



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Department of Special and Early Education

College of Education

Clinical Experience FAQs

1. I have some experiences with young children, but I am not sure if I am qualified to seek course waiver for some of clinical course.

Life experience may be substituted for part or all of pre-student teaching clinical experiences and student teaching if the following four conditions are met.

- Full time employment in the grade level and discipline for which the candidate is seeking licensure and for an appropriate length of time, as determined by the program.
- Documentation that the life-experience was a single, continuous experience that was monitored and/or evaluated at a satisfactory level of performance to meet the CAEP Standards, ISBE student teaching requirements, and program objectives.
- Letter of recommendation from the administrator of the school in which the experience was completed verifying that the candidate’s performance was equal to or greater than that of a student teacher or clinical student successfully completing a traditional experience.
- Written recommendation from the NIU licensure program supervisor that the candidate’s performance in the experience was equivalent to or greater than that expected of a candidate successfully completing the traditional student teaching or clinical experience.

Qualified professional experiences must be documented. For pre-student teaching experiences, a letter is required from the supervisor of the program in which you worked. The letter should state the following: 1) ages of the children you taught; 2) length of time in the position and average hours per week; 3) your responsibilities (should include planning and conducting activities, guiding young children, etc.); and, 4) confirmation of your satisfactory performance in the position. The letter must be signed and on organization letterhead. For the 585 Student Teaching experiences, both a letter and an evaluation are required. The letter should have the same elements as described above. The evaluation form is the Early Childhood Student Teacher Evaluation.

2. What are the clinical courses?

The State of Illinois requires that early childhood teacher candidates have different levels of clinical experience with different age groups within the licensure age range of birth to age eight (or grade three). Clinical experience includes both pre-student teaching and student teaching. Especially for those seeking an initial (first) Illinois teaching license, these clinical experiences must be thoroughly evaluated and documented. To complete clinical experiences, you have to take the following classes:

Clinical	Infant/Toddler	Pre K	Primary
Ages of Children	0-3	3-5	6-8
Course #	SEEC 586 (Observation)	SEEC 582 (Pre-student teaching) SEEC 585A (Student Teaching)	SEEC 582 (Pre-student teaching) SEEC 585B (Student Teaching)

Like many other courses, these clinical experience courses are not offered every semester It is the responsibility of students to know and check when each course is offered, please see the projected course rotation schedule on our [student resource website](#).) In no case will an exception be granted because students plead ignorance of, or contend that they were not informed of course rotation.

3. What are the requirements for each clinical course?

The following is the summary of each course, including placement and requirements.

Course	Responsibility of Placement	Requirement Before your Placement	Requirement During your Placement
SEEC 586	Students in consultation with their faculty mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NIU School Safety for Preservice Teachers Tutorial. • Submit "Infant-Toddler Placement Record" form. • Mandated Reporter. If you already completed a workshop or course, please provide a copy of the completed tutorial or course to the SEED graduate secretary, 162 Gabel Hall. In you need to complete a tutorial please start under the Clinicals section of our student resources website. • Criminal Background checks are completed at the location for your placement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 30 contact hours of observation/ participation (check with the graduate adviser to determine the number of credit hours). • Submit 2-3 page reflective paper to their faculty mentor. • Submit document that shows your observation dates/hours (e.g., sign-up sheet).
SEEC 582	Early childhood faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NIU School Safety for Preservice Teachers Tutorial. • Criminal Background checks are completed at the location for your placement • Mandated Reporter. If you already completed a workshop or course, please provide a copy of the completed tutorial or course to the SEED graduate secretary, 162 Gabel Hall. In you need to complete a tutorial please start under the Clinicals section of our student resources website. • These are due one month prior to starting the pre-k clinical. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 30 contact hours of hands-on participation. • A minimum of two weekly evaluations. • A final evaluation.
SEEC 583	Clinical Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NIU School Safety for Preservice Teachers Tutorial. • Criminal Background checks are completed at the location for your placement • Mandated Reporter. If you already completed a workshop or course, please provide a copy of the completed tutorial or course to the SEED graduate secretary, 162 Gabel Hall. In you need to complete a tutorial please start under the Clinicals section of our student resources website. • Contact Clinical Office at least 6-8 months before you take the course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 60 contact hours of hands-on participation. • A minimum of four weekly evaluations. • A final evaluation.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend a meeting with Clinical Office personnel to complete paper work. 	
SEEC 585A/ 585B	Clinical Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have Clinical course work completed. Test of Academic Proficiency or ACT+writing or SAT. The NIU School Safety for Preservice Teachers Tutorial. Mandated Reporter. If you already completed a workshop or course, please provide a copy of the completed tutorial or course to the SEED graduate secretary, 162 Gabel Hall. In you need to complete a tutorial please start under the Clinicals section of our student resources website. Pass the ECE Content Area test #206. Criminal Background checks are completed at the location for your placement Complete TB test may be required by your district. One year before student teaching semester, attend a meeting with Clinical Office personnel and complete paperwork to obtain a placement or to obtain permission to complete student teaching in an employment context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfactory grade during fulltime teaching experience.(8 weeks in Preschool/Kindergarten and 8 weeks in first, second, or third grade).

