



# **Practicum Handbook**

BYU-IDAHO  
Student Teaching Services  
325 Hinckley Bldg.  
Rexburg, Idaho 83460-1945  
(208) 496-4140

## **Purpose of Practicums**

This competency-based field experience is designed to apply understanding of learning and teaching in an authentic setting. University students will be working with public school age children in public school classrooms. Through observation, mentoring, planning, and implementation, practicum students will receive teacher-guided instruction to continue building expertise in lesson planning, classroom management, teaching strategies, student motivation, and professionalism.

Each individual involved in a practicum experience should read this handbook and understand the guidelines therein.

## **Role of Student Teaching Services**

Student Teaching Services in collaboration with partner districts, is committed to placing practicum students in fully accredited schools that will prepare them to be competent, effective teachers who can teach all students. Student Teaching Services objectives for practicums are:

1. Place practicum students in accredited educational settings.
2. Place practicum students with mentor teachers who possess a current license in the assigned subject.
3. Place practicum students in educational settings that provide diverse exposure opportunities for learning and teaching in public schools.
4. Maintain accurate records of practicum opportunities and placement of practicum students.
5. Obtain a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each participating school district.
6. Coordinate the cost paid to a mentor teacher and work to keep those costs consistent and fair.
7. Work closely with the partner school to coordinate and manage an effective field experience placement process.
8. Student Teaching Services or the partner school retain the right to cancel or change any placement confirmed by a partnering school as needed, if it deems the placement will not be conducive to professional growth for the practicum student.

## **Student Teaching Services Practicum Coordinator (PC) Responsibilities**

The Student Teaching Services Practicum Coordinator (PC) works with each principal to get the estimated number of classrooms available for practicum placements.

Student Teaching Services will use already established relationships and collaborate with university faculty to use their experience, knowledge, and to centralize the coordination of practicum placements.

Using the registration lists for practicum courses, the PC assigns students to available classrooms and ensures placements meet the criteria for content area and certification areas.

The PC provides placement lists to the faculty member conducting the observations and a master list to each principal of practicum students that will be in the building and their assigned classrooms.

The PC can support university faculty by checking in with principals and being the key point of contact for schools.

The PC will check-in often via school visits, phone calls, and emails with designated administrators.

If a problem arises, the PC will contact the connected university faculty and investigate together. If the university faculty is the first to determine a problem, they should contact the PC and continue forward collaboratively.

If a practicum student fails the practicum due to performance, it can be repeated. If a practicum student fails the practicum due to ethical or legal violations, a path forward will be determined in coordination with university legal, the Student Teaching Services Supervising Director and the Dean for Teacher Preparation.

Each Spring, BYU-Idaho Student Teaching Services will hold a meeting with all local principals who provide mentor classrooms for practicum placements. They meet with the PC to learn of any updated procedures for placement. Student Teaching Services will obtain feedback from schools about this approach and adjust based on feedback.

### **Program Practicum Considerations**

It is advised that consolidated education programs include two practicums, one early and one senior in the program outline. Programs that are not consolidated should consider the strain on university faculty, schools, funds etc. when thinking about having additional practicums.

Additional practicums are not prohibited but should make strong arguments for their necessity.

The senior practicum should be the same for all secondary subject areas regardless of major or minor in the area. University students majoring in Elementary content that are certifying in the 5/6-9 grade band must be placed in the 7-9 grade band in the subject, and the senior practicum be the proof of performance for all minor areas.

Distant partners are very willing to consider and host senior practicum students. For practicum students where it makes sense, they could relocate for their last year of schooling with semester one being the senior practicum and ear-marked courses that are online or that can be provided in hybrid formats and semester two being student teaching within the same district. Courses that are ED Controlled that could fit this bill are EDUC 310: Educational Psychology (3) and EDUC 340: Diverse and Exceptional Students (3) paired with a 4-6 credit practicum/methods course(s) gets most university students to a full-time semester.

