

SPU MA-TESOL



Practicum Handbook

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WELCOME!

Welcome to the Teaching Practicum of the Seattle Pacific University MA-TESOL program. Though challenging, the Teaching Practicum can be one of the most pleasant and rewarding parts of the entire program. For students, it is the capstone experience that gives them the opportunity to observe a gifted teacher, to reflect, and finally to put into practice the ideas, insights and techniques they have learned through their other coursework. It also serves as their formal introduction into the community of professional ESL teachers. Host Teachers have the satisfaction of helping to initiate new colleagues into the work that brings them so many rewards, and may be refreshed by the new energy the practicum students bring.

In writing this Practicum Handbook we have compiled the experience and wisdom of the many host teachers and MA-TESOL students throughout the program's history since its inception in 1993. The results of these reflections provide a pathway for the success of our students as they develop their growing professional competence and unique teaching voice.

The description that follows applies to typical Practicum settings. Naturally, specific circumstances may call for an extra portion of good will and flexible common sense.

We would like to take this occasion to express our happy pride in the students who are undertaking the final steps of their Master's degree program, and our deep gratitude to the host teachers who give so generously of their time and expertise to support them along the way.

May your Teaching Practicum be a joyful adventure!

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MA-TESOL at Seattle Pacific University

Covenant of Trust and Mutual Accountability

The MA-TESOL Program seeks to create a learning environment that promotes both depth of theoretical knowledge and breadth of practical experience.

The MA-TESOL Program strives to ensure that students develop professional behavior in relationship to host teachers, students, colleagues, SPU faculty, and the wider community.

The MA-TESOL Program requires the student to complete 80 hours in both Phase I and Phase II practica for a total of 160 hours.

The **student** will evince a growing sense of vocation in teaching English Language Learners, and remain engaged and active in the observation and teaching in the host classroom. The student will attend meetings with the practicum coordinator and other practicum students to discuss the practicum experience. Additionally, the practicum student will complete reflective journaling and additional assignments linked to the practica.

The **host teacher** will serve as a teaching mentor and support the practicum student with constructive feedback. The Phase II host teacher will complete a written evaluation of the student's teaching.

The **practicum coordinator** will maintain ongoing communication with the host teacher and student regarding the placement. The practicum coordinator will meet with the Phase I and Phase II students as a group to discuss and reflect on issues relating to the practicum. The practicum coordinator will observe the Phase II student for one or more teaching sessions in the host setting and meet with the student for observation feedback.

The **practicum student, host teacher, and practicum coordinator** understand and commit to the mutual responsibilities as outlined in this document and in the *SPU MA-TESOL Practicum Handbook*.

Student _____

Host Teacher _____

Host Teacher _____

Practicum Coordinator _____

Date _____

Host Teacher Phase I

Host teachers are integral to the practicum team in the MA-TESOL Program at Seattle Pacific University. Their partnership is a valued contribution to the professional growth and teaching competence of the practicum student. The practicum student is first and foremost a guest in the host institution and in the classrooms of the host teachers. The MA-TESOL program greatly values this hospitality and recognizes the extra time involved in being a successful host teacher.

Host teachers come from diverse backgrounds and have a heart for service and new teacher mentoring. As thoughtful practitioners, many are motivated to serve as they recall their experiences as beginning teachers. As reflective learners, host teachers welcome the current knowledge and teaching techniques that practicum students bring to their classrooms. As seasoned professionals, they are familiar with the routine of daily teaching and protocol at the institutions they serve.

During Phase I, the practicum student spends 8 hours a week divided between the classrooms of two host teachers. This Phase allows the practicum student opportunity to actively observe the rhythm of two teaching styles and classroom settings. The host teacher, practicum student and practicum coordinator meet before the start of the practicum. At this conference each host teacher shares information about the level, course content, and student population of their class. Also discussed is the role of the practicum student in the class. The host teachers encourage the practicum student to ask questions and share their teaching experience and goals. Contact information is exchanged and a Covenant of Trust and Accountability is signed at this conference.

