

Education & Training Committee

Mentoring for Unit 4

Most candidates who have successfully completed Part 1 (Units 1-3) of their Teaching Certificate will wish to go on to Part 2. Between Parts 1 and 2, they have to do Teaching Practice over a period of at least a year. The class they teach may be their own, or they may negotiate to teach another teacher's class, in whole or in part, from time to time. At the end, the Unit 4 candidate compiles a Record of Teaching Practice.

All candidates have an experienced teacher as Mentor. This can be someone they invite themselves, or if they don't know anyone, or have no other teachers nearby, they can ask for suggestions from their local or nearest Branch, or from the RSCDS Office.

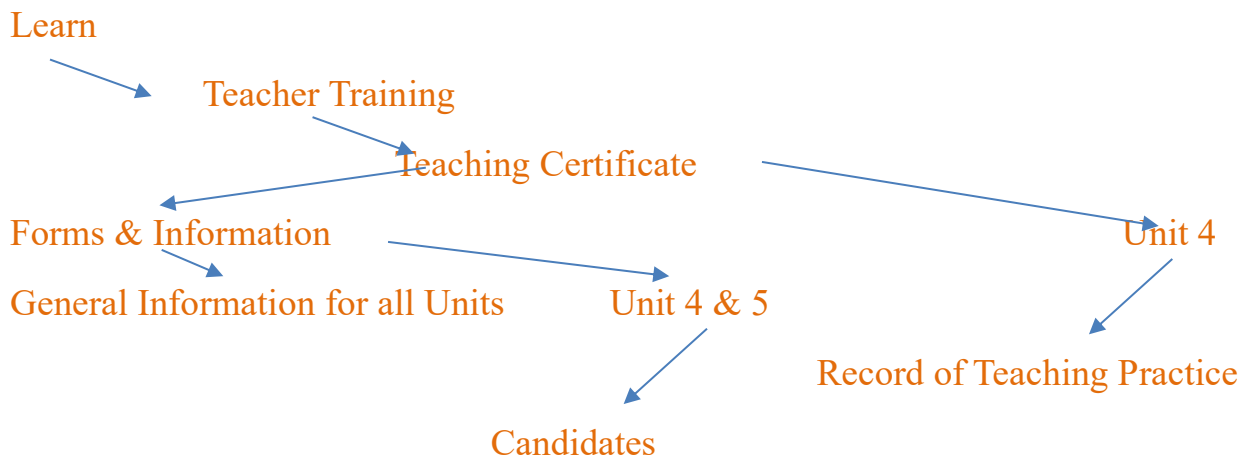
Some candidates, even in areas where Scottish country dancing is very active, have difficulty finding a Mentor - possibly because teachers are not clear about what the task entails, or what the time commitment is likely to be. The first part of this presentation directs to documents which give advice and information on the task of mentoring. The second part covers what the Mentor does or can at least offer to do.

Some teachers may feel reluctant to act as a Mentor if their own Teaching Certificate predates the current Unit system, but there is plenty of information available to bring them up to date – and in the essentials, the skill of teaching Scottish country dancing has not changed.

* Part 1 - Finding Information

Documentation on the RSCDS website for Unit 4 and the task of Mentoring was substantially revised in late 2022. It is to be hoped that everything will be updated on the website by early 2023 – but check that documents mentioned in the presentation as having been revised are the 2022 versions.

Information is to be found under the **Learn** tab. The main route is via the subsection Teacher Training.



In addition, a few of the same documents can be found, again via the Learn tab, but in the Teaching SCD section, subsection Mentoring.

*** Teacher Training -> Teaching Certificate -> Forms and Information**

In a little more detail, accessing documents via this route gives the following information.

General Information for all Candidates

- * **Syllabus** – this document contains information about all five units, and a teacher considering becoming a Mentor would be well advised to familiarise themselves with the complete Unit system.
- * **The Role of the Mentor – revised 2022, formerly Notes for Mentors** This document is very informative about the Mentor’s task and is therefore an excellent starting point.

