

# New Mexico Early Childhood Higher Education Task Force NM Early Childhood Field Experience Companion Guide for Institutes of Higher Education

This Field Experience Companion Guide contains reviews and recommendations produced by the New Mexico Early Childhood Higher Education Task Force (NMECHETF). The NMECHETF would like to thank the entire membership of the NMECHETF for its contributions to this document and recognize the committee chair and key authors of the document. In 2023-24, the NMECHETF met a total of eight (8) times, convening 26 institutional program representatives one half-day per month. Committees communicated between meetings and produced work within the scope of their service to the NMECHETF. The final deliverable, aligned with the 2023-24 NMECHETF Scope of Work is meant to support institutes of higher education in New Mexico as it relates to early childhood higher education faculty, state entities, and community partners.

New Mexico is regarded as a national leader in early childhood education and care. Together, local services, state organizations, and institutions of higher education are forging a strong, collaborative early childhood system that will improve the services and experiences of New Mexico's young children and their families and communities. The NMECHETF is proud to be a recognized expert voice and steward of early childhood higher education programs during this transformative time.

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The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of all institutes of higher education in New Mexico. The companion guide, and other reports supported by the New Mexico Early Childhood Higher Education Task Force are available at: [www.nmechetf.unm.edu](http://www.nmechetf.unm.edu)

# NM Early Childhood Field Experience Companion Guide for Institutes of Higher Education

**Objective:** Develop a companion guide that can support institutes of higher education (IHE) across the state to make decisions and implement best practice in the field experiences of their students (e.g., practicum, student teaching).

**Overview:** The NMECHETF produced this Field Experience Companion Guide within the scope of a committee. The collected data from the NNMECHETF meeting discussions, discussion meeting notes, and institutions' field experience handbooks. The Companion Guide is developed from the collected data and consists of five parts: Part I identifies current field experience challenges/barriers, Part II guidance on the current field experience challenges/barriers, Part III research recommendations, Part IV reports on institutions' field experience handbooks, and Part V Task 3 committee reflection. The Companion Guide also includes Appendix A Best Practices for Field Experiences Questionnaire, as a reference for relevant future work.

## Part I

### Current Field Experience Issues/Barriers

Based on committee members' discussions on November 13, 2023, January 12, 2024, February 9, 2024, and March 8, 2024, and committee meeting notes, the following challenges/barriers regarding early childhood field experience are identified.

Challenges/Barriers	Description	Essential Question
<p>Challenge 1: field experience requirements.</p>	<p>It is challenging for many students, especially non-traditional students, to meet the current field experience requirements for multiple reasons. For example, 1) students in a rural area with one or no children's center; 2) students don't have qualified mentors; 3) students work as full-time teachers in classrooms and cannot leave their own classrooms to complete the field experience, etc.</p> <p>The committee discussed and decided not to change field experience requirements. Instead, the committee decided to support students by providing alternative observation methods, strengthening collaborations, and so forth.</p>	<p>What are the best guidelines for students who cannot meet the field experience requirements?</p>
<p>Challenge 2: field experience format (in-person vs. virtual)</p>	<p>Access to quality field experiences may be a mutual challenge for students and faculty. Virtual formats, such as live Zoom observations, recorded observations, and video observations, may be conducted.</p>	<p>What are the relevant policies/procedures for conducting a virtual format field experience?</p>
<p>Challenge 3: qualified field experience mentors</p>	<p>Finding qualified mentors can be a challenge, especially infant/toddler mentors.</p>	<p>How can institutions collaborate with the Early Childhood Mentor Network (ECMN) to find mentors?</p>
<p>Challenge 4: meeting students' individual needs with field</p>	<p>Students don't always have paid leave time. Child center directors or school principals hesitate and/or are unable to give work releases to those</p>	<p>How can institutions meet students' individual</p>

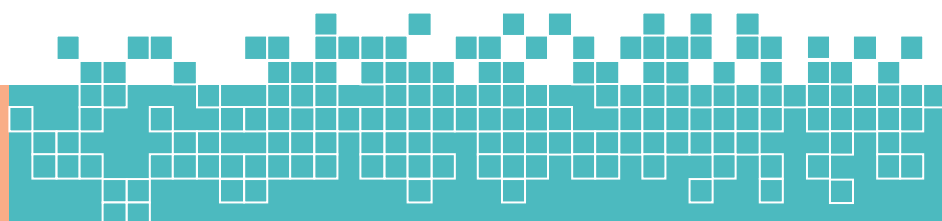
experience collaborations	students/teachers who need to complete their field experience at other field sites.	needs for field experiences?  What resources can be utilized to provide substitutes and financial support so that students can have off-site field experiences?
Challenge 5: definitions of best practice for field experiences	Best practices for field experiences can be perceived and understood from multiple perspectives.	How does New Mexico define best practices for field experiences?