## **Professional Conduct**

1. Demonstrate professionalism in dress, conduct, confidentiality, and commitment. Deviation from the BYU-Idaho Dress and Grooming Standards is allowed and expected in only a few situations. These exceptions would include participation in School Spirit Days, as directed by the school administrator (e.g., wearing the school shirt) or if the activity of the day would soil clothing worn by the practicum student and wearing an apron or smock would not be possible. Always wear official nametag.
2. Keep confidences and respect the rights of others. All information received about students during practicum experience is strictly confidential. Review the Federal Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) with the university faculty and/or mentor teacher.
3. Respect possible differences of opinion between the mentor teacher and university faculty concerning practicum student performance. Try to implement the feedback of the mentor teacher, university faculty, and administrators.
4. Maintain a positive attitude and develop a positive learning climate for students. Promptly discuss with the mentor teacher and university faculty any problems, disappointments, and/or frustrations experienced without being negative or critical.
5. Refrain from imposing personal, religious or political views upon students and/or mentor teacher and exhibit an accepting and tolerant attitude toward other perspectives, cultures and religions.
6. Be punctual and dependable. Prepare thoroughly for each day.
7. The mentor teacher is in charge of the classroom. Pay careful attention to instructions received from them.
8. Check emails regularly and reply promptly to any communication from the mentor teacher, school administration, and university faculty.

## **Transportation**

Travel distance and commute time to and from placements vary. Practicum students are responsible for their own transportation to and from the practicum placement. They are encouraged to carpool when feasible. The following guidelines have been established for those participating in a carpool:

1. Meet and leave from a central location
2. Pray before leaving and leave on time
3. Wear seatbelts whenever the car is in motion
4. Obey and follow all traffic laws

## **Attendance**

The practicum placement is an opportunity to develop relationships with students, learn how to use assessments to respond to student learning needs, develop and implement powerful lesson plans, and work in a professional teaching setting. These experiences are critical to help practicum students develop and succeed as a teacher. Students in the public schools depend on practicum students for their learning. Consistent attendance is required. Should an emergency arise which prevents attendance, practicum students should notify their mentor teacher and university faculty.

### **Background Checks for Practicum Students**

Prior to the first field experience, practicum candidates, at his/her expense, is required to complete a criminal background check for the state in which they are completing the practicum. Submissions are made through Student Teaching Services.

### **Standard of Dress**

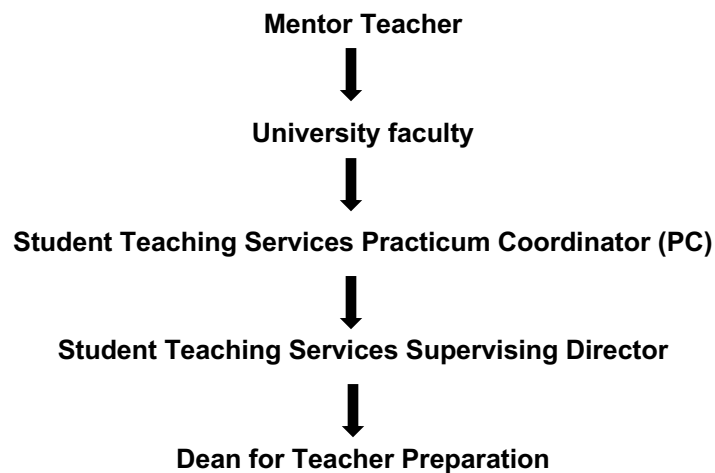
Dress professionally in clothing that is appropriate for active teaching, sitting on the floor, in short chairs, and bending over. Remember BYU-Idaho standards still apply, especially when in a public school.

### **Accommodations for Disabilities**

If a practicum student has any disability which may impair their ability to complete the course successfully, they should contact the Accessibility Services Office at (208) 496-9210. If they need assistance or if they feel they have been unlawfully discriminated against based on disability, they may seek resolution through the established grievance policy and procedures. They should contact the BYU-Idaho Personnel Office at (208) 496-9200.

### **Procedure to Handle Complaints**

This complaint procedure is designed to assist practicum students who have perception of unfair and/or unlawful treatment. A complaint should be attempted to be resolved at the lowest level possible first, then work up the chain of command from there. The level of handling complaints is as follows:



## **Mentor Teacher**

The mentor teacher has full responsibility for groups of learners and has final authority in instructional decisions.

