Course Outline  Fall 2014  Distance Practicum
ELCC 320EC

Prerequisites: Registration in or Completion of Eight Diploma Level courses or Permission of Department
Credit Hours: 5

I. Learning Outcomes

ELCC 320 students may complete the practicum in a variety of licensed or approved early learning and child care programs. Each program offers different learning possibilities; however, within these placements students must demonstrate the following general learning outcomes:

- Plan curriculum based on knowledge of child development
- Provide curriculum based on holistic development of children
- Use a variety of observation skills
- Maintain responsive relationships
- Maintain a safe and healthy environment
- Maintain effective interpersonal communications
- Apply relevant legislation, policies, procedures, and regulations
- Apply a personal philosophy of early childhood education
- Act in a professional manner

Students must also provide evidence that they have achieved the specific skills outlined in the document titled Learning Outcomes and Skill Sets. Details for this practicum are provided in the ELCC 320 Practicum Performance Rating Scale.

The learning outcomes and skill sets are the same for both ELCC 310 and ELCC 320; however, it is expected that students will demonstrate these skills at a higher level in ELCC 320 than is expected in ELCC 310. In exceptional situations, students may perform skills at a post-graduate level, as indicated on the overview document. Details about evaluation procedures are outlined in the Practicum Handbook.

II. Course Description

ELCC 320EC is a field placement course delivered online through Alberta eCampus. This practicum is designed to lead students through a process resulting in their achievement of specific learning outcomes and skill sets. We believe that student performance can be improved through thoughtful and purposeful performance of prescribed tasks, guided written reflection on practice, and professional dialogue. It is the responsibility of the student to demonstrate these skills in practice. Practicum courses emphasize programming for and responding to children based on observations and documentation of children’s developmental needs, abilities and interests. In the second year Diploma practicum courses, students are expected to gain skills in leadership and program management in order to provide an environment that supports high quality early learning and child care programs, encourages best practices related to professional standards, and reaches out to both families and the community.
In the Distance Program, students are typically working independently in their own workplace settings; however, their workplace supervisor must be kept informed of their practicum requirements. Practicum Mentors will be assigned to students who are completing non-working distance practicum courses. Both working and non-working students will be assigned a Faculty Consultant from the Early Learning and Child Care Department who will serve as a facilitator and resource person, as well as an evaluator.

III. Organization

Specific details on procedures and expectations are outlined in the Diploma Distance Practicum Handbook. This handbook is an official document directly related to the Course Outline. General guidelines are provided below.

Students must complete a minimum of 200 hours in each practicum course, as is required by government regulations for provincial certification in child care. Practica in the fall or winter terms are typically completed over 11 weeks and in an 8 week period of time during the spring term. The majority of time must be spent in direct contact with children. Students who are working in administrative positions may have to make arrangements to spend the required hours working with children.

Because each practicum placement has unique characteristics, the specific expectations will be different for each placement. In consultation with the Distance or Practicum Coordinator and/or the Faculty Consultant, individual students will complete a contract outlining specific practicum requirements for ELCC 320. Students will be expected to complete ongoing self-assessments throughout the practicum experience and these are requirements are built into individual assignments and projects.

Faculty Consultants will make two visits to each student during the practicum experience and engage in formal discussions at these times. It is the student’s responsibility to produce written documentation to demonstrate their learning, to arrange these meetings at appropriate times, and to obtain permission from their employer or supervisor for the visits and meetings to occur. The meetings following the observations could be scheduled during breaks, noon hour, or after regular program hours.

IV. Learning Activities

A. Practicum Performance: Professional Practice

Second year Early Learning and Child Care students must demonstrate the learning outcomes and skills detailed in the evaluation documents. In addition, they must demonstrate planning skills appropriate for their practicum setting and document their skills in a Practicum Planning Book that will be reviewed during visits by the Faculty Consultant. Instructions for organizing the planning book are outlined in the Practicum Handbook.

Student performance is evaluated by the Faculty Consultant using the ELCC 320 Practicum Evaluation Rating Scale. Evaluation is based on observations of student performance, face-to-face reflective practice discussions, and a review of planning documentation and record keeping. Mentors who have been assigned to non-working distance students will have an opportunity to provide input to the Faculty Consultant during the evaluation process.
B. Practicum Learning Portfolio: Practicum Projects
Students will be required to complete four practicum project choices related to specific learning outcomes and skill sets. Four projects can be completed in any order and in either practicum; project 4 (video project) is assigned in ELCC 310. A minimum of two projects will typically have been completed in ELCC 310 and the remaining projects will be submitted to meet the requirements of ELCC 320. The Practicum Learning Portfolio projects will represent the “best” of all activities that professionals are required to perform in early learning and child care programs. Detailed descriptions, specific objectives, procedures, requirements and evaluation rubrics are provided for each project in separate documents on Blackboard. These projects will be evaluated by Faculty Consultants. Percentage grades will be assigned to each project and students must achieve a minimum of 65% on each project to receive credit for the project. Students will be provided with opportunities to repeat and/or revise projects until required standards are achieved.

