

Oregon Practicum Position Statement



Oregon Department of
**Early Learning
and Care**



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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This is the first edition of Workforce Education Community of Practice's (WECOP) position statement on best practices in Oregon Early Childhood Education (ECE) Field Experience. The definitions, principles, and guideline recommendations all underscore the importance of social, cultural, historical and local knowledge. This broader view emphasizes the implications of contexts for all students involved in any aspect of an early childhood education field experience.

The value of field experience

Field experience, specifically practicum, is a supervised experience that allows early childhood students to apply what they have learned in their coursework to a real-world setting. It provides an opportunity for them to observe and work with children, practice teaching and lesson planning, and receive feedback from experienced educators. Engaging in a practicum can help early childhood students develop their skills and confidence as teachers, support ongoing reflection and continuous quality improvement, and it can also help the candidate to decide if a career in early childhood education is the right fit for them. It is an important part of the training and preparation for a career in early childhood education. For working candidates, practicum can serve as a resource to expose the candidate to new tools for practice, self-reflection, and professional evaluation.

The impact of COVID-19

The circumstances surrounding the COVID -19 shutdown led to innovations and new learning around possibilities in practicum. This experience brought to light barriers that were already being experienced by many of our candidates. As a result, it was an opportune time to come together to review Oregon's existing models and come to a consensus about the guidelines for best practices in this new reality.

Our hope is that this document can serve as a store for the collective learning for future programs and for current programs to expand their practices in their continuous quality improvement efforts.

In January 2023, work to begin this process started with gathering questions to create a survey, and asking those in the field about existing practices (February 2023 survey of colleges on their current field experience practices). Using that feedback, the expertise and experience of a dedicated group of Institute of Higher Education, Early Childhood Education (IHE ECE) faculty, and the base format of the NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards, specifically Standard F: Field Experience Quality, the workgroup began to move towards consensus around best practices for field experiences in Oregon.

Below is a list of the agreed upon common definitions, and the identified core beliefs about the requirements of a high-quality field experience:

- Candidates deserve the hands-on opportunity to practice what they are learning
- Practicum experiences should include at least two of the categories of sites for breadth of care (Infant/toddler to PreK) - ideally different types of care too (center, home, Head Start...)
- Candidates should have opportunity to have experience with the families and guardians of children
- There should be understanding of children with special rights (ideally inclusive classrooms)
- Practicum should include experience with a qualified and prepared supervising teacher candidates can observe
- Practicum mentors are trained to support and mentor practicum candidates
- The experience should connect course content to intentional experiences in practicum

Identifying the barriers

Next, the group identified unique candidate situations that they had encountered to highlight the needs of the candidates in their communities are addressed, including:

- Not all candidates can attend classes in person,
- Not all colleges have a lab school,
- Not all communities have NAEYC accredited early learning and care programs,
- Some candidates require opportunities for practicum at distance opportunities, both in relation to the education institution and practicum experiences sites, and
- Some candidates own their own programs or are a lead teacher with a director off site and need to do their practicum in their own site.

The workgroup hosted in depth discussions about Oregon specific resources and needs using the four categories from the NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation Standards which include:

- Breadth of Field Experiences,
- Quality of Field Experiences,
- Supporting Cooperating/Mentor/Supervisor Teacher Quality, and
- Candidate Supports

The discussions focused on how they fit in the context of current realities in terms of Institutes of Higher Education program capacities and the unique circumstances of candidates for a degree or certificate to create the recommendations listed below.

Statement of the position

We firmly believe that candidates deserve the invaluable opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in real-world settings through hands-on practicum experiences. By engaging in practical learning, candidates gain a deeper understanding of their studies while honing their skills and preparing for future endeavors. To ensure a comprehensive and well-rounded practicum, we advocate for the inclusion of at least two different levels of care, encompassing the breadth of care from infant/toddler to PreK. Additionally, exposure to various types of care and education environments, that include centers, home-based settings, early childhood special education, and Head Start programs, enhances candidates' adaptability and widens their perspectives.

Furthermore, it is crucial for practicum experiences to involve interactions with the family or legal guardians. These interactions foster a deeper understanding of the diverse backgrounds and needs of the children under their care, allowing candidates to develop stronger relationships and collaborate effectively with family or legal guardians.

Inclusive classrooms play a vital role in today's education landscape, and therefore, it is desirable for practicum experiences to provide an opportunity for candidates to understand and support children with special rights. Inclusive environments promote empathy, compassion, and a greater appreciation for diversity, preparing future educators to create inclusive and equitable learning spaces.

Moreover, **a key element of an enriching practicum is the presence of a qualified and prepared supervising teacher, who serves as a role model and guide for the practicum candidate.** A

quality or skilled supervising teacher provides valuable insights, shares best practices, and supports the growth and development of the candidate. We believe it is essential for practicum mentors to receive training specifically tailored to support and mentor practicum candidates effectively, ensuring a positive and constructive learning experience.

Lastly, **we emphasize the significance of connecting the content learned in courses with intentional experiences during the practicum.** This alignment helps candidates bridge the gap between theory and practice, reinforcing their understanding of concepts and methodologies. By intentionally integrating classroom learning with practical experiences, candidates gain a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of their field of study.

By providing candidates with such opportunities, we empower them to become competent, compassionate, and reflective professionals who are prepared to make a positive impact on the lives of the children and families they serve.

Current Trends for Practicum Experiences in Oregon

In today's educational landscape, it is crucial to acknowledge and address the realities that impact practicum experiences.

In Person Attendance

One significant challenge is the fact that not all candidates can attend classes in person. Various factors such as geographical limitations, personal circumstances, or health concerns may prevent candidates from physically being present on campus. As a result, alternative solutions must be explored to ensure that these candidates have access to meaningful practicum experiences that align with their learning goals.

Lab Schools

Lab schools provide invaluable opportunities for candidates to observe and actively engage with learners in a controlled and supportive environment. However, not all colleges have the resources or infrastructure to establish a dedicated lab school. In such cases, alternative avenues must be

explored, such as partnerships with local schools or community organizations, to provide candidates with similar experiential learning opportunities.

Mentorship and Supervision

There are instances where practicums must take place at the candidate's own site. This could occur when a candidate is working in a professional capacity within an educational setting, such as being an owner or lead teacher in a center or home-based provider or, because Oregon values home based care and its role in family or legal guardian choice, the candidate may be the single employee of their home based business. In such cases, it becomes essential to establish mechanisms for mentorship and supervision that account for the unique dynamics and responsibilities of the candidate's role.

