



This course supports the assessments for Preclinical Experiences in Elementary and Special Education. The course covers 8 competencies and represents 3 competency units. This course may take up to 6 weeks to complete.

It is recommended that your observations in the classroom take no more than 2 months' time unless you have made arrangements with the school administration for you to be on the campus longer.

## Introduction

### Overview

This course affords you the opportunity to observe and participate in a wide range of in-school teaching experiences in order to develop the skills and confidence necessary to be an effective teacher. During your classroom experience, you will

- examine the interaction between instruction and learning,
- review the impact of culture on learning,
- reflect on teaching strategies and assessment practices,
- consider current classroom practices as they relate to the student experience,
- address the needs of exceptional learners,
- analyze general and program-specific instructional methods based on student needs, and
- collaborate with a mentor teacher in the planning and delivery of instruction.

You will enter, observe, and participate in a live classroom. This will be an excellent opportunity for you to see the principles you have learned in action. Theory often diverges from practice when applied in a real-world, dynamic situation. In this course, you will reflect upon your previous coursework and also look forward to the other requirements that you still need to complete in preparation for your demonstration teaching and graduation. Please read carefully through the course, watch the introduction video, and meet with your course instructor. Review the [Preclinical Experiences Orientation & PCE Packet](#) to ensure that you are prepared for your preclinical experience. Enjoy this time. It is great to be at a school, and you can be a positive influence in many young lives.

Watch the following video for an introduction to this course:

*Note: To download this video, right-click the following link and choose "Save as...":* [download video](#).

### Getting Started



In Preclinical Experiences in Elementary and Special Education (PCE) you will arrange through the Field Experiences Office to spend time in the classroom to prepare for your future teaching career. For 15 hours of your preclinical experience, you are expected to collaborate with the host teacher in the planning and delivery of instruction. Your competency will be assessed through a performance assessment requiring you to reflect on your time in the classroom and to demonstrate your understanding of effective classroom management and lesson planning.

### **Three-Step Framework**

WGU employs a three-step developmental framework to support you through your preclinical and clinical experiences, and to ensure you exit the program confident in your ability to meet the needs of your future students and school system. Prior to this course, you completed the framework's first step by building your background understanding of teaching pedagogy through course readings and resources, and by completing video-based observations of teachers in their own classrooms. Now you will take on more responsibility, as this course falls into **step two** of the **three-step framework**. You will begin by actively observing classroom activities and you will gradually gain a more authentic teaching experience as you collaborate with your host teacher to plan and deliver lessons and learning activities with students.

#### [Clinical Experience Curricular Framework](#)

### **Competencies**

This course provides guidance to help you demonstrate the following 8 competencies:

- **Competency 665.1.1: Classroom Management, Engagement, and Motivation**  
The graduate develops a classroom management plan that integrates best practices for engagement and motivation.
- **Competency 665.1.2: General Teaching Practices**  
The graduate collaborates with a mentor teacher in the planning and delivery of instruction in a classroom setting. ;
- **Competency 665.1.3: Elementary Teaching Practices**  
The graduate evaluates the theoretical and practical implications of various content knowledge applications, tools of inquiry, instructional strategies, models and trends in the context of classrooms and schools.
- **Competency 665.1.4: Academic Language, Metacognition, and Communication**  
The graduate evaluates the theoretical and practical implications of various strategies that are intended to support the use of academic language, metacognition, and communication in classroom contexts.
- **Competency 665.1.5: Educational Assessment**  
The graduate evaluates the theoretical and practical applications of various assessment practices as they relate to student learning and instructional design.
- **Competency 665.1.6: Educational Technology**  
The graduate evaluates various applications of technological integration in support of learning for all students.
- **Competency 665.1.7: Diversity, Inclusion, and Exceptional Learners**  
The graduate evaluates the theoretical, legal, ethical, and practical applications of



teaching students with exceptional learning needs.

- **Competency 665.1.8: Reflection, Evaluation, and Philosophy of Teaching**

The graduate evaluates educational observations and experiences connected to professional practices to support the development of appropriate teaching dispositions and a personal teaching philosophy.

