

Guidelines for
School Placements III

Document approved by the School Placements Committee on 21 October 2016

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1. Introduction

This document complements the *Teaching Guide* for the subject and the *School Placements Regulations*, approved by the Academic Committee (CAT) on 19 July 2016 and ratified by the Board of the centre on 20 July 2016. Furthermore, it is also worth consulting other documents, which are found on the Teacher Training website and which the tutor will add to the Resources on the Virtual Classroom, such as:

- Course timetable
- Students' assessment by the school mentor
- Students' assessment by the teacher training tutor

This document contains some considerations about some of the tasks that will be used for assessment and that can be clarified in the mentor or tutor's assessment documents. Basically, they are guidelines regarding the professional attitude and behaviour of a student on school placement at the school and also on the characteristics, structure and contents of the Report on School Placement.

2. Professional attitude and behaviour of a student on school placement at the school

These basic principles, approved by the CAT on 19 June 2015, are not just advice but are basic principles of obligatory compliance and, as such, will be reflected in the mark.

When you enter the school each morning -we hope on time- during any of the school placement periods, your situation is that of a student of the Faculty of Teacher Training of the University of Valencia. Bear in mind that you may coincide with colleagues doing school placements for other qualifications (for example, educational psychology) or for teacher training courses from other universities and, in this sense, remember that you are representing our University and its Faculty of Teacher Training. This means that the Faculty of Teacher Training of the University of Valencia considers it important to pay attention to some principles of professional attitude and behaviour, principles that highlight respect and trust towards the schools and the teachers who welcome us. And principles that also highlight what we aim to show you in your training.

Some basic principles that would partly define this professional attitude and behaviour are:

1. Respect towards each and every person comprising the school: teachers, workers and, in particular, the boys and girls.
2. It is very important to remember that you are students and that the responsible person in the classroom is the mentor. Therefore, do not get ahead of yourself regarding your work, do not intervene with the students without the tutor being present, or without their authorisation, and, above all, never contradict or undermine the teacher, nor can you try to assess the teaching-learning process of the boys and girls because that is not up to you.
3. When you consider it necessary, regarding certain tasks you may be asked to do, clearly state your limitations depending on the training received thus far. In this sense, you must abstain from taking on professional obligations (which you will probably never be asked to do) for which you are not trained.
4. On the other hand, to the extent that during the school placement you are a "living" part of the school, you are expected to cooperate to the maximum to facilitate your integration in the centre. Therefore, what is needed is that you collaborate in all the activities that the teachers propose (for example, accompanying your mentor at breaktime, accompanying students to the classes of other specialists, etc.). The centre will inform you about those meetings that you may, or may not, attend. For our part, we recommend you go to

as many as possible, and also that you attend all the activities you can (for example, if possible, going to the school canteen is very educational).

5. As observers it is possible that you find yourselves accidentally (or not) dealing with problematic situations and conversations between, for example, two teachers, a teacher and a parent, a teacher and a child, etc. These are moments that, obviously, also contribute to your view of the daily routine, but bear in mind two aspects with regard to these kinds of situations:

- a) Do not get personally involved or interfere in situations, the variables of which you do not know.
- b) In subject reports, comments, seminars, etc., the confidentiality and privacy of the people with whom you are working or meet during your stay at the centre must always be respected.

6. It is very important you keep all the information regarding students and their families absolutely confidential (Personal Data Protection Law). Remember you cannot take photographs or record any part of the school, even if the children's faces do not appear. If you wish to take photos of the school or of a classroom, ask for the teacher's permission, and if you wish to take photos of the children, you must also talk about it first with the headteacher because it is possible that the school has some kind of agreement with families in this regard. But this is important: you cannot take photographs or videos on your own initiative.

7. Basic rules (which may not be necessary to mention, but...):

- a. Regular attendance and, in the event of an urgent and one-off incident, information to a member of the school so the teachers involved are aware of it.
- b. Arrive at the centre on time.
- c. Correct physical appearance.
- d. Suitable language.
- e. Abstain from using your mobile phone or any other electronic device that is not related to the work being done at any given time in the classroom.
- f. Correct relationship with the centre professionals and with other school placement students.
- g. Maximum collaboration within your abilities.

3. Report on School Placements III

3.1. General characteristics

By *report* we mean a written document on your learning experience through placements at a school, which must be given to the tutor at the end of the school placement period. It must be handed in through the Task that the tutor will open on the Virtual Classroom.

