

2023-2024

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.

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Overview

General Description

Master's 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. 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 schools chosen by the NGPRC in Phnom Penh. Each team of mentors will stay in a given school for around one month. Each team will work with 5 to 7 teachers. This disposition will ensure that the trainees have enough time to provide appropriate recommendations to the teachers and can follow up the implementation of any teaching technique they try to introduce.

Duration

Exceptionally, the Practicum will last for 2 months at the end of the academic year (8 weeks) during August and September due to changes in the national calendar.

Please, note that it is a full-time internship. The trainees are requested to spend 4 full days a week at the practicum site, and not just during the time when they have appointments. This will allow them to get a better understanding of the school climate and to build a stronger relationship with their mentees. They can spend time in the faculty room and other places to meet the teachers informally when they don't have a specific task to perform. They will also be available for any teacher to contact them.

Credits

The Practicum will be equivalent to 10 credits.

Practicum Content Summary

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.

Teaching demonstrations and co-teaching were mentioned in previous versions of the Guidelines are no longer mandatory activities to complete the practicum but are still considered valid mentoring practices and can be implemented, if the mentees request them. To ensure the fairness of the assessment, they are not evaluated.

The lessons observed during the practicum will be recorded on video to serve as learning materials for the next cohorts.

Note about the Current Revision

These Practicum Guidelines are revised on an annual basis to build on the experience of the previous cohorts and to adjust the training to the real needs of the future mentors.

The e-learning videos are no longer a part of the Practicum but are still required within the ICT stream.

The assessment system has been updated again. For more consistency, and also to recognize significant improvements, we will average the two best scores for each item.

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 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.

Implementation

Beginning of the Practicum

The first week of the practicum will be spent on 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 has been prepared by the NGPRC faculty, to take into consideration real cases encountered by NGPRC alumni in their real practice.

The first week of the Practicum will also provide exploratory meetings and orientations for trainees to better understand how the Practicum is supposed to unfold. These orientations might 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 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.

An orientation session will be organized by the faculty of NGPRC to inform the potential mentees of the objectives and the procedures of the practicum. In particular, that orientation will emphasize the benefits of participating in such a program, in terms of professional development and quality of teaching. At the end of the program, they will receive certificates for their learning efforts.

The teachers who work as mentees do not necessarily need to be ‘elite’ teachers or ‘beginners’. Assigned teachers may also be any teachers 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.

Each teacher will be visited once a week for 3 or 4 weeks. The schedule will be designed to find a good balance between the needs of the hosting schools and the needs of NGPRC trainees.

Teamwork

Although trainees are evaluated individually, they will undertake classroom observations in teams. Each team will be comprised of 5 to 7 trainees under the supervision of a Center Instructor or a mentor who is working at the NGPRC.

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

- Team Leader, who plans the activities of the team for the incoming week;
- Main Mentor, in charge of the conference with the teacher;
- Video technician, in charge of recording lessons;
- By default, Silent Observers.

Trainees will take turns in fulfilling these roles so that every trainee will have taken on every role at least twice during the practicum. The team leader is chosen for several days. The other roles can rotate on a daily basis, depending on the subject of the observed lesson.

To reduce the mental load on the mentee, only the main mentor will conduct the post-observation conference.

The other team members simply take notes during the lesson. They also take notes on the performance of the mentor for their Practicum Journal. Those observations don't need to be communicated to the mentee.

The recorded lessons should be uploaded into the following drive as fast as possible:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/19Bfdh9RO2VEzqD6hX0Mf-Xz493S3ue6e>

Team Composition

As the time for the Practicum approaches, the teams will be organized by the NGPRC management.

The NGPRC 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 at the hosting schools in the core subjects
- A review of trainees' personalities 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.

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 team leader, who will then be responsible for overseeing the training sessions and regular meetings. The assigned teachers can also be invited to attend these meetings. The team leader will:

- Organize the schedule and the agenda of the meetings;
- Distribute roles for the other participants, according to their training needs and skills;
- Give assignments to the other members of the team, such as video recording or preparation tasks;
- Conclude and summarize the feedback sessions for the mentors;
- 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.

Note on Lesson Plans

Many teachers consider writing lesson plans as extra work. Even though such an opinion is pedagogically debatable, the mentors are advised to take a benevolent approach and not to be too picky about the quality of those plans. They will not request a specific format but will accept whatever document that the mentees produce as preparation for their course. A simple screenshot of the teachers' notebook might be enough, if they are clear and inform the mentors about the objective of the lessons.

Complementary activities

The e-learning videos that were requested last year are now included in the ICT stream directly and will no longer be evaluated with the Practicum.

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.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to document the incident, seeking both incriminating and exonerating evidence. 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.

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.

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. To facilitate this work, a template is provided at the end of these *Practicum Guidelines*.

Trainees keep a log of all the mentoring activities. The journal is simply a summary of this log.

Trainees submit their journals to their assigned supervisor two times during the practicum, when they finish a round of mentoring in a given school.

