

GREAT PLAINS IDEA

Student Handbook January 2015

Welcome to Great Plains IDEA

We're glad you're here! As a student of a Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (Great Plains IDEA) program, it is your responsibility to become familiar with the information in this handbook and the applicable policies and procedures of your home institution. Your home institution information is located later in this document.

Student Responsibilities and Expectations

- Read and retain this student handbook.
- Learn the policies and procedures of your home institution.
- Follow scholarly codes of ethics in course work, research, and professional activities.

About Great Plains IDEA

The Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance is a partnership of 20 public universities providing access to the best educational opportunities by collaboratively developing and delivering high-quality online academic programs. Great Plains IDEA is an academic alliance that offers fully-online academic programs in high demand professional fields.

Terminology to Know

- Home Institution – The university where the student applied and was admitted. Students enroll, pay tuition and receive their degree* from the home institution. (**Degree/Certificate titles vary by institution. Consult each institution for the title as it will appear on the diploma.*)
- Teaching Institution – The university where the faculty member teaching a course is located.
- Campus Coordinator – The person available to assist students through Great Plains IDEA processes.
- Academic Advisor/Major Professor – The faculty member/staff person assigned to assist the student in academic decisions (e.g., course sequence, program planning, etc.).
- Enrollment Information Exchange Date – The day when priority registration for program students ends and the day when non-program students may be moved from the wait list to class rosters as space allows.
- Wait List – The process used for enrolling students into courses when a course reaches capacity before the first day of class **and** after the enrollment information exchange date. The wait list is used after the enrollment information exchange date as a way to ensure students from all institutions receive an equal/first-come, first-served chance at enrollment.

Student Processes and Forms

Student Acknowledgment Form

Students participating in Great Plains IDEA courses are required to sign and submit a Student Acknowledgment Form to be kept on file at the home institution. This form allows the exchange of information between the partnering institutions. All information is shared through a secure, web-based database. Campus Coordinators initiate the Student Acknowledgment Form process with newly admitted students. A sample form can be found in Appendix A of this handbook and on the Great Plains IDEA [website](#).

Title IX Mandatory Training for Students

Students are required to complete Title IX training provided by their home institution. Consult with your Campus Coordinator for instructions regarding this training.

Your Contact Information

Students must notify their home institution Campus Coordinator of any changes in contact information; this includes email address, phone number(s), mailing address, etc.

Email

Your email address is the primary method of communication between you and your instructors and your home institution. Your home institution will provide you with an email account. **It is strongly recommended that you use your home institution email account as your link between you and your home institution.** Often other accounts hinder communication because messages may be filtered as spam. The following are common issues and suggestions related to email:

- If you change your email address, make sure you update your Campus Coordinator.
- **Check your Spam and Junk Mail folder for course messages.**
- Include a course specific subject line in all email correspondence, especially mail sent to Campus Coordinators and instructors. We receive a high volume of mail, and sometimes a lot of junk, so are likely to delete message if there is no subject, especially if we do not recognize the email address/name.
- When taking courses through this program, communication is a shared responsibility. Check email regularly for messages from your instructor(s) and home institution. We recommend a **minimum** of twice per week.

Enrollment

Students enroll in courses at their home institution according to the enrollment dates set at their university. Course names and numbers vary by institution. Each course has a corresponding course information sheet posted on the Great Plains IDEA website prior to enrollment for the upcoming term: [Human Sciences course information sheets](#). The course information sheet contains instructor contact information, textbook information, and course access information. The anticipated rotation of courses is available on the website as well: [Human Sciences course matrix](#).

Wait List

The Great Plains IDEA maintains a wait list to be used when a course reaches capacity prior to the enrollment deadline. If you need to be added to the wait list, contact your Campus Coordinator.

Course Information Sheets

The Great Plains IDEA website houses course information sheets for each Great Plains IDEA class offered (excluding independent study, thesis, and practicum). Course information sheets are designed to provide a quick reference for course materials and instructor information. Course information sheets are not the official syllabi for the course and are subject to change as additional course information becomes available.

Course Access

Students access courses through the Course Management System (CMS)/Learning Management System (LMS) at the teaching institution for a given course. This platform serves as the virtual classroom environment. Campus Coordinators will facilitate access to the CMS/LMS for non-home institution students. Students should expect to receive an email from the teaching institution at least five business days before the first day of class. Students who have not received course access instructions from the teaching institution five days before the first day of class should contact their home institution Campus Coordinator.

Library Access

Great Plains IDEA students will have access to the online library system of their home institution. Students may receive access to the library resources at the teaching institution if the instructor expects students to use such resources.

Drop and Refund Information

If you need to drop a course, you must notify your home institution Campus Coordinator, the teaching institution Campus Coordinator, and the instructor of the course. Refunds are based on the policies of the student's home institution.

Graduation/Degree Completion

At least two semesters before your anticipated graduation, you should contact your academic adviser and your Campus Coordinator. These individuals will provide institution-specific information for degree completion requirements. Institutions may require additional exams/projects in order to complete.

Graduate School Policies (graduate students only)

Students are expected to adhere to the policies of the Graduate School at their home institution. It is the responsibility of the student to become familiar with these policies.

Grades

Students build their transcript at the home institution. Student transcripts are housed by the student's home institution. Grades for a course are determined by the instructor of the course. The home institution will determine the translation for a course grade from a teaching institution that uses a different grading system using the Great Plains IDEA [grade translation matrix](#).

Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade may be issued by the instructor of a course. If an incomplete grade is issued, the student will work with the instructor and the teaching institution Campus Coordinator to file an incomplete grade form with their home institution. The incomplete form outlines the expectations for completion of the course.

Academic Integrity

Everyone within the Great Plains IDEA is responsible for and affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. Academic integrity is defined as doing and taking credit for one's own work.

Instructors are expected to use reasonably practical means of preventing and detecting academic dishonesty. Students are encouraged to share the responsibility for the academic integrity of the Great Plains IDEA by reporting incidents of academic dishonesty to the appropriate administrator at their home institution. Any student found responsible for having engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to academic penalty and/or disciplinary action. Examples of academic dishonesty include—yet are not limited to—cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized possession or disposition of academic materials, falsification, and facilitation of cases of academic dishonesty.

In the case of academic misconduct, the members of the consortium agree to the following procedures:

1. Teaching faculty members have the authority to determine academic assessment of the work where there has been academic misconduct within their classes and other instructional contexts. The academic assessment will be based on the academic standards stated in the course syllabus, catalogues, handbooks, and other materials notifying students of academic requirements. The procedure for appeal of the academic assessment in the course shall follow the policies and procedures of the teaching institution.

2. The instructor is responsible for notifying the program administrator (chair, head, or director) at the teaching institution of the misconduct and course sanction. The program administrator is responsible for notifying the dean for undergraduate studies or other appropriate administrator at the teaching institution who will in turn notify his/her counterpart at the student's home institution.

Grade Appeals

Grade appeals for all courses will be handled by the teaching institution. Students will not have access to the grade appeal process at their home institution unless it is also the teaching institution for the relevant course.

