



Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg
Hamburg University of Applied Sciences

**Guidelines
for institutionally-guided professional practice and placements
in the BA degree course in
Education and Learning in Childhood**

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*This translation is provided for
informational purposes only. In cases
of dispute, the German version shall
be authoritative.*

Issued by

Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW Hamburg)
Faculty of Business and Social Sciences
Department of Social Work
BA degree course in Education and Learning in Childhood

In the interest of avoiding gendered language while maintaining readability, the text of these guidelines alternates female and male pronouns for 'the student', 'the Placement Officer', etc., and uses plural forms where appropriate.

Preamble

The BA degree course in Education and Learning in Childhood at HAW Hamburg places significant emphasis on its students learning in and through practical experience. The degree course is consciously based on a dual learning setting, comprising HAW Hamburg as an academic institution and the establishment or organisation at which the student's practical learning takes place.

The purpose of these guidelines is to enable the degree course to meet the criteria set out in the Joint Framework for Education and Learning in Childhood (*Gemeinsamer Orientierungsrahmen Bildung und Erziehung in der Kindheit*) issued by the Standing Conference of ministers for families and young people of the German *Länder* (JFMK) and to satisfy the requirements for our students' accreditation by their German federal state as specialists for education and learning in childhood. The Joint Framework states:

'[Students'] practical experience, as a site of their learning, has a crucial role to play in the professionalisation of the workforce in this field. The day-to-day reality of professionals supporting children involves significant numbers of diverse challenges which are difficult to anticipate or plan for. Gaining practical experience is key to developing the attitudes and skills needed to meet these challenges. This makes establishments and organisations that support children and young people important partners in the development and training of new specialists for the field. The quality of the day-to-day work with children and young people in the establishment in question is as vital [to successful training] as is the support provided to placement students.'¹

At HAW Hamburg, practical placements are an integral part of the degree course virtually throughout, from semesters 1 to 6. Students receive support and guidance in their practical placements and theoretical instruction and supervision from HAW Hamburg as their academic institution.

¹ 'Gemeinsamer Orientierungsrahmen Bildung und Erziehung in der Kindheit', issued by the JFMK on 14 December 2010 as an 'appropriate basis for managing trainees' access to the profession'.

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1 Purposes of professional and practical placements

The acquisition of practical experience in establishments working in the field, alongside attendance at the associated seminars (Theory and Practice Seminars) at HAW Hamburg, has the purpose of enabling students to transfer their skills to practical work in their future professional field and reflect upon this process as detailed in the information that follows.

The seminars take place each semester, and each focuses on a different aspect of professional practice (see 4. below), explored via specific tasks and focusing on encouraging students to reflect on their practical experiences. This process of experiential reflection, alongside the acquisition and implementation of relevant educational acts and activities in the day-to-day life and work of the host establishment, is an integral component of the professional practice students undertake.

Professional and practical placements present students with the challenge of stepping into their future professional role, reflecting upon their experiences and situating their professional actions in the context of their theoretical knowledge. A professional persona in this field is necessarily rooted in an attitude which has regard to the child's lifeworld, stage of development, and wellbeing, alongside the surrounding institutional, social and community context.

1.1 Specialist and methodological competencies (cf. Module Handbook)

At the conclusion of their institutionally-guided professional practice, students will be able to:

- identify, via naming examples of, and assess the societal and institutional frameworks of practice in education and learning in childhood as they relate to the specific field of work involved in the placement
- implement in their professional actions the theoretical knowledge and information acquired during their degree course
- apply methodological competencies attained during their degree course in a professional manner in specific working situations
- manifest and embody fundamental professional and ethical attitudes and positions in their professional practice
- comprehend and evaluate the relevance of the theoretical knowledge and information acquired during their degree course to their professional practice
- independently carry out specialised tasks, having regard to the legal, organisational and economic frameworks within which they are operating.

1.2 Social, personal and interpersonal skills (cf. Module Handbook)

At the conclusion of their institutionally-guided professional practice, students will be able to:

- adopt and carry out a professional role commensurate to the area of work in which they have gained their practical experience
- perceive, recognise and comprehend the influence of their selves and personalities on their actions within this professional role and reflect upon this influence in a professionally appropriate manner
- work cooperatively, constructively and productively in teams, communicating appropriately and professionally with the teams' other members.

1.3 Capacity for reflective practice (cf. Module Handbook)

At the conclusion of their institutionally-guided professional practice, students will be able to:

- reflect professionally and appropriately upon the methodological competencies acquired during their degree course, their professional role, and the fundamental professional and ethical positions and attitudes which determine their professional actions.

