

THE ROLE OF THE PRACTICUM IN TARPS

During the freshman year, students take foundational Professional Studies courses that provide experiences to examine the roles and responsibilities of teachers (EDUC 150/MUSC 100); work with diverse learners in a tutoring-type setting (EDUC 200); and establish foundational knowledge critical to future pedagogy depending on their area of specialization (EDUC 333; EDUC 360; ARED 180; PHED 215).

During their sophomore year, teacher candidates embark upon a sequence of courses linked to practicums that focus on the Action-Reflection-Action Cycle. All teacher candidates take EDUC 320 Social and Psychological Conditions of Learning. The various programs then diverge to accommodate specific programmatic needs while maintaining the integrity of the Action-Reflection-Action Cycle. While engaged in these practicum-linked courses, candidates begin taking program-specific courses that focus on increasing specialty area knowledge as related to teaching, curriculum development, technology, as well as diversity and inclusion in the P-12 classroom.

The concluding practicum experience is a full-time clinical teaching experience. Depending on specialty area and potential added areas of endorsement, the final clinical experience may take place in a single classroom or divided into two separate experiences. For secondary candidates entering the final clinical experience prior to Fall 2025, the clinical placement may consist of one 14-week student teaching experience (approximately 600 hours in the final placement setting). For all current elementary candidates and any freshmen entering the EPP in Fall 2024 and beyond, the final clinical experience will consist of a yearlong residency in which the first semester will include a minimum of 250 hours across a 14-week placement followed by a second semester that includes approximately 500 hours across a second 14-week placement. [For further clarification and current requirements, refer to [West Virginia Policy 5100 \(Section 6.8\)](#).]

CANDIDATE PRACTICUM PROFILE

At the completion of the practicum experiences, including the final Student Teaching / Residency experience, a teacher candidate should have had at least two distinct experiences coded E, M, or EM, with at least one of those coded E or M. [See the Practicum Manual for an explanation of the coding system and how schools are coded.] [Refer to [West Virginia Policy 5100 \(Section 5.25\)](#).]

RESTRICTIONS ON PRACTICUM PLACEMENTS

In order to avoid unnecessary problems, the teacher candidate should not request, nor be placed in, a school that the candidate has previously attended, a school in which the candidate has family members on staff or in attendance, or a school in which the candidate is currently employed. No candidate will be allowed to student teach in a district where a relative is employed by the school board or who is a member of the school board. **NOTE: All field-based coursework and placements prior to the final student teaching / residency placement will occur within the State of West Virginia.**

Review the [Practicum Manual](#) for specific Policies, Procedures, and Expectations related to the practicums (available on the [Shepherd University School of Education website](#)).

CODE OF CONDUCT

Teacher Candidates are required to abide by both school system and university policies as to professional dress and ethical behavior while in the school. Candidates should refer to the dispositional characteristics presented throughout their professional studies courses and confer with their facilitating/cooperating teachers for guidance as needed. For further guidance, please refer to the [Code of Ethics for West Virginia Educators](#), the [Shepherd University Code of Academic Integrity](#), and the School of Education's [Conceptual Framework](#).