

Classroom observations

Below are some important directions and guidelines regarding your school visits.

Before the visit

Make a schedule of your visits for the semester and make sure that you are able to fulfill the required 18-22 hours (not counting travel). Consult the school calendar (see school closings below) as well as your own semester schedule. If you have a big exam on a day that you're supposed to do a school visit, you may want to move that visit to another day that week. In addition to the district calendars, you may want to also check the individual school's website, which may have other events that are important to be aware of

[Boston Public Schools](#)

[Cambridge Public Schools](#)

[Community Charter School of Cambridge](#)

[Prospect Hill Academy](#)

First visit

Please give yourself extra time to find the school, sign in as a visitor at the main office, and find the teacher's classroom. If I didn't give you the teacher's room number above, ask for directions to it when you sign in. Before or after the class, give the teacher a copy of your scheduled visits, along with your contact info. If you need to and the teacher is available, you may consult with him or her about rescheduling some visits for a different day. Also, make sure that the teacher has your contact info in case s/he needs to notify you if a class trip or some other event comes up.

Dress code

You should take your cue from the teacher, but the basic rule of thumb is business casual – no jeans or sneakers. Err on the conservative side, especially on your first visit.

School closings

Please use the website to locate the academic and events calendar so you're aware of school holidays and other special events when there won't be classes to observe. In case of extreme weather, you can check for school closings at the Channel 7 website:

<http://www1.whdh.com/stormforce/>

Making up visits

If you miss a week because you're sick, you should let the teacher know ahead of time by email. Then arrange with the teacher to make up the observation on another day. You may also take advantage of MIT student holidays or unexpected free time to spend extra time at the school. Another way to make up hours is to increase time spent at your next visit and ask the teacher if you can tutor a student or help him or her prep lesson materials or do simple grading.

Participation in the class

Although you may more passively observe in the beginning, teachers will typically welcome you to assume a more active role as you become comfortable in the classroom. Some teachers may actually expect that so take a few minutes to ask what he or she expects from you during your first visit. Offer to help with activities, labs, other classwork, or to keep students on task. Some teachers may assign you to work with a particular student or group of students. Others may ask you to lead a class discussion or make a presentation. But if the teacher simply wants you to observe, that's fine too.

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