



WPI

Teacher Preparation Program Practicum Handbook

Programs

Math 5-8 & 8-12

Biology 8-12

Chemistry 8-12

Physics 8-12

General Science 5-8 (pending approval)

Technology/Engineering 5-12 (pending approval)

WPI's Teacher Preparation Program

Do more with your degree. Inspire. Change lives. Teach.

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Guidelines for Students

The Teaching Practicum is, in many ways, the most important part of the Teacher Preparation Program experiences, as it is the time that students submerge themselves in a classroom to practice and refine their teaching skills. It also provides the opportunity for student teachers to benefit from the tutelage and experience of a veteran, mentor teacher. The experience is one semester long and requires a high level of professionalism and commitment from WPI undergraduates. Students **MUST** receive a B or higher if Teaching Methods ID 3100. All components of the practicum follow Massachusetts' regulations **603 CMR 7.00 and 7.04**.

Pre-Practicum

The pre-practicum is designed to allow undergraduates to learn about classroom management techniques as well as best practices for teaching and engaging all learners through field experiences. Students will complete 20 hours of observation, planning, and Mursion simulation practice during Teaching Methods. Students will complete another 20 hours in the classroom in which they will complete their practicum prior to the start of student teaching (this is called Week One).

Additionally, undergraduates must research the school and district they will be teaching in. They must also study education in Massachusetts in their content area. This information should be included in your paper at the end of the experience. Students should understand items such as:

1. makeup of its student body and area demographics
2. performance on standardized tests

Requirements before Entering the Classroom

Prior to entering their student teaching, undergraduates must complete the following items:

1. Complete a CORI form for the district in which they will complete their practicum. This can take weeks to process and so should be done well in advance of starting the practicum.
2. Complete a fingerprint check. An appointment is needed for this.
3. Attend practicum orientation.
4. Complete all education coursework prior to or during practicum.

Required Hours

Pre-Practicum hour requirements total a minimum of 40 hours. Students are then required to complete a minimum of 300 hours for their teaching practicum. **This works out to be at least 20 hours per week for 14 weeks.** Students must build in some buffer time before or after the WPI terms end in case students need to make up hours missed due to weather. A minimum of 125 of these hours must be have the student in charge of the classroom.

Number of Hours	Tasks
40	Pre-Practicum observations, helping, guided planning, co-teaching with peer, and Mursion simulations
75-100 (approximate)	Observing, helping, working with small groups, co-teaching lessons with supervising practitioner, etc.
200-225 (approximate)	Teaching (additionally, students can/should lesson planning, grading, helping students after school etc. Note: 125 hours must be with the student as the teacher of record)

Field Placement Policies

Students are expected to follow these policies completely anytime they are in a K-12 classroom for a field placement. Additionally, students are expected to use common sense and professional judgement. If a student does not follow these standards, it is grounds for termination of the field placement. **During the teaching practicum, WPI students are responsible for the learning of K-12 students. There is minimal tolerance for anything that disrupts that learning.**

Attendance

Students are expected to show up on time, every time. In absolutely unavoidable situations, students are expected to alert their advisor or professor and mentor teacher as soon as they know about the conflict. Needing additional time to work on materials for other courses or needing to attend another commitment such as work is NOT acceptable and can be grounds for termination from the program.

Professional Dress and Presentation

Students are expected to show up in professional attire every time they enter the school. Jeans, t-shirts, and sweatpants are not allowed. Clothing must not be revealing in any way. Students should be showered and neat.

Cell Phones and Technology

Students should have their phones off or on silent (not vibrate) at all times. The use of other personal technology is also not allowed unless it is directly related to the lesson the student is teaching.

Confidentiality and Mandated Reporting

When working with K-12 students, their families, and colleagues in the schools in any capacity, WPI students must be respectful and keep information confidential at all times. Information shared in coursework should be professional. If a student suspects abuse of a child at any times, they should immediately speak with their mentor teacher, school principal, and Teacher Preparation advisor.

Handling Conflict

In the event that a WPI student feels uncomfortable, overwhelmed, or concerned about any aspect of their work in a school, that student should immediately reach out to their Teacher Preparation advisor or faculty member. They should not wait until the issue is such a big deal that finding a solution is difficult.

Vacations

WPI students should continue teaching throughout WPI's break week.

Substitute Teaching and Tutoring

WPI students may not substitute teach or tutor at the school during their practicum for money.

Representatives of WPI

Students must remember that they are representatives of WPI every time they enter the school.

