

Master of Arts in Educational Practice

Practicum Booklet

2023/2024

September 2023

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1. Introduction

National College of Ireland (NCI) offers the Master of Arts in Educational Practice (MAEP), which is a two-year part-time 90 ECTS credit programme designed to support learners develop (i) a comprehensive knowledge of the area of educational practice, teaching and learning, (ii) a deeper knowledge and more reflective approach to practice as a learning professional, (iii) enhanced knowledge and skill to enable learners to apply effective, research-informed approaches to learning and teaching in a range of settings, (iv) requisite knowledge and skill to engage with educational research methodologies and carry out a research or practice dissertation in the area of educational practice.

A key aim of the programme is to provide learners with an opportunity to develop as reflective, research-led practitioners, to enhance knowledge and critically engage with relevant educational scholarship and conduct independent educational research in an ethical and rigorous manner.

Figure 1 below shows all modules currently delivered in Year 1 of the MAEP programme:

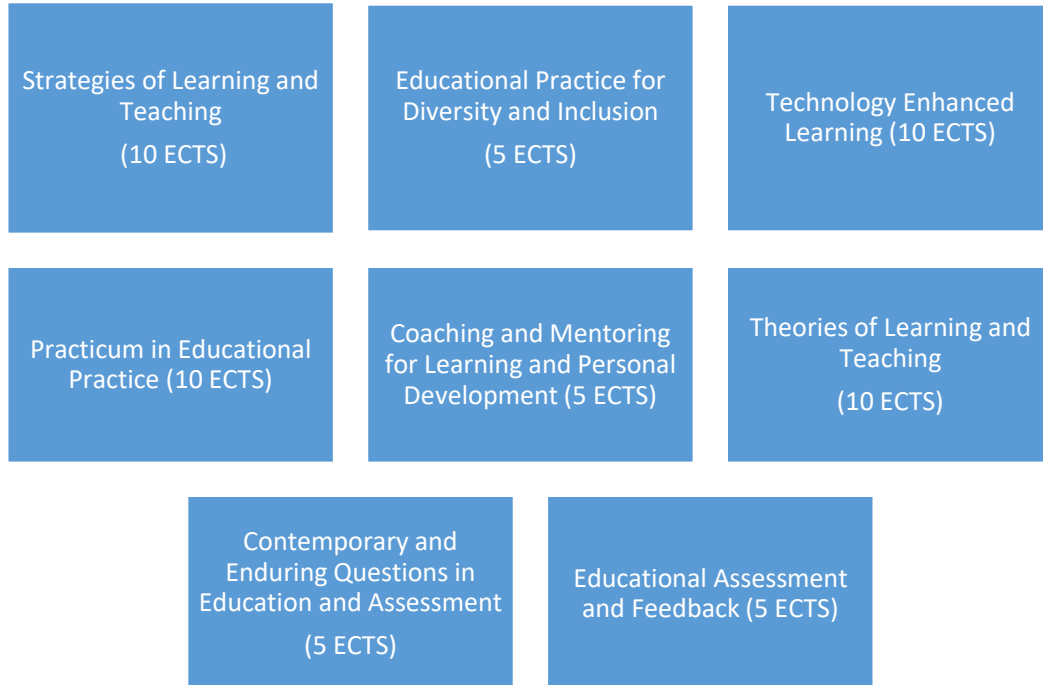


Figure 1: Modules on Year 1 of the Master of Arts in Educational Practice programme.

This booklet describes a module of the programme called **Practicum in Educational Practice** (also known as **Practicum**). This 10-credit module must be completed by all students. The purpose of this booklet is to provide information on the processes and procedures involved. The aim of this module is to provide students with practical experience in using a variety of learning, teaching and workforce education strategies in a workplace environment. These experiences will be supported by a process of scholarly reflection on practice which includes analysis and self-evaluation by the student, and a discussion between the Practicum Tutor and the student on the strengths and weaknesses of the instructional strategy and ways in which the strategy could be improved. Practicum tutorials will take place four times during the module. The purpose is to support the student in their plans for goal setting, monitoring progress and goal re-evaluation. It is not a requirement for the Practicum Tutor to make site visits to the students' place of work. They may be present when students are engaged in class teaching exercises.

Specifically, the learning outcomes for *Practicum in Educational Practice* module are:

- LO 1: Demonstrate proficiency in the design and application of effective learning teaching and assessment strategies for educational practice in professional settings.
- LO 2: Analyse and evaluate one's own teaching and/or role as an educator, discuss this analysis and evaluation with an experienced professional, and identify mechanisms for continuous professional improvement.
- LO 3: Demonstrate an ability to work with peers and other professional educators in planning and implementing learning, teaching and assessment strategies and developing and evaluating educational programmes.
- LO 4: Demonstrate a capacity for on-going professional development by scholarly reflection on practice and a commitment to the values and standards appropriate for learning professionals.

