University Teaching Program / Practicum

The University Teaching Program / Practicum helps prepare you for the various roles required for a career as a faculty member. The main responsibilities of faculty members are generally acknowledged as Research, Teaching, and Service/Admin. McMaster students receive excellent preparation for the research component of the faculty role by meeting the requirements of their Masters degree or Ph.D. Since the Teaching and Service/Admin components of faculty preparation are not explicitly addressed, the University Teaching Program / Practicum helps flesh out the experience and background graduate students will have for these roles and engages future faculty members in reflection on these experiences. The focus of the program is primarily teaching but also includes an introduction to Supervising graduate students, and to Service/Admin, in particular, committee work.

Why should I participate in the University Teaching Program?
The UTP is designed to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes useful to a new faculty member including:
- Development of some teaching skills (e.g., lecturing, discussion, small group work)
- Familiarity with theory and literature in teaching and learning
- Familiarity with good practice in Service/Admin and Supervision
- The ability to reflect on Teaching, Supervision, and Service/Admin

Upon completion of UTP components you will have all the components necessary to assemble an excellent Teaching Dossier appropriate for a job interview for a position as a faculty member.

What does the University Teaching Program involve?
Students registering for the UTP take one or more courses related to teaching, attend workshops, work as a TA, and participate in university Service/Admin. The practicum collects together a variety of these experiences in a structured way, builds in reflection on various experiences and develops skills useful to a new faculty member. In addition to knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed in the UTP, completion of the components results in a formal notation of participation on your university transcript.

The UTP is designed to be flexible and to enable a variety of ways of meeting requirements. The main goal of the UTP is to bring about increased knowledge and skill, and to demonstrate reflection of learning on the main components of the program. If you are not sure how you will meet particular aspects of the UTP, you can meet with someone from the Centre for Leadership in Learning who can help you find a way to meet the objectives. An outline of detailed requirements can be seen on the reverse of this page.

How long does it take?
The UTP is intended to be completed over the two to four years required of a graduate degree. Ideally, graduate students will register for the UTP early in their graduate work and complete the various requirements gradually.

How do I get started?
First, register with the Centre for Leadership in Learning (CLL) or the Program for Faculty Development (PFD Health Sciences). Then, begin participating in and collecting evidence of courses and workshops, and completing program requirements.

What are the required components and how do I meet them? There are many routes; here is **ONE** possible path:
- Find and meet monthly with a teaching mentor
- ED 750 (graduate credit course)
- Discussion Mini Course (non-credit course)
- Attend Supervision Workshop – TA Day
- Serve on a departmental Curriculum Committee
- Teach a Workshop in your department (e.g., Marking Labs)
- 2 Teaching Observations by your teaching mentor
- Teach at McMaster
- Write a Teaching Philosophy

- Assemble a Teaching Dossier providing proof of participation, and evidence of learning in the various components.

Requirements of the Program
- Register in the program through the Centre for Leadership in Learning (CLL) or the Program for Faculty Development (PFD).
- Formalize a mentorship relationship with an appropriate faculty member.
- Maintain a Learning Portfolio which contains some material from all courses, seminars and workshops for which credit is received, as well as copies of papers, reflections, and teaching materials prepared by the candidate in the course of the program.
- Meet regularly with mentor(s) and maintain a record of such meetings, including over-all objectives and learning plans, and progress towards meeting them. These records should be kept as part of the Learning Portfolio.
- Attend such courses and workshops as are outlined below. Credit may be given for courses and workshops external to McMaster University, with approval from the Program Coordinators. It is important to note courses and workshops taken prior to registering with the program may be eligible for credit, with approval from program coordinators.
- Participate in various components as outlined such as the Teaching Observation.
- Write a Summary Reflection regarding what has been learned as a result of the UTP.
- Assemble and submit the Learning Portfolio to the Centre for Leadership in Learning or the Program for Faculty Development for review upon completion of the program. This portfolio is required in order to receive the certificate of UTP participation.
- Meet with a member of the Centre for Leadership in Learning or the Program for Faculty Development to review the portfolio, UTP requirements and discuss outcomes of the UTP.

Requirements for each section of the overview document
Numbers below correspond to the numbers in the overview grid and elaborate on what is required.

