



The Office of Field Experiences 2024-2025

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OFFICE OF FIELD EXPERIENCES

Guidelines for Submitting a Field Placement Application

Introduction

The National College of Education Office of Field Experiences (OFE) is responsible for the oversight of all Student Teaching/Practicum candidate collaborations with area schools and school districts. The Office of Field Experiences placement staff look to carefully place each student in a school environment that is enriching, diverse, and supportive.

Before you start the Field Placement Application

NLU E-mail

You will be asked to supply your NLU e-mail address on the field placement application. All communications with OFE must be made via NLU e-mail. Your NLU e-mail address is your NLU log-in ID, with @my.nl.edu added to the end of it (e.g. jsmithe24@my.nl.edu). You may also seek assistance from the NLU HELP desk, 866.813.1177.

Supporting Documents Teacher Education Program Checklist

You will be asked to upload and submit the following documents with your application:

- **Fingerprint Criminal Background Check**
- **Mandated Reporter**
- **TB Test Results**
- **Unofficial NLU Transcript** (from NLU Portal). Log into Portal, Click on Student Services, then View Unofficial Transcript
- **Transcripts from other academic institutions** (if applicable)
- **Resume** (Use the [Educator Resume Guide](#) for reference)

Please use this naming convention for all uploaded documents: Last Name, First Name Document Name (e.g. Smithe, John Mandated Reporter). All documents that you upload must be in file formats of .doc, .docx or .pdf.

Application Deadlines

Please consult the Office of Field Experiences Deadlines page for dates on when to submit your Field Placement Application. Deadlines are listed by program. [MAT Student Teaching Application Deadlines](#)

To Access the MAT Field Placement Application: [CLICK HERE](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the prerequisites for student teaching?

Completion of pre-clinical field experience hours

Illinois Criminal Background Check

Copy of your TB test results

Mandated Reporter documentation

Satisfactory completion of all required coursework

[Content Test policies for MAT Traditional Programs \(as of July 2024\)](#)

How do I request a background check?

Review the **Teacher Education Program Checklist** for information regarding requesting and submitting a background check.

Do I have to interview for a student teaching position?

Expect to interview. Interviews are almost always conducted for Secondary Education placements, while other programs may also use interviews for placement. Knowledge of content area or interest in a grade level may be a main topic of discussion. The interview is an opportunity for school personnel to determine whether the placement is a good match for both you and the school. Dress professionally; show enthusiasm for your profession and the school, and let them know you are eager to learn and excited to be interviewing.

Where will I be placed during my student teaching?

Placement locations vary depending on availability at school sites. We do, however, consider location, program, level, and suitability when making the placement.

In what counties in Illinois are student teachers from the National College of Education placed?

- Region I: Central & North Cook
- Region II: Central & South Cook
- Region III: Southwest Cook & South Lake
- Region IV: Will & DuPage
- Region V: Kane & McHenry
- Region VI: Kendall, DeKalb & LaSalle
- Region VII: Will, Kankakee, & Grundy
- Other: If you live outside one of the Regions noted above, NLU will place you within 30 miles of your home address.

When will I hear about my placement?

Once we send your application to a partner school, the time allotted for a response varies depending on the school's own policy for placement. If the Field Experience Specialist/Manager has not heard back from a school within a reasonable period of time, the school is contacted again until we have a decision. You will be notified when a positive decision is received. If we receive a decline and we need further information from you regarding placement options, you will be contacted. Once the Field Experience Specialist/Manager receives official confirmation from a school, you will receive communication that includes the following: name, address, and phone number of the school, start and end date and name of your cooperating teacher(s). Once all students have received their placements, you will receive documentation from the individual department that includes: your placement information and name and phone number of your NLU supervisor.

When will I start my student teaching?

The partner school, in conjunction with National Louis University, will set dates. Actual dates will vary depending on the quarter and school site. Please check the handbook as well as your placement confirmation sheet.

What are my main responsibilities as a student teacher?

As guests in the site school, you are expected to always act professionally and participate as fully as possible in the life of the school. By the end of the **minimum 10-week** assignment, you will have had a minimum of **10 consecutive** days up to **six weeks** with all the responsibilities of a full-time teacher. The amount of take-over time varies by program. Please check your program handbook for details.

How many cooperating teachers will I have?

