

MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
HANDBOOK FOR PRESERVICE TEACHERS
2006

Education Department
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
375 Church Street
North Adams, MA 01247
Phone: 413.662.5381
FAX: 413.662.5387

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 3

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS 4

MASSACHUSETTS REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE..... 6

PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER APPLICATION PROCESS 8

ADVISING 10

REMINDERS OF YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A STUDENT WITH REGARD TO
ADVISING: 11

REMINDERS OF YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A STUDENT WITH REGARD TO MAIL:
..... 11

PRE-PRACTICA 12

 “Pointers” and Reminders for Having a Successful Pre-Practicum 13

THE WAIVER PROCESS 15

APPENDIX..... 17

INTRODUCTION

The *Pre-service Teachers' Handbook* has been prepared by the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) Education Department for use by Pre-Service Teachers, College Supervisors, and Supervising Practitioners.

As the Table of Contents indicates, the *Handbook* contains information that we believe will facilitate a successful experience throughout the licensure program, including various excerpts from the Commonwealth's *Regulations for Educator Licensure* and the MCLA Education Department policies and practices that enumerate some of the personal and professional qualities required to successfully meet the challenges of teaching. Copies of the numerous forms we use, descriptions of the of the pre-practica experience, student teaching, as well as the roles of the College Supervisor and Supervising Practitioner outline still other expectations for the licensure program experience.

The MCLA Education Department seeks to develop responsible educators who will continuously encourage and challenge their students to become contributing members of our evolving society. We hope this *Handbook* will be helpful to all those who generously offer their time and talent to the commitment and to the privilege of educating the future members of the teaching profession. We look forward to working with you throughout the licensure program experiences of our pre-service teachers.

Whereas some professions have formulated their own universal code of ethics (like the Hippocratic oath taken by all medical doctors), there are several codes of ethics for teachers. The most widely known, that of the National Education Association, follows:

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS
Adopted in 1975 at the NEA Representative Assembly

PREAMBLE

The educator, believing in the worth and dignity for each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards. The educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The desire for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents and of the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession indicates the aspiration of all educators and provides standards by which to judge conduct.

The remedies specified by the NEA and/or its affiliates for the violation of any provision of this Code shall be exclusive and no such provision shall be enforceable in any form other than one specifically designated by the NEA or its affiliates.

PRINCIPLE I
COMMITMENT TO THE STUDENT

The educator strives to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. The educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator --

1. Shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning.
2. Shall not unreasonably deny the student access to varying points of view.
3. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress.
4. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.
5. Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.
6. Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, or family or cultural background, unfairly
 - a. Exclude any student from participation in any program;
 - b. Deny benefits to any student;
 - c. Grant any advantage to any student.
7. Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
8. Shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

PRINCIPLE II COMMITMENT TO THE PROFESSION

The education profession is vested by the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service.

In the belief that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgment, to achieve conditions which attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education, and to assist in preventing the practice of the profession by unqualified persons. In fulfillment of the obligation to the profession, the educator:

1. Shall not in an application for a professional position deliberately make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualifications.
2. Shall not misrepresent her/his professional qualifications.
3. Shall not assist entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute.
4. Shall not knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a professional position.
5. Shall not assist a non-educator in the unauthorized practice of teaching.
6. Shall not disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.
7. Shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague.
8. Shall not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.