Mentoring
Candidates are required, as early in the program as possible, to locate a mentor (typically in their department or school) who will sponsor their involvement in the program. A mentor should be a faculty member who is well-regarded as a teacher, with whom the candidate is able to work well, and who is willing and able to spend some time advising and monitoring the candidate's progress as a university teacher. The mentor is not a "supervisor" in the traditional sense, but rather someone who can help a candidate solve teaching and learning problems as they arise, prepare quarterly reports on a candidates' progress, provide teaching feedback, and help the candidate maintain a portfolio of evidence of his or her progress. Meetings should be held regularly, at least monthly. The mentorship should be reviewed each quarter to determine if it will be concluded and a new mentor sought. Throughout the program you may have more than one mentor. The Centre for Leadership in Learning (CLL), as well as the Program for Faculty Development (PFD), may help the candidate identify a mentor.

Documentation Required
- Formalize a mentorship relationship with an faculty member and communicate this to the CLL or PFD.
- Meet regularly with the mentor(s) and maintain a record of such meetings, including over-all objectives, learning plans, and progress towards meeting them.
- Provide copies of all mentor feedback and progress reports received.
- Reference letter from mentors (optional)

2 a) Theory and Principles of Teaching and Learning - General

Candidates must engage in reading and research-literature review regarding the theory and principles of teaching and learning. Candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge of theory and principles by completing workshops, seminars, or courses in this area, and to demonstrate an ability to locate and cite research studies and descriptive literature regarding significant issues relevant to university teaching. Candidates must also demonstrate an awareness and

understanding of educational issues in their discipline or profession, including the relevance of pedagogical theory and principles to the discipline/profession, and utilize this awareness in teaching activities.

Choose one of the following options:
- **Education 750 or Nursing 719**
  Both these graduate level courses cover basic educational theory, with application into practice. This course meets the requirements for *both* the theory and skills category.
  http://www.mcmaster.ca/cll/programs.and.services/ta.program/education.750.htm
  http://www.fhs.mcmaster.ca/grad/nursing/courses/CHS719.htm

- **Theory-Based Workshops** Complete a minimum of 10 hours of workshops and seminars dealing with pedagogical theory, as approved by PFD or CLL. A reflective paper for *each* workshop is required and should follow the format specified at the end of this document.
- **A Course addressing Educational Theory offered elsewhere.** Courses and workshops taken prior to registering with the program, or taken outside McMaster may also eligible for credit, with approval from program coordinators.

Documentation Required
As appropriate,
- Proof of course and workshop participation.
- Reflective papers
- Workshop materials
- Literature review paper with references

2b) Theory and Principles of Teaching and Learning – Discipline Specific

In addition to the requirements in **2a**), conduct a:
- **Discipline Specific Workshop.** Design, plan, and implement a workshop including theory and skill development in your discipline from 1-3 hours in length. The nature of the skill development should be suitable for the candidate's own profession or discipline, and may be designed for students or faculty. Opportunities and assistance in workshop design are available through the TA Network and for workshops offered on TA Day through the CLL. Sample workshop topics: Marking Essays in Humanities, Effective Discussions, Marking Labs, Engaging students in Active Learning. This meets the requirement for both number 2b) and 3b).

If this is not possible, discuss alternatives with the CLL or PFD e.g.,

- **Library Research – Literature Review Paper.** Conduct library research using appropriate journals and writing in the field of education. Write a synthesis of your findings and discuss application to your discipline. Length and format to be discussed with CLL or PFD staff.
- **Library Research – Discipline Specific Teaching Tool**. Conduct library research using appropriate journals and writing in the field of education. Apply to your discipline by creating a Discipline Specific Teaching Tool to share with others in the field.

Documentation Required
As appropriate,
- Workshop Outline, materials developed and participant feedback forms.
- Independent Library Research Review paper. This paper should draw on and summarize the relevant educational research literature and apply this information to the specific discipline. The paper should include all references and citations and will be reviewed by the CLL or PFD as well as your mentor.
- Discipline Specific tool developed with all materials or evidence of the tool.

3a) Practical Teaching Skills Development - General

Candidates will put new knowledge and skills into use through trying out new ideas and techniques and practicing them in workshops and courses geared towards developing teaching skills.

Choose one of the following options:
- **Education 750 or Nursing 719**
  Both these graduate level courses cover basic educational theory, with application into practice. This course meets the requirements for both the theory and skills category, 2a) and 3a).
  http://www.mcmaster.ca/cll/programs.and.services/ta.program/education.750.htm
  http://www.fhs.mcmaster.ca/grad/nursing/courses/CHS719.htm
- **Teaching Skill Workshops**. Complete a minimum of **20** hours of workshops and seminars dealing with teaching skill, as approved by PFD or CLL. A reflective paper for **each** skill workshop is required and should follow the format specified at the end of this document.
- **Mini Courses** The Lecturing or Discussion mini course with a duration of six weeks.

