

FIELD PLACEMENT GUIDE FOR EDU 14

Department of Educational Studies, Swarthmore College

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It is important to complete and then review this guide prior to your first visit.

EXPECTATIONS FOR PLACEMENTS AND STUDENT VISITORS

Field placements provide students with the opportunity to connect theory to practice while also developing a deeper understanding of the many factors and issues present in school settings. While in the classroom, field teachers may ask students to work one-on-one or in small groups with students, or to assist with large group instruction. In addition, courses do differ in the number of required fieldwork hours and the types of activities to be completed while in the field. Students should carefully review the field hour expectations for the course for which they are registered.

In all field placements, students are expected to:

- Know the requirements and objectives of their fieldwork.
- Be punctual, reliable, and professional.
- Interact with teachers and students in respectful ways.
- Inquire how best to help, assist, and support the field teacher.
- Become involved in classroom activities, when appropriate.

SECTION 1. BASIC PLACEMENT DETAILS

Carefully review the letter to your cooperating teacher and the accompanying fieldwork overview on the back of the letter (see the end of this guide). Make sure you can verbally summarize your role, goals and objectives for the teacher who will host you. Make sure to give this teacher the letter/fieldwork overview on your first visit. Keep an extra copy for yourself, so that you can review what is expected of you.

SECTION 2. PLACEMENT, DIRECTIONS AND TRAVEL

When your placement is finalized, you will receive an email with all the specific details of your placement from the Field Placement Coordinator, Cathy Dunn (cdunn1@swarthmore.edu). The email will indicate your visit dates and whether you should walk, use public transportation or join an organized van pool to get to your assigned school.

If possible, plan to arrive at your school 15 minutes before your first field placement is scheduled to begin (sometimes not an option if you are dependent on public transportation or van pools). If traveling on your own, make sure to **print a copy of the directions to bring with you on your first visit, as well as a map of the area, in case you get lost or don't have a cell signal.**

If Google Maps suggests a route that seems overly complicated or time-consuming, you should explore slightly altering your departure or arrival times. Contact Cathy if you have questions about directions or if the route seems too long or difficult; she may have a better plan for you.

If you will seek travel reimbursement for public transportation fares or for mileage, please visit the Department's website under "Field Placements and Clearances > Travel Reimbursement Policy" and review the requirements. A travel reimbursement form is attached to this packet, for your use if needed. Our administrative assistant, Ruthanne Krauss (rkrauss1@swarthmore.edu) handles reimbursement and van certification/van driver questions. If you cannot wait for transportation reimbursement and need funds in advance for travel, contact Ruthanne; make sure to give her as much advance notice as possible.

SECTION 3. INTRODUCTORY SCHOOL RESEARCH

Visit the school's website and become familiar with the school and community you will visit. See if you can find information about the school, including:

- The school's philosophy and mission
- The population it serves
- Special programs and activities
- Student or faculty handbooks
- A webpage for your teacher
- News stories about your school

SECTION 4. SCHEDULING YOUR VISITS/CONTACT INFO

While you are on the school's website, look for a calendar that might indicate when the school is closed for holidays or in-service. If you cannot find this calendar on the school's page, check for a link to a district website with this information.

Copy down the dates of any holiday/in-service breaks that will conflict with your visiting day.

Next, refer to a copy of the Swarthmore College calendar, and check when fall/spring break occurs. List the break dates that will conflict with your visiting day.

Now, open a general calendar. Create a draft of the proposed dates you plan to visit your placement site, making sure to address the requirements of your course. **Write in these proposed dates on your own calendar and in appropriate box on the Fieldwork Overview form, which you will hand to your cooperating teacher on your first visit** (it is on the back of the Letter to Cooperating Teacher at the end of this packet). **Also fill-in the other personal information in that box, so that your cooperating teacher can contact you.**

SECTION 5. SCHOOL CLEARANCES

Determine the clearances you need, usually listed in your placement email from the Field Coordinator. **Make sure you have hard copies of all required clearances and be prepared to turn them in to the school's front office on your first visit.**

If you have concerns about submitting the personal information required by the state for these clearances, such as your social security number or citizenship status, please contact the [fieldwork coordinator](#) directly to discuss the options we've developed for such situations; we value your privacy and you need not share the specifics of your

situation, unless you wish to do so. Our department is committed to finding alternative field placements for students, which would involve working with older learners or in the area of policy.