## **Performance Assessment Summary**

Your competency in this course will be assessed by the completion of three tasks. The first task requires you to apply what you learned about classroom management by developing a classroom management plan. Task Two requires you to share a self-evaluation of your teaching experience, noting the strategies you used to meet the diverse learning needs of students in your classroom. The final task requires you to submit your Preclinical Experiences Log, along with a detailed reflection of your time in the classroom. Details and requirements for each of these tasks can be found in Taskstream but it may be helpful for you to familiarize yourself with the performance assessment tasks before you begin your preclinical experience.

## **Teaching Dispositions Statement**

Please review the [Statement of Teaching Dispositions](#).

## **Course Instructor Assistance**

As you prepare to successfully demonstrate competency in this subject, remember that course instructors stand ready to help you reach your educational goals. As subject matter experts, instructors enjoy and take pride in helping students become reflective learners, problem solvers, and critical thinkers. Course instructors are excited to hear from you and eager to work with you.

Successful students report that working with a course instructor is the key to their success. Course instructors are able to share tips on approaches, tools, and skills that can help you apply the content you are studying. They also provide guidance in assessment preparation strategies and troubleshoot areas of deficiency. Even if things do not work out on your first try, course instructors act as a support system to guide you through the revision process. You should expect to work with course instructors for the duration of your coursework, so you are welcome to contact them as soon as you begin. Course instructors are fully committed to your success!

## **Preparing for Success**

The information in this section is provided to detail the resources available for you to use as you complete this course.

## **Learning Resources**

As you work through this course, you might find it helpful to review some of your previous learning resources. These resources are provided below. Please review as needed.

There may be some references to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in the learning resources used with this course. Please be aware that, in December 2015, President Barack Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA. This new act replaced NCLB and reauthorized the



50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). For more information:

- [Fact sheet on ESEA](#)
- [ESEA now referred to as the ESSA](#)
- [Webinar recording](#)
- [Transition Letter](#)

### VitalSource E-Texts

- Burden, P. R., & Byrd, D. M. (2013). [Methods for effective teaching: Meeting the needs of all students](#) (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 9780132901703
- Gargiulo, R. M. (2012). [Special education in contemporary society: An introduction to exceptionality](#) (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 9781412996952
- Lewis, R. B., & Doorlag, D. H. (2011). [Teaching students with special needs in general education classrooms](#) (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. ISBN: 9780135014905
- Savage, T. V., & Savage, M. K. (2010). [Successful classroom management and discipline: Teaching self-control and responsibility](#) (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. ISBN: 9781412966788
- Slavin, R. E. (2012). [Educational psychology: Theory and practice](#) (10th ed.) Boston: Pearson. ISBN: 978013703435
- Waugh, C. K., & Gronlund, N. E. (2013). [Assessment of student achievement](#) (10th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. ISBN: 9780132689632
- Washut Heck, T. t., & Bacharach, N. n. (2015). [A Better Model for Student Teaching](#). *Educational Leadership*, 73(4), 24-29.

### Web Resources

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<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/reflective-teaching-exploring-our-own-classroom-practice>

- Reflective practice and professional development (2004). *eJournal of the International Child and Youth Care Network*, 63  
. Retrieved from <http://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0404-reflective.html>

### Course Documents

- [PCE Observation Guide](#)
- [Field Experiences Handbook](#)
- Preclinical Experiences Log (Download from Taskstream)
- Self-Evaluation Tool (Download from Taskstream for Task 2)
- Preclinical [Experience Log](#)

### Cohorts

Preclinical Experiences Cohorts are offered monthly to provide a live experience for students to discuss the different observation topics and understand the importance of reflective practice. Registration link, cohort dates, and details can be found in the Preclinical Experiences Cohort



Calendar by clicking on the calendar event.

The Preclinical Experiences Getting Started Webinar is offered several times a month to provide students with information on placement requirements, completing forms correctly, and understanding the task requirements. There is also an opportunity for a Q&A with the course instructors.

Access the Preclinical Experiences Cohort Calendar here:

- [Cohort Calendar](#)

To register for the cohort please click on the link in the calendar for details.