At the start of the quarter host teachers share syllabi, lesson plans, class texts and handouts with the practicum student. At the discretion of the host teacher, the practicum student may help with classroom activities. Such activities may include serving as a conversational model, dialogue partner or assisting students in class who need extra academic support. Valuable learning opportunities outside the classroom may arise during Phase I. Faculty meetings, assessment sessions, or professional development workshops may be attended by the student with the consent of the host teacher. During Phase I, the practicum student focuses on descriptive journaling. This journaling helps students refine their observational skills and prepares them for their Phase II teaching experience.

Throughout Phase I, the practicum student is encouraged to make inquiries about classroom process. The host teacher and practicum student communicate regularly throughout Phase I by email or in conferences. The practicum coordinator communicates routinely with both host teacher and practicum student. Each Phase I host teacher receives a \$100 honorarium as an expression of the university's gratitude and appreciation for their partnership with the MA-TESOL program.

Phase I Host Teacher Checklist

Participates in Initial Conference with practicum coordinator and practicum student

- Shares about class
- Discusses practicum student's role in classroom
- Exchanges contact information and establishes schedule
- Arranges first day protocol
- Signs Covenant of Trust and Accountability

Classroom

- Establishes observation "place" and introduces practicum student to class
- Integrates practicum student into classroom culture
- Shares classroom resources i.e. syllabus, text, lesson plans
- Plans classroom activities for practicum student e.g. conversational model, dialogue partner

Ongoing

- Communicates regularly with practicum student
- Expects inquiries from both practicum coordinator and practicum student
- Contacts practicum coordinator as needed

Receives \$100 Honorarium at Conclusion of Quarter

Host Teacher Phase II

Phase II provides an opportunity for the practicum student to teach under the supervision of one host teacher. The student is required to teach about 15 hours during the quarter at the host teacher's discretion. It is helpful if these hours can be consecutive as this gives the practicum student experience in preparing sequential lessons and implementing long-term instructional goals. The teaching schedule is established jointly by the practicum student and host teacher. The host teacher may have the practicum student "build up" to extended teaching by having the student teach short lesson segments each day. Host teachers may also use the "team-teaching approach" as they support the practicum student's initial teaching. With this mind, the major goal of Phase II is for the practicum student to independently and successfully teach entire lessons using some original materials.

Preparing to teach requires time and planning on the part of host teacher and practicum student. This planning is ongoing and will doubtlessly involve both email and face-to-face conferences. It is crucial that the practicum student develop lesson plans which fit within the instructional goals set by the host teacher. Sharing the class objectives and the material which is expected to be covered is a responsibility of the host teacher. Previous lesson plans and resources are useful models for the practicum student. This material gives the practicum student background to create their unique lesson plans, activities, and handouts. It is imperative that the practicum student share their lesson plans and handouts before their presentation so suggestions by the host teacher may be integrated into the lesson.

A second goal of Phase II is to enable practicum students to integrate constructive and descriptive feedback into their teaching. After each teaching segment, the host teacher is asked to provide feedback. Before giving feedback, it is important that the practicum student first reflect on and talk about their lesson presentation with the host teacher. After this discussion, specific suggestions by the host teacher are useful in guiding the practicum student's future lessons. Setting aside a regular time for feedback conferences is important. Host teachers complete a formal evaluation of the practicum student's teaching at the conclusion of the Phase II quarter.

Phase II requires ongoing and clear communication between the host teacher and practicum student. Such mentoring requires additional time on the part of the host teacher. Throughout the quarter it is helpful if the host teacher shares the rationale about their teaching methods and classroom management techniques. Discussion of these "why" questions can be rich learning experiences for the practicum student as they develop their own teaching style. As most practicum students are nervous at the beginning stages of teaching, it is useful if the host teacher takes initiative in actively encouraging questions and comments.

