

Overview

Professional experience is a compulsory component of all Initial Teacher Education and Early Childhood courses. This document provides current policies, guidelines and procedures for professional experience in Schools or Early Childhood settings. It offers assessment guidelines as part of the special requirements for UNE School of Education's accredited professional experience units.

Scope

This policy provides parameters for students undertaking professional experience in their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) or Early Childhood courses.

This policy applies to:

- (a) All UNE students enrolled in an Education degree where professional experience is scheduled as part of their course requirements;
- (b) Supervising Teachers (ST) of UNE's Teacher Education Students undertaking professional experience; and
- (c) UNE representatives/UNE Professional Experience Liaison Officers (PELOs).

Policy

1. Professional Experience

- 1.1 Where professional experience is a requirement of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), the University (UNE) will meet the requirements of the [Professional Experience Framework](#).
- 1.2 The University will only facilitate placements for Teacher Education Students (TES) where the placement setting complies with the requirements of the [Fair Work Act](#).
- 1.3 The University's insurance coverage afforded under this policy will only apply while the student is undertaking a professional experience placement as a mandatory requirement of an accredited UNE, ITE unit and with the authorisation of the University.
- 1.4 The University reserves the right not to place a student in a professional experience setting where the performance and personal or professional conduct of the Teacher Education Student does not meet the required standard, the [Student Behavioural Misconduct Rules](#) or specific rules and policies pertaining to the setting of the placement, e.g. [NSW Education Code of Conduct](#) (see reference list).

1.5 In the event of a conflict between this policy and the *Professional Experience Handbook*, this policy shall take precedence.

2. Professional Experience and the Teacher Education Student

2.1 Each placement cannot commence before a Confirmation of Placement notification from the Office for Professional Learning (OPL) is received before the starting date of the placement.

2.2 Teacher Education Students who undertake professional experience without receiving a Confirmation of Placement will have their placement terminated immediately. A repeat of the placement will be compulsory and no completed days in the terminated placement will count towards the professional experience placement requirements.

2.3 Professional experience placements:

2.3.1 Professional experience placements will normally be completed in a full-time block of consecutive days and weeks, e.g. 20-day placements over a consecutive four (4) week period.

2.3.2 Reasonable efforts are made to provide a placement in the Teacher Education Student's preferred geographic area. This, however, cannot be guaranteed because the decision to accept Teacher Education Students for placements in specific schools or centres is at the discretion of the school principal or service director.

2.3.2.1 Teacher Education Students will be required to travel for placement at a distance set by the Office for Professional Learning. This distance will not exceed 90 minutes of travel time (on average) from the area of preference. On occasion, the Teacher Education Student may choose to relocate as a means of completing the placement. The OPL does not provide funds for accommodation or travel unless a specific scholarship or financial initiative is on offer.

2.3.3 Variations to placements are at the discretion of the Office for Professional Learning after discussion with the school principal or service director at the original and/or revised placement setting.

2.3.4 A Graduate-Level (final) placement will:

- Be completed as a full-time Standard placement in a prescribed block of consecutive weeks and fully supervised.
- Will not have any variation to the placement period block allowed without an official interview with the Director of the Office for Professional Learning (OPL) and Program/Support Coordinator (OPL).
- Not consider part-time placements under any circumstance.
- Not approve requests for split placements except where a placement bridges school holidays (excluding the extended school end-of-year holiday) or where a unit in which a student is enrolled requires a split. In the case of a 30-day Graduate-Level (final) unit, the placement can only be split as 2 and 4 weeks to ensure completion of the Graduate Teaching Performance Assessment (GTPA).

2.3.6 A professional experience placement is not permitted outside formal enrolment in a unit with a mandatory professional experience requirement, as well as official confirmation from the OPL. Additional volunteering/work experience time spent in a school would be based on an agreement between the Teacher Education Student and the school/centre, and not the OPL/UNE.