Complaint and Grievance Processes

The Great Plains IDEA community is committed to resolving student concerns in a timely and effective manner. It is hoped that differences can be resolved through an informal communication process that promotes open expression in a climate of courtesy, sensitivity, and mutual respect. If a resolution is not reached, formal grievance processes are available at all participating institutions.

Informal Complaint Process: When a student is concerned about the actions of an instructor in a course or other faculty decisions regarding the student's program, the first step toward resolution is communication directly with the instructor/faculty member as soon as possible. It is expected that the instructor/faculty member will respond promptly. If the concern is not resolved, the student should contact the department chair at their home institution.

Formal Grievance Process: A grievance denotes a dispute concerning some aspect of academic involvement arising from an administrative or faculty decision that the student claims is unjust or is in violation of his or her rights. Grievances under this procedure include disputes over grades, course requirements, graduation or degree program requirements, and thesis and dissertation committee and/or advisor decisions.

When a student wishes to file a formal grievance, the following process will be in effect:

1. *For grievances regarding grade appeals, course requirements, or other action of an instructor of a course:*

Students will file the grievance and follow all procedures at the teaching institution. The teaching institution will inform the Great Plains IDEA representative at the student's home institution that a grievance has been initiated. A formal grievance should be filed in a timely manner, or a student may relinquish the right to pursue the grievance. Time limits for filing a grievance may vary by institution. If filing a faculty or course requirement grievance, the student may contact the Campus Coordinator at the teaching institution for assistance in locating policies and contact information at that institution.

2. *For grievances regarding graduation, program requirements, thesis/dissertation committee, and advisor decisions:*

Disputes involving graduation or degree program requirements, thesis and dissertation committee, and/or advisor decisions will follow the procedures of the home institution. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with all home institution policies and procedures governing the degree program. Campus Coordinators at each institution are able to assist students in locating the campus grievance policy and finding contact information for the appropriate parties.

Cost and Student Financial Assistance

The Common Price

Great Plains IDEA courses are offered at a Common Price per credit hour. The Common Price is reviewed and established annually by the Great Plains IDEA Financial Officers team and approved by the Great Plains IDEA Cabinet. The Common Price may be adjusted on an annual basis. The Common Price may be higher or lower than regular tuition at the home institution. The Common Price includes all fees, distance delivery costs, and other such “add-ons” common for distance education. No additional fees shall be charged by any participating institution. Textbooks and other material and administrative costs (such as late enrollment fees) are allowed.

If there is an onsite component of a course (e.g., field experience and/or laboratory experience) included in the curriculum, any additional fees and travel-associated expenses incurred in attending the required onsite experience will be the full responsibility of the student and must be fully disclosed to the student prior to their course selection and enrollment.

Student Financial Assistance

Students may be eligible for financial assistance through their home institution. Consult your home institution’s Office of Financial Assistance for details about how to apply. Campus Coordinators can provide contact information if needed.

Disability Support Services

Disability support services play an important role in the success of students with disabilities. However, the traditional service model does not fit the needs of a distance education student taking courses at multiple schools at the same time. The offices at participating institutions need to work together in order to serve students in a consortial paradigm.

Obtaining disability accommodation and services is a student driven process. This is also a confidential process. Campus Coordinators do not need to be informed of a disability or the need for services unless you, the student, choose to share that information. Since the goal of Great Plains IDEA is to have one point of entry and ease of student access, to be eligible for accommodations in a course, students must request those accommodations by registering with their home institution disability support services office. **Requests for accommodations must be completed for each course and repeated each semester.**

Students sign a release of information when registering with the disability office. If the student takes a course at another institution, the student’s home disability office sends the release form with an accommodation letter to the teaching institution’s disability office. The letter gives basic information about the disability. Should more information be needed, such as actual documentation, the home institution can forward appropriate documents to the teaching institution. The teaching institution disability office provides the accommodation according to its processes and procedures which may be different than those of the home institution.

Faculty may **not** independently provide accommodations. And because students request accommodations each semester (for the classes they choose), it is possible that the same student may have an accommodation one semester, but not the next. Faculty are encouraged to work with their institution’s disability support office for more information or assistance.

Students can obtain information about disability support services in many locations. The Great Plains IDEA website has contact information for each member institution’s disability support services office. Each course information sheet includes contact information also. Students may choose to request contact information from Campus Coordinators as well.

Students should remain in contact with their home institution's Disability Support Services office throughout the program.

Student Surveys

Great Plains IDEA is committed to continual program improvement. In order to gain a better understanding of the views and experiences of students and to provide feedback to program faculty, students will receive the following surveys from the Lead Institution:

- New Student Survey,
- Course Withdrawal Survey (only for students withdrawing from a course), and
- Program Completion Survey.

All surveys have been reviewed and approved by the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Surveys are voluntary and responses are anonymous. Survey data are aggregated and analyzed, and reports are provided to the Great Plains IDEA Cabinet, Boards of Directors, and program faculty.

The Early Care and Education for a Mobile Society Program

The mission of the Early Care and Education for a Mobile Society (ECEMS) program is to prepare graduates to work with diverse groups of young children, families, and communities in a global society. Graduates are prepared to engage in sensitive interactions, implement inquiry-focused curriculum, and support development and learning.

The Great Plains IDEA Institutions currently approved to participate in the ECEMS program are

- University of Missouri,
- University of Nebraska–Lincoln,
- Texas Tech University,
- Iowa State University, and
- Michigan State University.

Two additional universities are working on program approval and will be able to accept students soon.

Degree titles vary by institution:

University	Degree Title
Iowa State University	Early Childcare and Education and Programming
Michigan State University	Early Care and Education (BA)
Oklahoma State University	Early Childhood Education in a Mobile Society (BS)
South Dakota State University	Early Childhood Education BS with an emphasis in Early Childhood Education in a Mobile Society
University of Missouri	Early Childhood Education in a Mobile Society
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Child, Youth & Family Studies: Emphasis in Early Childhood Education in a Mobile Society (BS)
Texas Tech University	BS in Childcare and Support Services Management

Today, children and families are increasingly mobile. This is especially true for military families, immigrant families, families who must travel to make a living, homeless families, and families living in poverty. Young children and their families need professional support from individuals who are interested in working with them in a society that is always "on the go." That person could be you.

ECEMS is an online undergraduate program provided by seven universities working in collaboration. This bachelor's degree program will prepare you to work in early childhood settings with young children, especially those whose family members are highly mobile. When you complete the program you will be qualified to work in a variety of programs that offer early care and education in the community and on military installations. Some of these programs are

- childcare centers and homes,
- infant/toddler and preschool programs,
- Head Start programs, and
- before and after-school programs for children ages birth to eight.

Upon successful completion of the ECEMS bachelor's degree program, you will be able to

- use your understanding of young children's characteristics and needs, and of multiple interacting influences on children's development and learning, to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child;

- understand how successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with children’s families and communities and value the importance and complex characteristics of children’s families and communities;
- use child observation, documentation, and other forms of assessment, in partnership with families and other professionals, to positively influence the development of every child;
- use your knowledge of academic disciplines to design, implement, and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for every young child;
- identify and conduct yourself as a member of the early childhood profession, using ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice; and
- demonstrate, through sequential practicum experiences and clinical practice, the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to promote the development and learning of young children across the entire developmental period of early childhood.

