

# Guidelines for Lead Mentors

The Transforming Teacher Education and Learning Programme in Ghana (T-TEL, 2014-2018) aims at transforming the delivery of pre-service teacher education in Ghana by improving the quality of teaching and learning in all Colleges of Education.

Teaching Practice is of vital importance to improve the quality of teachers who graduate from the Colleges of Education to teach in Kindergarten, Primary and Junior High Schools in Ghana. Therefore, as part of the improvement of pre-service delivery, T-TEL has a Schools Partnership (SP) component which aims at providing systematic and uniform practice of Teaching Practice and in the Mentoring of Student Teachers. Through the SP component of T-TEL better links will be made between colleges of education, partner schools and supporting District Education Directorates.

The SP component is implemented by a national team of School Partnerships Advisers (SPAs) with an international key SPA to support the team. As one of their responsibilities, the School Partnership Advisers (SPAs) have developed Teaching Practice Guidelines for different key stakeholders.

These Guidelines for Lead Mentors are aligned with the T-TEL Student Teacher Handbook, the Tutor Handbook and Mentor Handbook, aimed at improving the quality of Teaching Practice. These Handbooks provide Student Teachers with topics and activities which are set out into: Plan Together, Do and Reflect Together. Each of the topics have been planned to fit into the daily programmes of the school week. The Lead Mentor will ensure that the Mentor supports the Student Teachers to carry out all the activities prescribed in the Handbook. Co-curricular activities are included and are to be conducted outside the normal school contact hours.

Student Teachers' work will be assessed in weekly Reflective Practice meetings attended by the Lead Mentor, Mentors and Student Teachers. Other key stakeholders such as SPAs, TPCs, GEOs, CSs or College Tutors may attend if they are present.

## Purpose

The purpose of these Guidelines is to clarify some of the roles and responsibilities of the Lead Mentor and the actions to be taken by the Lead Mentor in training their Mentors and also in monitoring and supporting the Student Teachers in the Teaching Practice School. Actions to be taken by the Lead Mentor include:

### Yr 1 Student Teacher: School Observations (possibly also Yr 2)

- Read the Class Teacher Guidelines.
- Copy the Class Teacher Guidelines for your Class Teachers involved in Yr 1 Student Teacher Observations.
- Meet Class Teachers to explain and distribute the Guidelines.
- Assign Yr1 ST to Class Teacher.
- After the 10-day observation hold an appraisal meeting with the Class Teachers.
- Student Teachers to discuss achievements, challenges and reporting to the CoEs.

## YR 3 Pre- TP Activities

In the T-TEL Mentor Teaching Practice Handbook the topics and activities for week 1 of the off-campus TP are described. The Lead Mentor and the Mentors in the TP Schools should implement these activities with the Student Teachers:

- The Lead Mentor should organise orientation programmes for both Mentors and Student Teachers to formally introduce, especially the Student Teachers, to the school environment and to outline the roles and functions of the players in the TP.
- Classification of Student Teachers: the Lead Mentor will assign classes to the Student Teachers as well as assigning them to teachers who will mentor them.
- Ensure that textbooks, syllabuses, Teacher's Handbooks and schemes of work are made available to the Student Teachers for effective TP.

*Institutional arrangements between the Colleges of Education and the partner schools.*

- As part of the preparation towards the TP, it is the responsibility of the TPC to, on behalf of the Principal, write to the DDE about the activity, giving timelines of the TP and requesting for schools. After the feedback from the Education Directorate, letters will be sent to the schools to inform the heads of the TP.
- It now becomes the responsibility of the Lead Mentors to allocate the Student Teachers to their classes and to their Mentors and give the necessary feedback to the CoEs with a copy to the Education Directorate.
- During the TP there should be regular and constant communication between the TP schools and the CoEs, regarding Student Teacher mentorship. This would be necessary because the Link Tutors need to collaborate with the Mentors if there would be a successful mentorship.
- The Lead Mentor should always be in constant touch with the TPC in the areas of progress, pitfalls in mentoring, indiscipline on the part of Student Teachers as well as the welfare of especially, the females. The Lead Mentor should immediately report anything that deviates from normal behaviour by any Student Teacher to the CoE authorities for immediate resolution.
- At the end of the TP there are some activities to perform. The mentors will write reports on each of the Student Teachers they mentored to the Lead Mentor who will in turn, write a summary of the reports to the CoEs. This would be followed by a general review meeting to evaluate the performance of each Student Teacher.

