



The University of New England

School of Education

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PORTFOLIO
FOR TEACHING**

CONTENTS

Professional Learning Portfolio for Teaching

About Professional Portfolios	1
What is a Professional Portfolio?	2
Constructing Your Professional Learning Portfolio	4
The Contents of Your Professional Learning Portfolio	5
Thinking About the Graduate Standards and How You Might Address Them	9
Further Guidance on Developing Your Professional Learning Portfolio	10
APPENDIX 1	
Professional Teaching Standards Framework	11
APPENDIX 2	
unE-Portfolio	20

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PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PORTFOLIO FOR TEACHING

ABOUT PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIOS

The notion of a professional portfolio is not new. Portfolios have been used in other professions for some time. In education, there are an increasing number of teachers who are now developing portfolios in their work. Examples include portfolios developed in initial teacher education and early career stages, those constructed in preparation for educational leadership, those designed for research purposes, and those prepared for award programs that recognise professional excellence.

Today, it is common and even mandatory for teachers to document their professional learning through a portfolio. Registration as a teacher in NSW through the NSW Institute of Teachers requires the beginning teacher to be able to demonstrate his or her competence against professional teaching standards developed by the profession. It is also necessary for teacher education providers such as UNE to meet the requirements for endorsement of teacher education courses they offer.

If you intend to seek employment as a teacher in NSW or elsewhere, your professional learning portfolio will be invaluable in demonstrating your professional learning and development as a teacher. As you proceed through your career, you will be able to develop and adapt your portfolio for various purposes and contexts.

It is a requirement of your course that you develop a professional teaching portfolio using the framework and guidelines provided.¹

Your portfolio will be checked and assessed regularly throughout your course of teacher training.

Your portfolio will guide and record your professional development as a teacher.

Your portfolio will be invaluable in securing employment and promotion.

¹ For 2007, the portfolio is compulsory for all primary BEd students only. However, this information will assist all pre-service teachers to prepare themselves for appointment and later promotion.

WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO?

A professional portfolio has been described as:

*a compilation of **evidence** which demonstrates the acquisition, development and exercise of knowledge and skills in relation to your work practice.* (Retallick and Groundwater-Smith, 1996)²

A portfolio provides a richer and more personal picture than other forms of assessment.

What a Portfolio is not ...

A scrapbook
 A collection of certificates and prizes
 Something that only looks back
 A list of achievements
 A curriculum vitae or resume

What the Portfolio is ...

Developmental, living, formative
 Past, present, and future focused
 An instrument that documents and guides professional learning
 A structured, carefully selected collection of evidence of a teacher's (best) work over time with accompanying commentary
 Reflective, in that the person thinks deeply about what he or she does and values and his or her goals for the future and uses and records this information
 Collaborative, in that it can be developed as a result of working with others

Teachers' views on their portfolio ...

"A revelation of how much I had done"
 "Clarified what I believed in"
 "Gave me confidence to go further"
 "Caused me to step out of my comfort zone"
 "Helped in an interview - I could articulate my professional learning and beliefs"

² Retallick, J. and Groundwater-Smith, S. (1996). *The Advancement of Teacher Workplace Learning*. Wagga Wagga: Centre for Professional Development in Education, Charles Sturt University.

Professional Teaching Portfolios are used for a number of purposes such as to:

- give insights into your teaching practice
- assemble a career record
- assist in applications for employment and promotion
- guide future professional learning
- record continuing professional learning
- set future goals
- reflect on past practice
- assist self-evaluation
- celebrate growth and achievement
- acquire new skills
- formalise and record key experiences
- gain recognition/accreditation by external bodies

CONSTRUCTING YOUR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PORTFOLIO FOR TEACHING

A professional learning portfolio for any profession goes beyond the traditional *resume* or *curriculum vitae*.

A portfolio is, essentially, a linked collection of evidence that demonstrates the knowledge, understanding, skills and professional values that underpin and find expression in your teaching practices.

A Teacher's Professional Portfolio can include *evidence of and reflection* on:

- lesson plans
- units of work
- student assignments and work samples
- written descriptions
- professional journals and other forms of reflective practices
- video records and photographs
- electronic entries
- formal evaluations by others
- supporting statements from others
- letters of recommendation from peers, supervisors, students, parents, members of the wider community
- awards and prizes
- outcomes of evaluations
- supporting materials
- learning opportunities from life such as hobbies, sport, previous employment
- details of professional learning that has been undertaken.

