

5.3 Induction Programme

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Rules: Induction

- A new teacher is required to complete an induction training programme during his or her probation period.
- The induction training must familiarise the new teacher with the education sector, the teaching profession, teacher rights and responsibilities, the work of a teacher and the school's learning approach and environment.
- For TTC based induction training: A TTC graduate will be provided with information on induction training after having passed examinations at the TTC.
- For workplace-based induction training: the new teacher will be informed about the induction training after deployment to a specific school.
- School leaders or experienced teachers assigned as mentors require mentoring skills and should have completed the mentoring course offered by the TSC.

Process: How to deliver an induction training programme in a school

School leaders and senior teachers are required to mentor new teachers. This is a continuation of the mentoring which is offered during student practice. School leaders and senior teachers assigned to be mentors would have participated in TSC's mentoring programme.

The school induction training takes two full days. If possible, the induction will target several new teachers from the same and/or neighbouring schools. During their induction training, new teachers will meet the other teachers and the school leader.

The school leader may present the school, its policies, plans, ways of operating, its stakeholders, etc to the new teacher. A senior teacher could be asked to present the school's approach to teaching, special issues in teaching and the teaching related duties, etc. A member of the SMC/BoG may be requested to introduce the teacher to the local community and explain the interaction between school, community and council. A folder of relevant materials should be compiled for the new teacher who must be given an opportunity to read it. In connection with the introductions and presentations new teachers will be given an opportunity to ask questions. The teacher should be presented to his or her class or classes.

The Induction covers learning areas such as:

- General knowledge on the profession as teacher
- The rights and responsibilities of teachers
- Basic knowledge on the relevant policies, laws, regulations and procedures
- An overview of relevant institutions and organisations in the education sector
- Facts, statistics, etc. which apply to teaching and the education sector
- Where to find information
- The duties of a teacher

- The challenges and how to deal with them
- Introduction to the professional standards for teachers
- Introduction to the code of conduct for teachers
- Introduction to the Teacher's Portfolio
- The school's didactic approach to teaching
- Special knowledge on the school and the local society
- The way the school is managed and organised, incl. meetings, teams, special duties, etc.
- Practical and administrative information.

Further reading: Induction introduction

The purpose of the induction training programme is to introduce new teachers to the teaching profession and familiarise him or her with the job as a teacher and with the school environment.

The induction training programme coincides with the new teacher's probation period.

The induction training programme is delivered in three stages:

- A preliminary two (2) day Induction programme offered by the SLTU in cooperation with TSC and hosted by the TTC on the teacher's graduation from a teacher training college. The training covers introduction to the profession, the rights and responsibilities of teachers and the career prospects of a teacher.
- A two (2) day induction training programme at the new teacher's school developed by the TSC and delivered by the school. If possible, it might include a group of new teachers from a cluster of neighbouring schools.
- An on-the-job mentoring programme by the school leader and a senior teacher assigned as the new teacher's mentor. This is a follow up of student practice.

Who is responsible

Teaching Service Commission

- Determines the rules and framework for Induction Training
- Provides overall management of induction training in schools
- Provides a two (2) day standard induction training programme to be delivered at and by the school.

Teacher Training Colleges and Sierra Leone Teachers' Union

- Hosts the SLTU and TSC two (2) days' induction training programme
- Involved in preparation and delivery of the training programme.

Schools

- Delivers the two (2) day induction training programme for newly employed teachers
- Provides mentoring and supervision during the probation.

Best Practice: How to mentor a new teacher in his or her job

Mentoring involves a professional relationship between a highly competent and experienced teacher or school leader, who acts as mentor and one or more new teachers, the mentees. The mentee learns from the mentor and applies this learning to achieve a high-quality standard of performance. If there is more than one new teacher at the school, there are advantages of mentoring them as a group.

Mentoring by an experienced teacher or school leader should involve:

- Providing a role model of best practice
- Providing advice on how to deal with challenges and shortcomings
- Helping new teachers to develop confidence in themselves as teachers and build their knowledge, skills and attitudes
- Helping the mentee develop best-practice teaching practices and work to the professional standards for teachers
- Assisting the new teachers in developing personal targets and developing a career plan
- Providing helpful contacts and networks
- Helping the mentee become adept in self-management, building relationships with colleagues, stress management, and related areas
- Helping the mentee become an effective self-directed learner
- Help promote equal opportunities by mentoring disadvantaged groups.

Adapted from Beevers and Rea (2010/2013), p.212-213

As a result of the mentoring process, mentee teachers(s) are expected to:

- Develop their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes as teachers

- Develop self-confidence and aspiration
- Develop the ability to reflect, analyse and find solutions
- Increase their motivation for teaching
- Develop career plans and pursue a career in teaching
- Understand their colleagues and superiors better
- Understand the wider context of their work
- Form good relationships and build professional networks in the teaching world
- Increase job satisfaction
- Develop positive and constructive attitudes
- Develop strategies to reduce stress.

Adapted from Beevers and Rea (2010/2013), p.217

Mentoring skills include the ability to plan a learning and development process and setting realistic and relevant targets, communicate clearly, explain complex matters in a simple way, actively listen to the mentee and focus on their needs, effective questioning, give constructive feed-back, team building (with teachers and leaders at the school), facilitate problem solving, and address personal problems and shortcomings with empathy. These skills are synonymous with some of the skills expected of an accomplished teacher.

The mentor is a facilitator. Ideas, reflection, brainstorming, improvement, changes, plans etc. should come from the mentee teacher(s) who are expected to take a very active role in the mentoring process.

In most cases, the mentoring process involves 4 stages:

Introductory stage

- An initial meeting between the mentor and the mentee.
- Agreeing on the purpose of mentoring and formulating realistic targets.
- Deciding realistically on how much time to allocate, how frequently to meet, etc.
- Developing the mentoring programme and incorporating it in the calendar.
- Agreeing how to work together.

Active mentoring stage

- The active mentoring stage covers the areas mentioned above under results of the mentoring process and any other issues which may have been identified as important.
- The duration of active mentoring may be half a year or more.
- The mentee teacher(s) will meet regularly, usually a couple of hours every week during the agreed mentoring period.

Concluding Phase

- Deciding on any follow up action and areas for improvement and learning
- Formulation of key result areas relating to the teacher's work.

Follow up Phase

- A meeting to evaluate the results and benefits of the mentoring
- Discussion of issues covered during mentoring and how things have developed
- Preparation of a plan for effective following up of mentoring. This is important to ensure that the results of mentoring are not forgotten.

It is important that time is allocated for the mentee teacher(s) to ask questions and for the mentor to give constructive feed-back. Staying objective, complying with guidelines and ethics, honouring confidentiality, regularly evaluating the process and keeping records are essential, both for the mentor and for the mentee. The mentee will be expected to take on responsibilities and an active role in the mentoring process.

Adapted from Beevers and Rea (2010/2013), p.225-226