

Frequently Asked Questions PSYC 6114

Q: How many hours are expected of me as a student in this program?

A: You would be expected to attend *all* of the classes for the course to which you're attached as a mentored co-teacher. This would all be important for your weekly reflection and journal writing. It is also important in terms of keeping up with the class overall. You are also expected to participate *at least once weekly* in terms of presenting some sort of instructional segment in the class. This is to ensure that the program is truly one of mentored co-teaching as opposed to a few "guest lectures" during the term. The nature of your commitment should be clearly set out in the Learning Contract.

Q: Do I get paid for this work?

A: No. This is not "work." This is mentored teaching practice as part of your own development as a graduate student in the department. You will get course credit for your participation.

Q: If my teaching-mentor asks me to grade assignments, should I do this?

A: No, this is the work of the instructor of record and/or the teaching assistants. You may choose to review the marking rubric and evaluate some of the assignments or exams to better understand the evaluation process, and you may choose to write about this in your journal, but you are not to do any formal grading in the course.

Q: I'm still confused about the differences between a co-teacher and the TA. What else can you tell me that might reduce the confusion?"

A: Teaching assistants are paid employees of the university who fulfill contractual duties to support the instructor of record in the delivery of the course. Their work is set out in a separate contract and is governed by a collective agreement. The practicum co-teacher is a senior doctoral student who is participating in a practicum for course credit to gain experience in a teaching role through mentored practice. Although the practicum co-teacher may help in the design of assignments and exams (including marking rubrics), review assignments and exams (i.e., as part of a discussion of the evaluation process), hold office hours, and instruct in various capacities, this is done as part of the expectations of the practicum course under the supervision of the teaching-mentor. It is not paid labour.

Q: Can I be expected to take on a whole lecture in the course?

A: Yes, but this depends on a mutual agreement with your teaching-mentor. It may not be desirable on the part of the faculty-mentor to “give up” a whole lecture to you as a co-teacher at any point in the term, and/or you may think that this is beyond your present capabilities. That said, it is in your best interest to take on as many opportunities as possible within the context of the practicum to teach, as this is what you want to develop and document for future employment opportunities.

Q: Students want me to hold office hours. Should I?

A: This is something you need to discuss with your teaching-mentor in the context of your learning goals for the practicum. It is important experience to work with students in the context of office hours, but this needs to be done with the approval and support of your teaching-mentor. If you do choose to do this, this should be something that you document and discuss in your learning journal.

Q: The student who has agreed to be my co-teacher is missing class and/or is late for class and/or is not taking on agreed-upon responsibilities. What should I do?

A: As always, start by addressing this with the student. However, if you are not getting a satisfactory response, you should discuss this with the Graduate Supervisor and/or the Department Chair. In the end, of course, as with all graduate supervision, you may decide to terminate your role as mentor. Note: It is important to document what you perceive to be as transgressions to the Learning Contract in writing.

Q: The teaching-mentor who has agreed to supervise and mentor my teaching this term is not providing me with what I think is appropriate support, opportunity and/or feedback. What should I do?

A: Please first address this with your teaching-mentor in terms of your expectations and learning needs in relation to the learning contract to which you both agreed. If you are unable to satisfactorily address the issues, contact the Graduate Supervisor and/or the Department Chair to discuss this further. Note: It is important to document what you perceive to be as transgressions to the Learning Contract in writing.

Q: How much is too much? (My teaching-mentor wants me to teach every-other class this term, or My student wants to teach a whole lecture weekly.)

A: The teaching-mentor is the instructor of record for the course and is responsible to the department and university for the course. Therefore, the instructor must teach the majority of the classes for the course. Ideally, the co-teacher will teach some part of the class on a weekly basis to keep active in the course and to allow for development as an instructor on a weekly basis in terms of content and delivery of materials, organization of learning activities, etc. All of this should be documented in the Learning Contract. If you are in doubt about how much the co-teacher is expected to do, consult with the practicum supervisor.

Q: Will there be any “classes” associated with PSYC 6114?

A: No. The course is mentored practice with a focus on learning by doing and reflection on practice. To that end, you will be required to keep a journal about your teaching experience.

Q: Can I do PSYC 6114 (Teaching Practicum) and PSYC 6104 (Seminar in University Teaching) (or the EDC’s Certificate in University Teaching program) simultaneously?

A: Yes. Neither PSYC 6104 nor the EDC’s Certificate in University Teaching program are pre-requisites for PSYC 6114.

Q: What are these “journals” that you keep talking about? Who are they submitted to? Are they graded?

A: The required journal is one approach to reflective practice. It is an approach to *writing to learn*. You are required to create a journal for your practicum and to write in it, at a minimum, before and after each class for the course that you are co-teaching (e.g., you will have a minimum of 4 entries per week in a typical course throughout the term). In these journal entries, you are to reflect on what you have been doing to prepare for the class, your expectations, personal goals, learning goals for the students, or what you learned from the experience of teaching in terms of your perceptions of the students’ learning, your performance, goals for future classes, etc. You may also choose to reflect on your practice in relation to the academic literature on teaching. In sum, your learning journal should be a formative tool for you where your writing helps you learn through reflection, AND it should be a summative text in terms of reflecting your learning throughout the term. These journals will be submitted to the Graduate Supervisor at the end of the semester. However, the student will be evaluated by the Teaching-Mentor. The Teaching-Mentor will assess whether the student has fulfilled the above stated goals and responsibilities. A grade of satisfactory or unsatisfactory will be applied. If you have questions about the expectations, you should speak to your teaching-mentor before as well as during the Teaching Practicum.

Q: What are the criteria for a successful completion of PSYC 6114? Is this a “pass/fail” course? Or, will there be a grade assigned to it? Who is ultimately responsible for assigning this grade?

A: Successful completion of PSYC 6114 requires:

1. weekly attendance of *all* classes for the course to which the student is assigned,
2. weekly teaching in the course as agreed upon with the teaching-mentor and set out in the learning contract,
3. completion of a learning journal that documents weekly entries before and after each class for the course (at a minimum), and
4. a satisfactory Student Feedback/Evaluation completed by the teaching-mentor.

PSYC 6114 is graded as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.

If you have additional questions that were not addressed herein or if you seek further clarification, please contact the Graduate Supervisor.