However it is important to realise that a professional learning portfolio is more than a miscellaneous collection of artefacts. Careful selection against defined criteria and/or a framework is the key. To provide the evidence of your learning, you will need to be **selective** and take care that you do not leave your reader drowning in data. You will need to consider what are the most **significant** entries for each category and how each entry adds value to your portfolio and assists in **demonstrating** your accomplishment as a teacher.

Your portfolio will demonstrate your accomplishments over an extended period. You will be able to use it throughout your career. It can be constructed electronically; or through a combination of electronic and other forms of media and hard copy; or hard copy only.

One of the most important aspects of constructing a portfolio is that it can clearly show evidence of **learning through reflection**. This means that you will need to have an inquiry orientation to the construction of your portfolio, constantly asking and responding to the question "*how am I demonstrating excellence and accomplishment as a teacher?*"

The integration of work and learning is an important element of professional development as a teacher and a key concept for learning communities and organisations.

THE CONTENT OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PORTFOLIO FOR TEACHING

In teacher education pre-service courses at UNE, you are required to use the framework below. This framework is based closely on the requirements of the NSW Institute of Teachers and similar to requirements in other school systems. When you commence your teaching career and as you proceed through it, you may wish to change the format to meet your needs and circumstances, e.g., if you decide to teach overseas or interstate.

1. *Cover page*

This provides details about you including your name, address for correspondence, workplace, position and contact details including telephone number and email address.

2. *Table of contents*

This acts as a quick guide to your reader(s) regarding what has been included in your teaching portfolio and, ideally, why.

3. *Statement of your professional beliefs and values*

This provides an indication to the reader of the basis upon which you carry out your professional work. What are the key beliefs that underpin your work as a teacher? How do you see your role as a teacher? What do you value in your teaching? What do you believe are desirable features of teaching and learning practices?

4. *Some observations on the context of your teaching experience to date*

This tells something about where you teach/have taught as relates to characteristics of your students, the nature of your workplace(s) and the expectations of the communities you serve/have served. It also shows how your professional beliefs and values translate to specific goals and strategies for these students.

5. *Evidence of your professional achievements*

This is the key section of your portfolio in which you clearly address key aspects of professional teaching competence as, for example, outlined in the Framework of **Professional Teaching Standards** (from www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au and partially reproduced in Appendix 1) for graduate teachers as set out by the NSW Institute of Teachers. While there is an understandable inter-relationship among many of these criteria, the seven elements of the framework provide a useful structure for your portfolio. *Don't worry if some of the terminology used is unfamiliar – it will become very familiar as you move through your course.*

To summarise, the essential components of your portfolio are as follows:

1. A cover page
2. A table of contents
3. A statement of your professional beliefs and values
4. Some observations on the context of your teaching experience to date
5. Evidence of your professional accomplishments as they relate to:
 - 1) knowledge of subject content and how to teach that content to students
 - 2) knowledge of students and how they learn
 - 3) planning, assessing and reporting for effective learning
 - 4) communicating effectively with students
 - 5) creating and maintaining safe and challenging learning environments through the use of classroom management
 - 6) continually improving your professional knowledge and practice
 - 7) engaging with members of the profession and the wider community

1) to 7) above under 5. are taken directly from the Professional Teaching Standards Framework developed by the NSW Institute of Teachers – see the diagram on the page following the references.

6. *Quality Teaching Dimensions within your Professional Portfolio*

Your Professional Portfolio would not be complete without reference to the dimensions and elements of the Quality Teaching Documents of the Department of Education, New South Wales.