This explanation must be:

- A well-presented formal document in a suitable format (formal cover, suitable and justified margins, Times New Roman font size 12, with 1.5 line spacing).
- A concise text between 25 and 30 pages in length, not including the cover, table of contents or annexes.
- Well-structured and numbered.
- It must have an interesting title. Bear in mind that *Report on School Placements* is not a title, it is the type of work and, as such, you must give it a title that summarises and defines the text you write. If you are asked to write a poem, story or newspaper article, you would not put "Poem", "Story" or "Newspaper article" as the

title, would you? A title is very important for a text because, as well as announcing what the reader will find, it helps with the motivation to read it and understand the idea behind it; mind you, the title has to be thought about and well-chosen.

- The language used must be suitable and, obviously, correct; in other words, there cannot be any spelling mistakes, it must be cohesive and have vocabulary that is coherent with the type of text in question. Remember that it is one of the essential requirements of the assessment, as stated in the *Teaching Guide* for the subject (also see the *Criteria for correction of writing*¹).
- It must contain your thoughts on what you have experienced and learnt and not just be a copy of documents. Therefore, it must be interesting and entertaining. Personal style and originality will also be assessed (see the document *Some additional considerations regarding the report on School Placements III*²).
- In short, it must be a reflection of the acquisition of the skills of the *School Placements III* subject.
- Pay particular attention to data protection: you cannot include the names of students or of the school which would enable recognition of the person being spoken about. And it cannot include any photographs of the boys and girls.
- Also pay attention to the reflections that a school placement student makes of the teachers or schools; you can have an opinion, but do not judge.

To draw up the report, the student will base it on:

- Their capacity to observe and get involved in school life.
- The gathering, systematic or not, of information through different sources, such as:
 - Diary
 - Interviews
 - Informal conversations
 - Experiences
- Reflection from participation and assimilation of the progressive guidance and tutoring in the school placement seminar meetings at the Faculty of Teacher Training.

3.2 Structure and content of the report

3.2.1 Brief introduction to the school as a framework for the professional activity

Two pages must discuss the location of the school where the school placement is being done, and also include some comments on its environment, organisation and resources. It is not necessary to describe all its material and personnel characteristics, rather reflect on those that have caught your attention for some particular reason.

3.2.2 Brief commentary on the classroom and class-group as a unit of analysis

Three or four pages should be used to analyse important characteristics of the organisation of classroom spaces and resources, the distribution of time and the classroom, the teaching and learning models and styles, the diversity of students and its implication for teaching (organisation and curriculum adaptations) and for the students (groups, cooperation, integration, conflicts, etc.), the possibilities, limitations and consequences of the use of teaching materials and resources, etc. In other words, you must reflect on those aspects of the classroom that catch your attention, but without writing an exhaustive description.

3.2.3 Analysis of a Teaching Unit: thoughts on planning, intervention and its assessment

We deem a Teaching Unit (TU) to be the planning, intervention or application, and assessment corresponding to a specific teaching-learning period. In this school placement period, it would be appropriate to be, at least, one week. Depending on the situation, a teaching unit could be a sequence of a subject, a small work project, the intervention in a case, etc. This section must be structured in the following way:

¹ Annexes 1 and 2 depending on the document are presented in Valencian or in Spanish.

² In Annex 2.

1. A thoughtful explanation on the decision taken.

During the school placement period, each student must have carried out different interventions in the classroom. As this report cannot contain them all, in this section a short comment must be made on the interventions done and explain why one of them has been chosen for analysis, the one which will be analysed in this section.

At this point, it is also worth commenting the coordination that has existed with the mentor, since it is related to the decision taken.

2. Planning and creation of the sessions.

When an intervention in class is prepared, whatever its type, first it must be prepared, it must be planned. This is the time to explain the planning and reflect on the steps to be taken, and that have been taken, in the design of the TU. Only this reflection can later lead us to an effective assessment and, as a result, to improving the teaching.

The aspects to cover are:

- The decision taken regarding the skills, objectives and contents one aims for the students to obtain, in other words: why has this been chosen and not another? What have I done to take this decision?
- What did I know about the content to be taught and what have I done to find the necessary information?
- How have I prepared each of the sessions and each of the activities (application of techniques, creation of materials, technologies, etc.)? Why have I chosen some activities and not others and why have I suggested them in a certain order? Why have I decided that each of the activities should have a certain duration? Etc.
- How have I planned the methodology of each session and of each activity? Why? Have I taken into account all the possible aspects? Have I thought about the distribution of the classroom? Have I thought about its diversity? Have I taken into account the characteristics of students with SENs? How will I check and correct, if required, everything that I ask the students to do?
- And finally: when, how and why have I planned the students' assessment? And, at the same time, what will I do to plan the TU assessment?