Boundaries

WPI students must maintain appropriate boundaries with K-12 students at all times. If there is any question around this topic, WPI students should speak with their advisor and mentor.

Role of the Director

Any information that a teacher candidate, supervising practitioner, or program supervisor shares with another member of the practicum team can always be shared with the program director. This is to ensure all individuals, especially the teacher candidate, are provided the support they need to successfully complete their teaching practicum.

The Supervising Practitioner

WPI students are assigned a supervising practitioner with whom they work closely with to learn the craft of teaching. This relationship is critical for successful completion of WPI's Teacher Preparation Program as it allows the student to learn from someone who is strong in the profession. To ensure this opportunity is fully utilized, students are expected to:

1. Communicate with their supervising practitioner regularly about their teaching.
2. Seek advice and feedback from their teacher and incorporate this information into their teaching.
3. Be respectful and professional at all times, including if there is any conflict or if a student is feeling over or under worked.

The Program Supervisor

The Program Supervisor is a faculty or staff member from WPI who is qualified to support the student teacher throughout their practicum in collaboration with the Supervising Practitioner. The Program Supervisor helps to answer questions, create a schedule of class takeovers and observations, and provide feedback.

Teaching Practicum Schedule

WPI students are expected to show up EVERY day for their scheduled practicum. There are very few reasons that would allow for an absence. Prior to the teaching practicum, WPI students are expected to sit down with their mentor teacher and confirm a schedule. **All schedules must start when school starts and run until 2 pm.** Exceptions to this schedule must be approved by the director. The program supervisor, supervising practitioner and teacher candidate will create a schedule at the beginning of the practicum confirming weeks of teaching, when the student will take over each class, and when observations and evaluation meetings will occur.

Lesson Plans, Homework, and Other Materials

Students are expected to use knowledge gained in Teaching Methods to create lesson plans, homework, handouts, activities, etc. Lesson plans must be completed for all lessons. Lesson plans are due Thursdays by midnight. These along with meeting logs and hour logs must be turned in weekly. Student teachers are expected to meet regularly with their supervising practitioners to gain feedback. Additionally there should be a meeting every Friday to review proposed lesson plans for the following week (this includes assignments, homework, and assessments). These meetings should be recorded in the meeting log.

Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP)

Throughout the practicum there will be a series of observations and meetings to set goals and ensure the teacher candidate is meeting these goals successfully. These goals are designed to support students in attaining proficiency in the six CAP essential elements: well-structured lessons, adjustment to practice, meeting diverse needs, safe learning environments, high expectations, and reflective practice. Rubrics will be provided for each element. Teacher candidates will be informed of their progress towards proficiency for each element throughout the practicum. If a candidate struggles in any area, an improvement plan will be created for the candidate. A candidate must attain proficiency for each element by the end of their practicum.

Practicum Paper and Portfolio

At the end of the teaching practicum, all students, regardless of if this experience is counted as an IQP or independent project, must complete an extensive paper/portfolio of the experience. Guidelines and requirements for this paper are included as an appendix to this document. Evidence for this work will be collected and kept throughout the practicum.

Practicum Seminar

This seminar, taken concurrently with the student teaching practicum, is designed to help students become reflective and critical practitioners. Through guided discussions, self-evaluative reflection, and goal setting, students will have the opportunity to develop their professionalism as a teacher while connecting previously learned theory to classroom experience. This is mandatory for all students in a teaching practicum. Students will create a portfolio of work.

Guidelines for Supervising Practitioners

The most significant part of a student's development is the practicum experience. The supervising practitioner is a critical component of this experience. WPI thanks all supervising practitioners for their dedication to supporting the next generation of educators.

Background Information

Supervising practitioners can assume that students entering their classrooms have completed the following:

1. Teaching Methods course taught by experienced math and science department heads.
2. A pre-practicum field experience which includes observations hours, co-teaching experience, guided planning experience, and Mursion simulation experience.
3. Background research on education in Massachusetts and the school and district in which they are doing their practicum.
4. Most will also have pedagogical coursework which includes: Psychology of Education; Developmental Psychology or School Psychology; and Sheltered English Immersion coursework (when students take these may vary – they are required to do so before or during their practicum however some may apply for waivers given scheduling constraints).