In order to evaluate and synthesise your understandings with respect to your professional growth as a teacher it is imperative that you reflect on the three overarching Quality Teaching dimensions:

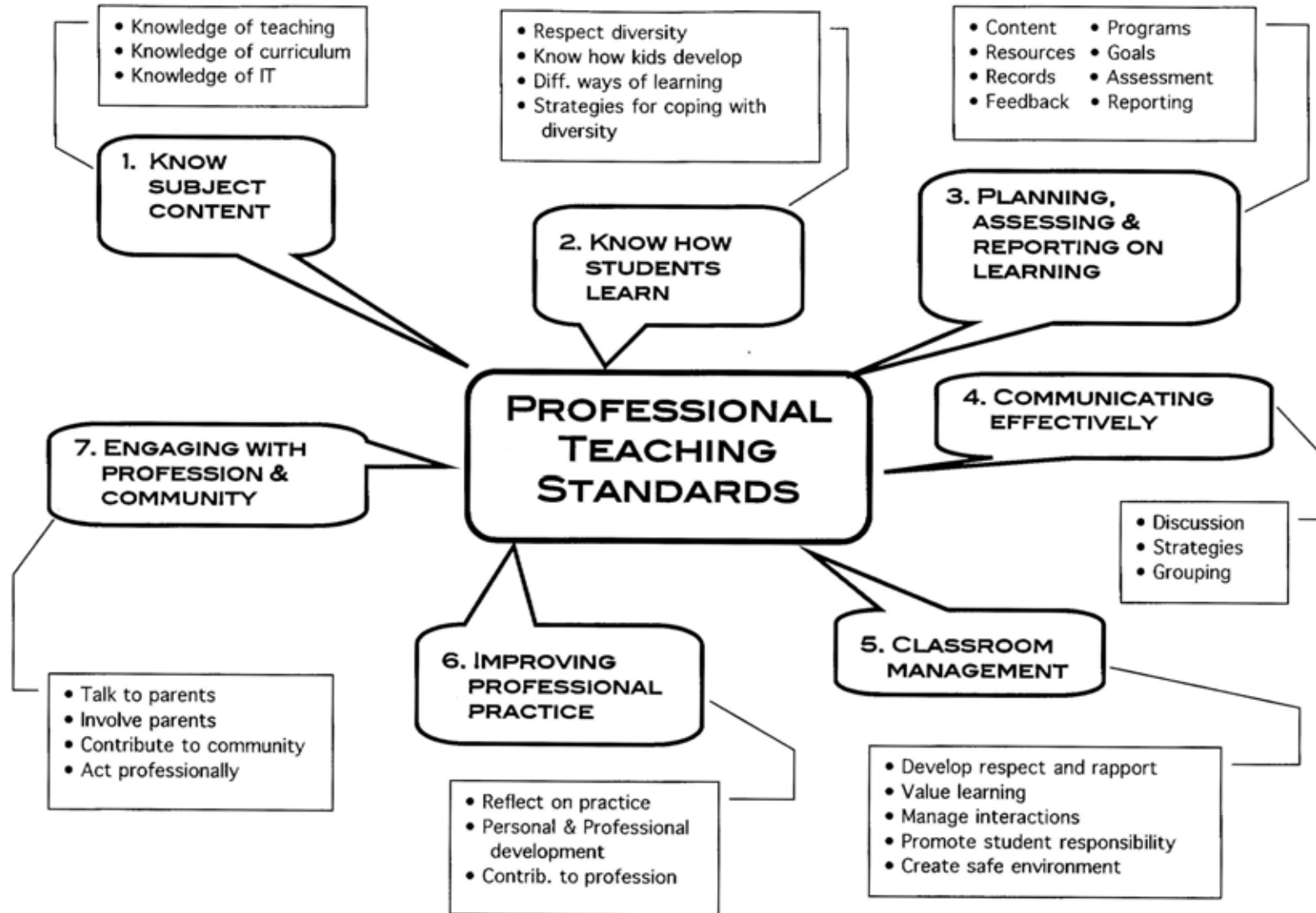
- the promotion of high levels of **intellectual quality**
- the promotion of a **quality learning environment**
- and making explicit to students the **significance** of their work.

