

Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation *(The Mount)*



Practicum Handbook

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Introduction Practicum

Welcome to the Montessori Practicum! The *Practicum Handbook* for Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation (“THE MOUNT”) is intended to serve as a guide throughout the practicum experience. This handbook outlines essential components of the practicum, including professional expectations, observation and evaluation processes, classroom management, and practical teaching methods aligned with Montessori principles. It is designed to support trainees as they bridge theory and practice, refine their teaching skills, and cultivate the Montessori philosophy in real-world settings. The goal of the practicum is to prepare students to demonstrate the skills defined in the AMS/MACTE competencies which are found in this Practicum Handbook.

The *Practicum Experience* for the Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation program is an immersive opportunity for students to engage hands-on with children in a Montessori classroom setting. This experience is meticulously crafted to help students develop the skills necessary to demonstrate the AMS (American Montessori Society) and MACTE (Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education) course competencies. Through structured observation, interaction, and practice, students learn to foster an environment that nurtures independence, exploration, and developmental growth in young children.

Effective communication is emphasized as vital between all involved—students, supervising teachers, administrators, site personnel, and practicum field consultants—to ensure a cohesive and supportive learning environment. By actively participating, adhering to protocols, and maintaining open lines of communication, students can fully benefit from the practicum, gaining practical skills and insights that are foundational for a successful Montessori teaching career.

The practicum internship within the Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation program is an intensive and demanding commitment, designed to cultivate deep practical understanding and teaching proficiency in a Montessori classroom. Given the rigor of the program, students are encouraged to limit other work commitments, ideally working less than full-time to focus on their internship responsibilities. The minimum required commitment for the internship is three hours per day, five days a week, providing consistent, hands-on experience with children.

If students choose to extend their hours, this arrangement is coordinated between the intern and the practicum site. Communication with the Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation Program Supervisor remains crucial; interns are required to report any adjustments to their schedule or challenges encountered during their practicum to ensure continuous support and alignment with program expectations.

AMS/MACTE Regulations

Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation makes every effort to ensure that each practicum site meets all AMS/MACTE requirements. It is the student teacher's responsibility to report to the Training and Practicum Director any variances from the AMS/MACTE guidelines, supervising teacher agreement form or site agreement form included in the Practicum Handbook. It is the intern's AMS diploma that may be affected, so it is in his/her interest to know these guidelines and keep Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation informed of any concerns. The field consultant is also aware of the requirements and will communicate any concerns to the Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation director.

American Montessori Society Code of Ethics

Principle I — Commitment to the Student

In fulfillment of the obligation to the children, the educator:

1. Shall encourage independent action in the pursuit of learning
2. Shall protect the opportunity to provide for participation in educational programs without regard to race, sex, color, creed or national origin
3. Shall protect the health and safety of students
4. Shall honor professional commitments, maintain obligations and contracts while never soliciting nor involving students or their parents in schemes for commercial gain
5. Shall keep in confidence information that has been secured in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law

Principle II — Commitment to the Public

The Montessori educator shares in the responsibility for the development of policy relating to the extension of educational opportunity for all and for interpreting educational programs and policies to the public.

In fulfilling these goals, the educator:

1. Shall support the American Montessori Society and not misrepresent its policies in public discussion. Whenever speaking or writing about policies, the educator should take the precaution to distinguish private views from the official position of the Society.
2. Shall not interfere with nor exploit the rights and responsibilities of colleagues within the teaching profession

Principle III — Commitment to the Profession

The Montessori educator makes efforts to raise professional standards and conditions to attract persons worthy of trust to careers in Montessori education.

In fulfilling these goals, the educator:

1. Shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the Montessori education profession
2. Shall represent his or her own professional qualification with clarity and true intent
3. Shall apply for, accept, offer, recommend, and assign professional positions and responsibilities on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications
4. Shall use honest and effective methods of administering duties, use of time, and conducting business

As American Montessori Society members, we pledge to conduct ourselves professionally and personally, in ways that will reflect our respect for each other and for the children we serve. We will do whatever is within our talents and capacity to protect the right of each child to have the freedom and opportunity to develop his/her full potential. AMS requires that all member schools and AMS-affiliated teacher education programs agree to comply with the AMS Code of Ethics. AMS relies solely on self-compliance of this Code.

Adopted by the AMS Board of Directors in October 1969. Expanded June 1975. Updated October 2008 and 2010

Practicum Site Requirements

The practicum provides the adult learner (also referred to as student teacher) with supervised teaching/learning experience and an opportunity to integrate the Montessori theory and practice.

To become an approved practicum site, the school administrator must be willing to certify that the school meets all requirements as outlined in this document. In addition, the supervising teacher must also be willing to accept the stated responsibilities. Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation recommends but does not require that practicum site schools be members of AMS

Montessori Environment:

- The practicum site must maintain a prepared Montessori environment that aligns with Montessori principles and practices.
- Classrooms should be equipped with complete and appropriate Montessori materials for the age group being served.