Concerns and Questions

The director of WPI's Teacher Preparation Program, Katie Elmes, is always available to supervising practitioners and schools. In addition to other members of the Teacher Preparation team who may be working with the student, supervising practitioners should never hesitate to email or call the director. The teacher candidates are told that all information shared with supervising practitioners or program supervisors can and will also be shared with the director. She can be reached at kaelmes@wpi.edu or 508-831-5703 (office)/508-450-7087 (cell).

Required Hours and Outcomes

Pre-Practicum hour requirements total a minimum of 40 hours. 20 of those hours are completed in Week One – the first week undergraduates are in classrooms. Students are then required to complete a total of 300 hours for their teaching practicum. **This works out to be 20 hours per week for 14 weeks.** Students must build in some buffer time before or after the WPI terms end in case students need to make up hours missed due to weather. A minimum of 125 of these hours must be have the student in charge of the classroom.

Program supervisors and supervising practitioners will work together to create a schedule at the beginning of the practicum as to start and end dates, when teacher candidates should start taking over classes, and when observations and meetings will occur.

Number of Hours	Tasks
40	Pre-Practicum observations, helping, guided planning, co-teaching with peer, and Mursion simulations
75-100 (approximate)	Observing, helping, working with small groups, co-teaching lessons with supervising practitioner, etc.
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Student teachers also must demonstrate proficiency for quality in all 6 essential CAP elements and at least needs improvement in scope and consistency to satisfactorily complete their student teaching. Students must have their teaching logs, meeting logs and all other documents signed off by their mentor teacher. Students are expected to meet with supervising practitioners almost daily to receive feedback. A meeting each Friday is also required once students take teaching to review lesson plans and all accompanying materials.

Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP)

Throughout the practicum there will be a series of observations and meetings to set goals and ensure the teacher candidate is meeting these goals successfully. These goals are designed to support students in attaining proficiency in the six CAP essential elements: well-structured lessons, adjustment to practice, meeting diverse needs, safe learning environments, high expectations, and reflective practice. Rubrics will be provided for each element. Teacher candidates will be informed of their progress towards proficiency for each element throughout the practicum. If a candidate struggles in any area, an improvement plan will be created for the candidate. A candidate must attain proficiency for each element by the end of their practicum.

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Supervising Practitioner Overview Meeting and Training

Supervising Practitioners will attend an overview and training meeting at the beginning of the practicum. This gathering will ensure all supervising practitioners and the teacher prep team are on the same page in terms of requirements and expectations as well and review any concepts the program is focusing on this year, and answer any feedback supervising practitioners may have. Questions about the meeting should be directed to Katie Elmes (kaelmes@wpi.edu).

Supervising Practitioner Requirements

Per DESE regulations, all supervising practitioners must have a minimum of three years of teaching experience under an Initial or Professional Massachusetts license and must have received at least a proficient on their most recent educator evaluation.



Appendix A

WPI Teacher Preparation Practicum Log

Name: _____

Mentor: _____

Week: _____

Mentor Signature: _____

	Activity (observe, support, teacher of record, staff/dept. meeting, parent communication)	Hours	Teacher Candidate Initial
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Totals	<i>Teacher of Record Hours</i>		
	<i>Other Hours</i>		

Appendix B
Teacher Preparation Program IQP Report Guidelines
IQP Paper Requirements
Teaching Practicum

Abstract

Chapter 1 – Background (PQP)

- Massachusetts Ed Reform Act of 1993
- MA performance relative to international community (see TIMMS)
- Overview and history of the district you are teaching in
- Information about your school
 - Socio-economic
 - Demographics
 - Academic performance
 - MCAS
 - Dropouts
 - College
 - Other pertinent information
 - Your classes in particular
 - Courses, levels etc.
- Information about what standards guided what content was taught in the classes you were responsible for.

Chapters 2-7 – Essential Elements of CAP

- One chapter on each of the elements you have been assessed on during your practicum
- Should cover:
 - What the element is and why you see it as critical to learning to become a strong educator
 - Make a case that you have or have not demonstrated competency in each level, including information about where you started and where you ended up. (This is the central purpose of the paper.)

Chapter 8 – Your WPI Education

- Chapter should reflect on how the narrow and broad aspects of your education at WPI have helped you in the classroom
 - Knowledge of the specific subject matter as demanded by the curriculum
 - Bring in outside perspective such as relevance, applicability, connection to real world, significance. (Think about how your WPI work impacted your ability to answer the age old question: “so what does anybody use this stuff for?”)

Chapter 9 – Your Classes

- Information of about the actual people in the class. Paint a picture that makes the classes become “real” and provides the reader with insight and understanding.

