

Education Department Experiential Requirement

All students must complete an experiential requirement to promote practice-based engagement with the field (note: this does not apply to students who remain under the old Concentration requirements). Students satisfy this requirement by engaging in a practice-based experience and reflecting on that experience by connecting it to their academic learning in the concentration.

What types of “experiences” count?

Students must engage in some substantial way with the world of education outside of Brown. This engagement could involve a volunteer experience in a school, an internship in a state education agency or school district, a summer teaching experience, volunteer work with adult education (e.g., Petey Greene), or any substantial experience in the field of education, writ large, beyond the classroom. The experience can occur during the school year or the summer, and can occur locally (e.g., in Providence) or anywhere in the world. Note that students may satisfy this requirement by taking a Community-Based Learning and Research course (courses with the CBLR designation) in the Department, which by nature include such engagement with the broader community.

What do I need to do to fulfil the requirement?

Students can satisfy this requirement in one of these ways:

- a) By completing an existing Community-Based Learning and Research (CBLR) course in the Department.
- b) By writing a paper reflecting on their experience through the lens of their coursework in the Department.
- c) By completing the Experiential Component Based (ECB) Capstone project in EDUC 1900 (Senior Seminar)
- d) By completing the reflection in an independent study-like course “Reflecting on Fieldwork.”

Please note that CBLR courses in other departments do not in themselves fulfill the requirement, but students can still reflect on one of those courses or experiences (e.g., tutoring ELL students through a POBS course or working with youth in a museum through a Public Humanities course) in a reflection paper or in an independent study that continues that experience practically and/or academically.

Students should discuss these options with their advisor. They should explain their plan to fulfill the requirement in their ASK declaration. Once the requirement has been satisfied, students should fill out the Experiential Requirement Completion Form, have their advisor sign it and upload it to ASK. *Note: this requirement must be completed before the start of the Spring semester of senior year.

Here, we describe more detailed standards for two of the options.

Reflection Paper (Option B)

Students should write a 5-7 page paper that reflects on their experience and explicitly connects their experience to their coursework. Students should (a) describe their experience and their role; (b) discuss why the experience was meaningful; and (c) analyze/reflect on the experience through the lens of their coursework. The goal is to analyze the experience through an academic lens. The connection to coursework can take many forms. The student can (a) use a single reading from a single class; (b) use broader themes/theories/readings from a single class; or (c) use themes/theories/readings from several different classes.

This paper is **independent of coursework** (i.e., not for an assignment that counts for a class) and is not credit bearing (although students may do it as an additional assignment associated with a class they are taking). The student's academic advisor will read the paper and confirm that it has been completed satisfactorily.

Reflecting on Fieldwork (Option D)

Students may enroll in an independent study-like course called Reflecting on Fieldwork. This course allows students to engage more deeply in reflecting on their experiential work. It is akin to an independent study – students will develop the course plan and readings, find an advisor, and work independently (with the advisor's guidance) throughout the year. This course will provide students the opportunity to structure a rigorous academic plan of study around the key themes/theories/readings that will enable them to interpret and analyze their experiential work. The syllabus should include general readings on praxis and core readings related directly to the experience. Assignments should include a paper to fulfill the reflection, more academic reading reflections, and a substantial final research project. The reflection paper would be assessed by the student's independent study advisor.