



Special Education Practicum Handbook

Revised July 2017

Table of Contents

1. SMSU Practicum Procedures.................................................................................3
2. SMSU Special Education Practicum FAQ ............................................................5
3. Practicum Application ...........................................................................................6
4. Comparison of Practicum Assessment and Portfolio Requirements .....................9
5. Final Assessment of Practicum/Licensure Candidate..........................................11
6. Examples of form letters sent by SMSU following your acceptance ..................12  of Practicum Placement

* Candidate Letter............................................................................................12
* Mentor Letter ..............................................................................................13
* ASD/DD/EBD/LD Letter ............................................................................14
* Administrator Letter.....................................................................................15

SMSU Practicum Procedures

The following practicum procedures will be followed for special education practicums at SMSU.

1. The practicum candidate will locate a practicum placement; placements must be able to provide experience across all grade bands and specific severity levels according to licensure sought.
2. The candidate will complete the practicum application and send the application along with a copy of the candidate’s MN teaching license and resume, along with the classroom mentor teacher’s MN teaching license to the university advisor.
3. The university advisor will approve the practicum placement site and the classroom mentor teacher.
4. The university advisor will provide an override for the practicum candidate to register for the practicum.
5. The university advisor will send the application to the Placement and Licensure office.
6. The Placement and Licensure office will document the location of the practicum placement and send confirmation letters to the practicum candidate, classroom mentor teacher, and principal of the placement school. The application forms will be filed in the candidate’s file.
7. Once confirmation letters are received by the practicum candidate and the candidate is enrolled in the practicum, the candidate will participate in the D2L course activities as indicated in the practicum syllabus posted on the D2L site for the practicums.
8. The practicum candidate will complete 60 hours in each of the required practicum placements for the license area.
9. The practicum candidate will complete the practicum assessment for each practicum placement in LiveText.
10. The university advisor will approve the practicum assessment in LiveText and award a grade for the practicum.
11. The Placement and Licensure Office will document completion of the practicum and file the practicum assessment in the candidate’s file.
12. When the candidate has completed required practicums in the licensure area, the candidate will complete a LiveText portfolio with artifacts and a reflective statement-documenting competency for each of the sub-competencies in each of the four Core Skills of Teachers of Special Education.
13. The candidate will present his/her portfolio for review and approval of meeting the Core Skills of Teachers of Special Education during a scheduled practicum review at SMSU, via phone, Skype or other electronic method. Candidates not meeting “competent” or “proficient” ratings during the portfolio review will meet with their university advisor to develop a plan for meeting the standards that were not met.

SMSU Special Education Practicum FAQ

1. An application must be completed prior to approval of each practicum experience. The practicum application includes a placement form, copy of your MN teaching license, and your resume. A copy of your classroom mentor teacher’s MN teaching license is also required. A hold will be placed on your practicum registration until your practicum is approved. Therefore, it is imperative that all materials are complete and returned so that late fees are not assessed.
2. You will register for two practicums for each licensure specialty, unless you have an ABS, follow the guidelines in the Master’s advising guide. Practicum Experience in three different age levels are required for licensure. For ASD, DD, EBD, and LD licensure, you will complete an experience in the elementary, middle school, and high school levels.
3. Candidates are typically responsible for finding their own practicum placements. Contact your university advisor if you need assistance with placement.
4. Your mentor /supervising teacher must be licensed in the special education licensure of the candidate’s practicum.  And have taught a minimum of 3 years.
5. The total hours in all three grade/age levels must be 120 hours between the enrollments with a target of 60 hours for each practicum.
6. You will complete a self-evaluation/assessment for each practicum experience; one completed assessment form for each experience. The self-evaluation is reviewed and signed by the graduate candidate, mentor teacher, and university advisor. Classroom mentor teacher also completes an evaluation.
7. The candidate will present his/her portfolio for review and approval of meeting the Core Skills of Teachers of Special Education during a scheduled practicum review at SMSU, via phone, Skype or other electronic method. Candidates not meeting “competent” or “proficient” ratings during the portfolio review will meet with their university advisor to develop a plan for meeting the standards that were not met.

