

NSCECE Workplace Practicum
Handbook



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NSCECE WORKPLACE PRACTICUM

Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education (NSCECE) recognizes the challenges associated with accessing practicum opportunities for educators who are working full-time. In response, NSCECE has developed the opportunity for educators who are currently working in an approved early childhood program to complete their required Practicum courses within a Workplace Practicum setting providing that certain criteria are met.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has set out criteria for Workplace Practicum experiences in the Standards for Early Childhood Education Post-Secondary Programs. All prospective Workplace Practicum sites need to go through an approval process to ensure they meet all the criteria as explained below. Once approved, the workplace will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with NSCECE where the expectations, roles and responsibilities of all parties are laid out as determined in the Standards for Early Childhood Education Post-Secondary Programs.

One of the core objectives of NSCECE practicum courses is for students to receive a wide variety of perspectives and philosophies in diverse programs and with a range of ages over the four practicum experiences. NSCECE believes that this is possible in a Workplace Practicum, provided that all parties understand potential issues and are committed to create a unique learning experience within a familiar setting.

While there are many benefits of students remaining in their workplace while completing their practicum requirements, there are also challenges. The student now has two roles: that of employee and that of student. A practicum in one's place of employment requires a clear delineation between the student and employee roles. Such a distinction is required to protect the student's learning and to avoid conflict of interest.

The more closely a practicum situation approaches the employment situation in terms of tasks, location or supervision, the more difficult it becomes for the student and the workplace to make necessary distinctions between focusing on learning and focusing on work. The student may feel that being paid creates an obligation to perform routine tasks rather than being challenged with new tasks to increase learning.

Many relevant factors need to be considered by the prospective student, the Sponsoring Workplace and the NSCECE Practicum Coordinator. These factors could influence the decision to proceed with a practicum at the student's place of work. All parties have to consider how the following information could affect the practicum experience before a decision can be made to proceed.

CHALLENGES

There are some challenges that students may face when doing a practicum in their own workplace.

- The student may feel pressured to allow the centre's needs to supersede their learning needs
- The student's ability to think critically about the centre may be constrained
- Unless appropriately protected, a negative evaluation of the student's performance in one role may jeopardize their status in the other role
- Issues related to managing conflicts or disputes at the workplace may create tension for the student

All parties need to consider these possibilities and prepare for ways to overcome these situations should they arise. Clear expectations and ongoing communication are two strategies that will help ensure a positive experience for all.

DEFINITIONS

Sponsoring Workplace Practicum Site: A program that meets criteria as outlined on page 6. The Sponsoring Workplace is the employer of the student and agrees to support the student through the practicum experience by providing mentorship and release time to attend meetings with the College Advisor and supervising ECE. The Workplace Practicum Site will allow the student to fulfill the expectations of the practicum assignments. Centres may be eligible to receive funding for substitutes to provide support for these release times through the Continuing Education Program provided by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Sponsoring Workplace Mentor Educator: The Mentor Educator is an employee of the centre who agrees to oversee the practicum experience. The Mentor Educator must provide role-modeling, mentoring and feedback. This employee must clearly understand the roles, ethical considerations and responsibilities associated with supporting the practicum student to fulfill the expectations of practicum. This employee needs to have a Level 2 or Level 3 classification and at least one year of experience in the field. The Mentor Educator cannot be working in the same classroom as the practicum student but must be available to observe and provide feedback on experiences the student offers as part of the practicum expectations. The Mentor Educator must also be available for weekly one-on-one meetings with the student to discuss progress and explore topics.

Workplace Practicum Student: This person is a student who has been approved to take a Practicum course within their own place of work. The student is an employee of the Sponsoring Workplace

Practicum Site and is included in the staff–child ratios. This person assumes paid responsibility for the supervision, care and education of children enrolled in the Workplace Practicum Site.

Practicum Advisor: This person is an employee of NSCECE and oversees the student’s practicum experience by supporting reflective practice and offering practical guidance during seminars and on-site visits. The Advisor will facilitate communication between all parties involved in the practicum and provide feedback to the Student both during, and at the end of the Practicum experience. The Advisor will make at least two visits to the student at the Workplace Practicum Site where the Advisor will observe the student’s practice, provide feedback to the student, engage in conversation with the Mentor Educator and monitor progress towards completion of practicum assignments. The Practicum Advisor will have a recognized Early Childhood Education diploma or degree with three years of experience working in a regulated child care setting or pre–primary program.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Practicum courses are a part of the NSCECE Diploma program of studies. The role of practicum should be clearly understood by the student, the Mentor Educator and the Director representing the Sponsor Workplace Practicum Site. The expectations of the practicum experience are in addition to the employee’s typical job responsibilities. The Practicum experience is where students demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have attained through coursework. This may differ in approach and implementation from the Workplace Practicum Site philosophy and practice. It is essential that the student’s learning needs be protected to prevent job responsibilities from creating barriers to their successful completion of the practicum expectations. At the same time, the Sponsoring Workplace Practicum Site has the right to expect that their employees will organize their time to ensure that the work they are being paid to do is done. The Workplace Practicum is a partnership where the Site, the Mentor Educator, the Advisor and the student work together to ensure both needs are being met.
2. The student will be expected to go beyond their work role to incorporate the assignments and expectations as outlined in the Practicum Package. Students must expect to put in additional hours beyond their normal work day to adequately complete all of the practicum requirements. The student will need to attend pre–arranged mandatory seminars with their Advisor. These will take place throughout the semester as scheduled by the Advisor. They will occur in the evenings in an online format.
3. NSCECE accepts that all four Workplace Practicums could possibly take place within the student’s own Practicum Workplace Site. Referring back to one of the core values of NSCECE, there is significant benefit to having experiences with a variety of ages. A maximum of **two**

practicums can be completed within the student's own classroom. The Practicum Site will agree to support the student by providing opportunities to complete two practicum experience in a classroom outside of the student's own. Should the Practicum Site not be able to support this criteria, then a Workplace Practicum might not be a viable option for all four of the placements.

