



School of
Education &
Human Sciences
Student Teaching
Handbook

**EARLY CHILDHOOD UNIFIED
PRACTICUM HANDBOOK**

UNIFIED EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

STUDENT TEACHING HANDBOOK

The Early Childhood Unified (ECU) program practicum experience is designed to offer the teacher candidate an opportunity to demonstrate the skills, strategies, and values learned in coursework and effectively implement them in a real-world setting. Effective practicum experiences focus on three broad outcomes: (1) developing the teacher candidate's identity as an educator; (2) understanding the field of early childhood education as a profession and early childhood special education as a specialization within the profession; and (3) developing the conceptual, analytical and technical skills as a teacher candidate. Students enrolled in practicum experience are referred to as teacher candidates. Teacher candidates are expected to participate in all aspects of teaching and learning practice, to think carefully about the purposes, complexities, and consequences of what they do, and to learn from their experiences. Teacher candidates are evaluated based on important knowledge, skills, and dispositions articulated in each of the licensure and endorsement Regulations and Standards of the state of Kansas for educators and specifically for Early Childhood Unified Educators (birth through kindergarten). Practicum experiences are a labor-intensive activity that requires commitment and professionalism, and are a space to share, problem-solve, and collaborate.

This handbook is designed to be a general reference during the practicum experience semesters at the University of Kansas for teacher candidates, their clinical supervisors, university supervisors, and administrator of the placement program or school. The information contained in this handbook addresses requirements and expectations to better guide the practicum process.

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Contact Information

During the practicum experiences, the primary resource for the teacher candidate and the clinical supervisors is the university supervisor. This person is the official liaison between the program/school site, the student teacher, and the KU Department of Special Education.

ECU Faculty members and staff will also be important sources of information for teacher candidates during their student teaching experiences. The names and contact information for ECU faculty members are in the table below.

Faculty/Staff Name	Email
Eva Horn, PhD	evahorn@ku.edu
Cheatham, Gregory, PhD	gac@ku.edu
Stephanie Parks, PhD	s.parks@ku.edu
Marie Kohart, MS.Ed	mariekohart@ku.edu

KU School of Education and Health Sciences Licensure Staff are other important sources of information for teacher candidates. The names and contact information for these staff members are listed below.

Staff Name	Staff Email
Sara Reichenberger, Education Program Coordinator	sreichenberger@ku.edu
Melissa Robinson, Licensure Officer/Academic Advisor	robinsonm@ku.edu

GENERAL PRACTICUM INFORMATION

Teacher candidates in the ECU program complete two practicum experiences. These experiences are required by the state of Kansas in order for the SOEHS to recommend the teacher candidate for license. One experience is conducted in a setting/context that focuses on the Infant-Toddler ages whereas, a second experience occurs in a program or school serving children ages 3 through 5. Both placements include children who are at risk for and/or experiencing developmental delays or disabilities.

Course instructors, university fieldwork supervisors, and clinical supervisors will complete informal and formal evaluations of the teacher candidate's acquisition and mastery of all program standards. In addition, fieldwork supervisors and course instructors will offer feedback about the teacher candidate's strengths and areas for improvement, and offer suggestions to improve their practices. Monthly seminar sessions will be used to de-brief, problem solve, and strategize to support teacher candidate's development and demonstration of all program competencies.

ECU PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The University of Kansas's Unified Early Childhood (ECU) Program:

- Prepares professionals to meet the learning and developmental needs of each and every child (birth through kindergarten), including those at risk for and with developmental delays or disabilities.
- Addresses interdisciplinary approaches that integrate developmentally appropriate early childhood education and early childhood special education strategies into holistic and functional activities for young children and their families in their natural environments.
- Emphasizes collaborative and team-based processes that empower families and program staff to work together to support the learning and development of each and every young children.

Designed to accommodate the busy schedules of our teacher candidates, most courses are hybrid (that is, included both asynchronous on-line & face-to-face class sessions) and offered at both Lawrence and Edward's campuses (Overland Park, KS). The Early Childhood Unified (ECU) Program content knowledge and performance goals are aligned with the Kansas Professional Educator Preparation Standards for the ECU birth through kindergarten content area and the professional education standards (see Appendix A and B).