Southwest Minnesota State University Special Education Graduate Practicum Experience Application

Complete one application for EACH placement. A hold will be placed on your practicum registration until your practicum is approved. You must be admitted to the graduate program and have completed the core Special Education Courses before you can begin a practicum.

I. Personal Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

License File No. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone #\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mustang ID \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Have you been convicted of a crime other than a non-alcohol related traffic violation?

No \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_

If “yes,” attach material indicating the crime of which you were convicted, including the court in which you were convicted, dates and sentence imposed.

II. Requirements for practicum/Special Education Licensure

 \_\_\_\_ I am covered by liability insurance for all placements **Liability Insurance**

All SMSU Education students must hold personal liability insurance in an amount comparable to professional standards (minimum of $1,000,000).

 \_\_\_\_Yes, name of insurer\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_No - If you are not currently covered by liability insurance you must join

EMSP for liability coverage

NOTE: Most school districts have a background check process. Check with the school district PRIOR to your beginning date.

 

III. SPED Practicum Experience Check one:

\_\_\_\_\_ 670 ASD (Mild-to-Moderate)

\_\_\_\_\_ 680 ASD (Moderate-to-Severe)

\_\_\_\_\_ 681 DD (Moderate-to-Severe)

\_\_\_\_\_ 673 EBD (Mild-to-Moderate)

\_\_\_\_\_ 683 EBD (Moderate-to-Severe)

\_\_\_\_\_ 674 LD (Mild-to-Moderate)

\_\_\_\_\_684 LD (Moderate-to-Severe)

Check one and fill in year indicating practicum enrollment:

\_\_\_\_\_\_Fall \_\_\_\_\_Spring \_\_\_\_\_Summer Year: 20 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_



IV. Placement

For each placement complete the following:

School Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

SPED Mentor Teacher \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

License File No.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Building Administrator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

University Advisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_



**Comparison of Practicum Assessment and Portfolio Requirements**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Practicum** | **Portfolio**  demonstration of licensure competencies |
| Forms | All forms are on the SMSU website. The practicum assessment form should be copied and pasted into your Word document so you can type your narrative. | Examples of portfolio entries and artifacts are also on the SMSU website and D2L. |
| Core Skills for Teachers of Special Education | Complete 2-5 sentences stating how you demonstrated competency in each of the four core skill areas in your practicum. | Complete a reflective statement for each of the sub-competencies in each of the four skill areas. You group the artifacts at the end of each main competency. |
| Number of practicums and/or portfolios for one licensure | Complete three age/grade levels within each required practicum enrollment. Refer to handout on FAQ about Practicums for placement and contact hours. | Complete a total of 60 hours in three age/grade levels within the required practicum enrollments. One portfolio is required for each licensure area. |
| Number of practicums and/or portfolios if completing more than one licensure. | One to Two for each licensure MUST be completed based on advising guide. | Because the portfolio is the final product that demonstrates your competencies in each licensure, you must always have one portfolio for EACH licensure. No exception. |
| Role of Classroom Mentor Teacher | Your classroom mentor teacher can be as involved as s/he is comfortable. The minimum requirement is that s/he reviews your practicum assessment form with you and signs that s/he agrees with its content. You type the narrative for the assessment, not your mentor. However, s/he may also include written input. | You should review your emerging and/or final portfolio with your classroom mentor teacher. Again, your classroom mentor teacher can be as involved as s/he is comfortable. |
| How and when do I complete my portfolio? | You will complete your reflections, lesson examples, and other artifacts from you practicum experience to include in your portfolio. | Each SpEd course in your program will include assignments or projects that may be included in your portfolio. You will also complete reflections and plans for meeting competencies related to each course. |
| Review of Your Competencies and Your Permanent File | The signed original of each assessment form must be present at your final portfolio/licensure review session and will be kept in your permanent file. This may be reviewed by accreditation review team members. Make a copy of each assessment for your own records. | Your portfolio is reviewed at a final review session. Reviewers include SMSU faculty, fellow special education candidates, and area special education teachers. Scheduled reviews are typically in January, June, and July. Additional review sessions are arranged as needed. |

Southwest Minnesota State University

Final Assessment of Practicum Candidate

The final assessment is completed through LiveText.



