



Professional Experience Handbook

A Reference Guide for STs and Teacher Education
Students

The UNE Office For Professional
Learning (OPL)

Staff Management Team



School
of Education

Welcome

The Office for Professional Learning (OPL) in the School of Education appreciates your willingness to mentor a University of New England Teacher Education Student. This assistance is invaluable for our Teacher Education Student and, more importantly, for education in Australia. Thank you!



For further advice, please contact our team:

peo@une.edu.au

This address is a service provided specifically for Teacher enquiries.

Students are asked to contact the OPL through [AskUNE](#)

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Professional Experience Handbook

A Reference Guide for
Supervising Teachers and
Teacher Education

School of Education

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE HANDBOOK

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Professional Experience in Context

Introduction

The following information provides clear guidelines to support the successful supervision of Teacher Education Students and to help students prepare for and complete their professional experience placement. These guidelines outline expectations, responsibilities, and practical steps for a positive and productive placement experience.

For more detailed information and additional resources, please visit the OPL website: une.edu.au/opl

Professional Experience is a vital component of teacher education. It provides Teacher Education Students with the opportunity to bridge theory and practice, applying the concepts learned in academic studies to the real-world dynamics of the classroom.

This approach works best when the University collaborates closely with placement schools, centres, and agencies to provide high-quality learning experiences and guidance for Teacher Education Students throughout each course. Placements are designed to be sequential, enabling students to progressively apply the theoretical knowledge and pedagogical strategies they have developed during their degree.

The site-based program has been structured around the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to enable TES's to develop their:

- **professional knowledge** of students and how they learn, subject content, and how to teach that content to their students;
- **professional practice** in relation to planning for and implementing effective teaching and learning, assessment, provision of feedback and reporting on student learning, and creating challenging, supportive, and safe learning environments by using effective classroom management skills;
- **professional engagement** in professional learning to ensure continual improvement in their professional knowledge and practice, and their active engagement with colleagues, parents/carers, and the community.



Section A: General Information

Professional Experience at UNE

Professional experience placements are a cornerstone of teacher education, offering Teacher Education Students meaningful opportunities to connect theory with practice. These placements enable students to:

- Gain real-world insight into the daily operations, culture, and context of schools, centres, and agencies.
- Develop a deeper understanding of the diverse needs, capacities, and developmental stages of young people.
- Strengthen curriculum knowledge and learn how to adapt it to different classroom settings.
- Progressively build effective teaching and classroom management skills through hands-on experience.
- Enhance their ability to design, implement, and evaluate learning programs that meet the needs of all learners.
- Adopt a critically reflective approach to teaching, fostering continuous improvement and professional growth.
- Appreciate the multifaceted role of teachers within educational institutions and their broader communities.
- Shape their own professional identity, reflecting on experiences and developing confidence as future educators.

For additional resources and detailed guidelines, visit the OPL website.



To be eligible to undertake professional experience, students must meet the following requirements:

- Teacher Education Students must be enrolled in a UNE professional experience unit before undertaking a placement
- A placement cannot commence until the school, centre or agency has been notified by the Office for Professional Learning that a Teacher Education Student will be attending a placement..
- Teacher Education Students cannot commence a placement until they have received official notification from the Office for Professional Learning through a Confirmation of Placement email (any days commenced before receipt of this email will not be counted towards a professional experience



Image: UNE Centre for Animal Research and Teaching

UNE requires TES's to have:

- an ASCIA Anaphylaxis Training e-certificate;
- obtained and maintained a valid 'Volunteer' or 'Employed' Working with Children Check in line with their state/territory's legislation;
- completed the Department of Education's Child Protection and Awareness online training module;
- completed the Department of Education's Code of Ethics & Conduct online training module;
- completed the Department of Education's Anti-Racism Policy online training module;
- completed the Department of Education's Aboriginal Cultural Education online training module;
- obtained a 'Paid' Working with Children Check before the final, graduating placement (primary and secondary teaching);
- completed the PST Registration Form and once a Placement is confirmed. The TES (TES) needs to provide the NSW School or centre with copies of other mandatory certificates as well as the completed PST Acknowledgement Form;
- For **NSW Primary and Secondary Students**, please refer to the NSW Pre Service Teacher hub- a dedicated resource hub providing pre-service teachers, schools and initial teacher education providers with access to information on professional experience placements: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teach-nsw/become-a-teacher/pre-service-teacher-hub>