ECU PRACTICUM

Practicum experiences in the Early Childhood Unified Program are offered as applied courses that support the supervised practice of professional skills in high quality programs serving infant, toddler, preschool and kindergarten-aged children with and without disabilities and their families. These courses are intended for persons currently working toward the Kansas State Department of Education teaching license in Early Childhood Unified (Birth through kindergarten) as well as persons interested in expanding their skills in teaching infants, toddlers and young children with and without disabilities.

All practicum courses address the Kansas Professional Teaching Standards and the Kansas Early Childhood Unified (Birth- Kindergarten) Teaching Standards, and reflect the Council for Exceptional Children- Division of Early childhood (CEC-DEC), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) joint positions on effective practices for the preparation of early childhood personnel.

The following practicum experiences to be recommended for initial ECU license as required by Kansas Department of Education.

- Complete two ECU Practicum Experiences
 - Preschool/Kindergarten and
 - Infant/Toddler
- Course: SPED 739
- Credit Hours: 3 hours for each practicum experience (6 total)

HOURS:

- Fall/Spring Semester Hours in sites: 20 hours per week over 14 weeks
- Summer Semester Hours in Sites: 40 hours per week over 8 weeks

DATES:

Teacher candidates will typically follow the start and ending date of the University's schedule. However, candidates will follow the site's academic, holiday, and spring break calendar (not KU's). The teacher candidate will be expected to follow their Clinical Supervisor's schedule; arriving and departing when they do, attending meetings outside student teaching hours such as, evening events, parent teacher conferences, IEP meetings, professional development, in-service, and staff/team planning meetings as appropriate.

ECU PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS & PROCEDURES

Practicum experiences can be completed any semester including summers and may be completed in the teacher candidate's current work setting if appropriate. ECU teacher candidates must meet the following academic requirements before applying for their Practicum experiences: a) prerequisites for the ECU Practicum include a Bachelor's degree in education or related area, b) admittance to the Early Childhood Unified Master's program, current enrollment or completion of the appropriate methods course (i.e., SPED 734-Inclusive Strategies and Interventions for Infants and Toddlers or SPED 755-Inclusive Strategies and Interventions for Preschoolers), and c) recommendation of their advisor.

The two practicum experiences should be completed in separate semesters. Teacher candidates may not complete both practicums in the same site/program unless special permission from faculty is received.

Teacher candidates enroll in their ECU practicum experience, SPED 739 for 3 credit hours for each practicum experience. Settings reflect provisions of services for each and every child including those at risk for or experiencing developmental delays and disabilities. Teacher Candidates will work directly under the supervision of qualified professional in the field of Early Childhood Education/Early Childhood Special Education. The practicum experience includes either the development of a two-week lead teaching experience or equivalent lead role as is appropriate to the context and role of the clinical supervisor.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Teacher candidates must apply for a practicum placement/site the several semesters prior to the experience. All arrangements for practicum are made through the ECU faculty and the SOEHS Field Experience Office. Teacher candidates may NOT initiate discussions with school, program, or district personnel about a student teaching assignment unless they are inquiring about a practicum experience in their own worksite.

The ECU program has a number of approved practicum sites that offer a range of excellent experiences for our teacher candidates. Access to personal transportation is highly recommended since many sites are in neighboring communities and require car travel.

Application Process for EACH Practicum Experience:

- **Step 1:** Review the ECU Canvas website regarding the practicum information and requirements. On this website, the following information will be provided:
 - General information about practicum experiences
 - Paperwork requirements
- **Step 2:** Attend the ECU Practicum Intent meeting held early in Spring semester for Fall and Spring Semester Practica and in early Fall semester for the following Summer Practica. At this meeting, students will receive:
 - Additional information for the practicum process

- Information about possible placement options
- Information for completing and submitting the Practicum application
- **Step 3:** Submit the Practicum application.
- **Step 4:** ECU Faculty meet to review applications, make a recommendation, and contact students regarding the recommendation. Once the teacher candidate has accepted the recommendation the placement request is submitted to SOEHS Field Director who then contacts the programs/district.
- **Step 5:** When the site accepts the request, the teacher candidate receives an official confirmation email from the School of Education and Human Sciences. Teacher candidates should NOT contact a teacher, district, school, or program prior to receiving the official confirmation email.
- **Step 6:** Once placement is confirmed, teacher candidate will contact their Clinical Supervisor to introduce themselves and confirm start date. The teacher candidate will attach an updated letter of introduction, current resume, and emergency notification form. The teacher candidate may make an appointment to visit the site at the Clinical Supervisor's convenience.