These realities of candidate experience present challenges that need to be proactively addressed in order to provide meaningful and inclusive practicum experiences. By recognizing and adapting, we can ensure that all candidates have equitable opportunities to engage in experiential learning and develop the necessary skills and competencies for their future professional endeavors.

Breadth of Field Experience

Starting with the base of the requirements set forth in the NAEYC Professional Standards and Competencies (black) edits to bring in the unique Oregon perspective have been added or elements changed (blue).

Ideal Practice

A. All candidates have opportunities in field experiences to observe and practice with at least two age groups (infant (6wk-12m)/ toddler (12m-3y), preschool age(3y-5), and early elementary grades (kindergarten through third grade) [If related coursework supports K-12 education].

B. All candidates have opportunities in field experiences to observe and practice within at least two types of early learning settings (home-based programs, center- based programs, early elementary grade [K-3] settings, home visiting and comprehensive service settings [e.g., Head Start, Relief Nursery, Early Intervention Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) and Educare]).

C. The program offers opportunities for candidates to observe and practice with children and families with dominant and non-dominant social identities, lived experiences and perspectives (e.g., cultural, linguistic, race/ ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, ability.), as data is available, or reflect on and process their own experiences with diverse populations (diversity as defined by NAEYC, see definitions).

D. Candidates should not count in ratio unless employed by their practicum site (practicum credit for paid internship/apprenticeship is not allowable in Oregon at the time of the creation of this document, 2023.)

Justification

A. All candidates have opportunities in field experiences to observe and practice with at least two age groups:

1. **Enhanced Understanding of Child Development:** By providing opportunities to observe and practice with multiple age groups, candidates gain a more comprehensive understanding of child development across different stages. This exposure allows them to witness and experience firsthand the unique needs, behaviors, and developmental milestones associated with each age group, enabling them to tailor their teaching approaches accordingly.
2. **Versatile Teaching Skills:** Working with different age groups enhances candidates' versatility as educators. It helps them develop a diverse range of instructional strategies, communication techniques, and classroom management skills that are appropriate for each age group. This adaptability enables candidates to effectively engage and support children at various developmental levels, leading to more successful learning outcomes.

B. All candidates have opportunities in field experiences to observe and practice within at least two types of early learning settings.

1. **Holistic Understanding of Early Childhood Education:** Exposing candidates to various early learning settings broadens their understanding of the diverse contexts in which young children learn and grow. It allows candidates to gain insight into the unique strengths, challenges, and instructional approaches associated with each setting, fostering a well-rounded perspective on early childhood education.
2. **Adaptation to Different Learning Environments: Practicing** in different types of early learning settings equips candidates with the ability to adapt and thrive in diverse

- educational contexts. This adaptability is essential for early childhood educators, as they may encounter different program philosophies, resources, and child populations throughout their careers. By experiencing multiple settings, candidates develop the skills necessary to provide effective instruction and support regardless of the learning environment.
- C. The program offers opportunities for candidates to observe and practice with children and families with dominant and non-dominant social identities, lived experiences, and perspectives:
1. **Culturally Responsive Teaching:** Engaging with children and families from diverse backgrounds helps candidates become culturally responsive educators. By interacting with individuals who hold different social identities, lived experiences, and perspectives, candidates gain a deeper understanding of cultural nuances and the impact they have on children's learning. This knowledge allows candidates to create inclusive and supportive learning environments that value and respect the diverse backgrounds of their candidates.
 2. **Self-Reflection and Personal Growth:** Providing opportunities for candidates to reflect on and process their experiences with diverse populations fosters personal growth and self-awareness. Candidates can critically examine their own biases, assumptions, and privileges, which is crucial for developing empathy, cultural competence, and a commitment to social justice in their teaching practice. This reflective process supports candidates in becoming advocates for equity and inclusivity in early childhood education.
- D. Candidates should only count in ratio if employed by their practicum site or a paid internship/apprenticeship:
1. **Professional Responsibility and Accountability:** The recommendation ensures that candidates have appropriate experience and qualifications before being counted in the teacher-to-child ratios. It emphasizes the importance of candidates being fully prepared and capable of effectively managing a classroom or learning environment independently, as counting them in the ratio directly impacts the safety and quality of care for children.
 2. **Focus on Skill Development:** By excluding candidates from ratio counting, the program encourages candidates to prioritize their own learning and skill development during their practicum experiences. It ensures that candidates have sufficient time and opportunities to observe, practice, and receive feedback without the added pressure of being solely responsible for the direct care of children. This allows candidates to focus on honing their instructional abilities and developing a strong foundation for their future teaching career.

Special Considerations

If - candidate is working to achieve 'full breadth of experiences', they can be in their own classroom for their practicum and

- For one term of their experience they do a practicum/at a different site (6-10 hrs/week); If they can not get the time off, look at odd hour care/after care placements
Placement as an early experience is preferable so that they have upfront mentoring and the time off work may be minimized if the earlier placement requires fewer hours.
or
- Remain at their site for all terms AND, for their final practicum, in addition to practicum at their own site, do an in depth interview and observation at a different site. Additional opportunities to practice with 2 additional age groups would need to be embedded in the coursework.

If a candidate does not meet a placement site requirement (ex. background check)

- Find alternative placement
- With conditional approval of CBR, the candidate may allowed to be onsite but not alone with children and not counted in ratio

Resource Links

- Oregon's Child Care Substitute Pool: <https://www.facebook.com/childcaresubsor/>
- Contact local CCRR for resources on CPR certification:
<https://oregonspark.org/ccrr-regional-map/>
- Conditional approval of CPR
<https://www.oregon.gov/delc/Documents/delc-cen-0005-cbr-faqs-en.pdf>
- How to expunge record: <https://www.pcc.edu/clear-clinic/>
- NAEYC source document:
https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/accreditation/higher-ed/2021_naeyc_higher_education_accreditation_standards.pdf

Quality of Field Experience

This section of the document starts with the base of the requirements set forth in the NAEYC Professional Standards and Competencies (shown in black font) edits to bring in the unique Oregon perspective have been added or elements changed (shown in blue font). Some items have been removed from the NAEYC and other source documents in the edits (Red).

