

# The College of New Jersey School of Education

Office of Support for Teacher Education Programs  
and Global Student Teaching  
<http://www.tcnj.edu/step>

## POLICIES RELATED TO FIELD/CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

### Student Teacher/Intern Placement

Each teacher education program at The College initiates the placement of student teachers/clinical interns. The student teacher/clinical intern coordinator for each program reviews, approves, signs and submits the student teaching/internship application to the STEP Office. It is the goal of the School of Education to place students in Professional Development School Network schools. The College has developed a formal partnership with PDSN school districts. The school districts are within thirty-five miles of the campus.

In collaboration with the departments of the School of Education and the PDSN school districts, the STEP Office will arrange placements for all students within the PDSN. However, The College may place students outside the PDSN schools in order to meet the specific needs of the department and their students or when placement in the PDSN schools is not possible. Once the placement is made, a binding contract between the College and the school district is executed. Students are expected to honor the contract.

**Students are not permitted to contact principals or teachers and arrange for their own student teaching/clinical internship placements.**

### Tuberculin Screening (Mantoux Test)

In accordance with New Jersey State Law, student teachers/clinical interns must have a negative Mantoux (TB) test within 6 months of their first student teaching/clinical experience. This usually occurs during Clinical Practice I. Once you have a negative tuberculosis test, you do not need another test while you are a TCNJ student. The screening is good for 3 years although not specifically stipulated by the State of New Jersey. This policy covers student teaching and internships in school systems throughout the State of New Jersey.

A record of a current negative tuberculin screening (Mantoux or another appropriate substitute) needs to be on file in the College Health Services Office.

### Grade Point Average Requirement

Admission to the student teaching program requires a 2.75 GPA for undergraduates and 3.00 GPA for graduate students. There are no exceptions to this policy. **(TEPC Approved - January, 2007) Students must have a 3.0 Cumulative GPA to be recommended by TCNJ for graduation.**

### Praxis Results

All student teachers and internship II graduates must take, but are not required to pass, the Praxis test in their major prior to participating in their Clinical II experience. The results are to be reported to the department coordinators. **(TEPC Approved – November 2014)**

## Substitute Teacher Certification

The School of Education encourages teacher candidates to obtain their NJ Substitute Teacher Certification. It is not required by TCNJ as a condition to be met in order to complete your clinical practice/internship II; however some districts are requiring student teachers/clinical interns to obtain their substitute certificates for placement acceptance.

## Criminal Background Check Requirement

- Students who possess a NJ Criminal Background Check (CBC) should send a copy of it to the STEP Office if they have not already done so.
- As soon as a student teacher/clinical intern is accepted by a school district, the student will be informed to begin the background check procedure IMMEDIATELY.
- For districts requiring students to obtain a NJ CBC, students will be informed by the school district or the STEP Office of this requirement and procedure to be followed at the time the placement is confirmed.
- Students will then make arrangements to be fingerprinted, pay the required fees and make the appointment to be fingerprinted through Identigo.
- Schedule an appointment at: <https://nj.ibfingerprint.com> or call the toll free number **1-877-03-5981**. The processing information will be provided by the school district.
- The results of the Criminal Background Check will be sent to the Department of Education and DOE will notify the school district of the results of the background check. When applying for your CBC, make sure you check the form to provide yourself with a copy.
- **The College will NOT receive the results of the background check from the Department of Education.** Should anyone not pass the background check, the district will void its acceptance of the student.
- In those instances when the placement occurs less than two months before the date the student will begin the student teaching/clinical practice assignment, the assigned district will require the student to present a receipt for the fingerprinting; the student, in most cases, will be allowed to begin the student teaching/clinical internship placement contingent upon criminal background check clearance by the Department of Education.

## Field Experiences in Diverse Contexts and Communities

Field experiences are essential components of all teacher preparation programs. The School of Education has made a commitment to provide students with multiple opportunities to learn in classrooms by observing teachers, planning and implementing lessons, and assessing their professional practices with the guidance of college supervisors and cooperating teachers. Teaching experiences will link theory and research to practice and reflection.

Teacher candidates will be placed in multiple contexts and varying grade levels for field experiences. Schools selected as sites for field experiences are located in urban, suburban, and rural communities. Extraordinary diversity exists in these schools in terms of languages, ethnic groups, and economic circumstances. In preparing educators to meet the needs of all learners, students enrolled in teacher education programs will have at least one urban experience during their Clinical I or Clinical II experience. The chair/subject area coordinator will advise the students accordingly.

Field experiences in international settings are also encouraged. Through field experience placements in diverse contexts and community settings, clinical interns gain flexibility, creativity, begin to understand individual and social differences and commonalities, and are prepared to succeed in diverse environments.

