Field Experience & fieldPortfolio

Library Science
Middle Tennessee State University

College of Education
Womack Educational Leadership Department
Middle Tennessee State University does not discriminate against students, employees, or applicants for admission or employment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age, status as a protected veteran, genetic information, or any other legally protected class with respect to all employment, programs, and activities sponsored by MTSU. The Assistant to the President for Institutional Equity and Compliance has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies and can be reached at:

Cope Administration Building 116
1301 East Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37132
Marian.Wilson@mtsu.edu; or 615-898-2185.

The MTSU policy on non-discrimination can be found at www.mtsu.edu/titleix.
FIELD EXPERIENCE

Download the Field Experience Handbook and print the appropriate field experience application please—each of your placements requires an application. All students must submit a field experience application before they start the experience (you should be able to print only the field experience pages).

You may start the field experience up 4 weeks in advance of the actual semester. Look further down for the requirements and the Memo of Understanding. To find the assignments, see the course from the previous semester by logging into D2L with the username prospective and the password student. SAMPLE COURSE I is the previous semester’s field experience course.

The field experience for the degree and/or the endorsement requires 6 credits of LIBS 6550—each field experience covers 100 clock hours. The field experience is variable credit; 3-6 credit hours. This way, for those of you with the time available, you may complete either one field experience in two different semesters OR you may complete both field experiences in one semester. It is your choice based on your professional, personal, and academic schedule. Field experiences are culminating experiences that bring together all you have learned in your classes. Ideally, they should be taken at the end of your program. Note: if you are seeking licensure, you must complete the sponsored (60 hours/FE) portion of your field experiences only in school libraries.

Some institutions (such as Nashville Public Library) have their own application process. You must gain approval from them as well as MTSU.

Please submit a copy of your application along with the institution’s application if applicable. It is your responsibility to submit your application(s) to the institutions and follow their directives if, when, and where necessary. Field sites should be arranged by the student. Contact the librarian at the chosen site to inquire about placement. The DIRECTOR / PRINCIPAL at the site must agree to your placement.

The instructor takes this charge from these oversight entities seriously. Please do not try to ‘slide by’ or be minimally committed to the experience. Any hint that you are doing so will be interpreted as evidence that you are not committed to this profession and should not continue in the program.

The field experience D2L course website lays out all requirements at the beginning of the semester. It is your responsibility to fulfill all the requirements by completing each of the assignments. Your best work is expected. Do not forget that a field experience also might lead to an invaluable professional reference you may use once when you are engaged in your professional job search.

The placement site is approved unless one of the faculty members contact you. Contact your instructor for guidance as you get started.
We trust you to make the time worked worthwhile. We warn you that just logging hours to ‘get your card punched’ is not in your long-term interests. When you interview or get a library job, a poor field experience will be apparent. You may be the only librarian! What will you do if you did not learn the procedures, policies, skills, dispositions or real librarian life? You could be terminated from your job!

The field experience is a required professional experience for the MTSU M.L.S. degree. If you feel that you cannot fulfill the requirements of the field experience, you should not enroll in the library science program.

Keep track of all hours. When the D2L course site opens, you must submit the Days-worked Calendar. Sponsored and Observation hours require an email from the library to the university instructor stating the days and hours worked. The email may be sent at the end of the experience.

The 60+ hours should be worked in at least 3-hour sessions. You are suggested to not work for less than 3 hours at a time.

The observations can be in as little as 1/2-hour sessions. Visit at least 3 different libraries (not including the primary site) and should all be different types of libraries.

If you are the librarian of record at a library, you can use that library for ONE field experience. It can be the primary library for the 60 hours. Those hours must be offset.
The COMPLETE application includes:

- Completed and signed Field Experience Application including required signatures. The second application only needs the application pages.
- Copy of teacher license, if seeking endorsement as a school librarian.

The application packet must be completed and submitted by:

- April 15 for summer field experiences (start in mid-May-Aug)
- August 15 for fall field experiences (start when fall semester starts)
- January 5 for spring field experiences (start when spring semester starts)

Background checks may be required by the library (not required by MTSU)

Please send all application materials to:

Dr. Frank Lambert  
Womack Educational Leadership Department  
Master of Library Science Program  
Middle Tennessee State University  
1301 E. Main Street  
P.O. Box 91  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132  
***OR***  
(preferred) scan and email to:  
Frank.Lambert@mtsu.edu

Please make sure that you share assignments with the sponsor so that s/he will know what is expected of you and him/her. The sponsor letter is what you give them when you are arranging the field experience. The assignment materials are in the course website. Your instructor may be able to provide a syllabus before the class starts.