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- Make sure to cover:
 - Information about special education students in your class and how you worked with them
 - ELL students in your classroom and how you worked with them
 - Classroom management and your classes
 - Reflection on feedback from your students (both formal survey you had them take and that data you analyzed as well as any informal surveys you did)
 - Reflection on the assessment you analyzed based off of expected performance as indicated by your supervising practitioner
- Discuss two of your most challenging students in depth and what you did to try and achieve a degree of success.
- Discuss at least one parent interaction you had and what you learned about parent engagement
- Discuss at least one department or school meeting/professional development you attended

Conclusion

- Include the following (as well as other final thoughts you wish to share):
 - Where you saw the biggest growth in yourself if not already indicated in one of the above components
 - What you learned about professional culture in teaching and the need to collaborate (or not) to impact student success
 - What you saw as the biggest way teachers can impact student success
 - Important takeaways from this experience
 - A professional goal you would set for yourself were you to begin teaching in your own classroom next semester (use the 6 essential CAP elements to guide this goal)

Appendices

- Carefully **organized** for easy reference (please name each appendix item and page number in table of contents)
- Any materials you generated and might wish to point to but do not need to be in the main body. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Student feedback survey examples (specifically comments section)
 - Student work
 - Exams and quizzes you created (make sure to redact student names)
 - Lesson plans
 - Homework problems created
 - Completed homework
 - Any tools you created to support diverse learners

*Hour logs and meeting logs do not need to be included here but must be given to program director before grades close.

All students must include an extensive demonstration of connection between the theory (pedagogy courses such as Teaching Methods and content coursework) and the practice (their time in the classroom).

Appendix C

Noteworthy References & Links

1. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/>
 - a. Pages of Interest
 - i. ELAR login
 - ii. District, school, and educator preparation program pages
2. Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/>
3. MTEL Information
<http://www.mtel.nesinc.com/index.htm>
4. WPI Teacher Preparation Program
www.wpi.edu/+teach
5. Worcester Public Schools
<http://www.wpsweb.com/default2.asp>
6. Massachusetts Academy of Mathematics and Science at WPI
<http://www.massacademy.org/>

Appendix D

Waiver Policy

WPI Teacher Preparation Program

Students may complete their teaching practicum with a teacher in a nonpublic school on a case-by-case basis. The supervising teacher must be highly qualified and experienced. Students must work with Teacher Preparation advisor.

Practicum Placement Waiver

Student Name	
Teaching Practicum Subject and Date	
Rational For Placement Exception	
Name of School	
Name of Mentor Teacher	
Subject Teaching and Years of Experiences	
Any MA Licenses Held	
Name of Principal	
Commitment by principal that mentor teacher is highly qualified and experienced	Principal's Signature:
Other Information	
Approved By	

Appendix E

WPI Teacher Preparation Program

Waiver Policy

Students may transfer in or substitute coursework, field placements, or other equivalent experiences with approval from the Teacher Preparation Team. To discuss this, students should work with their Teacher Preparation advisor.

Substitution/Transfer for Coursework/Fieldwork Waiver

Student Name	
Course Name	
Substitution/Transfer For	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education Coursework _____• SMK Requirement _____• Field placement _____• Other _____
Date Taken	
School Taken At	
Approved By	

Equivalency Waiver

Student Name	
Experience Description	
Substitution/Transfer For	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education Coursework _____• SMK Requirement _____• Field placement _____• Other _____
Date Done	
Supervisor of Experience	
Approved By	

Appendix F

WPI Teacher Preparation Program

Waiver Policy

Students complete all pedagogy coursework before or during their Teaching Practicum. Students who need to schedule a pedagogy course for after their practicum must fill out a waiver form and have it approved by the director. Students must prove that they have sufficient education experience to enter the classroom, can truly not take the course prior/during the practicum, and be prepared to do additional pedagogical work during the practicum to ensure they are successful.

Course Timing Waiver

Student Name	
Teaching Practicum Subject and Date	
Reason for Requesting Waiver	
Prior Educational Experience (include coursework, field experiences, and relevant extracurriculars)	
Example of how you will supplement your pedagogical knowledge during your practicum if necessary.	
Other Information	
Approved By Date Approved	
Conditions of Approval	



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Appendix E

Teacher Preparation Program

Teacher Candidate and Supervising Practitioner Meeting Log

Name _____

Date	Start Time	End Time	People Present	Meeting Focus	Next Steps