2. Key Contacts

Role	Name	Email Address
Programme Director	Dr Yvonne Emmett	Yvonne.emmett@ncirl.ie
Practicum Tutor	Dr Yvonne Emmett	Yvonne.emmett@ncirl.ie
Director for the Centre of Education and Lifelong Learning	Prof Leo Casey	Leo.casey@ncirl.ie
Programme Coordinator	Ariadny Bittencourt	To contact the Programme Coordinator: 'Submit a request' to Academic Operations (Programme Enquires) within NCI Support Hub: https://www.ncirl.ie/Students/Current-Students-Hub

3. Practicum Guidelines

The following general guidelines apply for the Practicum:

- Students are required to identify their own Practicum settings.
- Students typically complete their practicum within the timeframe of the first two semesters i.e. September - May. In some cases, students may extend this timeframe by applying for an extension. This would require permission of the Programme Director. (See page 8 for further details).
- Not all practicums start or end at the same time and the progression path for each student will be different.
- The Practicum activities will normally take place during the working week. For planned activities that take place outside this time, you need to obtain permission from the Programme Director.
- **Communication throughout the programme is managed exclusively through NCI e-mail, Moodle, and Microsoft Teams systems.** It is the responsibility of students to access and check their NCI emails regularly.
- All submissions during the Practicum must be through the designated college system (Moodle) Submissions by other means such as email attachment are not accepted.
- Students will not be deemed to have completed the programme until the Practicum has been completed.
- The Programme is limited in its capacity to support practicums through the summer months of July and August and prior permission from the Programme Director must be obtained where this is anticipated.
- Should a student have difficulties contacting the Practicum Tutor, s/he should inform the Practicum Coordinator at their earliest convenience.

4. Arranging an appropriate setting to complete the Practicum

The responsibility for arranging a Practicum setting rests with each student. National College of Ireland recognises that teaching takes place in a wide variety of settings, locations and time. Students are required to identify an appropriate adult learning or workplace learning context in which to carry out the Practicum associated with this module.

In identifying a suitable Practicum, students should be able to answer in the affirmative to the following:

- I carry out instruction where I am the trainer/designer of the strategy.
- I can describe the instructional context i.e. target group, intended learning outcomes and instruction and assessment strategies.
- The instructional context is authentic and useful for learners.
- I can vary the pedagogical approaches at class or learning activity level.
- I can complete meaningful and measurable learning uplift or instructional task within the timeframe.
- I can gather evidence from my own reflections, learner feedback and/or learner's performance.

The Programme Director can advise on suitability of an intended setting.

5. Responsibilities of students in their host organisation

Students are expected to:

- Act in a professional manner at all times.
- Adhere to all policies and procedures at the host organisation.
- Adhere to instructions given to them by their manager/supervisor.
- Inform the host organisation of any unexpected absence due to illness or exceptional circumstance in a timely manner and in keeping with local procedures.
- Conform to the appropriate dress code and institutional policies on social networking and public behaviour.
- Undertake all components of the Practicum in an ethical manner.
- Adhere to national and institutional policies and protocols in relation to Covid-19 safety.

Note: Students are **not** required to disclose any business sensitive information with NCI.

6. Practicum Orientation

The orientation for the Practicum in Educational Practice will take place online via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 13 September 2023.

Attendance at the orientation is compulsory for all students. Students will be provided with an overview of the Practicum and processes that support it during this session.

7. Practicum Overview

The Practicum in Educational Practice takes place during the academic year, typically from September – May.

Learning in the workplace is enabled and evidenced through a process of scholarly reflection on practice. This involves planning, delivery and on-going self-review of educational practice. It is supported and guided by meetings and discussions with the Practicum Tutor. The quality of the Practicum depends on a partnership between the student, programme team and workplace/adult learning setting.

The Practicum consists of two parts:

- i) Portfolio-based learning
- ii) Micro-teaching

The overall Practicum consists of 60 hours which may consist of preparation for the phase (individual and/or collaborative), preparatory observation, attendance at Professional Learning sessions (e.g. on the effective use of MS Teams etc.), implementation of the professional learning/education events, follow-up with learners etc.

Portfolio-based learning (70%)

Overall, students will create an online portfolio that will include a range of artefacts demonstrating their planning for, implementation of, and reflection on a teaching and learning process in their respective settings. Students will attend a specific session on portfolio-based learning to help choose artefacts. Students will also be encouraged to use multiple mediums e.g. tables, written pieces, photographs, Vlog entries etc. The Portfolio-based learning component is weighted at 70% of the overall Practicum module.