Nashville Public Library and Ingram have additional requirements for their field experiences (called internships). Please inquire directly with these two entities about these requirements, not with the MLS Program.
If you are the 'librarian of record' at your field experience site, then the hours you work in your own library can be used as field experience hours only if those are unpaid hours. You may add hours to your day or add weekend work that will cover the hours you count for field experience. In other words, you must 'exchange' hours spent in field experience for paid hours. The arrangement can be discussed with your employer and a log of exchanged hours must be kept and signed by the administration in your library. University policy does not allow paid field experience hours. Exchanged hours may be book fairs, program planning, weekend activities, lunch duty, meetings that are outside of work hours, etc.

**SCHOOL LICENSURE ONLY: COLLABORATIVE TEACHING**

Teaching in a **collaborative** environment is an essential skill. Course standards emphasize the teaching component of school librarianship. The sponsoring librarian must understand this and guarantee opportunities to teach library skills in collaboration with a teacher. Failure to teach the required lessons will result in an unsuccessful field experience. Do not engage in a field experience that has no such opportunity.

The sponsor does not complete the assignment! The School Evaluation is completed by you through observation, investigation, and research. Only ask question if these three techniques come up empty.
MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING

- These hours are within one month in advance of the semester time frame (verified by the librarians or principal).
- I will not have access to an instructor since Instructors work only during the semester for which they are hired.
- Observations at libraries outside of the sponsoring library must be completed within the ______ of the semester (with 4 weeks in advance + the first 4 weeks, you have 8 weeks to complete the observations). In other words, those hours are normally completed BEFORE I start work at the sponsoring library. I will make sure to complete at least 7 hours of observation in this pre-semester time frame.
- I will not have access to the class D2L website until the semester of enrollment begins.
- The fieldPortfolio due date will depend upon when I finish my 100 clock hours; therefore, I might enter the semester with my fieldPortfolio due almost immediately.
- The option to work in advance of the semester is a concession given so that I can tailor the field experience to meet my needs. If I decide to work hours in advance, I understand and accept the consequences of these conditions.

________________________________________   ________________
Student Signature                                  Date

________________________________________   ________________
Library Science Program Director
(signed when received and added to application file)

________________________________________
LIBRARY’S NAME

________________________________________
LIBRARY’S ADDRESS
Field Experiences

Master of Library Science Program

Middle Tennessee State University
Womack Educational Leadership Department
P.O. Box 91
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132

Educators as Reflective Decision Makers
## Applicant Information

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## Course Information

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## Sponsor Information

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I have read and agree to the guidelines for the Field Experience courses (LIBS 6550). I agree to contact Dr. Frank Lambert if I have any questions or concerns.

_________________________________________        ______________________________________
Student Signature                                      Date

_________________________________________        ______________________________________
Supervising Librarian at 60-hour host library            Date

**REFERENCES FOR HOST LIBRARY TO CONTACT**

**REFERENCE #1 PRINCIPAL OR EMPLOYER**

_________________________________________        ______________________________________
Name                                      Phone

_________________________________________
Email

**REFERENCE #2 CO-WORKER**

_________________________________________        ______________________________________
Name                                      Phone

_________________________________________
Email

**IF YOU MAIL THIS PACKET, DO NOT USE ANY MAILING PROCEDURE THAT REQUIRES A SIGNATURE FROM THE RECIPIENT. THE PACKET WILL BE DELAYED IN GETTING TO DR. LAMBERT.**

Womack Educational Leadership Department, PO Box 91 Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132
Dear Colleague,

Your generous agreement to sponsor an MTSU Master of Library Science (MLS) student in your library is appreciated very much. This is an important learning experience for the student that will help initiate them in the wonderful profession that we practice. The field experience is an opportunity to participate in the day-to-day life of the profession. Please help this student to become the high-quality professional needed in the modern library information center. The student must value the school and local community and recognize the worth of collaboration, collegiality, and service to the school stakeholders.