2 Structures of and regulations governing placements

Institutionally guided professional practice takes place each semester from the first to the sixth. Students are required to complete 180 hours of professional and practical experience in each of these semesters. The total number of hours to be completed during the degree course is 1080.

Students undertake placements in at least two different areas of the field; this may be in the same establishment throughout or in various different ones.

2.1 Planning the 180 hours of practice to be completed each semester

- Students plan their hours of practice in agreement with the establishment at which they are undertaking their placement (placement establishment, host establishment). During teaching periods (*Vorlesungszeiten*), students must complete at least six hours per week. Once this minimum requirement is met, students may, in agreement with their host establishment, complete hours in blocks.
- Placement hours should be planned to avoid conflict or clashes with students' academic courses at HAW Hamburg.
- A student in her fifth semester may, with good reason, by agreement with and subject to the approval of her Placement Officer, complete all 180 hours pertaining to that semester outside the semester's teaching period (for example, as a placement outside Germany).

2.2 Leave and absence

Only hours actually completed count towards a student's total hours requirement. A maximum of eight hours per semester of absences only may be counted towards total placement hours, regardless of the reason for absence. Students do not accrue annual leave during their placements.

3 Suitable host establishments for placements

3.1 Approved placement establishments

HAW Hamburg recognises as suitable host establishments such establishments that deliver social, educational or health services or children's or family services, as well as other relevant arenas of learning outside HAW Hamburg which enable students to attain, with qualified supervision and support, the competencies that are the object of the degree course.

3.2 Examples of appropriate areas of work

Appropriate areas of work are those which provide care, supervision and learning support for children (aged 0-14 years) in the context of a specific educational concept and/or support their families in their parenting and in organising their daily lives. Examples are:

- Kindergartens and day nurseries
- Pre-schools
- Schools with integrated after-school care (*Ganztagsschulen*)
- School classes practising inclusion of pupils with disabilities or those acquiring German as a second language (*Integrationsklassen*)
- Specialist advisory services
- Associations and managing/overseeing organisations tasked with developing quality in services
- Family support centres
- Support and advisory services for families
- Family education centres
- Relevant state or local authorities and children's services authorities (*Jugendämter*)
- Organisations providing parenting support
- Organisations providing early-years intervention
- Children's and family centres, with or without schools attached (*Bildungshäuser*)
- Establishments providing training and continuing education to specialist youth and community workers
- Research institutes and establishments working in academic research into and the evaluation of early education, childcare and the promotion of social and emotional development in children

Practice hours completed in research and evaluation may not exceed a total of two semesters' hours (360 hours). Students may not take up placements in this area until they have reached their third semester.

Students should choose their host establishment in accordance with the content of the relevant Theory and Practice Seminar (TPS) (see 4.).

3.3 Further requirements to be met by placement establishments

As a rule, host establishments should fulfil the following criteria:

- At least two employees qualified in education and learning, with positions of at least 0.5 FTE (full-time equivalent) (known as a *halbe Stelle*).
- Mentoring must be carried out by an employee with an academic degree in education and learning
- Students are permitted to observe the establishment's work or shadow an employee before commencing their placement
- Students are provided with the opportunity to carry out the tasks required for their degree course and receive the support they need in order to complete these successfully
- Students are integrated into the team and assigned appropriate tasks
- Students are invited to team meetings and working groups on quality or other topics
- Students are given the opportunity to encounter and familiarise themselves with various areas of the establishment and its work (groups, management tasks, a range of services, projects, etc.)
- Students are enabled and supported to attend their seminars at HAW Hamburg
- At least 20% of the student's practice hours is spent assisting with the establishment's administrative tasks

Exceptions may be permitted at the discretion of the Placement Officer at HAW Hamburg.

3.4 Placement mentoring at the host establishment

The student's placement mentor at the host establishment is responsible for providing continuous supervision and support to the placement student throughout his time with the establishment and acting as a reliable point of contact for any issues he experiences, supporting his learning, modelling and inculcating professional actions and aiding him in his engagement with and reflection upon his developing professional role and identity. The student and her placement mentor meet on a one-to-one basis at least once a month for at least one hour.

The Placement Officers at HAW Hamburg serve as points of contact for placement mentors, supporting communication between students, their mentors, and the lecturers taking the students' Theory and Practice Seminar.