**Adherence to the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession
shall be a condition of continuing membership in the National Education Association**

MASSACHUSETTS REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE

Initial

Based on the Massachusetts Department of Education's *Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval*

1. A Bachelor's degree in the arts or sciences: Licensure candidates working toward a Bachelor's degree at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) are co-counseled by the advisor in their major field and by a faculty member in the Education Department to ensure that their program of studies meets this requirement. Post-baccalaureate students have their transcripts reviewed by the Education Department Chair and /or the Licensure Officer prior to their admission into the Teacher Licensure Program to deem their past studies appropriate for the licensure requirements.
2. Successful completion of course work or other experiences which address the field of knowledge standards as identified in Professional Standard I: Advisors in the major field and Education Department advisors work with students to ensure these standards are met. Both the advisor for the major field and the Supervising Practitioner judge whether the Pre-service Teachers have sufficient subject matter content to begin teaching in the chosen area of expertise. During the practicum semester, student teachers are assessed by using the Pre-Service Performance Assessment, which may be found in the Appendix.
3. Successful completion of monitored field-based training (Pre-Practica): The state requires a pre-practicum. Candidates in the MCLA Teacher Licensure Program experience several pre-practicum experiences. Please see page 12 for more information.
4. Successful completion of a Practicum: At MCLA, a Practicum must be in the role and at the level of the license sought and must be pre-planned. Each semester the Education Department sets the schedule for the next term. To meet MCLA standards, the candidates are expected to complete the hours as established by department policy. Practicum assignments will reflect a variety of experiences, including, but not limited to, working with special needs students and with students of different gender, race, and linguistic and socio-economic background.

A Practicum must be supervised jointly by a representative(s) of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and by Supervising Practitioner(s). If a Student Teacher is part of a team placement, the Supervising Practitioner spending the most time with the Student Teacher will be designated as having primary responsibility for the evaluation of that Student Teacher. Early Childhood candidates will have two separate reports from their Supervising Practitioner(s); one representing the PreK-K experience and one representing the grade 1-2 experience. The Supervising Practitioner(s) and the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Supervisor(s) will together evaluate the candidate on the basis of the appropriate standards.

5. Passing scores on all MTEL tests required for the license to be obtained.

Early Childhood: Communications & Literacy, Early Childhood Content, Foundations of Reading

Elementary: Communications & Literacy, General Curriculum, Foundations of Reading

Middle School: Communications & Literacy, Content test for the license

Secondary: Communications & Literacy, Content test for the license

6. Successful completion of all components of the MCLA Licensure Program: All licensure program components must be completed with the required grade point average of 2.8 (cumulative, college-wide) with no grade below a C (in any Education course) or formally waived through the MCLA Education Department's review process.
7. Submission of a completed application with all supporting documents to the Commonwealth's Department Of Education. Candidates who have successfully completed the MCLA state-approved program apply for their license online at the DOE website (www.doe.mass.edu/educator services). Supporting documents such as transcript/s and practicum report must be sent via regular mail. MCLA recommends sending such documentation by registered or certified mail. Payment may be made online or by mailing it with the documents.

PLEASE NOTE: The Initial license is issued to a person who has met the preparation and eligibility requirements established by the Board for an Initial license and who has completed a teacher preparation program approved by the Commissioner; it is valid for five years of employment. Candidates must complete an approved and appropriate master's degree program or its equivalent for the Professional license.

The above requirements are based on the Massachusetts Department of Education's *Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval*. A complete and current copy of the regulations is available online (www.doe.mass.edu/educator) or in the Office of the License Officer at MCLA.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT STRONGLY ENCOURAGES ALL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH STATE AND COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS.

PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER APPLICATION PROCESS

The Student Teaching Practicum is the culminating experience in pre-service education. In order to enter into Phase III-- The Student Teaching Practicum, students must apply during the semester *prior* to the semester they wish to student teach. For students wishing to student teach during the fall semester, the application process generally occurs during the February prior to that fall. For students wishing to student teach during the spring semester, the application process generally occurs during the October prior to that spring. Given these deadlines, it is imperative that students plan carefully, along with their Education Department faculty advisors, to ensure successful completion of the process. Students are made aware of the deadlines for this procedure via documents sent to their on-campus mailboxes each semester. Please note that students are required to do their student teaching in Massachusetts.

