

Department Policy: Field Experiences for ZA Endorsement Students

The Department of Teacher Education and Professional Development is responsible for providing well rounded, diverse, and effective field experiences in our program of instruction for candidates seeking certification in the elementary grades. For those candidates seeking a ZA endorsement, as an additional focus of in-depth study, this preparation must include field experiences with infant/toddlers, pre-school students, and primary grade students. This wide range of field experiences cannot all be accomplished only during the student teaching semester. These field experiences must be addressed consistently throughout the teacher preparation program. Elementary certification, with the additional ZA endorsement, must address all age bands from infant/toddler to the upper elementary grades. This necessitates a coordinated and well-documented sequence of field experiences to meet the needs of candidates and the expectations of all departments involved in the elementary education certification and additional ZA endorsement.

Recommended Sequence of Field Experiences (total 300+ hours including all grade bands)	
Pre-professional experience	Infant/toddler experience or 4 th -6 th grade placement
HDF practicum	Pre-school
Pre-Student Teaching	Either infant/toddler or 4 th - 6 th grade field experience
Student teaching (1 st 8 weeks)	Pre-school, developmental kindergarten, or kindergarten in a district where an ongoing “district agreement” exists.
Student teaching (2 nd 8 weeks)	1 st , 2 nd , or 3 rd grade in a district where an ongoing “district agreement” exists.

This sequence of field experiences allows candidates to meet the general elementary education requirements of having meaningful experiences across grades K - 6 grades (including lower elementary and upper elementary). In addition, it ensures that candidates gain the depth of focus intended with the ZA endorsement by having field experiences (including a portion of the student teaching experience) with infant/toddlers, pre-school students, or kindergarten students.

Documentation

During the interview by the University Supervisor prior to placement of student teachers, experiences in each of preceding field experiences will be documented. EDU 458 faculty will seek placements in accordance with the above guidelines. Students seeking a ZA endorsement should have a pre-school, developmental kindergarten, or kindergarten during one of the eight week student teaching placements and may have a first, second or third grade placement in the other eight week placements. EDU 458 faculty will verify the field experiences as a part of the Cycle III exit interview. Those who meet the prescribed sequence of field experiences will then be forward forwarded with a recommendation for certification that includes the ZA endorsement. For any student who does not meet all field experience criteria, an additional independent study field experience course will be required to address the deficiency in the age/grade level experiences prior to recommendation for certification.

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