

aissksinima'tstoh'kiiksi
Bachelor of Education - Elementary

EDUC 3010 Practicum I Handbook Fall 2023



Mount Royal University is located on the traditional territories of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Siksika, the Piikani, the Kainai, the Tsuut'ina and the Îyârhe Nakoda. We are situated on land where the Bow River meets the Elbow River. The traditional Blackfoot name of this place is Mohkinstsis. This is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III. We acknowledge that we are able to gather on these lands as a result of agreements negotiated between these nations and settlers to peaceably share and care for this land, and that many of these agreements have not been honoured.

To All Teacher Candidates and Mentor Teachers:

We are excited to welcome you! We have developed this handbook to provide teacher candidates and mentor teachers with information to assist with your Practicum I experience.

Goals for Practicum I

The goal is for teacher candidates to become teacher leaders – those who:

- plan rich learning tasks with in-depth curricular knowledge;
- challenge learners to think deeply;
- use assessment to inform instruction and promote student self-monitoring;
- establish respectful learning communities and
- contribute to the profession in meaningful ways.

With your support and partnership, we are confident that the Bachelor of Education program is equipping teacher candidates to achieve these goals, and we will do all we can to support this growth. This handbook provides mentor teachers and teacher candidates with important information to ensure a successful practicum.

To mentor teachers, we wish to express our appreciation for welcoming a Mount Royal University B.Ed. teacher candidate into your classroom. We value your role as educational partners as we work together to guide these aspiring professionals.

Wishing all of you a rewarding practicum experience!

Kevin O'Connor, PhD
Chair, Department of Education

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Our Program

Mission:

Inspiring educational leaders through reflective engagement

Values:

Ethical and Reflective Dialogue

We value reflective practice for developing ethical responsibility. We foster the development of personal integrity and professional responsiveness to learners, colleagues, and the broader community. We respect diversity and work to expose issues of power and injustice so that teacher candidates can cultivate social consciousness in themselves and in their learners, contributing to a more ethical society.

Innovation and Engagement

Recognizing that lifelong learning emerges from genuine student engagement, we value the creation of dynamic learning environments. We value the cultivation of dispositions that encourage inquiry and integration to address deep questions that have relevance within and beyond the classroom. We value teaching strategies and ways of representing understanding that vary according to the needs of learners. We value innovative teaching practices that push beyond the ordinary, including digital, arts-based, and experiential learning.

Community and Relationships

Our professional network extends beyond the campus. We recognize that place and space are integral to building strong community relationships. Mentoring relationships provide our teacher candidates with the capacity to develop competencies related to planning for learning, facilitating learning, assessing learning, creating appropriate classroom environments, and undertaking professional responsibilities. Active partnerships support teacher candidates as they integrate theory and practice. We value connections with the community that foster leadership opportunities for our teacher candidates.

STEAM and EDUC 3010 Practicum I Overview

The MRU B.Ed. program is inquiry-based and focuses on subject integration as well as theory-practice connections. The fall practicum semester for year 3 teacher candidates (TCs) includes four curriculum and pedagogy courses, field studies with community partners, and practicum placements in partner schools.

The block of curricular courses for this semester is intended to promote a STEAM (*science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics*) interdisciplinary approach:

- EDUC 3104 **Arts Integration**
- EDUC 3106 **Science**
- EDUC 3108 **Mathematics**
- EDUC 3326 **Technology**

The MRU B.Ed. STEAM semester uniquely prepares year 3 TCs to create integrated learning during their year 3 practicum experience. To learn more about the practicum placement schools and students, TCs will join their practicum school community for several dates during the fall semester prior to the full-time five-week block. Attendance on these dates is required. Upon completion of the STEAM semester coursework, TCs begin the five-week practicum block on Wednesday, November 1, and finish on Tuesday, December 5, 2023.