4. It is within the discretion of the Practicum Coordinator to require the student to gain diverse experience outside of the workplace during a practicum by completing a visit at one of the NSCECE lab schools. The Practicum Coordinator will work with the workplace to implement this in the least disruptive way.
5. All parties are asked to explore and be aware of possible effects on working relations. The practicum can be a very rewarding opportunity for all if careful attention to work relationships is considered before the initiation of the practicum. The goals for the practicum must include attention to the working relationships involved. The Mentor Educator must be able to provide objective, specific feedback based on what is observed in direct relation to the practicum criteria and not on previous experiences.
6. All parties are also asked to consider the effects on children and families when staff are in classrooms other than their own. Even though the staff may know the children and families, it could cause a small disruption to their care. Centres should be aware of how to mitigate these effects and prepare the families for this type of experience.
7. As a student, a certain number of hours per work week will be allocated to practicum responsibilities. If there should ever be a conflict over roles, the role of the staff supersedes the role of the student, while the student is working at the centre.
8. Workplace students and Mentor Educators should address any additional conflicts of interest – for example, caring for the student's own child in a Workplace Practicum – and should consider how they will handle such problems and whether such arrangements could impact the practicum experience or future employment.
9. Some work arrangements are not suitable for a Workplace Practicum experience. For example, a student who is hired to support a specific child or children with diverse abilities is deemed to have responsibilities that do not lend themselves to separating their work and student roles. A float position where a staff member supports many rooms with coverage for breaks and absences might not be suitable either. Such situations may be considered on a case-by case basis if the employer and student can agree on release time where the situation can be supported by other staff during the student's required weekly hours of practicum time.
10. If the employee or the workplace terminate the working relationship before the completion of the required hours, the practicum placement will not be successful and the student will receive a grade of NCR (non-credit repeat). The student will have to pay to retake the practicum course

at the next available opportunity. This type of arrangement cannot be easily transferred from one workplace to another.

11. Many workplace students are comfortable with their skill level, however, workplace students are to utilize the practicum opportunity to take their practice to the next level. An additional bonus is that staff who are engaged in practicum often positively increase the overall level of practice in a centre, as new knowledge is gained or good practice is reaffirmed.

In addition to General Considerations, the Practicum Roles and Responsibilities (starting on page 12) should be considered by the workplace sponsor and by the student in reaching their decision to proceed, in order to safeguard the integrity of a Workplace Practicum.

CRITERIA FOR POTENTIAL STUDENTS

- Have to be employed for at least 30 hours a week at a licensed child care centre. (Verification letter from employer will be required).
- Have two years of full-time employment (minimum of 1,080 hours per year) in a licensed child care centre or pre-primary program at the time of application to the course. Details will need to be verified in writing by the employer.
- Must be able to participate in regular online seminars with a Practicum Advisor over the duration of the placement.

AN APPROVED WORKPLACE PRACTICUM SITE MUST:

1. Meet all regulatory requirements that are applicable to the type of setting.
2. Have a signed, written agreement with the early childhood education training program that outlines expectations, roles, and responsibilities when hosting an employee or student
3. Give the employee or student the opportunity to complete their practicum in a room and age group other than the one they typically work in.
4. Provide a level 2 or 3 ECE other than the one the student typically works with to function as the Mentor Educator.
5. Support the Mentor Educator and student in performing their roles and fulfilling the expectations of the practicum.

If the site is not able to meet the Workplace Practicum criteria, the training program may work with the potential Workplace Practicum site to provide a statement related to the challenges and how they

intend to mitigate them. In some cases, this may not be possible, and the workplace may not be a suitable site.

TIME LINES

Each practicum will be allocated a certain amount of hours in the work week that is centered on practicum duties.

Practicum I will occur over a span of seven weeks

Practicum II will take place over a span of eight weeks.

Practicum III will take place over a span of nine weeks.

Practicum IV will take place over a span of ten weeks.

APPROVAL PROCESS FOR A WORKPLACE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

1. The Centre submits an application to be approved as a Workplace Practicum Site. Application requests can be sent to sharrison@nscece.ca. *Note that potential workplace will need to submit an application each time a student wishes to complete a Workplace Practicum. A previous approval does not guarantee approval again as circumstances, staffing and other factors influence the ability for a centre to support this process.*
 - a. The Practicum Coordinator will then arrange to meet with the Administrator at the workplace. This meeting will consist of interviews with the Administrator, potential Mentor Educators and the potential student, a tour, observation of practice and compiling of documentation such as a parent handbook, behaviour guidance policy, philosophy and other relevant documentation.
 - b. If the centre is approved, the Administrator will be notified, and the prospective student can then start the application process.
 - c. If the centre is not able to meet the Workplace Practicum criteria, NSCECE will work with the program to provide a statement related to the challenges and how they intend to mitigate them. In some cases, this may not be possible, and the workplace may not be a suitable site.
 - d. If the site does not receive approval for any reason, the NSCECE Practicum Coordinator will inform the student of other options for completion of the practicum.

2. The student submits an application to complete a Workplace Practicum. The student who wishes to enroll in a Workplace Practicum Course will submit the appropriate application form along with the corresponding admin fees to info@nscece.ca.
3. If the student meets all the criteria and is approved to participate in a Workplace Practicum, the student will be assigned a Practicum Advisor from NSCECE. This Advisor will correspond with the student, outlining expectations and providing dates for seminars and portfolio submissions.

PRACTICUM IS AN IMPORTANT COURSE

NSCECE students complete 544 hours of practicum (510 field placement hours and 34 hours of practicum modules and seminars). NSCECE offers students the opportunity to acquire hands-on training and knowledge with children of all age groups through four (4) practicum field placements. Each student has the chance to develop their skills and gain real-life work experience in early years settings where they work alongside Early Childhood Educators with children from infancy through school age and with children who have additional support needs.

Practicum provides students with the opportunity to learn about the realities of work in early childhood classrooms while demonstrating the core dispositions and capabilities that are essential to Early Childhood Educators. Practicum students form important relationships with young children and families while also developing and demonstrating emerging skills in observation and documentation, positive behaviour guidance, and planning and implementing curriculum.

