

**South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE)**  
***Guidance for College- and University-based Field and Clinical Experiences for 2021–22***

Note: In this document, the term *clinical experience* refers to the full-time, culminating experience of a program preparing candidates for certification in teaching, service, or leadership fields. These clinical experiences may include traditional student teaching, residencies, or internships—and these terms may be used interchangeably in this document. The term *field experience* refers to field-based opportunities and activities prior to the full clinical experience.

This document provides updated guidance for the 2021–22 academic year for South Carolina school districts, colleges, and universities regarding field and clinical placements for teacher candidates. Traditional educator preparation providers have established essential partnerships with the state’s districts and schools to ensure that educator candidates have opportunities for meaningful field and clinical experiences in school settings as they observe, learn from, and work with highly effective teachers, service professionals, and leaders. These experiences with school-based mentors are integral components of college and university-based programs preparing the next generation of educators for careers in South Carolina’s public schools.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to present challenges for schools, districts, colleges, and universities. During the 2021–22 academic year, districts may vary in the instructional modalities they use to provide instruction to PK–12 students. Because scheduling models utilized by school districts may vary and could change for periods of time during the course of the academic year, the SCDE recognizes that clinical experiences and the field experiences prior to student teaching may take on new or varied formats by necessity.

*Prioritizing Placements*

To support candidates nearing completion of an educator preparation program during the 2021–22 school year and to ensure that these candidates have every opportunity to complete these programs and meet requirements for certification, providers and school district partners should prioritize placements of educator candidates enrolled in culminating clinical experiences.

**Full-time Student Teaching or Clinical Experiences**

*Candidate Placement and Instruction*

During the clinical experience, candidates must follow the schedule and teaching model of their cooperating teacher or school-based mentor, adhering to all safety protocols and procedures of the school and district including the district’s technology policies regarding acceptable use and security. Depending on the model in which the coaching teacher provides instruction to students, teacher candidates may require user accounts and access to the learning management systems or other web-based instructional platforms utilized by districts. Providers are encouraged to address these needs with districts and modify established partnership agreements as necessary.

### *Candidate Supervision during Clinical Experiences*

College and university providers must work with district partners regarding the supervision and observation of candidates.

The SCDE provides the following guidance regarding the supervision and observation of candidates during the 2021–22 school year:

- Any orientation and pre-planning meetings, as well as training sessions for school-based mentors and cooperating teachers, may be conducted in-person or virtually—including those training sessions related to South Carolina’s system for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT).
- Classroom observations may be conducted in-person or virtually. Supervisors may also conduct observations by viewing and evaluating video of lessons taught by candidates.
- If the district and college or university partner conduct in-classroom observations, supervisors must adhere to all school and district safety protocols. In this instance, observations should be announced so that appropriate preparations are made.
- Post-observation, mid-term, and summative conferences may be conducted in-person or virtually.

In the event of school closures that prevent the completion of standard clinical experience requirements established in State Board of Education guidelines, providers have flexibility as outlined in the following policy approved on March 10, 2020: [Emergency Provisions for Clinical Experience \(Student Teaching\) Requirements](#).

### **Field Experiences Prior to the Clinical Phase**

In some instances, districts may be unable to accommodate all requests for both clinical and field experience placements or may limit opportunities for field placements prior to student teaching. The SCDE encourages districts to allow field placements to the greatest extent possible and acknowledges that decisions regarding such placements must prioritize the safety and well-being of all stakeholders.

### *Guidance for Field Experiences*

Providers have flexibility to develop and implement field experiences that meet identified learning goals of the academic courses within approved programs. The focus of these experiences should be on high-quality opportunities for candidates to

- develop and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of effective practitioners in their specific certification fields;
- engage in activities of increasing responsibility and complexity; and
- demonstrate readiness to enter the full-time clinical experience.

The SCDE encourages providers to be innovative in their development and implementation of field experiences prior to student teaching and recognizes that the quality of field experiences is more significant than the quantity of these activities and interactions. By design, field

experiences should include a broad set of meaningful interactions with PK–12 learners and effective in-service educators. Providers are encouraged to implement experiences that maximize interactions with PK–12 students and professional educators to the greatest extent possible and to utilize related experiences, as needed, when placements in school settings are not possible. Additionally, the SCDE encourages providers to collaborate with each other to identify and develop resources and opportunities, and the Office of Educator Services is available to provide technical assistance to providers to facilitate these collaborations.

The SCDE offers the following guidance regarding field experiences.

- Providers should make every effort to ensure candidates complete the number of field experience hours prior to student teaching as outlined in State Board of Education policy. Modifications necessitated by adjustments in school schedules or limitations on classroom access should focus on the quality of the experience so that candidates meet the identified learning goals of the specific practicum or related academic course.
- Field experiences may include placements in traditional classroom settings, placements facilitated via distance learning, or placements that are hybrid in design.
- As needed, providers may arrange placements in non-public school settings (e.g., private or independent schools and child development centers).
- Field experiences may encompass varied activities that include but are not limited to:
  - synchronous and asynchronous observations in traditional, distance, or hybrid settings;
  - utilizing video of outstanding teachers conducting lessons, demonstrations, and classroom sessions;
  - micro-teaching with peers;
  - tutoring PK-12 students in traditional, virtual, or hybrid settings;
  - practicum experiences teaching and/or tutoring peers in entry-level college courses; and
  - classroom- or other teaching/service-related simulations.

Candidates must follow all health, safety, and policy guidelines established by their institutions and the districts, schools, and other entities with which they are placed.

Note: Providers should consult accreditation organizations (e.g., the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) or the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)) when modifying field experiences in programs accredited by these entities.