The Early Care and Education for a Mobile Society Curriculum

The bachelor's degree in Early Care and Education for a Mobile Society is a 120 credit hour baccalaureate program of study that includes completion of 51 credit hours of required coursework and other requirements unique to the university where you are enrolled. The required coursework includes three required practicum experiences (12 credit hours).

To become part of the Early Care and Education for a Mobile Society (ECEMS) program, you must apply for admission as an undergraduate student at one of the seven universities partnering in the delivery of this program through the Great Plains IDEA. This will be your "home" university. It will be where you receive academic advising, manage your program, pay tuition, and meet graduation requirements. Although you will take classes online at each of the participating universities, your home university will award your diploma on completion of the baccalaureate program.

Regardless of your home university, admission to the ECEMS program is a two-step process. First, you must be admitted to the university. Second, you must be admitted to the program. To be admitted to the program, you must already have completed at least 30 credits (applicable to graduation requirements) earning at least a 2.5 grade point average (GPA). These hours must include a Human Lifespan Development course. Following your admission to the ECEMS program, you will complete 51 credit hours in 12 core courses and three practica through Great Plains IDEA plus any remaining credit hours required by the admitting institution for completion of a bachelor's degree. You may transfer up to six credit hours of core course equivalents. However, you may not transfer equivalents for the Professional Development course or any practicum courses. Your home university will determine the number of credit hours from previous study that may be transferred in to meet other degree requirements.

The ECEMS program is designed to ensure that you will meet the professional preparation standards endorsed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2011). The core course requirements are organized into Blocks that help to align the sequence in which courses must be taken.

Block One Courses

Students must successfully complete all Block One courses prior to enrollment in Practicum I and Block Two courses:

- Child Development—Birth to 3 (Infant/Toddler),
- Child Development—4 to 8 (Early Childhood),
- Professional Development,
- Child Guidance and Classroom Environments, and
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition.

Block Two Courses

Students must successfully complete all Block One courses and Practicum I prior to enrollment Block Two courses:

- Development of Curriculum for Children Ages Birth to 3,
- Development of Curriculum for Children Ages 4 to 8,
- Understanding and Adapting for Developmental Differences, and
- Assessing Young Children and their Environments to Enhance Development.

Professional Development Block

Students must successfully complete all Professional Development Block courses prior to enrollment in Practicum III, yet these required courses may be taken before, after, or while taking Block One and Block Two courses:

- Administration and Supervision in Early Childhood Settings,
- Technology and Young Children,
- Diversity in the Lives of Young Children and Families, and
- Working with Families.

Practicum Block

- Practicum I. Block One courses are prerequisite to Practicum I. Practicum I must be successfully completed prior to enrollment in Block Two courses.
- Practicum II. Block Two courses are prerequisite to Practicum II. Practicum II must be successfully completed prior to enrollment in Practicum III.
- Practicum III. This is the program capstone experience. Practicum III may be taken only after successful completion of Block One, Block Two, and Professional Development Block courses, and successful completion of Practicum I and II.

Course descriptions may be found on the Great Plains IDEA website.

General Guidelines for ECEMS

On-line Platforms

Each home university uses a software platform that has been adopted by their university. For course work you will need to use the adopted platform. Currently there are two platforms used: Blackboard and Desire2Learn. Both of these have excellent tutorials on their use. It is recommended that you become familiar with these platforms prior to starting the courses.

Blackboard Platform:

- Iowa State University
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Missouri University
- Texas Tech University

Desire2Learn Platform:

- Michigan State University
- Oklahoma State University
- South Dakota State University

Civility in the Online Classroom

Students are expected to maintain an online environment conducive to learning. Therefore, the following are prohibited: making offensive remarks in email or the discussion board, using inappropriate language or discussing inappropriate topics online, spamming, hacking, using email or discussion board for commercial purposes, using all caps (considered shouting in online communications), cyberbullying, or online harassment of any type. Inappropriate behavior shall result in consequences ranging from a request to correct the problem to removal from the course or even removal from the university depending on the severity of the behavior.

The structure of courses in the ECEMS program is based upon the freedom of each student to express her or his personal views in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance. Some topics can be personal, sensitive, and sometimes emotionally laden. In the case of online classroom discussions, you may hear viewpoints that differ from your own value system, and this can often feel disconcerting and threatening.

It is essential that you weigh the appropriateness of how you participate in this class. Although your participation and opinions are greatly valued, disrespect of other students or to the instructor will not be tolerated, and continual violations to the above policies will result in your being removed from the course and/or the university depending on the severity of the behavior. If you find yourself having difficulty with any aspect, please discuss the problem with the instructor immediately via email or telephone in order to arrive at some solutions. Most difficulties can be resolved easily once the door for discussion has been opened. This approach will assist faculty in responding to your needs and in improving the course now rather than at the end of the semester during your final course evaluation.

Late Assignment Policy

The general policy for the ECEMS program classes online is that assignments will be considered late if they are submitted after the deadline for which they were assigned. Please check the course syllabi for course and instructor specific guidelines regarding the late assignment policy. It is always wise to contact the course instructor if you need to submit an assignment late or miss an assignment.

Background Check

Teaching may be one of the few professions where personal history is as closely scrutinized as experience and professional history. An educational institution carries out a background check as part of its pre-screening process to guarantee the safety of the students. This procedure is legally mandated in the 50 states of the USA. The professional field of early childhood education requires background checks for all personnel. All public schools are required to conduct background checks on its newly hired teachers. In most states, if you have been convicted of a felony you will not be granted a license to teach.

All university students must have a federal background check prior to Practicum I. There will be additional required background checks at your practicum locations, and you will be responsible for adhering to these background checks as required by your practicum sites. Also, there may be additional background checks required by your home institution. It is important that you work with your home institution to be sure all requirements are met. These requirements vary from state to state.

If you are requesting a background check for employment or licensing within the U.S., you may be required by state statute or federal law to submit your request through your state identification bureau, the requesting federal agency, or another authorized channeling agency. You should contact the agency requiring the background check or the appropriate state identification bureau (or state police) for the correct procedures to follow for obtaining an [FBI fingerprint background check for employment or licensing purposes](#).

The best source of a complete criminal background check is the Department of Justice for your state. If you have a criminal record in multiple states, you will need to contact each state's Department of Justice.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's authority to conduct a criminal history record check for non-criminal justice purposes is based upon Public Law (Pub. L.) 92-544. Pursuant to that law, the FBI is empowered to exchange criminal history record information with officials of state and local governments for employment (which includes volunteering), licensing, and other similar non-criminal justice purposes if authorized by a state statute which has been approved by the Attorney General of the United States.

First Aid and CPR Training

First Aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training must be completed while working at your practicum site. This is for your safety as well as the safety of the children you will be working with. Some districts also require the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogen training; check with your cooperating teaching site. You are responsible for obtaining the necessary trainings required by your practicum sites. First Aid and CPR training is included as an assignment in the Practicum I course and you will not be able to advance to Practicum II or Practicum III without this training.

Where to Get Training?

Many school districts provide training several times a year, local YMCAs, recreation centers, and other similar organizations do offer on-site classes.