Ideal Criteria for Field Practice Placements

Field Practice Placement sites should be selected for their demonstrated commitment to inclusive, developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practices as well as to collaborative relationships with families/guardians. In addition, Field Practice Placements should demonstrate

- evidence-based practices and continuous program improvement;
- have partnerships with appropriate other educational, social, and community entities, that are supportive to families (ex. CCR &R, EI/ECSE, mental health support, food and shelter supports, higher education),
- provide robust inclusive programs that support children with diverse abilities, and multi-language learners; and
- that reflect, to the extent possible, socioeconomic and cultural diversity.

The placement should, when possible, permit video and/or photography, with family permission, for candidate reflection and TPA completion. Field Practice Clinical Placements should also have a fully qualified site supervising teacher with at least an AA in ECE administrator.

Language adapted from: California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. (2023). PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential Handbook. Retrieved from

https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/educator-prep/standards/pk-3-handbook-docx.docx?sfvrsn=7fbd26bl_24

Quality of Field Experiences

The program has intentional partnerships with written expectations or agreements with early learning settings that support candidates' growth in the Professional Standards and Competencies.

- The program has a set of criteria/expectations it uses to identify potential **Field Practice Placements**. For example: NAEYC or other accreditation, Spark participating or rated, ERS or CLASS cut off scores.
- The program uses partnership agreements or Memoranda of Understanding (or other mechanisms) with its Field Practicum Placements to set expectations for how the sites, the program, and the candidates will work together.
- Field Practicum Placements are intentionally planned and sequenced to support candidates' proficiency in the Professional Standards and Competencies.
- Check-ins are regularly held between faculty and the candidate and between the candidate and mentor with the explicit purpose of ensuring alignment with course outcomes and opportunities to put learning into practice.
- To the greatest extent possible, the Field Practicum Placements selected are reflective of practices consistent with the NAEYC Professional Standards and Competencies. In the event that such sites are not available (or limited), the program will supplement the candidates' opportunities to observe and practice with young children in ways that are consistent with the Professional Standards and Competencies.

Justification

a. **The program has a set of criteria/expectations it uses to identify potential Field Practice Placements. For example: NAEYC or other accreditation, Spark participating or rated, ERS or CLASS cut off scores.**

- By establishing criteria and expectations for field experience sites, the program ensures that candidates are placed in high-quality educational settings. Accreditation from organizations like NAEYC indicates that the site has met rigorous standards of excellence in early childhood education. Similarly, participation in programs such as Spark and meeting ERS or CLASS score cutoffs demonstrates a commitment to providing a stimulating and nurturing learning environment for young children.
- Setting specific criteria and expectations allows the program to align field experience sites with its educational objectives. By selecting sites that meet the established criteria, the program ensures that candidates have access to experiences that directly support their learning and skill development in accordance with the program's standards and competencies.

b. **The program uses partnership agreements, orientations and/or other mechanisms with its Field Practicum Placements to set expectations for how the sites, the program, and the candidates will work together.**

- Partnership agreements support appropriate candidate placement and a successful placement experience for both site and candidate. Placement often leads to permanent positions.
- Partnership agreements establish clear lines of communication and collaboration between the program, field experience sites, and candidates. They outline the roles and responsibilities of each party, ensuring a shared understanding of expectations and objectives. This collaborative approach promotes a positive and productive working relationship, enhancing the overall quality of the field experience.
- Partnership agreements help maintain consistency between the program's goals and the practices implemented at field experience sites. By setting expectations for how the sites align with the program's standards and competencies, these agreements ensure that candidates receive consistent guidance, support, and mentoring throughout their field experience.

c. **Field Practicum Placements are intentionally planned and sequenced to support candidates' proficiency in the Professional Standards and Competencies. Check-ins are regularly held between faculty and the candidate and between the candidate and mentor with the explicit purpose of ensuring alignment with course outcomes and opportunities to put learning into practice.**

- Through intentional planning and sequencing, field experiences are designed to support candidates' growth and proficiency in the professional standards and competencies. Starting with foundational experiences and gradually progressing to more complex tasks and responsibilities, candidates can develop their skills incrementally, building a strong foundation for their future teaching practice.
- Practicum experiences may inadvertently reinforce outdated or ineffective teaching practices. Candidate check-ins provide an opportunity for candidates to unlearn and challenge these misconceptions by receiving feedback, guidance, and support from faculty or supervising teachers. Addressing these items in a timely manner ensures that candidates can refine their teaching approaches and align them with current best practices. This reflective process allows candidates to critically examine their own assumptions, biases, and ineffective practices, fostering professional growth and continuous improvement.

- Regular meetings with candidate and faculty and mentor and faculty further supports the alignment of placement experience with desired course outcomes.

d. **To the greatest extent possible, the Field Practicum Placements that are selected are reflective of practices consistent with the Professional Standards and Competencies. In the event that such sites are not available (or limited), the program will supplement the candidates' opportunities to observe and practice with young children in ways that are consistent with the Professional Standards and Competencies.**

- Placing candidates in field experience sites that reflect practices consistent with the professional standards and competencies reinforces the theoretical knowledge and skills they have acquired in the program. Such alignment ensures that candidates witness and engage in exemplary teaching practices, strengthening their ability to implement these practices in their future classrooms.
- In cases where field experience sites that align with the professional standards and competencies are limited or unavailable, the program supplements candidates' opportunities to observe and practice in alternative ways. This proactive approach ensures that candidates still have access to valuable learning experiences that are consistent with the program's standards, even if the primary field experience site may not fully meet those criteria.

Special Considerations

If a candidate cannot attend one of the 'approved/MOU' placement sites because of geography or other reasons, for example:

- If candidates need their placement at the site where they work or if a candidate is an owner/operator of a site
- If a candidate's placement is outside of Oregon
 - The site must sign an agreement. The agreement should include elements such as:
 - Identification of Quality measures used for Continuous Quality improvement (CQI).
 - A plan for regular check-ins with the supervising teacher and faculty and the candidate and faculty.
 - A commitment to providing opportunities for practice tied to post-secondary coursework.
- If the field site available for a candidate does not have a supervising teacher with at least an AA in ECE

- the candidate may select an alternate site and create a plan with the ECE department for approval.