Units 4 & 5 – Candidates

Various forms are needed at the end of the Teaching Practice, but it is useful for both Mentor and Candidate to be familiar with them from the start.

- * **X4-05 Guidelines for Preparation of Record of Teaching Practice – revised 2022** This document should be essential reading for a Candidate from the beginning of their Teaching Practice, so that they are thoroughly aware of the requirements.
- * **Unit 4 Checklist for Candidates – Record of Teaching Practice** This document should ensure that, at the end of Teaching Practice, the Record of Teaching Practice conforms to the Syllabus requirements.
- * **X4-X5-10 Unit 4 Cover Sheet and Intent to sit Unit 5 – revised 2022** This document must be sent with the Record of Teaching Practice, and the Candidate indicates where and when they intend to present themselves for Unit 5.
- * **X4-11 Mentor’s Confirmation – revised 2022, upload pending** The Mentor completes this at the end of the Teaching Practice.

- * **X5-03 Application Form – revised 2022** This is the application form for Unit 5 and has a revised layout. It should be submitted to the Office when the Candidate has decided when and where they intend to sit Unit 5.

* **Teacher Training -> Teaching Certificate -> Unit 4**

Part of the Mentor's role is to ensure that the Candidate knows the requirements of the Record of Teaching Practice, so that they do not have to resubmit it.

Sample Records of Teaching Practice

Unit 4 Sample 1

Unit 4 Sample 2

Unit 4 Sample 3

There is no set format for the document, though it does have to conform to certain parameters, of which more later.

* **truncated versions**

Where the full document must cover six hours of teaching, the samples contain shorter lesson planning sections, while making the other sections clear.

- * **evolve own style**

The samples are only suggestions and are in no way prescriptive. Whatever format a Candidate chooses is perfectly acceptable, so long as the document includes the required information for all the prescribed sections.

* **Part 2 - Overview**

As well as looking at the Syllabus Requirements, ...

- **Syllabus Requirements**

... this section mainly considers how a Mentor can be involved over the duration of Teaching Practice.

- * **The Role of the Mentor**

- **What the Mentor should not do**

- **What the Mentor could do**

- **Before Teaching Practice begins**

- **Lesson Plan Templates**

- **During Teaching Practice**

- **Written Follow-up?**

- **A possible procedure**

- **The Record of Teaching Practice and Detailed Review, and checking it**

- * **Resubmission**

Since the written Record of Teaching Practice is what is assessed, an important part of the mentor's task is to ensure that it is compiled correctly and that the Candidate avoids having to resubmit it.

- * **Use of Video?**

Finally, there are some thoughts on the possible use of video, which is not currently part of the process.

* **Syllabus Requirements**

To be able to give advice to a Candidate undertaking Unit 4, a Mentor has to know what is required of them. In the Syllabus, information on Unit 4 starts on page 8. In brief, the Unit 4 candidate has to do the following:

- * **take responsibility for planning and delivering a series of lessons to a class or classes.** Candidates compile a one-page summary of all these classes to be included in the Record of Teaching Practice.
- * **record and evaluate some of the lessons in detail.** This forms the basis of the Detailed Review section of the Record of Teaching Practice.
- * **submit their Record of Teaching Practice for assessment**

* **Who can be a Mentor?**

It is expected that a Mentor will be a fully qualified RSCDS teacher of Scottish country dance with experience of teaching in Branches, Affiliated Groups, **schools, clubs or other organisations.**

Some teachers may think that, because they haven't taught a branch class, they aren't eligible to be a Mentor. This is not the case. There is no necessity for the Mentor to have taught an RSCDS-run class, the important thing is for them to have taught regularly for some time.

A Mentor may advise more than one candidate.

