



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS 2011

### Pre-Practicum

When may I begin my pre-practicum?

*You may begin as soon as you have filed Form PL - Practicum Placement and attended orientation.*

Am I correct that the time we have spent writing the autobiography can be recorded in the pre-practicum log? I have finished the autobiography and am reading the assigned books.

*The time spend completing the two pre-practicum activities can be logged; the time spent writing the autobiography assignment cannot. The time spent completing (reading, writing) the other program assignments cannot. The 25 hour (pre-practicum) and 300 hour (practicum) requirements are for time spent experiencing the job.*

### Practicum

What is the point at which the hours that candidates are working can be officially counted? For example, one supervisor/director candidate was working in August doing "director-type work" to help out so everything would be ready for opening day in the director's absence. Would the time spent on these activities count?

*Yes. Candidates may count pertinent activities in the summer as long as they have been working under the direction of a mentor and as long as they have completed the pre-practicum.*

I sometimes have activities that cross standards and categories. I know that I should decide the major category in which the hours apply. Should I also record the activity under another standard without the hours? Or with a split of the hours?

*Record the hours under ONE area only, but note the standards to which the activity applies. Here's an example:*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity/Description</b>
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9/15/09	A5, L4, P2 Three two hour presentations to new teachers on the availability and use of multimedia resources, using PowerPoint and demonstrating other technological tools
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*There's always the option of moving an entry to another category at a future time in order to demonstrate sufficient balance across all of the standards.*

How do I get a new row in the log to add another activity?

*Put your cursor at the very bottom of the right hand box and hit tab. This will give you a new row in the table.*

I'm not sure what to put in the reflection section.

*Think about questions that arise as you step back from the activity, and reflect upon those. The log reflections should only be a few sentences. Here are some possibilities:*

*"How effectively is the leader handling the situation or approaching the task?"*

*"What surprises me about the way he/she handled the situation or approached the task? What new insights have I gained?"*

*"What might I have done if I were the leader?"*

*"How does this activity enhance/support student learning?" "If it doesn't, why not? What needs to change?"*

*"What's the impact on others?"*

*"What needs to happen next?"*

*"What do I need to learn or do to be effective in this situation?"*

How often do I need to write reflection in the log?

*You don't have to reflect on every activity (a few sentences); we suggest at least one a week. If you keep thinking about something you've experienced, or have an "aha" moment, that's probably the activity for which you would write a few sentences.*

Does attendance at conferences count for the practicum?

*Only when the content directly relates to the Professional Standards for Administrators AND you can document how you have applied the knowledge gained in the practicum setting. For example, if you attend a conference on alternative assessment and work with others to implement alternative assessments in your practicum site (as a principal, director or superintendent might), you can count both the hours of the conference and the time spent working with the content in your practicum setting. If you attend a conference on legal issues and then review your student handbook to assess compliance with recent changes in the law, you may count both the hours of the conference and the time spent on handbook review. It is necessary to directly apply the conference content to your administrative work, in an activity that counts toward the practicum, in order to count the conference hours.*

I regularly hold a pre-conference, observe a class, and have a post-conference with new teachers that I mentor. Can I count these hours?

*You can count a reasonable amount of the time you spend in direct supervision, but like any activity you do on a regular basis, you should not have this activity take up a disproportionate amount of the 300 hours required for the practicum. Like any ongoing activity, you can enter a representative number of hours but not all of the hours that you spend. The goal of the practicum is a broad range of activities spread out over the standards.*

Do the hours I spend preparing artifacts for my portfolio count towards my 300 hour practicum?

*The hours spent organizing artifacts and preparing the portfolio do not count. Hours spent in practicum activities that an administrator would normally perform do count. For example: If you spent an hour preparing for an interview with a reporter, 45 minutes with the reporter, and an hour writing reflections about your experience, you could count 1hr.45 in your practicum log.*

Does the time I spend writing in my journal count toward the 300 hours?