Here are a few examples of on-line options available:

- American Red Cross: www.americanredcross.org,
- American Academy of CPR and First Aid, Inc.:
www.onlinecprcertification.net/cms/firstaidcourse.php,

- American Health Care Academy: cpaedcourse.com/, and
- ProCPR.org: www.procpr.org/landing.

Professionalism

Attendance

Show your professional commitment to teaching by being punctual for each day in your observations and in your practicum experience. University students are expected to arrive before the start of assigned experience and stay through the duration of the placement. Taking breaks during practicum experiences are only permitted during times when the Cooperating Teacher is taking a break (unless medically documented as necessary). If you are going to be late to your scheduled practicum experience, contact the school/program prior to the scheduled arrival time and advise them of your late arrival. If you are ill and need to be absent for a scheduled visit, contact the school/program/classroom and advise them of this. It is then your responsibility to contact your supervisor and ensure he/she is also aware of your absence/tardiness.

All absences must be made up. Please remember, your absence is your responsibility and should not cause inconvenience or hardship for the Cooperating Teacher. Please be patient and flexible in making arrangements to make-up missed hours. It is your responsibility to obtain any required documentation of your attendance at the practicum experience when you are there. If your course instructor requires a signature by the Cooperating Teacher, when he or she is not busy, ask for the signature. If you forget, it is both unprofessional and inconvenient for the teacher to go back at a later date to obtain that documentation.

Professional Conduct and Attitude

Each person who university students meet will be left with a lasting impression of you as a professional. Be sure the impression you leave is a positive one in which you are seen as a dedicated, responsible, and caring early childhood professional. Keep in mind, practicum assignments often last the entire semester. Just because you have a passing evaluation at mid-term does not mean you become lax in professional preparation, delivery, and initiative.

Professional Dress

These are requirements for students enrolled in the ECEMS program courses. Individual childcare centers, schools, and/or districts may have additional requirements. While in their classroom/district, you will adhere to those requirements.

University students should dress for active play and for the weather. Washable, neat clothing that allows a person to bend over and get up and down off the floor discreetly is acceptable.

Clothing should cover all of the following areas: bust, stomach, back, and posterior. All body areas should be covered while stretching, bending, or squatting. Halter or tank tops, t-shirts with inappropriate slogans, cut-offs, short shorts or skirts, and jumpers without t-shirts are not acceptable. Be sure you check that clothing worn is not sheer enough to see through.

Dress appropriate to the climate of your setting. Wear shoes that are securely fastened to the feet to allow quick movement without slipping. Dangling earrings and other jewelry should be avoided. (Infants and toddlers pull jewelry and it interferes with active participation with children.)

Children are sensitive to strong odors. Avoid use of perfume and keep body odors under control through use of deodorants, daily bathing, and freshly washed clothing. Avoid tobacco use and use mouthwash or breath sweetener if tobacco is used. Consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal substance or being under the influences of these substances are forbidden.

Refrain from bringing unnecessary personal items (purses, backpacks, etc.) to your practicum experience. Bring only the papers/pencils/etc. required by your assignment. It is impossible to ensure that contents of your personal items are safe for the children. You may, without realizing their potential dangers, have medicine, lotions, etc. in them. Classrooms are not able to provide a safe/secure space for personal items to be stored; leaving them obtainable violates licensing/accreditation requirements for the program.

Professionalism in the Classroom

While in the classroom please remember **you are a guest**. You are expected to make every effort to minimize the impact of your presence and ensure that your participation in the classroom does not compromise the learning environment for the children in that classroom. Should a Cooperating Teacher make a request of you, you are expected to comply with her/his request. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure the safety of all children enrolled in the program as well as maintain compliance with program/school requirements. What may appear an "odd" request may have an understandable/appropriate rationale behind it. If you have any questions or concerns about a request that you don't understand or deem unreasonable, please discuss it privately with that teacher after the session ends or at a scheduled meeting. It is never appropriate to engage in a tension-filled discussion when children are present. Doing so will result in immediate and ongoing removal from practicum experiences.

If the teacher communicates to you that it is not possible for you to complete the tasks assigned by your university instructor, please contact your course instructor. It is important that if you have questions about your practicum experience, you have the opportunity to discuss them with the classroom staff or the teacher or by leaving a note.

During your practicum experience, food and drinks may be served to the children at snack time. Please look to the Cooperating Teacher for guidance on how you should participate. In some classrooms, you will be encouraged to sit and visit with the children as they eat. In others, you will be invited to enjoy some of the snack foods. Please do not eat or drink the snack foods unless you are invited to do so by the Cooperating Teacher. Each program has specific rules and availability regarding food. When in doubt, ask! Refrain from bringing food from home unless you have permission from the teacher to do so. Some children may have food allergies, and outside food may compromise their safety.

If you see something that is concerning or unsafe, gain a staff member's attention immediately. If time does not allow for that, directly intervene and protect the children's safety until a staff member can arrive.

Use of Electronic Devices

While working in a classroom, there are to be no personal phone calls, text messages or Facebook posts. Find out the program's main phone number. Give that number to family members, and ask them to call **only** for something that needs immediate attention. Otherwise put your phone away and check messages when you are finished working in the classroom.

Sometimes it will be necessary to use an electronic device for documentation purposes; therefore, use the technology responsibly. You will need to check for photo permission with your Cooperating Teacher and follow that policy. Never post pictures of children, teachers, staff, and families on any social media site.

Confidentiality

Information about children, their families and the staff you are working with is **always confidential!** Refrain from discussing children and families in front of other children and/or families or outside of course discussions. Be aware of observers within the classroom or in close proximity.

Be careful what you say and do in the Teacher's Lounge. Remain professional at all times. Talking negatively about your Cooperating Teacher, mentor, or any other faculty or staff member is unacceptable.

In completing assignments for your practicum experience, ensure the confidentiality of all children, families, teachers, and individuals you interact with. All documentation and reporting of events should maintain anonymity (i.e., Child X walked from the block area to the dramatic play area. Child X said, "Can I play?" to child Y. Child Y said, "No." Teacher 2 said, "Remember our rule."). Discussion of children, families, teachers, etc. should only occur with the staff of the program or in your online classroom, nowhere else. If your course requires that you obtain artifacts (pictures, video, work samples, or access to the child's enrollment file) from the classroom, be sure you have written permission from the individuals involved to do so. Remember it is **unlawful** to post pictures/videos to YouTube, Facebook, and the Internet in general without written permission from the child's parent/guardian. Violators will be prosecuted in a court of law.

Emergency Procedures

You need to be familiar with posted emergency procedures and other evacuation policies established by your placement site. Discuss with your Cooperating Teacher what your expected role is in case of an emergency.

Working With Your Cooperating Teacher

Your Cooperating Teacher can help you make the most of your practicum experience. You want to build a good relationship which will eventually lead to a positive recommendation for employment.

Arrange to meet your Cooperating Teacher before you report to the site. During this first meeting, discuss expectations your Cooperating Teacher has for your participation in the classroom:

- Discuss the information in this handbook with your Cooperating Teacher.
- Develop an initial overview of specific observation and teaching tasks that you will be doing.
- Discuss priorities that your Cooperating Teacher feels are pertinent to your work within the classroom and school. These involve
 - tasks in the classroom,
 - specialized teaching needs, and
 - information concerning curriculum, equipment, procedure, and other school policies.