* **The Role of the Mentor 1**

- **visit, where possible at least twice, a class taught by the Candidate during the period of teaching practice. The purpose of these visits is for the Mentor to offer help and advice.**

The phrase "where possible at least twice" suggests that more than two visits can be made to the Candidate's class if considered necessary. However, "where possible" could also imply that a situation may exist where a Mentor can't see their candidate teach in person. In such a situation thought must be given as to how a Mentor can judge the Candidate's capabilities. Even if the Mentor can visit classes, they will always see a selection of lesson plans and self-evaluations, and if they can't visit, it might be wise to see more. While nothing can be as effective as a Mentor seeing their Candidate's lessons in person, there are other possibilities. The use of video in such situations is considered later.

- **act as a consultant for the candidate to discuss and advise on teaching practice. This may involve giving candidates information about various methods of planning**

lessons and recording progress, **but the mentor should ensure that his/her contribution is purely advisory.**

A Mentor is not there to teach or train the candidate, so must consider how to get their message of good practice across to them and encourage them to think about their teaching and how to develop it.

* **The Role of the Mentor 2**

- concentrate particularly on **assisting the candidate to improve self-evaluation as a teacher.**

The Mentor's role is not to criticise negatively, but to find ways to encourage the candidate to be self-critical and think of ways to move forward. What is particularly valuable is the opportunity that the Candidate has to tap into the experience and accumulated wisdom of an experienced teacher – challenges as well as successes.

- * **complete form X4-11 Mentor's Confirmation for submission with the Candidate's Record of Teaching Practice**

Other than visiting classes, there are several situations where a Mentor could have input - but this depends on whether the Candidate wants that input, and whether the Mentor has the time - and the inclination. Potential Mentors should consider how much input would be ideal, and when it could become too much.

* **What the Mentor should NOT do**

In addition, as Mentors study the documentation on the website, it should become clear to them that there are certain things that they should *not* do. These should really all be common sense, but it is worth mentioning them, as a reminder.

In summary, they should **not**:

- * write any of the lesson plans
- write any of the Record of Teaching Practice
- decide what the candidate should teach or how they should teach
- make only critical/negative comments
- make only general, non-specific comments
- interrupt the lesson

* *Therefore*

- *Any feedback given should be positive and developmental*
- *It should be clear what is being commented upon*

There will be more information about giving feedback later.

- * *Any issues which arise should be dealt with later*

Even though a Mentor, especially in the early stages of the collaboration, may be tempted to interrupt a lesson if the Candidate is in difficulty, it would be unwise to do so. A discussion after the class is the place to address any issues.

*** What the Mentor could do - Before Teaching Practice begins - 1**

It would seem sensible for a Candidate to be clear from the start about what components the Record of Teaching Practice should contain.

* Appendix G of the Syllabus gives good guidance on what is required in each component, as do the Sample Records of Teaching Practice. In addition, Mentors should make clear to their Candidates which dances can be included in the Record of Teaching Practice. While non-RSCDS dances may be taught, the dances included in the Record of Teaching Practice must be from the books listed in Appendix G.

Components of the Detailed Review

- *** Introduction** – a “scene-setting” so that the Examiner understands the nature of the classes being taught
- *** Details of teaching** – evolves from the Candidate’s Lesson Plans for the six written-up hours of teaching
- *** Review of the music** – shows that the Candidate has thought about their choice of music or that they have communicated with their musician, if they have one
- *** Self-evaluation** – a very important part of the Review, where the Candidate can show how they feel they have developed over their period of Teaching Practice, what their next steps might be, their aims, etc.

*** Before Teaching Practice begins – 2**

The Lessons

Any preparatory time before Teaching Practice begins might consider topics such as these.

- **Discuss the nature of the class and the Candidate’s ideas for the first lesson**
- **Is the class the Candidate’s own, or “borrowed” from another teacher?**

Ensure that, if the Candidate is not working with their own class, they understand that the class they will be teaching may be used to a particular teaching method or working from a pre-arranged programme. They will have to read the class well so that they can judge how much they can vary from what the class is used to.