Placement mentors carry out the following functions and tasks:

- Instructional:

with the aim of helping students acquire practical competencies and the capacity to reflect upon their actions in

the course of their professional practice:

Providing and explaining options for action in specific situations, and enabling productive reflection upon those situations and the options taken

Passing on their knowledge acquired in the course of their professional practice and providing the student with opportunities to become involved in and influence the day-to-day work of the establishment

- Advisory:

Encouraging students to reflect upon their ideas of themselves as specialists for education and learning in childhood

- Administrative:

Contextualising educational objectives and activities in their organisational and legal frameworks and settings

- Evaluatory:

Describing the student's learning process and assessing and evaluating the extent to which it fulfils the objectives of the placement or the relevant phase of the student's overall professional practice

These functions confer upon the placement mentor the right and the obligation to determine, at her own discretion, the success or otherwise of the placement and to give an account of this determination in a final written evaluation. Should doubts arise as to the student's capacity to successfully complete the placement, the mentor is required to inform, without delay, the student and the relevant Placement Officer for the Education and Learning in Childhood degree course of these doubts.

Placement mentors for institutionally-guided professional practice in the Education and Learning in Childhood degree course are required to meet the following formal criteria:

- Possess an academic qualification in the field of education and learning. It is permissible for a non-academically qualified staff member (e.g. one holding the vocational qualification of *Erzieher/in*) to mentor a student in combination with an academically qualified colleague (holding, for example, a degree in youth and community education work (*Sozialpädagogik*) or childhood education and learning (*Kindheitspädagogik*) or a comparable qualification). Such a 'tandem' mentorship arrangement must be in place for at least four of the six semesters incorporating professional practice, or at least 720 of the total 1080 practice hours, where a student's principal placement mentor is vocationally, but not academically qualified.

- Hold a position amounting to at least 0.5 FTE (*halbe Stelle*)
- Hold a contract of employment which covers the duration of the student's placement

Exceptions may be permitted at the discretion of the Placement Officer.

3.5 Finding a placement

Students are required to ensure, when choosing a placement establishment, that the placement will not conflict with their commitments at HAW Hamburg, including attendance at courses and seminars.

Students are responsible for finding a suitable host establishment. Where required, they may receive advice from the Placement Officer for the Education and Learning in Childhood degree course.

The conclusion of a Placement Agreement (see 5.) between the Placement Officer, the host establishment and the student shall, as a rule, be deemed to constitute approval of the host establishment as suitable for the placement.

4 Preparatory action for placements and associated seminars

Students are required to seek the approval of the Placement Officer for their proposed placement establishment. The necessary form can be found on the HAW Hamburg website on the EMAIL service, under Fakultät Wirtschaft und Soziales / Information und Organisation / Praxisangelegenheiten BABE (Modul 5) / Dokumentendownload / Verträge & Co.

Students are expected to complete 180 hours in a professional practice setting in each semester from the first to the sixth, in at least two different areas of the field of childhood education and learning. As students complete a practical project in their focal area during their fifth and sixth semesters, it is advisable for their practice hours in these semesters to take place in the same host establishment.

In each semester from the first to the sixth, students additionally attend associated seminars (Theory and Practice Seminars) at HAW Hamburg, which accompany and support their professional practice hours and aid reflection on their learning in these.

Students' institutionally-guided professional practice has a different focus in each semester. These foci, around which the Theory and Practice Seminars offered in each semester are designed, are as follows:

- Semester 1: Exploring the field of education and learning in childhood
- Semester 2: Observing and documenting educational processes
- Semester 3: Evaluation and quality development
- Semester 4: Requirements and activity analysis
- Semester 5: Practical project in student's focal area
- Semester 6: Practical project in student's focal area

Proposing a host establishment

Students must have submitted their proposed placements for approval by 15 August (for placements in the following winter semester) or 15 February (for placements in the following summer semester).

The relevant Placement Officer will check that the placement meets the requirements for approval (see 3.3) and communicate his finding to the student and the proposed placement mentor.

After a placement has received approval, a Placement Agreement is drawn up and concluded between HAW Hamburg, the placement establishment and the student. The pro forma for

the agreement is available on the HAW Hamburg website on the EMIL service, under:

HAW Hamburg EMIL, Fakultät Wirtschaft und Soziales, Information und Organisation,
Praxisangelegenheiten BABE (Modul 5) / Dokumentendownload / Verträge & Co.

The placement establishment's specialism and activities, and the areas of work it can offer on the basis of these, must be compatible with the content and objectives of the Theory and Practice Seminars for each semester as listed above.