*No.*

Can I count the hours I spend as webmaster?

*Like any ongoing activity, you can enter a representative number of hours but not all of the hours that you spend. The goal of the practicum is a broad range of activities spread out over the standards. Webmaster would certainly address the productivity tech standard and perhaps the instructional tech standard if you're posting teacher web page and curriculum information that people use to enhance learning, but you probably shouldn't log more than 15-20 hours total on this activity (fewer would be even better).*

What do I do if I'm getting the hours I need but not the kinds of experiences? For example, I am not participating in difficult conferences with students or staff, so I cannot see how these are handled.

*Address the issue with your mentor. If necessary, involve your program supervisor as well.*

I was a mentor to an administrative intern from BC this past semester, Sept-Dec. I was wondering if I could record the hours spent with him as practicum hours; and if so, how many hours I could put down, since he would come in on Tuesdays for the whole day.

*You could record the one-on-one contact hours you spent with him in activities directly related to the standards.*

Do we mark the hours from our 2 Practicum Diversity visits in our log or just on the form we fill out?

*Record the hours in your log (and on the form).*

## **Journal**

Is journal writing a requirement for the program? If so, what format is expected? I do not see the Journal in the Portfolio rubric. Have I missed it? Are journal entries expected to be turned in?

*Because reflection is something the program is trying to foster, faculty have the expectation that "each participant will keep a written, visual, or electronic journal of responses, curiosities, and questions that arise out of discussion,*

*reading, and his or her work experience. Sharing of selections from the journals will be encouraged." Some instructors may require journal entries as assignments.*

I have just begun to keep a journal but I am a little unsure what to include in the entries. I understand that it should document my evolution of thinking about leadership, learning, etc. Should we begin to share journal entries with classmates?

*The purpose of keeping a journal is to get better at reflecting on your practice. There's really no limit to the kinds of things you might include in your journal. You might write about your feelings, observations and assessment of activities in which you've been directly involved or those you've observed. You might reflect on reading that you've done or curriculum topics.*

*Keeping a journal will help you become a more reflective practitioner. It will also get you in the habit of stopping to think about what you're doing and the impact on others, especially students and their learning. Many people are not used to substantive reflection - they're too busy "doing."*

*Mentors and supervisors will try to help you address questions such as "What did I learn from this?" and "How could I have a greater impact on student learning?" They will give you feedback about the quality of your reflection. The strength of your final leadership portfolio will depend upon the quality of your reflections.*

I am not clear as to how often I should be placing entries in my journal, or on what topics I should be reflecting. Should I write a journal entry for every time I log practicum hours, or do journal entries only apply for documents that will be placed in my portfolio?

*There is no required frequency or length for journal entries. Some candidates may want to write once a day or once a week; others may want to write after an activity or class or reading that inspired reflection. This is a personal choice. When the time comes to select artifacts for the portfolio, you will need a reflection for each artifact of choice.*

### **Practicum Conferences**

How will the three required 3-way practicum conferences be arranged and what will happen during the meetings?  
*Your supervisor will contact you or you can contact him/her to schedule each of the three three-way meetings with your mentor, usually by email. You will need to check with your mentor and confirm a time that works for all three of you. When you meet, your supervisor will review your practicum log, assignments, reflections, and portfolio. The items that you will be expected to have ready for review are listed on the assignment and activity sheet.*

*The section at the end of the conference sheet asks the supervisor to identify areas for you to concentrate on before you meet again. If you are unable to gain certain experiences where you are doing your practicum, you can visit a cohort colleague's school and document this on the Practicum Diversity form.*

### **Diversity Visits**

What do I need to do for these?

*There is no time requirement re. how long you must spend at another school for each of the visits. If impossible for you to visit during the school day, which is recommended, you can visit after school. Select schools that have a different population and thus different challenges than yours. You could visit the school of another LLP student or someone you know. If you're having trouble, ask your mentor to help. He or she probably knows a lot of people. Complete the Diversity Visit form D and also record the hours in your log.*

Under which category would logging our diversity visit be most appropriate, as it covers many?