Supporting Cooperating/Mentor/Supervisor Teacher Quality

Starting with the base of the requirements set forth in the NAEYC Professional Standards and Competencies (black) edits to bring in the unique Oregon perspective have been added or elements changed (blue).

Ideal Practice

Supporting Supervisor Teacher Quality: The program offers professional development for mentoring and coaching to supervising teachers to ensure candidates have positive models of early childhood practice consistent with the Professional Standards and Competencies and to ensure consistency in the mentoring and evaluation of candidates.

a. The program has a set of criteria/ expectations it uses to identify potential supervising teachers.

Ideal criteria include at least a degree equivalent to the degree the candidate is working to achieve. Consideration should be given to placement with past graduates.

b. The program provides orientation/ preparatory materials to supervising teachers and faculty that set expectations for supporting Candidates.

Levels of support for Professional Development in mentoring and coaching for supervisory teachers may include:

- Professional Development on mentoring/coaching for supervisory teachers
- Periodic meetings between practicum instructor and supervising teacher
- Peer supervisory teacher communities of practice
- Orientation for supervisory Teacher
- Handbook for supervisory Teacher

c. The program provides regular feedback and support to supervising teachers.

d. Candidate and Supervisory teacher co-determine 3-4 candidate objectives to differentiate experience in the experience. The practicum instructor meets with the supervising teacher to gather general feedback about candidate performance and specific feedback on the candidate objectives.

e. Each practicum placement site should complete an MOU that includes, at a minimum, agreements that:

- Candidates should not count in ratio unless their practicum is in their own site or a paid internship/apprenticeship*.

*At this time paid internships cannot count towards practicum hours in Oregon.

Justification

a. The program has a set of criteria/expectations it uses to identify potential supervising teachers. Consideration should be given to placement with past graduates.

Expertise and Qualifications: Requiring supervising teachers to have at least a degree equivalent to the degree the candidate is working to achieve ensures that candidates receive guidance and mentorship from qualified professionals. This criterion guarantees that supervising teachers possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and expertise to effectively support candidates' growth and development as future educators.

Professional Alignment: The set criteria and expectations for supervising teachers ensure that they align with the program's educational goals and standards. By selecting supervising teachers who possess the same or higher level of education, the program promotes consistency and coherence in the mentorship process, fostering a shared understanding of instructional practices and pedagogical approaches. Consideration of past graduates for mentors also supports alignment.

b. The program provides orientation/preparatory materials to supervising teachers and faculty that set expectations for supporting candidates.

Consistency in Support: Providing orientation and preparatory materials ensures that all supervising teachers and faculty members have a clear understanding of the program's expectations for supporting candidates. This consistency in support enables candidates to receive equitable guidance and mentorship, regardless of their specific practicum placement.

Professional Development: Offering professional development opportunities on mentoring and coaching for supervising teachers enhances their skills and knowledge in effectively supporting candidates. By equipping supervising teachers with the tools and strategies needed to provide meaningful guidance, the program ensures that candidates receive high-quality mentorship that enhances their professional growth. Credit for professional development can also serve as an incentive to mentor.

Collaborative Networks: Creating peer supervisory teacher communities of practice fosters a collaborative environment where supervising teachers can share experiences, best practices, and resources. This collaborative network strengthens the support system for candidates and promotes ongoing professional development among supervising teachers.

c. The program provides regular feedback and support to supervising teachers and practicum instructors.

Individualized Learning Objectives: Co-determining specific candidate objectives with supervising teachers allows for a differentiated experience tailored to each candidate's needs and developmental areas. Regular feedback sessions between the practicum instructor and supervising teacher facilitate the gathering of general feedback on candidate performance and specific feedback on the established objectives. This feedback loop ensures that candidates receive ongoing support and guidance aligned with their individual goals.

d. Funding for supervisory teachers to support additional hours for feedback sessions, paperwork, and mentoring and coaching professional development:

Recognition of Extra Effort: Providing funding to supervisory teachers acknowledges the additional time and effort required to support candidates effectively. By alleviating the financial burden, supervisory teachers can dedicate more hours to feedback sessions, paperwork, and engaging in professional development opportunities focused on mentoring and coaching. This investment in supervisory teachers ultimately enhances the quality of the mentoring experience for candidates.

e. Each practicum placement site should complete an MOU that includes agreements:

Clarity and Accountability: An MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) establishes clear expectations and agreements between the program and practicum placement sites. Including

the agreement that candidates should not count in the ratio unless their practicum is in their own site or a paid internship/apprenticeship ensures that the safety and quality of care for children in the placement site are maintained. This agreement holds both parties accountable for meeting the established standards and reinforces the program's commitment to providing optimal learning experiences for candidates.

Special Considerations

If no site placement is available with a teacher with an equivalent degree, candidates may select their own placement sites and should consider in their selection:

- A supervising teacher with the highest level of ECE education (college or ORO step) available.
- and/or a placement at a site that is 'high quality' as defined by the 'Quality Field Experiences' section of this document.
- and candidates should reflect on experiences in their practicum seminar, evaluating the quality of the experiences of the children in care.

The recommendation allowing candidates to select their own placement sites when no site placement is available with a teacher of an equivalent degree is justified for the following reasons:

Ensuring Highest Level of ECE Education: By allowing candidates to select a supervising teacher with the highest level of ECE education available, the program prioritizes the importance of mentorship and guidance from highly qualified professionals. This ensures that candidates receive supervision and support from individuals who possess extensive knowledge and expertise in the field, enhancing the quality of their learning experience.

Access to High-Quality Placement Sites: Encouraging candidates to consider placement at a site that is deemed "high quality" emphasizes the significance of being exposed to exemplary early childhood education practices. A high-quality placement site provides candidates with an opportunity to observe and learn from skilled practitioners, witness effective teaching strategies, and engage in experiences that align with professional standards and competencies. Such exposure contributes to their overall professional growth and development.

Reflective Evaluation of Experiences: Encouraging candidates to reflect on their experiences in their practicum seminar and evaluate the quality of care provided to the children in the placement site promotes critical thinking and a deeper understanding of effective early childhood education. By evaluating the experiences of the children in care, candidates can assess the impact of the practices and environments on children's learning, development, and well-being.

This reflection enhances their ability to make informed decisions, adapt their teaching approaches, and advocate for high-quality early childhood education.