For middle grades and secondary student teaching, one teacher's class load may not meet your student teaching needs. This may also be necessary in departmentalized elementary schools. Therefore, multiple teachers may combine portions of their class load to provide one full-time teacher load.

What about scholarships?

Think about applying for the Patricia Cassin-Graft Student Teacher Assistance Fund available to graduate and undergraduate NCE students. [Patricia Cassin-Graft Student Teacher Award | National Louis University | Chicago, Illinois | Tampa, Florida \(nl.edu\)](#)

If I plan to visit a Chicago public school for an observation, practicum, or student teaching experience, will I have to meet some additional requirements?

Yes, before visiting any Chicago public school, you must meet certain Chicago Public Schools requirements [found at their Web site](#).

What if I'm asked to substitute teach?

Substitute teaching will be limited to no more than 5 days in the student teaching placement classroom while the cooperating teacher is absent. Consent must be given by the program chair in consultation with the teacher candidate. Student teachers may not move or be hired in another classroom or building.

Anything else I need to know?

Keep copies of everything! Schools may request to see a copy of your TB results and Criminal Background Check, so keep the original to show upon request when you arrive at a school. Schools may also request evidence of health insurance and vaccination status.

Placement Policies

- **Candidates must communicate with OFE using their official NLU email address.** OFE will send electronic correspondences only to candidates' NLU email addresses.
- Candidates must submit the application for Practicum 2/Student Teaching Field Experiences by the deadline specified by their program. [MAT Student Teaching Application Deadlines](#) **Failure to submit the application by the appropriate deadline may result in a delay of the start and/or completion of student teaching.** OFE will begin the placement process after the Student Teaching Application (including all required documents) is received.
- If there is a principal request for a teacher candidate, it must be in writing and accompany the student teaching application before the placement process has begun.
- Candidates may not complete field experiences in a school where a close family, friend, relative, or former teacher, is attending or professionally employed without consent from the school district or principal.
- A Practicum 2/Student Teaching placement may be within 30 miles of a candidate's home address.
- OFE will submit one request at a time for each candidate. If a placement request is denied, OFE will make as many successive attempts as necessary on behalf of the candidate to secure a placement. OFE will facilitate one placement per term, per candidate.

- All Practicum 2 and Student Teaching placements are to be made by OFE only. Candidates may not contact schools or school districts to arrange placements. The placement confirmation is final.
- If a candidate withdraws from a placement or fails to complete student teaching, OFE will confer with the Director of Teacher Preparation to determine whether additional placement attempts should be made.

Calendar Dates for Field Placements

All courses requiring students to complete field-based clinical components follow the University calendar. Student teaching assignments begin and end on the dates indicated in the teacher candidate's confirmation letter sent by the Office of Field Experiences. However, start and end dates for student teaching may need to be modified depending on the needs of the school district and placement site. Upon confirmation of the placement, it is the responsibility of the student teacher to contact the cooperating teacher and supervisor to determine a schedule for the experience. **In all cases, a minimum of 10-weeks of full-day student teaching (not counting fall or spring breaks) is required.** The placement must end no later than the end of the university's quarter. During Spring Quarter, the placement ends when the NCE/NLU quarter ends or the last day of the school year for the district in which the placement site is located, whichever comes first.

Calendar for Field Experiences 2024-2025

NLU Academic Calendar	Academic Term Dates	Fall Term Dates Sept 23, 2024 - December 1, 2024	Winter Term Dates Jan 13, 2025 - March 23, 2025	Spring Term Dates April 7, 2025 - June 15, 2025
Field Experience Dates	Term Dates Classes Begin	Fall 2024 Sept 23 – Dec 1	Winter 2025 Jan 13 - Mar 21	Spring 2025 March 17 - June 6
Practicum	Begin Experience	Second week of quarter	Second week of quarter	N/A
	End Experience	Friday, December 1	Friday, March 21 NOTE: For students moving into Spring Student Teaching, field hours will need to be completed by March 14 th .	N/A
Full-day Student Teaching	Begin Experience	When school begins	When teachers report in January	Monday, March 17 (see ** Note below)
	End Experience	Minimum of 10 weeks based on placement site start dates (excluding fall break)	Friday, March 21 (OR minimum of 10 weeks based on placement site start date, excluding spring break)	Friday, June 6 (OR minimum of 10 weeks based on placement site start date, excluding spring break) **NOTE: If schools end on May 23, student teachers begin on March 10



Sonia

Sonia is web-based, placement management software that helps streamline the process of placing, tracking, and monitoring field placement data. This platform allows students, faculty/staff, supervisors, and cooperating teachers to access placement records, complete Competency Appraisals, and upload support documentation. NCE students in SPE 500, Practicum 1, Practicum 2, and Student Teaching courses use this system.