The MTSU program is grounded in the ALA Competencies for Librarians, Empowering Learners, and Standards for the 21st Century Learner. As you may know, the program is delivered 100% online. Students from all over the state are enrolled in the program. Guided discussions, collaborative projects, interviews with librarians, and observations in libraries connect students to each other, to the instructors, and to practicing librarians. We work diligently to teach the students both theory and practical applications. In these days of high-stakes accountability, librarians must have a sound grasp of the “why” along with the “how” of library practice and librarianship. The field experience is integrated into the library science program at MTSU. We rely upon the field experience to teach the daily routines and the depth of thinking and analysis required by librarianship. Here are examples of the relationship between the coursework and the field experience.

- The cataloging class teaches the foundation of creating a basic cataloging record (ISBD, AACR2, MaRC, LCSH, and RDA) in a MaRC record format. In your library, they can use a specific automated system that handles circulation, catalog record input, and reporting.

- Lesson plans or library programming plans are created in several classes. In your library, students should implement programs/lessons, practice collaboration, practice management of user behaviors, and assess the success of their programs/lessons.

- Students have explored 75-100 pieces of literature for children and young adults. In your library, they can practice Reader’s Advisory, reading aloud, selection, and evaluation of this literature.

- Students have examined current library policies and written policies based on case studies. In your library, they will see the application of policies.

- Students have interviewed various stakeholders. In your library, they can see how the groups fit together to create a library and its services.

- The field experience is planned as a time of application of skills, knowledge, and dispositions learned in coursework.

The student placed with you must complete many requirements as part of a portfolio assignment. There are additional assignments as well. These are some of the activities that students should experience while under your supervision:
1. Attendance at various stakeholder meetings and discussions with users.

2. Preparation of programming. In a school library, the MTSU MLS student teaches lessons in order to integrate information literacy skills into a curriculum area. Collaboration should be present.

3. Instruction and practice in the use of specialty technology that your library may use—MediaCast, SharePoint, Web site maintenance, etc.

4. Performance of and notes on processing routines. This is crucial since the students have very little time to practice processing functions during the library science program. However, a few hours of this are sufficient.

5. Cataloging with an integrated library system such as Alexandria or Follett. Since school systems across the state use many different ILS products, our program does not teach the use of a specific ILS. Students are taught to do original cataloguing so that they understand the foundation of good catalog records. As a result, the MLS Program relies upon the field experience sponsor to provide guidance in use of a specific ILS and its associated modules.

6. Collection management—book repair, inventory, shelf management, periodical management, and other activities that you complete during the course of a year.

7. Planning and executing special events such as book fairs, maker fairs, author events, etc.

8. Budget planning—share how you receive and allocate your budget.

9. How interactions with boards, governmental bodies, friends’ groups, parent groups affect the library.

The activities listed above will expose students to the wide range of experiences that library professionals encounter in the workplace. You may assign the student to any activities with which you need assistance or to activities that you think are valuable to their training. There may be activities not covered in the manual; you have the discretion to add these to the student’s field practice experience.

Repetitive project type activities are discouraged since they are focused often too narrowly to provide the genuine learning that is the goal of the field experience. If you have a project to be completed and would like to assign the student to it, please limit it to only a portion of the field practice experience time frame. You also will have to ensure that opportunities are provided to fulfill the required elements. The best experience is hands-on. Please let the student participate and fulfill duties as much as possible. Discuss the “why” of decision making as you go through the day. The student should be a librarian while they are in the library with you. Because the student has so much to learn from you, it is necessary that professional librarians are present when they are working with your library.

The student has requirements for a Portfolio. There is some factual information that will be needed by the student. Your time and help will be needed in compiling this information.
THE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENTS ARE NEEDED:

FOR STUDENT (POST IN DROPBOX):

- **FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**: (instructions provided in D2L)
- **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT**: (instructions provided in D2L)

SPONSORING LIBRARIAN
(E-MAIL TO THE UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENT)

- **FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**: A mid-practice summary of the student’s performance. Please eMail this to the university instructor. The student will provide the forms.
- **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT**: Assessed at the end of the field practice experience. The student will provide the forms.
- **EVALUATION OF LESSONS (School Library students) OR PROGRAM (Generalists students)**

These must be emailed to the course’s instructor of record for the respective semester. Please send the evaluations as quickly as possible since a grade cannot be assigned until they are received.

You may, of course, supervise and direct the student at any time during the placement. I am available for candid communication at all times during the placement. If you have any immediate concerns during the field practice experience, call me without hesitation.

Thank you so much for your contribution to the education of future librarians!

Sincerely,

Frank Lambert, Ph.D.