Once you have met your Cooperating Teacher and discussed the items above, you have established a working relationship. You are expected to seek and receive assistance and feedback from your Cooperating Teacher on a regular basis as you develop your teaching skills.

Arrange to meet with your Cooperating Teacher and Faculty Advisor several times during your practicum experience. During these meetings, the focal point should be a three-sided reflective discussion on your teaching practice. You should receive advice and suggestions about your activities.

Practicum I and Practicum II Experience students are never to be left alone (out of sight of a staff member) with children. This includes taking children back and forth from the playground into a classroom where no teacher is present, taking children to the bathroom, etc. If a teacher asks you to be in a situation where you would be alone with a child, inform her/him that you are not permitted

to be alone with children. This rule exists for your safety. Practicum III is the only practicum experience when you are permitted to be the sole supervisor of children.

When it is time for you to leave your practicum experience, **be sure you have cleaned up any areas you worked in**. If appropriate, say “good bye” to the children; however, always be sure the teacher is aware you are leaving. Sign out, and ensure that the exit door is securely closed as you leave. Please close all outdoor gates as you exit.

Professional Organizations

Every university student should join a professional organization for the following reasons:

- **Support from Practicing Teachers**
Professional organizations have many veteran teachers who can offer you the help you need. Also, it is nice to have a friendly ear to listen to your successes and challenges.
- **Annual Conferences**
Conferences are fun, and usually only members are allowed to attend. Veteran teachers give workshops that offer new ideas and fun projects to try in the classroom. It is valuable to network with educators from your community, other cities, and states.
- **Meetings and Newsletters**
Try to attend your organization's meetings regularly. It can be hard to do when you are swamped with papers to write and lesson plans to write, but is worth it. At these meetings, teachers have a place to discuss their concerns as well as get new ideas. New legislation and how it will affect you is often a topic of discussion. Stay alert and be aware of changes in the profession!

Suggested Professional Organizations

- **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**
NAEYC is the world’s largest early childhood organization, and its focus is on the quality of educational and developmental opportunities for children ranging from birth to eight. As student members, you can receive either NAEYC’s publication of *Young Children* or *TYC (Teaching Young Children)* for one year, reduced rates at conferences, and numerous other benefits. There are also state and local branches of NAEYC that will provide you with additional developmental opportunities and benefits. Find out more at www.naeyc.org.
- **Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)**
ACEI is a global community of educators and advocates who unite knowledge, experience, and perspectives in order to exchange information, explore innovation, and advocate for children. The mission of ACEI is to promote and support in the global community the optimal education and development of children, from birth through early adolescence, and to influence the professional growth of educators and the efforts of others who are committed to the needs of children in a changing society. For more information visit www.acei.org/.
- **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**
CEC is the leading voice for special and gifted education. Through the vision and dedication of more than 30,000 members, CEC sets the standard for high quality education for children and youth with exceptionalities. The Council ensures needs of children and youth with exceptionalities are met in educational legislation, establishes professional standards for the field, and develops initiatives to improve special education practice. CEC is known for its information, resources, and professional development for special educators. Division of Exceptional Children (DEC) is the early childhood branch. Learn more at www.cec.sped.org.

Code of Ethics

All students are expected to read, understand, and abide by the Code of Ethical Conduct for those who work with young children adopted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). All early childhood professionals are expected to demonstrate ethical practice consistent with this code. Find it at www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/ethical_conduct.

Core Values of the Code of Ethical Conduct

Standards of ethical behavior in early childhood care and education are based on commitment to the following core values that are deeply rooted in the history of the field of early childhood care and education. We have made a commitment to

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn
- Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family
- Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture,* community, and society
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)
- Respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2005). Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment: A position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Obtained 5/1/2015 from: www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/ethical_conduct

Student Privacy

"FERPA" is the acronym for the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act" of 1974. (Sometimes this is called the "Buckley Amendment.") FERPA requires that educational records be treated in a very specific way to ensure the privacy of students and their records.

Notifying students of their grades via email is a violation of FERPA. Confidentiality is not guaranteed by this means of communication. Further, the posting of grades in any public space on the Internet (using the student's name, student number, or social security number) is also prohibited. Please do not ask your instructors to send your grades via email.

Child Abuse and Neglect

If a university student suspects child maltreatment while involved in a practicum experience associated with a course requirement in the ECEMS program, he or she should report such an observation to the supervisor of the setting where this practicum experience is taking place. After informing your supervisor of the setting and instructor, follow your state's law for reporting child maltreatment. In some states you are considered a Mandated Reporter, which requires you to also report this child maltreatment to the appropriate authorities.

Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Policy

This is a general policy for reporting child abuse/neglect. Please check with your Cooperating Teacher for the specific policies that are in place for your specific setting. In accordance with most state laws, staff will report any suspected incidence of child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Social Services, Child Protection Services. After informing your supervisor of the setting, and

instructor, follow your state’s law for reporting suspected child maltreatment. If you suspect that you have witnessed possible abuse or neglect of children, the following information is vital when reporting this suspected abuse or neglect to authorities:

1. The name and address of the child you suspect is being abused or neglected.
2. The age of the child.
3. The name and address of the parent or caretaker of the child.
4. The name of the person you suspect is abusing or neglecting the child.
5. Why you suspect the child has been abused or neglected.
6. Names and ages of other additional children in the household.
7. Location where the incidents occurred.
8. Primary language of the family.
9. Family composition.
10. Nature and extent of suspected abuse or neglect.
11. Any other helpful information.

The Cooperating Teacher is usually the one responsible for making the call to Child Protection. **If the child is in immediate danger, call the Department of Social Services or call the police department immediately. Any other reports must be made within 24 hours of occurrence.**

General Signs of Child Sexual Abuse

Type of Behavioral Indicator	Ages 0-8	Ages 9 & Older
Drawings, pictures, or stories with a strong, unusual, or bizarre sexual theme	X	
Overt sexual behavior (individually and/or with peers)	X	X
Withdrawal from peer interaction	X	X
Aggressive behavior	X	
Extreme fear of being alone with men or boys	X	
Extreme fear of showers and restrooms (these are common places for sexual abuse to occur)	X	
Poor attention span or daydreaming	X	X
Poor self-concept	X	X
Aggressive behavior, poor peer relations	X	X
Reluctant or fearful about going home after school	X	
Frequent absences, low regard for the child’s school performance	X	X
Appearance of behavior often seems more mature or older than their age mates	X	X
Manipulative behavior	X	
Refusal to dress for physical education		X
Unwillingness to participate in recreational activities		X
Repeated attempts to run away from home by a child who does not have other behavioral problems		X
Drug use		X
Prostitution		X
Frequent absences from school justified by a parent only		X

Practicum Block Experiences

The ECEMS program requires three (3) practicum experiences coinciding with course work. These placements need to be in at least two (2) different settings, three (3) different age groups and three (3) different Cooperating Teachers.

Below is a chart that will provide an overview of the three practicum experiences. More detail and explanation will follow in each of the practicum sections.