- This information is just a summary. Please, read the **Handbook of Clinical Experience**, located on our [student resources website](#), **carefully**. The handbook includes very specific information regarding clinical, including all the required forms.

4. According to the Handbook of Clinical Experience, students arrange their placement for SEEC 586. Are there any criteria for its placement?

Yes, you must arrange your placement in a NAEYC-accredited center, which has a infant/toddler classroom(s). Then you need to seek the approval of your faculty mentor.

5. According to Handbook of Clinical Experience, SEEC 586 requires students to submit reflection paper. Are there any specific guidelines for the paper?

You will be asked to submit 2-3 page reflective paper to their faculty mentor. During your observation, you may engage in reflective thinking about what you observe in the classroom on educational issues, such as a classroom environment, daily schedules, interaction between caregivers and children, safety and health, and relationships with family. You may discuss some of those issues in the paper, along with specific evidence/examples of your observation.

6. May I take SEEC 582 and SEEC 583 in one semester?

Yes, you may, but please note that the courses are not offered every semester. Clinical Office provides very specific information of the course on our [student resources website](#). Be sure that your adviser and the

clinical office are aware that you are taking the courses together because your schedule will need to be adjusted.

7. May I take SEEC 582/583 before SEEC 586?

Yes, you may complete the practicum courses in a flexible order. However, you must complete all practicum courses before you begin student teaching.

8. Where can I find the class schedules for SEEC 582, 583, and 586?

For SEEC 586, you need to meet with your faculty mentor for your placement and class requirements. For SEEC 582/583, visit the Clinicals section of our [student resources website](#) to find specific information about the courses.

9. How soon do I need to contact Clinical Office for my student teaching and SEEC 583?

For SEEC 583, contact Clinical Office at least 6-8 months before you take the course. Attend a meeting with Clinical Office personnel to complete paper work. For student teaching (SEEC 585A, 585B), at least one year before student teaching semester, contact Clinical Office and ask them about a meeting to complete paperwork.

10. I am afraid that my placement will be arranged far away from my living place.

Early Childhood faculty and the Clinical Office do their best to find your placements that meet your needs; however, it often happens that your placement is a distance from your living place due to limited availability of classrooms and schools.

11. Where can I find information on how to obtain the criminal background check?

Contact the Clinical Office for the policy for the Criminal Background check.

12. Do I have to take the TB test whenever I take each clinical course?

TB tests are valid for one year. Students may have to repeat TB tests as needed for each clinical or student teaching.

13. Where can I find all the required forms, such as placement request forms?

The Handbook of Clinical Experience includes the following forms:

- Infant-Toddler Placement Record
- Pre-K/Primary Clinical Placement Request
- Weekly Evaluation (early childhood clinical experiences)
- Evaluation of Early Clinical Experience
- Early Childhood Student Teacher Evaluation

Our [student resources website](#) also provides several types of evaluation forms.