Key dates in schools:

- September 15, 18 and October 4, 20, and 27
- 5-week practicum block: Wednesday, November 1 - Tuesday, December 5, 2023
- Make-up days: until December 7, if needed

Key dates on campus:

- STEAM semester course block: September 11 - October 30, 2023
- Final STEAM class - Friday, December 8, 2023
- STEAM Gala: 4:00-6:00 pm, Monday, December 11, 2023

TCs are expected to be engaged in 100% of the classroom and school experiences during the entire practicum. While in schools, TCs are required to start and end the day on the same schedule as their MTs and to follow the school schedule for holidays, meetings, and professional development days.

Practicum block teaching expectations for TCs include:

- Week 1: Teach a minimum of 25% with the support of their mentor teacher (MT).
- Week 2: Increase teaching to 50% again with the support of the mentor teacher.
- Weeks 3-5: Teach a minimum of 50%, developing lesson plans independently.

During the last four weeks, TCs are expected to write lesson plans for each lesson taught, self-assess each lesson taught, and develop strong teaching competencies in response to feedback provided. Throughout this practicum, TCs are expected to collect evidence of professional growth and share reflections on their learning with their MTs and faculty supervisor (FS).

MTs are expected to provide written and/or oral feedback on each lesson taught by the TC and engage in conversations about teaching and learning. TCs are expected to reflect on and adjust lessons and teaching strategies based on feedback provided by their MTs and FSs.

TCs will be assigned an ***Experiential Pass*** or ***Experiential Fail*** grade. A pass grade indicates that the TC has demonstrated sufficient competence to go on to EDUC 4030 Practicum II

Scheduling Considerations

Participation in the year 3 practicum and co-requisite STEAM courses requires TCs to be available for full days for the entire 13-week semester. This extends the year 3 fall semester commitments and responsibilities into days that do not follow the MRU schedule of classes. TCs are reminded to pay special attention to the STEAM semester schedule as attendance is critical for success.

TCs must submit all STEAM course assignments prior to starting the 5-week practicum block. TCs who have not submitted assignments cannot begin their practicum and thus may compromise successful completion of the practicum expectations.

It is strongly recommended that TCs DO NOT maintain a part-time job during this semester as the time commitment required for success is significant.

Practicum Expectations

Weekly Teaching Schedule: During the 5-week practicum, TCs are required to maintain an accurate weekly teaching schedule. This provides a clear overview of the activities and responsibilities of the TC and serves as important documentation for the [Professional Learning Plan \(PLP\)](#). TCs submit their weekly schedule to the FS prior to the start of each week. This helps the FS to support specific teaching and learning activities while effectively monitoring TC teaching time.

Lesson Plans: TCs are required to prepare a [digital dossier](#) that includes written lesson plans for each lesson taught and reflections on each of these lessons using the Department of Education [MRU Lesson Plan Template](#).

MT Feedback: The [digital dossier](#) also includes feedback from the MT (feedback on at least one written lesson each day) and artifacts of student learning. The digital dossier must be regularly updated and available to the FS for review at any time.

Seminar Posts and Journal Reflections: In addition to the [digital dossier](#), TCs are required to complete a weekly seminar post for each of the weekly seminar topics along with a weekly reflection journal connecting to their teaching experiences.

Professional Learning Plan (PLP): Year 3 TCs are also expected to provide evidence for each of the five B.Ed. program competencies: professional responsibilities, planning for learning, facilitating learning, assessment, and inclusive environments in their PLP. The PLP will build on work completed in previous education courses and will showcase the TC's professional growth.

Practicum Placements

All MRU B.Ed. practicum placements are made in consultation with the Field Experience and Practicum Coordinator (FEPC) and the Practicum Director, who work collaboratively to ensure we honour practicum agreements with school partners.

Under no circumstances will TCs contact school personnel directly or make their own arrangements. Changing MTs independently once placements are confirmed is not permitted. TCs are invited to complete the *EDUC 3010 Practicum Information Form* prior to the start of the semester. On this form, TCs provide information to ensure we do not create placements in schools where there are family relationships including but not limited to parents, children, siblings, cousins, or personal friends. If such a placement inadvertently occurs, the TC must notify the FEPC Office immediately.