### Personal Hardship Placement Request Policy

The College has not and does not guarantee placement of student teachers/clinical interns in school districts near their residences because of the students' desire to commute to school from their parents' homes or permanent residences.

Should students experience personal hardships such as a medical condition, unexpected family financial hardship, or family crisis that necessitates the need for a specific geographic location for the Clinical II experience, students can request a placement waiver by completing the **Student Teaching Personal Hardship Placement Waiver Request Form**.

This hardship waiver request form requires the student to state the reasons for the request, along with appropriate supporting documentation, and to submit the request to the department chair and subject area coordinator for review. Upon review of the documentation the chair/subject area coordinator will decide on its merit and will forward the decision to the STEP Office. With the approval of the chair/subject area coordinator, the chair/subject area coordinator and the STEP Office will work collaboratively to locate an appropriate placement. The clinical practice coordinator will arrange for supervision of the student. In the case of personal hardship, students living a distance from campus should not expect to be placed in their home district. Placement will be sought within thirty-five miles of the student residence during student teaching, but in the direction of the College.

### Home District Placement

Department advisors will counsel students to accept placements in districts other than their home districts in order to broaden the student teachers' /clinical interns' experience. Students can be placed in districts from where they have graduated with justification and departmental approval. When possible, students should not be placed in schools they attended or with former teachers.

### Placement in Districts Where Family Members are Employed

It is not The College of New Jersey's desire to place students in school districts where members of their family are employed. Given the student's circumstances, the department/subject area coordinator may approve placement in a district where a student's family member is employed. However, some district policies may preclude the acceptance of student teachers/clinical interns into the schools or school districts where their family members are working.

## Calendar and Schedule

Student teachers/clinical interns are required to follow the school district's academic calendar not the College calendar. Usually, the spring clinical practice experience does not coincide with the College's spring break. It is the responsibility of each student to locate his/her own housing during that period.

## Attendance

Student teachers/clinical interns are expected to be at their school site daily. Absences due to illness or emergency situations should be reported by telephone to the cooperating teacher and college supervisor according to the agreed upon policy. **Student absence beyond two days will be made up on a day-for-day basis in consultation with the cooperating teacher, college supervisor and if necessary, the department's chair/coordinator.** Whenever student teachers/interns are absent from clinical practice, they must provide their cooperating teacher with an appropriate written lesson plan for the day on which they will be absent. Supervisors will inform the department coordinator of clinical interns who have been absent more than two days. Student teachers/clinical interns should work collaboratively with their cooperating teachers when arranging for job interviews. Oftentimes job interviews will necessitate absence for the whole day. Clinical interns are reminded that they have a professional responsibility for the continuity of the classroom program once they have begun clinical practice. Student teachers/clinical interns are encouraged to schedule interviews in the early morning or after school whenever possible.

## Withdrawal Procedure

If students wish to withdraw from the clinical practice experience, they must notify the department chair and subject area coordinator, and the STEP Office. Students who plan to re-enroll in the clinical practice experience at a later time must obtain approval of the program chair/subject area coordinator and re-apply to intern by completing placement application materials. These materials will be submitted to the STEP Office by the program chair/subject area coordinator.

## Change of Semester for Student Teaching

If students wish to change the semester of student teaching/clinical practice from the fall to spring, they may do so without withdrawing and re-applying, providing both semesters involved are within the same academic year. They must notify the program chair/subject area coordinator and STEP Office in writing. If the semesters involved cross academic years, the students must withdraw and re-apply.

## Employment

Students participating in the clinical practice experience are not permitted to work as employees in the capacity of substitute teacher, teacher aide or as a paid coach or advisor in the school district in which the clinical practice experience occurs. However, in certain MAT programs, upon approval of the chair/coordinator, some students may complete their clinical practice experience as "On the Job Training" while working at the assigned site.

## Strike

When a strike is in effect in a public school system, students from The College of New Jersey who are participating in any clinical experience in the striking district are not permitted to be present at the school site.

During a strike, student teachers/clinical interns are held responsible for the following procedures:

1. Inform the host teacher and principal that student teachers/clinical interns are not permitted to be present while the strike is in effect.
2. Promptly inform the College supervisor and the STEP Office that a strike is in effect in the school district.
3. Request that the cooperating teacher inform the clinical intern when the strike has officially ended.
4. Promptly inform the college supervisor and the STEP Office of the date student teachers/clinical interns will return to the school site.