2. Age-Appropriate Classrooms:

- The practicum site must provide an age-appropriate classroom setting corresponding to the level of training (e.g., Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary, etc.).

3. Class Size and Composition:

- Class size should be manageable, with a mixed-age group consistent with Montessori pedagogy.
- There should be a sufficient number of children to ensure a dynamic learning environment.

Supervising Teacher

Qualifications:

AMS or MACTE certification for the age range in the classroom

In the same classroom as the intern at all times

In at least the second year of teaching after certification

Familiar with requirements and willing to fulfill the following responsibilities:

1. Direct and supervise the student teacher during the hours outlined in the practicum contract. At no time may the student teacher be used as a substitute teacher. The student teacher, with your support, should take full charge of the classroom for at least two weeks before the final visit. At that time, you will take the assistant's role so that you can give feedback to the student teacher. You will not be present in the classroom for the final visit. An assistant with whom the children are familiar should be assisting in the classroom.

1. Guide the student teacher's progress by role-modeling, involving him or her in joint planning, record keeping for the class, parent conferences and meetings, report preparation.
2. Meet with the student teacher at least once per week. This weekly meeting should focus on the progress of the student teacher. There is a natural tendency to use these times to discuss the children, the curriculum areas, or upcoming events. These too, must be discussed, but not at the expense of the discussion between the head teacher and student teacher about those skills the student teacher is developing well and those that need additional attention. New areas of responsibility for the student teacher would typically be discussed at this time. Your purpose is to provide experiences that will allow the student to meet the AMS/MACTE competencies detailed in this document.
3. Provide opportunities for the student teacher to take greater responsibilities as the year progresses. Responsibilities should be added in all areas of preparation of the indoor and outdoor environment, planning, assessing, classroom management, conflict resolution, leadership during circle time, record keeping, family support, parent education, interviews and parent conferences and preparation of progress reports. The student should work in the whole classroom.
4. Be receptive to the student's ideas and questions.
5. Promptly submit objective student evaluations and other forms as required to the Training and Practicum Director. Evaluation forms will be sent by mail in the middle and at the end of the practicum period and should be completed as soon as possible and discussed with the student teacher.
6. Be available to meet with the field consultant either by telephone or before his/her meeting with the student teacher.
7. Immediately report any problems in the practicum to Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation and the field consultant.
8. Fill out and submit the Supervising Teacher Agreement form. Provide Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation with a copy of your Montessori credential.

Student Teacher

General Responsibilities:

1. The student teacher must be aware of and comply with all AMS/MACTE guidelines.
2. The student teacher must complete all of the Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation requirements, including all requirements from the academic phase, year-long classes, and all practicum requirements, and payment of all fees due Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation within two years following the official end of the academic phase for which she/he was enrolled. Students who need to retake courses or who need additional practicum visits will be charged additional fees.
3. The student must comply with all policies and procedures of the practicum site, except where these conflict with Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation or AMS policies.
4. The student must obtain a written contract with the site stating wages, hours, job responsibilities, sick leave policy, any specified holidays, and observation days. The Program Director, field site consultant, or other designated observer will expect to see a copy of this contract.
5. The student must be prepared to participate in the practicum phase in a thorough and professional manner. This means a time commitment of 540 hours over 9-13 months, 3-4 hours a day 4-5 days a week. It also means a commitment of time for after-school activities at the site school, especially parent meetings, observing parent conferences, school staff meetings, etc. These requirements include spending time helping your head teacher prepare and clean the environment.
6. Attendance and punctuality at the school are very important. Students who have excessive absences (more than 4 per year) or who are habitually late for work may be asked to repeat portions of their practicum.
7. The student must notify the field consultant or course director immediately of any difficulties with the internship.
8. Students will maintain a professional attitude and good relations with the internship site and its personnel. This is the beginning of the professional record; students usually ask this employer to write a letter of recommendation in the future. Students should also remember they are representatives of and ambassadors for Mount Rainier Teacher Preparation.

Internship Overview for Self-Directed Teachers

In many situations, interns will be doing a self-directed practicum for lack of a qualified head teacher. In these cases, the field consultant also functions as a mentor, answering questions and discussing situations with the student teacher. The field consultant and the Program Director are available to the intern by phone and email. The self-directed intern will assume all responsibilities for all aspects of the classroom immediately. Therefore, self-directed interns are encouraged to keep in close contact with their field consultants. We encourage the field consultants for these students to make contact early in the year or before school even begins to help with questions of setting up a classroom, planning, record keeping, etc.