In order to student teach, students must have the following completed. Please note, however, that the following does NOT have to be completed in order to *apply* for the Professional Semester. By the time a student *enters* the Professional Semester, the following must be achieved:

- A cumulative GPA of 2.8 or higher
- Completion of all of Education coursework with a grade of C or better (C- and below is not sufficient)
- Passing scores on all parts of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) required for the level of license the student wishes to obtain. (See page 7 of this *Handbook* for a list of the required MTEs. Please be sure that our Education Department Office has official copies of all of your passing MTEL scores before you begin student teaching.)
- CPR and First Aid certification (required for Early Childhood and Elementary student teachers)

Applications for the Student Teaching Practicum are available in the MCLA Education Department Office. The application process requires that students complete, by the posted deadline:

- Application paperwork (similar to a job application)
- A brief narrative statement detailing goals, philosophies, and preparedness for the teaching field
- References from 2 – 3 people with whom the student has recently worked in an educational setting
- An interview with two Education Department faculty members

Once a student has all of the application paperwork completed, the student submits all of the paperwork to the MCLA Education Department Office. Soon thereafter, the student will be contacted to set up an interview with two Education Department faculty members. The interviews are designed to give students an opportunity to articulate their goals and visions for teaching, much like a job interview would be in the field of education. In addition, the interview is an important time to ensure that all measures necessary are either complete, or close to

completion, further ensuring the student will successfully obtain the initial teaching license at the completion of the Professional Semester.

ADVISING

Every student in the Education Department has an Education Department Advisor. All students should make an appointment to meet with their advisors as early in their program careers as possible. Students should also plan to meet with their advisors every semester, even when not taking Education courses.

Who is my advisor?

To obtain the name of your advisor, students may either visit the Education Department Office, or access this information on the “Student Tools” feature of the MCLA website. In order to access “Student Tools”:

1. <http://campus.mcla.edu/>
2. Click on “Student Tools.”

How do I set up an appointment with my advisor, especially during the busy time prior to registration?

Generally, the best time to reach a professor is during his/her office hours, which are posted on the professor’s office door, as well as in the Education Department Office. During the busy two weeks prior to registration, the Education Department has a special process in place to ensure that each student has an opportunity to meet with his/her advisor. Several weeks prior to registration, there will be a series of clipboards hanging on the wall in the Education Department Office. Find the name of your advisor and his/her corresponding clipboard. Listed on the clipboard will be a range of dates and times for which you may sign up to meet with your advisor.

How can I change my advisor?

After careful consideration, if you decide that you would like to apply to have a different Education advisor, you may request a form in the Education Department Office.

REMINDERS OF YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A STUDENT WITH REGARD TO ADVISING:

- Essentially, advising is the student's responsibility to seek out on a consistent basis. It is in the student's best interest to meet with his/her advisor every semester to ensure successful completion of the program.
- When registering for Education courses, the student's registration form must be signed and initialed by the Education advisor for all coursework with an EDUC (Education) prefix.
- Every semester for which a student is registered for coursework involving an Education Pre-Practicum, it is the student's responsibility to fill out a "Field Placement Form" and have it signed by his/her advisor and returned to the Placement Facilitator as soon as possible, in order to ensure timely placement in the local classroom with a cooperating teacher. A sample of the "Field Placement Form" may be found in the Appendix.

REMINDERS OF YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A STUDENT WITH REGARD TO MAIL:

- Every MCLA student has an on-campus mailbox. It is the student's responsibility to check it frequently. Important information is sent there pertaining to courses and requirements in the Education program, including information about preparing for student teaching and about the MTELEs.
- Prior to obtaining the mailbox, students will need their MCLA ID cards, which may be obtained through the Public Safety Office in the Campus Center building. With the ID card, students may access their mailboxes by visiting the Mail Room in Venable Hall.
- Mailboxes are available until formal graduation from MCLA.
- Every MCLA student also has access to a free email account. Education students are strongly advised to activate and to use their MCLA email to communicate with the Education Department and faculty.