ECEMS Practica Sites/Supervisors Guidelines

	Practicum I	Practicum II	Practicum III
Number of Hours Required at Site	120	120	300
Site	Childcare center, Head Start, family childcare, afterschool program, Mom's Day Out	Childcare center on or off military installation, Head Start, public school, private/religious PK-3 schools	Classroom as defined by head teacher and assistant teachers, public school, childcare, private/religious PK-3 schools
Licensed/Accredited	No	Yes, by state	Yes, licensed by state, prefer NAEYC accredited or state QRS rating at or above state mean
Class size	Minimum of 5	Minimum of 5	Infant-toddler minimum of 6; Preschool /Elementary minimum of 10
Agree to Videotaping	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cooperating Teacher education	High school degree or GED; prefer training in field	AA or CDA, prefer BS (one person on site should have BS with training in field)	BS in a related field
Coop Teacher holds valid teaching certificate	Will vary depending on age level	Will vary depending on age level	Will vary depending on age level
Coop Teacher total years teaching	1+ year	3+ years	3+ years
Coop Teacher years teaching at site	1+ year	1+ years	1+ years
Coop Teacher able to schedule time with univ. student	Yes	Yes	Yes

Guidelines for Finding Your Practicum Site

Finding a placement host takes time, and students are advised to submit their Student Profile and Placement Form (see Appendix C for the form) as soon as possible, but no less than eight weeks before the date at which they plan to commence their placement. This allows for the possibility that in some circumstances a need for further negotiation with the Site Supervisor and/or Cooperating Teacher concerning the placement project is required, and the fact that some childcare centers require a process of character screening before they can accept a student on placement. To ensure diversity in placements as required by our accreditation agencies (i.e., NCATE), university students should not return to previous placement sites or be placed with the same teachers they had in previous practicum experience placements. Past placement information is available upon request from the Practicum Coordinator.

While university students take responsibility for making contact and tentative arrangements with their preferred site, university students should be aware that for quality assurance and insurance reasons any arrangements they make must be acknowledged and confirmed by the Practicum Coordinator by letter, email, or FAX prior to the commencement of the placement.

Expectations of University Student for Practicum Site Placement

The university student

- identifies the site of desired placement following the guidelines given above;
- contacts the potential site supervisor to negotiate the possibility of a placement;
- submits **Student Profile and Placement Form at least 8 weeks** before the placement at the latest and awaits confirmation;
- arranges own travel and accommodation throughout duration of the placement;
- contacts/visits the placement site prior to the first day of placement to confirm arrangements and organize a starting time;
- is aware the placement site is taking on extra commitment in a usually busy work schedule;
- is aware that they will be under the day-to-day direction of the Site Supervisor for the duration of normal staff hours;
- will show a willingness to take on tasks provided as development opportunities. Be prepared to adjust expectations. Don't expect a childcare setting to give you responsibility for providing service before it has a chance to know you. You may start your placement in an observing role and move on to function as part of a team. Treat your placement like a job. Demonstrate responsibility, be active and seek ways that you can involve yourself in a variety of activities;
- will maintain a level of objectivity towards "politics" of the workplace and current professional issues;
- is aware that all information is confidential;
- will not comment on individuals or individual performance;
- will contact the Practicum Coordinator immediately if arrangements need to be altered because of sickness, etc.;
- will contact the Practicum Coordinator as soon as possible if they have an accident in the workplace while on placement;
- will communicate with Practicum Coordinator if there are concerns about the practicum site. Your safety and wellbeing are a priority. If a change in placement is required the first placement must be appropriately terminated by the ECEMS program before any negotiations begin for an alternative placement.
- will fulfill all organizational and assessment components of the practicum placement;

- will complete and submit their practicum report within two weeks of completing the placement; and
- will allow another adult to set limits for university student's own child in the event that child is in the classroom where the university student is practicing.

Practicum I Experience

Practicum I in the ECEMS program is an opportunity for university students to have a guided learning experience in a professional agency that provides services to children and families. It is expected that learning experiences and projects at the practicum site will provide university students with the opportunity to use and implement theories and practices learned in other ECEMS program classes. In Practicum I university students will be required to use knowledge and skills from the Block One courses. Block One Courses include Child Development – 0 to 3; Child Development – 4 to 8; Professional Development; Child Guidance and Classroom Environments; and Health, Safety, and Nutrition.

Practicum I is the first practicum experience for students enrolled in the ECEMS program. This practicum experience component requires 120 hours working in a setting with children ages birth to three or three to eight (approximately 8 hours a week for 15 weeks).

Upon completion of Practicum I, successful students will

1. have a realistic practicum experience in an early childhood education site;
2. understand the mission and purpose of the program as a resource to children and families with particular needs;
3. demonstrate an understanding of how the program helps children and families;
4. assist in delivering the service for which the program has responsibility;
5. evaluate, as objectively as possible, the student's own effectiveness in delivery of services as assigned under (4) above; and
6. clearly and concisely report one's own activities in delivering such services.

During this practicum experience the university student will have the opportunity to interview the Cooperating Teacher about beliefs and practices in an Early Childhood setting. The university student will observe guidance and classroom management strategies and begin to formulate your personal philosophies. You will follow one child during your time and be able to observe and identify different developmental domains in this child.

More detailed explanation of Practicum I will be found in the syllabus for the course.

You will be responsible for finding the site to complete the necessary hours. The site can be a childcare facility on a military installation, a childcare center in the local community, a family childcare situation, a church related setting, a YMCA setting or local recreation setting.

University students are expected to spend 120 hours working in your practicum placement site with children. Some hours may not include children (e.g., preparations prior to arrival of children and clean up after children's departure), yet they will count towards the 120 hours. Participating in full class sessions is advised (i.e., two ½ days if program is half-day program, one full day if program is full-day program.)

	Practicum I
Site	Childcare center, Head Start, family childcare, afterschool program, Mom's Day Out
Licensed/Accredited	No
Class size	Minimum of 5
Required hours	120 hours at the site
Agree to videotaping	Yes, Cooperating Teacher and guardians of the children in the classroom will need to sign a video release form.
Cooperating Teacher education	High school degree or GED; prefer training in field
Cooperating Teacher holds valid teaching certificate	Will vary depending on age level
Cooperating Teacher completed years teaching	1+ years
Cooperating Teacher completed years at Site	1+ years
Cooperating Teacher must be able to schedule time to work with univ. student	Yes

Practicum II Experience

Practicum II in the ECEMS program is an opportunity for the university student to have a guided learning experience in a professional agency that provides services to children and families. It is expected that learning experiences and projects at the practicum site will provide university students with the opportunity to use and implement theories and practices learned in other ECEMS program classes.

Prerequisites for Practicum II:

University students must have successfully completed Practicum I and all Block Two courses. Practicum II courses can be taken concurrently with Block 3 courses

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Each objective for this course represents an objective or standard of one of the following agencies that approves and/or evaluates teachers and their educational programs. NAEYC Standards evaluated: 3a, 3b, 3c, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5b, 5c, 6d, 7a, 7b.