Students will be required to design and deliver a number of classes to individuals within their workplace, based on best practice. Specifically, students will be required to create learning plans, design their presentations, formulate activities or opportunities for interaction (where appropriate) and to gather feedback.

Portfolio-based learning focuses on three phases of planning and design, implementing and review and reflection as outlined in the diagram below.

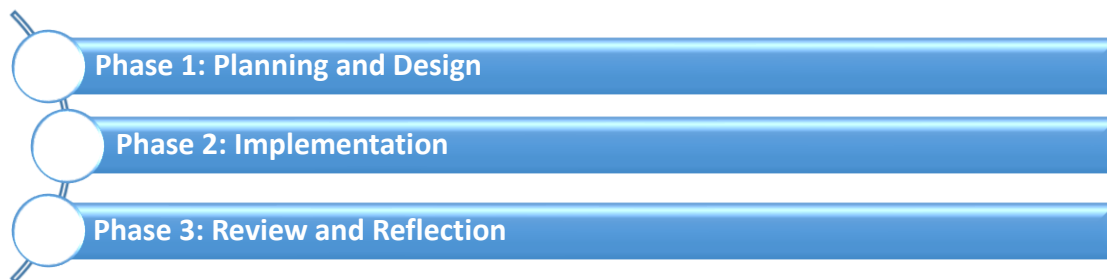


Figure 3: The Phases of the Portfolio-based learning

Phase 1: Planning and Design

During the Planning and Design Phase, students will meet with the Practicum Tutor to discuss the nature of the activities they intend to undertake. There will be a clear plan developed in agreement with their Practicum Tutor for how they intend to complete their Practicum, and this should be added to their portfolio. It is important that the Practicum constitutes a personal development challenge.

Only when the Plan of Activities is agreed and approved by the Practicum Tutor can the student commence the specified activities.

It is the responsibility of students to ensure their supervisor/manager are provided with a copy of the Plan of Activities also. The student is obliged to inform their Practicum Tutor of changes to the Plan of Activities.

Other Phase 1 artefacts in the portfolio could include e.g. indicative readings, needs assessment with peers, evidence of own professional learning undertaken to upskill in advance of implementation etc.

Students must complete a brief overall reflection on the planning process. This should be no more than 500 words.

Phase 2: Implementation

During the Implementation Phase, students will carry out their plan as identified in their Plan of Activities. As part of their portfolio, students will

be required to develop a draft Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Design in agreement with the Practicum Tutor.

Students must upload their final version of the LTA Design for approval by their Practicum Tutor. Once this is approved, the student can commence implementation. It will also be agreed with the supervisor/manager (or equivalent responsible person within the organisation).

An LTA Design is a personalised plan of teaching/training, learning and assessment activities designed for specific cohorts of learners. It outlines the classes/sessions for which the student will assume responsibility and the intended teaching strategies. It is supported by relevant theory and educational research. Specific guidance on LTA designs will be provided to students in the Strategies of Learning and Teaching module.

Other Phase 2 artefacts in the portfolio could include e.g. overall schedule of rollout, sample presentation slides or resources, sample assessments etc.

Students must complete a brief overall reflection on the implementation process. This should be no more than 500 words.

Phase 3: Review and Reflection

The Review and Reflection Phase supports students to develop an ability to reflect on their practice and use these insights to enhance their approach to learning and teaching.

Phase 3 artefacts should include feedback from participants, sample assessment results/analysis, any ongoing reflections from the student etc.

Students must complete a scholarly reflection on the overall teaching and learning process, with future directions etc. This should be no more than 1000 words.

A separate grading rubric will be issued for the portfolio-based learning component.

Micro-teaching (30%)

For this practical component, students will be expected to design and deliver a micro-lesson (8-10 minutes) to their peers on a topic of their choice from their practicum in the context of one of the scheduled practicum tutorials taking place on December 2023 and 21 February

2024. This should be based on a lesson plan produced specifically for this class. The mini-lesson, which will be delivered live in Microsoft Teams will be recorded and marked by the Practicum Tutor. Students will also be required to write a report on feedback which they receive from their peers and the marker. Each student is expected to be able to formulate a clear critique on each peer that presents and to engage with each of the topics being presented.

A separate assessment brief and rubric will be provided for the micro-teaching component.

Practicum Tutorial Meetings

Students meet with the Practicum Tutor four times in the context of group tutorials, which will take place on the dates shown below. These are oriented to guide students through the different stages of the practicum and provide support for meeting the assessment requirements:

- 4 October 2023 (online)
- 25 November 2023 (on campus)
- 6 December 2023 (online)
- 21 February 2024 (online)

Programme Team Roles

Role of the Practicum Tutor

The Practicum Tutor is part of the National College of Ireland Programme Team who supports and evaluates students during the Practicum by means of meetings, feedback and portfolio assessments.