Under each dimension there are a set of related elements. You will need to consider how the Quality Teaching elements align with the seven elements of the Institute of Teachers' Teaching Standards. You need to give careful consideration to the links between the artefacts/samples/evidence you have selected to be included in your Professional Portfolio and the Dimensions of Quality Teaching. You will find the NSW Department of Education's document entitled 'Quality Teaching' at:

<http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/qualityteach/index.htm>

Further Reading on Professional Portfolios

- Bullock, A. & Hawk, P., 2005, *Developing a Teaching Portfolio*, (second edition) Pearson Education Inc., Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.
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- Hay, T., & Moss, J. 2005, *Portfolios, Performance and Authenticity*, Pearson Education, Frenchs Forest, NSW.
- Hewitt, G. 1995, *A Portfolio Primer - Teaching, Collecting, and Assessing Student Writing*, Heinemann Portsmouth, NH.
- Norton, P. & Wiburg, K. M. 1998, *Teaching with Technology*, Harcourt Brace College, Fort Worth.
- Wyatt, R. L., & Looper, S. 1999, *So You Have to Have a Portfolio – A Teacher's Guide to Preparation and Presentation*, Corwin Press, Inc, Thousand Oaks, California.



Created by John Maurer

THINKING ABOUT THE GRADUATE STANDARDS AND HOW YOU MIGHT ADDRESS THEM

An important task is to familiarise yourself with a professional standards framework for graduate teachers such as that of the NSW Institute of Teachers.

For some of the standards, possibly even many, you will already be able to provide some evidence of your competence. Competence in other criteria will be developed during your course.

For example, under Element 1 (for the Graduate Teacher Stage)

Teachers know their subject content and how to teach that content to their students

[page 4 of Professional Teaching Standards]

Knowledge of information and communication technologies (ICT) –

1.1.4 *Demonstrate current knowledge and proficiency in the use of basic operation skills*

you could outline your experience and current level of expertise in using basic operational/ICT skills and could include examples of work you have completed. You should also include some statements about your professional needs and goals in this area and how you intend to achieve these. For example, you might express a need to develop expertise in web page design. This could be achieved through taking a short course.

You should be aware that you would not be expected to be outstanding on every aspect or indicator, but should be able to demonstrate some level of competence by the time you have completed your course. Once you have commenced your course and been involved in professional experience, you will have plenty of material and experiences to draw upon.

FURTHER GUIDANCE ON DEVELOPING YOUR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PORTFOLIO FOR TEACHING

- 1) As well as knowing what to include, you also need to make a judgement of when to **delete** or **modify** the contents of your portfolio. As you develop professionally, your views and experiences will change and you will acquire better evidence of your accomplishments.
- 2) Try to include only the **best evidence** of your accomplishments as a teacher.
- 3) Regularly re-read and **update** your portfolio.
- 4) Speak with your lecturers about what aspects of your work you might include in your portfolio.
- 5) Remember to **explain** [what] and **justify** [why] the material you include, e.g., if you decide to include an activity or experience such as coaching a sporting team, what did the activity actually involve? What experience, knowledge and skills did you derive from the activity? How has this changed your thinking and practice? What has the experience or activity led to?
- 6) Presentation is up to you – you might like to put your portfolio in a folder, on a video, or on a CDROM. It might be electronic using a home page.
- 7) Remember, **quality** is more important than quantity.

Some Key Questions When Developing Your Portfolio:

What?: What is it I have included? What does it encompass or involve?

So What?: Why have I included this artefact/evidence? What does it demonstrate? What element does it relate to?

Now What?: How has the activity or experience represented by the artefact/evidence led me to change my thinking, my approach, my future plans and goals?

APPENDIX 1

NSW INSTITUTE OF TEACHERS

Framework of Professional Teaching Standards – February 2005³

Element	Aspect	Graduate Teacher
1. Teachers know their subject content and how to teach that content to their students	<p>Knowledge of subject content</p> <p>Knowledge of pedagogy</p> <p>Knowledge of NSW curriculum requirements</p> <p>Knowledge of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the following areas</p>	<p>1.1.1 Demonstrate relevant knowledge of the central concepts, modes of enquiry and structure of the content/discipline(s).</p> <p>1.1.2 Demonstrate research-based knowledge of the pedagogies of the content/discipline(s) taught.</p> <p>1.1.3 Design and implement lesson sequences using knowledge of the NSW syllabus documents or other curriculum requirements of the Education Act.</p> <p>1.1.4 Demonstrate current knowledge and proficiency in the use of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic operational skills • information technology skills • software evaluation skills • effective use of the internet • pedagogical skills for classroom management.

