Clinical Field Placement - An Overview

A professional clinical field experience at the junior level follows the sophomore experience. At the graduate level this experience is referred to as Internship I. It is during this intense and focused experience that the candidate is Enhancing Expertise. After completing all work and responsibilities associated with Professional Beginnings, The Developing Professional and Enhancing Expertise, students must apply to be placed in their culminating clinical field experience, Entering the Profession. For graduate students, the culminating field experience is referred to as Internship II. Eligibility requirements for both undergraduate and graduate students are identified by each department.

Most, field experiences and clinical practices are provided primarily within our PDSN partner schools. As a result our students are afforded the opportunity to participate in rural, urban, suburban and international school settings. The PDSN schools provide the settings where best teaching practices are evident. These schools enable the teacher candidates to work collaboratively in the developing theory into practice under the direction and cooperation of the clinical professors and cooperating teachers. International clinical field experiences are held to the same standards of performance as the student teaching experiences in the United States.

Field Placement Site Criteria

In all undergraduate teacher preparation programs at TCNJ, beginning in the first year (freshmen) clinical field experiences are required. This practical experience including Senior Student Teaching and Internship II take place in either an elementary, middle or secondary school setting. The developing professional has opportunities both to observe and teach in a classroom. Although the requirements for this clinical field experience vary somewhat from department to department, all programs emphasize the developing professional as a decision-maker and a collaborative and reflective practitioner, one who can make connections among theory, research and practice.

Schools and districts selected as field placement sites offer diversity of student body and staff; provide teachers who demonstrate best teaching practice; are within close proximity to TCNJ; are able to work collaboratively with TCNJ’s clinical faculty; and support the on-going staff...
development TCNJ teacher candidates and teachers currently employed.

Clinical Faculty, Teachers and Supervisors

The clinical field experience staff is comprised of clinical faculty member, supervisors and the cooperating teaching staff. This group of professional form a team designed to offer the teacher candidates with a rich resource of practical experience in order to guide the teacher candidates in the development of best practices in teaching and learning. Because of their vast experience and knowledge of current trends and practices the team is poised to help the teacher candidate meet practically any challenge in the classroom and school setting.

Clinical Faculty

The clinical faculty scheduled to work with the teacher candidates possess the training and preparation to guide, lead and instruct students in the latest trends and best practices in teaching and learning. The faculty is comprised of part and full time faculty many of whom are former classroom teachers who have been successful in teaching in the public schools throughout central New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Clinical Faculty Staff Development

The clinical teaching faculty is engaged in ongoing professional development through its work within each of the departments. These opportunities vary and include the participation of staff development programs offered by resident faculty; participation in professional development seminars presented at professional conferences and conventions and through engagement in specific research by the individual clinical faculty member.

Clinical Supervisors

The clinical supervising staff consists of full and part time professors and supervisors who have served as school district teachers and administrators. They are guided by the department coordinators who provide ongoing staff development and direction in the clinical supervision of teacher candidates. The past teaching experience and teacher leadership experience of the clinical faculty are important factors in the selection of the clinical field experience faculty. Of equal importance is the clinical faculty member’s ability to relate well to school district personnel and the teacher candidate.

Selection of Cooperating Teachers

District administration, school principals, and school supervisors, carefully nominate tenured, subject matter/grade level certified cooperating teachers to serve as mentors. These mentors display best teaching practices in their classrooms. The STEP Office formally organizes, administers and completes the placement of the teacher candidates in concert with the clinical professor and department policy.

Note: 2003-08 Student Teaching and Internship II Completion Rates--Less than 1%