## **Contact a Course Instructor**

Access the course instructors' contact information, hours, and booking links:

- [Course Instructor Contact Information](#)

## **Pacing Guide**

The pacing guide suggests a weekly structure to pace your completion of learning activities. It is provided as a suggestion and does not represent a mandatory schedule. Follow the pacing guide carefully to complete the course in the suggested time frame.

### Course Prerequisite

- Applying for In-Classroom Experiences
  - Prior approval for PCE must be obtained from Field Experiences before you begin this course. All items of the preclinical experiences application must be completed in the Field Experiences portal to obtain approval. You cannot enter a school prior to receiving the approval notification.
  - Refer to [PCE Placement Guidelines & Restrictions](#) to ensure your PCE placement meets the guidelines for your degree program and start date. Both grade level and content area placement requirements vary by degree.

### Week 1

- Preparing for In-Classroom Experiences
  - Read Chapter 2 of the Field Experiences Handbook
- Review course content on classroom observations

### Week 2

- Review course content on classroom management
- Review course content on collaborative teaching
- Review course content on Preclinical Experiences Log and Reflection
- 15 Hours of Preclinical Experiences and Related Log Entries
  - *Please note that up to 45 total hours may be spent observing in a "one teach,*



*one observe” role, and at least 15 hours must be spent actively participating through another collaborative teaching structure.*

### Week 3

- 15 Hours of Preclinical Experiences and Related Log Entries
  - *Please note that up to 45 total hours may be spent observing in a “one teach, one observe” role, and at least 15 hours must be spent actively participating through another collaborative teaching structure.*
- Task 1: Classroom Management

### Week 4

- 15 Hours of Preclinical Experiences and Related Log Entries
  - *Please note that up to 60 total hours may be spent observing in a “one teach, one observe” role, and at least 15 hours must be spent actively participating through another collaborative teaching structure.*

### Week 5

- 15 Hours of Preclinical Experiences and Related Log Entries
  - *Please note that up to 60 total hours may be spent observing in a “one teach, one observe” role, and at least 15 hours must be spent actively participating through another collaborative teaching structure.*
- Task 2: Collaborative Teaching Experience

### Week 6

- Finalize Preclinical Experiences Log
- Reflections
- Task 3: Preclinical Experiences Log and Reflection

*Note: This pacing guide does not replace the course. Please continue to refer to the course for a comprehensive list of the resources and activities.*

## Applying for In-Classroom Experiences

You must complete your field experiences application and be approved for entry into a classroom before you can begin your in-classroom preclinical experiences. The following application process must have been completed prior to beginning this course.

### Field Experiences Application and Preparation

Before you can begin your in-classroom experiences, there are a number of steps you must take to ensure your preparation and adherence to rules and regulations in your area. You need to complete all parts of the PCE phase of your field experiences application so that your



placement coordinator can obtain permission for you to begin in-school activities. You should submit all parts of your application no later than one month prior to the time when you plan to begin your in-classroom preclinical experiences. You can learn more about these requirements by reviewing all of the relevant links found within Chapter Two of the [Field Experiences Handbook](#).

## **WGU ID Card**

You will need a current WGU student ID card for your in-classroom preclinical experiences. If you do not currently have one, [request one now](#).

## **Background Check**

In order to prevent those who may pose a danger to children from working with them in the classroom, WGU requires all teacher certification candidates to provide verification of a cleared, current background check prior to placement in the classroom. Each state has a specific type of background clearance required. Please review your field experience application for your state specific requirements.

Submit evidence of a current, cleared background check to [licensure@wgu.edu](mailto:licensure@wgu.edu). You may not participate in any field experiences, including the in-classroom preclinical experiences in this course, without a clearance on file.

## **Basic Skills Exam**

You may not begin your in-school preclinical experiences until you have passed your [basic skills exam](#) and your scores have been posted to your Degree Plan. This is a WGU requirement even if you are in a state that does not require a basic skills examination. Some states require the Praxis I and others have their own basic skills requirements. If your state does not have a basic skills requirement, you must take and pass the Praxis I basic skills examination.

Basic skills examinations are external exams. You must register and pay for basic skills exams either with Educational Testing Services (ETS) for Praxis exams or with your state if your state has its own exams.