Individualized Learning and Candidate Autonomy: Allowing candidates to select their own placement sites empowers them to take ownership of their learning experience. It recognizes the unique interests, preferences, and career goals of candidates, enabling them to seek out opportunities that align with their individual learning needs and aspirations. This individualized approach fosters a sense of autonomy and self-directed learning, contributing to their professional growth and personal satisfaction.

Flexibility and Adaptability: When traditional site placements are limited or unavailable, providing candidates with the option to select their own placement sites allows for greater flexibility and adaptability. This ensures that candidates can still engage in valuable field experiences, even in challenging circumstances. It promotes resourcefulness, problem-solving, and resilience, which are valuable skills for future educators.

If the candidate is doing their practicum in their own center site there should be a mentor at the site that supports reflection. (ex. Educational coordinator, director, teacher from another room)

The recommendation to have a mentor at the candidate's own center site who supports reflection during their practicum is justified for the following reasons:

Objective Perspective: Having a mentor at the site who is separate from the candidate's direct role can provide an objective perspective on the candidate's teaching practice. This mentor, such as an educational coordinator, director, or teacher from another room, can offer valuable insights, observations, and feedback that help the candidate gain a more comprehensive understanding of their strengths and areas for growth.

Professional Guidance and Support: A mentor plays a crucial role in providing guidance and support to the candidate during their practicum. They can offer mentorship, share their expertise, and engage in reflective conversations to help the candidate deepen their understanding of effective teaching strategies, curriculum implementation, and classroom management techniques. This mentorship fosters the candidate's professional growth and development.

Feedback and Reflection: A mentor at the candidate's own center site can facilitate regular feedback and reflection sessions. They can observe the candidate's teaching practice, provide constructive feedback, and engage in reflective conversations that promote critical thinking and

self-assessment. These feedback and reflection sessions help the candidate refine their instructional approaches, make informed decisions, and set goals for continuous improvement.

Contextualized Support: A mentor at the site is familiar with the specific context, policies, and practices of the center. They can provide guidance on how to navigate the unique challenges and opportunities within the candidate's own center site. This contextualized support helps the candidate integrate their learning from the practicum experience directly into their daily practice, ensuring that their professional growth is directly applicable to their role as an educator in that specific setting.

Collaboration and Learning Community: Having a mentor at the candidate's own center site promotes a collaborative learning community. The mentor can facilitate opportunities for the candidate to engage with other educators, share ideas, and collaborate on projects. This collaborative environment enhances professional learning, encourages the exchange of best practices, and cultivates a sense of community and support within the center.

Seamless Integration of Learning: With a mentor at the candidate's own center site, there is a seamless integration of the practicum experience with the day-to-day operations of the center. The mentor can help the candidate connect theoretical knowledge gained from coursework to practical applications within their specific context. This integration enhances the candidate's ability to transfer learning into meaningful and effective teaching practices.

If a candidate is the owner of a home based site:

- **Seek External Support and Mentorship:** Even as the site owner and sole employee, it is crucial to seek external support and mentorship to enhance your practicum experience. Reach out to experienced ECE professionals, mentors, or consultants who can provide guidance, feedback, and support throughout your practicum. They can serve as external mentors, helping you reflect on your practice, providing valuable insights, and sharing their expertise.
- **Collaborate with Peer Practitioners:** Connect and collaborate with other ECE professionals in the community who may be willing to partner for collaborative activities or exchange of ideas. This can provide an opportunity for observation and learning from their practices and receive constructive feedback. Building a network of supportive peers can enhance professional growth and provide a sense of community, even if a candidate is the only employee at their site.

- **Virtual Observations and Reflections:** Utilize technology to engage in virtual observations and reflections. Consider recording videos of interactions with children during different activities and reflect on practice through self-analysis. Videos can then be shared with an external mentor or peers for feedback and suggestions for improvement. Virtual meetings or discussions can be held to facilitate reflection and receive guidance.
- **Online Professional Development:** Take advantage of online professional development opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills. Participate in webinars, workshops, and online courses relevant to areas of interest or areas for further growth. Online platforms provide a wealth of resources, networking opportunities, and learning experiences that can support professional development during the practicum.
- **Engage in Self-Study and Research:** Take this opportunity to engage in self-study and research projects related to ECE. Explore current trends, research findings, and best practices in the field. Conduct literature reviews, analyze case studies, or design small-scale research projects within their own site to deepen your understanding of ECE principles and strategies. This self-directed learning can contribute to your professional growth and demonstrate your commitment to ongoing learning.
- **Reflective Journaling:** Maintain a reflective journal to document experiences, insights, challenges, and achievements throughout the practicum. Regularly engage in self-reflection, analyzing teaching practices, and setting goals for improvement. This journal can serve as a valuable tool for self-assessment, identifying areas for growth, and tracking your progress over time.
- **Engage Families and Seek Feedback:** Actively involve families in your practicum experience. Seek their feedback and input regarding the effectiveness of teaching approaches, communication strategies, and overall program quality. Engaging families can provide valuable insights and contribute to a holistic understanding of impact on children's learning and development.

If the site is too far for practicum instructor visits, a remote meeting will be set up for the supervising teacher and practicum instructor to connect.

The recommendation to set up remote meetings between the supervising teacher and practicum instructor when the practicum site is too far for in-person visits is justified for the following reasons:

- **Maintaining Regular Communication:** Remote meetings provide a platform for the supervising teacher and practicum instructor to maintain regular communication and stay connected throughout the practicum period. This ensures that both parties are updated on the candidate's progress, challenges, and achievements, fostering a collaborative and supportive learning environment.
- **Feedback and Guidance:** Remote meetings allow for the exchange of feedback and guidance between the supervising teacher and practicum instructor. The practicum instructor can provide insights and suggestions based on their expertise and observations, while the supervising teacher can share their own observations, experiences, and recommendations specific to the candidate's site. This collaboration enhances the quality of support and guidance received by the candidate, contributing to their professional growth.
- **Reflection and Goal Setting:** Remote meetings offer an opportunity for the candidate, supervising teacher, and practicum instructor to engage in reflective conversations. They can discuss teaching practices, challenges, successes, and areas for improvement. Through these discussions, the candidate can gain valuable insights, set goals, and receive guidance on how to enhance their teaching skills and meet professional standards and competencies.
- **Flexibility and Convenience:** Remote meetings provide flexibility in scheduling and eliminate the constraints of travel time and distance. They offer a convenient way to connect, especially when the practicum site is located far from the practicum instructor's location. This flexibility allows for more frequent and focused interactions, ensuring that the candidate receives timely feedback and support throughout their practicum experience.
- **Technology-Enabled Observation:** Remote meetings can be augmented with technology to facilitate observation of the candidate's teaching practice. Video recordings of the candidate's lessons or activities can be shared during the remote meeting, allowing the practicum instructor to observe and provide feedback based on these recordings. This approach ensures that the candidate's teaching practice can be assessed and supported, even in the absence of in-person visits.
- **Enhanced Mentorship and Collaboration:** Remote meetings provide an opportunity for the supervising teacher and practicum instructor to collaborate and share their expertise. They can discuss instructional strategies, curriculum planning, and assessment techniques.

