Fieldwork Guide for School Media Students

New York State certification requires school media students to complete 100 hours of on-site fieldwork in elementary (50 hours) and secondary (50 hours) schools prior to their practicum experiences. These are non-credit experiences monitored by the Fieldwork Coordinator and supervised on-site with a certified library media specialist. These certification requirements are for any school media student, even if you do not live in New York, as they are part of our accredited program requirements.

You must have completed at least six credits within the School Media Program before you can begin your fieldwork.

Students can complete one or both of their 50-hour fieldwork requirements in any single quarter. It is expected that fieldwork experiences for each level (elementary, secondary) will be completed in the quarter in which they are initiated, but we can be somewhat flexible. The Fieldwork Coordinator must approve any exceptions.

Fifty hours of fieldwork must be completed in an elementary school and fifty hours in a secondary school. Middle school fieldwork may be substituted for either of these as long as the focus of the project is on either the elementary (grades 6 and below) or secondary level (grades 7 and above). For example, a student may have completed 40 hours of fieldwork in an elementary school and a fifth grade fieldwork project for 10 hours in a middle school.

A minimum of 15 of the 100 clock hours of field experience must include a focus on understanding the needs of students with different needs.

Important Contact Information

Blythe Bennett
Program Manager Library and Information Science/School Media Program (and current Fieldwork Coordinator)
School of Information Studies, Syracuse University
Email: babennet@syr.edu
Phone: (315) 443-5445

Develop Your Fieldwork Project

Students will coordinate fieldwork placement and fieldwork projects with guidance from the Fieldwork Coordinator and the site supervisor. The following are guidelines for selecting projects:

- Students are advised to complete 1 to 3 projects during one 50-hour fieldwork experience. This is dependent upon: (1) how many competencies one hopes to address during the fieldwork experience; and (2) the extent or number of hours required for completion of chosen projects.

- Fieldwork projects should be selected that help to improve the student’s scores on the competency checklist. For example, a student who has had little background and experience in teaching should select fieldwork projects that allow him or her to design and teach information literacy skills to students at various grade levels in an elementary school.

- Students are encouraged to select projects that also meet the requirements of their current course assignments. For example, a student taking IST 612 who has little experience with book-talks may want to develop and deliver a series of book-talks to middle school students.

- By the end of their program, School Media students are expected to participate in the design and/or implementation of the following types of activities:
  1. Collaborative instructional planning with classroom teachers
  2. Differentiated instruction for a diverse range of students including students with special needs
  3. Integration of technology into instruction
  4. Exposure to a wide range of management tasks (e.g., budgeting, planning and evaluation)
  5. A storytelling and/or book talking session
  6. A classroom management and/or conflict resolution experience
  7. Language acquisition and/or literacy development activity (e.g., reading guidance, literature appreciation, speaking, writing, or listening skills)
  8. Planning and/or evaluation of a library media center of program
  9. An information literacy skills lesson or unit for students

Some of these activities will be addressed in fieldwork and some in practica.

Following the completion of a fieldwork experience, students must document participation in each project on the “Record of Fieldwork” form including dates, location, level (elementary or secondary), related competency standards, a copy of the lesson plan you developed and delivered, a brief description of the activities and your role in it.

All completed Learning Agreement, Record of Fieldwork, and Completion of Fieldwork forms must be submitted via email to Blythe Bennett (babennet@syr.edu) and submitted in the School Media Forum on https://blackboard.syr.edu/ (under Organizations, not Courses).

At least ONE lesson plan must be written and presented to students. It does not need to be for the whole class, but a small group will be fine. Use any of the lesson plan templates required by the school media faculty. The lesson plan must be submitted with the Record of Fieldwork at the end of the placement.

Select the Fieldwork Site and Site Supervisor

The site supervisor must be a certified Library Media Specialist (LMS) in New York State or in the state in which you are doing your fieldwork. You may spend your 50 hours at more than one site, but no more than two. You MAY do your fieldwork in your own town, unlike your practica.

If you need help selecting a site, please contact the Fieldwork Coordinator or your Advisor for suggestions.

Middle school fieldwork may be substituted for either of these as long as the focus of the project is on either the elementary (grades 6 and below) or secondary level (grades 7 and above).
Note: preparation and lesson planning done at home may not be included as part of the 50 hours.

Before the actual on-site fieldwork hours begin, you should meet with your site supervisor at least once. First, contact your potential site supervisor by telephone or email to ask if they would be willing to mentor you and to have you conduct your fieldwork projects in their library media center. Library Media Specialists are typically very busy with complicated weekly schedules and appreciate when you set up an appointment at a time that is convenient for them.