## Liability

**N.J.S.A. 18A:16-6** requires public boards of education in this state to defray all the costs of defending a student teacher/intern in an action brought against the student teacher/clinical intern arising out of his/her performance of the duties of the position. In addition, the board must hold harmless and protect such persons from any financial loss resulting from the action. The board is authorized by the same statute to arrange for and maintain appropriate insurance to cover all damages, losses and expenses. **(TEPC Approval 3/27/02)**

## Criminal Offenses Preventing Teacher Certification

As required by New Jersey law, the State of New Jersey, Department of Education will not issue a teaching certificate, in most cases, to anyone with a criminal history of certain disqualifying offenses. Similarly, New Jersey facilities, centers, schools, and school systems under the supervision of the Department of Education are barred from employing such individuals in positions which involve regular contact with pupils under the age of 18.

A conviction or charges pending for any of the following crimes or offenses may prevent a student from participation in clinical practice and placement in school districts/agencies.

These disqualifying crimes/offenses include:

- Any crime of the first or second degree;
- Any crime involving sexual offense or child molestation;
- An offense involving the manufacture, transportation, sale, possession, distribution or habitual use of drugs or any violation involving drug paraphernalia;
- Any crime involving the use of force or the threat of force to or upon a person or property, including, but not limited to, robbery, aggravated assault, stalking, kidnapping, arson, manslaughter and murder;
- Any crime of possessing a weapon;
- A third degree crime of theft or a related offense;
- An offense of recklessly endangering another person, terroristic threats, criminal restraint, luring or enticing a child into a motor vehicle or isolated structure;
- An offense of causing or risking widespread injury or damage;
- Any crime of criminal mischief, burglary, usury, threats or other improper influences, perjury and false swearing, resisting arrest, or escape;
- Any conspiracy to commit or attempt to commit any of the crime described above.

## Change of Field Placement Procedures and Form

In rare instances during clinical practice it may become necessary for a teacher candidate to be transferred to another assignment or discontinue the candidate's clinical practice. The procedures for reassignment of a teacher candidate to another setting or discontinuing the intern from the placement are noted below. In both cases steps will be taken to resolve issues which are contributing to the need for change in assignment.

## Change of Clinical Practice Placement and Intervention

If a principal, school district superintendent, cooperating teacher or student teaching/clinical practice supervisor has serious concerns about a teacher candidate's ability to successfully complete field experience, the concerned party should immediately notify the chair or coordinator of the student's specific program. The coordinator or chair may request an additional observation of the teacher candidate by a tenured member of the appropriate department.

All initial efforts shall be directed toward resolving the problem at the school. However, if the supervisor, chair, or coordinator recommends a change in placement, a "Team" conference will be scheduled with the teacher candidate. The team should include: the department chair or program coordinator, the clinical practice supervisor(s), the teacher candidate, and the Support for Teacher Education Programs (STEP) Office director or designee. The purpose of this meeting will be:

1. to identify the issues/problems and areas of concern;
2. to identify a plan to address those issues;
3. to implement an action plan which may include:
  - a. additional meetings with cooperating teacher and/or clinical intern
  - b. a modification of the clinical intern's schedule
  - c. additional supervision
  - d. a remediation plan to address the clinical intern's performance
  - e. a change in placement or modification of the teacher candidate's length of clinical practice
  - f. other steps taken to address the issues, and

(Minutes of the meeting will be taken and sent to the meeting's participants.)

### OPTIONS:

After reviewing all of the supervisors' observations, evaluations and records; all cooperating teacher evaluations (teaching performance and dispositions assessment); and any other pertinent information, the team will either:

1. Allow the teacher candidate to remain in the current placement; however, if the teacher candidate receives less than a C+ in student teaching, s/he will not be recommended for certification.\*
2. Remove the teacher candidate from the placement with recommendations; recommendations may include
  - a. reassignment to a new placement
  - b. discontinuance of the current placement for the balance of the semester. If this occurs, discontinuance may entail
    - i. withdrawing from clinical practice with a WD on the teacher candidate's transcript
    - ii. a failing grade (F) assigned

- iii. (For undergraduates) a recommendation that the education component of the teacher candidate's program be dropped
3. Or, the team will identify a new plan to address the teacher candidate's future status.

The chair or program coordinator should complete the Student Teaching Advisory Form and make copies for the supervisor, department chair or coordinator, and the STEP Office. The Student Teaching Advisory Form should include the following information:

- a) The previous remediation plan with an explanation of why it was not successful;
- b) All of the supervisor's observations, evaluations and records;
- c) All cooperating teacher and district input; and
- d) Any other pertinent documentation.

Once the plan is identified, the department chair or coordinator will inform the teacher candidate in writing.

The STEP Office will plan collaboratively with the department and the student to initiate a successful reassignment.

***\*For teacher candidates enrolled in graduate programs, successful completion of Internship II requires a minimum grade of B-. (TEPC approval 4/20/11)***