The journals are written in Khmer or in English, to the trainees' choice.

Scoring system

The following sections cover the assessment of all the activities conducted during the practicum. The practicum will be evaluated based on dynamic scoring. The trainees will be marked on the fly, several times, on each scoring item. They can request additional evaluations when they feel ready, in order to improve their scores on specific items. The scores obtained on any given item will be averaged at the end of the practicum.

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.

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 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.

The two best performances on each item will be selected to calculate the average score.

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

Scoring Items	1 st assessment	2 nd assessment	3 rd assessment	4 th assessment	Final score (average of the two best scores)
The trainee can...					
<i>Pre-Observation</i>					
Build relationships with the mentees.					
Set observation goals with the mentees.					
Guide the methodological choices of the mentee through discussion.					
Make the mentee anticipate possible challenges in the lesson.					
Help mentees with their lesson preparation (practical lesson plans, learning objectives, support material). Note: This item can be evaluated during a specific session (online or otherwise).					
<i>Observation</i>					
Pay attention to the material conditions of the lesson.					
Understand the body language of the teacher.					
Observe and understand the reactions of students.					
Understand the purpose and the organization of activities.					
Respect the authority of the mentee.					
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.					
Choose and use appropriate observation tools (consistent with the nature of the lesson).					
<i>Post-observation</i>					
Understand the objectives and constraints of mentees.					
Listen actively (pay attention, show that you are listening, paraphrase and summarize, differ judgement, respond					

Scoring Items	1 st assessment	2 nd assessment	3 rd assessment	4 th assessment	Final score (average of the two best scores)
The trainee can... appropriately).					
Engage a professional conference with the mentee and keep it on track (with clear purpose).					
Express feedback in a way that is acceptable to the mentee (with tact).					
Provide feedback that is grounded in the real practice of the mentee, i.e., specific and relevant.					
Ask questions to make the mentees reflect on their practice.					
Effectively respond to questions and concerns of the mentee and to take these concerns into account.					
Give appropriate suggestions on the points to improve, when the mentees request it, and to be clear about the limitations of the proposed methods.					
Set reasonable and reachable objectives for the mentee to improve his lessons (summarizing and prioritizing).					
Create a sense of achievement for the mentees. (The post-observation conference has positive results).					
Get feedback from the mentees (on the coaching cycle).					
<i>Feedback Session for the Mentors</i>					
Be lucid about one's own performance as a mentor (self-assessment).					
Take accurate notes during conferences (on the performance of one's peers).					
Share feedback in a collective session (peer review).					
<i>Leadership</i>					
Plan effectively the work of the					

Scoring Items	1 st assessment	2 nd assessment	3 rd assessment	4 th assessment	Final score (average of the two best scores)
The trainee can... team, assigning roles and giving all necessary information and instructions to coworkers.					
Create the conditions for effective (focused on the task) and harmonious (friendly) teamwork.					
Facilitate discussion so that every participant has an opportunity to share his/her opinions and concerns.					
Facilitate discussions so that they have concrete outcomes (decisions are made).					
Summarize and conclude the meetings accurately.					
Support one's team members (giving suggestions and solutions about the problems faced by the members).					
<i>Practicum Journal</i>					
Keep a log of one's mentoring practice (just a draft as evidence).					
Summarize one's notes at the end of each round.					
<i>Attendance</i> (validated at the very end of the practicum)					

Annex 1: Observation Log

Classroom Observation Log #01

Name of the Observer:

Name of the School:

Date of the Observation:

Time of the Observation:

Teacher's Name:

Subject:

Grade:

Chapter Title:

Lesson Title:

Does the teacher have a lesson plan? YES / NO (Please circle)

Have you conducted a Pre-Observation Conference with the teacher? YES / NO (Please circle)

❖ **What the Teacher Can Do Well**

-

❖ **What the Teacher Should Improve**

-

❖ **Other Comments**

-

Post-Observation Conference – Observation Log #01

Observer's Name:

Mentor's Name:

Mentee's Name:

Date of the Conference:

Time of the Conference:

Place of the Conference:

❖ **What the Mentor Can Do Well**

-

❖ **What the Mentor Should Improve**

-

❖ **Other Comments**

-

Annex 2: Practicum Report



New Generation Pedagogical Research Center

Mentoring Practicum Report

5th Cohort

School's Name:

Trainee's Name:

Supervisor's Name:

Academic Year: 2023-2024

Classroom Observations

In this section, you should include the number of classroom observations, the overall description of the teachers' performance (this includes the strengths and weaknesses), and what you have learned from the observations as a mentor.

Post-Observation Conference Observations

In this section, you should include the number of post-observation conference observations, the overall description of the mentors' performance (this includes the strengths and weaknesses), and what you have learned from the mentors' observations.

Challenges

In this section, you should express all the challenges you have encountered during the practicum and how you overcome them, if any.

Suggestions

In this section, you can provide any suggestions you have for improving the whole practicum at this school. Your suggestions will contribute to the refinement of the future practicum.