Practicum placements are based on careful consideration of many factors, including:

- availability of school placements;
- professional learning priorities of placement schools;
- appropriateness of school placements, and
- size of TC cohorts.

During the practicum, TCs are responsible for securing their own transportation (personal vehicle, carpooling with other TCs, transit, etc.) and all related costs.

Due to the large number of TCs in the program and the complexity of developing school cohorts, revisions to placements are not possible. In extreme circumstances, consideration of a change (e.g., legal, religious, or personal safety concerns) may be reviewed by members of the practicum team.

If an MT goes on leave for *more than one week* and a substitute is present, the TC will immediately inform the FS as arrangements will need to be made with the school administration regarding the placement and the evaluation.

Vulnerable Sector Police Information Checks

- TCs must obtain a new Vulnerable Sector Police Information Check that is backdated no more than six months from the start of year 3 practicum.
- TCs are required to show their clearances to the FEPC prior to beginning practicum.
- TCs must show their clearances at school sites on the first day of practicum, but they are advised to maintain their original copies.
- TCs who do **not** complete or **do not** have a clear VSPC may not be eligible to participate in year 3 practicum.
- If there are any changes to a TC's VSPC status after the document has been verified, the TC must immediately notify the Field Experience Practicum Coordinator.

A new clearance may also be requested by the MRU Department of Education, a school district, or a practicum placement school at any time. Schools may require an additional police check designated specifically for volunteers if TCs wish to volunteer beyond the practicum timeline.

Other Agreements

All MRU Department of Education TCs will complete a Confidentiality Agreement and additional related forms specific to school partners. Incomplete forms will result in delays to practicum.

Practicum Roles and Responsibilities

Throughout EDUC 3010 Practicum I, there exists an important triad relationship. The roles of the TC, MT, and FS (FS) are key to the success of this professional learning experience. Expectations for each role along with key responsibilities are outlined below. As each practicum placement is unique, if any aspect of the role is unclear, each party is expected to seek further clarification and support.

Teacher Candidates are expected to:

- Become familiar with the school and classroom context (physical setting, schedules, policies, and procedures), the students (class lists, seating plans), and teaching assignment details.
- Arrange a teaching day start and end time that best serves the needs of the students, teaching and learning priorities, and the MT. This will allow the TC to fully experience the life of the teacher.
- Conference with MT to discuss teaching and learning needs, planning, and assessment strategies.
- Write lesson plans for all lessons taught using the [MRU Lesson Plan Template](#).
- TCs may teach from plans prepared in collaboration with the MT for the first week of the practicum. TC-developed lesson plans will be reviewed by the MT at least 24 hours prior to teaching. Exceptions to this timeline may be negotiated with the FS and the MT.
- Participate in all activities that constitute the working day of the MT. The MT is expected to be available throughout the teaching day to provide support to the TC. TCs are not certificated teachers and at no time should act as substitute teachers to protect the safety of students, TCs, and MTs.
- Participate in and contribute to weekly seminars with the FS.
- Adhere to all school policies including expectations of professional attire and personal presentation.

- Contact the MT, the practicum placement, and the FS if the TC must be absent.
In the event of an absence, the TC is responsible for providing lesson plans to the MT for any lessons the TC was scheduled to teach.
- Complete course requirements indicated in the EDUC 3010 Practicum I Course Outline. This includes daily lesson reflections, weekly seminar posts, and journal reflections.
- Maintain an up-to-date digital dossier with general information (school documents, class lists, schedules, seating plans), lesson planning information (lesson plans for each lesson taught, reflections on lessons, feedback from the MT, feedback from the FS, artifacts of student learning), evaluations (copies of mid-term and final evaluations), and other items (collections of useful ideas, professional goals, teacher resources)
- Collaborate with the MT and FS to complete mid-term and final evaluation documents, providing evidence of reflective growth through daily lesson reflections and weekly journal reflections, and the [Professional Learning Plan \(PLP\)](#).