- *** If the Candidate agrees to this, see each lesson plan in advance and comment on strengths and weaknesses – involvement of the Mentor is at the request of the Candidate**

It must always be remembered that all a Mentor can do is say they are willing to look at lesson plans, it has to be at the Candidate’s request, since the Mentor cannot oblige

the Candidate to ask for assistance. It can only be hoped that they will recognise the value of doing this.

It is up to the Mentor and the Candidate to decide how to go about this, but it is worth considering that if a Candidate does allow their Mentor to see their Lesson Plan, at least in the early stages this should be the version prepared before teaching the class. After the class, the Candidate should add their self-evaluation for the various stages of the lesson, and this could again be discussed with their Mentor. Once the Candidate is secure in their style of Lesson Plan, it would be adequate to see it after the lesson, with the post-lesson self-evaluation added.

* Lesson Plan templates

A Lesson Plan template is to be found in the **Syllabus, Appendix F**

As with the sample Records of Teaching Practice, it is only a suggestion and is not prescriptive, but whatever style a Candidate adopts, they would be advised to conform to certain requirements.

- * Candidates must demonstrate evidence of consideration of the ability and experience of the class, dance analysis, steps and activities to be used in teaching the dances, the music.

It is likely that Candidates will need some guidance on dance analysis in particular, and how to use it to guide the development of their lesson plans

- * Candidates must also show evidence of self-evaluation, considering what went well or not so well, and what future steps could be taken

The Candidate's ability to be self-critical, to think about their own strengths and weaknesses, to consider how their teaching could evolve, must be demonstrated in the self-evaluation section of their Detailed Review, so should also be focused on as they develop their lesson plans.

* During Teaching Practice

- Visit and observe (at least) two lessons; if not possible, see the lesson plans and reviews of the lessons

The starting point for discussions during Teaching Practice will be the Mentor's visits to the candidate's class if it is possible to arrange these. If this is not possible, then start with the Candidate's lesson plans and encourage them to review the lessons after the classes.

- * Have a discussion immediately after the class, or by phone/Skype/Zoom/WhatsApp etc as soon as possible thereafter, or have an exchange of emails or other messages

After either the visit or having sight of the lesson plan and lesson review, have a discussion with the candidate.

- * Encourage self-evaluation

A Mentor has to think about how to guide a Candidate in this.

* Self-evaluation - some thoughts

A Mentor could encourage their candidate to think about their self-evaluation under these or similar headings.

- How did you think that went

A good question to get a first impression of the Candidate's mood after the class

- * What do you think went well?

Even when a Candidate has given the impression that they think the lesson didn't go all that well, try to encourage them to focus on something that did go well, and why

- * What areas do you think needed improvement?
 - Was something missing?
 - Was there too much of something?
 - How could you go about improving things?
 - What might you do differently next time?

Questions such as these help the Candidate realise what they need to focus on next time.

- * How do you think the music worked?
 - Did it suit the activities?
 - Was the tempo suitable?

It's important that the Candidate shows that it isn't sufficient just to reach for the nearest CD, or whatever form of music recording they are using. If they have a musician, they have to think about their interaction with them and how best to use them.

- * What are you going to try to aim for next time?
- Will the next lesson build on this one, or will it stand alone?

Good starting questions to get the Candidate started on their self-evaluation.

* Written Follow-up?

Currently there is no suggestion that the Mentor must or even should give written feedback on lessons. There is, however, nothing to say they can't indicate to their Candidate that they are willing to provide it – **if the Candidate requests it.**

- * Advantage – a written record of the discussion, to which both Candidate and Mentor can refer again – at any future visit, both can see whether points raised in discussion have been addressed
- * Disadvantage – time consuming for Mentor – and the Mentor is, after all taking on this task voluntarily

* Written Follow-up – a possible procedure

Even if there is no written follow-up, the pattern suggested is valid guidance for verbal feedback and discussion.

