



Professional Experience Handbook

Structure of Practicum (practical experience in classroom)

The Advanced Diploma of Rudolf Steiner Education is specifically targeted at teacher training, and takes place over two years. During this time students complete **three** practicums: one, two week placement in their first year, and the remaining two, four week placements between terms 1-3 of their second year.

Teaching is a vocational profession and so the Seminar feels that it is very important to provide you with as many opportunities as possible to experience the rich environment of a classroom and to ‘learn by doing’ under the guidance of experienced professional teachers. Use the opportunity while under the supportive supervision of another professional teacher to teach as much as you can; whole classes, small groups or individual students. It is a marvelous opportunity to get to know yourself as a teacher; that is that you will learn to be comfortable with the **professional persona of a teacher**. This persona will support you when you come to have a class of your own.

Administration

The Seminar has a list of Steiner Schools that have been approved as suitable for the practicum. Requests for schools other than these will be considered however it remains up to the discretion of the Seminar as to whether or not to approve them. As part of your practicum, there are a number of important administrative forms which require your attention. The forms to be completed will be given to you prior to commencing your practicum.

On the first day of your practicum visit, you **must** take with you and complete the *Practical Placement Schedule and Agreement* form. These are to be given to the **School Administration** who will complete their section before **posting it back** to the Seminar.

Students are required to sign the *Practical Placement Schedule and Agreement* in accordance with the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1990*.

You will also take with you the following forms to give to your **supervising teacher** at the beginning of the practicum:

- *Supervising Teacher’s Evaluation Form* and
- *Attendance Record Sheet*.

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The Seminar **cannot complete your assessment** of the Practicum unless **all** of these forms have been satisfactorily completed.

In summary the *Practical Placement Schedule and Agreement* is to be completed by you and the **School Administration**.

Supervising Teacher's Evaluation Form and *Attendance Record Sheet* goes to your **supervising teacher**.

Protocols

When on a practicum you are expected to act with appropriate professionalism, in short you are to act *as if* you are an employee of the school. You should observe the following protocols for a student teacher:

1. Students should not initiate a conversation with a child during class time and if your presence is proving to be a distraction you will need to assist the teacher in keeping the children focused. You should be aware that when another adult is in the room children often react boisterously and it is not appropriate to encourage this by holding conversations with them.
2. Students are required to leave asking questions of the teacher to an appropriate time.
3. Students are expected to behave professionally at all times; speak consciously, dress appropriately and be supportive to the teacher. If required, a copy of the Student "Code of Practice" is available in the Student handbook, which can be obtained directly from the Seminar or from its website <http://steinerseminar.com/>
4. Dress. Our physical presence has an enormous impact on students and this applies equally when we are visitors to a class. We ask that you give conscious attention to how you dress. Please inform yourself of any dress requirements that the school you visit may have. If nothing is specified we offer the following suggestions for your consideration.
 - a. Choose **clear plain colours devoid of logos**. Avoid wearing black particularly above the waist-line in the younger classes and it is to be completely avoided in any Early Childhood settings.
 - b. No caps or beanies in class.
 - c. Women should avoid anything that can be seen up, down or through.

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- d. Do not wear *informal* clothes.
 - e. No thongs.
 - f. Remove piercings apart from earrings.
5. Mobile phones must be **switched off** during the school hours. If you need to be in contact with someone please pass onto them the school's telephone number. This is just what would be expected of a teacher.
6. **Absences** must be reported first thing **to the school and the Seminar** on the day. If you **must** leave early please inform your supervising teacher at the **start of the day** and report your departure to the office.

Attendance

100% attendance at Practicums is an expectation for successful completion of the practicum modules. Unless you have a **Special Consideration** arrangement with the Seminar, you are expected to attend your school placement *as if* you were an employee. Days missed during a placement **must be made up** in a timely way by arrangement through the Seminar office.

Students are required to ring **both** the school where they are completing their Practicum **and** the Seminar if they are going to be absent for any reason. Students must also provide supporting medical documentation if they are absent due to illness.

The Attendance form which you will provide to your supervising teacher is the means by which your official attendance will be verified for assessment.

The Seminar will counsel and provide support to prevent an unsatisfactory attendance record. **International students** are reminded that where there is an unsatisfactory record of attendance the Seminar is obliged to notify the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. (DIAC) This may affect your visa status.

Refer to the Seminar's policy on *Student Attendance Policy* for more details.