### YR 3 During TP Activities

Apart from the action points in the **Pre-TP** stage of the mentorship programme, the Lead Mentor has equally vital pastoral roles to play in the course of the TP. Among these are:

- Ensuring that both Mentors and Student Teachers are regular and punctual to school for effective TP. This is an important aspect of Teacher professionalism. The Lead Mentor and Mentors should see themselves as role models of professional conduct to the Student Teachers.
- In the course of the TP the Lead Mentor should hold weekly reflective sessions with both Mentors and Student Teachers to ensure that the mentorship programme is on course. The Lead Mentor should also keep an eye on the welfare of the Student Teachers especially the females, so that none of them experience any unnecessary stress during the course of the TP. See Annex 1
- Co-ordinate the activities of Mentors, Link Tutors and Student Teachers at the school level.
- Occasionally, assess Mentors on their roles and responsibilities.
- Guide Student Teachers on time management as a major component of the mentorship programme.

### YR 3 Post TP Activities

In the T-TEL Mentor Teaching Practice Handbook the activities to be undertaken at the **post TP** level have been outlined. These include:

- Meeting with both Mentors and Student Teachers at the end of the TP period to reflect on the performance of each Student Teacher. This post TP review meeting should employ the THINK-PAIR-SHARE approach. For the THINK activity, the Student Teachers will be instructed by their Mentor to begin together with their TP the Teacher Competencies listed in Annex 1 of the Student Teacher TP Handbook. They should be made to identify in which week of the Y3 TP they practised each of the competencies.
- Remind Student Teachers to refer to their TP Journal for each week to remind themselves how well they achieved each competency. The Student Teacher should be ready to present a specific example of their best competency achievement and an example of a competency they found more difficult to achieve from their TP records.

At the PAIR stage the Lead Mentor will organise the Student Teachers to work with their TP group. Each Student Teacher should present to their TP group the competency they rated as their best achievement and the one they rated as more difficult.

At the SHARE stage each TP group will share with the whole group to find out if there is a common pattern to the responses to all Y3 students.

- As part of the assessment of the Student Teachers by colleges, the Lead Mentor will write a report on every Student Teacher to be submitted to the colleges. These reports will form an integral component of the assessment procedure of every student. These will include: general attitude to work, punctuality, regularity, respect for rules and regulations of the school and involvement in other activities.

### Tips for Lead Mentors when Training Mentors

Mentoring is widely used in supporting students in many professions. It is an area that needs an expert who is trained in the requisite skills and knowledge to fulfil the mentoring role. In education, mentoring is also used to describe coaching, counselling and assessment, where a teacher is delegated to assist pre-service or newly qualified teachers in their professional development.

Mentoring also means guiding and supporting Student Teachers through difficult transitions. Whichever way it is looked at mentoring is concerned with continuing personal as well as professional development.

A Mentor should therefore possess a kind of specialised knowledge about mentoring, skills in mentoring and a positive disposition towards the mentee and the mentoring process. For a mentoring programme to succeed, it must satisfy the following:

- It must have the active support of the top management of the establishment, in this case the Lead Mentor / Head Teacher of the TP School.
- It must be time bound, in this case the duration of the Year 3 Off-Campus teaching practice should be known to all the stakeholders.
- The Mentor and Student Teacher should share responsibility for the relationship and have a shared understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities.
- It must be structured in such a way that the Mentor and Student Teacher meet regularly to discuss issues pertaining to the mentorship. In this case the Mentor Handbook describes regular Reflective Practice meetings to be held weekly throughout the Y3 TP.