- **Start with something positive, e.g...**

- You have a lovely open personality
- People were smiling and making eye contact
- The class improved their performance of xxx
- You demonstrated xxx very clearly, well done

Styles of feedback evolve, but a fairly standard basic format is a sort of "sandwich".

- *** Go on to the things that need improvement**

It is important in this section not to use negative language, but it can be a challenge to find positive terminology.

- Avoid using negative expressions – don't say "you didn't" or "you shouldn't have", say "next time could you think about/try to..."
- Avoid "but", "however"

*** Written Follow-up – a possible procedure contd.**

- **Finish with something upbeat, e.g...**

- Next time, if you put xxx into practice that should work really well
- You have shown great improvement since last time

* A guidance document on Giving Feedback is available as part of the Core Training for Instructors programme - contact the Office, it is not currently on the website

*** The Record of Teaching Practice**

At the end of their Teaching Practice, Candidates compile their Record of Teaching Practice. Candidates should be considering its content as they proceed through their Teaching Practice.

- must be the Candidate's unaided work with a statement to this effect signed by the Candidate
- * must be submitted to the RSCDS Office no later than 6 months prior to the date of the examination for Unit 5 - Teaching Level 2 – ensure that the Candidate is aware of this deadline
- * will be assessed by one Examiner
 - assessment will be in the form of written comment, covering the strengths of the candidate and suggesting targets for improvement

The Record of Teaching Practice - content

Document X4-05 - Guidelines for Preparation of Record of Teaching Practice has been revised. The submission must comprise **two components**

- * One-page **summary** of all classes taught since passing Unit 3

- to include date and duration of each lesson, level of classes taught and approximate numbers attending

It is worth encouraging Candidates to compile this list, at least roughly, from the beginning of your association. If the Mentor is not involved from the beginning of the Candidate's Teaching Practice, Candidates should be advised to refer back to the beginning of their Teaching Practice when compiling this page. This information helps the Examiner evaluate the appropriateness of the Candidate's teaching.

- * **Detailed review of a series of lessons – six hours independent teaching; can be same class throughout or classes of different levels**

Ideally, the class(es) would have at least two sets, but it is appreciated that this may not be possible in certain areas. For the Unit 5 it is likely that at least 18 dancers will be assembled for the examination.

- 8-12 sides of A4, all pages numbered; font no smaller than Times New Roman 12 point
- Date and duration of each lesson

Ensure that Candidates conform to these requirements, they are a means of establishing consistency among Candidates, and avoid the Examiner having to deal with a variety of styles. If a Candidate's first language is not English, they may submit their Record of Teaching Practice in their own language, but must have it translated and enclose the translation with their submission.

- Plus

The three documents which are submitted with the Record have also been revised.

- **Record of Teaching Practice – Checklist for Candidates**

Although there is no pass/fail result for Unit 4, some submissions are returned to Candidates before they reach an Examiner because they have not been formulated correctly or are missing some components. If Mentor and Candidate are well informed about the requirements, all the boxes in the Checklist have been ticked and the candidate allows their Mentor to see the Record of Teaching Practice before submission this shouldn't happen.

- **X4-X5-10 Cover Sheet and Intent to sit Unit 5**

It is standard practice to complete a Cover Sheet and declaration that a submission is a candidate's own work when submitting a piece of written work for assessment. There are slightly different instructions depending on whether Unit 5 is being done at Summer School or other residential course, or at a local course over a number of sessions.

- **X4-11 Mentor's Confirmation**

When the candidate has completed the Record of Teaching Practice and signed their Cover Sheet, the Mentor completes form X4-11, stating that appropriate consultation has taken place. The Candidate sends it to the office with their submission.

* **Checking the Record of Teaching Practice**

- **If the candidate agrees, check the document**

It would be advisable for the Candidate to allow the Mentor to do this, so that there is no need for resubmission.

