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Practicum Guidelines

Master's Degree of Education in
Mentoring



New Generation Pedagogical Research Center
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, PHNOM PENH

Practicum Guidelines

Master of Education in Mentoring

These guidelines might be revised shortly before the practicum, to take the needs and the constraints of the hosting schools into account.

Overview	3
General Description	3
Location	3
Duration	3
Credits	3
Practicum Content Summary	3
Practicum objectives	4
Implementation	5
First week of the practicum	5
Detailed Preparations to Complete the Practicum	5
Typical Observation Session	7
Complementary activities	8
Using <i>Observic</i> as a Key Part of the Practicum	8
Suspension and termination of the practicum	8
Appeal	9
E-learning material	10
Table of specifications	10
Process	10
Topics	11
Emergency online practicum	12
Observations of lessons pre-recorded on video	12
Observation of online lessons with real teachers	12
Assessment of the Practicum	13
Practicum Journal	13
Scoring system	13

Overview

General Description

Master Degree candidates who are enrolled at the *New Generation Pedagogical Research Center (NGPRC)* of the National Institute of Education will be expected to fulfill the requirements of a Practicum at the end of their classroom coursework. The Practicum will provide a realistic setting to help candidates put their understanding of Mentoring Principles into real practice. The Practicum will, therefore, provide an ideal opportunity for candidates to reinforce what they have learned during classroom discussions and research. As such, the Practicum will be an essential element of the preparation of each candidate to be an effective mentor when they return to their assigned schools.

Location

The Practicum requirement for receiving the *M.Ed in Mentoring* will occur in several public schools chosen by the NGPRC in Phnom Penh.

Duration

The Practicum will last for 3 months at the end of each academic year (12 weeks) during May, June and July.

Credits

The Practicum will be equivalent to 10 modules in NGPRC syllabus or 10 credits.

Practicum Content Summary

The credibility of a mentor depends on his or her ability to do the job of a teacher. Therefore, the practicum comprises a small number of teaching demonstrations. A total of two or three demonstrations are anticipated during the required Practicum. In agreement with the supervising instructor from the center and the senior classroom teacher who hosts the practicum, the trainee will plan and implement a lesson using new or unusual techniques that were researched during earlier course work at the center. This demonstration can take the form of co-teaching with the normal teacher or other modalities that are agreed with the trainee, the supervisor, and the host teacher.

To be sure, teaching at a host school will not be the main task of the mentor during the Practicum. The central set of tasks of the practicum will consist of classroom observations. The trainees will observe the lessons of junior teachers to provide them with feedback and support. Trainees may be expected to work closely with teachers that they mentor in lesson preparation, planning meetings, and other forms of collaboration as recommended during mentoring coursework.

All the lessons observed during the practicum will be filmed as part the new *Observic* platform, which will be a key tool to ensure that the mentoring process is optimal. The trainees conduct themselves the utilization of *Observic*, from the footage to the final report.

To demonstrate their expertise as educators, the trainees will also produce learning material to be shared with other teachers in Cambodia.

Practicum objectives

The following objectives have been identified as benchmarks to assess the degree to which trainees were able to successfully complete their Practicum coursework:

- Trainees can prove their teaching abilities, by successfully undertaking classroom demonstrations and co-teaching.
- Trainees can reflect on their own practice, both verbally and in writing, through various self-assessment tools, including *Observic*.
- Trainees can conduct effective conferences with assigned teachers, as measured by agreed guidelines, to prepare lessons and provide relevant feedback.
- Trainees can observe the teacher's skills with benevolence and in a non-threatening manner.
- Trainees can provide feedback to assigned teachers 'constructively' and in accordance with guidelines discussed during previous coursework.
- Trainees can write reports for the benefit of the assigned teacher, including a description of the lesson(s) observed and answers to the questions that the teacher might ask.
- Trainees can effectively use *Observic* for all the main purposes for which it is intended, as these pertain to the needs of the mentee and as mentor. This includes the footage of a video, the submission of the video for review, self-assessment and the full review of someone else's video (exclusive of administrative tasks).

Implementation

If the sanitary situation doesn't allow a physical presence in the schools, please refer to the emergency online practicum.

First week of the practicum

The first week of the practicum will be spent in simulations and preparatory activities, to ensure a smooth beginning.

The trainees will watch lessons recorded on video, share their observations and role-play the conference between a mentor and the teacher on the video.