The role of the Practicum Tutor is not simply evaluative. S/he will act as a support and guidance throughout the Practicum. Students should share their ideas, intended strategies, challenges and reflections with their Practicum Tutor.

Practicum Tutors will guide students in carrying out tasks such as planning strategies for improvement, integrate ideas from theory, manage learning activities and design assessments to provide feedback to learners.

The Practicum Tutor will look for a cycle of continuous improvement and evidence of a professionally and academically appropriate reflective stance on the part of the student.

Role of the Programme Director

The Programme Director has overall academic responsibility and leadership of the Master of Arts in Educational Practice programme. They are responsible for moderating all marks and ensuring adherence to the module assessment policies.

Role of the Programme Coordinator

The programme coordinator has overall administrative responsibility for the Master of Arts in Educational Practice programme.

Confirming the Practicum setting

To confirm the Practicum setting, students are required to inform the programme team of their practicum arrangements via a Microsoft Form on Moodle. Students will add details of their Practicum setting.

When can I commence the Practicum?

Before students commence the Practicum, they must complete a Plan of Activities and share and agree this with their Practicum Tutor and manager/supervisor for approval.

The Practicum Tutor must approve the Plan of Activities before students can commence their Practicum.

Practicum Timeframe

Students typically complete their Practicum within the timeframe of the first two semesters i.e. September - May. In some cases, students may extend this timeframe. This requires permission of the Programme Director.

Where a student has to extend their practicum beyond this period, they must request for an extension and permission of the Programme Director is required.

A student will not be able to complete the programme without completing the Practicum.

Deferral Request

Students who are unable to complete a Practicum due to extenuating circumstances such as illness, bereavement etc. may apply for a module deferral. This means the student can pause the Practicum and continue the following academic year. To apply for a module deferral, email your Practicum Coordinator for details.

Where circumstances in the Practicum setting change during Practicum and the Practicum setting is not in a position to provide accommodate the student's Practicum, the student will be approved to continue/defer the Practicum without penalties if they cannot find another Practicum setting in sufficient time within the academic year.

Withdrawal

On the advice of the manager of the host organisation and the Practicum Tutor, the Programme Director may withdraw a student from a Practicum where there is serious infringement of the host policies, code of practice of and for students on Practicum or where the student fails to follow the procedures. A student may appeal this decision in accordance with National College of Ireland's Appeals Process.

Where a student fails to maintain a Practicum they will forfeit their place on the Master of Arts in Educational Practice.

Not-Progressing / Fitness to Learn

In certain circumstances a student may be deemed to be 'not-progressing' during the Practicum. The Practicum is in-effect paused. This may happen for a variety of reasons, for example substantial changes to a Plan of Activities brought about by changes in employment, change of venue, problems with a host organisation or changes in the student's circumstances.

In some cases, this may be beyond the control of the student and if this is the case the programme team will endeavour to work with the student to find a suitable alternative.

In other cases, the student may be deemed as 'not progressing' by the programme team (usually the Programme Director in conjunction with the Practicum Tutor) due to a deficit in 'fitness to learn' on Practicum. This can occur when the student is deemed to be unable or unwilling to follow guidance from the Practicum Tutor, and/or absence of communication with Practicum Tutor, failure to act and communicate professionally and within the standards required of the Practicum setting and failure to prepare adequately to carry out the Practicum tasks.

Where a student is deemed 'not progressing' due to fitness to learn issues the student will be provided with communication outlining the issues of concern and will be required to demonstrate that these issues have been rectified before the Practicum may re-commence.

Information for the host organisation

The Master of Arts in Educational Practice programme is designed to enhance understanding of personal learning and the development of learning in others.

The Practicum in Educational Practice (also known as the Practicum) is an essential element of this programme as it provides students with opportunities to learn their profession within an authentic adult learning or workplace setting. The Practicum forms an integral part of the programme where students are required to demonstrate that they are developing competence and skills in the practice of teaching or training.

What is required of a host organisation?

- Provide a student with a Practicum that facilitates fulfilment of the requirements of the programme (the opportunity to teach or train).
- Students may or may not be existing employees of your organisation.
- If possible, assign a 'buddy' or helping mentor to the student.

- Students will not be required to disclose any business sensitive information with NCI.
- For the format of Practicum, NCI's Practicum Tutor will not visit the host organisation facilitating the student's Practicum.
- Agree the Plan of Activities with the student.
- Provide appropriate induction in compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and make the student aware of workplace policies and procedures as appropriate.
- Notify NCI's Practicum Tutor or the Programme Director of any problems, in particular of any aspects of the student's performance that are unsatisfactory.