This application process and confirmation procedure must be completed twice (i.e., for EACH practicum experience). ECU Field Coordinators must be notified as soon as possible if program plan changes are made that impact practicum plans.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In this section of the practicum handbook, the roles, responsibilities, and qualifications of each of the individuals involved in the student teaching experience are described.

UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR

The University Supervisor is the liaison between the ECU program faculty, the student teaching site staff, and the teacher candidate. The University Supervisor will work closely with both the Clinical Supervisor and the teacher candidate, providing guidance, resources, and support to ensure that the student teaching experiences meets the expectations and requirements of the ECU program. The university supervisor may be a KU faculty or staff member, or a doctoral student in the SOEHS at KU. The expectations for the university supervisor include:

- Keep everyone informed. Use the triangular method of communication.
- Ensure the teacher candidate has maximum exposure to planning and delivery of instruction in inclusive academic, extracurricular, and non-academic activities by communicating expectations with Clinical Supervisors, principals, or other school personnel.
- Communicate student teaching expectations, including assignments and observations, to the teacher candidate in a timely and clear manner

- Provide on-going, honest, and constructive feedback regarding the teacher candidate's professional growth to both the teacher candidate and the clinical supervisor, if applicable.
- Maintain a positive, supportive and respectful attitude toward the teacher candidate.
- Problem-solve with the teacher candidates on any concerns or problems that may arise during their experience.
- Schedule observations and de-briefing activities with the teacher candidate.
- Provide written feedback to the teacher candidate for all assignments and observations
- Address concerns immediately through honest, open dialogue with the teacher candidate and Clinical Supervisor (if necessary).
- Complete a final evaluation form (STAR assessment) for the teacher candidate of their performance near or at the end of the placement and share it with the teacher candidate.
- Provide written feedback to the teacher candidate for both assignments and observations

CLINICAL SUPERVISOR

The Clinical Supervisor plays one of the most important roles in the final stages of the teacher candidates preparation. Not only does the Clinical Supervisor help provide direct “real world” experiences by inviting the teacher candidate into their classroom, but they also serve as a teacher, role model, and mentor. Clinical Supervisors are positive role models for teacher candidates and therefore demonstrate the teaching profession in a positive light, reflecting high quality teaching practices. With the Clinical Supervisors guidance, the teacher candidate will take on the responsibilities of the lead teacher and further develop their teaching knowledge and skill.

The expectations for the clinical supervisor include:

- Mentor, support and advocate for the teacher candidate - be their cheerleader.
- Work collaboratively with the teacher candidate.
- Ensure the teacher candidate has maximum exposure to planning and delivery of instruction in inclusive academic, extracurricular, and non-academic activities.
- Support teacher candidate as they gradually assume greater responsibility for the planning and implementation of instruction in preparation for the two week lead teaching role.
- Share with the teacher candidate school and classroom policies and procedures, the curriculum, the daily schedules, and other resources that are used to support the learning and development of each and every child in the program and classroom.
- Permit the teacher candidate to review individual child progress monitoring data, and as appropriate assessment and evaluation reports, individual program or intervention plans (e.g., IFSPs, IEPs, behavioral intervention plans) as well as other documents needed to support the teacher candidates understanding of and ability to plan and implement

appropriate. *If the site requires consent to review children's educational files and share information with the teacher candidate and University Supervisor, the Field Experience Coordinator can provide the necessary consent forms.*

- Provide on-going, honest, and constructive feedback regarding the teacher candidate's professional growth to both the teacher candidate and the University supervisor.
- Participate in an initial meeting within the first or second week of the semester with the teacher candidate and University Supervisor to discuss teaching expectations, share university policies, and answer any questions. *This meeting will be scheduled by the teacher candidate.*
- Schedule weekly conferences to reflect on and plan teaching practices in terms of both teacher candidates learning and child learning and development.
- Address concerns immediately through honest, open dialogue with the teacher candidate and University supervisor (if necessary).
- Complete a midterm and final evaluation form (STAR assessment) for the teacher candidate of their performance and share it with the teacher candidate.
- Keep a written record of observations of the teacher candidate to aid in weekly conferences with the teacher candidate and to facilitate completion of the final evaluation form.

