



Southwest Minnesota State University

Special Education
Practicum Handbook

Professors in Special Education

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SMSU Practicum Procedures

The following practicum procedures will be followed for special education practicums at SMSU.

1. The practicum candidate will locate a practicum placement; one placement can be in the candidate's school of employment. The other placement needs to be in a school where the candidate is not employed.
2. The candidate will complete the practicum application and send the application along with a copy of the candidate's MN teaching license, the mentor teacher's MN teaching license and a resume to the university advisor.
3. The university advisor will approve the practicum placement site and the mentor teacher.
4. The university advisor provide an override to the practicum candidate to register for the practicum.
5. The university advisor will send the application to the Placement and Licensure office.
6. The Placement and Licensure office will document the location of the practicum placement and send confirmation letters to the practicum candidate, mentor teacher, and principal of the placement school. These letters will be signed by the university advisor. The application forms will be filed in the candidate's file.
7. Once confirmation letters are received by the practicum candidate and the candidate is enrolled in the practicum, the candidate will participate in the D2L course activities as indicated in the practicum syllabus posted on the D2L site for the practicums.
8. The practicum candidate will complete 120 hours in the practicum placement.
9. The practicum candidate will complete the practicum assessment for each practicum placement and send the signed practicum assessment to the university advisor.
10. The university advisor will approve and sign the practicum assessment and send the practicum assessment to the Placement and Licensure Office. The university advisor will then award a grade for the practicum.
11. The Placement and Licensure Office will document completion of the practicum and file the practicum assessment in the candidate's file.
12. When the candidate has completed both practicums in the licensure area, the candidate will complete a portfolio with artifacts and a reflective statement documenting competency for each of the 35 sub-competencies in each of the ten Standards of Effective Practice.
13. The candidate will present his/her portfolio for review and approval of meeting the Standards of Effective Practice during a scheduled practicum review at SMSU. Candidates not meeting "competent" or "proficient" ratings during the portfolio review will meet with their university advisor to develop a plan for meeting the standards that were not met.

SMSU Special Education Practicum FAQ

1. An application must be completed prior to approval of each practicum experience. The practicum application includes a placement form, copy of your MN teaching license (go to http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Teacher_Support/Educator_Licensing/index.html to run a copy of your license), and your vita. A copy of your mentor teacher's MN teaching license is also required. **A hold will be placed on your practicum registration until your practicum is approved. Therefore, it is imperative that all materials are complete and returned so that late fees are not assessed.**
2. You will register for two practicums for each licensure specialty. Only one practicum placement can be on-the-job in your school of employment. Experience in three different age levels are required for licensure. For DD, EBD, and LD licensure, you will complete an experience in the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. For ECSE licensure, you will complete an experience in the infant, toddler, and pre-school age levels that will include contact time in both a home-based and center-based setting. The practicum experience cannot be completed solely in a candidate's school of employment.
3. Candidates are typically responsible for finding their own practicum placements. Contact your university advisor if you need assistance with placement.
4. Your mentor /supervising teacher must be licensed in the special education licensure of the candidate's practicum.
5. The total hours in all three grade/age levels must be 240 hours between the enrollments with a target of 120 hours for each practicum.
6. You will complete a self-evaluation/assessment for each practicum experience; one completed assessment form for each experience. The self-evaluation is reviewed and signed by the graduate candidate, mentor teacher, and university advisor.
7. You will also complete one professional portfolio that spans all practicum experiences in the licensure area, either elementary/middle/high school or infants/toddlers/preschoolers. The portfolio is presented during a portfolio review session. Faculty, area teachers, and peers review the portfolio and complete the portfolio rubric. Portfolio review dates are posted on the special education webpage.

For more information or forms, contact the Education office by phone at (507) 537-7115 or by email at Carol.Bossuyt@smsu.edu.

Southwest Minnesota State University

Special Education Graduate Practicum Experience Application

Complete one application for EACH placement. A hold will be placed on your practicum registration until your practicum is approved. You must be admitted to the graduate program and have completed the core Special Education Courses before you can begin a practicum.

I. Personal Information

Name _____ License File No. _____

Your Address _____ Phone # _____

City, ST Zip _____ E-mail Address _____

Mustang ID _____

Have you been convicted of a crime other than a non-alcohol related traffic violation?