  Documentation required
  As appropriate,
  - Proof of course and workshop participation
  - Reflective papers if individual skill workshops are taken.
  - Workshop materials

3b) Practical Teaching Skills Development – Discipline Specific

In addition to the requirements of 3a), Choose one of the following options,
- **Teach a Discipline Specific Workshop.** See Discipline Specific Workshop 2b) above. This meets the requirement for both number 2b) and 3b).
- **Teaching Skill Workshops**. Complete a minimum of **six** hours of workshops and seminars dealing with teaching skill, as approved by PFD or CLL. A reflective paper for **each** skill workshop is required and should follow the format specified at the end of this document.
- **Mini Courses** The Lecturing or Discussion mini course with a duration of six weeks.
- **Education related conference.** Attend **six** hours of teaching skills workshops in one's own profession. Outside courses offered through professional bodies or education-related conference presentations may be considered for credit, in addition to those offered through PFD.

  Documentation Required
  As appropriate,
  - Workshop outline, materials developed, and participant feedback forms.
  - Proof of mini course participation.
  - Proof of workshop participation.

Educational Leadership - General
The UTP introduces candidates to their roles in providing "Service", or in the case of Health Sciences, "Administration", to the university community. This usually takes the form of committee work. In addition, it addresses the faculty role of providing "Supervision" of students towards meeting requirements of a Masters or Ph.D program. This component also engages future faculty members in reflection on these experiences. Participants need only complete requirements for Supervision and Service in either the General or Discipline Specific category.

4a) General Supervision Workshop This workshop is part of the advanced series offered for experienced Teaching Assistants on TA Day and addresses issues around supervising the work of students, providing constructive feedback, monitoring and assisting progress.

AND
4b) General Service/Admin Options:

Choose one of the following options,
- **University Committee Service.** Join, or be elected to, a *University* or Departmental committee for a minimum of one year. The objective is to gain a greater understanding of the dynamics of effective committee work. This committee work satisfies both the general and discipline specific requirement for Service/Admin.
- **Leadership Certification** The Leadership Certification program offered by the Centre for Student Development focuses on development of skills to take a leadership role. These skills meet many of the same objectives as the Service/Admin component requirement. Completion of the Leadership Certificate will satisfy this requirement.
- **Community Responsibility** Participate in community liaison work as a representative from McMaster University. E.g., giving a public presentation for a lay audience in one's area of expertise, visiting local elementary or high schools to discuss ideas in your discipline.

Documentation Required
As appropriate,
- Proof of Supervision workshop participation.
- Proof of committee involvement, plus a reflective paper on this involvement. This would include notes taken, reflection on the role played, observation of group dynamics, and a discussion of practices facilitating and hindering committee progress.
- Proof of Leadership Certificate participation.

4. Service/Admin & Supervision - Discipline specific (alternatives to number 4 above).

4a) Supervision Options:
In lieu of Supervision options in 4a) General above,
- **Departmental Supervision** Some departments provide supervision opportunities for Graduate students. For example, a Ph.D student might be allowed to supervise a fourth year thesis project. This, or some other discipline specific supervision opportunity may meet most of the supervision requirement for supervision. To complete this requirement, write a reflection paper on the supervisory experience. Consult with the CLL or PFD preferably prior to commencement of supervision.

AND
4b) Service/Admin Options:
In lieu of Supervision General options in 4a) above choose one of the following options,

- **Departmental Service/Admin.** Join, or be elected to, a *University* or Departmental committee for a minimum of one year. The objective is to gain a greater understanding of the dynamics of effective committee work. This committee work satisfies both the general and discipline specific requirement for Service/Admin.
- **Departmental Leadership** Playing a leadership role in your department and a written reflection on the role may meet the leadership requirement. Consult with the CLL or PFD.

Documentation Required
As appropriate,
- Proof of student Supervision and feedback provided. Reflection paper on the experience of supervising a student.
- Proof of committee involvement, plus a reflective paper on this involvement. This would include notes taken, reflection on the role played, observation of group dynamics, and a discussion of practices facilitating and hindering committee progress.
- Proof of Leadership Certificate completion.