NSCECE students study, develop and implement a holistic, play-based approach to pedagogy based on the learning goals and objectives of Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework. Practicum students synthesize child observations, and their child development and curriculum knowledge, through the use of inquiry and a reflective planning cycle. Field placement personnel provide role modeling, mentoring, and feedback. Practicum Advisors oversee each practicum. They support reflective practice and offer practical guidance during seminars and on-site visits.

PRACTICUM LEARNING OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

Learning outcomes in practicum are tied to achievement of theory and practice connections and reflect the student's increasing confidence and capacity in four core areas. Students will meet progressive learning outcomes as they successfully complete each practicum. See Appendixes D, E, F, and G for individual course outlines.

PRACTICUM GRADES (PASS, FAIL, NON-CREDIT REPEAT)

Upon completion of 100% of required practicum hours, reliable demonstration of essential core dispositions and capabilities, and submission of a complete Practicum Portfolio documenting student learning and reflective practice, students will receive the grade P (**Pass**) for practicum.

A student who fails to reliably demonstrate the essential core dispositions and capabilities required by Early Childhood Educators will receive the grade F (**Fail**). A student who fails any practicum will not be eligible to continue in the NSCECE Diploma program.

If a student does not complete required hours, or is unsuccessful with portfolio requirements, but could meet requirements if given another attempt the student will receive the grade NCR (**Non-Credit Repeat**). The student will be required to pay to retake the course. Students must receive a pass on their second attempt as an NCR will only be given once for a course.

ESSENTIAL PRACTICUM DISPOSITIONS AND CAPABILITIES

The following dispositions and capabilities, with or without reasonable accommodations, are expected of all students enrolled in the NSCECE Early Childhood Education Diploma program. Students who do not reliably demonstrate these essential dispositions and capabilities will receive an (F) for practicum and will not be eligible to continue in the Diploma program. Practicum students will reliably demonstrate:

1. Emotional stability and the psychological health to work with young children, families and field placement personnel.
2. Interpersonal skills sufficient to establish responsive and nurturing relationships with young children.
3. Interpersonal skills sufficient to establish professional relationships with families and field placement personnel.
4. Emotional and behavioural self-regulation sufficient to carry out duties and responsibilities in early childhood field placements.
5. Effective written and oral communication skills and the ability to communicate ideas in a clear and friendly manner.
6. Stamina and physical ability to carry out essential duties and responsibilities in early learning and care environments, including observation and assessment; monitoring safety needs; moving quickly to ensure children's safety; and lifting children, equipment and supplies up to 50 pounds.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR PRACTICUM

The Nova Scotia Day Care Act (Section 43) requires that any person **18 or older** who has contact with children in a licensed day care program must have a **Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)** on file; and that **any person 13 years or older must have a Child Abuse Registry Check (CAR)** on file; where they have direct contact with children.

- Under provincial licensing regulations individuals without required checks are not permitted to have direct contact with children, and furthermore, regulated child care programs place their licenses in jeopardy if individuals without the required documents are found on site.
- Students cannot be accepted by NSCECE for a Workplace Practicum placement until copies of current **CAR** and **VSC** clearances have been provided to NSCECE.
- For further information visit (http://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/acts_regs_faq.shtml).

NSCECE PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

THE ADULT LEARNER

At NSCECE, we believe that adult learners come to us with a foundation of life experiences and knowledge that deserves respect. We believe that a hands-on active learning approach supports the understanding and retention of knowledge and we strive to provide a variety of teaching methods in recognition that students vary in learning styles. As adults are goal and relevancy orientated, it is important to communicate learning outcomes and provide opportunities to apply new knowledge.

THE CHILD LEARNER

We believe that early development sets the foundation for life-long learning, behaviour, and health. We believe that children are competent, curious, and motivated learners and must be active participants in the learning process. From birth, children begin to make sense of their world through this active participation and exploration. We also know that children develop and learn best in a supportive environment that includes a balance of child-initiated and teacher-guided experiences and that play and creativity are the foundations for a quality program for children. Finally, and maybe most importantly, we believe the education, learning, and care of young children involves a partnership with each child's family within the context of community.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR

We believe that Early Childhood Educators must be thoroughly grounded in child development knowledge and demonstrate strong observational and listening skills. In addition, we believe Early Childhood Educators must promote development and learning in all aspects of the curriculum. They must be proficient in documenting children's development, skills, interests and behaviours both formally and informally. This leads to thoughtful and engaging planning of learning experiences for children based on those skills, abilities, and interests. Early Childhood Educators must also establish and maintain collaborative, supportive relationships with children, their families, and with each other, demonstrating respect for diversity and inclusion regarding the entire learning community.

PRACTICUM AND THE LAB SCHOOLS

Practical experience is central to the learning process. Students will have completed a total of 600 hours of practicum before graduation. We are proud to have developed a partnership with Nova Scotia Community College and are operating three Lab Schools out of the campuses in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The Lab Schools of NSCECE are valuable teaching sites for the ECE program and serve as an extension of the classroom learning process. All employees at the Lab Schools (permanent, contract and casual) are an important part of the NSCECE team and are critical to the success of the organization. The college operated lab schools provide:

- Programs for young children based on the research validated framework Nova Scotia Early Learning Curriculum Framework
- Opportunities for observation, documentation and programming
- Environments that reinforce a reflective, intentionally responsive philosophy
- A demonstration of quality, inclusive child care for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers
- An opportunity for students to participate in a setting that is based on the philosophy outlined by the ECE program at NSCECE
- An environment where student teachers, lab school employees and College faculty can collaborate

The purpose of the Lab Schools is to nurture the link between practice and theory and to provide support and exemplary modeling for our ECE student teachers. In order for a student to gain diverse experience, the Practicum Coordinator, in consultation with the Workplace Practicum site administrator, may recommend a visit to one of the lab schools.

- Designate work time which will incorporate practicum competencies and opportunities.
- Pre-set daily and weekly planning and debriefing discussion times with the student.
- Inform families of what is happening and why.
- Inform other staff of what is happening and why.
- Plan to support students as they explore alternate “ways of knowing and being” as they study current research on teaching strategies and styles.
- Be willing to discuss what opportunities or flexibility the workplace will offer to assist student achievement of this goal.