PRE-PRACTICA

Massachusetts requires a pre-practicum (field-based experience). MCLA is proud to offer its students several pre-practica to provide them with a variety of field-based experiences. The Education Department believes that a variety of field-based experiences best prepares teaching candidates for the numerous and diverse challenges of the teaching profession. In fact, most of our courses have a 1-credit pre-practicum that corresponds with the regular 3-credit course. The pre-practicum must be taken concurrently with the given course.

Students may take more than one course at a time that has a corresponding pre-practicum. Please keep in mind, however, that each 1-credit pre-practicum requires 30 hours in the field placement over the course of the semester. Therefore, students enrolled in 2 courses with pre-practica are required to spend 60 hours in the classroom; students enrolled in 3 courses with pre-practica are required to spend 90 hours in the classroom, and so on. A student has one field placement classroom in a given semester, regardless of the number of pre-practica he/she is taking. In other words, no matter how many hours a student must complete in a given semester's field placement, he/she spends all of those hours in one designated classroom.

Every semester, all students registered for one or more pre-practica will be expected to be in attendance at a Pre-Practicum Seminar, which meets once a month for 90 minutes.

Students are reminded to be thoughtful and communicative planners with regard to pre-practica. Students are asked to complete their "Field Placement Forms" and have them signed by their advisors and returned to the Placement Facilitator as soon as possible, in order to ensure timely placements in local classrooms with cooperating teachers. (A sample of the "Field Placement Form" may be found in the Appendix.) If a student must change plans (for example, withdraw from a class, or change the placement entirely) the student is asked to communicate these changes to the Placement Facilitator as soon as possible. It is imperative that everyone be respectful of the relationships with local schools.

Once a student has completed the "Field Placement Form," the Placement Facilitator does all he/she can to place the student within the specifications the student has requested. All students are asked to disclose on the form whether or not they have a vehicle available to them, because students are expected to drive themselves to their placements. In some cases, with adequate notice, the Placement Facilitator can arrange for a placement within walking distance, or help to arrange public transportation for those without a vehicle.

The Placement Facilitator puts forth every effort to make certain the student has a broad range of experiences, at various schools and grade levels within the licensure-level sought, over the course of a student's career at MCLA. Such efforts are extended because the Massachusetts Department of Education, as well as most hiring principals, all agree that the more diverse experiences a person has, the stronger the teaching candidate will be.

“Pointers” and Reminders for Having a Successful Pre-Practicum

- Please treat the pre-practicum as the professional obligation it is.
- Each pre-practicum is 30 hours, which is to be spread throughout an entire semester (lasting at least 10 weeks). If a student is taking more than one pre-practicum, all of the hours will be done in one classroom.
- In order to get 30 hours completed, plan on being in the classroom approximately 3 hours per week for 10 weeks.
- Once a student has received a placement card at the first Pre-Practicum Seminar, it is the student’s responsibility to call the cooperating teacher to set up a schedule.
- Consistency is key. Have a regular schedule (same time/day each week).
- Be consistent and respectful in attendance. Go at a regular time each week. The children come to expect the pre-practicum student!
- Spread the pre-practicum hours out over the entire course of the semester, rather than overcrowding a cluster of hours over a couple of weeks. It is vital to see and experience a progression of time, which also helps to nurture lasting relationships.
- Only on rare occasions should one miss attendance at the pre-practicum, for example if one is very ill or if one has a family emergency. When a student must be absent, please call the school to notify the cooperating teacher, and also please call the MCLA Education Department to inform the Department as well.
- The cooperating teachers will be completing mid-term and final evaluations of each student’s performance in the placement. These evaluations become a part of students’ permanent files in the Education Department. (A sample of this evaluation form may be found in the Appendix.)
- Please dress appropriately. Dress codes vary from school to school. Please be mindful of the type of attire that is worn at the school to which one has been assigned.
- Formal supervision only occurs for students enrolled in Curriculum courses.
- Attendance at the Pre-Practicum Seminar is very important. In fact, it is mandatory, and does factor into one’s grade. Attendance will be taken each month with a sign-up sheet.
- Confidentiality Agreement forms will be available for all students to sign at the first Pre-Practicum Seminar each semester. It is imperative that all students sign and uphold the form, which details steps necessary to respect the confidentiality of the schools, children, etc. with whom one works. (A sample of the form may be found in the Appendix.)