## **Placement Requirements**

WGU is committed to providing a safe environment for students, faculty, and staff. WGU will only approve potential preclinical or demonstration teaching sites that are expected to fully comply with all relevant ordinances and laws related to safety and health and will not knowingly place a teacher candidate at a site that is out of compliance with such ordinances or laws. Refer to the [PCE Placement Guidelines & Restrictions](#) section of the Field Experience Handbook for detailed information about the placement requirements. Questions about appropriate placement based on your state's licensing requirements should be directed to [fieldexperiences@wgu.edu](mailto:fieldexperiences@wgu.edu).

## **Professional Liability Insurance**





You must obtain and submit proof of professional liability insurance prior to entering the classroom. Find information about NEA liability insurance in the [Field Experiences Handbook](#).  
**Code of Professional Behaviors and Dispositions**

Read the [Teachers College Code of Ethics, Professional Behaviors and Dispositions](#), which includes the process for disciplinary actions. You may want to refer to this several times before and during your preclinical experiences to ensure that you are familiar with the requirements.

## **Demonstration Teaching Application and Preparation**

You should complete the Demonstration Teaching (DT) phase of your field experience application. If you have not already done so, complete that phase now. It must be completed several months before you intend to begin your DT and cohort seminar, so failure to complete all parts of the application by the required deadline will cause you to miss the cohort you intend to be a part of and may result in a delay of your academic progress and graduation. Discuss your plans with your instructor and be sure you understand the deadlines and requirements for DT. Refer to the [Pacing Guides: Preparing for Demonstration Teaching](#) and be sure to submit all parts of your application and complete the required number of assessments and student projects by the dates outlined on the pacing guide.

### **Completing the DT Application**

Talk about your plans for DT with your mentor and complete all required sections of the checklist for DT by the deadlines outlined for the cohort you wish to enter.

Many of the pieces of your DT application will be the same as those in your PCE application; however, if you take several terms to complete courses between PCE and DT, you will be required to renew and resubmit those documents. Review the [application requirements](#) in the Field Experience Handbook.

### **Making Plans for Your Time in DT**

While in DT, you are strongly discouraged from working at another job. Think of DT as your full-time job during this period. You should be fully invested in teaching the students in your host classroom, including planning lessons, evaluating work, and reflecting on your experiences.

You can prevent your other obligations from become a hindrance in your successful completion of DT by planning appropriately. Make arrangements for the following and other obligations you may have such as:

- other job(s) and volunteer responsibilities
- child care, elder care, and pet care
- health insurance and other healthcare considerations
- financial obligations

Review the [DT Placement Guidelines and Restrictions](#) and discuss your plans with your course instructor.





## Preparing for In-Classroom Experiences

This section will help you prepare for your preclinical classroom experiences. Remember that you represent WGU. The teachers, administrators, and other people you work with in your host school are professional contacts that could help you secure a position as a teacher in the future. It is important that you prepare adequately for this experience so you can participate in an appropriate, professional manner.

### **In Classroom Preclinical Experiences: Professionalism**

As you participate in the preclinical setting, it is important that you present yourself in a professional, appropriate manner. You are a representative of WGU in your host school, and you should consider this experience a partial job interview, as potential employers will likely want to talk with teachers and administrators who have interacted with you in a professional setting.

When you come to the classroom, please be professional in your appearance and conduct. Dress at least as well as the educators at the school. Be reliable, courteous, and supportive at all times. Remember, what you are beginning is really a long professional interview. Many students will ultimately do their demonstration teaching and often receive employment offers from their PCE site because of their work during this time.

### **Field Experiences Handbook**

It is important that you read the [Field Experiences Handbook](#) before you enter the classroom for the preclinical experiences. Relevant sections of the handbook are highlighted throughout the course.

In the handbook, focus on the day-to-day things that you need to be aware of as you enter the classroom, including:

- dress code, with the proper identification
- schedule and timeliness
- appropriate interaction with the host teacher, students, administrators, and others you may encounter in the classroom

Discuss these things with your host teacher or an administrator at the host school to ensure that you understand what is expected of you and how you can put your best foot forward as a potential teacher in this school or other schools.

You should refer back to the handbook throughout your observations to ensure that you are in compliance with all requirements.