5 Placement Agreement

The Placement Agreement forms the legal basis for the placement. The parties to the Agreement are:

- HAW Hamburg, with its President as its representative; his representative in turn is the Placement Officer for the Education and Learning in Childhood degree course in the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Business and Social Sciences
- The placement student, that is, a student of HAW Hamburg on the Education and Learning in Childhood degree course offered by the Department of Social Work
- The placement establishment (host establishment)

The Agreement is binding on all parties; its formal conclusion via the signatures of all the parties, alongside compliance with the agreed commitments it contains, are necessary preconditions to the recognition of the placement as counting towards the student's degree and to the student's state accreditation as a specialist for education and learning in childhood (*Kindheitspädagogin/Kindheitspädagoge*).

The Placement Agreement commits the student to undertaking the placement which is its subject in the establishment named in the Agreement and previously approved by the relevant Placement Officer. Principal components of the Agreement include the time period covered by the placement and the responsibilities of each of its parties (cf. Sections 4, 5 and 6, Placement Agreement).

These responsibilities principally comprise:

- The obligation upon the student to carry out the tasks assigned to him with due care and attention
- The obligation upon the student to maintain confidentiality on internal matters relating to the establishment or its administration which become known to her in the course of her placement, where legal stipulations or the organisation responsible for overseeing the establishment direct that confidentiality is to be maintained. This obligation remains in force after the placement's completion.

Further, the Placement Agreement sets out the student's working hours and contains binding provisions relating to the management of the placement student's absence (cf. Section 8, Placement Agreement). Only hours actually completed count towards a student's total hours requirement. A maximum of eight hours per semester of absences only may be counted towards total placement hours, regardless of the reason for absence. Students do not accrue annual leave during their placements.

The Placement Agreement also contains provisions on its termination or dissolution (cf. Sections 11 and 12, Placement Agreement).

6 Completing placements

A student's institutionally-guided professional practice shall be deemed successfully completed when he has undertaken placements to the requisite number of hours and received positive assessments (evaluation as 'successful') for each.

Placement evaluation by host establishment

It is incumbent on the host establishment to assess the student's development during her placement; as a rule, the placement mentor will undertake this task (see relevant section above), describing in written form the student's learning process and assessing it against the objectives of the placement, or, more precisely, of the relevant phase of the student's professional practice (cf. content of the Theory and Practice Seminars as detailed above). The host establishment is expected to issue this evaluation by the **end of each semester**, i.e. 28/29 February for placements in a winter semester and 31 August for placements in a summer semester. The evaluation should contain the following information, including the criteria to be assessed:

1. Relevant personal information on the student (name, registered student no., address, email, telephone, relevant semester)
2. Address of placement establishment
3. Name of mentor at the placement establishment
4. Duration of placement (incl. confirmation that student has completed the required hours, or of the number of hours completed)
5. Tasks undertaken by the student; these may include:
 - Administrative duties
 - Conduction of a practical project
 - Observation and documentation of educational processes
6. The student's attitude and approach to work and learning; this may include:
 - Acquisition of specific knowledge and skills and methodological competencies
 - Willingness to take on tasks
 - Ability to plan and coordinate their work
 - Ability to work cooperatively and as part of a team
 - Approach to problem-solving
 - Capacity to reflect on their work and actions
7. Concluding, summary evaluation of the placement: 'successful' or 'not successful'
8. Date, signatures of placement mentor and student, host establishment's official stamp

The Placement Officer, on the basis of the information given in the evaluation, makes the final decision as to whether the student has passed Module 5 (a) to e)).

The placement mentor shall meet with the student to discuss the written evaluation.

The written evaluation is not a comprehensive reference for use in subsequent applications

for positions in the field; its purpose is to confirm to HAW Hamburg the successful (or otherwise) completion of the placement. ^{Completing placements}

A further purpose of the written evaluation is to support students' professional development. With this in mind, mentors should include in the written evaluation information about the student's existing strengths and, constructively, about his weaknesses, so he can further enhance the former and undertake specific efforts to improve the latter.

The evaluation should engage with the following aspects of the student's professional development:

Structure and process of placement

- the context and frameworks within which the placement was undertaken
- the organisational structures for the placement as agreed in advance, including any additions or changes
- particular situations or tasks that arose during the placement
- the forms of support, development

The student

- the state of her professional knowledge and skills and of her capacity to implement them in her everyday professional practice
- his ability to understand, process and assimilate new information
- her ability to form relationships with children/families/clients
- his interactions with individuals and groups
- her ability to identify problems, locate and assess them in a professional context
- his ability to access and operationalise possibilities for action from a professional repertoire and structure them methodically
- her administrative competencies
- his progress during the course of the placement
- any areas evidently requiring further development and learning

Summary evaluation

- Overall impression of the student's stage of professional development as a practitioner in the field
- Comments on the student's suitability for the profession, particularly with relevance to her abilities and potential for future development

7 Divergence from the Placement Agreement

The realisation of any aspect of the placement in a manner divergent from the provisions set out in the Placement Agreement is subject to the approval of the Placement Officer.

