University of Massachusetts Boston
College of Education and Human Development

Field Placement Policy

The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) at the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston) is committed to serving schools and community agencies and to providing authentic learning experiences for students enrolled in our professional preparation programs. Training professionals involves field placements (e.g., practicum, internship, student teaching). The following policies are offered to ensure productive learning experiences for pre-service students as well as mutually beneficial partnerships with schools and community agencies. Each academic program in CEHD will also provide information concerning field placement procedures and a description of student responsibilities.

Student Code of Conduct

Students in CEHD programs are obligated to meet all of the following conduct and training obligations throughout their enrollment in classroom and fieldwork experiences:

1. policies of the University of Massachusetts Boston, including the Code of Conduct https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/community/code;
2. the standards or competencies required in their professional program of study or license/certification process;
3. rules/policies of the cooperating school or agency placement that do not conflict with UMass Boston policy

Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate conduct and professional dispositions essential for safe and competent practice at all times; examples include: honesty, trustworthiness, integrity, accountability, reliability, distinguishing right from wrong, avoidance of aggression to self and others, and taking personal responsibility for one’s own actions. Absence of these dispositions includes: hostile or destructive conduct toward self or others, disregard for the safety or rights of others; disregard for honesty, integrity, or trustworthiness; inability and/or unwillingness to maintain professional standards of behavior; inability to control personal stress, mental or emotional dysfunctions, and/or interpersonal difficulties that interfere with professional competence; substance abuse; and violations of federal, state, or local laws. Individual programs of study may include additional expectations regarding professional conduct.

Placement Assignments

Each program in the College of Education and Human Development that requires field placements has established procedures for making those placements.
Procedures vary across programs. Students are responsible to learn and follow the policies and procedures.

1. In order for students to be placed, the field placement policy of each program must be followed, including, but not limited to: application deadlines, site selection, completion of prerequisite coursework, completing placement forms, applications, and/or contracts before the established due dates.

2. Students expecting to participate in a field placement must meet their respective program requirements and register for the appropriate course.

3. Students who want to participate in a field placement must exhibit professional conduct/behavior throughout all courses in the program. Failure to exhibit professional conduct/behavior may result in denial of field placement.
   a. A student’s unprofessional conduct may be reported to the Program Director by faculty members, university staff, other students, or staff in partnering schools/community agencies.
   b. Upon review of the allegations and using the standards listed in the first section of this guide, the Program Director may decide to deny a field placement and implement a remediation or termination plan consistent with their program guidelines.
   c. A student who believes his or her conduct is not in violation of the standards or a decision has been made on the basis of factual error can appeal this decision to the Department Chair.
   d. If the field placement is required for completion of the degree/license/certificate, inability to complete the fieldwork requirements after remediation attempts have been unsuccessful at a placement, would lead to termination from the program.

Problems during Field Experience

If a student encounters problems related to a field experience,

1. the student has a responsibility to contact the University supervisor (i.e., primary supervisor/teacher of record for field placement, practicum, or internship) overseeing the placement to resolve the problem. The supervisor and student may work on a plan to resolve the concern or problem occurring within the placement. The student and university supervisor will follow the plan for resolution or remediation of the problem.

2. If the concern is not resolved to a satisfactory conclusion, the student should contact the UMass Boston Program Director.

3. If the concern is not resolved to a satisfactory conclusion after meeting the Program Director, the student and Program Director should refer the matter to the Department Chair.
Background Check and Violations of Law

Students applying for field placement may be required to undergo a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check through their placement site and may be required to undergo a National Background Check (NBC), including fingerprinting. Students may also be asked by their program to complete a self-report background check. The purpose of these checks is to ensure public safety and avoid unacceptable risk to vulnerable populations. Students who refuse to consent to a CORI/NBC will be administratively withdrawn from their program.

Background checks are typically conducted by the placement site. If a violation is discovered or self-reported, authorized personnel at the school or agency determine the suitability of a candidate for placement at the facility. The UMass Boston Program Director may also determine the suitability of a candidate for field placement eligibility based on discovered or self-reported information. Unless otherwise provided by law, factors considered in determining suitability may include, but are not limited to the following:

- relevance of the crime to the practical experience
- nature of the work to be performed
- time since conviction
- age of the candidate at the time of the offense
- seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense
- number of offenses
- existence of pending charges
- any relevant evidence of rehabilitation

Students may challenge a CORI finding by appealing to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board.

If a student is charged with a crime during field placement, he/she must report it to the University supervisor or Program Director. Depending on the nature of the violation, the Program Director and Department Chair may suspend the student from the field experience or terminate the student from the program.

Please refer to the UMass Boston student Code of Conduct for policy regarding a student being charged with a crime at any time during their enrollment in an academic program.

Performance Evaluation

Each program outlines the learning goals and professional conduct expectations during field experiences, including those listed in the above section Student Code of Conduct.

1. Students are evaluated by their University instructor in consultation with the cooperating professional at the placement site according to the criteria set by the program of study and the instructor.
2. Grades can be appealed through a process established by the University and found on the UMass Boston website: https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/academics.

3. University supervisors will report problems or concerns with performance or conduct in field placements to the Program Director or Department Chair.

4. A concern related to the safety or well-being of an individual or to the violation of professional standards may result in immediate removal from a placement while the issue is considered by the Program Director or Department Chair. A student would only be allowed to resume the placement with the permission of the Program Director or Department Chair. If the violation is confirmed and removal from a placement is upheld, this may be considered failing the course.

5. If a student is asked to leave a field placement by the cooperating professional or is removed from a placement by the department for unsatisfactory performance or conduct, the student may receive a failing grade for the course. A failing grade resulting from a request by the cooperating school or community agency to remove a student is not subject to appeal through the College.

6. Each program publishes its requirements for academic and professional performance and the consequences of failing a field placement experience. Program faculty may allow a student to continue in the program with an additional field placement, subject to conditions outlined in a probationary performance or remedial plan for completing that field placement. A student who fails two field experiences will not be allowed to complete the program.

7. If a student is allowed to continue in the program, failing a field placement requires repeating the entire experience.

8. Occasionally, a student may not meet the requirements to pass a field placement but the University instructor believes that extending the placement may allow the student to satisfy the requirement. An extension can be granted in these circumstances with the approval of the cooperating school or agency.