- The Mentor and Student Teacher should mutually respect each other so that they will operate in an atmosphere of cordiality. *Again the Mentor Handbook and Student Teacher activities in Y3 TP Week 1 provide an opportunity for the Mentor and the Student Teacher to reflect together on their respective roles.*

As with a Lead Mentor, a Mentor also needs special knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitude to perform effectively. In the school situation the Mentor should aspire to have the following:

Knowledge of...	Skills in ...	Behaviour & attitude that show...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The subject matter</li> <li>• The school Teaching Syllabus</li> <li>• Schemes of work</li> <li>• Teaching and Learning theories and linking them to classroom practice</li> <li>• Assessment instruments used by the colleges</li> <li>• Conditions of service which the mentee will meet in the field after qualifying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team teaching</li> <li>• Creativity and innovativeness</li> <li>• Supporting others</li> <li>• Modelling effective teaching strategies</li> <li>• Discussing and giving constructive feedback</li> <li>• Assessing Student Teachers' performance and that of pupils/ students</li> <li>• Guidance and counselling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patience and tolerance</li> <li>• Objectiveness and openness/ willingness to trust</li> <li>• Commitment to their work and to helping Student Teachers to develop professionally</li> <li>• Consistency</li> <li>• Empathy towards Student Teachers</li> <li>• Positive disposition towards Student Teachers and the Teaching profession</li> <li>• Being able to exhibit self-confidence</li> </ul>

## Annex 1: Guidelines for Protection Strategies for Student Teachers on Teaching Practice

The Gender Responsive competencies that are described in the table below provide a comprehensive set of guidelines or indicators for protection of Student Teachers, particularly female Student Teachers, during their teaching practice. The Gender Responsive competencies highlight the systems and procedures that should be in place in all TP schools to safeguard Student Teachers. These Gender Responsive competencies are included as a core component of the T-TEL Project Monitoring and Evaluation Scorecard.

Gender Responsive competencies for Mentors	Example actions or strategies
<p><b>1. The Mentor makes sure that their school sexual harassment policy has been developed and implemented</b></p>	<p>a) The school has received and adopted the National Teaching Council’s Sexual Harassment Policy. If the policy has not yet been circulated, the Lead Mentor should help the school complete the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The school’s staff develops an agreed definition of what constitutes sexual harassment (e.g. sexual bullying, suggestion, touching and favours. Coming from staff/community towards other teachers, Student Teachers and pupils)</li> <li>ii. The school staff agree on a transparent reporting system for teachers, Student Teachers or pupils experiencing sexual harassment (e.g. victim can go to a designated female staff member, problem then taken to HT/SMC, then circuit supervisor, etc.)</li> <li>iii. The school staff nominates an appropriate, trained staff member to act as the first point for reporting and to act as a counsellor for those experiencing sexual harassment</li> <li>iv. The school staff develops a reprimand system for those guilty of sexual harassment (e.g. develop appropriate punishments for staff, HT, community members, pupils, etc.)</li> <li>v. The HT disseminates the sexual harassment definition, reporting system and reprimand system to all teachers, Student Teachers, pupils and community members</li> </ul> <p>b) The Mentor ensures that all Student Teachers are aware of the school’s sexual harassment policy and reporting system</p> <p>c) The Mentor monitors female Student Teachers’ relationships with staff/community members to make sure they are free from sexual harassment</p>
<p><b>2. The Mentor helps to secure gender responsive accommodation for female Student Teachers</b></p>	<p>a) The Mentor meets with their Student Teacher before teaching practice begins to help them find safe accommodation</p> <p>b) The Mentor ensures that their Student Teacher does not have to live with a teacher, Mentor or member of staff</p> <p>c) The Mentor ensures that if their Student Teacher lives in a community member’s house, the community member has been vetted and is aware of the school sexual harassment policy</p> <p>d) The Mentor ensures that their Student Teacher’s accommodation is close to the school and is safe at night (adequate lighting, security guards/watchmen), particularly for females</p> <p>e) If possible, the Mentor tries to ensure that pairs of female Student Teachers find accommodation together</p>
<p><b>3. The Mentor ensures gender responsive treatment of Student Teachers at the school</b></p>	<p>a) The Mentor and staff’s daily behaviour does not reinforce traditional gender roles (e.g. only female Student Teachers run errands or clean up)</p> <p>b) The Mentor ensures that female and male Student Teachers are treated equally by staff, community and pupils</p> <p>c) The Mentor monitors female Student Teachers’ relationships with staff/community to make sure they are free from bullying, intimidation and any form of abuse</p> <p>d) The Mentor ensures that female and male Student Teachers have equal access to school resources and teaching/learning materials</p> <p>e) The Mentor encourages and supports female Student Teachers in teaching subjects like maths and science</p> <p>f) The Mentor encourages female Student Teachers to take leadership roles during teaching practice</p> <p>g) The Mentor supports and makes allowances for female Student Teachers who have to balance family responsibilities (such as marriage, pregnancy, child-care)</p>