Such instances of divergence may arise where unforeseen developments necessitate them. Examples of such unforeseen developments may be:

- prolonged absence on the part of the placement mentor
- failure of the student to adequately meet his obligations as set out in the Placement Agreement
- failure of the mentor to adequately meet her obligations as set out in the Placement Agreement
- failure of the host establishment to adequately meet its obligations as set out in the Placement Agreement
- student request to move to another host establishment for personal reasons or on grounds related to the placement's content
- the student leaving the placement before completion
- prolonged absence on the part of the student (e.g. due to illness or accident)

The procedures to be implemented in specific cases are as follows:

7.1 Change to another host establishment

Students may only change to a different host establishment during a specific semester in exceptional cases and with prior consent of the Placement Officer. The previous host establishment is required to issue the Placement Officer with confirmation of the student's 'successful' or 'not successful' completion of the hours undertaken.

The student must have a significant reason for changing host establishment. Students may only move to another host establishment due to receiving an evaluation as 'unsuccessful' in the previous one a maximum of twice. A third request for such a move for this reason will lead to the student's entire professional practice being deemed unsuccessful (cf. Section 18, subsection 2, Course and Examination Regulations issued on 27 November 2008) and, consequently, to the student's removal from the degree course.

7.2 Extension of placement period (with corresponding proportional reduction in hours per week)

In individual, exceptional cases for which the student has robust grounds, the Placement Officer may approve an extension of the placement period (as it pertains to one semester), with a corresponding proportional reduction in the number of hours a week to be completed. Such an extension shall not be recognised without the Placement Officer's prior approval.

7.3 Placements outside Germany

In the fifth semester of the degree course, students may undertake a placement outside Germany. Such a placement shall be subject to preconditions and requirements identical to those governing placements within Germany; students must seek the approval of the relevant Placement Officer for any exceptions to this provision.

8 Response to specific cases and unforeseen events

Specific unforeseen events occurring during the course of the placement must be reported to the relevant Placement Officer without delay.

This is particularly the case in the following instances:

- The placement student has an accident at the host establishment or while travelling between her home and the host establishment. It is incumbent on the host establishment to make the mandatory report of the accident as required by the German Social Accident Insurance (*gesetzliche Unfallversicherung*).
- The placement student is absent from the placement for a prolonged period, due, for example, to illness, accident or pregnancy/maternity. Students should submit notifications of sickness and doctor's notes (*ärztliches Attest*) to their host establishment.
- The student, placement mentor or host establishment have violated any of the provisions of the Placement Agreement or the student has acted in such a way as to render him liable for damages. HAW Hamburg will not accept liability for such actions in which fault lies with its students. It therefore recommends that students take out their own professional liability insurance.

9 Responsibilities of the Placement Officer

Placement Officers act as the point of contact between HAW Hamburg, placement students and host establishments.

Their primary duties concern all matters relating to institutionally-guided professional practice in the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, at HAW Hamburg.

The Central Office for Certification of Professional Practice (*Zentrales Praktikumsbüro*; ZEPRA) issues state accreditation as specialists for education and learning in childhood (*Kindheitspädagogin/Kindheitspädagoge*), on the basis of the Act on State Accreditation of Specialists for Education and Learning in Childhood of June 7th 2012, to graduates of the BA degree course in Education and Learning in Childhood in the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, at HAW Hamburg.

The Placement Officers' responsibilities are as follows:

- Working with the relevant Theory and Practice Seminar lecturers to provide guidance and support to students in choosing a suitable placement establishment
- Acting as a point of contact for placement mentors in host establishments
- Providing advice and intervention where conflict arises between a student and her host establishment
- Mediation in cases of professional disagreement or dispute between HAW Hamburg and the host establishment
- Approving host establishments for placements
- Concluding Placement Agreements between HAW Hamburg, students and host establishments
- Approving placements outside Germany and acting as a point of contact and support during the placement
- Awarding credits for Module 5 a) – 5 e) ('Learning in and from practice'); confirming students' professional practice as successfully completed