### **Code of Professional Behaviors and Dispositions**

Read the following document, which includes the process for disciplinary actions:

- [Teachers College Code of Ethics, Professional Behaviors and Dispositions](#)



You may want to refer to this several times before and during your preclinical experiences to ensure that you are familiar with the requirements.

## Preparing for Observations

For several of the lessons you will observe, requesting a copy of the host teacher's lesson plans, notes, and/or learning objectives and relevant standards for the lessons. As you observe these lessons, reflect on what the teacher does to address specific learning goals and objectives. Also note how the teacher modifies instruction as needed during the lessons and what causes the teacher to deviate from preconstructed plans (e.g., student questions, problems with technology, a fire alarm going off).

Access the Preclinical Experience Log in Taskstream to ensure that you accurately note what you see and hear in the classroom in a way that will make it easier for you to reflect on each classroom visit.

To structure your notes from your classroom observations, use the following template:

- [PCE Observation Guide](#)

Watch the following video that reinforces the elements needed for a quality learning objective:

- [Writing Learning Objectives](#)

You will be required to construct objectives for your lesson plans in Demonstration Teaching, so you should practice writing objectives now. You may want to write objectives related to the lessons you are observing in your host classroom or for lessons you are collaboratively teaching. Identify the state and national standards related to your objectives and reflect on what type of teaching methods you might use to help students master the content in the lessons with the objectives you have written.

Consider the following questions:

- What would you do that is similar to your host teacher's techniques?

What might you do differently?

## Reflective Practice

Throughout your field experiences for this course, you will reflect on your observations and discussions. Becoming a reflective practitioner is an important process of refining teaching and growing as a professional.

### Reflective Teaching

Read the following articles on reflective practice and professional development. Think about ways to incorporate reflection into your practice and the benefits of using reflection.

- ["Reflective Teaching"](#)
- ["Reflective Practice and Professional Development"](#)



## Classroom Observations

Each of the topics in this section is related to a specific part of your performance assessment. Be sure that you are familiar with the requirements in Taskstream before you enter the classroom so you can collect and reflect on the appropriate information for your submission. As you work through each topic, you can also collaborate with peers and mentors in your learning community.

### Making the Most of Your Classroom Experience

The following videos will provide you with insights and guidance to ensure that you make the most of your time observing and participating in collaborative teaching in your host teacher's classroom. The videos summarize the key ideas expressed in Gary D. Borich's book *Observation Skills for Effective Teaching: Research-Based Practice*.

Videos Coming Soon:

- The InTASC Standards as a Lens for Classroom Observation [[Transcript](#)]
- Observation and Becoming a Reflective Teacher [[Transcript](#)]
- Purposeful Observation [[Transcript](#)]
- How to Observe [[Transcript](#)]

To structure your notes from your classroom observations, use the following template:

- [PCE Observation Guide](#)

### [Preclinical Experiences Log](#)

- Throughout your field experiences for this course, you will keep a log to document your hours of experience in the classroom, including the 15 hours you will spend collaboratively planning and teaching with your host teacher. Be sure to do this from the first day of your preclinical experience so you will have all the information needed when you are finished with your field experiences; you are required to submit the log along with your reflections as part of your performance assessment in Task 3.

### Addressing the Needs of Students

You have looked at the different characteristics that all students, but especially exceptional learners, in your classroom may have in courses such as Psychology for Educators and Diversity, Inclusion, and Exceptional Learners. As a teacher, you are responsible for creating the best possible learning environment for all students in your classroom; however, because different students have different needs, creating a nonrestrictive, productive educational environment can be difficult.

Understanding how to address diverse students' needs begins with recognizing and understanding the needs in your group of students. During your preclinical experience, you will observe ways in which your host teacher addresses the needs of different students in the classroom and reflect upon ways you might address similar needs in a different way in your own classroom.



## Classroom Management

(This section will help you with Task 1)

You have learned about many aspects of classroom management in previous courses. Instructional strategies, such as those you learned about and practiced in the Introduction to Instructional Planning and Presentation, and Advanced Instructional Planning and Presentation courses, can also be part of your classroom management plan.

