CPS Field Experience Registration Guide (03/2018)

Field Experience is defined by CPS as completion of a set number of hours observing in a classroom and/or school environment. These hours are an Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)’s course requirement to obtain credit toward a degree in their education preparation program. Field experience may also be referred to as observational hours, practicum experience, pre-student teaching or pre-clinical experience.

An IHE student must be approved through the CPS Field Experience Program if their observation time exceeds a total of 5 hours. The approval notification is valid throughout the student’s coursework leading up to student teaching. IHE students may complete their field experience hours at multiple CPS schools.

The Field Experience registration process steps are outlined below.

**Step One: Submit Field Experience Online Registration**
Prospective Field Experience students must complete the online registration, which is submitted to the CPS Talent Office. It is required by all prospective Field Experience students in order to gain CPS approval to begin field experience hours in the district, including active CPS employees. The application is located on the CPS Field Experience Program page.

*Completing the requirements out of sequence may cause a delay in the process.*

**Step Two: Complete the CPS Field Experience Background Check**
Prospective Field Experience students must complete fingerprints using the CPS Field Experience Background Check form at any Accurate Biometrics location, which is located on the CPS Field Experience Program page. Results are sent directly to the CPS Safety and Security department. Follow the steps below:

1. Complete fingerprints using the CPS Field Experience Background Check form at any Accurate Biometrics location
   a. **Recommendation:** Obtain your Accurate Biometrics receipt
2. Call the CPS Background Check department within two business days after completing fingerprints so the CPS Background Check team can confirm with Accurate Biometrics that fingerprints were processed.
   a. This does not mean that fingerprints results will be approved during the two-day window. The CPS Background Check number is 773-553-6503

**Step Three: Receive approval**
Once the CPS Talent Office has received the online registration form and the CPS Safety and Security team receives your background check results, your request will be processed. Within 15 business days after completing fingerprints, the student and IHE coordinator will receive the Approval Notice via email. An **Approval Notice is contingent on clear background check results and completed registration.** To ensure the highest level of safety for our students and school communities, an Approval Notice is required from every prospective Field Experience student. If you and your student(s) have not received an Approval Notice, they may not begin observing in the district.

A copy of the Approval Notice is to be presented to each school at the start of your placement. The **CPS Talent Office will not supply duplicate approval notices if lost or misplaced.** Your CPS Field Experience Approval Notice will be valid through all semesters until you reach the point of student teaching; at which time you will complete the CPS Student Teaching application process.

**Special Note:** Though registration for CPS Field Experience is open year round, we ask that you follow the directions of your IHE, relative to any specific timelines that have been set for registration and submission of required documents.

Please note that acceptance to complete Field Experience within CPS does not supersede your IHE’s field experience requirements. **Prospective Field Experience students must have their IHE and district approval to complete field experience with Chicago Public Schools.**

CPS Field Experience – 42 W. Madison, Garden Level, Chicago, IL 60602  |  Email: fieldexperience@cps.edu
Background Check Guide

Chicago Public Schools requires prospective Field Experience candidates to undergo a fingerprint-based criminal background check. Please carefully review the guidelines and procedures below for proper submission of your background check reports.

Fingerprinting can be completed at any Accurate Biometrics location using the CPS Field Experience Background Check form found on the CPS Field Experience Program page. This method ensures that you are fingerprinted for both required agencies (Illinois State Police and FBI). It also ensures that your results are transmitted directly to the CPS Safety & Security department.

Fingerprinting Procedures
CPS fingerprinting service is provided by Accurate Biometrics. For a list of locations and hours of operation please visit http://www.accuratebiometrics.com or call 866-361-9944. The charge for fingerprinting is $54.50 and can be paid by company check, money order, cashier’s check or MasterCard/Visa. (No cash or personal checks are accepted.)

You will be required to present a valid state-issued photo identification card along with the CPS Field Experience form found at www.cps.edu/fieldexperience. Please read the form carefully and provide an accurate response to all questions. Once processed, your state and federal background check results will be transmitted directly to CPS. It is important to save the Accurate Biometrics receipt. It will contain a tracking number that may be needed for future reference. Call the CPS Background Check department within two business days after completing fingerprints so the CPS Background Check team can confirm with Accurate Biometrics that fingerprints were processed. This does not mean that fingerprints results will be approved during the two-day window. The CPS Background Check number is 773-553-6503.

Important Note: If you are aware of any arrests/charges/convictions on your background check report, please be prepared to provide court certified dispositions for each to CPS if requested. The CPS Background Check number is 773-553-6503. Background check reports that indicate prior arrests may be required to go before the CPS Criminal Background Review Committee along with the accompanying certified disposition(s). The CPS Criminal Background Review Committee will make the final decision regarding field experience approval.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR OUT-OF-STATE PARTICIPANTS: All out-of-state participants (“physically out-of-state”) are advised to take the following steps to ensure that their fingerprints are properly submitted to Accurate Biometrics:

- Go to a local Police Station in your hometown 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 Student Teaching Program

  1. The Fingerprint Card (Form 258)  
  2. A money order in the amount of $54.50 (made payable to “Accurate Biometrics”)  
  3. The Identity Certification Statement (completed by the Officer performing the fingerprinting)  
  4. The CPS Fingerprinting Background Authorization & Release Form located on the Field Experience page.
Frequently Asked Questions

What if I have already been fingerprinted, will background checks from other background check vendors be accepted for the CPS Field Experience program?
No. CPS does not accept background checks from outside vendors and agencies. You must be fingerprinted at an Accurate Biometrics location using the CPS Field Experience Background Check form and process so that the CPS Background Check team will receive your fingerprint results.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are aware of any arrests/charges on your background report, please be prepared to provide Certified Dispositions to CPS when requested and call the CPS Background Check team at 773-553-6503. Any background check that produces a “Hit” result will be required to go before the CPS Criminal Background Review Committee along with certified dispositions submitted from the candidate.

What should I do after I complete my fingerprints?
Call the CPS Background Check team at 773-553-6503 within two business days of completing their fingerprints to ensure their fingerprints are being processed.

If I did not receive an Approval Notice, can I still 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 prospective Field Experience student. If you have not received an Approval Notice, you may not begin volunteering in the district. Please contact your IHE coordinator about potential next steps.

Do I have to register for field experience more than once?
No, you only complete one registration form and background check for the CPS Field Experience program. It is important to keep your Approval Notice since it is required to submit a copy of your Notice at each observation site.

Can I obtain my background check results even though the results go to CPS?
Yes. You may request a copy of your background check results within one year of your fingerprints being processed. To request your results, please email the CPS Background Check team at backgroundcheck@cps.edu and/or call 773-553-6503.

If I am an active CPS employee, do I have to complete the registration form and background check for Field Experience?
Yes. Effective as of January 2018, all Field Experience candidates must complete the registration form and background check. If you have further questions, please reach out to the CPS Background Check team at backgroundcheck@cps.edu.