This collaborative mentorship enhances the candidate's learning experience, as they benefit from the collective knowledge and insights of both the supervising teacher and practicum instructor.

- Candidate Supports

Starting with the base of the requirements set forth in the NAEYC Professional Standards and Competencies (black) edits to bring in the unique Oregon perspective have been added or elements changed (blue).

Candidate Supports

Ideal Practice

Candidate Supports: The program supports candidates in making meaning of their experiences in early learning settings and evaluating those experiences against standards of quality. The program sets clear expectations for candidates regarding the purpose of the field experiences and how they will grow candidates' proficiency in the Professional Standards and Competencies.

Levels of support for candidates to understand expectations may include:

- A full practicum orientation course
- Practicum orientation session alone or in combination with supervising teachers
- Candidate practicum expectation handbook (electronic or hard copy)
 - Orientations and handbooks should include topics such as:
 - preparatory materials to support candidates' readiness for extended field experiences (e.g., candidate teaching, practicum courses). ie [What to do the first few days, weeks and assignments for the term](#) [See appendix ____ for an example checklist]
 - protocols in place for candidate expectations and behaviors during field experiences that are consistent with the NAEYC Code of Ethics.
- Review and identification of professional strengths and areas for growth related to NAEYC Code of Ethics
- Reporting concerns about placement sites and Mandatory reporting
- Reminder that they are not to be considered in ratio

- Professional behaviors (ie. Calling in late/sick protocols, professional dress etc.)
 - Soft skills
 - Teamwork. With effective teamwork, teams are more productive, deadlines are met, relationships with your team members are stronger and knowledge is shared.
 - ...
 - Problem solving. ...
 - Communication: professional, Identification and understanding of communication styles
 - Adaptability. ...
 - Critical thinking. ...
 - Time management. ...
 - Interpersonal.
- b.. The program provides regular feedback to candidates during extended field experiences.
- In person observation or video observations at least twice per term and reflection sessions with the candidate and the practicum instructor

Justification

a. The program sets clear expectations for candidates regarding the purpose of the field experiences and how they will grow candidates' proficiency in the Professional Standards and Competencies:

Focus and Direction: Setting clear expectations for candidates regarding the purpose of field experiences ensures that they understand the specific goals and objectives they are expected to achieve. Clearly communicating how field experiences contribute to their growth in the Professional Standards and Competencies provides candidates with a sense of direction and purpose, enabling them to actively engage in meaningful learning experiences.

Alignment with Standards: Linking field experiences to the Professional Standards and Competencies ensures that candidates understand the connection between their practical experiences and the knowledge and skills required for effective teaching. By clearly articulating this alignment, the program reinforces the importance of translating theory into practice and empowers candidates to apply their learning in real-world settings.

Support for Readiness: Providing preparatory materials, such as a full practicum orientation course, orientation sessions, and handbooks, helps candidates understand and internalize the expectations and protocols of field experiences. These resources equip candidates with the necessary knowledge and tools to navigate their roles, responsibilities, and behaviors during their field experiences, ensuring a smooth transition and maximizing their readiness for extended field experiences.

Integration of Ethical Principles: Incorporating protocols aligned with the NAEYC Code of Ethics reinforces the importance of ethical conduct and professional behaviors during field experiences. Candidates are made aware of their responsibilities as future educators, including mandatory reporting and adherence to professional standards. This integration fosters a commitment to ethical practices and prepares candidates to uphold the highest standards of professionalism in their future careers.

Personal and Professional Growth: The program encourages candidates to reflect on and identify their professional strengths and areas for growth related to the NAEYC Code of Ethics. This reflective practice promotes self-awareness and supports candidates in developing a strong ethical foundation for their teaching practice. Additionally, addressing soft skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, communication, adaptability, critical thinking, time management, and interpersonal skills prepares candidates for the diverse challenges they may encounter in their field experiences and future teaching careers.

b. The program provides regular formal feedback (at least twice a term) to candidates during extended field experiences:

Formative Assessment: Regular feedback during extended field experiences allows candidates to receive ongoing formative assessment, which supports their growth and development as educators. Through in-person observation and reflection sessions with the candidate and the practicum instructor, candidates gain insights into their strengths, areas for improvement, and progress in meeting the established goals and expectations. This feedback loop ensures that candidates receive timely guidance and support, promoting continuous improvement and enhanced performance.

Individualized Support: Feedback sessions provide an opportunity for personalized guidance tailored to each candidate's needs. By engaging in reflective conversations and constructive feedback, candidates can receive specific recommendations and strategies to further develop their instructional skills, classroom management techniques, and overall effectiveness as

educators. This individualized support fosters a sense of professional growth and encourages candidates to refine their practice throughout their extended field experiences.

Communication and Collaboration: Regular feedback sessions strengthen the communication and collaboration between candidates and their practicum instructors. These sessions create a space for open dialogue, allowing candidates to voice their questions, concerns, and reflections on their experiences. This collaborative relationship promotes a supportive learning environment where candidates feel valued and supported in their journey toward becoming effective educators.

Special Considerations

If the site is too far for practicum instructor visits, candidates may submit video recordings and a remote meeting will be set up to reflect on the video observation.

The recommendation to utilize video recordings and remote meetings for observation and reflection when the practicum site is too far for in-person visits is justified for the following reasons:

Accessibility and Inclusivity: By leveraging technology, such as video recordings and remote meetings, the program ensures that all candidates, regardless of the geographical distance of their practicum site, have equal opportunities for observation and feedback. This approach promotes inclusivity and allows candidates from remote or distant locations to actively participate in the observation and reflection process, enabling them to receive valuable support and guidance.