### **Criteria for Selecting Mentor Teachers**

Mentor teachers are identified **master teachers** qualified to **mentor** a practicum student as part of a teacher preparation training program.

Mentor teachers must be experienced and highly competent teachers and have the skills and knowledge to help others learn to be effective teachers. They must be good at mentoring other adults.

Listed below are criteria that should be used to select mentor teachers:

1. Possess the level of academic preparation recommended for the teaching position they occupy.
2. Possess full certification and teach in the major content area of their preparation (are highly qualified). Practicum students they mentor will eventually be certifying in similar content area.
- 3. Have a minimum of three years teaching experience.**
4. Recommended as a mentor teacher by the school administrator.
5. Show evidence of mentor qualities including personal experience with adult learners, respect for and from peers, and knowledge of developmental sequences and processes.
6. Willingly schedule time to give one-on-one mentoring to practicum students.
7. Build trust, rapport, and communication with practicum students, the university faculty, and other stakeholders.
8. Does not currently mentor a Student Teaching Candidate.

## **Responsibilities of the Mentor Teacher**

As certified and experienced teachers, mentor teachers guide and mentor practicum students, assign duties and responsibilities, and, with university faculty, monitor the practicum student's progress providing continual feedback. To host a practicum student, mentor teachers need to possess a **minimum of three years teaching experience** in the content area(s) targeted.

Mentor teachers are governed by a contract signed by the school district and the University. By accepting a practicum student, the mentor teacher assumes responsibility to mentor and coach someone who will eventually be teaching in a public school. This role will require a new dimension of planning, teaching another adult, and hard work. A mentor teacher serves as a coach and support to the practicum student. A trusting and open relationship is key to the mentorship process. Mentor teachers will not be asked to conduct formal observations of practicum students.

The following is a detailed list of responsibilities of the mentor teacher:

1. Become familiar with assignments/responsibilities of practicum students and assist them in fulfilling those responsibilities.
2. Provide a safe environment and inform your practicum students of any hazardous conditions, including students or student issues that could affect them (e.g., students with communicable diseases, students with behavior needs, Individual Education Plan goals, etc.).
3. Acquaint the practicum student with your building and facilities as well as the procedures of the school. Introduce your practicum students to other faculty and support personnel to help them feel part of your school team.
4. Provide a desk or table for your practicum student. They should also have copies of textbooks, workbooks, or other teaching materials used in class, including course objectives, scope and sequence.
5. Inform each parent their child will have a practicum student in class. A good practice for practicum students is to write an introduction that can be shared with parents.
6. Give an informative introduction to your class when the practicum student arrives. They should be treated as a professional and this attitude should be conveyed to your students. Students respond best to a practicum student who is introduced and approached as another teacher in class.
7. Discuss with your practicum student the importance of being a role model in your classroom in the areas of respect for others, diversity, and appropriate dress and language, etc.
8. Model good teaching practices and use a variety of teaching strategies as the practicum student observes your class.
9. Establish specific guidelines for your practicum student to follow in formulating lesson plans and clearly indicate the amount of detail expected. Lesson planning helps emerging teachers think through details and anticipate student needs, increasing the likelihood of a successful lesson. Help practicum student know how and when you will review their lessons prior to the plan being taught in class. BYU-Idaho expects practicum students to write lesson plans for each lesson taught.
10. Allow your practicum student to assist you in planning lessons and learning activities where applicable. Provide reasons and clarification as to why you do what you do, so they can learn from your experience. Provide them opportunities to prepare and develop original teaching materials that use a variety of teaching strategies. Model specific teaching strategies and expect them to use these while you observe their use in the next lesson they teach.
11. Provide your practicum student with opportunities to work with students starting the first day of the practicum experience.