EXAMPLE OF LETTER TO CANDIDATE (YOU)

DATE

CANDIDATE NAME Candidate ADDRESS

Dear STUDENT,

Congratulations! You have been placed in a mentorship for PRACTICUM TYPE of the GRADES level and MENTOR has agreed to serve as your mentor. A letter has been sent to your mentor outlining your responsibilities at your placement.

During your mentorship you will complete 60 contact hours for the practicum. Enclosed is a log for you to use during your practicum; feel free to make copies as needed. Please place it in an accessible location and have your mentor sign it at the end of each week. You are required to complete a journal and portfolio based upon the four core skills of teachers of special education.

Also enclosed is a copy of the Assessment form that your mentor teacher, the university advisor, and you, the candidate will complete using information included in their Licensure Portfolio. At the end of the practicum experience you will need to review the Assessment Document (1 per practicum) and Licensure Portfolio (1 per licensure area) with your mentor.

Your placement may require a background check. Please contact the building administrator to confirm the requirements prior to placement.

As University Advisor my goal is to visit you in the classroom early in the practicum. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

PRACTICUM INSTRUCTOR UNIVERSITY ROLE PHONE NUMBER EMAIL



EXAMPLE OF LETTER TO ASD, DD, EBD, OR LD MENTOR

DATE

MENTOR NAME SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION ADDRESS

Dear MENTOR,

Thank you for your support of Southwest Minnesota State University’s Special Education Program and agreeing to be a mentor. STUDENT NAME is enrolled in a practicum for PRACTICUM TYPE at the GRADES level.

As a mentor your role is to provide support and information, as needed, in your licensure area. Candidates will complete 60 contact hours for the practicum. The candidate has been sent a log; please sign the log at the end of each week. In addition, the candidate is required to complete a journal and portfolio based upon the four Core Skills of Teachers of Special Education.

Enclosed is a copy of the Assessment form that you-the mentor teacher, the university advisor, and the candidate will complete using information included in their Licensure Portfolio. At the end of the practicum experience you will need to review and sign the Assessment Document (1 per practicum) with the candidate.

As University Advisor my goal is to visit the candidate in the classroom early in the practicum. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

FACULTY NAME UNIVERSITY ROLE PHONE NUMBER EMAIL





EXAMPLE OF LETTER TO ADMINISTRATOR

Date School/Organization Address Dear Administrator,

Thank you for your support of Southwest Minnesota State University’s Special Education Program and permitting a mentorship within your organization. MENTOR STUDENT is enrolled in a practicum for PRACTICUM TYPE for the GRADE LEVELS level, and MENTOR has agreed to serve as her mentor. The following is a copy of the information contained in the letter sent to MENTOR.

As a mentor your role is to provide support and information, as needed, in your licensure area. Candidates will complete 60 contact hours for the practicum. The mentor student has been sent a log; please sign the log at the end of each week. In addition, the candidate is required to complete a journal and portfolio based upon the four Core Skills of Teachers of Special Education.

Enclosed is a copy of the Assessment form that you- the mentor teacher, the university advisor, and the candidate will complete using information included in their Licensure Portfolio. At the end of the practicum experience you will need to review the Assessment Document (1 per practicum) and Licensure Portfolio (1 per licensure area) with the candidate.

Please forward the enclosed letter to your immediate supervisor. I appreciate your school’s cooperation in allowing this mentorship to occur.

As University Advisor my goal is to visit the candidate in the classroom early in the practicum. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

If your district requires a background check, please make arrangements with the practicum student. Thank you again for your cooperation, and if you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Amy Christensen, SMSU Field Experience Director 507-537-6212 Amy.Christensen2@smsu.edu