THE TEACHER CANDIDATE

All teacher candidates will be expected to complete practicum experiences to the best of their ability. These are outlined first, followed by additional responsibilities for teacher candidates who are working with a Clinical Supervisor.

Responsibilities of the Teacher candidate

- Establish on-going communication with the Clinical Supervisor, including a scheduled weekly planning conference.
- Establish on-going communication with the University Supervisor, including a scheduled bi-weekly planning conference.
- Address problems or concerns immediately through discussion with the University Supervisor and the Clinical Supervisor.
- Assume increasing responsibility for all aspects of classroom teaching, including planning and implementing instruction, classroom organization and assessment of Teacher Candidate progress, if applicable.
- Follow the placement school's calendar and daily schedule
- Notify the school/program and the University Supervisor in event of an absence. Lengthy absence may result in an extended placement in order to meet required hours. Up to 3 excused absences are allowed that do not require making up the time missed. All students are given an excused absence for the Spring, KU Education Interview Day.

- Participate in school related activities with the Clinical Supervisor including faculty meetings, professional development opportunities, IFSP/IEP meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and interdisciplinary team meetings.
- Develop a receptive attitude towards suggestions and critiques. Constructive feedback from the Clinical Supervisor and the University Supervisor is essential for the teacher candidate's professional growth and helps develop the candidate into a reflective practitioner.
- Attend practicum seminar sessions and complete assignments on the course syllabus.
- Be proactive! Take the initiative in becoming involved in the classroom. Ask for opportunities to assist. Seek out productive activities to become involved in.

PROFESSIONALISM

As a representative of the profession, KU, and themselves, teacher candidates must always act as professionals when on school/program grounds. This includes use of professional language, dress, and behavior. Minimally, teacher candidates must adhere to the school's dress code; teacher candidates should obtain a copy of this prior to their arrival at the school or program. If you are unsure, ask the University Supervisor or the Clinical Supervisor about professional clothing. Professional conduct also includes use of school-appropriate language (written and verbal) at all times. Teacher candidates also demonstrate professionalism by arriving on time for their practicum experience, seminars, and meetings with their university and clinical supervisors. Teacher candidates should also refrain from all personal cell phone use when on campus. Request information about the school's behavior expectations for teacher candidates, and any handbooks given to staff and faculty about school policies and procedures. These should be reviewed prior to your arrival at the school/program.

Teacher candidates are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the following professional codes of conduct/ethical practices:

- NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment (https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011_09202013update.pdf)
- DEC of CEC Code of Ethics (https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011_09202013update.pdf ...)
- Teacher candidates will not engage in any form of restraint or seclusion or other punishment-based systems (see this link for more information about restraint and seclusion: <https://www.pbis.org/topics/restraintseclusion>)

INCIDENT REPORTING

It is possible that a teacher candidate may become injured during the practicum experience. If this occurs, immediately report the injury to the Clinical Supervisor, if applicable, or the school principal. Follow all school rules for treating and reporting on-the-job injuries. As soon as possible, the injury should be reported to the University Supervisor.

EVALUATION AND OBSERVATIONS

It is important that the Clinical and University Supervisors provide frequent feedback to the teacher candidate. Feedback is shared through two formal methods: 1. Observations of the teacher candidate, and 2. Midterm and Final Evaluations. Both observations and evaluations will impact the teacher candidate's overall grade.

The University Supervisor and Clinical Supervisor will each complete a minimum of 3 observations. Teacher candidates provide copies of lesson materials (see the course syllabus) to the University Supervisor at least 24 hours before the scheduled observation. After each observation, candidates and supervisors meet to discuss the observation.

All teacher candidates will be evaluated during their preschool/kindergarten practicum experience using the STAR assessment. The University Supervisor and Clinical Supervisor will complete at midterm and summative STAR assessment. Midterm and summative evaluations are completed to measure the teacher candidate's progress throughout the student teaching experience. Following each evaluation, a follow-up conference will be held between the teacher candidate and the supervisor that completed the evaluation. During this conference, the teacher candidate's progress, areas of strength and areas of growth will be discussed.