Timely Feedback and Support: Video recordings allow for flexible observation schedules, as they can be reviewed at a convenient time for both the practicum instructor and the candidate. This flexibility facilitates timely feedback and support, as the practicum instructor can review the recordings in detail and provide specific observations and recommendations during the subsequent remote meeting. Prompt feedback is crucial for candidates to address areas for improvement and continue their professional growth effectively.

Detailed and Focused Observation: Video recordings offer the advantage of repeated viewings and close examination of specific moments or interactions. The practicum instructor can pause, rewind, and analyze different aspects of the candidate's performance, enabling a more detailed

and focused observation. This depth of observation enhances the accuracy and specificity of feedback, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the candidate's teaching practices and facilitating targeted support and guidance.

Reflection and Professional Growth: Remote meetings set up to reflect on video observations provide a structured platform for the candidate and the practicum instructor to engage in meaningful dialogue and self-reflection. The candidate can share their own reflections on their teaching practice while receiving guidance and insights from the practicum instructor. This reflective process fosters professional growth by encouraging candidates to critically analyze their teaching strategies, identify areas for improvement, and set goals for their ongoing development as educators.

Cost and Time Efficiency: Utilizing video recordings and remote meetings can be more cost-effective and time-efficient compared to extensive travel for in-person visits. It eliminates the logistical challenges and expenses associated with physical visits to distant sites, making it a practical alternative for maintaining regular observation and feedback processes. This efficiency allows practicum instructors to allocate more time and resources to support a larger number of candidates effectively.

Recommendations for future and statewide work

- **Use common Terminology:** The field should avoid using ambiguous or confusing terms that may have different meanings in different contexts and institutes of higher education use common, consistent and clear terms to describe the different types of field experiences, practicum and related terminology.
 - terminology should align with this document and NAEYC definitions
- **Provide examples and explanations** of the different types of field experiences, practicum and related terminology to help students and faculty understand the expectations and outcomes of each. For example, explain the difference between a practicum and an internship, and provide examples of the activities and assignments that students will complete in each. Also, explain the roles and responsibilities of the supervising teachers, mentors, and coaches who will guide and support the students during their field experiences and practicum. Identify the key competencies: Identify the key competencies

that supervising teachers need to possess to guide ECE candidates effectively. These competencies could include knowledge of child development, effective communication, and the ability to provide constructive feedback. You can refer to the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) guide on best practices for early childhood educators 1 for guidance.

- **Develop a comprehensive training program:** Develop a comprehensive training program that covers all the identified competencies. The training program should be designed to be delivered online, so that the training can be consistent across the state and supervising teachers can access it at their convenience.

Provide ongoing support: Provide ongoing support to supervising teachers after they complete the training program. This could include regular feedback sessions, mentoring, and coaching. Funding is needed to support additional hours for feedback sessions, paperwork, and mentoring and coaching professional development.

Appendix A – Definitions

Apprenticeships include a structured training plan, with a focus on mastering specific skills an employer needs to fill an occupation within their organization. Apprentices receive individualized training with an experienced mentor who walks them through their entire process. Apprenticeships are paid experiences that often lead to full-time employment. Apprenticeships lead to an industry-recognized credential, certificate and/or Degree.

Candidates refers to candidates for completion in early childhood degrees or certification.

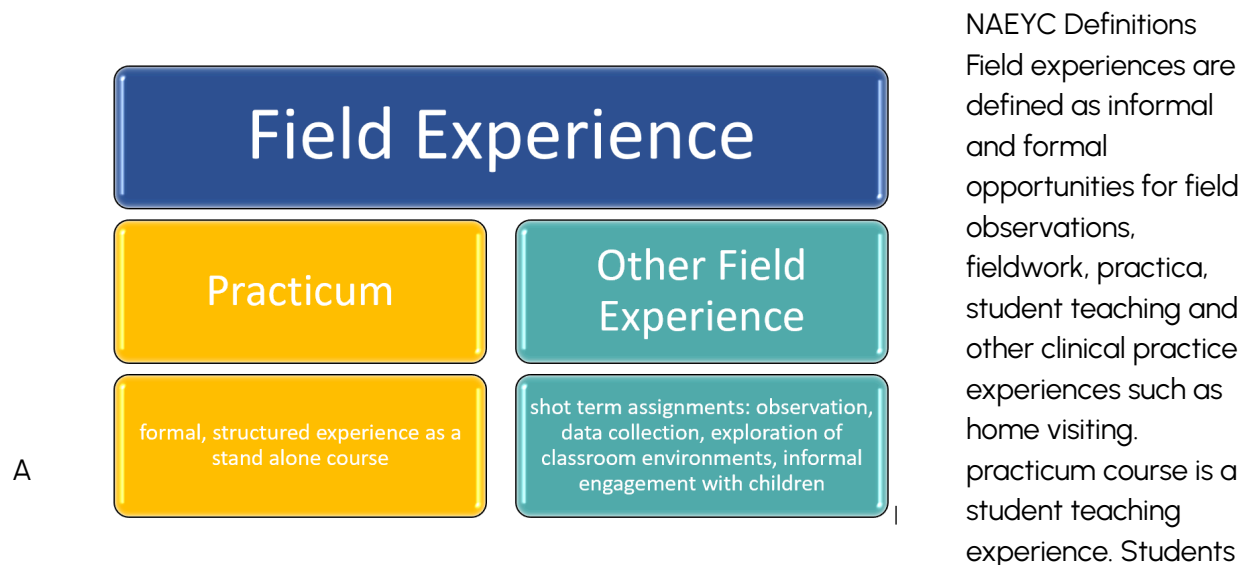
Continuous Quality Improvement or "CQI" means a framework to guide intentional quality improvement in systems and individual organizations.

Diversity Variation among individuals, as well as within and across groups of individuals, in terms of their backgrounds and lived experiences. These experiences are related to social identities, including race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, social and economic status, religion, ability status, and country of origin. The terms "diverse" and "diversity" are sometimes used as euphemisms for non-White. NAEYC specifically rejects this usage, which implies that Whiteness is the norm against which diversity is defined. (This definition is found in NAEYC's Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education position statement.)