Upon completion of Practicum II, successful student will be able to

- communicate with children in a way that demonstrates respect for the child(ren), supports the child(ren)'s development or as a way to better understand a child's knowledge and skill;
- communicate respect for a diverse group of children's/families culture and language;
- use a variety of formal and authentic assessments for observing, documenting, and summarizing the skill and development of a child;
- identify and use appropriate strategies for maintaining confidentiality regarding children's abilities, families, interests, behaviors, etc.;
- communicate knowledge and demonstrate skills for establishing meaningful routines in ECE classrooms;
- effectively use developmentally appropriate guidance strategies with children that support children's social and emotional development and model appropriate behavior in the classroom;
- critically reflect on classroom practice and make adaptations in their practice based on self-reflection, and supervisor feedback;
- communicate familiarity with various content areas important for ECE and demonstrate skills for using materials to support children's development across content areas; and
- develop, implement, and evaluate developmentally appropriate curriculum for young children based on theory and best practice in the field of ECE.

The university student will observe planning strategies used by the Cooperating Teacher and begin to formulate personal strategies. The university student will follow one child during the practicum and be able to observe and identify different developmental domains in this child.

More detailed explanation of Practicum II will be found in the syllabus for the course.

You will be responsible for finding the site to complete the necessary hours. University students are expected to spend 120 hours working in your practicum placement site with children. Some hours may not include children (e.g., preparations prior to arrival of children and clean up after children's departure), yet they will count towards the 120 hours. Participating in full class sessions is advised (i.e., two ½ days if program is half-day program, one full day if program is full-day program.)

	Practicum II
Site	Childcare center on or off military installation, Head Start, public school, private/religious PK-3 schools
Licensed/Accredited	Yes, by state
Class size	Minimum of 5
Required hours	120 hours at the site
Agree to videotaping	Yes, Cooperating Teacher and guardians of the children in the classroom will need to sign a video release form.
Cooperating Teacher education	Associate of Arts (AA) or Child Development Associate (CDA), Prefer bachelor's degree (one person on site should have bachelor's with training in field of early childhood)
Cooperating Teacher Holds valid teaching certificate	Will vary depending on age level
Cooperating Teacher completed years teaching	3+ years
Cooperating Teacher completed years at site	1+ years
Cooperating Teacher must be able to schedule time to work with univ. student	Yes

Practicum III Experience

Practicum III (6 credit hours) is a full-day experience, approximately 300 hours, designed to allow the student to demonstrate practical application of developmentally appropriate early childhood teaching techniques and skills, actual teaching experience, and developmental feedback. Practicum students will be involved in observation and evaluation of classroom experiences, environmental design, classroom management, and parent communication.

University students should perform a variety of instructional roles including, at a minimum, the independent/lead teaching of a two-week subject unit and assume major control of the learning situation and supervision/direction over other classroom staff. The supervising instructor should approve all lessons and assessment instruments developed by the practicum student.

Prerequisites for Practicum III:

University students must have successfully completed all courses in Block One, Block Two, and Block Three with a “C” or better before enrolling in this course.

Expected Learning Outcomes

It is the goal of Practicum III to insure students meet the following objectives:

- Demonstrate understanding of concepts and methods of inquiry of subject matter in assigned grade level through completion of written lesson plans and activities that make learning meaningful for students.
- Demonstrate understanding of how students learn and develop through written lesson plans learning opportunities that support the intellectual, social, physical, and emotional development in assigned classroom.
- Demonstrate understanding of students’ various approaches to learning through written plans/activities of learning opportunities that are adapted to individual differences of learners.
- Demonstrate understanding of the value of an integrated curriculum through the creation of written plans/activities of various strategies that encourage students’ development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
- Demonstrate understanding of best practices in engaging children’s learning and guiding behavior through creation of a learning environment that encourages development of the whole child in assigned classroom.
- Demonstrate understanding of effective communication techniques through written plans/activities of learning opportunities.
- Plan instruction based upon curriculum goals, knowledge of teaching/learning process, subject matter, students’ abilities and differences, and the community, and adapt instruction based upon assessment and reflection.
- Demonstrate understanding of a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate teaching/learning process and continuous development of the learner through written plans/activities.
- Demonstrate ability to evaluate effects of choices on others (students, parents, and professionals) and modify those actions when needed.
- Demonstrate ability to foster positive interaction with school colleagues, parents/families, and others to actively engage them in support of students’ learning and well-being.
- Demonstrate understanding of the importance of assisting students with career awareness through the written plans/ activities that include career concepts in the curriculum.

- Demonstrate commitment to the process of continuous life-long learning, concept of making learning engaging, and the willingness to change to support student learning and development.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the legal aspects of teaching and the responsibilities of the teacher.
Demonstrate an understanding of the needs of the diverse learners that make up the class including but not limited to children with special needs, English as a Second Language learner, and children who might be identified as “at risk.”

More detailed explanation of Practicum III will be found in the syllabus for the course.

You will be responsible for finding the site to complete the necessary hours. University students are expected to spend approximately 300 hours, full-days, working in your practicum placement site with children. Some hours may not include children (e.g., preparations prior to arrival of children and clean up after children’s departure), yet they will count towards the 300 hours. Participating in full class sessions is advised (i.e., two ½ days if program is half-day program, full days if program is full-day program.)

	Practicum III
Site	Classroom as defined by head teacher and assistant teachers, public school, childcare, private/religious PK-3 schools
Licensed/Accredited	Yes, licensed by state; prefer NAEYC accredited or state QRS rating at or above state mean
Class size	Infant-toddler minimum of 6 Preschool /Elementary minimum of 10
Agree to videotaping	Yes, Cooperating Teacher and guardians of the children in the classroom will need to sign a video release form.
Cooperating Teacher education	Bachelor’s degree in a related field
Cooperating Teacher holds valid teaching certificate	Will vary depending on age level
Cooperating Teacher completed years of teaching	3+ years
Cooperating Teacher completed years at site	1+ years
Cooperating Teacher Must be Able to schedule time to work with univ. student	Yes

University Information

Contact your home university Campus Coordinator for specific information about your home institution.

Appendix A

STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM GREAT PLAINS INTERACTIVE DISTANCE EDUCATION ALLIANCE (GREAT PLAINS IDEA)

The Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (Great Plains IDEA) sponsors multi-institution, online degree and certificate programs (gpidea.org). Students are provided with high quality instruction by faculty from multiple Great Plains IDEA partner universities. After admission to the partner institution of their choice, students enroll in courses sponsored by Great Plains IDEA directly through their home institution. Credits earned are counted at the home institution as regular, not transfer, credits.

Student Information Exchange. To register a student in a class, the home university enters student information into a secure Great Plains IDEA database. The information includes the student's home institution, student identification number, name, address, phone number, email address, date of birth, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, military status, academic history and Great Plains IDEA academic records. Teaching institutions access this information for course enrollment and grade reporting. A limited number of member university employees are granted access to the database on a need-to-know basis. Great Plains IDEA does not share student information with outside parties.

Common Price. Great Plains IDEA courses are offered at a Common Price per credit hour. The Great Plains IDEA Financial Officers Functional Team reviews the Common Price annually and makes a recommendation to the Great Plains IDEA Cabinet for approval. The Common Price includes regular tuition and any course, program, facilities or student services fees as well as distance delivery costs. This does not include additional administrative fees incurred by the student, for example, application fees, late enrollment or late payment fees. The Common Price may be higher or lower than regular tuition at the home institution.