Mentor Teachers are expected to:

- Develop a trusting relationship with the TC.
- Provide a welcoming environment by orienting the TC to school staff, facilities, and school activities.
- Facilitate a transition that allows students to accept the TC as a legitimate authority in the classroom.
- Work closely with the TC to determine appropriate learning experiences that will promote professional growth.
- Engage the TC in discussions about professional learning goals.
- Provide the TC with student information that will inform planning and interactions in the classroom.
- Encourage the TC to develop their unique teaching presence.
- Support the TC in their professional growth by providing opportunities for the TC to evaluate their own progress.
- Assist and support the TC by co-planning lessons in the first week and providing suggestions for individual lessons in weeks 2-5 to support the gradual transition toward TC independence.
- Observe all lessons taught, supervise and provide written feedback of at least one lesson daily, and provide ongoing assessment and coaching.
- Notify the FS if concerns arise or if there is evidence that the TC is experiencing considerable difficulty.
- Collaborate with the TC and FS to complete mid-term and final evaluation documents, reviewing documented evidence of reflective growth in the practicum binder, journal entries, and [Professional Learning Plan \(PLP\)](#)

Faculty Supervisors are expected to:

- Contact the MTs and TCs weekly through school visits and weekly seminars.
- Provide feedback on weekly reflection journal entries connecting to weekly seminar topics.
- Supervise two lessons during the five-week practicum. Supervision is defined as pre-conference (virtual or in-person), a full lesson observation, and post-conference feedback (virtual or in-person).
- Monitor teaching assignments and assigned responsibilities.
- Work closely with the MT to determine appropriate experiences to promote TC professional growth.
- Collaborate with TCs and MTs to complete mid-term and final evaluation documents, reviewing documented evidence of reflective growth, weekly journal reflections, and Professional Learning Plan content.

MRU B.Ed. Practicum Assessment and Evaluation

The MRU practicum assessment and evaluation tool documents focus on five program competencies: Professional Responsibilities, Planning for Learning, Facilitating Learning, Assessment, and Inclusive Environments. Refer to the [EDUC 3010 Practicum I Evaluation](#) for complete rubrics and evaluation details. The evaluation details the alignment between the [Alberta Education Teaching Quality Standard](#) and the outcomes listed on the evaluation. At mid-term and end of the 5-week practicum block, the MT (in collaboration with the TC and the FS) will complete the [EDUC 3010 Practicum I Evaluation](#) electronically using the Intern Placement Tracking system (IPT).

TCs will be awarded either an “EP” (*experiential pass*) or “EF” (*experiential fail*) at the end of the practicum.

Where to find IPT? The database is found online at www.runiptca.com

[Using the IPT system in the MRU practicum](#)

Practicum Placement Challenges

Placement difficulties with respect to communication and professional relationships

Together, TCs and MTs will review their roles and responsibilities in the EDUC 3010 Practicum I Handbook. A positive working and learning relationship requires open lines of communication, developing trust, and the ability to engage in difficult conversations. The FS may support these conversations. If a situation cannot be resolved with the support of the FS, the FS will meet with the Years 1-3 Practicum Lead to determine an appropriate course of action.

In cases of professional misconduct, the issue may be reported to the MRU Office of Student Community Standards.

Failure to complete

Full attendance in the year 3 practicum is mandatory. Where absences are deemed unavoidable, the TC may be permitted to make up the time at the end of the practicum period. Where absences are deemed unjustified, the TC may receive a failing grade. Justified absences must be supported by documentation and include, but are not restricted to personal illness, bereavement, personal injury, and unavoidable and unanticipated demands in caring for dependents. Decisions for awarding an incomplete grade are that of the MT and FS.

