ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCM, CT & NIES

The School Coordinating Mentor (SCM), Cooperating Teachers (CTs) and NIE Supervisors (NIES) are vitally important to NIE’s school-based practicum programme. The professional guidance and help they provide to the student teachers during this school attachment are of great importance to the latter’s initial professional growth and development. A significant factor in the success of a student teacher’s supervised practicum experience is the kind of professional relationship established between the SCM, the CTs and the NIES. It is important that a sound team relationship be developed and that each member of the team is able to communicate openly and honestly with one another.

The NIES roles and responsibilities are outlined below.

NIE Supervisor (NIES)

The NIE Supervisor (NIES) assumes the major responsibility for the general welfare of the student teacher and serves as the liaison between NIE and the school to which the student teacher is assigned for the practicum. The NIES works closely with both the student teacher and the school to ensure that the interests and expectations of each are being satisfied. NIES function in various roles:

a) As a supervisor of professional experience for the student teacher, the NIES should:
   - assist the student teacher in preparing for the teaching attachment experience by communicating clearly NIE’s expectations, e.g., lesson plans for all lessons taught, positive work attitude, professional conduct, working with CTs and other members of staff, conforming to rules governing teachers of the school,
   - ensure the student teachers settle into their roles and responsibilities,
   - guide/instruct the student teachers in classroom teaching and management,
   - guide the student teachers in preparing their reflections during TA/TP1 [for ALL non-final practicum],
   - advise the student teacher on lesson planning, lesson presentation and student management in the classroom [for ALL practicum, except for BA/BSc(Ed) – TA and PGDE – TA],
   - observe lessons conducted by the student teachers (see section on “The lesson observation-feedback cycle”) and provide feedback to the student teacher by using the Assessment of Performance in Teaching (APT) instrument to help identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, and suggest alternative approaches/strategies that can be adopted (for TP1 and TP2 only).

b) As a counsellor to the student teacher, the NIES should:
   - advise the student teacher concerning professional matters,
   - be an advocate for the student teacher,
   - help the student teacher maintain a professional attitude towards teaching and the school community.

c) As an evaluator, the NIES should:
   - establish with the student teacher (and SCM and CTs) acceptable standards of performance,
   - liaise with the SCM and CTs, meet periodically with them to discuss the student teacher’s progress, and determine helping strategies to be used,
   - identify areas of strengths and weaknesses exhibited by the student teacher,
help the student teacher develop plans to improve his/her performance and suggest, if necessary, remedial action,
read and give feedback on student teachers’ reflections during TA/TP1 [for non-final practicum only]
observe lesson(s) taught by each student teacher during practicum [for ALL practicum, except for BA/BSc(Ed) – TA and PGDE – TA],
check student teachers’ practicum files to see if they are on task and up-to-date with their lesson plans [for ALL practicum, except for BA/BSc(Ed) – TA and PGDE – TA],
assess the student teacher’s performance towards the end of the practicum and prepare a formative/summative report on the student teacher,
act as “quality controller” by moderating across schools under his/her charge for practicum (i.e., making classroom observations per student teacher) and validating grades suggested by schools [for ALL practicum, except for BA/BSc(Ed) – TA and PGDE – TA],
listen to student teacher’s final portfolio presentation and help him/her consolidate learning, conduct a final check on the practicum files at the end of TP to ensure that student teacher has kept up with his/her lesson planning and preparation work right to the end [for ALL final-practicum only],
For Professional Practice and Inquiry (PPI), assess the student teacher’s ability to reflect and inquire into his/her practice through his/her sharing during pre-practicum conference and Focused Conversations [for ALL final-practicum only],
Prepare student teacher’s PPI assessment report [for ALL final-practicum only].

d) As a liaison between NIE and the schools, the NIES should:
share experiences which will help the student teacher in his/her professional preparation prior to the teaching attachment,
seek ways to bring about cooperative and collaborative relationships between NIE and the schools,
acquaint the cooperating school personnel with the objectives and policies of the student teaching phase of the teacher preparation programme (i.e., TP1 and TP2),
provide material that will help the CT become acquainted with his/her assigned student teacher and with his/her responsibility for the student teacher,
assist the SCM, CT and student teacher interpret the current practicum materials (e.g., Practicum Handbook, suggested guidelines and etc.) and the policies currently at NIE,
consult with the SCMs and CTs of the school concerning the student teacher’s performance,
inform the Practicum Office of student teachers’ serious problems and/or questionable progress,
make his/her services available to SCMs and CTs for whatever assistance may be required,
provide a NIE moderator to observe potential DISTINCTION / FAIL [for ALL final practicum only] and FAIL [for BA/BSc(Ed) – TP1 only] student teachers,
inform the student teacher of moderation for DISTINCTION / FAIL [for ALL final practicum only] and FAIL [for BA/BSc(Ed) – TP1 only].

In summary, NIES would be involved in the following cycle of practicum activities:
a) Pre-Practicum Conference
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- Highlight student teacher’s role during practicum, i.e., as learner and co-teacher,
- Emphasise the Code of Professional Conduct,
- Check that student teacher is aware of NIE requirements, e.g., timetable, reflection, APT form, lesson plan, practicum file, etc.,
- Help student teacher set some personal learning goals for the practicum,
- Check that NIES is able to view student teachers’ portfolios to facilitate PPI assessment [for all final practicum only],
- Give feedback on student teacher’s portfolio presentation [for final-practicum only].

b) School Courtesy Call (see Appendix 8 for Checklist for the First Meeting with the SCM)

c) Read and give feedback on student teachers’ reflections during TA/TP1 [for non-final practicum only]

d) Lesson Observation [for ALL practicum, except for BA/BSc(Ed) – TA and PGDE – TA]

e) Final Assessment Meeting

f) Submission of practicum summative reports

g) Submission of PPI summative reports [for final-practicum only]

h) Post-Practicum Conference

- Listen to student teacher’s ‘sharing of learning during practicum’ and help him/her consolidate learning,
- Encourage student teacher to identify areas of strength and areas of weakness,
- Prompt student teacher to take stock of what he/she has set out to achieve at the beginning of practicum,

Collect practicum file for perusal, and return it to the student teacher a week later.