Degree Titles. The degree or certificate title printed on the diploma and/or the transcript is determined by each institution and may be different than the Great Plains IDEA title for the academic program. Students should consult their home institution for the title as it will appear on the diploma or certificate.

Grade Appeals. Grade appeals for all courses will be handled by the teaching institution. Students will not have access to the grade appeal process at their home institution unless it is also the teaching institution for the relevant course.

Academic Integrity. Academic dishonesty undermines the educational experience offered through Great Plains IDEA, lowers morale by engendering a skeptical attitude about the quality of education and negatively affects the relationship between students and instructors. Students are expected to understand and abide by the academic integrity policy found in the Great Plains IDEA policy and procedure manual. Teaching faculty members have the prerogative for determining the penalty for academic misconduct in their classes. The procedure for determining the penalty and the process of appeal for the academic penalty will follow the policies and procedures of the teaching institution. The student's home institution may administer remedial action and institutional sanctions using its policies and procedures. Appeal of these additional sanctions will be adjudicated at the home institution.

- I understand _____ (*home university name*) will disclose my personal information in the manner outlined above and hereby consent to said release/use of education records under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- I understand the purpose of sharing student-specific information among my home and teaching universities.
- I understand the Common Price may be higher or lower than the standard tuition at my home institution.
- I agree to substitute the grade appeal process at the teaching institution for my home institution's process.
- I have read and understand the academic integrity policy of Great Plains IDEA and I agree to abide by this policy.

(Electronic Signature)

(Date mo/dd/yy)

(Print Last Name)

(Print MI)

(Print First Name)

Revised 11-15-2005; Approved Great Plains IDEA Graduate Deans, 02-23-06; Approved Great Plains IDEA Board of Directors 03-02-06; Revised 10-14-11, 3-21-2013.

Appendix B

NAEYC Standards and Criteria

Ensuring quality of children's daily experiences in early childhood programs and promoting positive child outcomes is the goal of the 10 NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria.

The NAEYC program standards and accreditation criteria were updated in 2006 to include (1) explicit program standards for early childhood programs serving children birth through kindergarten and (2) making the standards more evidence-based and aligned with the profession's knowledge of best practice.

There are ten program standards, with specific criteria attached to each, which programs must meet in order to achieve NAEYC Accreditation. The framework of the standards and criteria focus on best practices in the field and the benefits to stakeholders in early childhood education. There are four groups of early childhood education stakeholders: children, teachers, family and community partners, and the program administration.

Each of the ten standards falls under a category according to the early childhood education stakeholder. As the breakdown below illustrates, the majority of the standards focus on children—the most important stakeholders. The remainder of the ten standards focus on other stakeholders and the programmatic structure they build to support quality.

Children

Standards under this group focus on the advancement of children's learning and development.

- Standard 1: Relationships
- Standard 2: Curriculum
- Standard 3: Teaching
- Standard 4: Assessment of Child Progress
- Standard 5: Health

Teachers

The focus for this standard is on the qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment of a program's teaching staff.

- Standard 6: Teachers

Family and Community Partners

The two standards focus on relevant partnerships the program establishes with both families and the community.

- Standard 7: Families
- Standard 8: Community Relationships

Program Administration

The final two standards focus on the program's physical environment and the leadership and management provided by the program administration.

- Standard 9: Physical Environment
- Standard 10: Leadership and Management

NAEYC Mission and Goals

NAEYC Mission Statement

NAEYC's mission is to serve and act on behalf of the needs, rights, and well-being of all young children with primary focus on the provision of educational and developmental services and resources (NAEYC Bylaws, Article I., Section 1.1).

Goals

NAEYC expresses its mission in terms of three broad goals:

1. Improving professional practice and working conditions in early childhood education.
2. Supporting early childhood programs by working to achieve a high-quality system of early childhood education.
3. Building a high-performing, inclusive organization of groups and individuals who are committed to promoting excellence in early childhood education for all young children.

Vision Statement

NAEYC's efforts are designed to achieve these ends:

1. All children have access to a safe and accessible, high quality early childhood education that includes a developmentally appropriate curriculum; knowledgeable and well-trained program staff and educators; and comprehensive services that support their health, nutrition, and social well-being, in an environment that respects and supports diversity.
2. All early childhood professionals are supported as professionals with a career ladder, ongoing professional development opportunities, and compensation that attracts and retains high quality educators.
3. All families have access to early childhood education programs that are affordable and of high quality and actively participate in their children's education as respected reciprocal partners.
4. All communities, states, and the nation work together to ensure accountable systems of high-quality early childhood education for all children.

Strategic Objectives

NAEYC achieves its goals by

1. providing professional development opportunities and resources for those who work for and with young children;
2. convening individuals and groups with diverse perspectives to generate new knowledge and understanding of issues affecting the education and development of young children and their families;
3. setting and publicizing standards that promote excellence in early childhood education and early childhood professional preparation;
4. implementing systems to recognize early childhood education programs and early childhood professional preparation programs that meet NAEYC standards and guidelines;
5. building public understanding and support for activities and services that promote the healthy development and learning of all young children and their families;
6. advocating for public policies-and funding-to support a comprehensive system of high-quality early childhood education for all young children and families; and
7. fostering the development of a network of high-performing, inclusive organizations that share the goal of promoting excellence in early childhood education for all young children.

Statement of Philosophy and Values

Accomplishing NAEYC's mission is dependent on

- building the commitment, loyalty, and enthusiasm of thousands of people by providing opportunities for participation, contribution, and building consensus on critical issues;
- valuing and respecting individuals with diverse viewpoints and perspectives who share a commitment to the education and development of young children;
- designing programs and services that support individual and collective efforts to improve all early childhood programs regardless of sponsorship, funding, or structure;
- encouraging and supporting a strong network of AEYC Affiliates that provide leadership and professional growth opportunities at the community and state levels;
- supporting the development of individuals' professional competence and attitudes primarily through education, persuasion, and modeling; and
- building and maintaining a strong organizational structure (governance, communication, financial base, headquarters staff and facility) to provide leadership, coordination, and services.

NAEYC seeks to become a more highly functioning organization that exemplifies its mission and vision and is enriched by and continually grows from the ongoing institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion as a core value in its work throughout the Association.

Appendix C Student Profile and Placement Form

Please complete this form. If any changes occur in this information, please notify the Placement Coordinator immediately.

Name	
Phone Number	
Cell Number	
Email Address	
Home University	

Please indicate where you would be interested in completing your practicum experiences and at what level. Remember this not certain nor guaranteed at this time. Also remember you must have diverse settings for your practicum experiences. The ECEMS requires three (3) practicum experiences coinciding with course work. These placements need to be in at least two (2) different settings, three (3) different age groups and three (3) different Cooperating Teachers.

Practicum I

City	State	Country	Childcare setting/School if you know	Level (0-3), (3-5), (4-8)

Practicum II

City	State	Country	Childcare setting/School if you know	Level (0-3), (3-5), (4-8)

Practicum III

City	State	Country	Childcare setting/School if you know	Level (0-3), (3-5), (4-8)