Different scenarios will be proposed during these role-plays, in order to simulate various problems that mentors can face during their actual practice, for instance:

- The mentee is an elderly teacher, who is very much attached to his traditional ways and doesn't want to change anything.
- The mentee challenges the authority of the mentor.
- The mentee tries to engage in a romantic relationship with the mentor.

A comprehensive list of scenarios will be prepared by the NGPRC faculty later on, to take in consideration any real case encountered by NGPRC alumni in their real practice.

The first week of the Practicum will also provide exploratory meetings and orientations to trainees to better understand how the Practicum is supposed to unfold. These orientations will include a tour of the school and introductions to relevant staff members at the school. The Supervisor will act as a team leader to demonstrate how assigned tasks are to be completed. He or she implements a "think aloud" strategy in which he comments on his own actions.

Detailed Preparations to Complete the Practicum

Identifying Assigned Teachers

There is obviously a balance to be found between the learning needs of students, of the teachers who will be mentored, and the development needs of the trainees. In order to effectively organize the practicum, the Director of the school will provide a list of teacher candidates who are interested in receiving mentoring support from trainees enrolled at the New Generation Pedagogical Research Center.

The teachers who work as mentees will do so voluntarily and do not necessarily need to be 'elite' teachers. Assigned teachers may also be 'beginners' who want to learn new techniques or to get feedback about their current methods of teaching. Nevertheless, they must agree to be observed by a small team of young mentors and be ready to spend time to

discuss with NGPRC master's candidates about the preparation for teaching before and after class. Assigned teachers must also provide lesson plans and all necessary material. The assigned teachers should provide their timetables in advance, including planned tests and other special activities, so that the NGPRC can find the best time to observe their classrooms.

Participating in this practicum as an observed teacher should be seen as an opportunity to improve one's teaching skills and better understand the process of mentoring, which is different from inspection. Teachers who are struggling with difficulties or who want to advance in their career should be encouraged to participate.

Team Work

Although trainees are evaluated individually, they will undertake classroom observations in teams. Each team will be comprised of 4 or 5 trainees under the supervision of a Center Instructor or a Mentor who is working at the NGPRC.

During an observation session, trainees must fulfill different roles, including the following:

- Team leader and main reviewer
- Demonstrator or co-teacher, as relevant,
- Technical supporter for *Observic* (taking video footage and editing),
- Deputy reviewer.

Trainees will take turns in fulfilling these roles so that every trainee will have taken on every role at least twice during the practicum.

Team Composition

As the time for the Practicum approaches, the teams will be organized during a general meeting of all NGPRC faculty members.

Faculty members will assign trainees to a team according to the following criteria and considerations:

- A review of Core Abilities (e.g., Critical Thinking Skills, Learning Styles, etc.) and academic background (e.g., STEM, Arts, Social Science, Language, etc.),
- The needs of the assigned teachers of the hosting schools in the core subjects
- A review of trainees' personality and leadership capabilities, in order to obtain well-balanced teams.

The teams will remain the same until the end of the practicum. Under exceptional circumstances, team members can be changed by a common decision of the NGPRC manager and mentors. In any case, the staff members overseeing the Practicum will ensure the consistency of the training. Before changing the composition of a team, 2 supervisors can shift their positions temporarily in order to get a better understanding of the circumstances.

Each team can be expected to work with several teachers of the hosting schools. The schedule will be designed to find a good balance between the needs of the hosting schools and the needs of NGPRC trainees.

Typical Observation Session

The Supervisor (NGPRC Mentor or Instructor) of the trainees will intervene as little as possible as trainees build a relationship with their mentees. Supervisors will provide comments and observations to the trainees at the very end of a session, when everything is wrapped up.

Each week, the Supervisor will designate the main reviewer, who will then be responsible for overseeing the training sessions and regular meetings. The assigned teachers should also join these meetings. The leader of the week will:

- Organize the schedule and the agendas of the meetings
- Facilitate each scheduled conference and animate the discussions
- Distribute roles for the other participants, according to their training needs and skills
- Give assignments to the other members of the team, such as *Observic* reviews or preparation tasks
- Conclude and summarize the debates
- Identify any problems that may have occurred during the week and lead troubleshooting discussions, as needed.
- Write down and sign the meeting report, which should also be co-signed by the Supervisor.

At the end of each week, the Supervisor will organize a short meeting (approximately 1 to 2 hours) with the trainees only (no teacher from the hosting school), to evaluate their work briefly, set new objectives and designate the next team leader. He gives personalized recommendations in writing.