Log In

- Go to <https://sonia.nl.edu>
- Select **Office of Field Experiences: BA & MAT Educator Preparation**
- Bookmark this page, as you will return to it often!
- Choose 'Student' as your Role
- Click the 'University Sign in' button
- Enter your NLU email and password (the same login that you would use to access your NLU portal)

SPE 500 & Practicum 1: Observation Hours Log

Students who take SPE 500 or a Practicum 1 courses as part of their MAT degree will need to complete a set number of observation hours in the field. Students must go into Sonia, add their Observation site(s), and complete an Observation Form for each site visited. Directions for how to do so are [here](#).

Practicum 2 and Student Teaching: Pre-Placement Application & Required Documents

You will be asked to upload and submit the following documents along with your Placement Application, all within Sonia:

- Fingerprint Criminal Background Check
- Mandated Reporter
- TB Test Results
- Unofficial NLU Transcript
- Transcripts from other institutions (if applicable)
- Professional Resume

[Here](#) are additional directions - you will receive more information from your Advisor far in advance of the application deadline. Your Advisor will review your uploaded documents and *Approve* once complete.

Practicum 2 and Student Teaching: Placement Details & Competency Appraisals

Practicum 2 and Student Teaching candidates' placement details including their placement site, cooperating/mentor teacher and University Supervisor assignments will all be listed in Sonia. During each of these field experiences, each candidate and their mentor(s) and Supervisor must complete a Competency Appraisal form (once in Practicum, twice in Student Teaching). Competency Appraisals live under the Form tab in Sonia and are marked as to which ones are to be completed by which role.

For additional support with questions or technical difficulties with Sonia, contact ofesupport@nl.edu.



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NCE MAT TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM CHECKLIST

REGISTRATION

The information shown below is **required** as part of the registration process to start your Teacher Preparation Program. **You will need to complete these requirements to begin field experiences in your first course.**

Detailed instructions are attached to this document.

- ☐ **Criminal Background Check through Accurate Biometrics**
 - Please use the NLU UCIA Criminal Background Check Form (attached).
 - **It is important to put *your name* as the 'Requestor', not NLU, in the forms and have results *sent directly to you*, not NLU.**

- ☐ **TB (Tuberculosis) Test**

- ☐ **Certificate of Completion with the Department of Children and Family Services Mandated Reporter Training** [Illinois Mandated Reporter Training \(dcfstraining.org\)](http://ilinoismandatedreportertraining.dcfstraining.org)

Prior to Student Teaching: KEEP ORIGINAL VERSIONS OF THE ABOVE DOCUMENTS TO PROVIDE TO SCHOOLS (MAY BE REQUIRED FOR OBSERVATIONS).

When you apply for Student Teaching: UPLOAD THESE DOCUMENTS WITH YOUR APPLICATION (see below)

STUDENT TEACHING / FIELD EXPERIENCES (APPLICATION DEADLINE)

- ☐ NLU Academic Advisors will send application information close to the deadline in order for the Office of Field Experience to find you a placement site. *Be sure to submit the application no later than the deadline specified for your program here:*

[MAT Student Teaching Application Deadlines](#)

CONTACT

If you have any questions, please contact the NLU Advising Office:

advising@nl.edu
Phone: 888-658-8632, option 2
Fax: 312-261-3044



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CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS TB TESTS MANDATED REPORTING HEALTH INSURANCE

Office of Field Experiences

Field Experience Requirements (Observations, Practica, Internships, Student Teaching)

NLU requires all candidates in programs that include time spent in an Illinois school to have an Illinois State Criminal Background Check, a TB test, and a Certificate of Completion with the Department of Children and Family Services Mandated Reporter Training. A candidate with “no record,” a negative TB test, and a Certificate of Completion may be placed in a school.