No ___ Yes ___ If "yes," attach material indicating the crime of which you were convicted, including the court in which you were convicted, dates and sentence imposed.

II. Requirements for practicum/Special Education Licensure

___ Practicum Orientation _____ Date of attendance

___ I am covered by liability insurance for all placements

___ Yes, name of insurer _____

___ No - If you are not currently covered by liability insurance you must join EMSP for liability coverage

NOTE: Most school districts have a background check process. Check with the school district PRIOR to your beginning date.

III. SPED Practicum Experience

Check one:

___ 682 ECSE (infant/toddler, home-based) ___ 692 ECSE (toddler/preschool, center-based)

___ 681 DD (elementary/middle school) ___ 691 DD (middle/high school)

___ 683 EBD (elementary/middle school) ___ 693 EBD (middle/high school)

___ 684 LD (elementary/middle school) ___ 694 LD (middle/high school)

Check one and fill in year indicating practicum enrollment:

___ Fall ___ Spring ___ Summer Year: 20 _____

IV. Placement

____1st of two placements ____2nd of two placements

I understand that only one placement may be completed in my school of employment. ____Initials

A. Placement within your school, please complete the following:

School Name _____ Phone Number _____

School Address _____

SPED Mentor Teacher _____ License File No. _____

Building Administrator _____ Phone number _____

B. Placement outside of your school, please complete the following:

School Name _____ Phone Number _____

School Address _____

SPED Mentor Teacher _____ License File No. _____

Building Administrator _____ Phone number _____

Student Signature _____

Practicum Candidate (Student Signature)

Date

University Advisor Signature _____

Advisor

Date

Assessment should be mailed to university advisor.
1501 State Street
Marshall, MN 56258
Contact Information: 507-537-7115 or 1-800-642-0684 ext. 7115
Carol.Bossuyt@smsu.edu

Comparison of **Practicum** Assessment and Portfolio Requirements

	Practicum	Portfolio demonstration of licensure competencies
Forms	All forms are on the SMSU website. The practicum assessment form should be copied and pasted into your Word document so you can type your narrative.	Examples of portfolio entries and artifacts are also on the SMSU website and D2L.
Ten Standards of Effective Practice (SEPs)	Complete 2-5 sentences stating how you demonstrated competency in each of the ten areas in your practicum.	Complete a reflective statement for <u>each</u> of the 35 sub-competencies in each of the ten SEPs. You group the artifacts at the end of each main competency.
Number of practicums and/or portfolios for <u>one</u> licensure	Complete three age/grade levels within two practicum enrollments. Refer to handout on FAQ about Practicums for placement and contact hours.	Complete a total of 240 hours in three age/grade levels within two practicum enrollments. One portfolio are required for each licensure area.
Number of practicums and/or portfolios if completing <u>more</u> than one licensure.	Two for each licensure MUST be completed. For example, if seeking licensure in EBD and LD, you complete all four practicums, all four practicum assessment forms, and pay for all four practicums.	Because the portfolio is the final product that demonstrates your competencies in each licensure, you must always have one portfolio for EACH licensure. No exception.
Role of Mentor Teacher	Your mentor teacher can be as involved as s/he is comfortable. The minimum requirement is that s/he reviews your practicum assessment form with you and signs that s/he agrees with its content. <u>You</u> type the narrative for the assessment, not your mentor. However, s/he may also include written input.	You should review your emerging and/or final portfolio with your mentor teacher. Again, your mentor teacher can be as involved as s/he is comfortable.
How and when do I complete my portfolio?	You will complete your reflections, lesson examples, and other artifacts from you practicum experience to include in your portfolio.	Each SpEd course in your program will include assignments or projects that may be included in your portfolio. You will also complete reflections and plans for meeting competencies related to each course.
Review of Your Competencies and Your Permanent File	The signed original of each assessment form must be present at your final portfolio/licensure review session and will be kept in your permanent file. This may be reviewed by accreditation review team members. Make a copy of each assessment for your own records.	Your portfolio is reviewed at a final review session. Reviewers include SMSU faculty, fellow special education candidates, and area special education teachers. Scheduled reviews are typically in January, June, and July. Additional review sessions are arranged as needed.