C. Online Journal Assignment
Students will answer weekly reflective questions in six online guided journal assignments that will be posted on the practicum web site. These questions will focus on one or more of the skills that must be demonstrated in the practicum setting and documented in a Practicum Planning Book. Students will also share information with Faculty Consultants about their learning and challenges in the real-life program setting. Online journal assignments will be marked by the Faculty Consultants who will provide students with weekly feedback. Specific due dates for submission are listed in the Important Dates document on Blackboard.

D. Online Discussion Seminars
Students will contribute to six online seminar discussions by answering posted questions and responding to the postings of other students. Seminar topics will be introduced by Faculty Consultants; however, students are also invited to post questions and comments in this online discussion area. Specific criteria for marking ten discussion entries are outlined in the Practicum Handbook.

E. Basic Practicum Expectations
A professional in the ELCC field strives to understand and support young children and their families. Students must conduct themselves in a manner that is worthy of the Early Learning and Child Care Department at Red Deer College and of the Early Childhood Profession. Unprofessional behavior can result in a request for students to withdraw from practicum (RDC calendar – Academic Policy). This request may be initiated by a community program or by the ELCC department. Students have a right to appeal this decision. The Practicum Handbook provides further details regarding basic expectations.

V. Evaluation Guidelines
Faculty Consultants will be responsible for grading assignments, completing final evaluation reports and assigning grades. Self-assessment information will also be used in completing the evaluation. Final grades (CR/NCR) will be based on student demonstration of learning outcomes and skills as presented in both written assignments and performance in practice.
Practicum Performance: Professional Practice  Value: 60%
Faculty Consultants will use the ELCC 320 Practicum Performance Evaluation Rating Scale to evaluate student performance in the practicum setting. Mentors for non-working students will provide input to consultants on student performance in the work place. Students will be required to submit both a mid-term and a final self-evaluation using the forms provided.

Practicum Learning Portfolio  Value: 20%
Faculty Consultants will grade each Practicum Project according to the criteria on the evaluation rubrics provided in the project guidelines.

Journal Assignments and Discussion Seminar Postings  Value: 20%
- **Online Journal Assignments**
  Faculty Consultants will grade journal assignments and provide students with ongoing feedback.

- **Online Discussion Seminars**
  Faculty Consultants will grade discussion postings using an evaluation rubric and provide students with ongoing feedback.

The overall practicum grade will be calculated based on the above values. Students will not receive a letter grade based on these percentage grades; however, students must receive satisfactory levels of completion for each evaluation requirement and an overall minimum grade of 65% to pass this course. Student transcripts will show either CREDIT(CR) or NO CREDIT (NCR) as final practicum grade.

Although percentage grades will not be reflected on student transcripts, they will be included in student’s Final Practicum Evaluation Reports. Faculty Consultant comments in these reports will indicate student strengths as well as areas needing improvement. The marks and comments on this report will document the specific progress and achievement of students in each practicum.

Students who achieve at an exemplary level (95%) in all aspects of the practicum will receive a **Certificate of Exemplary Performance** in recognition of their dedication to excellence.

Inability to complete the requirements outlined on the Practicum Contract within the agreed time frame will result in an incomplete grade. An extension contract may be established between the student and the Faculty Consultant in the case of an incomplete mark. Inability to complete the requirements as agreed to in the contract will result in a Fail (NCR) being recorded for the course.

The **Academic Misconduct Policy (Plagiarism) is in effect.**

Plagiarism involves submitting work created by someone else as if it were the student’s own. Plagiarized work may result in the assignment of an F and could also result in expulsion from the course.
VI. Changes to Course Outline

Changes are subject to review by the program chairperson for completeness and consistency with all college policies.

VII. Withdrawal

The last day to add/drop without academic penalty and have tuition refunded is September 11, 2014. The last day to withdraw is December 3, 2014.

VIII. Materials and Special Fees

An online distance fee of $25.00 has been added to the tuition for this course. This course delivery fee is assessed by eCampus. This fee was paid upon registration.

IX. Support Services

All RDC students can access the following free support services:

- Services for students with disabilities (students are responsible for registering for these services early in the term)

**Academic Resources on Campus**

Visit the Student Life tab or the Learning Supports tab on the Loop at www.rdc.ab.ca for information on the following services.

**Learning Support Services (Library Information Common)**

- Writing Skills Centre (403-342-3264)
- Math Skills Centre
- Learning Strategies (note-taking, studying and exam-writing strategies learn_help@rdc.ab.ca)
- Peer Tutoring (one-on-one tutoring by students) [http://rdc.libguides.com/peertutors](http://rdc.libguides.com/peertutors)
- Computer Basics
- Peer-Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) (student-led study groups)
- Prescreening and referral for learning disabilities

**Disability Services (Library Information Common; 403-357-3629)**

- Coordination of services (tutoring, alternate format text, note-taking etc.)
- Academic accommodations, including exam accommodations
- Accessibility issues
- Funding information and referral

**Counselling and Career Centre (Room 1402; 403-343-4064)**

- Personal counselling
- Career counselling
- Employment and Career Services (resumes, job postings, etc.)

X. Prior Learning Assessment

This course may be eligible for Prior Learning Assessment. Students should refer to the RDC College Calendar for a list of excluded courses.