Other Practicum Responsibilities

In addition to the coursework from the year-round academic sessions, the student teacher is expected to complete the observation assignments, papers, albums and any other assignments due during the practicum phase. Maintenance of the work in all areas is also required to successfully complete the practicum. Students who fail to do this may have to repeat sections of their practicum and pay for additional supervision the following year.

The MACTE Competencies for Montessori Teacher Candidates

As outlined in the MACTE Handbook, the following is a framework to guide and assess the development of essential skills and qualities needed to be an effective Montessori educator. These competencies are categorized into three primary areas:

II. Knowledge

This competency emphasizes a thorough understanding of Montessori philosophy, child development, curriculum, and educational theory. Teacher candidates must acquire foundational knowledge of Montessori principles, the unique characteristics of each developmental stage, and the learning materials that facilitate children's growth and independence.

Evidenced through written and oral assignments and examination results.

II. Pedagogy

The pedagogy competency focuses on the application of Montessori methods in the classroom, including lesson planning, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Candidates are expected to demonstrate skill in creating a prepared environment, conducting lessons that foster self-directed learning, and adapting their teaching approach to meet the needs of individual students. Mastery in pedagogy ensures that candidates can translate Montessori principles into effective teaching practices.

Evidenced through written and oral assignments, examination results, and demonstrations.

III. Teaching with Grace and Courtesy

This competency highlights the importance of modeling and nurturing social harmony, respect, and community within the classroom. Teacher candidates are expected to embody grace and courtesy in their interactions with children, fostering a respectful and peaceful classroom culture. By demonstrating these qualities, candidates help children internalize social skills and positive behavior, creating a foundation for emotional and social development. Emphasis on classroom leadership, authentic assessment, philosophy and methods (materials), parent/teacher/family partnership, professional responsibilities, and innovation and flexibility.

Evidenced through – 1. Documentation from employer, field consultant, supervising teacher observations, and evaluations. 2. Children’s learning and progress. 3. Post-graduate professional performance.

| AMS and MACTE Standard |
|--|
| It is recommended that the practicum site is an AMS member school. Programs report practicum sites annually to AMS when registering interns. |
| The site has a written nondiscrimination policy for both students and staff. |
| The site meets all applicable local, state, and federal regulations. |
| The site communicates its administrative policies and standards related to the adult learner to the student and program in writing. |
| The site provides a mutually agreeable written job description and contract agreement including the remuneration to the student. The student and the training center have a copy. |
| If the site provides all or part of a student’s tuition for the program, a written payment plan is signed by both parties. The student and the training center have a copy. |
| The site agrees to cooperate with the teacher education program in all matters pertaining to the practicum. |
| The job responsibilities of the intern during the practicum hours will not include janitorial services, child care or any other services other than that which would be listed in the job description of any teacher during their practicum hours. Interns may provide these additional services outside their practicum hours if agreed upon by both parties. |
| The classroom has children in the full age range (3-6) |
| The classroom schedules allow for two to three hours of uninterrupted work time for children at least 4 days per week. (recess and circle excluded) |
| The classroom is <u>fully equipped</u> with Montessori materials for this age range. See the AMS Suggested Materials Lists for schools on the AMS Website. |
| Supervision of the intern is provided by a qualified supervising teacher or, in the case of a self-directed practicum, through the field consultant and/or mentor. (See Supervising Teacher Agreement for qualifications) |

Steps for Practicum Site Approval:

1. ***Request for Consideration:*** *The school initiates the process by requesting to be considered as a practicum site for the Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation program.*
2. ***Review of Guidelines and Documentation:*** *The school administrator carefully reviews the Practicum Handbook guidelines and the enclosed Site Proposal Agreement form to confirm that the school meets all Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation requirements. The supervising teacher also reads and accepts the handbook guidelines and commits to working closely with the student teacher.*
3. ***Submission of Forms:*** *The Site Proposal Agreement, Supervising Teacher Agreement, and Intern Student Teaching Agreement forms must be completed and submitted to the Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation Course Director.*
4. ***Site Visit for Final Approval:*** *A representative from Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation will conduct a site visit to assess the school's suitability. Based on this visit, the course director will either approve or deny the site's practicum status.*

Following these steps, approved sites are expected to adhere to the outlined responsibilities, creating a structured and nurturing environment for teacher candidates