Documentation & Artifact Examples
Standards of Effective Practice (Based on INTASC standards)
Special Education Teacher Portfolio

I. Standard: Subject Matter

1.1 Select teaching methods, activities and materials appropriate for students and the discipline.

1.2 Demonstrate subject mastery and general teaching knowledge.

1.3 Understand and teach the connections of the discipline with other disciplines & everyday life.

- A. Signed degree check and reflection
- B. Practicum/clinical experience and reflection
- C. Research papers and reflection
- D. Certificates of completion of workshops and reflection
- E. Summaries of related articles and reflection
- F. Annotated bibliography of related texts and reflections
- G. Curriculum resource or teaching unit

II. Standard: Student Learning

2.1 Demonstrate ability to identify and be sensitive to students' base knowledge, beliefs, and experiences (pre-assessment).

2.2 Demonstrate familiarity with how students learn and develop.

2.3 Provide and guide learning opportunities that support a student's intellectual, social, emotional & physical growth.

- A. Sample lesson plans created for a variety of age groups
- B. Reflections on the difference between your X age/grade clinical students and your X age/grade clinical students
- C. A bibliography of children's books with suggestions for age-appropriateness
- D. Term paper comparing and contrasting the theories of renowned child psychologists

III. Standard: Diverse Learners

3.1 Demonstrate familiarity with students' cultural, ethnic, language, & experiential backgrounds.

3.2 Demonstrate familiarity with student differences in learning capabilities and approaches.

3.3 Provide and guide learning opportunities that are adapted for students with diverse backgrounds and exceptionalities.

- A. Group project completed in your mainstreaming class
- B. Descriptions of curricular modifications you've tried and their outcomes
- C. Reflection on the role you played in an IEP meeting
- D. Letter from parent thanking you for the extra time you put into modifying the social studies test for their child with learning disabilities
- E. Examples of how you make curriculum more challenging for students with gifted abilities
- F. Narrative paper on your decision making process when creating lesson plans to include English language learners
- G. Documentation that demonstrates your cultural sensitivity to students and their families

IV. Standard: Instructional Strategies

- 4.1 Use leadership skills to make the learning goals and instructional procedures clear to students.
- 4.2 Make content comprehensible to students.
- 4.3 Encourage and guide students to extend their thinking to include inquiry, critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
- 4.4 Use technology to enhance student learning.
- 4.5 Integrate information literacy to enhance student learning.
 - A. Video of you teaching a lesson and reflection
 - B. Self-evaluation identifying methods you've found success with and others that still need work
 - C. Narrative descriptions of the methods used by your cooperating teachers
 - D. Research project on the battles of controversy between experts in the field of classroom instruction
 - E. Rationale for changing cooperative learning groups before mid-semester

V. Standard: Learning Environments

- 5.1 Create a climate that promotes democratic, fair and positive social interaction.
- 5.2 Communicate behavioral expectations to students and establish consistent standards of behavior.
- 5.3 Attend to making the physical environment safe and conducive to learning.
- 5.4 Understand and use "community building" theory to guide and maintain effective learning communities.
 - A. Letters home updating parents on coming projects and homework
 - B. Examples of certificates you've created for achievements, such as:
 - 1. Improved behavior
 - 2. Excellent effort
 - 3. All homework in on time for the month
 - 4. Improved attendance
 - C. Copy of classroom discipline planning, including:
 - 1. Plans for redirecting
 - 2. Rules
 - 3. Consequences
 - 4. Student/teacher-generated reward system
 - 5. Charts
 - D. Certificate of completion of special classroom management course, seminar, or workshop
 - E. Letters of appreciation from parents grateful for the extra effort you gave to their child with emotional or behavioral problems
 - F. Summaries of articles on classroom management and/or motivation
 - G. Evidence of community building, creating a positive learning environment and fostering democracy in the classroom or school

VI. Standard: Communication

- 6.1 Use knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal and media communication techniques to foster learning and positive social interactions.
- 6.2 Assist and enable students to communicate effectively about their learning needs and accomplishments.

