

Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

Ed.M. in College Student Affairs

Information for Field Experience Placement Sites

The field experience in the College Student Affairs program exposes students to real-world work in the field of student affairs and allows them to apply theory to practice. Two separate experiences are required for each student, with their first taken during their second semester of enrollment. A second field experience takes place in a subsequent semester.

Offices that wish to become Field Experience Placement Sites must apply and be approved by the Graduate School of Education. The application process is required to ensure that the College Student Affairs program is in compliance with the regulations set forth by the [Council for the Advancement of Standards \(CAS\) in Higher Education](#) for Master's Preparation Programs.

Agencies or programs that wish to host field experience students must apply and be approved. The application describes what is expected of field experience sites and signifies an agreement to provide field placement students with a meaningful experience and high-quality supervision.

Site supervisors are responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the field experience student, for conducting a performance evaluation, and for making recommendations about the final grade to the field experience seminar instructor. Field experience is as much a learning experience as classroom instruction. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity for the student to have practical exposure to a real-world work setting and to knowledgeable, experienced practitioners. Site supervisors serve as teachers, advisors, and often as mentors, to graduate students who will soon enter their chosen profession. Site supervisors have the responsibility to create an experience that will help students hone their skills and to nurture the growth of young professionals. The main responsibilities of site supervisors are to monitor and provide feedback regarding the student's work efforts, to provide an overview of a functional area including its current priorities and pressing agendas, and to structure a work environment that is conducive to a positive, mutually beneficial learning experience.

Normally, students will work eight to ten hours per week at a site, most frequently divided into two half days. These hours should be scheduled over the course of the 15-week academic term. However, workflow in some offices begins before or extends beyond a semester and it is, where appropriate, possible to adjust a student's schedule to fit this workflow.

Qualifications of Site Supervisor

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in higher education has established criteria for staff members who serve as site supervisors for field experiences. Supervisors should meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. Be employed full-time at the institution in a professional position.
2. Has a master's degree in higher education/ college student affairs or related area (strongly preferred).
3. Have experience supervising professional full-time staff members.
4. Have the support of their supervisor to apply to supervise field experience students.
5. Have the time and resources to provide sustained supervision, including time to meet with the student on a regular basis.

Roles of the Field Experience Student

The field experience student should be expected to operate at approximately the same level as an entry-level student affairs professional. The field experience should include the opportunity to:

1. Complete a well-defined project that serves as a learning experience for the student and which could be of value to the site;
2. Work with the staff team in general office functions, and
3. Complete other tasks that will enhance the student's understanding of how the functional area accomplishes its goals.

This means that the Field Experience student should also:

1. Work in a meaningful way with undergraduate students in small groups or individually;
2. Participate in regularly scheduled staff meetings;
3. Meet weekly with the site supervisor;
4. Sit in on meetings on relevant topics;
5. Be responsible for one or two special projects;
6. Attend special events; and
7. Observe the site supervisor or other staff in workshops and individual or small group meetings with students.

Site Supervisor Responsibilities

Having a field experience student provides a professional the opportunity to reflect on their own practice and contribute to the professional development of a graduate student. Site supervisors are expected to:

1. Become familiar with the purpose and responsibilities associated with having a field placement student.
2. Participate in the field experience interview process in October.

3. After a student has been assigned to a site, the site supervisor should meet and discuss the experience that the student will have at the site and complete the field experience contract (a blank copy is available on the CSA field experience website).
4. Arrange for the appropriate work environment including a defined work space and introductions to members of the office/unit.
5. Within the first two weeks, review the field experience evaluation form (a copy is available on the field experience website) with the student as a vehicle for discussing expectations including arrangements for absences, meeting schedule, proper dress, etc.
6. Meet with the student at least weekly for a minimum of 45 minutes to one hour to discuss on-going projects, review work, discuss student's observations/questions regarding issues and group dynamics in staff meetings and other meetings attended, and provide feedback to the student. Discuss questions raised by the student, including student observations about how theory is implemented or not implemented in the agency.
7. Provide the student with an understanding of the mission, goals and current objectives facing the unit along with a familiarity with the organizational structure.
8. Provide the student with readings that enhance their understanding of the specific functional area.
9. Observe the student at the workplace, working with colleagues, and with students; provide the student with constructive feedback about his/her performance.
10. Develop ways to keep the student informed about what has happened between times they are working in your office.
11. Contact the field experience seminar instructor in a timely manner about concerns relative to the student's performance (e.g. failure to meet the work schedule, to complete tasks on schedule, etc.).
12. Take the student to an outside meeting you attend to help broaden their perspective.
13. At the end of the field experience, meet with the student to formally evaluate their performance and review the field experience evaluation form. Have the student submit the completed evaluation to the field experience Seminar Instructor on the designated due date. Students are graded Pass/No Credit in the field experience.
14. While site supervisors have primary responsibility for meeting these requirements, they may also have other staff in their office supervising some aspects of the student's work. For example, supervision of the project may be delegated to another professional staff member.

Since field experience students are enrolled in other coursework and have a graduate internship or full-time job in student affairs, it is important that realistic goals be established and that a schedule is fashioned which does not interfere with the requirements of attending classes. Students enrolled in the field experience participate in a required seminar with their field experience seminar instructor. Students should share a copy of the syllabus and required readings with their field experience site supervisor.

Students are expected to spend sufficient time in the office to meet the objectives of the field experience. The site time commitment includes time spent on site, as well as work on a site project or regular activity. If project work is done remotely, that time is to be included in the student's weekly hours

Special Site Requirements: Some sites may want to establish special requirements for placement at their site. Special requirements might include two consecutive semesters, summer only, course prerequisites, or other conditions. Those requirements should be specified on the application. Prior discussion with the faculty about special conditions would be beneficial for both the site and the department.

Assignment Process for Field Experience Placement

In brief, the field experience placement will operate in the following way:

In August-September of each year, the Graduate School of Education College Student Affairs Program will contact field experience placement sites and request any changes to their job descriptions. An updated list of available field experience placement sites will be listed on the [CSA Field Experience Website](#). Students will begin to review the available sites in late September and will submit a list of the top 5 sites they would like to interview with to the CSA Program Coordinator. Students will also submit the most recent copy of their resume.

The CSA Program Coordinator will contact all field experience site supervisors with a list of students interested in interviewing with their site in early October. Site supervisors are responsible for emailing students and scheduling a 30-minute virtual interview during the designated field experience interview timeframe, usually the third week of October. After all interviews are complete, students will be asked to rank their top field experience sites and sites will be asked to rank their candidates. The CSA Program Coordinator will then conduct a matching process. Placements will be announced in early November.

Students who are seeking their second field experience placement are required to find their placement on their own. They should outreach to sites they are interested in working for and schedule an interview if mutually agreeable.

All students are required to complete a field experience contract. Contracts for spring placements are due December 1.