## Part II

### Guidance on the Current Field Experience Challenges/Barriers

Challenges/Barriers	Essential Question	Guidance
Challenge 1: field experience requirements.	1) What are the best guidelines for students who cannot meet the field experience requirements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Institutions conduct individual meetings with students and investigate the main barriers students face when completing the field experience.</li> <li>b) Institutions make adjustments to meet individual situations.</li> <li>c) Institutions ensure the adjustments align with and meet the NAEYC accreditation requirements and NMCCC to the best of their ability given the situation.</li> </ul>

<p>Challenge 2: field experience format (in- person vs. virtual)</p>	<p>2) What are the relevant policies/procedures for conducting a virtual format field experience?</p>	<p>a) All Institutions develop protocols regarding virtual observation/live Zoom observations/observation recorded videos and include them as a section in their field experience handbooks.</p> <p>b) Institutions provide information on the required equipment, such as computers, cameras, microphones, etc. regarding what is needed to complete virtual observations.</p> <p>c) Institutions provide the consent form as necessary.</p>
<p>Challenge 3: qualified field experience mentors</p>	<p>3) How can institutions collaborate with the Early Childhood Network (ECN) to find mentors?</p>	<p>a) Institutions contact ECN for support in finding qualified mentors.</p>
<p>Challenge 4: meeting students' individual needs with field experience collaborations</p>	<p>4) How can institutions meet students' individual needs for field experiences?</p> <p>5) What resources can be utilized to provide substitutes and financial support so that students can have off-site field experiences?</p>	<p>a) Depending on individual needs, institutions adjust to meet particular situations while maintaining the exact field experience requirements and expectations for all students. For example, adjust the in-person field experience to a virtual format, arrange field experience in the summer, etc.</p>
<p>Challenge 5: definitions of best practice for field experiences</p>	<p>6) How does New Mexico define best practices for field experiences?</p>	<p>a) Creating a common field experience framework of best practices in alignment with the NAEYC standards and NMCCC.</p>



### Part III

#### Research Recommendations

Research Article (title, author, journal, etc.)	Access (DOI)	Summary
Orland-Barak, L. & Wang, J. (202). Teacher Mentoring in Service of Preservice Teachers' Learning to Teach: Conceptual Bases, Characteristics, and Challenges for Teacher Education Reform. <i>Journal of Teacher Education</i> 72(1). 86-99.	<a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487119894230">https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487119894230</a>	<p>Preservice teacher education programs worldwide are increasingly becoming field based with student teaching as the capstone experience for preservice teacher learning in the program. Consequently, mentor teachers at field-placement program schools are bestowed with new and unique functions to support preservice teachers' learning to teach, which calls for new conceptualizations of teacher mentoring approaches. This article critically examines the theoretical underpinnings of four existing approaches to teacher mentoring during student teaching, analyzes the focuses and practices associated with each approach, and identifies the major challenges that each approach faces in guiding preservice teachers to learn to teach as expected by the field based teacher education reforms. Finally, it proposes an integrated approach to teacher mentoring for field-based teacher education that transcends the four existing teacher mentoring approaches.</p>
Geisler, C. (2023). <i>Improving the</i>	<a href="https://nwco.mmons.nwc">https://nwco.mmons.nwc</a>	For early childhood education students, field experiences are a critical component of applying