SECTION 6. LETTER TO FIELD TEACHER/FIELDWORK OVERVIEW

Make sure you have a neat and clean copy of the Letter to Cooperating Teacher; the Fieldwork Overview Form is printed on the reverse site. If you have more than one placement teacher, please make additional copies for these teachers. A copy machine is available in the Department of Educational Studies in Pearson.

SECTION 7. WHAT TO BRING TO A PLACEMENT

- Photo ID (*Your driver's license or Swarthmore ID*) and lanyard to hold ID.
- Clearances, usually collected by front office on first visit*
- Letter for cooperating teacher with fieldwork overview form on back. *Make sure you added your personal info and proposed visit dates and that your teacher(s) get this on your first visit!*
- Transportation fares (*Save receipts for reimbursement*)
- Appropriate attire (*See next section below for details*)

* If your clearances are not collected on the first visit by the school's front office or the field teacher, make sure to bring them each week until they are collected.

SECTION 8. APPROPRIATE ATTIRE AND CONTACT

Please wear clean, professional attire appropriate for your school's context. If you have questions, ask your professor and other students familiar with the school for guidance about what to wear. It can be helpful to look at the school's dress code, which is often posted on their website. Also take cues from your field teacher and other professionals in the school. If you feel that you do not have appropriate attire, please speak to your professor or Cathy, who will work with you to find a solution.

Students should be mindful of appropriate and professional interactions with children. If you have worked with kids in camp settings or after-school programs, remember that schools tend to be much more formal as far as how adults are expected to interact with children. Be careful with humor, especially since you are in a new context. Under no circumstances should you be in electronic communication with minors or have contact outside of the classroom setting. Child safety and professionalism will be covered in class, prior to your first fieldwork visit.

We expect that students will not have their phones out while in the school. Food and drink should not be brought into the building or consumed while you are in the classroom. Please do not leave bags or coats in visible locations in parked vans or cars and be mindful of towing signs; many of our schools are in locations where parking regulations are strongly enforced.

SECTION 9. INFORMATION TO COLLECT AT YOUR SITE

On your first visit or when appropriate, ask your teacher(s) the following:

- If you had not been assigned a specific field teacher prior to your arrival at the school, please ask your teacher for her/his first and last name and email address (we will send him/her an evaluation at the end of the semester).

- How can you best help or assist your teacher in the classroom? Before asking this question, make sure you understand your professor's fieldwork expectations; many teachers will ask you what requirements you need to fulfill while in their classroom.
- How best to contact your teacher if you cannot make a visit?
- Confirm all of your planned visit dates, by pointing out that you have listed a proposed schedule on the fieldwork overview page, on the back of the letter for the cooperating teacher. Make sure to revise your visit schedule if some of the dates don't work for the teacher.
- Would your teacher like you to send an email reminder before you visit each week?
- Are there any special school expectations that you should be aware of, such as is your attire appropriate, etc.? This might be a good opportunity to open the door and ask the teacher to let you know if you are doing anything that isn't what he/she expects, etc.

SECTION 10. MISSING A SCHEDULED VISIT

If you are ill, it is important to contact your teacher as soon as possible, as well as your driver, if you are in a van pool. Many teachers may have planned around the expectation that you are coming; you need to **provide them with advance notice if you will miss a scheduled visit. Copy your professor on your email to the teacher.** Remember that most teachers cannot check email during their teaching day and **you may also need to call the school and leave a message.** Most importantly, please remember that field teachers expect you to be professional and on time; if you make a mistake, a short note of apology should be sent.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the case of inclement weather, it is your responsibility to determine if your school is closed or running on a different schedule. Information about school closings/late openings can be found at <http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/schools/>. If in a van pool, please notify your driver if your school is closed.

Additionally, if you are taking public transportation to your placement, be sure to check the SEPTA website for information about route changes or closings. This information may be found at www.septa.org. If a school is open but you cannot get there due to weather, be sure to notify your teacher(s) as soon as possible. In

PLACEMENT QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Several Department members assist in the planning and supervising of field placement experiences. Please direct your questions to the following contacts accordingly:

- Contact your professor with questions/concerns about fieldwork and your experiences at the school.
- Contact Swarthmore's Fieldwork Coordinator, Cathy Dunn (cdunn1@swarthmore.edu), with questions/concerns regarding placement logistics, start dates, etc. (215)868-5954
- Contact the Department's Administrative Assistant, Ruthanne Krauss (rkrauss1@swarthmore.edu) with questions/concerns about transportation reimbursement and van certification. (610)328-8344
- Contact your school/teacher regarding absences and copy your professor.