Students should:

- Be able to attend to practicum responsibilities while working – this may require additional time and organization.
- Be open to constructive feedback from their Mentor Educator who is also their co-worker or supervisor.
- Accept that they are in a learning mode and that the Mentor Educator may create teaching situations in order to assist students in achieving practicum objectives (e.g. a Mentor Educator may note that the student needs to gain skills in large group developmentally appropriate circle times and may request that the student observe a circle, to reflect upon the activity, share insights and learning, and implement new strategies in several student conducted circle times).
- Only document hours when another ECE is on the floor and as the student, they are not the sole charge of the room. This means students will not be able to document beginning/ end of days/ break times or lunch hours when they might be alone or in sole charge.
- Understand that practicum will add additional workload to the staff members who are working at the centre.

These are only a few of the Workplace Practicum considerations. There may be other considerations depending on the workplace and individual needs. A Workplace Practicum can be a valuable experience for the student and the centre and it is important to ensure all possible protocols are in place to protect both the student and the practicum placement.

The Practicum Advisor will:

Re: Placement/Mentor Educator

- * Familiarize self with the philosophy of the program and inform the Mentor Educator of practicum goals and expectations.
- * During each practicum visit, discuss with the progress of the student with the Mentor Educator.
- * Discuss any problems that arise promptly with student and Mentor Educator.
- * Serve as a resource and mentor for Mentor Educator.

Re: Student

- * Visit, observe and provide feedback to the student at least twice during each term.
- * Support reflective practice by discussing progress with the student and helping the student identify strengths and areas of need.
- * Support the student in communication with the Mentor Educator and the centre.
- * Assist students in planning appropriate experiences.
- * Assist students in developing reflective skills and the ability to analyze the experiences they plan as well as their interactions with the children.
- * Complete feedback notes/comments and discuss with student. Leave a duplicate copy with the student.
- * Monitor student's practicum portfolio and write concise comments. Initial planning sheets for each student.
- * Conduct self in a professional manner while representing NSCECE.
- * Maintain confidentiality of children, students and program staff.
- * Maintain a professional working relationship with placement personnel, parents, students, and families.

The Practicum Coordinator will:

- * Hold an initial orientation with the student prior to practicum to discuss practicum expectations and responsibilities.
- * Approve placement sites and provide the Memorandum of Understanding.
- * Keep communication open with placement sites. Act as a liaison between placement and student.
- * Be available for consultation during posted office hours.
- * Ensure that the required number of hours is completed.
- * Determine final grade based on: overall performance, suggested grade from Practicum Advisor, and required documentation.
- * Be available to students to discuss progress and concerns.
- * Be available to Advisors to discuss student progress and concerns.

PRACTICUM PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENT

Students must submit a practicum portfolio which includes all required elements. The portfolio is a professional work sample and is to be assembled in an organized manner following the expectations outlined in this handbook. The student's Practicum Advisor will clarify guidelines and expectations during the scheduled mandatory practicum seminars. Students who do not offer their portfolio to their Practicum Advisor for review at seminars or on-site visits will miss important feedback and take the risk that their portfolio will not meet the criteria necessary for a pass when it is submitted.

Completed portfolios must be submitted on the portfolio due date unless an extension has been granted by the Practicum Advisor. Incomplete portfolios will not be graded. It is the student's responsibility to ensure all necessary signatures are obtained.

The practicum portfolio is a large assignment. Students should work on it each day of their placement. Don't leave it until the last minute!

The Practicum Portfolio must be submitted to the Practicum Advisor in the manner and time specified. A satisfactory and complete practicum portfolio is a requirement for successful completion of practicum. An incomplete practicum portfolio must be remedied prior to the end of the practicum term. If not completed satisfactorily the incomplete portfolio will result in a grade of No Credit repeat (NCR).

PRACTICUM PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS

1. PORTFOLIO COVER PAGE

- Practicum Level
- Student name and contact information
- Placement name, address and phone number
- Mentor Educator name and contact information
- Practicum Advisor name and contact information

2. SELF-INTRODUCTION POSTER

3. REQUIRED PROGRAM INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION

- Daily Routine (as posted in the classroom) you may also choose to include your own notes and reminders on how to organize for daily activities
- Philosophy Statement of the Centre
- Behaviour Guidance Policy of the Centre
- Health & Safety Information such as diaper changing protocols, etc.
- Other materials gathered, or that provided by the placement

4. OFFICIAL SIGNED TIMESHEET

- It is the student's responsibility to do the addition and include the total hours
- No fewer than the required number of placement hours for the practicum level (some students may have more hours than required)
- Seminar dates and hours recorded on Practicum Checklist
- Signed by Mentor Educator, student and Advisor

5. SIGNED FEEDBACK AND SELF-EVALUATION FORMS

- Feedback and Self-Evaluation Forms should be completed and discussed at mid-term and at the end of practicum. Make sure to obtain all required signatures prior to passing in the practicum portfolio.
- **** See Practicum Feedback Forms for specific details of competencies at each level of practicum****

6. COMPLETED EXPERIENCE PLANNING SHEETS

Students are required to plan and implement a certain number of experiences depending on which practicum course they are enrolled in. The portfolio checklist that is included in the practicum package will outline the specific requirements.

Experience planning sheets are considered complete when they record all aspects of the observation, planning, implementation, and reflection cycle, and have been signed by the Mentor Experience. Activity plans must include the date the activity was implemented.

7. PRACTICUM MODULE ASSIGNMENTS (ECE 105 ONLY)*

- Introduction Poster Assignment
- Anecdotal play observations from different learning centres e.g. blocks, outdoors, art area, etc. Include drawing of classroom floor plan.
- Noticing/observations of things that capture your attention or interest about a child, the environment or a teaching practice
- Completed activity plans
- Journal entries done during Practicum Modules
- Journal entries completed during placement (Journal prompts provided)
- Final reflection on learning goals
- Learning goals for next practicum

* These assignments are discussed and reviewed during the six mandatory practicum modules that are part of Practicum I.

8. OBSERVATIONS (ECE 205, 305, 405 ONLY)

Students in Practicum II, III and IV are required to record observations as a means of practicing this important competency. An observation workbook is provided to students with both personal observations and focused observations. Students will be expected to fill out the workbook in full. The personal observations are ones that are intriguing to the student. The focused observations reflect important developmental concepts and will help students make the connection between theory and practice.