- 2.3.7 All Teacher Education Students must hold a valid NSW Working with Children Check plus the equivalent interstate clearance for placements outside NSW as required by [NESA](#). All relevant and current Anaphylaxis and Child Protection Certificates must be completed and uploaded to [InPlace \(the OPL's current software platform\)](#) before a placement can be approved. InPlace is the Office for Professional Learning's hub for students and staff to manage all placement information and resources pertaining to professional experience. No Teacher Education Student may undertake a placement without providing evidence of meeting all of these mandatory requirements.
- 2.3.8 Placements are normally unpaid. The exception to this is if a student is currently employed in a school or centre and the requirements for the placement align with the criteria for the professional experience unit. This is known as an In-service placement and is set in accordance with the [Fair Work Act Student Placements information](#).
- 2.3.9 Paid In-service placements may be undertaken providing the employment in the school or centre aligns with the placement requirements of the unit, and the school, service or centre is a willing participant in the arrangement. The final placement in a school may be completed as In-service in accordance with the current NESA guidelines for Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education ([Waiver on Appendix B](#)). Applications for the Waiver must first be processed, checked and submitted by the OPL for final approval from NESA.
- 2.3.10 In accordance with NESA's [NSW: Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education](#) (see reference list), all students must complete in-school professional experience placements in at least two school settings aligning with the requirements for their UNE course. For example, at least two placements in a primary school setting for the Bachelor of Education (K-6) teaching degree.
- 2.3.11 It is expected that UNE Teacher Education Students in the first year of their studies will attempt the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students (the test) ([LANTITE](#)). Teacher Education Students enrolled in an Initial Teacher Education degree are required to successfully complete [LANTITE](#). It is expected this test will be completed in a Teacher Education Student's first year of study. This is a non-negotiable regulation implemented by NESA for all tertiary providers across New South Wales (NSW).
- 2.3.12 The Teacher Education Student must inform the Office for Professional Learning, **in advance** of the placement arrangement and confirmation, of any circumstances that may impact on their undertaking of the placement. This information allows for reasonable adjustments to be made that maintain the academic integrity of the course. This may include pregnancy, physical or mental health issues, family circumstances and disability.
- Teacher Education Students will receive support at the OPL's discretion when requests are made for reasonable adjustments during a placement. This will depend on case-by-case circumstances. In some situations, further consultation with the Unit or Course Coordinator may be required to determine an outcome.
 - If pregnant, the Teacher Education Student must notify the school or centre to check the regulations or policies relating to pregnancy in that specific setting. If attendance at the placement will be at 30 weeks of pregnancy or more, the OPL requires a medical certificate, confirming the candidate is capable of undertaking the placement.

2.3.13 Teacher Education Students may, at the OPL's discretion, be required to provide a medical certificate to verify their capacity for managing the demands of the upcoming placement.

2.3.14 If Teacher Education Students are affected by unanticipated circumstances during the period of the placement, they must advise the Office for Professional Learning as soon as practicable. Subsequent adjustments cannot compromise the academic integrity of the course.

(a) Any days missed due to absence must be completed at a later date, with negotiations occurring between the Teacher Education Student, the Supervising Teacher and the OPL within two weeks of the originally confirmed final date of placement.

2.4 Conflicts of interest

(a) Potential or actual conflicts of interest may arise on a professional experience placement where there is a perceived or actual bias between a Teacher Education Student and member of staff or student body (e.g., A Teacher Education Student attends a placement in the same school where their child attends).

(b) Teacher Education Students may only be placed in a setting in which a conflict of interest may occur when the principal, director or delegate confirms that the concerns will not burden staff or affect the outcome of the professional experience placement.

(c) Failure to notify the Office for Professional Learning about a potential or actual conflict of interest may result in the placement being terminated and/or an Unsatisfactory Result being recorded for the placement.

2.5 Placements must meet the following requirements:

(a) Schools and Centres must provide an experience of a range of teaching and learning activities.

(b) Placements in a school setting must cumulatively provide experience of all intended teaching subjects and at appropriate junior and senior levels for intending teachers of secondary education.

(c) Early Childhood settings must cumulatively provide experience of a range of early childhood programs and age groups.

(d) All school placements must normally be in an Australian School in Australia. Placements may be completed outside of Australia in accordance with NESA's NSW: [*Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education*](#) policy. In such cases, a maximum of 50% of placements can be completed overseas in a setting approved by the Office for Professional Learning with the final placement occurring in a School setting in Australia.

3. Professional Experience Assessment

3.1 A Teacher Education Student will be assessed against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) or the Early Childhood Qualification Guidelines (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, ACECQA) if they are undertaking professional experience in Schools or Early Childhood settings respectively.

3.2 A Teacher Education Student must meet required Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at the Graduate Level, or the ACECQA Specifications to successfully complete a professional experience placement.