³ <http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au>
Professional Learning Portfolio for Teaching

NSW INSTITUTE OF TEACHERS

Framework of Professional Teaching Standards – February 2005

Element	Aspect	Graduate Teacher
2. Teachers know their students and how they learn	Knowledge of and respect for the diverse social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds of students, and the effects of these factors on learning	2.1.1 Demonstrate knowledge, respect and understanding of the social, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds of students and how these factors may affect learning.
	Knowledge of the physical, social and intellectual developmental characteristics of the age group(s) of students	2.1.2 Demonstrate knowledge of the typical stages of students' physical, social and intellectual development as well as an awareness of exceptions to general patterns.
	Knowledge of students' varied approaches to learning	2.1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of students' different approaches to learning.
	Knowledge of how students' skills, interests and prior achievements affect learning	2.1.4 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of students' skills, interests and prior achievements and their impact on learning.
	Knowledge of strategies for addressing student needs	2.1.5 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specific strategies for teaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATSI students • Students with Special Education Needs • NESB students • Students with Challenging Behaviours

Element	Aspect	Graduate Teacher
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Element 2 continued

		2.1.6 Demonstrate knowledge of a range of literacy strategies to meet the needs of all students including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATSI students • Students with Special Needs • NESB students • Students with Challenging Behaviours
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NSW INSTITUTE OF TEACHERS

Framework of Professional Teaching Standards – February 2005

Element	Aspect	Graduate Teacher
3. Teachers plan, assess and report for effective learning	Planning – Teaching and learning goals	3.1.1 Demonstrate the capacity to identify and articulate clear and appropriate learning goals in lesson preparation.
	Planning – Teaching and learning programs	3.1.2 Plan and implement coherent lessons and lesson sequences that are designed to engage students and address learning outcomes.
	Planning – Selection and organization of content	3.1.3 Select and organise subject/content in logical, sequential and structured ways to address student learning outcomes.
	Planning – Selection, development and use of materials and resources	3.1.4 Demonstrate knowledge of a range of appropriate and engaging resources and materials to support students' learning.
	Assessment – Linking assessment to learning	3.1.5 Demonstrate knowledge and use of a range of strategies to assess student achievement of learning outcomes.
		3.1.6 Demonstrate knowledge of the link between outcomes and assessment strategies.
	Assessment – Providing feedback to students	3.1.7 Give helpful and timely oral and written feedback to students.

Element	Aspect	Graduate Teacher
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Element 3 continued

	<p>Assessment – Monitoring of students’ progress and record keeping</p> <p>Reporting</p> <p>Program evaluation</p>	<p>3.1.8 Demonstrate knowledge and a rationale for keeping accurate and reliable records to monitor students’ progress.</p> <p>3.1.9 Demonstrate an understanding of the principles and practices of reporting to students, parents and caregivers.</p> <p>3.1.10 Demonstrate an understanding of the principles and practices for using student assessment results to reflect on lesson sequences and inform further planning of teaching and learning.</p>
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NSW INSTITUTE OF TEACHERS

Framework of Professional Teaching Standards – February 2005

Element	Aspect	Graduate Teacher
4. Teachers communicate effectively with their students	Effective communication and classroom discussion	4.1.1 Communicate clear directions to students about learning goals.
		4.1.2 Demonstrate a range of questioning techniques designed to support student learning.
		4.1.3 Listen to students and engage them in classroom discussion.
	Student grouping	4.1.4 Use student group structures as appropriate to address teaching and learning goals.
	Teaching strategies	4.1.5 Use a range of teaching strategies, resources including ICT and other technologies to foster interest and support learning.

NSW INSTITUTE OF TEACHERS

Framework of Professional Teaching Standards – February 2005

Element	Aspect	Graduate Teacher
5. Teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments through the use of classroom management skills	<p>Create an environment of respect and rapport</p> <p>Establish a climate where learning is valued and students' ideas are respected</p> <p>Manage classroom activities smoothly and efficiently</p> <p>Manage student behaviour and promote student responsibility for learning</p> <p>Assure the safety of students</p>	<p>5.1.1 Demonstrate a variety of strategies to develop rapport with all students.</p> <p>5.1.2 Establish supportive learning environments where students feel safe to risk full participation.</p> <p>5.1.3 Demonstrate strategies to create a positive environment supporting student effort and learning.</p> <p>5.1.4 Provide clear directions for classroom activities and engage students in purposeful learning activities.</p> <p>5.1.5 Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to managing student behaviour and their applications in the classroom.</p> <p>5.1.6 Demonstrate knowledge of principles and practices for managing classroom discipline.</p> <p>5.1.7 Understand specific requirements for ensuring student safety in schools.</p>

