

Integrated Bachelor's/Master's (IB/M) Teacher Education Program

Influential Experiences Requirement

Applicants to the IB/M Program must be able to indicate experiences that have influenced and/or shaped their decision to pursue a career in teaching. These experiences may be in the field of education, relate to working with children, or relate to other work-related experiences that you can connect to teaching and/or learning. Many of these experiences help to develop skills (e.g., organization, collaboration) and traits (e.g., responsibility, responsiveness) that are valuable for future teachers and their students. Other options to include may be meaningful or transformative experiences that have had an impact on your life as it relates to education. One component of your application to the IB/M Program is your life experience up to this point. We will ask you to describe your experiences in detail as well as what you learned from them.

Working with children will help inform your decision to pursue a career in teaching. Also consider working with diverse populations, including children with special needs and those who are English language learners, experiences in urban settings, as well as in your major area of study (e.g., elementary education, special education, secondary math). Having a range of experiences is perceived as contributing to your overall readiness for teacher education.

Your personal experiences are also of tremendous value in shaping who you are as a person. Experiences can be described as anything personal, educational, extra curricular, work-related, volunteer, or travel that has been influential in your life. Teachers draw from their personal experiences, and we look forward to hearing what makes you unique that would allow you to serve your students.

Why do I need education experience? Experiences working with children in schools and other educational settings will help you decide if you really want to become a teacher. It can also help us know that you have received adequate exposure to a classroom (or similar) setting and that you want to further your education. If you were not able to obtain experiences in classrooms or with children, help us understand how you came to pursue teaching as your career by sharing some of your other life experiences.

How much experience do I need? We will ask that you consider some meaningful experiences and decide on the experiences you would like to share more about in the essay. Although we value a range of experiences, we recognize that you may have had limited opportunities recently. Regardless, your beginning to realize the potential influence any of them have on your future teaching is important.

What kind of classroom experiences should I have? The best classroom experiences are in a K-12 school, but these may have taken place in another setting. Typically, experiences can include but are not limited to: working with individual students, small groups, and a whole class; taking on the role of a tutor or teacher assistant; and actively engaging in students' learning of various subject matters.

Who arranges placement? Options are listed below:

- **The Office of Community Outreach** (<https://communityoutreach.uconn.edu/>) - offers a variety of opportunities, including America Reads, Jumpstart, and school tutoring. Some programs provide transportation. Located in the Student Union on the Storrs campus.
- **Husky Sport** (<https://huskysport.uconn.edu/>) - community-campus partnership. Participants engage with elementary and middle school kids around development of transferable life skills, nutrition education, and physical activity.
- **K-12 Placements** - Students find their own placements, usually during Thanksgiving, winter, and summer breaks. Contact the principal or a teacher at a local school to arrange the placement (relatives are not appropriate placement supervisors). Neag can provide a support letter if the school district requires one. Email Dominique.Battle-Lawson@uconn.edu with the name and address of the school and to whom the letter should be sent. Students independently locate and join volunteer efforts in the community that engage children in learning such as after-school programs, tutoring, and summer programs.