Field Experiences Includes informal and formal (Practicum), opportunities for candidates to observe and engage in early childhood settings through observations, practice candidate teaching (with individual children and groups of children), and other clinical practice experiences such as home visiting. A planned sequence of these experiences supports candidate development of understanding, competence, and dispositions in a specialized area of practice. While Field experiences include any exposure to children in a community setting, Practicum experiences are a specific, formalized subset of field experiences. (see Practicum definition below)

Lab School A school operated in alignment and coordination with the ECE department at a college or university and used especially for student teaching and the demonstration of classroom practices.

Learning opportunities The many ways in which the program helps candidates know, understand, and apply the Professional Standards and Competencies throughout the program of study. Learning opportunities include assignments, classroom discussions, guest speakers, group projects, required and optional readings, reflections, etc. Learning opportunities focus primarily on the individual candidate experience and therefore may include opportunities for feedback and revision, as well as some variation in assignments across tracks or learning modalities.



are placed in a licensed childcare center or school setting to learn under the guidance of a cooperating teacher.

(https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/accreditation/higher-ed/draft_revised_naeyc_higher_ed_accreditation_standards_with_introduction.pdf)

Practicum Practicum is a formal, structured experience as a stand alone course, where candidates partner with a supervising teacher who directs their activities and gives them feedback on any work they do. A practicum can be from a few hours a week to 10 hours a week over the course of a term with assignments aligning coursework with activities in the classroom.

Practicum experiences vary by college but in general in practicum levels 1-4 (AKA: ex. orientation - advanced practicum, cooperative work experience...) candidates progress in their practicum responsibilities from observation towards creating and implementing curriculum with children.

* Some higher levels may also be called student teaching, however, this term is typically used in K-12 and when related to licensure. Also may be known as clinical placement for specialized areas like Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE).

Practicum Instructor (adjunct/faculty) Meets with candidates and conducts observations (either in person, virtual or recorded).

Supervising Teacher (Cooperating/Mentor/ Teacher) Works in a classroom with candidates and serves as a teaching model and mentor.

Program Higher education ECE program of study.

Practicum or Placement or Site Location of practicum placement (ex. ECE classroom with children)

Children Children who are eligible for care settings that are ages 6 weeks through 8 years old served in early childhood education settings

Appendix B – References and Resources

WORKGROUP MATERIALS

- NAEYC source document:
https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/accreditation/higher-ed/2021-naeyc_higher_education_accreditation_standards.pdf
- Practicum practices survey data (Feb. 2023)
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1r4ALjxKAj_1aIN8YUI7ucN_xSfkCCBnf/edit?usp=sharing&oid=112438467033626476744&rtpof=true&sd=true
- <https://www.startearly.org/resource/the-essential-fellowship/>
- <https://www.thinkingmaps.com/cdn/Models-of-PD-1024x607.png>

LOCAL RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

- Oregon's Child Care Substitute Pool: <https://www.facebook.com/childcaresubsor/>

- Contact local CCRR for resources on CPR certification:
<https://oregonspark.org/ccrr-regional-map/>
- Conditional approval of CPR
- How to expunge record: <https://www.pcc.edu/clear-clinic/>
- Oregon's Credit for Prior Learning Standards. Important Note- Oregon's Credit for Prior Learning Standards are being revised, with updated Standards expected to be released late 2023.
- OAR 589-007-0150, Granting Academic Credit for Certificates of Completion and Associate Degrees for Apprentices and Journey Persons
- OAR 589-007-0110, Apprenticeship Related Training Courses, Work-Based Learning and Academic Credit

Workplace Vaccine Exception Forms

- COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Exception Request Form (word)
- More Languages
- COVID-19 Vaccine Religious Exception Request Form (word)
- COVID-19 Vaccine Religious Exception Request Form (pdf)
- More Languages
- Instructions for filling out the COVID-19 Medical Exception Request Form and the COVID-19 Religious Exception Request Form
- More Languages

Childcare assistance

- Emergency Assistance:
<https://www.cocc.edu/departments/financial-aid/types-of-aid/grants/assistance-fund.aspx>
- Overall Candidates need/resources:
<https://www.cocc.edu/departments/student-life/student-resources/help.aspx>
- PTO Specific: <https://www.cocc.edu/departments/step/pto.aspx>
- Child Care Subsidy

Financial Assistance

- OCCD Scholarships:
<https://www.pdx.edu/education-career-development/enhanced-rate-scholarships#ofcc>
 - Betty Ggrey expanded for Montessori, Waldorf, mental health endorsement, do not have to be licensed (20hrs a week with kids) and up to 5 credits (was 4)
 - EARLY LEARNING DEGREE PATHWAY SCHOLARSHIP
 - allowing for certificate and degrees up to a masters in Early Childhood Education and related degrees
 - even for those not working daily in a classroom.
 - Roles may include coaches, mental health specialist and other TA supports to ECE environments in addition to those that work directly with students.
 - Students must be enrolled in at least 6 credit hours per term
 - Approvals are first come first served on a term by term basis.
 - Russian and Spanish are out
 - Here's a number to call for help: Tel: 503-725-8518 (language specific on each form
 - Staff working on this can reach out to their CCRR and OCCD
- HECC Scholarships
 - OSAC: <https://www.oregon.gov/highered/institutions-programs/Pages/osac.aspx>
 - Child care Grant:
<https://www.oregonstudentaid.gov/grants/oregon-student-child-care-grant/>
 - Opportunity Grant: <https://www.oregonstudentaid.gov/grants/oregon-opportunity-grant/>
 - Scholarship catalog: <https://osacapps.hecc.oregon.gov/Catalog/Default.aspx>

Appendix C – Templates and Examples

Preparing Early Childhood Professionals for Inclusion (PEPI): Inclusive Field Experience Checklist for Candidate Advanced Practicum II and III, Clackamas Community College. Adapted from the original PEPI checklist:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/18hbr57WJfuZoWLXnpVo4ziVQJzfDbfU4/edit?usp=sharing&oid=112438467033626476744&rtpof=true&sd=true>

ECE 133 Practicum Module 1 July 2022

ECE 134 Practicum Module 2 July 2022.docx

ECE 135 Practicum 3 Module July 2022

Observation Questionnaire

module from Jamie:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/ld_ZAfp8NRBV2jFUMv33203fiWeA34HC9bDtWF_lzl_M/edit

Link to other example documents:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1tSTzmx6kqpONyy5AvTBkqfViH_JhfiG8?usp=sharing

Appendix D –

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