The practicum coordinator observes the practicum student's teaching for about two to four hours during Phase II. At times, additional faculty from the MA-TESOL program may also request a classroom visit. The MA-TESOL program is committed to training high-quality teaching professionals and to research in teacher education. Host teachers may be asked to participate anonymously in research studies that further the knowledge of teaching English to speakers of other languages. This participation is entirely voluntary. The practicum coordinator serves as a resource to both host teacher and practicum student. The Phase II host teacher receives a \$200 honorarium as an expression of the university's appreciation and gratitude for their partnership with the MA-TESOL program.

Phase II Host Teacher Checklist

Conference with practicum student

- Shares course content and quarter instructional plan
- Establishes teaching schedule with practicum student
- Provides course resources for practicum student
- Reviews practicum student's lesson plan before presentation

Feedback to practicum student

- Sets regular times to share feedback
- Discusses the lesson presentation by the practicum student with suggestions as needed

Ongoing

- Encourages questions and comments from the practicum student
- Expects classroom visits from the practicum coordinator
- Contacts the practicum coordinator as needed

Receives \$200 Honorarium at Conclusion of Quarter

Tips and Prompt Questions for Host Teachers

These tips and prompt questions are helpful in establishing the host teacher/mentor relationship with the practicum student.

Welcome the practicum student at the first meeting.

How did you become interested in teaching? What is your teaching or volunteering background? Do you speak another language? What are your goals for the practicum?

Tell the practicum student about your class.

I teach a Level 4 integrated skills class. Are you familiar with this level of student? There are 20 students in my class from 10 countries.

Have you worked with students from differing backgrounds?

Share the course content and a few details.

Here is a copy of the syllabus. I use this text. My handouts always include a due date.

Share your teaching methods and philosophy.

This is a good warm-up activity because it helps students “get into” English and easily integrates class latecomers. I allow students to speak their own language in class on these occasions because...

Feedback on lesson planning by the practicum student.

Good job. You planned well and included a variety of activities. How do you plan to fit every activity into the 50-minute time frame?

Feedback on lesson presentation by the practicum student.

Good job. I noticed when you did X... the student reacted this way. What should you do?

Ongoing

I encourage your questions. Please tell me how I may be helpful to you during the quarter.

Student Phase I

MA-TESOL students are required to complete a two-quarter Teaching Practicum. Phase I and Phase II are three credits each. These experiences consist of one quarter of active observation in the classroom (Phase I) and one quarter in which the student completes practice teaching under the supervision of a host teacher (Phase II). Students typically spend 8 hours per week in classroom observation. These hours are divided between different classrooms with two host teachers. Phase I provides the unique opportunity for the practicum student to observe two teaching styles and student populations. Both Phase I and Phase II students attend regular practicum meetings facilitated by the practicum coordinator.

MA-TESOL students must contact the practicum coordinator in writing two quarters ahead of their Phase I quarter for a practicum placement. Flexibility is the key to a successful Phase I experience. Students must be flexible in terms of hour availability and towards the type of practicum placement. Effort is made to place the practicum student in a site of choice, but this is not always possible. Practicum students may not be placed in sites where they are working, have worked in the past or have volunteered. Practicum placements are typically unavailable in the summer.

The MA-TESOL program seeks to create a learning environment that ensures graduates have depth of theoretical knowledge and breadth of practical experience. The crucial task of Phase I and Phase II is to move beyond completion of coursework to knowledge of professional standards and excellence in teaching. Professional behavior such as positive demeanor, appropriate dress and grooming, reliability, acceptance of feedback, follow-through on suggestions, clear communication, and acknowledgement of the role as a representative of the Seattle Pacific University MA-TESOL program is assumed.

