**Candidate Instructions for Practica**

New York State requires that all candidates for Initial Certification in Music Education have experience in school music classrooms prior to student teaching. To meet this requirement, candidates in Music Education at Fredonia are required to spend at least 40 clock hours each of 4 placements (for a total of 160 hours) functioning as a music teacher’s aide. These pre-student teaching experiences are called practica.

Each of your Foundations courses has an accompanying practicum (singular of practica) that is devoted to specific grade levels related to that course (although the actual experiences can be completed in any order).

* MUED 250 Foundations I-MUED 255-Practicum in Elementary **General** Music
* MUED 251 Psychology and Sociology of Music Education II-MUED 256-Practicum in Middle School Music
* MUED 300 Foundations III-MUED 355-Practicum in High School Music

You are also required to complete an additional practicum at a grade level of your choice before student teaching:

* MUED 356-Practicum in music at a grade level of your choice.
* One of these four practica must be in a high-needs school as defined and listed by New York State (see FredLearn MUED Practicum Site for a partial list of high-needs schools).
* One of these four practica must be completed in an **elementary general music setting** to ensure that you observe *all* or nearly all of the children enrolled in a school in their music classes, and to ensure that you complete New York state’s requirement of at least 15 observation hours in settings with students with disabilities and with English language learners.

Before you can begin scheduling your practica, you must be fingerprinted and have a criminal background check, and you must establish a New York State Education Department TEACH online account to establish the state’s file of your teaching credentials.

TEACH Account: Go to [www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach). Use a permanent home address and email address. Be sure to record your username and password and keep in a safe place for future reference. \*Be sure all information in your TEACH account matches the information used for your certification exams EXACTLY. (e.g., If your TEACH account includes your middle initial, you should use your middle initial for everything else)

Username: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Password: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Fingerprinting Information: The fingerprint supported criminal history background check program administered by the NYSED’s Office of School Personnel Review and Accountability (OSPRA) has joined the Statewide Vendor Managed System operated by MorphoTrust. For more details and cost, visit [NYSED Fingerprinting](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tsei/ospra/fpprocess.html).

Now you are ready to schedule your first practicum experience! Begin by choosing a school where you would like to complete one of your practica. Typically, Music Education students choose a school close to home, which enables them to live at home and complete practica in January or May/June. Contact the local music teacher or the administration office of the school district and request permission to observe in their school. Briefly describe your reasons for contacting them. Remember to explain that this is a *pre-student teaching* experience—if you use the word *practicum*, they may not understand.

If the school agrees to allow you to complete the practicum, give them the **Practicum Packet**. This packet can be found on the FredLearn MUED Practicum Site. Because of concerns for students’ safety, some school districts require that you complete a phone interview and/or obtain additional direct email or school-specific forms completed by the Music Education Area Head. Many large school districts require that you apply through a central office, such as Human Resources so that they can monitor visits and limit the number of possible distractions to their teachers. These school-specific procedures add time to the process of scheduling a practicum, so begin the process of scheduling a practicum well in advance of the dates you hope to visit the school.

Fredonia’s Practicum Packet includes:

* A letter to the teacher explaining the program and requesting permission for you to participate in the school
* Guidelines for the cooperating teacher
* Agreement form
* Teacher Evaluation form
* Practicum Reflection form

Although completing your practica at the school in which you graduated is convenient, it is advisable to schedule your practica in a different district, if possible (your former music teachers could be helpful in recommending other area placements). This will allow you to broaden your experiences. You may complete any practicum in more than one school building or district as long as the grade levels meet the requirements.

After you have completed your practicum, complete the Practicum Reflection form and retrieve the Teacher Evaluation form from your cooperating teacher.

Submit all three of the required Practicum forms as indicated on the forms within ten days of completing each practicum. You can check your submissions on the [music.education@fredonia.edu](mailto:music.education@fredonia.edu) email site to see the status of all submitted forms. Remember that you must complete two practica to earn Professional Standing and all four practica for Admission to Student Teaching. You must enroll in the appropriate course number of each Practicum with each co-requisite foundations/Psychology and Sociology of Music Education/methods class, but you may complete the practicum weeks in schools in any order.

Special Note: ***Professional conduct and dress are required while in the schools***. If you are unclear about acceptable criteria for each, contact the cooperating teacher or administration offices and request guidance.