should not clean it up unless you've received Universal Precautions Training. Teachers and staff in Indiana schools receive Universal Precautions Training every school year – you will likely not receive this training prior to your field experience. Your cooperating teacher or another designated staff member is the responsible party in these situations.

... standardized tests or other special activities forbid you to be in the classroom, or if they make your presence in the classroom awkward or intrusive:

You should take the opportunity to visit the school library or ask your cooperating teacher to introduce you to another teacher to observe or help. However, never assume you can visit another classroom without the advance permission of the teacher.

... other problems arise:

Where possible, first try to work out any problems you are having with your cooperating teacher and/or your course instructor. If you have a logistical concern, contact your course's placement coordinator. If further assistance is needed, make an appointment to meet with a member of our office staff. It is a good idea to take care of problems while they are still small. We are always here to help make your placement a success!

# Protecting Yourself While Preparing Yourself: Student Memberships in Professional Organizations

Pre-service and in-service teachers are expected to become members of professional organizations. The Office of Teacher Education recommends joining professional organizations as soon as possible in your undergraduate career. Professional organizations provide access to a wide array of print and electronic resources, opportunities to network with other educators, opportunities for professional development beyond your coursework, and seminars and conferences to expand your knowledge and expertise. As students, you will often be able to secure these benefits through significantly discounted student memberships and student-centric offerings.

As future educators, membership in professional organizations can also offer personal and professional legal protections in the form of liability insurance. The Office of Teacher Education strongly recommends that all students participating in field experiences (from your first field experience through student teaching and beyond) join a professional organization and secure this important protection. Some school corporations will require proof of liability insurance prior to the start of student teaching.

## Recommended Professional Organizations for Future Educators (Organization Benefits May Vary):

### **All Educators:**

National Education Association (NEA)  
<https://ims.nea.org/JoinNea/>

Indiana State Teachers Association (ISTA)  
<https://www.ista-in.org/our-association/members/isea>

### **Early Childhood Education:**

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)  
<http://secure.iaeyc.org/membership/>

### **Elementary Education:**

Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)  
<https://www.acei.org/membership/>

### **Secondary English/Language Arts:**

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)  
<http://www2.ncte.org/membership/>

### **Secondary Mathematics:**

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)  
<https://www.nctm.org/Membership/Membership-Options-for-Individuals/#student>

### **Secondary Science:**

National Science Teachers Association (NSTA)  
<https://www.nsta.org/membership/membership.aspx?promo>

### **Secondary Social Studies:**

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)  
<https://www.socialstudies.org/membership>

### **Special Education:**

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)  
<https://www.cec.sped.org/Membership/New-Membership-Options/Your-Membership/Basic-Membership>

### **World Languages:**

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)  
<https://www.actfl.org/membership>

# Suggestions for Classroom Participation:

In order for you to truly benefit from your field experience, spend as much time as possible working with children. This is your opportunity to put yourself in as many different situations as possible, exploring the field of education and developing your teacher skills.

You should:



**Discuss and collaborate** (whenever possible) with your cooperating teacher to try out co-teaching strategies.

**Take ownership** of your experience. Identify the personal goals you would like to work toward during your time in the classroom, and share these with your cooperating teacher.



**Get up** and move around. Offer your assistance and take the initiative whenever possible.

**Help students** stay on task through proximity or by offering assistance.



**Assist students** struggling with content through one-on-one or small group instruction.

# 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.

**Share your ideas on what professionalism is and isn't here:**

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# Developing Active & Reflective Practices:

Actively participating in the learning process, 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.

**Share examples of how you've used & observed these practices as a learner and an educator:**

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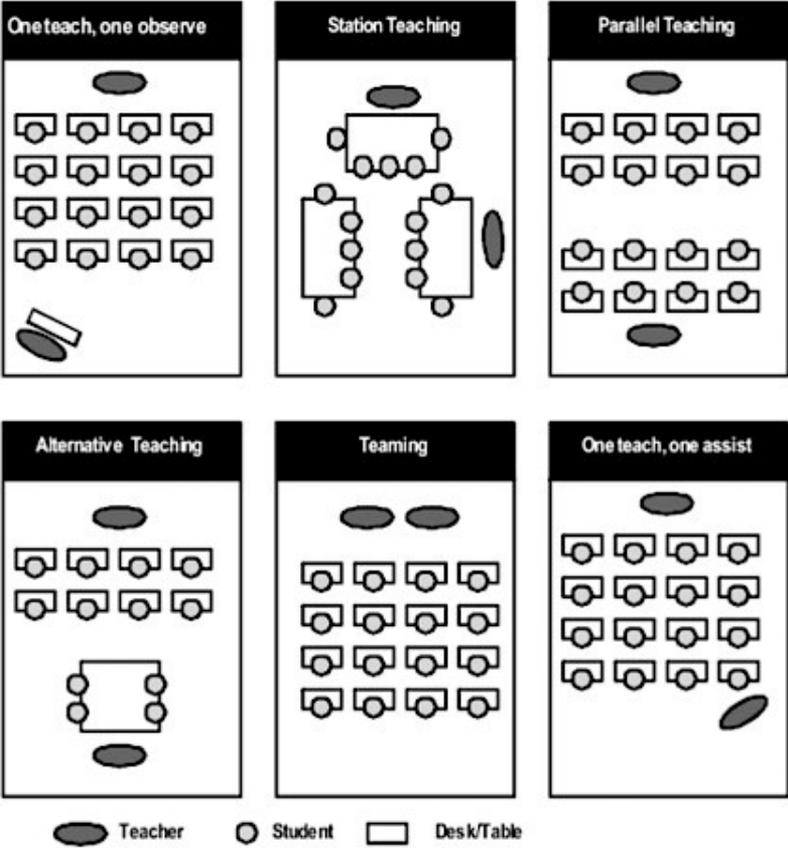
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# Co-Teaching Strategies:

Collaborative teaching is a practice used in field experiences and student teaching that shares instructional responsibilities between pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers in a variety of ways (see below). work together to provide the best possible instruction coupled with opportunities for you to gain valuable teaching experience.

These methods are not designed to occur in any specific order; however, in early field experiences, you will likely utilize One Teach, One Observe; One Teach, One Assist; and possibly Station Teaching and/or Alternative Teaching. In later field experiences, you and your cooperating teacher may feel comfortable implementing others.



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## 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.

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.

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.



# 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.

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*Course Instructor*

*Course #*

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*Date/Semester*



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## Questions or Concerns?



### Email:

[stuteach@indiana.edu](mailto:stuteach@indiana.edu)



### Call:

812-856-8503



### Search:

[go.iu.edu/21EU](http://go.iu.edu/21EU)



### Stop By:

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