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Supporting materials for school heads and mentors for implementing Practical School Experience (Schulpraktische Studien, or SPS) as part of teaching degree programmes at Leipzig University

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Dear school heads and mentors,

Thank you very much for supporting Leipzig University as a practical training school and enabling our students to gain practical teaching experience. This information leaflet contains general task descriptions for the implementation and organisation of the SPS, which are intended to assist you during the work placements. It contains information about the overall objective, the tasks of the mentors and the individual work placements as well as aspects of the basic content of the SPS.

1. What is the basic objective of the SPS?

The SPS are compulsory work placements that enable students to gain and reflect on their first experience of working in a school. From this they can derive conclusions regarding how to act and what decisions to take in their further studies. The SPS establish a connection between theory and practice, including with a view to coping with the requirements of the students' subsequent state preparatory practical training (VBD). The SPS are carried out at both general and vocational schools in the Free State of Saxony and other German states, but also abroad.

2. Which specific work placements do students have to complete?

Students are required to complete a total of five work placements. They vary in terms of their scope and emphasis:

a) Educational science block placement

First of all, they have to complete an educational science block placement (Bildungswissenschaftliches Blockpraktikum) (placement in module 05- BiWi-02 "Praxis- und Studienfeld Schule"). This is not yet related to the students' teaching subjects. The focus here is on getting to know the "school as an institution" and getting to grips with its complexity. This placement takes the form of a four-week block.

b) In-school practice and subject didactics block placement

Building on this, students complete "in-school practice" (Schulpraktische Übungen or SPÜ) for each subject studied. This is carried out during each semester. Working in small groups, students are gradually familiarised with how to plan, give and review lessons. This fundamental knowledge is then deepened in the two subject didactics block placements (Fachdidaktische Blockpraktika) which

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are part of the master's programme (or the higher semesters of the Lehramt teaching degree programmes).

The aim is to be able to apply the knowledge gained for comprehensive, supervised teaching. These placements also last four weeks each.

Students are required to have taught ca. 40 lessons themselves. The hours are documented in a dedicated 40-hour booklet, which is kept independently by the students and signed by the respective mentors/school heads.

3. What are the tasks of the mentors?

The mentors accompany, advise and assess the students during the placement. They also provide support in completing the tasks set by the University.

The requirements for mentors are derived from the goals of the individual work placements. Essentially, they need to fulfil the three requirements of accompanying, advising and assessing.

Subject didactics block placements (Fachdidaktische Blockpraktika) for subject 1 and subject 2 (SPS IV/V, block placement B)

These placements are the responsibility of the respective faculties and relate to each of the core subjects studied (this involves all four subjects in the case of primary school education, while for special needs education it is based on the respective specialisations).

Structure	Four-week block placement from the 4th semester
Period	February–March and August–September
Scope	Varies from subject to subject; students bring information with them
Objectives	Linking subject-related and didactics knowledge (both subject-specific and general) with practical planning and action as well as theory-based reflection; taking over teaching sequences as well as planning and implementing one's own teaching attempts; preparing a practical training portfolio/coursework
Tasks of the mentor	<p><i>Accompanying</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing the initial situation • Reflecting on the practical training assignment with the students, if necessary liaising with University representatives • Providing complex information about the school and medium-term lesson planning (e.g. catchment area; premises; lesson times; daily, weekly and monthly schedules; staff situation; liaising with the school authorities; parental involvement; profiles; class situation, current lesson situation and existing plans, extracurricular activities) • Overall planning for the practical training (timetable, shadowing plans, appointments, overview of teachers' duties, accompaniment of extracurricular activities such as project groups, parents' evenings, school trips and excursions) • Study planning for the coursework topic <p><i>Advising</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint planning of the lesson or sequence of lessons on the basis of short drafts and taking into account selected focuses from a didactics perspective • Orientation towards main points of observation for in-class shadowing • Establishing possible performance measurements and assessments among pupils

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting students in preparing their practical training portfolio or coursework (if required) <p><i>Assessing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on and assessing the respective lesson under subject didactics, subject-related, and pedagogical aspects (based on University requirements) • Assessing lesson plans, if possible • Assessing subject-related, subject didactics, and pedagogical competences
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4. Organisational information

The school management is responsible for assigning mentors.

The teacher training universities and the State Office for Schools and Education (LaSuB) offer a further training programme to qualify mentors for Practical School Experience (SPS) and state preparatory practical training (VBD). We recommend that you participate. For more information, please visit <https://www.lehrerbildung.sachsen.de/23585.htm>.

After the amended Teacher Training Degree Examination Regulations (LAPO 2019) enter into force on 1 April 2019, the 40-hour booklet will no longer have to be submitted to the school supervisory authority (LaSuB) when registering for the 1st State Examination. Nevertheless, we recommend that students continue to keep evidence of the compulsory work placements completed during their studies.