<p><i>Quality of Field Experiences: A Program Improvement Plan. Master's Thesis &amp; Capstone Projects. Northwestern College.</i></p>	<p><a href="http://iowa.edu/education_masters/506">iowa.edu/education_masters/506</a></p>	<p>content knowledge to real-world experience in the classroom. The problem is the number of field experience hours does not assure quality learning for the early childhood education student. A review of literature on the topic of quality field experiences revealed a need for scaffolded experiences, positive relationships with mentor teachers and integration of reflective practice. 13 participating mentor teachers and 14 students currently enrolled in the early childhood education program at Minnesota North College were surveyed to collect data related to scaffolded experiences, mentor teacher roles and relationships and reflective practice. The early childhood education program at Minnesota North College was evaluated using a three-point rubric for alignment with markers of quality field experiences. In response to research and data analysis, a developmental trajectory of field experiences throughout four semesters was created. Additionally, mentor teacher roles and responsibilities were clarified and organized within three distinct levels of interaction. Finally, a framework for embedding scaffolded reflective practice was developed. Implementation of scaffolded field experiences, positive mentor teacher relationships and embedded reflective practice will create a high-quality field experience component to the early childhood program.</p>
<p>Ault, M. J., Spriggs, A. D., Bausch, M. E., &amp; Courtade, G. R. (2019). Evaluation of Remote Versus Face-to-Face Observation of Teacher Candidates in an Alternative</p>	<p><a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/8756870519861030">https://doi.org/10.1177/8756870519861030</a></p>	<p>The University of Kentucky provides an alternative certification program to prepare teacher candidates in moderate and severe disabilities. Observations occur every semester that candidates are in the 2-year program and must be conducted all across Kentucky, often many miles away from campus. University researchers placed cameras in the classrooms of teacher candidates and measured reliability of teacher observations conducted face-to-face and remotely. The researchers also surveyed perceptions of the teacher candidates and university</p>

<p>Certification Program. <i>Rural Special Education Quarterly</i>, 38(3), 124-136</p>		<p>observers and analyzed the cost-effectiveness of the two observation methods. The results indicated that the observers achieved similar results on an observation form regardless of the observation method used. The remote observations were the most cost efficient of the two methods both monetarily and in the time commitment needed by the observers. The findings include the perceptions of the teacher candidates and university observers for benefits and challenges of each observation method.</p>
<p>Gremaud, Krystle N., Can Virtual Observations Effectively Prepare Pre-Service Educators for a Career in Teaching?" (2021). Murray State Theses and Dissertations</p>	<p><a href="https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/etd/204">https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/etd/204</a></p>	<p>This study aimed to identify if virtual observations of preservice teachers could be an effective alternative means for universities to use when observing students in their various education practicums. If found to be effective, universities could use virtual observations in place of in person observation as a cost-saving measure during times of financial instability. Additionally, the findings could allow universities to market their teacher preparation programs nationally where states have closed their teacher preparation programs in response to the national teacher shortage. Two surveys were used: The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale and a Likert scale to determine the perceived efficacy and attitudes of the 54 participants. Findings revealed a strong correlation between a student's certification area and efficacy. Additionally, correlations were found between a student's placement and general attitude towards virtual observations. In conclusion, virtual observations can be an effective alternative to in-person observation with better training of university supervisors in conducting virtual observations.</p>
<p>Woolston, D. &amp; Dayman, T. (2022). Practicum - A space for leadership and</p>	<p><a href="https://doi.org/10.24135/teacherswo">https://doi.org/10.24135/teacherswo</a></p>	<p>The article titled "Practicum: A space for leadership and mentoring" published in the New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work, Volume 19, Issue 1 in 2022 likely focuses on the role of practicum experiences in fostering leadership skills and</p>



<p>mentoring. <i>New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work</i>, 19(1), 29-45.</p>	<p><a href="#">rk.v19i1.33</a> <a href="#">5</a></p>	<p>mentoring relationships among educators in New Zealand. It may discuss how practicum placements provide opportunities for aspiring teachers to develop leadership qualities and for experienced educators to engage in mentoring roles, ultimately contributing to the professional growth and development of teachers. The article might explore the dynamics of these experiences within the context of New Zealand's education system, offering insights, strategies, and reflections for optimizing the practicum as a space for leadership development and mentoring within teacher education programs.</p>
<p>Woodhouse, J., Guihen, L., Scalise, M. (2022) 'I've just got to get through it!' student teacher- mothers negotiating the challenges of the initial teacher education year', <i>TEAN journal</i>, 14(1), pp. 46-60.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The research for this article was located in the UK and focused on Student Teachers who are also mothers. Some of the struggles noted by these non-traditional students were time constraints due to the expectation of college work and distance of placement location. Often students were not given a choice in their placement. Additionally, there were financial burdens and feelings of guilt about juggling homelife and time for children with school work expectations. This sometimes even came in the form of their placements- if they were too far from their home. The study showed that institutional and Mentor Teacher understanding of their situations often determined their success in the field experience.</p>

