Field Experience is defined by CPS as 5 or more hours observing in a classroom and/or school environment. These hours are often required by Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) to obtain credit toward an education preparation program. Field experience may also be referred to as observational hours, practicum experience, pre-student teaching, or pre-clinical experience.

Prospective field experience students must have **both IHE and district** approval to begin field experience in CPS. Additionally, the IHE must be an affiliated field experience partner with CPS. Field experience students may complete hours at multiple CPS schools. The CPS Field Experience Approval Notice is valid all semesters until the point of student teaching, at which time the student must complete the CPS Student Teaching approval process.

All of the following steps are **required**. Completing the requirements out of sequence may cause a delay in the process.

**Effective January 2018, active CPS employees are required to complete all the steps indicated below prior to the start of field experience.**

**Step One: Submit Field Experience Online Application**

[Apply Here!](#)

**Step Two: Complete Field Experience Background Check**

1. Download and print the [CPS Field Experience Background Check form](#).
2. The charge for fingerprinting is $59.25 and can be paid by company check, money order, cashier’s check or MasterCard/Visa. (No cash or personal checks are accepted.)
3. You will be required to present a valid **state-issued photo ID**.
4. Bring all materials to any [Accurate Biometrics location](#). Results are sent directly to the CPS Background Check Team.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

1. Save your Accurate Biometrics receipt with your TCN (transaction control number).
2. Scan and send a copy to your IHE coordinator. Please keep a copy for your records.

**Step Three: Receive Approval**

*The Approval Notice is contingent on submitted application (Step One) and clear background check results (Step Two).* This document authorizes the student to begin field experience. Approval Notices are issued on a rolling-basis to the student email and IHE coordinator email listed on the student’s application. Field experience students must share their Approval Notice with the CPS principal of their school placement before reporting to service.

To ensure the highest level of safety for our school communities, students who have not received an Approval Notice **cannot** begin field experience. If an Approval Notice is not received within 15 days of fingerprinting, please contact your IHE coordinator and [fieldexperience@cps.edu](mailto:fieldexperience@cps.edu) for next steps.
Special Circumstances

If you are aware of any arrests/charges/convictions on your background check report, please be prepared to provide court certified dispositions of etc. Any background check that produces a “HIT” result will be required to go before the CPS Criminal Background Review Committee. The Committee will make the final decision regarding field experience approval.

Out-of-State Participants: All out-of-state participants (physically out-of-state) are advised to take the following steps to ensure their fingerprints are properly submitted to Accurate Biometrics:

✓ Go to a local Police Station and request an FBI Fingerprint Card-Form 258. The Police Station will take your fingerprints and affix them to the card.

✓ Mail the following 4 items to:

Accurate Biometrics
500 Park Blvd., Suite 1260
Itasca, IL 60143
RE: CPS Field Experience Program

1. The Fingerprint Card (Form 258)
2. A money order in the amount of $59.25 (made payable to “Accurate Biometrics”)
3. The Identity Certification Statement (completed by the Officer performing the fingerprinting)
4. The CPS Fingerprinting Background Check Form.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will background checks from other vendors be accepted?
No. CPS cannot accept background checks from outside vendors and agencies. You must fingerprint at an Accurate Biometrics location using the CPS Field Experience Background Check Form.

If I did not receive an Approval Notice, can I start observing for field experience hours?
No. To ensure the highest level of safety for our students and school communities, an Approval Notice is required from every Field Experience student. If you have not received an Approval Notice, you cannot begin observations in the district. Please contact your IHE coordinator about potential next steps.

Can I obtain a hard-copy of my background check results even though the results go to CPS?
Yes. You may request a copy of your background check results up to a year after your fingerprints are processed. Please contact your IHE coordinator who will partner with CPS to obtain a copy.

If I am an active CPS employee, do I have to complete the application and background check for Field Experience?
Yes. Effective January 2018, active CPS employees must complete the application and background check.