- All students must maintain a log of their hours spent in the field placement classroom. The cooperating teacher must consistently sign the log from week to week throughout the semester. (A sample log sheet may be found in the Appendix.) At the conclusion of the semester, students are expected to submit their hour logs to the MCLA Education Department Office. (Some professors may request copies of the logs as well.)
- Students have a great deal to learn from the children, the cooperating teachers, and the schools, regardless of circumstances. Enjoy this valuable experience!

THE WAIVER PROCESS

What is a waiver?

The waiver process as authorized by the Commonwealth's *Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval* can help transfer students and experienced educators use coursework or work experiences to meet the licensure standards. The process does not waive the standard, nor does it award credit. It only provides the student a way of demonstrating that he/she has had the equivalent knowledge or experience required to meet Initial Licensure Standards. (Please note that work experiences may not be used in lieu of a particular course, although particular work experiences may be used to waive a portion of pre-practica. Please see details below.)

How do I obtain a waiver?

In order to obtain a waiver, students are asked to meet with their Education Department advisor. At the meeting, the advisor assists the student in completing the appropriate forms, and in attaching documentation to substantiate the request for the waiver.

What documentation do I need to substantiate the request for the waiver of specific coursework?

In order to attempt to waive specific coursework, a student is required to provide an official transcript of the related coursework. Any additional information is often helpful, such as a college catalog description of the coursework, or even the syllabus from the course itself. The more specifically focused and well documented a waiver request is, the more likely it is that the request will be approved.

What documentation do I need to substantiate the request for the waiver of my pre-practicum hours?

If students have had extensive experience working in public school settings, they may be able to request a waiver of up to half of their pre-practicum hours in one given semester. MCLA's Education Department will only consider waivers for up to half the amount of pre-practica hours for which the student is currently enrolled. In other words, if a student is currently enrolled for 2 credits (60 hours) of pre-practicum field time, the student may only potentially waive 30 hours at most from that experience. A student must be enrolled in at least 2 pre-practica in order to be eligible for the waiver request process. A student may only waive his/her pre-practicum hours once, during one semester only, so the student is advised to choose wisely in selecting a semester to request a waiver of hours.

Students are expected to have extensive relevant experience to substantiate the request for the waiver. Students are often expected to have at least double the amount of hours of experience that they are attempting to waive. In other words, if a student is attempting to waive 60 hours of pre-practicum hours, he/she should have at least 120 hours of relevant experience in the field.

Students should have specific, quantitative documentation to substantiate their requests, which detail precisely how many hours they have spent in given educational settings. In addition,

students are expected to provide a qualitative report from a supervisor, detailing the students' performance in the given educational settings. For example, a brief letter from a school principal detailing the student's amount of hours in service, along with some indication of the level of satisfaction with the student's performance is best.

Students are advised to prepare well in advance to waive pre-practicum hours. The deadline for applying to waive pre-practicum hours is generally 4 weeks into the semester during which the student wishes to waive the hours.

How is my waiver request determined? How will I find out if my waiver request is approved or not?

The student's Education Department advisor will circulate the waiver request with documentation to all full time faculty. Upon review by full time faculty as to the relevancy of the documentation to meet standards, the waiver is then formally approved or rejected at a meeting of the appropriate Curriculum Committee. A copy of the approved or rejected waiver is mailed to the student and the original is placed in the student's permanent file in the Education Department Office. A sample waiver form may be found in the Appendix.

APPENDIX

1. Preliminary Service Performance Assessment
2. Field Placement Form
3. Pre- Practicum Final Evaluation Form
4. Confidentiality Agreement
5. Pre-Practicum Hour Log
6. Sample Waiver Sheet