NSW INSTITUTE OF TEACHERS

Framework of Professional Teaching Standards – February 2005

Element	Aspect	Graduate Teacher
6. Teachers continually improve their professional knowledge and practice	Capacity to analyse and reflect on practice	6.1.1 Demonstrate a capacity to reflect critically on and improve teaching practice.
	Engagement in personal and collegial professional development	6.1.2 Demonstrate knowledge of the professional standards framework and its impact on the professional life of a teacher.
		6.1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of the available professional development opportunities and the importance of personal planning to ongoing professional growth.
	Capacity to contribute to a professional community	6.1.4 Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of teamwork in an educational context.
		6.1.5 Accept constructive feedback to improve and refine teaching and learning practices.
		6.1.6 Prepare for and contribute to discussions about the teaching profession or subject/content.
		6.1.7 Explore educational ideas and issues through research.
		6.1.8 Recognise the range of policies and policy documents that teachers in NSW may need to comply with following employment in a school.

NSW INSTITUTE OF TEACHERS

Framework of Professional Teaching Standards – February 2005

Element	Aspect	Graduate Teacher
7. Teachers are actively engaged members of their profession and the wider community	Communicating with parents and caregivers	7.1.1 Demonstrate the capacity to communicate effectively with parents, caregivers. 7.1.2 Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of effective home-school links and processes for reporting student progress to parents/caregivers.
	Engaging parents and caregivers in the educative process	7.1.3 Demonstrate the importance of involving parents and caregivers in the educative process and the use of a limited number of strategies to seek that involvement.
	Contributing to the school and wider community	7.1.4 Demonstrate the capacity to work effectively with external professionals, teachers' aides and community-based personnel to enhance student learning opportunities.
	Professional ethics and conduct	7.1.5 Understand regulations and statutes related to teachers' responsibilities and students' rights.
		7.1.6 Demonstrate the capacity to liaise, communicate and interact effectively and appropriately with parents, caregivers, colleagues, industry and the local community.

APPENDIX 2

unE-PORTFOLIO

Developing a professional learning portfolio for teaching, which documents your learning and skills development, will require you to be well organised and reflective about your experiences as a learner and beginning teacher. The unE-Portfolio may be a tool you can utilise to organise your thoughts. This can provide the database of activities which can be incorporated into the specific professional portfolio you will develop as part of your award.

WHAT IS THE unE-PORTFOLIO?

This portfolio is a records management system which will allow you to record:

- Personal details
- Extra-curricular activities
- Skills developed and
- Achievements and highlights of your university experience.

The unE-Portfolio is web-based so you can access your documents at any time. Information can be entered and stored for the duration of your studies at UNE and will provide you with a valuable record of your experiences.

Your unE-Portfolio provides you with the data to assess your career options by reflecting on your experiences while at university and to prepare effective job seeking aids such as a CV, written application or professional portfolio. It is like a diary—a convenient way to record and reflect on your achievements during your time at university and it will be this type of information that will allow you to market your skills and abilities to future employers.

WHEN TO START?

Ideally, you should start keeping a record of your activities at university from Day 1. It is not too late however to start at any time during your studies—it will just be harder to recall the detail of all the things you have been involved in if you wait too long.

From the time you enter university, you are on a career development path and the unE-Portfolio is a great way to help you plan your future directions. It will assist you to explore the types of additional skills you need to develop and to identify the types of evidence you can provide to substantiate your claims of professional development.

WHAT CAN I RECORD IN MY unE-PORTFOLIO?

You can include any activities you have participated in. You should record:

- dates you participated;
- who provided the activity;
- any skills or attributes you developed or enhanced during the activity. (Keep in mind the required standards of competency for professional teachers);
- any comments—reflect on how well you performed, what were the positives/negatives of the experience, what you would do differently, how you have developed as a result of the experience.

Development of these skills will occur through both your academic and non-academic pursuits and this development can be recorded through the unE-Portfolio.

You can access unE-Portfolio at <http://www.une.edu.au/eportfolio>
Or contact Counselling and Careers Service on 02 67732897