EDUCATORS PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

During the practicum experience, the teacher candidate will complete the KU Educator's Performance Assessment (EPA). The EPA is designed to provide each teacher candidate with an opportunity to demonstrate how they use contextual factors of young children and their families within the student teaching experience setting to design and implement supports and interventions. Teacher candidates completing the EPA will be provided with a guide that describes the requirements and expectations as well as a template. In addition, teacher candidates will have opportunities to ask questions and receive clarifications throughout the semester.

GRADING

The practicum and accompanying seminars are graded on a letter grade basis. To complete their practicum, candidates must successfully complete the requirements outlined in the course syllabus. The University supervisor and the Clinical Supervisor must agree that the candidate has acquired the skills, competencies, and dispositions necessary to successfully serve as a novice level educator working with young children birth through kindergarten including those with developmental delays and disabilities.

PRACTICUM SEMINAR

Teacher candidates are required to participate in all scheduled practicum seminars each semester. The seminar is a time to discuss the student teaching experience and problem solve together.

Appendix A
Kansas Professional Education Standards

Standard 1 The educator demonstrates the ability to use the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of each discipline he or she teaches and can create opportunities that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for all students.
Standard 2 The educator demonstrates an understanding of how individuals learn and develop intellectually, socially, and personally and provides learning opportunities that support this development.
Standard 3 The educator demonstrates the ability to provide different approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are equitable, that are based on developmental levels, and that are adapted to diverse learners, including those with exceptionalities.
Standard 4 The educator understands and uses a variety of appropriate instructional strategies to develop various kinds of students' learning including critical thinking, problem solving, and reading.
Standard 5 The educator uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation
Standard 6 The educator uses a variety of effective verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
Standard 7 The educator plans effective instruction based upon the knowledge of all students, community, subject matter, curriculum outcomes, and current methods of teaching reading.
Standard 8 The educator understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continual intellectual, social, and other aspects of personal development of all learners.
Standard 9 The educator is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community), actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally, and participates in the school improvement process (Kansas Quality Performance Accreditation [QPA])
Standard 10 The educator fosters collegial relationships with school personnel, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support all students' learning and well-being.
Standard 11 The educator demonstrates the ability to integrate across and within content fields to enrich the curriculum, develop reading and thinking skills, and facilitate all students' abilities to understand relationships between subject areas.

Standard 12 The educator understands the role of technology in society and demonstrates skills using instructional tools and technology to gather, analyze, and present information, enhance instructional practices, facilitate professional productivity and communication, and help all students use instructional technology effectively.

Standard 13 The educator is a reflective practitioner who uses an understanding of historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education to guide educational practices.

Appendix B
Kansas Program Standards for Early Childhood Unified Birth-Grade 3 Educators

Standard 1 Child Development and Learning: Candidates prepared in early childhood unified degree programs are grounded in a child development knowledge base. They understand and value learner differences. They use their understanding of young children’s development and learning, to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each learner.

Standard 2 Content Knowledge: Candidates understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of the discipline he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

Standard 3 Application of Content Knowledge: Candidates understand how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

Standard 4 Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Learners and Families: Candidates prepared in early childhood B – G3 degree programs understand that child observation, documentation, and other forms of assessment are central to the practice of all early childhood professionals. They know about and understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment. They know about and use systematic observations, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies in a responsible way, in partnership with families and other professionals, to positively influence the development of each and every learner.

Standard 5 Planning for Instruction: Candidates prepared in early childhood B – G3 degree programs use their knowledge of pre-academic / academic disciplines to design, implement and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for every learner.

Standard 6 Using Developmentally Effective Strategies: Candidates in early childhood B – G3 degree programs understand that teaching and learning with young learners is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on learners’ ages, characteristics, and the settings within which teaching and learning occur. Candidates know, understand, and use a wide array of developmentally appropriate approaches, instructional strategies and tools to connect learners and families and positively influence each and every learner’s development and learning.

Standard 7 Professional and Ethical Practice: Candidates prepared in early childhood B – G3 degree programs identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledge, reflective and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational practices and policies.

Standard 8 Leadership and Collaboration: Candidates prepared in early childhood B-G3 degree programs understand that successful early childhood education depends upon collaborative partnerships. They know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of learners’ families and communities and respect families as the primary decision-maker for their learners. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal, and culturally sensitive relationships that support and empower families, and to involve all families in their learners’ development and learning.