Participation

Bearing in mind the rationale for the practicum offered above and the understanding, that given the demands on a Classroom teacher the following may not always be possible, the expectations for **participation** on practicum are as follows:

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- 1st Practicum the “Observation Round”:
This practicum is primarily for the purpose of observation however *if* opportunities present *and* the supervising teacher is in agreement then the student could consider small interactions with the class. For example through:
 - Story telling
 - Participating in singing, poetry and simple games
- 2nd Practicum:
 - Primary and Secondary: Wherever possible, within the constraints of the particular class you are visiting:
 - Week 1: Observation and if possible 2 x sessions or part-sessions
 - Week 2: 4 x whole class lessons
 - Week 3: 1 x Main Lesson and/or 3x sessions
 - Week 4: More than 1x Main Lesson and/or 3x sessions
 - In addition the student should take every opportunity to teach. They could, for instance consider:
 - Story Telling
 - Small group/individual support
 - Practice sessions with whole classes
 - Teaching songs, poems and/or games
 - Form Drawing to whole classes
 - Early Childhood: Wherever possible, within the constraints of the particular class you are visiting:
 - Week 1: Observation and if possible 1 x sessions or part-sessions
 - Week 2: 2 x sessions
 - Week 3: 1 x Morning Circle
 - Week 4: More than 1 x Morning Circle

In addition the student should take every opportunity to teach. They could, for instance consider:

 - Story Telling
 - Small group/individual support
 - Craft or artistic activity
 - Teaching songs, poems and/or games
- 3rd Practicum:
 - Primary and Secondary: Wherever possible, within the constraints of the particular class you are visiting:
 - Week 1: 2 x whole class lessons
 - Week 2: 3 x Main Lesson sessions
 - Week 3: 3 half days including Main Lesson
 - Week 4: 5 half days including 1x Main Lesson or some whole days
 - In addition the student should take every opportunity to teach. They could, for instance consider:
 - Story Telling

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- Small group/individual support
- Practice sessions with whole classes
- Teaching songs, poems and/or games
- Form Drawing to whole classes
- Early Childhood: Wherever possible, within the constraints of the particular class you are visiting:
 - Week 1: Observation and if possible 2 x sessions or part-sessions
 - Week 2: 4 x sessions
 - Week 3: 1 x Morning Circle and some sessions
 - Week 4: More than 1 x Morning Circle and some sessions

In addition the student should take every opportunity to teach. They could, for instance consider:

- Story Telling
- Small group/individual support
- Craft or artistic activity
- Teaching songs, poems and/or games

Assessment

Assessment is decided by a combination of all of the following:

- Attendance
- Supervising teachers report
- Completion of all assignments. NOTE: To pass *any* module a student must be assessed as *Competent* in ALL learning outcomes of the assignments for the module.

Supervising Teacher Evaluation:

One of the principle assessment tools for practicum is the evaluation provided by your supervising teacher. They will be asked to evaluate your practicum on the basis of the following *Critical Aspects of Evidence*. The expectations are however graded and in the first practicum the performance criteria states that you should demonstrate “... *a clear potential for...*” In the second practicum the performance criteria states that you should demonstrate that your skill “...*is developing...*” The performance criteria for the final practicum stand alone as developed competencies.

Critical Aspects of Evidence used in supervising teacher evaluations:

Supervising Teacher’s Evaluation

This will assess your participation on the basis of *demonstrating a clear potential for:*

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

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- a. **“Appropriate personal presence is displayed”will include evidence of:**
- Appropriate personal presentation:
 - Speech
 - Dress
 - Deportment
 - Effort and commitment
 - Calming presence
 - Awareness of the need to support the teacher and the classroom environment
- b. **“Warm professional relationship to the children is displayed”.....will include evidence of:**
- Warmth and friendliness
 - Awareness of their authority as an adult
- c. **“Appropriate communication skills are displayed”....may include evidence of:**
In communication with students:
- Clarity of speech
 - Use of language
 - Questioning technique to draw out deeper responses
 - Appropriate body language for the classroom
- In communication with adults:
- Responsiveness to advice
 - Open rapport with staff
 - Clear communications skills

PLANNING AND TEACHING

1. **“Skills in Lesson Planning are applied”.....may include, where relevant, evidence in:**

Lesson plans

- Preparation, organisation and resources
- Structure includes a planned rhythm
- Evaluation of learning outcomes is included

Curriculum

- Background knowledge
- Appropriateness choice of content

2. **“Skills in Lesson Delivery are applied”...will include evidence of:**

- an ability to gauge the flow and speed of presentation
- evidence of having transformed the subject matter artistically, so that when it is presented the children's feeling life is touched;
- Confidence

3. **“Effective Classroom Management is displayed”....will include evidence of:**

- increasing awareness that positive discipline is achieved through the in dwelling authority of one's own personal presence
- confidence and expertise in managing small groups and the whole class

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

a. “Potential for continued professional development” is displayedwill include evidence of:

- Willingness to accept constructive advice.

Student Support

During the Practicum, student support is provided by the Seminar as follows:

1. The student is phoned once per week to address any issues and to identify any requirements for additional support.
2. The Seminar attempts to visit local schools where the student is completing his/her work based training. An interview is conducted with both the student and the supervising teacher to assess the progress of the training.
3. The supervising teacher or school administration is asked to contact the Seminar if there are any issues surrounding student attendance, learning support, welfare or professional conduct.

The Seminar staff are available to students from Monday to Thursday on tel. 98765199 or via the after hours contact number (tel. 9739-1244).