Complementary activities

To demonstrate their pedagogical expertise and take a leading role in their schools, the trainees are requested to produce e-learning material that might serve other teachers in their daily practice. This will demonstrate their ICT skills as well as their teaching abilities.

The pedagogical articles and booklets that were done by the previous cohorts, during their virtual practicum, are no longer requested in the normal, face-to-face practicum.

Using *Observic* as a Key Part of the Practicum

This component of the practicum is suspended until further notice.

The New Generation Pedagogical Research Center seeks to empower trainees with knowledge of cutting-edge developments in 21st Century pedagogies and tools. This includes dynamic software mentoring programs such as *Observic* that will form a key part of the skill set imparted to trainees. NGPRC trainees will need to fully comprehend how the *Observic* platform works in two very different ways. First, they will be observed (as a mentee), as any other teacher might be, using this software. This will help them to better understand the use of the software as a mentee. But they will also be expected to use the software as a mentor for assigned teachers, giving them a very different perspective on the use of the software (as a mentor). These dual experiences will help trainees to gain a strong understanding of how to use this software effectively.

Suspension and termination of the practicum

The practicum can be suspended, without notice, by a common decision of the school principal and the supervisor for serious motives such as:

- Poor attendance and obvious lack of commitment,
- Behavior that threatens the physical or moral integrity of the students or the school personnel.

The manager of NGPRC must be informed of the decision without delay. He summons a disciplinary board as soon as possible, between 1 day and 3 days after the incident. The incriminated trainee is informed of the date and venue of the disciplinary board at least one day before it is held, so that he can prepare his defense. The trainee must come in person to respond of his behavior. He can be assisted by a person of his choice.

If possible, the disciplinary board is held at the school where the incident took place, or, if it proves unpractical, at the NGPRC.

The disciplinary board is composed of:

- At least 3 members of NGPRC faculty who are not the supervisor of the trainee,
- Including at least 1 member of the NGPRC management team (Manager, Mentor, Training Coordinator).

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to document the incident, seeking both incriminating and exonerating evidences. The incriminated trainee can of course produce evidence of his own. The director of the hosting school should assist him in this effort. They can decide to summon any witness (student, teacher, school personnel, mentors etc.) to shed some light on the incident.

The disciplinary board can take the following decisions:

- Termination of the practicum,
- Probatory sentence,
- Written warning that will be put in the trainee's record,
- Oral warning, without record,
- Reintegration of the trainee in the practicum,
- Adjournment of the decision for a maximum of 3 working days.

The minutes of the discussions are communicated to the trainee, along with the final decision.

A probatory sentence specifies the conditions under which a termination would be automatically decided.

A termination will result in failure of the practicum and of the Master's degree. It means that there is a major objection against the trainee becoming a mentor. That decision is taken regardless of the trainee's academic achievements.

Appeal

A terminated trainee can appeal to the director of the NIE. This appeal must be communicated within 2 days after the notification of the termination. The trainee will be summoned to explain himself to a committee as soon as possible. The decisions of the committee are made without further appeal.

E-learning material

Table of specifications

Content

The lessons are complete, self-sufficient packages, comprehending:

- A lesson on video
- Several exercises, with a correction
- Assessments
- Supporting materials (such as vocabulary lists, reading assignments, etc.)

They respect the following specifications:

- The lessons follow the national curriculum.
- The videos are in Khmer, except for the English subject.
- Explanations on video should last between 5 and 20 minutes.
- Explanations should be kept as clear as possible.
- The objectives and type of the lesson should be stated clearly in a short introduction (below 30 seconds).
- Lessons should follow clear steps.
- The lessons comprehend charts and pictures for better understanding.
- The resolution of the video is sufficient.
- The sound is clear without disturbing noise.

The lesson can be done through various techniques, from traditional whiteboard to animated images (also includes experiments, slideshows and so on).

Please, note that the lessons can be shared by NGPRC, to be used by any school in Cambodia.

Process

A proper storyboard or plan (with precise timing) is submitted to the faculty before recording, with a request for special material, if needed.

The storyboard is peer-reviewed for fact checking and clarification.

Every material that is to be peer-reviewed should be submitted to the supervisor and at least two students who are not taking part in the preparation.

Recording can be done at home, in a school, at the NGPRC or in a studio, depending on the needs and the possibilities.

The video is edited to remove unnecessary parts.

Quizzes and other materials are saved independently from the sharing platform.