- 6.3** Formulate and ask questions effectively and stimulate discussion.
- A. Letter to parents introducing yourself as student teacher
 - B. Copies of minutes from team meetings showing your participation
 - C. Copies of your position or persuasive papers you've written
 - D. Copies of group projects you've completed, demonstrating your ability to work in a group
 - E. Certificates of your technological abilities, including:
 - 1. Word processing
 - 2. Internet
 - 3. Data base
 - 4. Spread sheets
 - 5. Hyperlinks
 - 6. Digital cameras
 - 7. Scanners
 - F. Address of your website with hard copies of documents included there
 - G. Samples of your best handwriting in a handwritten essay (many districts require this in their employment applications)
 - H. A video of you presenting to a class
 - I. PowerPoint presentation of your philosophy of teaching
 - J. Personal/professional reflection on socio-cultural interactions with a person/people from a culture other than one's own.

VII. Standard: Planning Instruction

- 7.1** Articulate clear learning goals for the lesson that are appropriate for the students and the content.
- 7.2** Select teaching methods, activities and materials appropriate for the students and the content.
- 7.3** Align goals, instruction, and assessment.
- 7.4** Plan and use instructional skills to help students meet the graduation standards.
- A. Copies of lesson plans from each subject and grade level you've taught
 - B. Copies of curriculum you've created
 - C. Copies of group presentations you've team-taught in your courses
 - D. A schedule of the entire school day from your clinical experience
 - E. Examples of seating charts you've designed
 - F. Scope and sequence of a unit you wish to teach

VIII. Standard: Assessment

- 8.1** Demonstrate knowledge of and employ a variety of formal and informal assessment tools, including self-assessment strategies.
- 8.2** Use assessment information to adapt instruction and to support student learning.
- 8.3** Report information regarding student learning accurately and appropriately.
- A. Copies of established informal assessment charts you've used, citing authors
 - B. Copies of informal assessments you've created, including your rationale
 - C. Copies of objective tests you've created
 - D. Examples of how you modify assessments for students with special learning needs
 - E. Skill inventories you've used or would like to use
 - F. Learning modality inventories you've learned how to use
 - G. Summaries of articles on multiple intelligences

- H. Papers you've written on multicultural issues in assessment
- I. Anonymous examples of P-12 student work and your reflections about the learning of these students

IX. Standard: Reflection and Professional Development

9.1 Reflect on the extent to which the learning goals were met.

9.2 Demonstrate professional dispositions, responsibility, and integrity.

9.3 Use research, colleagues, and professional development opportunities to become a better teacher, learner, and leader.

- A. Your statement of beliefs/philosophy of education
- B. Certificates of participation in community events
- C. Articles about your volunteer work with non-profit groups
- D. Your resume, focusing on the time you've spent working with children in and out of the school setting

X. Standard: Collaboration, Ethics, and Relationships

10.1 Build professional relationships with colleagues.

10.2 Communicate with parents and guardians about student learning.

10.3 Collaborate with colleagues, families, and the community to foster healthy and productive learning environments and organizations.

10.4 Seek and share opportunities for leadership in the classroom, school, community, and profession

- A. Documentation of the help you provided to coordinate a community volunteer drive for your local public school system
- B. Your written thoughts on a legislative session you attended in your state's capital when they discussed education issues
- C. Letters from your local legislators thanking you for meeting with them to discuss education issues
- D. Sharing your knowledge, skills and/or disposition with the professional community

Adapted from:

Reiman, P.L. (2000). *Teaching portfolios: Presenting your professional best* (pp. 29-30). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

1. Subject Matter

- _____ 1.1 Select teaching methods, activities and materials appropriate for students and the discipline.
- _____ 1.2 Demonstrate subject mastery and general teaching knowledge.
- _____ 1.3 Understand and teach the connections of the discipline with other disciplines & everyday life.

Narrative:

2. Student Learning

- _____ 2.1 Demonstrate ability to identify and be sensitive to students' base knowledge, beliefs, and experiences (pre-assessment).
- _____ 2.2 Demonstrate familiarity with how students learn and develop.
- _____ 2.3 Provide and guide learning opportunities that support a student's intellectual, social, emotional & physical growth.

