

## PRACTICUM WAIVER GUIDELINES - EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM (1/06)

**Petitions submitted after 1/1/06 will be evaluated using these revised Guidelines.**

For students in the undergraduate program in Early Childhood Education, the master's program, or the licensure program at the master's level, one of the requirements is the completion of a Practicum experience. **\* If you have had an equivalent experience and are sure you are competent to move directly to Student Teaching and work at a high level of competence, you are eligible to petition to waive this requirement.** In order to do so, you must have:

- taught at the pre-kindergarten or kindergarten-grade three level
- as a classroom teacher (not an aide or short-term substitute)
- in a regular education program
- for a minimum of two years by the time of the Practicum
- within the last 5 years

You must submit documentation (observation forms, letters, etc.) from 4 detailed observations of your teaching from 2 persons (2 from each) who are/were in a supervisory relationship to you. Both should have observed you at least twice and should present evidence that they have observed your teaching over time. This documentation must affirm that—in their professional judgment—you are fully capable of implementing developmentally appropriate practice in the classroom. Specifically, the documentation must attest to your competence in all the following areas:

- using appropriate teaching methods, strategies, and materials
- planning on both a long-term and daily basis
- developing and implementing curriculum
- evaluating children using both traditional and authentic assessment
- establishing warm, supportive relationships with children which facilitate the growth of competence
- adapting teaching strategies to meet learners' diverse needs
- guiding children's behavior appropriately, individually and in groups
- interacting professionally and positively with other professionals and parents

In addition, you need to include a unit/project plan that you have implemented, along with at least one complete lesson plan that was part of that unit/project. Both plans should include all of the following, at minimum: standards, benchmarks, and grade level indicators; goals and objectives; materials; procedures; completed assessment; and a reflective self-evaluation. Use one of the teaching plan formats from an early childhood course. Include copies of other district or school evaluations that have been completed on your teaching.

The recommendation of your course instructor in ECE 402 or 502: Teaching Methods in Early Childhood Education will also be needed for the Practicum waiver. His/her recommendation will be based on 2 observations—one of them unannounced—of you working in your field experience classroom. You must receive ratings of "Observed" on at least 4 items in each Praxis domain. The instructor will also take into account the evaluation of your mentor teacher. (You may submit the other documents by the deadline and then get this recommendation to your advisor when it is completed.) **Students who do not receive a favorable recommendation from the ECE 402 or 502 instructor, will not be allowed to waive the Practicum.**

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In order to petition for a Practicum Waiver:

- Obtain a petition from the Education Student Services Center in RT 1401,
- Fill it out with all the specific details of your experience, including the age group you taught, where, when, and for how long,
- Include details of your responsibilities in the bulleted areas listed on the other side of this page,
- Be sure to indicate that you are waiving the Practicum and note whether you are waiving it at the pre-k or k-3 level,\*
- Attach all of the documentation (4 observations + unit/project plan + lesson plan),
- Submit the petition to your advisor by August 15 or January 15 of the semester **before** you would complete the Practicum if you were not waiving it.
- Note that you may petition to waive either the Practicum or Student Teaching, not both.
- Remember to complete all applicable portfolio requirements for Checkpoint #3 and Praxis II exam requirements before Student Teaching.

If your petition is approved and you are in the master's program only, then you must replace the Practicum credit hours with an equal number of credit hours from the list of program electives. This is not necessary if you are seeking the master's degree and the licensure or only the licensure. If you are in the undergraduate program, an equivalent number of credit hours must be completed only if will not have enough credits to graduate without them. Check with your advisor.

\* Undergraduate students and those in the licensure program at the master's level must complete both a Practicum and a Student Teaching experience. One must be urban; both may be urban. Only one can be in a parochial school. One must be at the pre-kindergarten level and one must be at the kindergarten-grade 3 level. If a student waives the Practicum at the pre-k level, then the Student Teaching must be conducted at the k-3 level. If a student waives the Practicum at the k-3 level, the Student Teaching must be conducted at the pre-k level. Similarly, if the student waives the Practicum based on teaching experience in a suburban school, the Student Teaching must be at an urban school. If the student waives the Practicum based on teaching experience at a parochial school, the Student Teaching must be at a public school (that must also be urban if the waiver school is not). Students who are only seeking a master's degree in Early Childhood Education are only required to complete a Practicum and it can be at the pre-kindergarten through grade three level.