Once he/she has agreed to be your site supervisor, schedule an appointment for your initial in-person meeting. You should have some project ideas already outlined so you can let your site supervisor know what it is you would like to work on during the hours you spend in their school. However, keep in mind that your site supervisor may have suggestions for your project as it relates to his/her school.

Fieldwork Learning Agreement (required form)

Download the Fieldwork Learning Agreement (PDF)

Once you and the site supervisor have agreed on your fieldwork experience, including the project(s) on which you will work, you must submit the Fieldwork Learning Agreement via email to Blythe Bennett babennet@syr.edu. It is imperative that you submit this form at least one week BEFORE you begin your actual fieldwork hours. It also needs to be submitted in the School Media Forum. Hours completed before the Learning Agreement has been approved will not be counted toward the 50 hours.

Fieldwork Journal

Send Judi a weekly journal entry via email to babennet@syr.edu of your fieldwork experience. These are due by midnight Sunday evenings during your fieldwork experience. In the journal entry, indicate how many hours were spent in the school, activities you observed or conducted, and your reflections upon those. These entries are required but not graded. Feel free to say what you really think, because the content will not be passed along to your site supervisor. It is okay to have good days and not so good days.

Updating the Fieldwork Coordinator of Project Adjustments and Changes

If during the course of your fieldwork, you modify or change your project, or if you have questions about your progress, contact the Fieldwork Coordinator. It is ok to have changes, but they need to be noted.

Record of Fieldwork (required form)

Download the Record of Fieldwork Form (PDF)

Once you have completed 50 hours at your fieldwork site(s), you are required to submit a final report titled “Record of Fieldwork” via email to Blythe Bennett babennet@syr.edu. Include the lesson plan also. This also gets submitted to the School Media Forum https://blackboard.syracuse.edu.

Site Supervisor Follow-up

After you submit the Record of Fieldwork forms, the Fieldwork Coordinator will contact your site supervisor via email for a brief evaluation of your time spent at his/her site. This evaluation will allow your site supervisor to provide us with some input on your performance, ensuring you completed the work to which you committed and that it was done satisfactorily. There is no grade attached to Fieldwork.

Update Competency Checklist and Setting up the Fieldwork

After you complete your second fieldwork placement, submit an updated Competency Checklist (the second time you rate yourself) to the School Media Forum https://blackboard.syracuse.edu. You have likely gained new knowledge and skills in your coursework to date related to at least some of your competencies since your Baseline assessment. Updating helps to make clear the competency areas that you would like to address through projects you take on in your practica experience.

Having your Competency Checklist up-to-date also makes it easier for the Fieldwork Coordinator and your School Media Advisor to guide you in developing projects. If, for example, you have had little experience with teaching, a good idea for a project would be developing and teaching lesson plans or other instructional program. Or, if you need more experience in addressing program administration, attending committee meetings or taking on a budgeting project are ways of filling in those competencies. A list of project ideas, broken down by competency area and School Media course content is available in the School Media Forum, under “Fieldwork Resources.” Before beginning any project, discuss your project with the Fieldwork Coordinator and your site supervisor.

Completion of Fieldwork (required form)

Download the Completion of Fieldwork Form (PDF)

When you have finished both fieldwork placements, email the Completion of Fieldwork Form to Blythe Bennett (babennet@syr.edu) in order to have this placed on your transcript as a Milestone. Submit this also in the School Media Forum https://blackboard.syracuse.edu.

You will need this Milestone as a requirement for Syracuse University’s School of Education to recommend you for state certification.

The School Media Fieldwork Process Overview
1. Complete a minimum of six credits in the School Media Program.
2. Read this Fieldwork Guide (also available in the School Media Forum on https://blackboard.syracuse.edu/)
3. Email Blythe Bennett (babennet@syr.edu) stating intent to begin fieldwork.
4. Find a placement via networking, suggestions from other students in the program, Blythe Bennett, school media faculty, or calling local schools.
5. Complete Fieldwork Learning Agreement Form and email it to Blythe Bennett (babennet@syr.edu). Submit in School Media Forum.
6. Blythe will review the Learning Agreement and approve or ask for revisions, and notify you via email.
7. Begin your 50 hours.
8. Send Blythe a weekly journal entry via email of your fieldwork experience by midnight on Sundays.
9. At the end of your 50 hours, complete and submit Record of Fieldwork Form and lesson plan to Blythe Bennett (babennet@syr.edu) via email. Submit in School Media Forum.
11. When you have finished both fieldwork placements, submit the Completion of Fieldwork Form in the School Media Forum and it will be noted on your transcript as a Milestone.
12. When you know when you want to start your practica, email Blythe to set you with permission to register for 972 in MySlice.