Format for the files:

.mp4 for video files

.txt .docx and .pdf for written documents

.jpg or .png for image

Files should be named as such:

subject_grade_initialletter_title_documentnumber

Example:

math_8_lsh_trigonometry_3

Topics

Trainees choose their topics and prioritize them in small teams, by subject-matter, according to the national curriculum. They are not allowed to choose a topic that has already been taken by the previous cohorts.

Trainees are not allowed to take a topic that has already been covered by other NGPRC trainees.

Emergency online practicum

This section describes the online practicum that will replace all or parts of the normal practicum, in case primary and secondary schools are closed. It follows the same strategy as during the Covid outbreak in 2020.

2 main activities:

- Observations of lessons pre-recorded on video
- Observation of online lessons and conference with the real teacher.

Observations of lessons pre-recorded on video

2 formats:

- Long video (complete lesson)
- Short video

Short videos are followed by group discussion to analyze the classroom situation or the teaching strategy displayed on them.

Long videos are followed by a role-played conference. Each conference follows a scenario to prepare the future mentor for challenging situations that he might encounter in his professional life. The scenarios are chosen by the faculty of NGPRC for each video.

Possible scenarios:

- The mentee cries.
- The mentee tries to make the mentor sorry, in a manipulative way.
- The mentee lies about some mistakes.
- The mentee wears inappropriate clothes.
- The mentee has critical problems with classroom management. He's bullied by his own students.
- One of the students of your mentee has terrible issues. He's involved in drug trafficking.
- Conflict between your mentee and other colleagues.
- The mentee gossips about students and colleagues.
- The mentee is starting to have a bad reputation in the school.

Observation of online lessons with real teachers

The exact schedule and organization will be communicated later on, to accommodate for the constraints of the partner schools. The partners can be private or public schools, and have different backgrounds and organization, in order to expose the trainees to diverse teaching experiences.

The partnership is intended to be mutually beneficial. The schools will benefit from useful advice, and the trainees will develop their mentoring skills.

The online observation is similar to an ordinary classroom observation. The mentors are invited to the virtual room in small groups, and observe in silence. The students are informed of their presence, but the mentors are not required to turn on their camera. They take notes but don't interrupt the lesson. They intervene only at the demand of the hosting teacher, if an agreement has been made in advance.

The trainees are organized in groups of 6 or 7, that include various subject matters. Responsibilities mimic the ones described above as much as possible. However, there will be no *Observic* component this year, in case of online practicum.

The possibility of teaching demonstration will be examined with the hosting schools, but is not a requirement, due to the limited possibilities offered by online courses.

Assessment of the Practicum

Practicum Journal

To practice self-reflection and gather material for their future work, the trainees are required to write a journal during the practicum. Each observation and conference, whatever its format, must be reported briefly in the journal, with the following sections:

- Brief description of the observation
- Brief description of the post-conference (with the objectives for the mentee)
- What the mentor can do well
- What the mentor must improve
- General reflections on the fly.

Trainees take notes during the activities. The journal is simply a clarification of these notes.

- The length depends on the time spend.
- Each activity should be documented, even briefly.
- Journals should be submitted for scoring at the end of each week, in the appropriate form on Google classroom.
- Trainees submit their journals to their assigned supervisor.
- Journals are written in Khmer or in English, to the trainee's choice.

Scoring system

The following sections cover the assessment of all the activities conducted during the Practicum. Practicum assessments are not based on an average of unchangeable scores. There will be no final exam. The trainees will be continuously evaluated based on dynamic scoring, so that rapid progress at the end of the Practicum will outweigh poorer scores received at the beginning. In practice, it means that the supervisor can score a specific item whenever a trainee has demonstrated his or her competency.

When in serious doubt with an individual case, a supervisor can ask a colleague to assist in order to get a second opinion and ensure that all the assessments are reliable. This should be more the exception than the rule, in order to avoid an excessive disruption of the training. The first supervisor remains responsible for the grading of the given trainee, unless the manager of the center says otherwise.

To be accredited, a trainee must validate all the required skills. Numerical scores are used to determine special achievements and to reward outstanding trainees.

Each item is graded over 5.

1. Serious efforts are required
2. Almost sufficient. You must confirm the next time.
3. Satisfactory.
4. Solid
5. Outstanding

The candidates should score at least 3 on each item, without exception. The main purpose of this assessment is to evaluate the readiness of the future mentor. A score of 3 means that the faculty trusts the candidate with his/her future job.

A trainee who has validated all the required skills continues to participate to the activities until the official end of the practicum. Grades can be revised by the instructor until the end of the practicum.