*I think it depends upon what you focus on when you visit, and I would encourage you to have some questions or area of inquiry that you want to pursue. For example, if you go to a place that's a lot more diverse than yours and there's a big achievement gap, you might be asking a lot of questions that relate to equity and excellence, so record your hours there. There's no "one right place" to log the diversity visit hours, so use your judgment.*

### **Portfolio**

Is there an outline or a written explanation for the "Vision and Core Beliefs" document?

*The instructors usually ask for you to develop a belief/philosophy statement in the DNA course, although it's not on the assignment sheet. It's usually very short – a paragraph or two. This is something that you revisit periodically and revise a final time at the end of the program so that it reflects your thinking at that time. You put it in your portfolio.*

I'm having trouble selecting an artifact for mentoring and induction. Do you have suggestions?

*The artifact can be pretty much anything that would enable you to reflect on mentoring and induction. Remember, the purpose of including an artifact and reflection is to provide evidence that you meet the standard: "Understands principles of mentoring and provides new teachers with mentors." You might include an agenda for a new teacher meeting; an email to a new teacher you sent as a mentor or vice-versa; something you have prepared for your work with a new teacher as a mentor; a proposal for a mentoring program, etc. It does not need to be from this year.*

I am still a little confused about the artifact that we need to come up with for mentoring and induction. Is this artifact something that we created on our own? Can it be something that already exists in the school district? If so, do we need change it in any way to put our "stamp" on it? Or can I make the changes, suggestions, criticism in my reflection.

*Ideally, artifacts should be evidence of something you've done - an activity you've participated in or directed. Have you been a mentor? Been mentored? Served on a committee that designed a mentoring program? If you've had NO involvement whatsoever in a mentoring program, you could select as an artifact a description of your school's mentoring program or the table of contents from your school's mentoring guide or something like that, and then reflect on the effectiveness of your school's program.*

*Your reflection provides the "meat" of the evidence that you meet the standard of mentoring and induction. Do you adequately describe what you have learned about mentoring and induction? Have you made the connection between effective mentoring and induction and effective teaching - and made explicit the impact on student learning? Have you cited the literature on mentoring and effective programs? Have you talked about the role of the district leader in insuring that new teachers receive adequate support? Have you used vivid language and examples? Have you talked about what you might do differently in the future as a result of what you have learned?*

*Here's an example of one student's portfolio approach: I interviewed the lead mentor of the high school and read the mentoring handbook. I compared the mentoring handbook to that used when I was "inducted" to teaching. I then spoke to the lead mentor (and a leader of the mentor program development committee) about the changes that have taken place and the functioning of the program. I wrote a reflection about this process and have called the mentoring handbook my artifact.*

Must I have a reflection for every document in the portfolio, or for only the artifacts that I choose?

*You need only include a reflection where listed.*

How can I feel less anxious about the portfolio?

*Feeling on top of this task is simply a question of 1) organization - get it all set up; and 2) looking at the choice artifacts that you need (the items in white on the portfolio rubric that are NOT assignments) and thinking about what you might select. You can select the artifacts and write the reflections at any time. You might want to share ideas for what you've selected with your table group. Note the rubric, which highlights what makes a good reflection. The strongest reflections address the impact on student learning. Still worried about the portfolio? Participate in the optional portfolio help sessions in the fall and winter.*

## **Licensure**

How do I apply for my license?

Online at [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)

Can a candidate get more than one license through the program?

*The program leads to ONE license. Candidates who wish to earn more than one license should apply for ALL licenses at the same time and earn additional licenses through an alternate route. See DESE regulations.*

When should I apply for my license(s)?

*Apply as soon as you begin the program. You will be "grandfathered" with respect to the requirements for licensure, so that if they change, the requirements in force when you applied will be the requirements that you must meet.*