Practicum Site Proposal Agreement

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Intern's Name | Intern's Scheduled Days and Hours |
| School | Phone |
| School Address | City/ZIP |
| Supervisor Name | Title |
| Supervisor Email | |
| Supervising Teacher Name | Supervising Teacher Email |
| Supervisor Signature | Date |

| AMS and MACTE Standard | Check |
|--|-------|
| It is recommended that the practicum site is an AMS member school. Programs report practicum sites annually to AMS when registering interns. | |
| The site has a written nondiscrimination policy for both students and staff. | |
| The site meets all applicable local, state, and federal regulations. | |
| The site communicates its administrative policies and standards related to the adult learner to the student and program in writing. | |
| The site provides a mutually agreeable written job description and contract agreement including the remuneration to the student. The student and the training center have a copy. | |
| If the site provides all or part of a student's tuition for the program, a written payment plan is signed by both parties. The student and the training center have a copy. | |
| The site agrees to cooperate with the teacher education program in all matters pertaining to the practicum. | |
| The job responsibilities of the intern during the practicum hours will not include janitorial services, child care or any other services other than that which would be listed in the job description of any teacher during their practicum hours. Interns may provide these additional services outside their practicum hours if agreed upon by both parties. | |
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| The classroom is <u>fully equipped</u> with Montessori materials for this age range. See the AMS Suggested Materials Lists for schools on the AMS Website. | |
| Supervision of the intern is provided by a qualified supervising teacher or, in the case of a self-directed practicum, through the field consultant and/or mentor. (See Supervising Teacher Agreement for qualifications) | |

Intern Signature _____ Date _____

Supervisor Signature _____

Intern Student Teaching Agreement

General Responsibilities:

- 1 . The student teacher must be aware of and comply with all AMS/MACTE guidelines.
2. The student teacher must complete all of the Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation requirements, including all requirements from the academic phase, year-long classes, and all practicum requirements, and payment of all fees due Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation within two years following the official end of the academic phase for which she/he was enrolled. Students who need to retake courses or who need additional practicum visits will be charged additional fees.
3. The student must comply with all policies and procedures of the practicum site, except where these conflict with Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation or AMS policies.
4. The student must obtain a written contract with the site stating wages, hours, job responsibilities, sick leave policy, any specified holidays, and observation days. The Program Director, field site consultant, or other designated observer will expect to see a copy of this contract.
5. The student must be prepared to participate in the practicum phase thoroughly and professionally. This means a time commitment of 540 hours over 9-13 months, 3-4 hours a day, 4-5 days a week. It also means a commitment of time for after-school activities at the school site, especially parent meetings, observing parent conferences, school staff meetings, etc. These requirements include spending time helping your head teacher prepare and clean the environment.
6. Attendance and punctuality at the school are very important. Students who have excessive absences (more than 4 per year) or who are habitually late for work may be asked to repeat portions of their practicum.
7. The student must notify the field consultant or course director immediately of any difficulties with the internship.
8. Students will maintain a professional attitude and good relations with the internship site and its personnel. This is the beginning of the professional record; students usually ask this employer to write a letter of recommendation in the future. Students should also remember they are representatives of and ambassadors for Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation.

Signature _____ Date _____

Supervising Teacher Agreement

1. Direct and supervise the student teacher during the hours outlined in the practicum contract. At no time may the student teacher be used as a substitute teacher. The student teacher, with your support, should take full charge of the classroom for at least two weeks before the final visit. At that time you will take the assistant's role so that you can give feedback to the student teacher. You will not be present in the classroom for the final visit. An assistant with whom the children are familiar should be assisting in the classroom.
2. Guide the student teacher's progress by role-modeling, involving him or her in joint planning, record keeping for the class, parent conferences and meetings, report preparation.
3. Meet with the student teacher at least once per week. This weekly meeting should focus on the progress of the student teacher. There is a natural tendency to use these times to discuss the children, the curriculum areas, or upcoming events. These too, must be discussed, but not at the expense of the discussion between the head teacher and student teacher about those skills the student teacher is developing well and those that need additional attention. New areas of responsibility for the student teacher would typically be discussed at this time. Your purpose is to provide experiences that will allow the student to meet the AMS/MACTE competencies detailed in the handbook.
4. Provide opportunities for the student teacher to take greater responsibilities as the year progresses. Responsibilities should be added in all areas of preparation of the indoor and outdoor environment, planning, assessing, classroom management, conflict resolution, leadership during circle time, record keeping, family support, parent education, interviews and parent conferences and preparation of progress reports. The student should work in the whole classroom.
5. Be receptive to the student's ideas and questions.
6. Promptly submit objective student evaluations and other forms as required to the Training and Practicum Director. Evaluation forms will be sent by mail in the middle and at the end of the practicum period and should be completed as soon as possible and discussed with the student teacher.
7. Be available to meet with the field consultant either by telephone or before their meeting with the student teacher.
8. Immediately report any problems in the practicum to Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation and the field consultant.

Provide Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation with a copy of your Montessori credential.

Supervisor Signature _____

Submission of Forms: *The Site Proposal Agreement, Intern Student Teaching Agreement, and Supervising Teacher Agreement forms must be completed and submitted to the Mount Rainier Montessori Teacher Preparation Course Director.*