9. REFLECTIVE JOURNAL (ECE 205, 305, 405 ONLY)

Students in Practicum II, III and IV are required to keep a reflective journal. This journal offers you an opportunity to critically reflect on your developing skills and increasing professional knowledge. In the journal, the student will choose significant happenings that have taken place and write an account of them. The events should be significant because of what happened and an effort should be made to reflect on what the student learned from the situation and how that might lead to a change in thinking or practice. Journals are private and will only be reviewed by the student's Practicum Advisor. A guided journal workbook is provided for students.

PRACTICUM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow all policies in the NSCECE Early Childhood Education Student Handbook and the NSCECE Early Childhood Education Practicum Handbook while on practicum.

1. PROFESSIONALISM

In addition to providing an opportunity to develop skills, the practicum placement serves to introduce students to issues encompassing the professional nature of the child care field. The student should be able to fulfil all professional expectations as outlined in practicum evaluation and act in a conscientious and mature manner as a representative of the Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education. Acceptable standards of student conduct are based on common sense and common courtesy, respect towards all children, Mentor Educators, Administrators and colleagues.

The College expects a high standard of professionalism during the program, as each student is a representative of NSCECE. Students, who are unable to uphold these standards (i.e.) do not conduct themselves in a professionally acceptable manner, may be asked to discontinue their practicum.

*****Admission to practicum may be refused by the Mentor Educator or Practicum Advisor for patterns of lateness, misconduct, inattention or neglect of duty. *****

2. ATTENDANCE

Five hundred and forty-four (544) hours of practicum are required for graduation. These hours are accumulated as a result of all placement hours, practicum modules, and seminars scheduled by the College. Each practicum has a minimum number of field placement hours that are required to successfully move on to the next practicum level.

- Practicum I – minimum of 105 documented placement hours (14 days)
- Practicum II – minimum of 120 documented placement hours (16 days)
- Practicum III – minimum of 135 documented placement hours (18 days)
- Practicum IV – minimum of 150 documented placement hours (20 days)

If the student has not demonstrated the learning outcomes within the designated time frame, permission may be given by the Practicum Coordinator for additional time to meet requirements.

3. TIME SHEETS

Time sheets and their maintenance are the responsibility of the student. Students are given a time sheet that must be posted at the placement and signed by both the student and Mentor Educator prior

to submitting the time sheet to their Advisor. Students are to keep a backup copy of their timesheet in their practicum portfolio so it can be reviewed and initialed by their Advisor at practicum seminar.

Students are responsible for adding up their own hours and are reminded a 15 minute preparation time each day is not to be included in the daily total. Most employers expect employees to be on site at least 15 minutes prior to beginning work. This time gives students the opportunity to gather materials, and take a few moments to rest and prepare themselves for the busy day.

4. STORM DAYS

Child care centres do not usually cancel for storm days. However, in the case of extreme circumstances, closure is at the discretion of the centre. The specified number of placement hours is still required to pass practicum so students must make up anytime that might be missed due to storms.

5. PRACTICUM SEMINARS

Practicum seminars are scheduled during the practicum term. Seminars give students an opportunity to discuss successes and questions in a small group environment. Students must attend all scheduled seminars, as attendance will be taken. Non-attendance at practicum seminars may result in an NCR for practicum. Attendance at seminars must be documented on the practicum portfolio checklist and initialed by the student's Practicum Advisor.

6. STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS OR EXCEPTIONALITIES

If any student has a special need s/he must inform the College before commencing studies. Accommodations are organized through the Student Success office following College protocols. It is important to note that Practicum sites have a voluntary relationship with NSCECE and agree to host a student and provide a workplace environment where students practice skills and learn through their interactions with children, families and placement staff. NSCECE can request accommodations but cannot ensure practicum sites are able to implement accommodations.

Students are responsible for sharing information about approved accommodations with their Practicum Advisor, Mentor Educator and practicum site at the beginning of term so that agreed accommodations can be made available.

7. WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATION

Students are requested to use correct language, spelling and grammar, as indicated in the College policies, when submitting required documentation as well as in direct oral communication with Mentor Educators, College Advisors, and children. Students are responsible for keeping an up-to-date practicum portfolio that is well organized and professionally presented.

8. PROBLEM RESOLUTION

Problems or concerns that arise during the practicum placement should be identified early and communicated to all parties.

WHEN A STUDENT OR MENTOR EDUCATOR IDENTIFIES AND SHARES CONCERN:

- The concern is to be documented
- The student and the Mentor Educator discuss the concern
- After the student and the Mentor Educator explore the issue and choose an acceptable solution or plan of action to resolve the problem a summary of the plan should be sent to the student's Practicum Advisor for follow up
- The Practicum Advisor should be contacted if further guidance is needed; the student and the Mentor Educator do not agree on a solution; the problem is not resolvable; the problem is persistent and recurring; termination of the practicum is being considered
- The Practicum Advisor can help clarify and communicate the specific concerns and help create detailed suggestions for improvement; outline a reasonable timeline for improvement; and indicate consequences should the concerns continue
- In consultation with the Practicum Coordinator a behavioural contract may be established to reinforce expectations around professionalism
- In the event that the concern cannot be mutually resolved by the student, Mentor Educator and Practicum Advisor the NSCECE Practicum Coordinator must be contacted and consulted
- The Practicum Coordinator will inform and seek guidance from the College Executive Director as necessary
- If the concern cannot be resolved by the individuals involved, the practicum site, and NSCECE, the student may be asked to withdraw from the practicum placement, and potentially from practicum

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality includes showing respect for peers, faculty members, children and their families. Conversations regarding these persons should contain only professional objective observations with a focus on student reflection and learning. Students are not to use the names of children, placement personnel or practicum sites when discussing practicum either informally or during classes or seminars.

All students sign a confidentiality agreement as part of the practicum process. Students must refrain from discussing any information about children and their practicum experience outside the placement and the College. Breaking confidentiality may be cause for termination from the practicum.