3. Result of the TU planning.

Now would be the time to include the planning papers: the list for each session or activity with its skills, objectives, contents, activities, methodology, correction, assessment, etc.

This entire section can go in the annex.

4. Implementation of the sessions.

The second part of a TU is its application. Now is the time to explain how the intervention in the classroom went, what happened and why.

5. Assessment of the sessions.

- Of the learning. In other words, of the boys and girls: have they achieved the objectives with the activities I have done, the methodology I have applied and the method I have used to assess them? Why?
- Of the planning and its application. After all these reflections: what would I change in the planning and the implementation of the sessions to improve my students' learning?

3.2.4 Self-assessment and conclusion

What is your assessment of the participation in all aspects of this school placement period? Why? Have you reached a conclusion?

What are the problems, doubts and expectations that have arisen during the *School Placements III* period?
What possibilities and limitations do you think you have in the future profession as a teacher?

3.2.5 Subject assessment

In this last section we ask for suggestions regarding the organisation of the *School Placements III* and also an assessment of:

- The meetings in small and large groups,
- The tutor's work, both in the school as well as in the faculty,
- The school placement centre.

4. Annexes

1. Criteria for correction of writing

Expression		Accuracy	
MB	The writing achieves the requested purpose: it clearly expresses the authors opinions; formulates the ideas with transparency and provides diverse relevant arguments and/or examples. The selection of information is appropriate for the reader. The text is organised in paragraphs, which are ordered logically; the structure follows the typical conventions of a report.	MB	<p>Spelling: Good despite some occasional mistakes (some consonant vacillation, some accents, etc.).</p> <p>Grammar: There is an occasional problem (poorly used verb forms, badly formed impersonal structures, concordance errors, incorrect connectors, punctuation signs, etc.).</p> <p>Vocabulary: It is suitable and varied.</p> <p>Overall assessment: 0 to 5 mistakes.</p>
B	The writing achieves the purpose and clearly expresses the ideas but shows some limitations in the selection and organising of information or in the expression. There are unjustifiable redundancies, some unrecoverable implicit ideas, ambiguities, some badly segmented paragraphs or violations of the conventions of this type of text.	B	<p>Spelling: Good but with some systematic problems and some occasional mistakes.</p> <p>Grammar: Some occasional mistakes, but systematic.</p> <p>Vocabulary: Suitable, but with some repetition.</p> <p>Overall assessment: 6 to 10 mistakes.</p>
R	The writing only partly achieves the purpose. Several errors are observed that affect comprehension: some confusion, inaccuracy or ambiguity in the selection and organisation of the ideas. The text moves away from the prototypical conventions of this type of text.	R	<p>Spelling: It has mistakes of all kinds, some systematic and others occasional.</p> <p>Grammar: It has quite a lot of mistakes.</p> <p>Vocabulary: It has little variety of vocabulary and, sometimes, it is inadequate.</p> <p>Overall assessment: 11 to 20 mistakes.</p>
M	The writing has obvious deficiencies that make its comprehension difficult. The errors in the selection and organisation of the information are varied and relevant: there are contradictions, semantic mistakes, poorly developed ideas. The form of the text has very few conventions of this type of text.	M	<p>Spelling: Bad. It has mistakes of all kinds.</p> <p>Grammar: It has a lot of systematic mistakes.</p> <p>Vocabulary: Very little variety of vocabulary and it is inadequate.</p> <p>Overall assessment: 21 to 30 mistakes.</p>
MM	The writing is so deficient it fails to achieve the objectives and does not transmit clear ideas. The errors in the selection and organisation are serious and reiterated. The writing does not follow any of the instructions, for example: it does not correspond to the matter in hand, its length is inadequate, etc.	MM	<p>Overall assessment: More than 30 mistakes of all kinds.</p>

MB (very good): 9-10

B (good): 7-8

R (fair): 5-6

M (bad): 3-4

MM (very bad): 1-2

2. Some additional considerations regarding the report on *School Placements III*

GUILDENSTERN

What would we say, my lord?

HAMLET

Why, anything. But to th'purpose.³

As well as the guidelines provided in the previous sections, I want you to understand that in this brief report⁴ you are expected to talk about you and your learning throughout the stay at the school. My basic interest is not about the school, its teachers, its methodology, its students, or anything that is not yourselves in your condition as future teachers. I hope you organise your valuable experience in these placements into a story that is the result of what you want to explain to the world about yourselves and your experience in a school during these weeks; of how much you have enjoyed being able to share the life of a teacher in their classroom and of the analysis you have made of it; of the relationships the children have established with you; of those you have seen when there have been opposing postures between practicing teachers; of how the children are different during breaktimes and in the classroom; of what the caretaker thinks of it all, etc. In other words, of anything that has allowed you to increase your knowledge in a relevant manner during this time, and that I can use to assess your capacity to learn and communicate what you have learnt. Any of these matters may be the starting point to describe situations because you transmit sensations, because you make reflections of vital and educational value, and because you communicate to me what is of value in them as well as how they have helped you learn.

