

Guidelines for the Practicum Courses

Successful completion of all prior coursework is a prerequisite to any practicum. If, for any reason, a pre-service teacher fails to complete a practicum successfully, the pre-service teacher may be required to wait for a period of one calendar year before being reassigned to an associate school.

The practicum, in which pre-service teachers work closely with associate teachers, university representatives, and other professionals, presents a particular set of professional and ethical challenges. The experience involves a complex set of relationships between the public schools, the university, teachers, parents/guardians, and children, which requires sensitive professional judgments and behaviours appropriate to a public context. For these reasons, the protocols for the practicum are divided into two sections.

First, there is a set of expectations about pre-service teachers' professional conduct during the practicum. These behaviours identify elements of conduct that are essential to the pursuit of a career in professional teaching. They represent types of conduct that might naturally lead to severe reprimand or dismissal within the teaching profession. Second, there is a set of expectations regarding professional competency which, if not met, could result in negative evaluations of a student's performance or, in extreme cases, to a pre-service teacher's dismissal from the program. This second set of expectations recognizes the status as a student of teaching rather than as a fully qualified professional. These criteria are designed to optimize the learning experience rather than to establish absolute rules for conduct.

Set 1: (Expectations Regarding Professional Conduct)

Our Provincial Professional Code of Ethics requires that teachers be **punctual** and **dependable in attendance**. You will be expected to demonstrate this professional behaviour at all times in the Education Program at Acadia University.

Pre-service teachers are expected to fulfill the following requirements throughout the entire period of their practicums:

1. Full attendance at the associate school.
2. Honest accountability for absence, or for any other aspect of the pre-service teacher's responsibilities.
3. In the event of unavoidable absence, immediate notification of the absence, together with its reasons, to the associate teacher, the pre-service teacher's university advisor and, if relevant, the Practicum Coordinator.
4. Just as you would inform a principal of your absence from teaching responsibilities in a school, you are expected to inform your professors in advance if you are unable to attend any course meetings associated with your practicum.
5. Strict adherence to the professional code of ethics of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union.
6. Disclosure of all relevant background information in application, pre-placement or placement documents and interviews.

7. Demonstration of a sustained level of effort, together with a responsive attitude to constructive criticism and advice.
8. Exhibition of a continuing positive and collegial attitude.

In addition, the following are considered to be unacceptable:

9. Any incident leading to the pre-service teacher's discredit while in an associate school.
10. Acts of physical or sexual harassment directed to any person.
11. Any sexual relationship with a student in an associate school.
12. Any non-consensual touching of a student in an associate school.
13. Any inappropriate public behavior bringing disrepute to the pre-service teacher, or to members of the associate school or to the Acadia University's School of Education.

Set 2. (Professional Competencies)

1. Thorough and effective planning and preparation for all classroom teaching assignments; maintenance of appropriate documentation relating to lesson plans, unit plans, reflection papers, and teaching evaluations.
2. Employment of appropriate classroom management and discipline techniques.
3. Appropriate teaching and presentation skills, together with an ability to establish a positive learning environment.
4. Ability to establish professional, collegial working relationships with associate teachers, faculty, and other educational personnel.
5. Involvement in the life of the school, including meetings, extra-curricular and professional development activities.
6. Adaptability in dealing with diverse student needs, abilities, cultural backgrounds, and sexual orientations.
7. Adherence to professional procedures, including consultation with others, in dealing with difficulties or matters of contention.
8. Developmentally appropriate self-reflection, self-monitoring, growth and learning from the practicum.