

Overview of SPU's Teacher Ed Internship Placement Process: FAQs

When does the placement process start?

The exact timeline depends on your program. Undergraduate and AMAT/AMTMS/ARC students will begin submitting placement paperwork in the spring prior to the autumn start. MAT students will submit paperwork in October of their second year, in advance of a February internship start date.

What process does SPU use for collecting all of my information?

We will send you a detailed electronic form that allows you to submit all of your information about geographic location, transportation, preferences, potential mentors, etc.

Is the internship application form all you need me to do to get started?

We will also request that you submit an updated resume that features your experience working in schools or with children. These are attached to your placement request and principals/teachers use them to evaluate you as a candidate. See the Canvas site for tips on how to draft and format an internship resume. And don't forget to proofread!

I have a potential school and/or mentor in mind for my internship. Will that be considered?

The placement form will give you the opportunity to request potential mentors, and if the mentor meets qualifications (a valid WA teaching certificate, 3+ years of professional teaching experience, and a classroom environment that meets requirements for your endorsement area), we will be happy to follow up with the district or school with an official placement request email.

I am an AMAT student and hope to use my para or conditional certificated job for my internship. How will that work?

You will also note this in the electronic placement form. When we get closer to the internship start date for your program, we can individually assess what information we need to collect to determine whether or not your position will work. Some districts will require you to take a short leave of absence during your "full time" student teaching (which will be covered in detail as you prepare for internship). You can start asking now about what your district policies are, so that you have all of the information.

If you are an ARC candidate, you or someone from your school should already have provided evidence of support from your building administrator before you complete your internship application with the placement team. However, we will still need to send an official placement request to your district or school and receive formal approval before the placement is officially confirmed.

Am I allowed to contact schools or districts that I'm interested in, to make arrangements for potential mentors?

Unless you have an established relationship with a teacher/administrator at a school (e.g., you have subbed there or have been working there as a paraeducator), please refrain from reaching out directly to a district, principal, or teacher about interning with them. While this is the practice for arranging your "field experiences" in the first year of the MAT program, this is not the process for official student teaching internships. Districts require us to follow their protocols for making placements, and in most instances this means a formal placement request must be

received directly from the university to their offices; relationships may be strained if districts believe we are bypassing their systems. Again, we encourage you to indicate on your placement form if you know of a mentor teacher you are interested in working with or if you have spoken to administrator at a school where you have a connection, but leave the rest to us.

What information does a placement request include?

SPU's placement coordinator collects the data in your internship application form and uses it to submit a placement request on your behalf to a district or school (Seattle Public Schools allow us to reach out to schools directly; otherwise our process begins at the district level). This email will include information about what kind of classroom you need, your internship dates and requirements, and mentor guidelines, and will include an attached copy of your resume and our program handbook for mentor teachers. The district or school will then look for teachers who are available for and interested in hosting a teacher candidate. If there is no availability at that district/school, the placement team will update you with that information and send out another placement request. It is important to note that in most instances the placement office can only reach out to one district or school at a time.

How soon will I know what my placement is?

This varies a great deal and is entirely dependent upon many factors, such as careful and timely submission of paperwork, responsiveness of the districts, and demand for the endorsement area. Most AMAT/AMTMS/ARCSE and UG students will know their Autumn placements by mid-June, and most MAT students will have placements confirmed in December/early January. The placement coordinator will keep you updated as progress is made, but try not to get too anxious if the process takes a while—it can take time to hear back from the schools and districts, and isn't unusual for us to reach out to multiple districts/schools before finding a good fit. During each cycle there are placements that take right up to the internship start date (and even sometimes a little beyond – but don't worry, we will make sure no one is in danger of not meeting their requirements!) before a placement is confirmed. It isn't fun to wait, but rest assured that our team will be working as hard as we can on your behalf.

Will I have the opportunity to meet my potential mentor before the placement is official?

Yes, in almost every placement, the mentor wants to meet with you for a "matching interview" to make sure the placement is a good fit. SPU's placement coordinator will let you know when it is time to schedule a matching interview, and we will provide resources to help prepare you for this experience. Some districts will send out their own email introducing the candidate/prospective mentor and initiating an interview. If you notice the placement coordinator is not copied on these emails, please follow up with them and also let them know the interview date.

What happens after the matching interview? You're not finished quite yet! Follow up with the placement coordinator by email to let them know how the meeting was. If you feel like it's a match they will contact the district or school, and if everyone is on board the placement will be confirmed and the placement coordinator will discuss next steps.

I have childcare considerations and can't wait until the last minute for my placement.

There are many students with various needs that we make every effort to accommodate. We cannot guarantee a placement close to your residence, or with a specific bell schedule, for

example. We want you to be successful and we do consider special requests when making placements, however, the more open you can be, the more options you will have.

Can I intern at the school where my child is enrolled, or where my spouse teaches? Our policy is not to place candidates at schools where they have family members. We do have a petition form that candidates can access if they feel their circumstances merit special consideration. For more information, contact the placement coordinator.

I think I want to change my endorsement area from what I included on my placement application. What should I do?

Please email SPU's certification officer if you are considering switching endorsements, and copy the placement coordinator so your internship files are updated.

Aside from my mentor teacher, who works with me from SPU to evaluate my teaching?

Every candidate works with an SPU Field Supervisor during your internship. This is an experienced educator who works as a bridge between course and field (internship) work and who will coach, support and evaluate you. Supervisors are not assigned until all placements are confirmed for each program. They will contact you directly prior to the start of your internship to introduce themselves and arrange an initial meeting.