Naturally, the report must be well written, and I am not referring to correct spelling or grammar which, like attendance, are mandatory. I am referring to the fact that it awakens the interest and knowledge of whoever reads the report, of myself; to the fact that when you make statements they are accompanied by the corresponding reasoning that upholds them; to the fact that there are no contradictions between reasons, evidence and conclusions; to the fact that when personal opinions or value judgements are given, they are coherent, intelligent and well-argued and clearly stated, they are coherent with the discourse of the report and raise interest.

The mention of discourse has brought to mind *Poetics* by Aristotle, in which he insists that a narration must always try to explain a story, -he wrote a fable, we would now say a plot-, and that it should only include actions that are essential for its development. He describes that the structure of a narration must contain its setting, development and outcome:

- The setting in a drama is its initial scene, where the environment in which the story will take place is made known, where the characteristics of the main characters are stated in detail (which may include their past, present, attitudes, psychology, etc.) or the place or time in which it occurs (although it is not always defined exactly, in fact sometimes it is not mentioned at all). This is where the characters begin to develop their story and the subsequent problem that will lead to the climax.⁵

³ William Shakespeare, 1601. *Hamlet*, act III, scene II, lines 285-6. Bilingual edition (M.Á. Conejero and J. Talens), 18th ed. Madrid. Cátedra, 2013, p. 282-3.

⁴ It is likely that a 25-page report takes up 50 pages if you do not edit and cut bits out without mercy. There was a moment when you were worried about having enough things to include; before you know it, you have too many. You have to find the best story that describes the specific situation, for the reader's benefit, and for that of the case and the woods. An efficient author is whoever explains what is necessary and leaves the rest to the reader (adapted from Robert E. Stake, 1995. *The Art of Case Study Research*, Sage Pub., Thousand Oaks, p. 121).

⁵ In the structure suggested for the report, it could correspond to the first two sections, "*Brief introduction: The school as a framework for the professional activity*" and "*Brief description of the classroom and the class-group as a unit for analysis*", although it could also consider what education or what expectations, own or external, one arrives with at the school where the placement will be done. It should not take up more than 4 pages.

- What follows the setting is the development, complication or dénouement, and contains the climax, the moment of greatest tension of the story, the discourse, the transformative action of the narrated story. Sometimes, the resource is used to cause a conflict between the protagonist and antagonist causing the effect of separating and opposing them for greater effect of narrative tension.⁶
- Always end the narration with a conclusion, the function of which is to lighten the narrative tension that has reached its climax in the dénouement, and in which the consequences of the drama, of the transformative action, are explained as well as their effect on the story's characters. Sometimes it is used to reverse the situation that was initially proposed to highlight the narrative tension, particularly its climax.⁷

Any story must always bear in mind this simple rule of having a beginning, middle and end, as well as recognising its artistic part, which does not entail abandoning objectivity, nor permission to state personal opinions that can only be defended by referring to a non-existent individual right to having them. This artistic component of the story does not enable one to abandon rationality or plot coherence: it only offers the chance to choose the story you wish to explain, as well as the metaphors or allegories that can be used to facilitate its comprehension and to get the appropriate sensations which it is hoped the reader receives from the text.

One last piece of advice: to explore your narrative quality it is a good idea to read the report aloud, if possible to someone you trust, whether or not they have any knowledge of formal education matters. Their comprehension and opinion on the interest of your story will help you assess the narrative tension you have got in the report, as well as helping you repair fragmented sentences caused by badly placed commas, eliminate the majority of annoying spelling mistakes, improve editing decisions to make reading easier and other inconvenient and avoidable matters.

Óscar Barberá, 27 February 2015

⁶ Section 3 of the proposed structure serves this purpose: expectations and experiences can be confronted, theoretical models and teaching practices, opposing lives of school children or teachers, antagonistic educational objectives, wishes and realities and many other things.

⁷ The last two sections of the recommended structure, "*Conclusion and self-assessment*" and "*Assessment of the subject*", are the place for the conclusion, where the effects suffered by the transformative power of the school placement are stated, explaining how it has affected the training and personal identity that has been built on the teaching profession when comparing it to the experience lived. It is very important to always bear in mind that one does not learn from the experience, but from reflecting on it.