12. Collaborate with your practicum student regularly to set growth goals, determine instructional strategies, and assist your practicum student in reflecting on the practice.
13. Familiarize your practicum student with classroom evaluation techniques and procedures.
14. Encourage your practicum student to participate in an MDT or IEP meeting. Help them learn about how Special Education works within your school.
15. Discuss difficulties with your practicum student as soon as they become apparent. Work together to develop strategies to overcome any issues. If you feel your practicum student may not fully understand your verbal comments, provide them in writing.
  - a. When intervention and conferencing does not seem to produce the change needed in your practicum student, notify the principal and university faculty and encourage your practicum student to seek support and/or resources from their university faculty, and PC.
16. Visit with the university faculty as needed.
17. Note that continuation determination is made by the university faculty in cooperation with the PC and input from the mentor teacher.

### **Stipend for Mentor Teachers**

Mentor teachers are currently awarded a monetary stipend in appreciation of the support they provide in the classroom mentoring a future teacher. Their role is critical to the success of practicum students, and we would like to express gratitude for their willingness to serve the profession in this way. We recognize the commitment of time and energy and the expertise they share with a BYU-Idaho practicum student. Therefore, it is the intention of BYU-Idaho that mentor teachers are co-selected, prepared, evaluated, supported, and retained. (Stipend information is available in Appendix 1.)



### **Responsibilities of University Faculty**

**University faculty** act as liaisons between BYU-Idaho, practicum students, mentor teachers, and the public-school district's school administration and staff. University faculty have P-12 certified field experience. The university faculty demonstrates evidence of dispositions of a professional educator.

The following is a list of responsibilities of the university faculty:

1. Be trained and certified in Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching. Certificate must be provided to Student Teaching Services.
2. Provide supervision and observations of practicum students.
3. Arrange and conduct an initial meeting with practicum students.
4. Develop and promote a professional working relationship with personnel at the cooperating school. When problems arise coordinate communication between the practicum student, mentor teacher and PC.
5. Conduct at least two formal observations of practicum student during the semester in which all domains are evaluated.
6. Prepare digital evaluation data for each observation using the Formative Observation of Student Teaching Form. Review the results with practicum students within four hours of the observation. Each visit should include examination of the lesson plan, observation of teaching, and a post observation conference.
7. Assist practicum students in analyzing their teaching, detail teaching problems, and develop alternatives for strengthening teaching skills.
8. Assist mentor teachers in dealing with any problems practicum students may be experiencing. Assist practicum students with any problems that may arise with mentor teachers.
9. Include on the summative evaluation of each practicum student a recommendation for continuing in the program. If a student is considered failing, documentation is required along with clear communication to the practicum student.
10. Prepare digital disposition evaluation for each practicum student at the end of the semester. Where any disposition does not meet basic levels, discuss areas needing improvement with the practicum student.

### **Practicum Observation Expectations for University Faculty**

University faculty observe practicum students at least twice per semester, once by mid-term and a final evaluation. If there is evidence of unsatisfactory performance at mid-term, an additional evaluation between mid-term and final is scheduled and completed.

It is best practice for the first observation to be done in-person. If the evaluation is satisfactory, the second may be done remotely through technology or video recording.

Evaluations are given using the Danielson Teacher Observation Model. Domains 1 and 4 can be evaluated through evidence from lesson plans, pre-planning conferences, and post-teaching conferences. Conversations with the mentor teacher and practicum student providing evidence of those indicators. Domain 4 evidence is not gathered usually through observation.

In cases where the senior practicum is the proof of performance, passing must be a score of 2 or above in **ALL** areas of the evaluation.

### **Responsibilities of School Administrators**

The school principal recommends teachers as mentor teachers who have demonstrated **superior teaching practice** and are eligible to serve in those roles. Principals must assure the mentor teacher has adequate time to serve as an effective mentor for the practicum student.

Additional responsibilities would include:

1. Approve practicums in the school.
2. Help practicum students understand the philosophy, organization, program, and administrative regulations of your school.
3. Select capable mentor teachers in consultation with the PC assigned to the school.
4. Formally introduce practicum students to grade level team and school faculty during a faculty meeting.
5. Assist practicum students in becoming familiar with aspects of the program other than the individual classroom, such as the guidance program, group activities, faculty meetings, extracurricular activities, etc.
10. Visit the classroom of practicum students on occasion.