Phase I students meet with the practicum coordinator and host teachers near the beginning of the Phase I quarter. At this conference, the Phase I classes are discussed and contact information is exchanged. The practicum student and host teachers mutually set the observation schedule. The goal of Phase I is reflective observation and learning. Phase I students have the unique opportunity to actively observe without the intense responsibility of planning and executing a lesson. Making the most of this opportunity provides the groundwork for a successful practicum experience. Practicum students keep a descriptive journal which typically includes class handouts. This journal is a valuable tool as students begin to build their own resource file.

At the discretion of the host teacher, the practicum student may help with classroom activities. Examples of such activities include serving as a conversational model, dialogue partner or assisting students in class who may need extra academic support. Taking advantage of additional learning experiences such as faculty meetings, assessment sessions, and professional development workshops will enrich Phase I learning.

It is essential to remember that the host teacher is providing a unique gift in classroom hospitality. The practicum student and Seattle Pacific University are guests in their classrooms. As practicum students complete Phase I, they often learn that their two host teachers have vastly contrasting styles and that there is no one “right way” to teach a lesson. The host teachers may also have different approaches from the teaching style of the practicum student. Flexibility to varying teaching styles and to diverse student populations contributes to a successful Phase I experience. Host teachers are reflective practitioners and encourage questions about class process. Frequent communication with the host teachers by email or conferences coupled with thanking them for their hospitality makes for a smooth Phase I experience.

Phase I Practicum Student Checklist

Practicum Preparation

- Contacts practicum coordinator in writing 2 quarters before anticipated Phase I quarter**
- Reviews and adjusts schedule for maximum hour flexibility**

Participates in Initial Conference with practicum coordinator and host teacher

- Listens to description of practicum class**
- Asks questions as necessary and appropriate**
- Reviews class syllabus and resources**
- Discusses role in classroom**
- Exchanges contact information and establishes schedule**
- Understands first day protocol**
- Signs Covenant of Trust and Accountability**

Classroom

- Observes and completes descriptive journal**
- Participates in classroom activities at direction of host teacher**
- Completes required 80 hours divided between the two practicum classrooms**

Ongoing

- Communicates regularly with host teacher and practicum coordinator**
- Attends regular practicum meetings during the quarter**

Student Phase II

Phase II provides opportunity for the practicum student to teach under the supervision of one host teacher. Ideally, the practicum student spends 8 hours per week in one of the Phase I practicum classrooms and teaches about 15 hours during the quarter. The practicum student and host teacher work together to establish the teaching schedule. At first, the teaching may initially include short lessons or “team teaching” as the practicum student gains confidence in front of the class. As confidence builds, the teaching segments extend into full-length lessons. All teaching is completed in accordance with the host teacher’s goals for the class. Using resources provided by the host teacher and other materials, the practicum student creates their own lesson plans and handouts. It is important that Phase II students keep in close communication about their lesson plans to ensure that they are a “fit” with the host teacher’s objectives for the class. The major goal of Phase II is for the practicum student to confidently and competently teach entire lessons using some original materials.

A second goal of Phase II is to enable the practicum student to integrate constructive and descriptive feedback into their teaching. After each teaching session, the host teacher gives feedback to the practicum student. The host teacher’s suggestions and comments are discussed and perhaps integrated into the next lesson presentation. The host teacher completes a written evaluation of the practicum student’s teaching at the end of Phase II.

During Phase II, the practicum student keeps a journal of their teaching experience. This journal includes reflections about their lesson planning, resource development and lesson presentation. Topics from this journal as well as teaching resources are often discussed at the monthly practicum meetings. In addition, Phase II students are required to write a brief Philosophy of Teaching Statement which is shared at a practicum meeting.

A successful Phase II experience requires clear and consistent communication between the practicum student and host teacher. It is the responsibility of the practicum student to initiate communication by email and conferences. Setting a regular time for face-to-face conferences is recommended and assures ongoing communication about these issues.

Willingness to ask questions and openness to suggestions help the practicum student make the most of the Phase II experience. It is a professional courtesy to the host teacher to be mindful that the student is a teaching guest.

