



Pam Stephens

Each university or teacher preparation program has its own territory, so to speak, when placing teacher candidates for the student-teaching experience. These territories can be small or large. While some universities restrict student teaching to nearby school districts, others are expansive and include school districts well beyond their own borders.

Finding a Good Local "Fit"

Most universities allow student teachers to request local schools or districts where they wish to complete the internship. For those candidates who are given options, it is important to consider how the requested placement will contribute to teaching success. Prior to asking for a certain placement, the candidate should visit the school and cooperating teacher to make sure that there is a good "fit." An effective way to do this is to fulfill practicum hours (required in most

teacher preparation programs) or volunteer in the schools that interest the teacher candidate.

Distant Cities

Some universities have programs that provide opportunities for student teaching in distant cities both in-state and out-of-state. Check with the student-teaching placement office well in advance for this option. Such distant placements usually require up to a year's notice and are contingent upon a variety of factors including availability of qualified supervision and adequate grade point average.

Europe and Asia

Another option available at a few universities is student teaching abroad. Typically offered in conjunction with Department of Defense Dependents Schools

(DODDS), application to this program is usually one year in advance, is limited to candidates who demonstrate a high maturity level as well as exemplary scholarship, and is contingent upon qualified supervision. Students are responsible for their own transportation, but they are usually housed on DODDS bases and are eligible for reduced rentals.

Student Responsibility

Like good teaching, a good student-teaching experience relies upon thoughtful planning and skillful execution. Be proactive and plan your field experience. Talk to an advisor. Not all universities have the same rules and guidelines. Each student-teacher candidate is responsible for knowing university guidelines and meeting all deadlines. An advisor can make sure you are on track and ready to get the most from student teaching wherever you are placed. ☺

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