The Illinois State Background check, TB test (Mantoux Method), and Certificate of Completion for Mandated Reporter training are uploaded by the student to SONIA to complete the student teaching application. **Students are responsible for submitting to schools or districts considering placement. Keep all originals with you when visiting schools.**

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

- Criminal background checks must be completed after registering and within the first week of classes at NLU. Candidates cannot begin any field experience without a “passed” background check. Use the NLU UCIA Criminal Background Check form at the end of this packet.
- Locations, appointments times, and additional directions for completing a background check with Accurate Biometrics are posted on the company’s website at <https://www.accuratebiometrics.com/>
- Candidates are responsible for all fees and the **results must be sent to the students’ home address.**
- A candidate may not be placed in any school if the background check determines that he or she has been convicted of criminal behavior that, by law, automatically prohibits him or her from attaining Illinois certification. The offenses that automatically prohibit certification include first degree murder, any Class X felony, juvenile pimping, soliciting a juvenile prostitute, exploitation of a child, obscenity, child pornography, criminal sexual assault, aggravated sexual criminal assault, criminal sexual abuse, aggravated criminal sexual abuse, some offenses set forth in the Cannabis Control Act, and some crimes defined in the Illinois Controlled Substances Act.
- Some school districts require their own or an additional background check prior to student teaching.
- In the event that no district will accept a student because of his/her criminal history, National Louis University will assist the student in choosing an alternative course of study.

Additional information can be found at:

<https://www.nl.edu/fieldexperiences/criminalbackgroundpoliciesandprocedures/>

TB (Tuberculosis) TEST

- National Louis University (NLU) requires all candidates in programs that include time spent in an Illinois school/childcare program to have a TB Test completed no later than one (1) year or 12 months prior to applying for any field experience.
- This test can be completed with a primary care physician or can be completed at many local pharmacies such as [Walgreens Health Care Clinic](#) and [CVS Minute Clinic](#).
- Results must be signed off on by a licensed medical person such as a Physician (Dr.), Nurse Practitioner or Physician Assistant (PA) at the location in which the test was given.
- Students are responsible for all fees associated with these tests.
- Candidates cannot begin any field experience without a “negative” TB Test result.
- In accordance with Illinois School Code (105 ILCS5/24-5), a school district might require a physical examination by a licensed physician. Please check with your placement site prior to your field experience.

MANDATED REPORTER

- National Louis University (NLU) requires all candidates in programs that include time spent in an Illinois school/childcare program complete the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Online Training prior to applying for any field experience. This is a free, online training.
- **To complete the training, please log on to:** [Illinois Mandated Reporter Training \(dcfstraining.org\)](http://dcfstraining.org)
- When creating an account for the online Mandated Reporter training, please answer the following questions with the responses below.
 - I work or volunteer in Illinois **YES**
 - Specify if you work/volunteer at the following **(check the appropriate box)**
 - ✓ An Illinois Catholic Diocese
 - ✓ Chicago Public Schools
 - ✓ An Illinois Higher Education Institution
 - Please list **National Louis University** as the employer and your **employee ID is your “N” number**.
 - At the end of the training, please print out a copy of the Certificate of Completion. Keep a copy for your own professional records.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Many school districts require students to provide verification that they have health insurance before being allowed to student teach. As a result, National Louis University may not be able to identify a school placement for student teacher applicants who do not carry health insurance. If National Louis University students need additional information regarding health insurance, information can be accessed here: [Student Health Insurance | National Louis University | Chicago, Illinois | Tampa, Florida \(nl.edu\)](#)

Accurate Biometrics
4849 N Milwaukee Suite 101
Chicago, IL 60630

Phone 773-685-5699

Fax 773-685-5433

Web site:
www.accuratebiometrics.com

National Louis University

UCIA

Thank you for choosing Accurate Biometrics for your fingerprinting needs.

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Last name:

First name:

Middle Initial:

Daytime Phone:

Date of Birth:

Sex: (circle one) Male Female

(circle one)

Race: Black Hispanic Asian American Indian/Alaskan

REQUESTOR INFORMATION

Name: _____ Agency Name: _____ <not applicable> _____

Street _____

Address: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

I, the undersigned, authorize Accurate Biometrics to capture and transmit my fingerprints and above-noted demographic data to the Illinois State Police. I understand that the Illinois State Police will return the results of the fingerprint search to the Requestor listed above.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

(Do Not Write Below This Line --- For Office Use Only)

F.P. Tech: _____ TCN: _____

Date Fingerprinted: _____