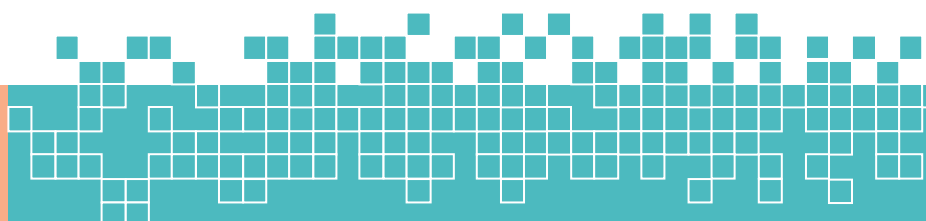


<p>Grobart. E. (2024). Embedding High-Leverage Practices into special education field experiences. <i>Journal of Special Education Preparation</i>, 1-10, <a href="https://openjournals.bsu.edu/JOSEP/article/view/4396">https://openjournals.bsu.edu/JOSEP/article/view/4396</a></p>	<p><a href="https://doi.org/10.33043/9487e6iz">https://doi.org/10.33043/9487e6iz</a></p>	<p>This research article is specifically chosen and recommended because it aligns with Task 3, Field Experience, and Task 5, Early Childhood/Special Education Exploration. The article delves into the systematic design and construction of special education teacher education, preparation, and support through field experiences. The relevance of this alignment is crucial for reflecting on NM's early childhood field experience and understanding the best practices. For example, a multi-step process to embed high-leverage practices (HLPs) with program standards, tailored field experiences and supervision, the linkage between university performance standard domains and HLPs, bridging coursework and field experiences by scaffolding supports, models of observation schedule and tasks, alignments between reflections prompts, standards, and HLPs, etc.</p>
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## Part IV

### Reports on Institutions' Field Experience Handbook

A review of the submitted field experience handbooks show that while we have some similarities, we have many differences in what is included. Some handbooks are extensive and detailed while others are minimal. Each handbook includes information on the required field experience hours by course (2121 or 2131), however the number of hours varies. Each handbook includes information regarding observations; however, the number of observations and how they are conducted varies. Guidelines, expectations, checklists, timelines, lesson plan templates, student concerns, etc. are included in some of the handbooks but not all. Other differences include the inclusion of various information in individual handbooks such as ELEVATE NM domains, video guidelines,



confidentiality agreements, core values, and more. While institutions may not be in favor of having one common field experience handbook, for obvious reasons, it might be helpful to create a sample or template that would allow institutions to support one another with considerations for content, sample forms, timelines, and checklists, and come to agreement on what should be common for each institution.

## **Part V**

### **Task 3 Committee Reflection**

Field experience is a complex situation that needs more collaboration between the ECECD and institutions, as well as among institutions and community organizations. Field Experience also needs to be analyzed case by case, with instructors' understanding of the students' individual context. It is challenging to offer specific and in-depth solutions within a short timeline. Forming a subcommittee with stipend support is suggested for future work. Future work might be included but not limited to, for example, creating a universal field experience handbook/framework, identifying a shared definition of best practices, establishing collaboration guidance between institutions and ECN, collaborations between Institutions offering summer field experience courses, constructing payment/stipend system for field experience students and mentors, sharing sub-teacher pool for substituting teachers when they need to complete their field experience.

## Appendix A

### Best Practices for Field Experiences Questionnaire

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdb3y47LJb\\_b2Gk3oqOMvT1giQbOOQYUQ](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdb3y47LJb_b2Gk3oqOMvT1giQbOOQYUQ)

[HvpWws4GtdtFnsHJg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdb3y47LJb_b2Gk3oqOMvT1giQbOOQYUQ/HvpWws4GtdtFnsHJg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0)