Narrative:

3. Diverse Learners

- _____ 3.1 Demonstrate familiarity with students' cultural, ethnic, language, & experiential backgrounds.
- _____ 3.2 Demonstrate familiarity with student differences in learning capabilities and approaches.
- _____ 3.3 Provide and guide learning opportunities that are adapted for students with diverse backgrounds and exceptionalities.

Narrative:

4. Instructional Strategies

- _____ 4.1 Use leadership skills to make the learning goals and instructional procedures clear to students.
- _____ 4.2 Make content comprehensible to students.
- _____ 4.3 Encourage and guide students to extend their thinking to include inquiry, critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
- _____ 4.4 Use technology to enhance student learning.
- _____ 4.5 Integrate information literacy to enhance student learning.

Narrative:

5. Learning Environments

- _____ 5.1 Create a climate that promotes democratic, fair and positive social interaction.
- _____ 5.2 Communicate behavioral expectations to students and establish consistent standards of behavior.
- _____ 5.3 Attend to making the physical environment safe and conducive to learning.
- _____ 5.4 Understand and use "community building" theory to guide and maintain effective learning communities.

Narrative:

6. Communication

- _____ 6.1 Use knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal and media communication techniques to foster learning and positive social interactions.
- _____ 6.2 Assist and enable students to communicate effectively about their learning needs and accomplishments.
- _____ 6.3 Formulate and ask questions effectively and stimulate discussion.

Narrative:

7. Planning Instruction

- _____ 7.1 Articulate clear learning goals for the lesson that are appropriate for the students and the content.
- _____ 7.2 Select teaching methods, activities and materials appropriate for the students and the content.
- _____ 7.3 Align goals, instruction, and assessment.
- _____ 7.4 Plan and use instructional skills to help students meet the graduation standards.

Narrative:

8. Assessment

- _____ 8.1 Demonstrate knowledge of and employ a variety of formal and informal assessment tools, including self-assessment strategies.
- _____ 8.2 Use assessment information to adapt instruction and to support student learning.
- _____ 8.3 Report information regarding student learning accurately and appropriately.

Evidence and/or suggestions:

Narrative:

9. Reflection and Professional Development

- _____ 9.1 Reflect on the extent to which the learning goals were met.
- _____ 9.2 Demonstrate professional dispositions, responsibility, and integrity.
- _____ 9.3 Use research, colleagues, and professional development opportunities to become a better teacher, learner, and leader.

Narrative:

10. Collaboration, Ethics, and Relationships

- _____ 10.1 Build professional relationships with colleagues.
- _____ 10.2 Communicate with parents and guardians about student learning.
- _____ 10.3 Collaborate with colleagues, families, and the community to foster healthy and productive learning environments and organizations.
- _____ 10.4 Seek and share opportunities for leadership in the classroom, school, community, and profession.

Narrative:

The Practicum Candidate _____ has _____ has not successfully completed this practicum.

Overall Statement:

_____	Practicum Candidate	_____	Signature/Date
_____	Licensed Mentor Teacher	_____	Signature/Date
_____	University Advisor	_____	Signature/Date

EXAMPLE OF LETTER TO CANDIDATE (YOU)

DATE

CANDIDATE NAME

Candidate ADDRESS

Dear STUDENT,

Congratulations! You have been placed in a mentorship for PRACTICUM TYPE of the GRADES level and MENTOR has agreed to serve as your mentor. A letter has been sent to your mentor outlining your responsibilities at your placement.

During your mentorship you will complete 120 contact hours for the practicum. Enclosed is a log for you to use during your practicum; feel free to make copies as needed. Please place it in an accessible location and have your mentor sign it at the end of each week. You are required to complete a journal and portfolio based upon the ten Minnesota Standards of Effective Practices (SEP).

Also enclosed is a copy of the Assessment form that your mentor teacher, the university advisor, and you, the candidate will complete using information included in their Licensure Portfolio. At the end of the practicum experience you will need to review the Assessment Document (1 per practicum) and Licensure Portfolio (1 per licensure area) with your mentor.

Your placement may require a background check. Please contact the building administrator to confirm the requirements prior to placement.

