
Bates College Department of Education

Guidelines for Field Experience - Host Teachers

Bates Education Department Faculty Fall 2014

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We hope these guidelines will help clarify the student's role and our expectations.

1. What is the purpose of placing Bates students in local school classrooms?

The Education Department is committed to a pedagogy called *service-learning*. This means that we believe that our students' learning will be enhanced while being of service in local schools.

2. How are placements in local schools arranged for Bates students?

The Education Department is very fortunate to have the support of the Service Learning Coordinator, Ellen Alcorn, in the Harward Center for Community Partnerships. Ellen makes all the placements for all the students in every education course each semester – over 100 each time! She is the communication hub for all three groups: host teachers, students and professors.

At the end of each semester, Ellen contacts current and past host teachers to ask if they would like to host again the next semester. We certainly hope that you say yes! In addition, we encourage referrals of fellow teachers who might also welcome Bates students into their classrooms. Please send us names to add to our roster of host teachers at any time.

3. How often are Bates education students placed in local classrooms?

Thanks to the help of local teachers, all students who take any education course get hands-on experience in schools to enrich the “book knowledge” that they acquire in their classes at Bates.

4. How many hours must the student complete in my classroom?

Students are required to spend a minimum of 30 hours doing field work during the semester. We ask them to set up a regular schedule that is agreeable to you. In a few instances, students have schedules at Bates that leave too little time for them to do all of their hours in area schools. Thus, we sometimes give permission to individual students to do some of their field hours in other places. A very few students may split their time between two local schools. This usually happens when students are taking two education courses simultaneously (and have 60 hours to do). The students should let you know that they will be doing part of their hours elsewhere.

5. How much experience in classrooms do students typically bring with them?

The field experience component is an essential part of every course we teach, but some of you will be hosting students who have never before taken an education course. They may need a little more encouragement to become fully involved. Other students, however, may have taken one, two, or even three previous courses, and, thus will be ready to assume more responsibility. Students will vary in what they know about schools and education depending on the number of education courses they have taken and the extent of their personal experiences working with children in the past. Sometimes students who are taking their very first education course may hesitate to take much initiative unless you encourage them a bit.

The *Student Information Sheet* that the student will give to you will provide some information about him or herself, but feel free to ask for more details.

6. How do Bates students use this fieldwork in their education courses?

Bates students use the fieldwork to deepen their understanding of course material, and they may draw upon their experiences in classroom discussions and class assignments (using pseudonyms to protect confidentiality).

7. What expectations should I hold about my student's participation in the school and classroom?

The main purpose of the field experience is to give our students the opportunity to connect theory to practice in "real schools." Since most have had no prior background or experience to prepare them to actually "student teach," we expect that they will spend most of their time observing and assisting in your classroom. However, it would also be helpful if they could spend some time getting acquainted with other aspects of school life, such as being with children at recess or lunch, attending a faculty or P.E.T. meeting (if okayed by the principal), or going to other school events (a school fair or open house).

The Student Information Sheet will give you information about the prior experience of your student and information about the professor's expectations for the student in your classroom. Reading this information should be helpful to you as you decide how to begin with your new student each semester. Below are some general guidelines based on the level of student experience. However, above all, *use your own judgment* about how best to arrange the service-learning of any Bates student whom you are hosting.

First or Second Placement - In most cases, students will, under your direction, tutor individual students or work with small groups of students. Other activities might include assisting you in finding resources for upcoming units of study, helping out with other classroom and school activities, or, in some cases, doing action-research projects. As you get to know your Bates student, his/her special talents or prior experience, you may find other ways the student can enrich your teaching, perhaps by showing slides and talking about a foreign country they have visited. A few students may feel ready to teach a lesson under your direction and supervision.

Second and Subsequent Placements – In addition to the activities described above, many students may be ready to handle the responsibility of teaching. If the Bates student is willing, or if the course that the student is enrolled in requires it, he/she can teach the class for a brief time, e.g. giving a spelling test or reading a story. Depending on their levels of skill and prior experience, we encourage students to plan and teach their own lessons. These could be part of the regular curriculum or as enrichment for it. In the past our students have taught wonderful mini-units on such topics as Native Americans and gender bias. We encourage you to assess the maturity and ability of the student who is working with you and to invite capable students to take on this challenge whenever possible.

If we require that students do an *action-research or other project*, we expect them to discuss this with you so that the topics they choose to investigate will be useful to you.

8. What kind of assessment am I expected to provide about the student?

You are not expected to grade the Bates students, but your feedback is very important to us; **students will not receive a grade or credit without a completed form from the host teacher.** Thus it is very important that we receive the evaluation form before the end of the semester. Ellen Alcorn will email a copy of the evaluation form when she sends you information about the student to be placed with you. She will email the form a second time when she checks in toward the end of the semester. In addition, students should bring a copy of the form to you along with this brochure. You can access a new copy on-line at <http://www.bates.edu/EDUC> or by emailing Ellen Alcorn at ealcorn@bates.edu. You can *return* the completed form in two ways: 1) give it to the student to return to his or her professor (students see the completed forms so confidentiality is not an issue here); 2) copy and paste it into an email, complete it, and email to the appropriate professor (email addresses at the top of this brochure).

In order to meet the deadlines for our grades, we need to have the completed evaluation forms returned as follows:

Fall Semester - no later than December 1

Winter Semester - no later than April 1

Short Term - no later than the Wednesday before Memorial Day (Bates Commencement)

Whom do I contact if I have suggestions, questions or concerns?

Please contact us whenever you have any suggestion, question or concern. (We can't work to solve a problem we don't know about!) We want to make the field experience positive and beneficial for you as well as for our students. Most students are dependable, committed, and caring young people, but, once in a while, there is an exception—a student who does not fulfill his/her obligations or lacks the interpersonal skills or sensitivity needed to work with local teachers or students.

If the problem is one of logistics, Ellen Alcorn is probably the best person to contact first. If the issue relates to teaching or learning, or classroom events, the student's professor is probably the best person to contact first. All of us would be grateful to receive your suggestions for making the program better. Any of us may be reached at any time by phone, e-mail, or snail mail.