- * **Because, if it does not conform to the requirements, ...**

- Introduction
- Details of teaching
- Review of the music
- Self-evaluation

- * **or to the given length, font size and page numbering**

... it will be returned for amendment

* **Resubmission**

- **Candidates may submit the Detailed Review no more than three times**

Resubmission of the Record of Teaching Practice because of its content is rarely necessary.

- * **They can sit and pass Unit 5 before the Detailed Review has been successfully completed, but this must be done within one year of passing Unit 5 in order for Part 2 of the Teaching Certificate to be awarded**

However, if, for any reason, resubmission is required, the Candidate can proceed to the Unit 5 examination, but will not be awarded their Teaching Certificate until Unit 4 has been completed successfully.

* **Use of Video - Advantages**

As a final point, it is worth considering the possible use of video during Teaching Practice. It is used in the Core Training for Instructors Scheme (CTI), and for Unit 4 it could potentially give access to a Mentor for a Candidate who does not have a suitably qualified or willing teacher within travelling distance. Document CTI-30 Guidelines for Use of Video is a useful resource. Of course, it has advantages and disadvantages.

- * **Can inform discussion between Mentor and Candidate, especially if the mentor cannot attend the class to see the lesson, but also useful for all Candidates**

- **Can clarify points of disagreement – both Mentor and Candidate can have a copy**

Candidates may not be aware of any quirks or habits they may have, or, for example, may not have a good awareness of their positioning within the room when teaching, or their voice level, and if both Candidate and Mentor can see a recording of the lesson the points can be made quickly and clearly.

- * **Candidate can self-evaluate from another point of view**

If they feel something didn't go well, and can't understand why, they can look at their performance and can probably see the reason when they have an outside perspective. They can see things which may have been happening elsewhere in the room and

which they did not notice at the time, and they can think about how such a situation could be dealt with in the future.

* Use of Video - Disadvantages

- **The whole class has to be filmed, or at least more than one set**, if numbers allow. It must be recognised that not all Candidates will be in a position to teach a class of that size.

- *** Mentor has to see how the class reacts to the Candidate's teaching.**

The recording equipment should not focus solely on the Candidate. It is important for the Mentor to gain a picture of how the Candidate interacts with the class, how the class behaves, whether they are attentive, whether they can correctly interpret what the Candidate wants them to do, whether they are chatty, whether there is someone who dominates the group. These are the kinds of topic which would then be addressed in feedback, either oral or written.

- *** Privacy issues have to be considered – a consent form may have to be signed by all class members (cf. CTI-13 Video Consent Form)**

During the development of the Core Training for Instructors scheme it was realised that video would be an essential part of the process. Since the CTI Trainee's final lesson is always recorded a Consent Form was developed. This is signed by all the participants in the class. The same thing could also be done in a situation where a Mentor cannot visit their Candidate. Privacy laws will vary from country to country, and action appropriate to the location should be taken.

- *** Sourcing and operating equipment**

A basic level of recording can be done quite easily with a phone or laptop. While the quality may not be as good as that required for the CTI, it should be adequate, especially if the Mentor has the lesson plan to hand. It may be all that is available to a Candidate who is preparing Unit 4 in isolation, with no-one to help with recording.

- *** Consideration needs to be given to how the video is shared – various file-sharing sites are available**

If a lesson is recorded in short segments, this can make the transfer process easier, short snippets can be sent by Messenger or WhatsApp, longer sections via GoogleDrive or WeTransfer, or other similar methods. Document CTI-31 Instructions for Sharing Video, available on the website, may be useful, though the methods used in Unit 4 can be less formal than those required for the CTI.

* Continued Teacher Development

Finally, a reminder of the links to the information on the website. The Education and Training Committee hopes you found this information useful.

Find out more here:

[Teaching Certificate | Royal Scottish Country Dance Society \(rscds.org\)](https://www.rscds.org)