<b>4. The Mentor provides gender responsive support to Student Teacher well-being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Mentor builds confidence in Student Teachers, especially females</li> <li>b) The Mentor monitors female Student Teachers' day-to-day well-being</li> <li>c) The Mentor takes action to address female Student Teachers' problems/needs</li> <li>d) The Mentor makes sure that female Student Teachers feel comfortable and secure</li> <li>e) The Mentor ensures that female teacher toilets have water and hygiene bins and that female Student Teachers are allowed to use these</li> </ul>
<b>5. The Mentor demonstrates gender responsive classroom practices while co-teaching with Student Teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Mentor shows Student Teachers how to give equal chances to girls and boys to ask/answer questions</li> <li>b) The Mentor shows Student Teachers how to assign leadership roles equally to girls and boys in lesson activities</li> <li>c) The Mentor shows Student Teachers how to make sure girls and boys participate equally in activities</li> <li>d) The Mentor shows Student Teachers how to be patient with girls and boys who may be shy or afraid to speak out</li> <li>e) The Mentor shows Student Teachers how to check if both girls and boys equally understand the lesson</li> <li>f) The Mentor shows Student Teachers how to provide constructive verbal feedback to both girls and boys in class</li> </ul>
<b>6. The Mentor demonstrates classroom strategies to challenge traditional gender roles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Mentor shows Student Teachers how to use teaching materials that do not show or reinforce traditional gender roles (e.g. women cooking/cleaning and men in professional roles)</li> <li>b) The Mentor shows Student Teachers how to point out traditional gender roles that appear in books and discuss how traditional gender roles can limit what girls think they can achieve in their lives</li> <li>c) The Mentor shows Student Teachers how to use examples (in exercises/activities) that challenge or reverse traditional gender roles (e.g. like showing men/boys cleaning the house)</li> <li>d) The Mentor shows Student Teachers how to make girls and boys feel confident to challenge traditional gender roles in general (e.g. encourage boys to cook and girls to be doctors)</li> <li>e) The Mentor shows Student Teachers how to support/encourage girls in studying and achieving in subjects like maths and science</li> </ul>
<b>7. The Lead Mentor contributes to improving the school's gender responsive Mentoring practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Lead Mentor checks that there is an equal number of female and male Mentors at the school (if there is an imbalance, the Mentor advocates for the gender balance of Mentors)</li> <li>b) The Lead Mentor completes the Gender Responsive Scorecard after every teaching practice and reflects on how they can improve next time</li> <li>c) The Lead Mentor has all Student Teachers anonymously appraise their Mentors using the Gender Responsive Scorecard at the end of their teaching practice</li> <li>d) The Lead Mentor collects and looks at all the Student Teachers' appraisals of their Mentors and identifies areas that need improvement</li> <li>e) The Lead Mentor facilitates discussion with other Mentors to choose/prioritise follow-up actions for areas that need improvement</li> <li>f) The Lead Mentor advocates/budgets for gender responsive training for all staff and Mentors</li> <li>g) The Lead Mentor advocates/budgets for gender responsive infrastructure improvements</li> </ul>