The practicum coordinator observes the practicum student’s teaching for about two to four hours during the quarter. The practicum student needs to reserve time after this observation for a feedback discussion. The practicum coordinator has ongoing contact with the host teacher about the progress of the practicum student. Not all Phase II students are ready to graduate due to lack of teaching experience or need for professional growth. At times, a practicum student may need to repeat the teaching quarter in order to be ready for graduation. The decision to repeat Phase II is made upon recommendation of the Phase II host teacher, practicum coordinator, and Director of the MA-TESOL Program.

The MA-TESOL Program is committed to training high-quality teaching professionals and to research in teacher education. At times additional faculty from the program may request a site visit. Practicum students may also be asked to participate anonymously in research studies that further knowledge about teaching English to speakers of other languages. This participation is voluntary. Throughout Phase I and Phase II, the practicum coordinator serves as a resource person to both practicum student and host teacher.

Phase II Practicum Student Checklist

Plans for Teaching

- Works with host teacher to establish teaching schedule
- Creates own lesson plan and materials in accordance with host teacher's class goals
- Shares lesson plan with host teacher for suggestions
- Presents lesson

Feedback

- Reflects on lesson presentation with host teacher
- Integrates suggestions into next lesson presentation
- Meets with practicum coordinator after teaching to discuss lesson

Ongoing

- Completes required 80 hours including about 15 hours of supervised teaching
- Completes journal and Philosophy of Teaching Statement
- Communicates regularly with host teacher and practicum coordinator
- Attends monthly practicum meetings during the quarter

Tips and Prompt Questions for Practicum Students

The following tips and prompt questions are helpful in establishing a positive practicum experience

Be a good listener at the first conference with the host teacher and practicum coordinator.

Take notes as the host teachers describe their practicum classes and course content.

Ask questions if you don't understand classroom protocol or your role in classroom activities.

Where do you want me to sit in the classroom? How should I respond if students ask me questions?

Ask questions about the host teacher's teaching materials, methods, and philosophy.

May I have a copy of the syllabus and handouts? I noticed when you did X... the students reacted this way. Why did you choose this approach? How much of their own language do you think that students should use in the classroom?

Ask questions about your teaching in Phase II.

I want to establish my Phase II teaching schedule. What days would work for you? What topics are you planning to teach this quarter and how can I best "fit in" with my lesson plans?

Plan regular feedback meetings.

I'd like to tell you what I would do the same and differently in my lesson before you give me feedback. Thanks for your lesson suggestions. I'll integrate this suggestion in my next lesson. I don't understand this suggestion or how to use it in my next lesson.

Thank you for having me in your classroom.

I appreciate your hospitality and have learned under your guidance.

What to do if...

The Practicum is a three-fold partnership. This partnership includes the MA-TESOL Program, the practicum student, and the host teacher. Occasionally challenges arise and the following situations have been commonly noted during the course of the practicum. In all cases, immediately contact the practicum coordinator if the challenge is ongoing or particularly troublesome. Don't stew!

Practicum Student

What to do if...

Your class is suddenly cancelled or rescheduled and/or your host teacher is transferred to another class?

Gather as much information as you can about the change and immediately email the practicum coordinator.

Because of schedule conflicts, you cannot seem to have a discussion with your host teacher about your observations in Phase I or teaching plans in Phase II.

Email your host teacher with several options of dates and times. Include in this email your specific question so your face-to-face discussion will be focused. CC the practicum coordinator this email.

A student in the practicum classroom asks to see you outside of the assigned classroom time.

At times practicum students are asked by students to provide them with extra tutoring outside of the regularly scheduled class time. Say no to these requests. Such requests are outside of your role as practicum student. Always share these requests with your host teacher and with the practicum coordinator if needed.

Host Teacher

What to do if...

The practicum student seems unsure about what to teach during Phase II.

Giving the practicum student a choice of unit or topics often provides the needed structure and "jumping off" point for the practicum student's planning. As a new teacher lesson planning can look overwhelming at times and concrete suggestions are welcomed.