

Childhood/Early Childhood Undergraduate Employment Policy

The purpose of the Childhood/Early Childhood Undergraduate Program policy on employment during field experiences is to ensure that all Teacher Candidates engage in high-quality, structured, and developmentally appropriate clinical experiences aligned with program expectations and state certification requirements. This policy protects the integrity of the teacher preparation process by prioritizing meaningful learning opportunities, consistent supervision, and equitable experiences. By clearly outlining expectations regarding employment, the program supports candidates in developing the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary for success in the classroom.

Field experiences are a central component of the program and are intentionally designed to provide candidates with opportunities to observe effective practice, engage in professional responsibilities, and develop instructional skills under the guidance of a certified cooperating teacher. These experiences represent a collaborative partnership between P–12 schools and SUNY Potsdam and are essential to candidate preparation.

To ensure full engagement, employment is prohibited during all pre-student teaching field experiences. Candidates may not hold paid positions that conflict with or compromise their ability to meet required fieldwork hours, planning, preparation, seminar attendance, and professional responsibilities.

During student teaching, candidates are expected to fully commit to the clinical experience and may not engage in employment that detracts from their responsibilities. These expectations reflect the structured and scaffolded nature of field experiences, which require consistent participation, collaboration with cooperating teachers, and adherence to supervision and seminar requirements.

Undergraduate candidates are not eligible for internship certificates and may not serve as teachers of record. Required field experiences include both associated coursework and designated fieldwork hours, which must remain separate from employment. Requests to balance employment during student teaching will be considered on a case-by-case basis; however, approval is not guaranteed and will be granted only when program requirements are not compromised. Failure to comply with this policy may result in removal from the field placement, delay in program progression, or additional actions in accordance with program and institutional policies.

The program recognizes that candidates may have financial responsibilities and encourages consultation with advisors to identify financial aid, scholarships, or alternative supports.

This policy reflects the program's commitment to ensuring consistent, equitable, and high-quality clinical experiences that support the development of effective, reflective educators prepared to meet professional standards.