5. Synthesis & Evaluation

This part of the UTP integrates the various components of the program and requires application to actual teaching practice. Teaching theory and skill development is only really understood when it is finally applied and experienced, thus some classroom work is essential. In this category three components must be met, the **a) Teaching Philosophy, b) Teaching Practice**, and **c) Feedback** (in the form of class observations or development of a Discipline Specific Teaching Tool).

5a) Teaching Philosophy

- Best written upon completion of other components of the UTP, the 1 to two page teaching philosophy outlines how you view education and how you believe students learn best. More information is available at the CLL and via the website of the Program for Faculty Development.

PLUS

5b) Teaching at McMaster

- **Work as a Teaching Assistant.** Hold at least two half-time teaching assistantships (or equivalent) while registered in the UTP. This should involve actually designing, planning and implementing teaching sessions such as tutorials incorporating principles, methods and techniques learned. Student evaluations of teaching performance must be included in the candidate's portfolio. If formal TA evaluations are not conducted in your department, the CLL can suggest alternatives.
- **Teach all or part of an Undergraduate or Graduate Course.** Incorporate principles, methods, and techniques learned and include student evaluations of teaching performance in the candidate's portfolio.

If the above is not possible, discuss alternatives with CLL or PFD such as,

- **Design a course independently.** This requires more than a simple course outline or syllabus but includes rationale for the course, a weekly breakdown of topics, activities, plans for assessment, sample evaluation, and sample assignments.
  AND
- **Design and teach 3 hours of Discipline Specific workshops, seminars, presentations, or lectures.** Teaching sessions may be for learners of any university level, from students, residents, through to faculty members. Written evaluations from participants of the candidate's teaching must be kept in the candidate's portfolio, and ratings must be satisfactory.

5c) Feedback

In addition to the requirement for teaching, this category also requires one of the following:
- **Two observations of teaching performance.** This may be fulfilled by the mentor, another faculty member, or someone from the TA Network on at least 2 occasions. The observer should provide written feedback to the candidate, to be kept in the candidate's portfolio (ask for forms).

If this is not possible, consult with the CLL or PFD to discuss alternatives e.g.,

- **Develop a Discipline Specific Teaching Tool.** This is intended to be a generalizable tool others would find useful. E.g., a website on a Getting groups off to a good start with useful information. A tutorial for introductory students on using the library, FAQ's on a topic such a Leading Effective Labs. A series of active learning activities for a discipline including any handouts and forms required. Discuss ideas with CLL or PFD staff.
  Note: If a Discipline Specific Teaching Tool has been created for 2b), something different should be considered for completion of this element.

Documentation Required
- Teaching Philosophy
- Summary of Teaching Experience

- Student feedback on teaching
- Feedback from teaching observations

PLUS as appropriate,
- Complete course design
- Reflective papers with references
- Workshop Teaching materials developed
- Letter from mentor (optional)

5d) Write a Summary Reflection

Write a reflection on the experience of the University Teaching Program. How are you different as a result of the program?

Program Completion

When candidates have completed all of the requirements listed above, they should ensure the portfolio is complete, and contains the appropriate proof of registration in, and attendance at, workshops and seminars, all reflective papers completed, all research papers completed (if those options were taken), copies of all evaluations received (by students, peers, and faculty), plans/outlines and resources for any seminars, workshops, classes designed and taught, a copy of course design materials and so forth as outlined above.

Once complete, the candidate should assemble all these materials into a teaching dossier and it for review to the office in which they registered for the program, namely, the PFD office or the CLL. More information about the format for a teaching dossier is available from the CLL or the PFD.

The successful candidate will receive a certificate of successful program participation signed by representatives from the Centre for Leadership in Learning or the Program for Faculty Development. The School of Graduate Studies will make an entry on the candidate's transcript (where applicable), noting that he or she has successfully completed the program.

**A Brief Guide to Writing Reflective Papers

- Describe your experience. Be specific.
- What has been your progress during this experience? What new ideas have you gained?
- Identify the one moment or idea that stands out above all others. Why? What impact has it had on you? How will it influence you? What changes will you make? How will you know if you have succeeded?

Length: Two to three pages maximum.

Guide to Writing a Research Summary

For purposes of the UTP this is similar to writing a literature review, or review paper.

- First Become familiar with some of the educational literature on the relevant topic including, educational journals, books, key authors and papers. Sources must be of excellent quality. You will easily find many of these sources in the CLL Library. Read and write a summary of your findings.
- Second, think about what you have read, how it relates to your discipline and to your own experience. What do you think about what you have read? Why do you agree or disagree? How does this fit with your previous experiences? Write thoughtfully about your response to the reading.