# DATA COLLECTION FOR PRACTICUM EXPERIENCES/PLACEMENTS AT BYU-IDAHO

Course	Description	# st/sem	Hours required	days/hrs/wk	Impact	#/mentor	Proposed Comp
ENG329L	Teaching Writing	30	18 hours	Average 2 hours/wk	mild	2/Mentor	\$75/every 2 students
ENG430L	Teaching English	10	18 hours	Average 2 hours/wk	moderate	2/mentor	\$100/every 2 students
TESOL213	Culture and Diversity	6	12 hrs minimum	4 hrs/wk	mild	2-4/mentor	\$75/every section
TESOL 497	Teaching Practicum	8	16 hours/sem	1-2 hrs/wk	mild	1/mentor	none
FR377	French Teaching Methods	1	10 hours/sem	2 hr actual teaching	mild	2-4/mentor	\$75/every section
SPAN377	Spanish Teaching Methods	12	10 hours/sem	2 hr actual teaching	mild	2-4/mentor	\$75/every section
MATH190	Tutoring Mathematics	20	15 hours	2-3 hrs/wk	minimal	3-4/mentor	none
MATH491	SEC ED Math Teaching Methods	10	Daily on block	5 hrs/wk	moderate	2/mentor	\$100/every 2 students
SCIED305	Science Teaching Principles	10	9 hrs over 6 weeks	2-3 hrs/wk (Winter)	minimal	3-4/mentor	none
SCIED405	Science Teaching Methods	10	20 hours	1 hour daily (Fall)	mild	2-4/mentor	\$75/student
SCIED410	MS Science Teaching Methods	13	32 hours	1 hour daily (Fall)	moderate	1/mentor	\$50/student
HIST206	History Teaching Principles	24	8-12 hrs (F & W)	5-6 weeks/teach 2X	mild	2/mentor	\$50/student
HIST207	Middle School Practicum	24	8-12 hrs (F & W)	5-6 weeks/teach 2X	mild	2/mentor	\$50/student
HIST406	History Teaching Methods	25	20-30 hrs (F & W)	5-6 weeks/ unit	moderate	1/mentor	\$75/student
FCS205	FCS Practicum	20	1 hr	2 sessions/semester	minimal		\$100 per load
FCS405	Teaching Methods FCS	10	Daily on block	5 hrs/wk	mild	2/mentor	\$75/student
MUS377A	String Practicum	1	20 hrs	2 hrs/wk	minimal	2/mentor	none
MUS383	Choral Practicum		30 hrs	3 hrs/wk	significant	3-8/mentor	Adjunct load
MUS385A	Band Practicum		10-15 hrs	1 day/wk	mild	1 section	\$75/every 1-2 students
ART314	Secondary Art Methods 1	15	60-70 hrs	6 hrs/wk	moderate	2-4/mentor	\$100/every 2 students
ART414	Secondary Art Methods 2	15	50-60 hrs	5 hrs/wk	mild	2-4/mentor	\$75/every 2 students
TA405	Theater Arts Methods		20 hours	varies	minimal	?	none
ED245	Early Practicum (ELED, ECSE, SPED)	160	20 hours	3 hrs/wk	mild	1-2/mentor	\$75/student
ED346E	Literacy Practicum	66	100 hrs	4 days/wk on block	moderate	1-2/mentor	\$100/mentor
EDCOR455	Assessments and Intervention	12	48 hrs	4 hrs/wk	minimal	2/mentor	\$50/every 4 students
ED449	ELED Senior Practicum	58	100 hrs	2 full days/week	significant	1/mentor	\$125/student
SPED 410	Junior Practicum	20	5 hrs/week	2 half days /week	moderate	1-2/mentor	\$75/student
ECSE360L	Preschool Practicum	10	5 hrs/week	2 half days /week	moderate	1-2/mentor	\$75/student
SPED 435	Senior Practicum	20	100 hours	2 full days/week	significant	1-2/ mentor	\$125/student