10. USE OF DIGITAL IMAGES

Students will respect the privacy rights of children, families and colleagues and abide by the Photo and Digital Image Policies of their practicum sites. Additionally, students will only capture digital images for the purposes of observation and documentation assignments. Students will not transmit, post or share digital images of children, families, or placement staff. Students will delete any stored digital images used for assignments before the end of the term in which they were used.

11. APPROPRIATE DRESS

Students should dress in compliance with the dress code of their placement site. If the centre does not have a dress code, students are reminded that they are to dress professionally and appropriately for the work they are doing. This includes clean and comfortable clothes, appropriate personal hygiene, no high heels, jewelry or manner of dress which may cause discomfort or present a danger to the children. If a student's dress or personal hygiene is creating a problem for the Centre or the College, the student will be spoken to regarding the issue. Students are reminded that they will also need appropriate outdoor clothing for all kinds of weather.

12. EVALUATION

Evaluation for practicum is an on-going process involving the student, Mentor Educator and Practicum Advisor. Students will be offered interim feedback half way through practicum so they can review their progress and set learning goals (usually during block week), and a summative evaluation the end of term. Students are responsible to complete a self-evaluation as part of the evaluation process. The final evaluation for the semester's work in practicum is based on the following:

- Midterm and final feedback
- Midterm and final self-evaluation
- Satisfactory completion of required hours
- Satisfactory completion of Practicum Portfolio
- Satisfactory attendance and participation in all practicum seminars, modules and industry related training

13. ENJOY!

This is the most amazing time. *Have fun. Take risks. Try things out. Then try again.* Trust the children, they know how to learn and if you pay close attention they will show you what they need.

APPENDIX A: PROGRAM OF STUDIES (AS OF SEPTEMBER, 2019)

Code	Course Name	Hours
COM 100	Communications	30
ECE 101	Child Growth & Development	60
ECE 113	Play: Pedagogy & Curriculum	60
ECE 127	Health, Safety, and Nutrition	30
ECE 147	Child Guidance I: Strategies & Approaches	30
* ECE 105	Practicum I (ECE 101 or ECE 147 or concurrent)	<u>127</u>
		337
ECE 201	Foundations of Early Childhood Education	30
ECE 203	Play: Extending Experiences	60
ECE 212	Play: Creative Arts	60
ECE 211	Observation & Authentic Assessment	30
ECE 229	Welcoming Families in All Their Diversity	60
* ECE 205	Practicum II (ECE 105; ECE 101 or ECE 147 or concurrent)	<u>124</u>
		364
* ECE 306	Inclusion: Relationships & Environments (ECE 101)	60
* ECE 307	Child Guidance II: Social Emotional Learning (ECE 147)	30
ECE 312	Ethics and Professional Identity	30
ECE 323	Play: Physical Literacy	30
ECE 313	Responsive Caregiving in the Early Years	60
* ECE 305	Practicum III (ECE 205; ECE 101; ECE 147)	<u>139</u>
		349
ECE 407	Play: Literacy & Numeracy	30
* ECE 406	Inclusion: Supports & Interventions (ECE 306)	60
* ECE 418	Emergent Curriculum & Pedagogical Documentation (ECE 211)	60
ECE 425	Administration & Management	60
ECE 409	Play: Environment as Teacher	30
* ECE 405	Practicum IV (ECE 305; ECE 101; ECE 147)	<u>154</u>
		394
		TOTAL: 1,444
ECE 157	Child Guidance I & II	60

* Prerequisite required (in brackets)

APPENDIX B: ATTENDANCE POLICY – PRACTICUM

1. To receive a pass (P), students must complete the total assigned number of practicum hours, which includes practicum seminars. If time is missed for **any** reason, it is the student's responsibility to arrange makeup time. All absent time must be made up within the designated practicum term.
 - Make medical and other personal appointments around practicum hours.
 - Limit absence to illness or bereavement.
 - Inform NSCECE beforehand of a need to be absent for important religious holidays during the placement.
 - Be prepared to show evidence of a valid reason for any time missed.
2. As outlined in the academic calendar each practicum course has a start date, an end date, a portfolio submission date, and an end of practicum term date. All practicum requirements must be met prior to noon on the end of practicum term date. Students must complete their placement hours and pass in all other practicum course requirements within the designated timeframe.
3. The practicum term allows a limited amount of time for makeup days due to absence. The amount of time available varies according to the academic calendar year. Students who miss more time than can be made up prior to the end of practicum term date will receive a non-credit repeat (NCR) and must repeat the course. ***Practicum will not be extended beyond the end-of-practicum term date listed in the academic calendar.***
4. Attendance is mandatory for all practicum seminars. Students will be in jeopardy of receiving an NCR (non-credit repeat) if they are absent for any reason.
5. Time sheets and their maintenance are the responsibility of the student. Students are given a time sheet that **must** be posted in the child care centre and signed by both the student and Mentor Educator prior to submitting the time sheet to their Advisor. Students are required to keep an additional copy of their hours for review by the Practicum Advisor at seminar.

APPENDIX C: TERMINATION OF PRACTICUM

Termination of a student's practicum placement at any time is a serious matter and will always be based on a thorough review of the issues and any steps taken to resolve the issue.

A student's practicum may be terminated for the following reasons:

- The student resigns, or is terminated, from the Workplace Practicum site.
- The student fails to adhere to NSCECE attendance policy, confidentiality policy, or behavioural contract
- Administrative changes within the practicum site that negatively impact the student's learning experience
- Failure of the student or practicum site to meet expected standards for ethical professional practice
- If a change is made in practicum placement location to better accommodate a student's learning there may be an extension of the number of required hours to ensure a successful learning outcome.

APPENDIX D: ECE 105 – PRACTICUM I COURSE OUTLINE

General Course Description:

This course will be a combination of classroom content and a field placement opportunity in a licensed child care centre. In the classroom portion of this course, students are provided with an introduction to the roles and responsibilities of the Early Childhood Educator. Upon completion of these modules, students are placed in child care centres working with children from infancy through school age. Practicum I is designed to provide students with an opportunity to become familiar with child care through observation and reflection and to gain experience interacting with children and families.

Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students will

- Demonstrate an awareness, appreciation, and modeling of positive relationships, and apply such knowledge to their practice. **With support**, the student will be able to:
 - Form responsive and nurturing relationships with children of different ages and abilities
 - Encourage children to form positive relationships with other children
- Demonstrate an understanding of early learning curriculum and pedagogical practices, and apply such knowledge to their practice. **With support**, the student will be able to:
 - Assist in the planning and implementation of inquiry and play based-experiences
 - Use observations to inform pedagogical practices
- Demonstrate an understanding of principles of health and safety for young children, and apply such knowledge to their practice. **With support**, the student will be able to:
 - Demonstrate safe and sanitary personal hygiene practices with children
 - Identify potential risks and hazards in indoor and outdoor learning environments

Practicum Hours: 127 hours

Practicum Advisor: To Be Determined

Required Documents (prior to start): Clear Child Abuse Registry Letter
Current Vulnerable Sector Check

Required Documents (upon completion): NSCECE Practicum Portfolio Package

Professional Expectations

- Use appropriate grammar and vocabulary when initiating or responding to written and/or spoken communication
- Protect the sensitive information and the privacy and confidentiality of children and their families
- Demonstrate an understanding of and adhere to the NSCECE Code of Conduct
- Maintain professional boundaries with children and families
- Recognize the importance of confidentiality, its limits, and the consequences of breaching it
- Understand the importance of and model non-judgmental attitudes
- Take responsibility for their own actions and decisions, as well as the resulting consequences
- Be open-minded and accepting of constructive feedback
- Be professional in the workplace, such as awareness of tone of voice, respecting privacy, adhering to work hours, attendance policies, dress code, and other workplace expectations
- Establish personal learning goals

Course Content:

Practicum Modules (in-class):	18 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to Practicum• Starting to Notice Children• Starting to Notice Environments• Frequently asked questions about practicum• Activity Planning• Role Playing for Success	
Practicum Seminars (with Advisor)	4 hours
Practicum Placement:	105 hours

Students will use the information gained in the classes to demonstrate professional behaviour, clear and positive communication skills and will serve as an assistant to the program. Students will have opportunities to plan activities with Early Childhood Educators, reflect on their experiences and apply their course knowledge to practical experience.

Evaluation: Students will be evaluated on a pass/fail/NCR basis according to the competencies in the Practicum Evaluation Forms, completion of practicum hours and required practicum portfolio elements.

Students will adhere to all academic policies found in the Student Handbook. *The learning outcomes listed are the minimum expectations. At the discretion of the student, Practicum Advisor, and/or Practicum Coordinator, additional learning outcomes may be added. This allows for each student, no matter their amount of experience, to take their practice to the next level.*

APPENDIX E: ECE 205 – PRACTICUM II COURSE OUTLINE

General Course Description:

Building on previous practicum experience, students will continue field placement opportunities in licensed child care settings working with children from infancy to school age. Students will strengthen skills in communication, professionalism, curriculum planning and implementation, and behaviour guidance. Students will demonstrate an understanding of planning, implementation, and reflection of developmentally appropriate experiences in the areas of creative expression, small groups, circles and transitions. Students will function as a more effective team member during this time but may still require periodic assistance in demonstrating the required skills. Students will also actively participate in practicum seminars where they will share ideas and experiences with their peers through guided discussion and activities.

Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students will

- Demonstrate an **emerging** knowledge of child development and learning theories and apply such knowledge to their practice. The student will be able to:
 - Demonstrate strategies for guiding children’s behaviour
- Demonstrate an **emerging** awareness, appreciation, and modeling of positive relationships, and apply such knowledge to their practice. The student will be able to:
 - Form responsive and nurturing relationships with children of different ages and abilities
 - Encourage children to form positive relationships with other children
 - With support, begin to form relationships with parents and families of children
- Demonstrate an **emerging** understanding of early learning curriculum and pedagogical practices, and apply such knowledge to their practice. The student will be able to:
 - Plan and implement inquiry and play based-experiences
 - Use observations to inform pedagogical practices
 - Engage in reflective practice

Practicum Hours: 124 hours

Practicum Advisor: To Be Determined

Required Documents (prior to start): Clear Child Abuse Registry Letter
Current Vulnerable Sector Check

Required Documents (upon completion): NSCECE Practicum Portfolio Package

Professional Expectations

- Use appropriate grammar and vocabulary when initiating or responding to written and/or spoken communication
- Protect the sensitive information and the privacy and confidentiality of children and their families
- Demonstrate an understanding of and adhere to the NSCECE Code of Conduct
- Maintain professional boundaries with children and families
- Model positive and professional relationships with colleagues and supervisors
- Recognize the importance of confidentiality, its limits, and the consequences of breaching it
- Understand the importance of and model non-judgmental attitudes
- Take responsibility for their own actions and decisions, as well as the resulting consequences
- Be open-minded and accepting of constructive feedback
- Be professional in the workplace, such as awareness of tone of voice, respecting privacy, adhering to work hours, attendance policies, dress code, and other workplace expectations

Course Content:

Practicum Seminars (with Advisor)	4 hours
Practicum Placement	150 hours

Evaluation: Students will be evaluated on a pass/fail/NCR basis according to the competencies in the Practicum Evaluation Forms, completion of practicum hours and required practicum portfolio elements.

Students will adhere to all academic policies found in the Student Handbook.

The learning outcomes listed are the minimum expectations. At the discretion of the student, Practicum Advisor, and/or Practicum Coordinator, additional learning outcomes may be added. This allows for each student, no matter their amount of experience, to take their practice to the next level.

APPENDIX F: ECE 305 – PRACTICUM III COURSE OUTLINE

General Course Description:

Building on previous practicum experience, students will continue field placement opportunities in licensed child care settings working with children from infancy to school age. Students will now have opportunities for “out-of-Classroom” placements that will provide a wider range of opportunities in inclusion, administration and family-centred practice.

Demonstrating skills in communication, professionalism, curriculum planning and implementation, and behaviour guidance, students will continue using observations as a springboard for planning developmentally appropriate experiences for children and will function as an effective team member. Students will also actively participate in practicum seminars where they will share ideas and experiences with their peers through guided discussion and activities.

Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students will

- Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of child development and learning theories and apply such knowledge to their practice. The student will **consistently** be able to:
 - Demonstrate strategies for guiding children’s behaviour by utilizing a variety of positive guidance techniques
- Demonstrate an awareness, appreciation, and modeling of positive relationships, and apply such knowledge to their practice. The student will **consistently** be able to:
 - Form responsive and nurturing relationships with children of different ages and abilities
 - Encourage children to form positive relationships with other children
 - Form relationships with parents and families of children, and **with support**, will begin to encourage familial engagement
- Demonstrate an understanding of early learning curriculum and pedagogical practices, and apply such knowledge to their practice. The student will **consistently** be able to:
 - Independently plan and implement inquiry and play-based experiences
 - Apply knowledge of Capable, Confident and Curious: Nova Scotia’s Early Learning Curriculum Framework’s learning goals and objectives to program planning with different age groups of children
 - Use observations to inform pedagogical practices and share observations with Mentor Educator and practicum Advisor
 - Engage in reflective practice

Practicum Hours: 139 hours

Practicum Advisor:

Required Documents (prior to start): Clear Child Abuse Registry Letter
Current Vulnerable Sector Check

Required Documents (upon completion): NSCECE Practicum Portfolio Package

Professional Expectations

- Use appropriate grammar and vocabulary when initiating or responding to written and/or spoken communication
- Protect the sensitive information and the privacy and confidentiality of children and their families
- Demonstrate an understanding of and adhere to the NSCECE Code of Conduct
- Make ethical decisions and act in accordance with ethical and professional standards
- Maintain professional boundaries with children and families
- Model positive and professional relationships with colleagues and supervisors
- Recognize the importance of confidentiality, its limits, and the consequences of breaching it
- Demonstrate an awareness of conflicts of interest, and why it is necessary to identify and declare their own
- Understand the importance of and model non-judgmental attitudes
- Take responsibility for their own actions and decisions, as well as the resulting consequences
- Be open-minded and accepting of constructive feedback
- Be professional in the workplace, such as awareness of tone of voice, respecting privacy, adhering to work hours, attendance policies, dress code, and other workplace expectations

Course Content:

Practicum Seminars (with Advisor)	4 hours
Practicum Placement	150 hours

Evaluation: Students will be evaluated on a pass/fail/NCR basis according to the competencies in the Practicum Evaluation Forms, completion of practicum hours and required practicum portfolio elements.

Students will adhere to all academic policies found in the Student Handbook.

The learning outcomes listed are the minimum expectations. At the discretion of the student, Practicum Advisor, and/or Practicum Coordinator, additional learning outcomes may be added. This allows for each student, no matter their amount of experience, to take their practice to the next level.

APPENDIX G: PRACTICUM IV COURSE OUTLINE

General Course Description:

Building on previous practicum experience, students will continue field placement opportunities in licensed child care settings working with children from infancy to school age. Students will continue to have opportunities for “out-of-Classroom” placements that will provide a wider range of opportunities in inclusion, administration and family-centred practice. Students will consistently demonstrate skills in communication, professionalism, curriculum planning and implementation, and behaviour guidance. Students will combine skills in observation, knowledge of child development and curriculum planning to demonstrate an understanding of an inclusive and holistic approach to program planning. Students will also actively participate in practicum seminars where they will share ideas and experiences with their peers through guided discussion and activities.

Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students will

- Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of child development and learning theories and apply such knowledge to their practice. The student will **independently and consistently** be able to:
 - Demonstrate strategies for guiding children’s behaviour
- Demonstrate an awareness, appreciation, and modeling of positive relationships, and apply such knowledge to their practice. The student will **independently and consistently** be able to:
 - Form and maintain responsive and nurturing relationships with children of different ages and abilities
 - Encourage children to form positive relationships with other children
 - Form relationships with parents and families of children and encourage familial engagement
- Demonstrate an understanding of early learning curriculum and pedagogical practices, and apply such knowledge to their practice. The student will **independently and consistently** be able to:
 - Independently plan and implement inquiry and play-based experiences
 - Apply knowledge of Capable, Confident and Curious: Nova Scotia’s Early Learning Curriculum Framework’s learning goals and objectives to program planning with different age groups of children
 - Demonstrate knowledge of the pedagogical principles described in Nova Scotia’s early learning framework and apply those principles of different ages groups of children
 - Use observations to inform pedagogical practices and share observations with Mentor Educator and practicum Advisor
 - Engage in reflective practice

Practicum Hours: 154 hours

Practicum Advisor:

Required Documents (prior to start): Clear Child Abuse Registry Letter
Current Vulnerable Sector Check

Required Documents (upon completion): NSCECE Practicum Portfolio Package

Professional Expectations

- Use appropriate grammar and vocabulary when initiating or responding to written and/or spoken communication
- Protect the sensitive information and the privacy and confidentiality of children and their families
- Demonstrate an understanding of and adhere to a Code of Ethics
- Make ethical decisions and act in accordance with ethical and professional standards
- Maintain professional boundaries with children and families
- Model positive and professional relationships with colleagues and supervisors
- Recognize the importance of confidentiality, its limits, and the consequences of breaching it
- Demonstrate an awareness of conflicts of interest, and why it is necessary to identify and declare their own
- Understand the importance of and model non-judgmental attitudes
- Manage their time and resources to meet deadlines for projects and tasks
- Take responsibility for their own actions and decisions, as well as the resulting consequences
- Productively respond to change
- Be open-minded and accepting of constructive feedback
- Be professional in the workplace, such as awareness of tone of voice, respecting privacy, adhering to work hours, attendance policies, dress code, and other workplace expectations

Course Content:

Practicum Seminars (with Advisor)	4 hours
Practicum Placement	150 hours

Evaluation: Students will be evaluated on a pass/fail/NCR basis according to the competencies in the Practicum Evaluation Forms, completion of practicum hours and required practicum portfolio elements.

Students will adhere to all academic policies found in the Student Handbook.

The learning outcomes listed are the minimum expectations. At the discretion of the student, Practicum Advisor, and/or Practicum Coordinator, additional learning outcomes may be added. This allows for each student, no matter their amount of experience, to take their practice to the next level.