Criteria	1 st assessment	2 nd assessment	3 rd assessment	Validated = 3 or more (date and signature)	Final score (not an average)
<i>Teaching skills (only if possible)</i>					
The ability to design clear and practical lesson plans.					
The ability to define clear learning objectives.					
Ability to design activities that are consistent with the objectives.					
The ability to design support material (worksheets, tests and so on).					
The ability to anticipate difficulties in a lesson design.					
The ability to explain one's choices during the Practicum and their limitations (e.g., relevance, expected benefits, points of attention), so that another teacher can imitate him.					
The ability to coteach and support a teacher without replacing him.					
The ability to demonstrate specific teaching techniques convincingly.					
The ability to scaffold student work.					

Criteria	1 st assess- ment	2 nd assess- ment	3 rd assess- ment	Validated = 3 or more (date and signature)	Final score (not an average)
The ability to answer questions effectively.					
The ability to respond to unexpected events (e.g. disruptive behavior, incidents).					
<i>Self-assessment (only if teaching demonstration is possible)</i>					
The ability to assess the outcomes of one's own lessons in terms of students' achievements and motivation.					
The ability to use <i>Observic</i> to do a self-assessment.					
The ability to listen to critics made by one's mentee or peers.					
<i>Learning journal</i>					
The ability to take notes during observations.					
The ability to take accurate notes during conferences.					
The ability to identify one's strengths and use them to one's advantage.					
The ability to be lucid about the difficulties one encounters and how to effectively resolve them					
<i>Leadership</i>					
The ability to plan effectively the work of other people, giving them all necessary information and instructions.					
The ability to create the conditions for effective (focused on the task) and harmonious (friendly) team work.					
The ability to conduct conferences so that every participant has an opportunity to share his/her opinions and concerns.					
The ability to facilitate conferences so that they have positive & concrete outcomes (decisions are made).					

Criteria	1 st assessment	2 nd assessment	3 rd assessment	Validated = 3 or more (date and signature)	Final score (not an average)
The ability to listen to others during conferences and take their remarks into consideration.					
<i>Observation Skills</i>					
The ability to pay attention to the material conditions of the lesson.					
The ability to understand the body language of the participants.					
The ability to observe and understand the reactions of students.					
The ability to understand the purpose and the organization of activities.					
The ability to respect the authority of the mentee.					
The ability to pay attention to the security and well-being of all the people in the classroom and report any problems in this regard to the supervisor.					
<i>Counseling</i>					
The ability to understand the objectives and constraints of mentees.					
The ability to help a teacher design a lesson plan, so that the teacher can effectively implement it (with private school teachers, or peer-review of story-boards)					
The ability to express feedback in a way that is acceptable to the mentee (with tact)					
The ability to provide feedback that is grounded in the real practice of the mentee, i.e. specific and relevant.					
The ability to effectively respond to questions and concerns of the mentee and to take these concerns into account.					

Criteria	1 st assessment	2 nd assessment	3 rd assessment	Validated = 3 or more (date and signature)	Final score (not an average)
The ability to set up reasonable and reachable objectives for the mentee to improve his lessons (summarizing and prioritizing).					
Reporting (<i>post-observation report given to the teacher</i>)					
The ability to summarize the most important pieces of advice.					
The ability to formulate the advice in a way that is both encouraging and honest.					
The ability to submit the report on time.					
Respect confidentiality (to be checked at the end of the practicum).					
Observic (<i>only if possible</i>)					
The ability to make clear footages of a lesson.					
The ability to choose a relevant point of view to record a lesson, depending on the planned activity.					
The ability to edit and upload a video for review.					
The ability to explain the Observic software to a teacher.					
The ability to use all the forms on the Observic platform (as a reviewee)					
The ability to assess all forms (as a reviewer)					
The ability to perform admin tasks on Observic					
The ability to interpret the key indicators					
E-learning material					
The ability to make a clear presentation on video.					
The ability to use presentation tools properly (whiteboard, LCD projector and so on). For lesson on video.					

Criteria	1 st assessment	2 nd assessment	3 rd assessment	Validated = 3 or more (date and signature)	Final score (not an average)
Voice control and body language.					
The ability to display the objectives clearly to the target public (i.e. teenagers).					
The ability to use the learning material effectively (reading material, experiment, textbook).					
The ability to engage learners (i.e. asking some questions, pausing, emphasizing, ...)					
The ability to manage time (sticking to the plan, avoiding blanks etc.)					
Attendance (validated at the very end of the practicum)					