Effectively managing your classroom is critical for ensuring academic success of your students and establishing and maintaining a healthy classroom environment. To complete Task 1 of your performance assessment, you will reflect on the classroom management strategies you observed in your host classrooms and evaluate what was effective or ineffective about the strategies you observed. Details related to this performance assessment can be found in Taskstream.

Preclinical [Experiences](#) Log

*Reminder: Your observation log is only submitted with Task 3 but you need to be making observations and documenting your experiences throughout your preclinical experience.*

### Your Classroom Management Plan

What will you do to effectively manage your classroom and maximize student learning when you teach your own students? Part of Task 1 requires you to develop a personal classroom management plan that includes strategies and procedures that integrate best practices for engagement and motivation. If you have already begun to compile notes on the way you would design a classroom management plan (for example, as part of your Classroom Management course), review those notes now.

Consider the following questions:

- What would you add to the plan or change about it, given your additional experience and learning?
- What have you seen other teachers do that is particularly effective that you might like to incorporate into your classroom management plan?
- How will you adapt your classroom management plan to meet the needs of diverse learners? (Students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

If you have questions about the requirements of this task, review the details in Taskstream and please speak with the course instructor for Preclinical Experiences.

## Collaborative Teaching Experience

(This section will help you with Task 2)

You are required to complete 15 hours of your total experience in the classroom by actively participating with students in ways other than the “one teach, one observe” structure. This



active participation can be teaching a lesson (“one teach, one observe” with you in the teacher’s role), assisting the classroom teacher with teaching a lesson (“one teach, one assist”), or any other structure described in this course or in others you have completed. It is important that you and your host teacher choose active teaching experiences that will positively impact your learning as well as the learning of the K–12 students in the classroom.

[Preclinical Experiences](#) Log

*Reminder: Your observation log is only submitted with Task 3 but you need to be making observations and documenting your experiences throughout your preclinical experience.*

## Collaborative Teaching Practices

Collaborative teaching involves educators working together to teach and mentor students in a classroom setting. Collaborative teaching is sometimes called cooperative teaching, co-teaching, or team teaching. This teaching strategy is often used when teachers from various disciplines, such as the general education or core subject area teachers, work together with special education or ELL teachers to meet the diverse learning needs in any given classroom. However, collaboration can be implemented across all instructional levels and subject areas.

### Read

[“A Better Model for Student Teaching”](#)

This article reviews some of the concepts you learned about collaborative teaching strategies in your prior coursework and describes how cooperating teachers and teacher candidates at St. Cloud use co-teaching strategies like station teaching, parallel teaching, and differentiated teaching allowing the teacher candidate to gradually assume more responsibility.

### Watch

[“The Six Models of Co-Teaching” \(4:10\)](#)

This video will allow you to review the six models of collaborative teaching.

For Task 2 of your performance assessment, you will be required to summarize a core academic lesson you collaboratively taught along with a self-evaluation of your teaching performance during the collaborative teaching effort. Additional details related to this assessment can be found in Taskstream.

## Observational Log and Reflection

(This section will help you with Task 3)

[Preclinical Experiences](#) Log

Throughout your field experiences for this course, you will keep a log to document your hours of experience in the classroom, including the 15 hours you will spend collaboratively planning and teaching with your host teacher. Be sure to do this from the first day of your preclinical experience so you will have all the information needed when you are finished with your field



experiences; you are required to submit the log along with your reflections as part of your performance assessment. Use the forms and directions provided in Taskstream to document your time and experience in the classroom throughout your field experiences. While the log is only submitted with Task 3, you need to be making observations throughout the semester and working on the other tasks during your preclinical experience.

In Task 3 of the Preclinical Experiences performance assessment, you will complete the Preclinical Experiences Log, record field notes, and a related written reflection. The written reflection will be completed as a separate essay in addition to the field notes recorded.

Because it will not be possible for you to go back and redo your observation, you should become very familiar with the requirements of the performance assessment for this course before and during your in-classroom preclinical experiences as they are described in Taskstream.

If you have questions about the requirements, please speak with your mentor and the course instructor for Preclinical Experiences

## **Final Steps**

This course has prepared you to complete the assessments associated with this course. If you have not already been directed to complete the assessments, schedule and complete your assessments now and review [Chapter Two of the Field Experience Handbook](#) to ensure you have met all requirements.