Practicum/Student Teaching FAQs

What is the difference between Practicum and Student Teaching?

The Practicum experience is a precursor to Student Teaching. Practicum Students will be observing, getting to know students and learning styles, and participating by working with individual students or small groups. Practicum students will then begin preparing a few lessons, however a class take over is not expected during Practicum. Depending on the ability of the student and the comfort level of the teacher, some students may act in a capacity above and beyond a few lessons. Overall, the Practicum experience is to prepare for Student Teaching in which a full classroom take-over is expected.

How do I apply for Practicum or Student Teaching?

There is a hyperlink to the student teaching application website on the www.hartford.edu/sto webpage, on the student button non the right hand side of the screen.

When are applications due?

Applications for Fall Semester will be due on February 15th of the previous Spring Semester (junior year). Applications for Spring Semester will be due September 15th of the Fall semester.

What items are required as part of the application?

An application completed online is required. Items that should be sent directly to the coordinator via email are fingerprints, a resume and a written “Philosophy of Teaching” essay.

How does the placement process work?

All the applicants’ information will be reviewed by their Program Advisor to ensure that they meet the requirements for Practicum or Student Teaching. Advisors to ensure students meet the requirements for Practicum/Student Teaching. Once approved, the application will be sent to a district for review (we do our very best to secure placements that are within reasonable commuting distances, however availability of placements always varies.)

From there, a district facilitator contacts the Principals of the schools within their district to inform them of the request. The Principal ensures that each teacher selected to become a Cooperating Teacher is TEAM Mentor trained, is an experienced teacher with multiple, successful years in the classroom, and has shown an interest and willingness to accept the responsibility of working with a teacher candidate.

A response is sent to the district facilitator who, in turn, responds to the Student Teaching office. The student teaching office will then correspond with the teacher-candidate and provide the necessary details to the student (via email) to set up the interview.
**Can I contact schools and teachers to secure my own placement?**

The Student Teaching offices arranges all placements. The process which employs District Facilitators and Principals to approve placements was designed so that all necessary people are informed about placements made. Based on our experience, students reaching out to schools and teachers directly has created communication gaps and may cause confusion or damage relationships so candidates may not contact schools, teachers or districts directly.

**Can I be placed at a school in which I have worked in before or recently?**

We encourage students to perform student teaching in schools that are not familiar to them, which challenges them and offers a real opportunity for growth. In addition, if the student is currently employed at that school (as a paraprofessional, for example), the student teaching experience may have the tendency to overlap with their other duties and will be difficult to ensure that the require hours of student teaching are met.

**What do I do when I receive my placement?**

Students should reach out to their assigned teacher to schedule an interview (the student teaching office does not arrange interviews). Students may want to prepare by speaking with the Student Teaching coordinator or career services, or review information on Preparing for an Interview which is on the student teaching website. In addition, it is recommended that students research the school, familiarize themselves with the school website, etc. Please note, a placement is not considered final until after a successful interview.

**Who do I contact if I am expecting to be absent from my placement?**

Please contact the cooperating teacher, the supervisor, and the student teaching office if you plan to be absent from your placement.

**Who do I contact if I have a concern or issue that arises during my placement?**

Depending on the issue and person(s) involved, you should begin by sharing your concern with your Cooperating Teacher and/or your Supervisor. As necessary, you or your Supervisor may bring the issue to the attention of the Coordinator of Student Teaching. The Coordinator may also involve your seminar leader and/or your advisor.