As University Advisor my goal is to visit you in the classroom early in the practicum. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

PRACTICUM INSTRUCTOR

UNIVERSITY ROLE

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL

EXAMPLE OF LETTER TO DD, EBD, OR LD MENTOR

DATE

MENTOR NAME

SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION ADDRESS

Dear MENTOR,

Thank you for your support of Southwest Minnesota State University's Special Education Program and agreeing to be a mentor. STUDENT NAME is enrolled in a practicum for PRACTICUM TYPE at the GRADES level.

As a mentor your role is to provide support and information, as needed, in your licensure area. Candidates will complete 120 contact hours for the practicum. The candidate has been sent a log; please sign the log at the end of each week. In addition, the candidate is required to complete a journal and portfolio based upon the ten Minnesota Standards of Effective Practices (SEP).

Enclosed is a copy of the Assessment form that you-the mentor teacher, the university advisor, and the candidate will complete using information included in their Licensure Portfolio. At the end of the practicum experience you will need to review and sign the Assessment Document (1 per practicum) with the candidate.

As University Advisor my goal is to visit the candidate in the classroom early in the practicum. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

FACULTY NAME

UNIVERSITY ROLE

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL

EXAMPLE OF ECSE MENTOR LETTER

DATE

MENTOR NAME

MENTOR ADDRESS

Dear MENTOR,

Thank you for your support of Southwest Minnesota State University's Special Education Program and agreeing to be a mentor. CANDIDATE NAME is enrolled in a practicum for ECSE at the LEVEL grade level.

As a mentor your role is to provide support and information, as needed, in your licensure area. Candidates will complete 240 total contact hours for the Birth – 2 years (home-based) and 3 to 6 years (center-based) practicums working with infants, toddlers, and preschool age children. Home visits are counted as three hours per visit because of the preparation, windshield time, and follow-up paperwork. For the home-based practicum hours, the mentee may also count IEIC meetings, workshops, and/or conference sessions that are directly related to the ECSE field. However, if 120 hours cannot be logged in the home-based practicum, the center-based practicum can be over 120 to complete the required total of 240 hours.

The candidate has been sent a log; please sign the log at the end of each week, month, or practicum, whichever works best for your arrangements. The candidate is required to complete a journal and portfolio based upon the ten Minnesota Standards of Effective Practices (SEP), and you may want to review these materials when you sign-off on their Practicum Assessment form.

Enclosed is a copy of the Practicum Assessment form that is completed by the candidate. You-the mentor teacher and the University advisor will review this and the portfolio materials before or as you sign-off on their Practicum Assessment form. Again, at the end of the practicum experience, as the mentor, you have reviewed the completed Practicum Assessment (1 per practicum) and Licensure Portfolio (1 per licensure area) with the candidate.

Your building administrator has been mailed a letter confirming the placement of CANDIDATE NAME within your classroom. As University Advisor my goal is to visit the candidate in the classroom or workspace at least once per practicum. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Faculty Name
University Role
Phone Number
Email

EXAMPLE OF LETTER TO ADMINISTRATOR

Date

School/Organization Address

Dear Administrator,

Thank you for your support of Southwest Minnesota State University's Special Education Program and permitting a mentorship within your organization. MENTOR STUDENT is enrolled in a practicum for PRACTICUM TYPE for the GRADE LEVELS level, and MENTOR has agreed to serve as her mentor. The following is a copy of the information contained in the letter sent to MENTOR.

As a mentor your role is to provide support and information, as needed, in your licensure area. Candidates will complete 120 contact hours for the practicum. The mentor student has been sent a log; please sign the log at the end of each week. In addition, the candidate is required to complete a journal and portfolio based upon the ten Minnesota Standards of Effective Practices (SEP).

Enclosed is a copy of the Assessment form that you- the mentor teacher, the university advisor, and the candidate will complete using information included in their Licensure Portfolio. At the end of the practicum experience you will need to review the Assessment Document (1 per practicum) and Licensure Portfolio (1 per licensure area) with the candidate.

Please forward the enclosed letter to your immediate supervisor. I appreciate your school's cooperation in allowing this mentorship to occur.

As University Advisor my goal is to visit the candidate in the classroom early in the practicum. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

If your district requires a background check, please make arrangements with the practicum student. Thank you again for your cooperation, and if you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Kaiser
SMSU Field Experience Director
507-537-6212
Sheryl.Kaiser@smsu.edu