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## **Vocational training agreements for the practical training weeks during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> semesters**

During the period of practical training, a close partnership develops between the students and education professionals involved. A vocational training agreement outlining expectations, requirements, procedures and objectives should be worked out together, before training begins, in order to ensure commitment and planning reliability both for the institution and for the trainee. This “map” for the training period provides a common working foundation which both sides can refer to on an ongoing basis. The plan can of course be adjusted and elaborated during the period of practical training.

The cooperation partners should address the following issues when drawing up the vocational training plan:

- Personal expectations and wishes; if applicable, fears and uncertainties
- What is expected and required of the other partner
- The responsibilities of the trainee and of the partner education professional
- Methods to be applied (e.g. methods of observation and enquiry, documentation procedure)
- Outline of a particular educational focus or research question of the trainee
- Objectives and intermediate goals for the course of the training period

Practical training lasting several weeks can be divided into the following phases:

### **1. Orientation and information phase**

The aim of the orientation phase is for the trainee to gain insight into the place of work and the scope of its practical educational activities. The trainee should become acquainted with the following aspects (among others):

- Features of the institution and its role in the community
- Legal framework of the work
- Organisational procedures, staff and financial situation
- Cooperation with other institutions, boards, etc.
- The institution’s educational concept and objectives
- Qualifications and responsibilities of the various staff members
- Working methods and procedures used

In addition, the institution should gain insight into the university's requirements of the practical training period during this phase: The partner youth or child care worker, or other key contacts in the field of practice (e.g. director), receive detailed information about the tasks, methods and objectives of the training period. The following aspects should be addressed in the vocational training plan:

- Type and scope of the student's tasks during the training period and the responsibilities of the partners
- Scope of the trainee's involvement and influence
- Trainee's rights and responsibilities
- Consultation in the daily routine and ensuring information is shared on a regular basis
- Joint reflection on the work

## **2. Trial and consolidation phase**

The orientation and information phase is followed by a period of trying things out, active involvement, assumption of duties and joint reflection on practice. The trainee and the partner youth or child care worker cooperate closely during this phase in order to create a common learning context and reflect on practical experiences. The trained education professionals may assume the function of professional educational "role models" here. They should initially have a greater presence and be available for questions and consultation in order to share reflections on the teamwork with the students and to plan how to tackle the tasks which have been set for the practical training period. The trainee can and should gradually take over independent responsibility for different duties and areas.

Common objectives in this field should be laid down in the vocational training plan on the basis of the institution's educational programmes and concepts. These may include:

- Systematic observation of children (individual children, groups) with various standardised and non-standardised methods, analysis and documentation of developmental and educational processes
- Systematic observation of education professionals' practice
- Reappraisal and consolidation of knowledge about the different areas of education and children's developmental processes
- Development of educational strategies together with the education professional
- Independently preparing and carrying out learning modules for individual children and the group
- Active teamwork (participating in staff meetings, talks with parents, parent evenings, etc.)
- Involvement in cooperation with parents
- Use of various interview and communication techniques to gain insight into the particular area of education
- Reflection on practical experiences made, the relationship of theory and practice, and the professional role (together with the youth or child care worker)

### **3. Leave-taking and feedback phase**

The completion of the practical training period should also be prepared and planned. The aim is not only to take stock and evaluate how the training period went, but also to reflect on uncalculated processes and how they impacted on the learning and educational processes of all parties. Furthermore, the trainee organises his or her own leave-taking from everyone involved – children, colleagues and parents – thus providing meaningful feedback on his or her own experiences from the practical training period.

There is no assessment of students by the partner youth or child care worker. Nevertheless, the student and partner should reflect on and evaluate the practical training period together in order to learn from their experiences.

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING PLAN

for the *practical training period* of \_\_\_\_\_

at the *institution* \_\_\_\_\_

during the period from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Practical training phases	Tasks and objectives of the partners	Conditions and methods for the completion of tasks and achievement of objectives	Time frame
1. Orientation and information phase			
2. Trial and consolidation phase			
2.a. Addressing of research question			
3. Leave-taking and feedback phase			