Failure to meet expectations

TCs who are rated as “*not yet meeting expectations*” in any area on the final evaluation, will not pass the practicum. In exceptional situations, the MT and FS may agree that a TC will meet expectations if provided an extended period of practicum. In this case, the FS will meet with the Years 1-3 Practicum Lead to determine an appropriate course of action.

Termination of Placement

The following indicate circumstances in which a practicum placement may be terminated:

1. *“At the professor’s discretion, a student in an experiential learning course (e.g., practicum, fieldwork, work experience, Co-op, or clinical placement) may be removed from the course at*

any point in the semester and assigned an “EF” grade, if the student's academic performance directly or indirectly threatens the safety of others.”

[\(2023-2024 Academic Calendar MRU/Academic Status\)](#)

2. *“Upon express written notice to the Post-Secondary Institution, the [school district] may terminate the participation in the practicum of any practicum student with immediate effect:*
 - a. who fails to follow [school district] policies and applicable procedures;*
 - b. who is or has engaged in activities contrary to [school district] policies;*
 - c. who, in the reasonable opinion of the [school district] acts or has acted in a manner that is or may be considered to be offensive or hurtful to any person or persons, socially inappropriate, violent, unsafe or disruptive, or that would result in the value of the association for the [school district] being substantially impaired;*
 - d. who fails to participate in the practicum in a safe manner or fails to take direction from the [school district], where applicable, or*
 - e. if the practicum is no longer within the mandate of the [school district].”*

(Master Practicum Agreement, Calgary Board of Education, 2021-2026, p. 5).

3. If a FS recommends that a TC be removed from practicum, they will first consult the Years 1-3 Practicum Lead. If a MT or principal requests that a TC be removed from the placement immediately, the TC will be removed and the FS will contact the Years 1-3 Practicum Lead for further direction.
4. After removal, the TC will meet with the FS, the Years 1-3 Practicum Lead, and the Academic Advisor to determine an appropriate course of action. Each case will be handled on an individual basis. TCs who do not complete EDUC 3010 will be required to repeat the course the following fall. They will also be restricted from any course that includes EDUC 3010 as a prerequisite.

Department of Education Standards of Professional Conduct

Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education – Elementary program are bound by, and shall comply with the Alberta Teachers’ Association [ATA Code of Professional Conduct](#), [MRU Code of Student Conduct Policy](#), as well as the Department of Education Standards of Professional

Conduct:

- Be prepared for all practicum-related responsibilities
- Refrain from all forms of academic dishonesty
- Refrain from making malicious or slanderous comments about teacher candidates, mentor teachers, faculty supervisors, or any other school or faculty members
- Abide by the Department of Education confidentiality agreement and all school board/district policies. Maintain strict confidentiality of any student or practicum placement information or data, both written and unwritten
- Use professional language, actions, and demeanor in all forms of communication (verbal, written, electronic) as expected for teaching professionals
- Abide by the professional attire policies of the board/district for the practicum placement

Resources and Document Links

Alberta Human Rights Act	Alberta Human Rights Act
ATA Code of Professional Conduct	ATA Code of Professional Conduct
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms	Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms poster
Digital Dossier	Digital Dossier
EDUC 3010 Practicum I Evaluation	MRU B.Ed. EDUC 3010 Practicum I Evaluation
Identification of Support	MRU B.Ed. Identification of Support Form
Integrated Curriculum Project (ICP)	MRU B.Ed. Integrated Curriculum Project (ICP) F23
Intern Placement Tracking (IPT)	Using the IPT system in the MRU practicum
Lesson Plan Template	MRU B.Ed. Lesson Plan Template
MRU Academic Calendar	MRU 2023-2024 Academic Calendar
MRU Code of Student Conduct Policy	MRU Code of Student Conduct Policy
Professional Learning Plan Guidelines	MRU B.Ed. Professional Learning Plan (PLP)
Teaching Quality Standard - Alberta	Teaching Quality Standard - Alberta
The Education Act, Province of Alberta	The Education Act, Province of Alberta