- 3.3 Students undertaking a specialist TESOL program [e.g., Master of Applied Linguistics], will complete a successful professional experience placement to meet qualification requirements of state-based departments of education, National ELT (English Language Teaching) Accreditation Scheme Ltd ([NEAS](#)), or equivalent.
- 3.4 Assessment of a Teacher Education Student while on a professional experience placement will be completed by the Supervising Teacher(s) with input from the principal, director, coordinator or delegate as required.
- 3.5 Supervising Teachers will base their assessment of a Teacher Education Student on the *Assessment* section in the Professional Experience Handbook (see Reference list) [*see Handbook page 16*]
- 3.6 Where multiple supervisors are required, a joint recommendation must be made on one Final Professional Experience Report.
- 3.7 Supervising Teachers must request an '*At-Risk*' *Action Plan* from the OPL and ensure that the plan is administered for UNE students who are experiencing challenges during their professional experience placement, causing concerns or are deemed to be [At-Risk](#). An *Action Plan* needs to be completed as soon as possible. The *Action Plan* should have demonstrated pathways for the Teacher Education Student to pass their professional experience placement. Failure of the Teacher Education Student to follow the *Action Plan* will result in an Unsatisfactory Result for their Professional Experience Report.
- 3.8 A principal, director or coordinator may override an assessment recommended by a Supervising Teacher to pass or fail a student if they have reason to believe that the Supervising Teacher has not properly assessed the Teacher Education Student against the Professional Standards or Guidelines as per the Handbook and relevant documentation.
- 3.9 Upon completion of the professional experience, the Supervising Teacher will recommend the Teacher Education Student be passed or failed for the professional experience, but the University determines the final grade in consultation with the Supervising Teacher and other parties as per clause 3.4.
- 3.10 A grade of 'Satisfactory' or 'Unsatisfactory' will be awarded for the professional experience placement.
- 3.11 If a Teacher Education Student's professional experience placement is failed, terminated or withdrawn, they will be required to work with the OPL in a manner determined by the Office for Professional Learning to support their remediation, future progress and achievement. Enrolment in future placements will not be considered by the OPL until this support process has been satisfactorily completed.
- 3.12 If a Teacher Education Student's *Professional Experience Report* is not submitted within 12 months of completion of the professional experience placement, the result will be recorded as 'Unsatisfactory' and the Teacher Education Student will be expected to re-enrol in specific professional experience placement unit to complete a 'Satisfactory' placement. Although Supervising Teachers are responsible for submitting the *Professional Experience Report*, Teacher Education Students should also take responsibility to ensure these reports are submitted to the OPL.

4. Termination of Professional Experience Placement

- 4.1 Grounds for termination of a professional experience placement include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) failure to reasonably co-operate with staff and work effectively in the placement setting;

- (b) demonstrated attitudes and actions antithetical to the profession of teaching;
 - (c) absence from the professional experience placement without satisfactory explanation, approved leave and the necessary documentation;
 - (d) deficiencies in knowledge and understanding of subject disciplines, the curriculum and/or planning for learning;
 - (e) failure to communicate adequately and in a professional manner;
 - (f) no demonstrated improvement after an *Action Plan* has been implemented;
 - (g) failure to meet the requirements of one or more of the Fundamental Skills Assessment;
 - (h) breaches of UNE University regulations, policies and/or procedures; and, if the performance and personal or professional conduct of the Teacher Education Student does not meet the required standard, the [Student Behavioural Misconduct Rules](#) or specific rules and policies pertaining to the setting of the placement, e.g. [NSW Department of Education Code of Conduct](#).
 - (i) when the Supervising Teacher, in consultation with their colleagues and possibly the allocated Professional Experience Liaison Officer [PELO] and OPL, believes that it would take an unreasonable amount of effort, time and commitment to bring the Teacher Education Student to a satisfactory level of performance against the criteria for the professional experience in the nominated timeframe for the placement.
 - k) failure to comply with the School's/Centre/s Code of Conduct.
- 4.2 The OPL may terminate a Teacher Education Student's professional experience placement on the basis of 4.1 and/or on the recommendation of the principal, director or delegate of the placement setting.
- 4.3 Where the principal, director, or their delegate recommends a termination of a professional experience placement, they must sign the *Placement Requires Termination* document included in the 'At-Risk' Package.
- 4.4 A Teacher Education Student who has had their professional experience placement terminated will be deemed to have failed the placement.
- 4.5 A Teacher Education Student who has had their professional experience placement terminated may be precluded from future professional experience placements and/or a return to the original placement setting.
- 4.6 A Teacher Education Student who is precluded from further professional experience due to the termination of a placement under 4.2 may be asked to show cause under section 17 of the *General Rules*. This may be in the case if the performance, personal conduct or professional conduct of a Teacher Education Student does not meet the required Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST), the [Student Behavioural Misconduct Rules](#) or specific rules and policies pertaining to the setting of the placement, e.g. [NSW Department of Education Code of Conduct](#).

5. Appeals

Appeals on the assessment of a professional experience placement are investigated under the UNE Academic Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedures.

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1 The Students/Teacher Education Students participating in a professional experience placement are responsible for:
- (a) complying with the relevant UNE Rules and Policies;

- (b) undertaking criminal probity checks, vaccination status, and other conditions as required, at their own cost;
- (c) complying with all applicable policies, procedures and protocols of the placement setting and/or the [NSW Department of Education Code of Conduct](#);
- (d) committing themselves to full and active participation in the placement and its assessment;
- (e) at the earliest opportunity, raising with the Office for Professional Learning any issues impacting adversely on their participation in the placement.
- (f) submitting documents, for example, professional experience placement reports to the OPL, is expected to be finalised by the last day of the placement.

6.2 The Supervising Teacher is responsible for:

- a) providing supportive supervision to the Teacher Education Student and providing regular feedback (preferable a combination of verbal and written) on their progress during the placement;
- b) ensuring that adequate and appropriate information is provided to the Teacher Education Student about the applicable policies, procedures and protocols of the placement setting;
- c) assessing the Teacher Education Student against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers or the Early Childhood Qualification Guidelines and recommending to the Office for Professional Learning a result based upon the Teacher Education Student's performance relevant to level of placement;
- d) completing and submit all required and relevant paperwork to the Office for Professional Learning. Although the TES is not responsible for submitting this paperwork to the OPL, they should be pro-active in ensuring it is finalised by the last day of the placement.
- e) Determining whether the Teacher Education Student will pass or fail the professional experience.
- f) Providing the graduating final year students with access to student data and opportunities to collect the wide range of student data required to complete the Graduate Teacher Performance Assessment task.

6.3 Academic staff are responsible for becoming familiar with and complying with this policy and the related procedures.

6.4 The Office for Professional Learning is responsible for overseeing and managing all aspects of the educationally based professional experience placements.

6.5 The Head of School is responsible for:

- (a) ensuring that professional experience placements comply with all relevant Government legislation and regulations and University rules and policies, where appropriate;
- (b) ensuring that staff within the School are aware of, and comply with, this policy and the related procedures; and
- (c) ensuring that Teacher Education Students in the School are adequately notified of the existence of this policy and the related procedures.

7. Records Management

Actions under this policy and procedures must be recorded and lodged in the University's electronic records repository in accordance with the University Records Management Policy.

8. Authorisation

Substantive amendments to this policy and procedures must only be made by the School Education Committee (SEC).

Definitions

'At-Risk' Package is sent to the Supervising Teacher at the point of arising concerns relating to the Teacher Education Student's progress during the placement.

Action Plan is contained within the 'At-Risk' Package. It is to be used to create goals for the Teacher Education Student to facilitate learning for a satisfactory outcome of placement.

Placement means an abbreviated wording for professional experience placement.

Professional Experience is 'on the job' preparation for teaching undertaken by a Teacher Education Student in Schools or Early Childhood setting.

Professional Experience Report means a report completed by the supervising teacher at the completion of a placement.

Interim Report is assessment completed by the Supervising Teacher at the mid-point of a 10 days or more professional experience placement.

Weekly Review Sheet is a template for the Supervising Teacher to provide weekly, culminating feedback against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APSTs) to the Teacher Education Student regarding their progress to date.

Standards means the assessment criteria marked against either the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers or the ACECQA Early Childhood Qualification Guidelines for school-based or early childhood degrees respectively.

Student means an Admitted Student or an Enrolled Student, at the relevant time.

- (a) Admitted student means a student who has been admitted to a UNE course of study and who is entitled to enrol in a unit of study.
- (b) Enrolled student means a student who has been admitted to a UNE course of study at UNE or elsewhere and who is enrolled in a unit at UNE.

Supervising Teacher means an educator with a relevant degree or diploma working in a school or early childhood service contracted by the University of New England to supervise a teacher education student during a professional experience placement.

Teacher Education Student is a tertiary education student (preservice teacher) studying an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) or Early Childhood (EC) course at the University of New England (UNE).

UNE Representative or Liaison Officers means a University employee (casual, fixed term or permanent), contractor, agent, appointee, UNE Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for, or on behalf of, the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.

Related Documents

Academic Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedures

ACECQA Early Childhood Qualification Guidelines

Assessment Policy and Procedures

New South Wales Education Standards Authority – Framework for High-Quality Professional Experience

in NSW Schools

New South Wales Education Standards Authority – NSW: Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education

Fair Work Act 2009

Higher Education Standards Framework (Thresholds Standards) 2011

Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth) and Administration Guidelines 2012 (Chapter 5)

[NSW: Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education](#)

Records Management Policy

School of Education Partial Credit Policy

Student Behavioural Misconduct Rules

Supervising Teacher’s Handbook: Reference Guide for Mentoring a UNE Pre-Service Teacher.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011

Administration

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References

PREXUS MyLearn site: Professional Experience Handbook.

<https://mylearn.une.edu.au/course/view.php?id=9487>

https://www.une.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/458435/Professional-Experience-Handbook-A-reference-guide-for-Supervising-Teachers-and-Teacher-Education-Students-2023.pdf

NSW: Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education.

<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/teacher-accreditation/resources/policies-procedures/professional-experience-in-initial-teacher-education>

NESA: Professional Experience Guidelines.

<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/teacher-accreditation/resources/policies-procedures/professional-experience-in-initial-teacher-education>

NSW: Education Code of Conduct

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/rights-and-accountability/department-of-education-code-of-conduct>