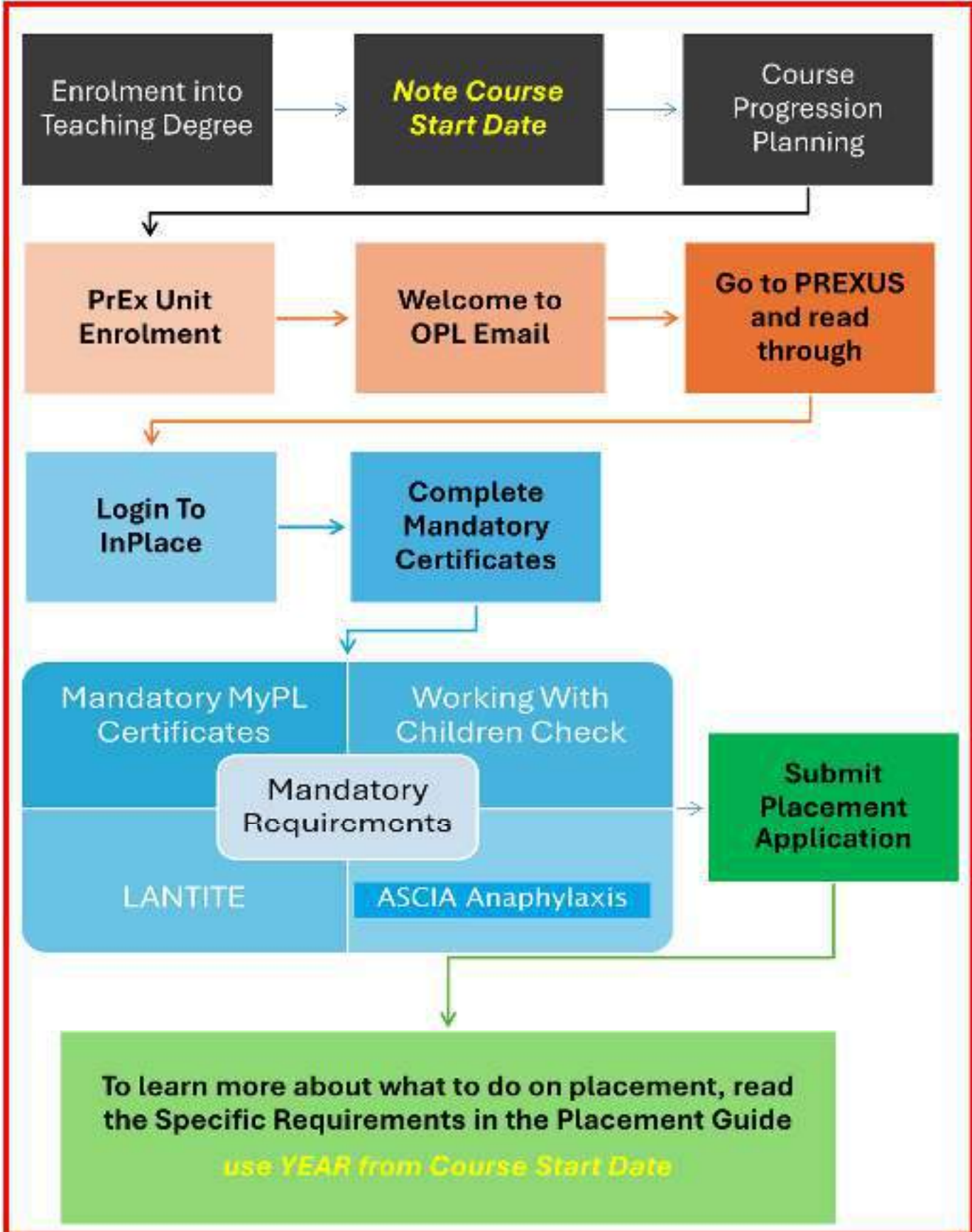
LANTITE Requirements:

- All Initial Teacher Education students enrolled in an Initial Teacher Education degree are expected to attempt LANTITE during their first year of full-time study (48 credit points).
- Not completing LANTITE will impact your course progression. ITE students are not permitted to attend their final professional experience (PrEx) placement if they have not passed the LANTITE.
- Students who require financial support to attempt LANTITE can find information about Student Loans via the following link: <https://www.une.edu.au/current-students/my-course/fees/financial-assistance/student-loans>
- The UNE LANTITE MyLearn site offers extensive support and resources to help ITE students prepare for LANTITE. You can access the LANTITE MyLearn site at the following link: <https://mylearn.une.edu.au/course/view.php?id=12662>
- Please get in touch with the LANTITE coordinators with further questions about LANTITE at lantite@une.edu.au

All of the Mandatory requirements can be found on the OPL, PREXUS myLearn site. It is the Teacher Education Student's responsibility to ensure they meet any additional state/territory requirements for their placement.



Placement Application Process Workflow



Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP)

What is it?

The Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP) is a financial support initiative funded by the Australian Government to help *domestic* students undertaking **mandatory placements** (practicums) in their courses—specifically in **teaching, nursing, midwifery, or social work**.

The CPP is a means-tested support payment of up to **\$331.65/week** provided during mandatory unpaid professional placements in teaching, nursing, midwifery, or social work. It helps alleviate placement-related financial burdens so that students can focus on their practical training.

Who can Apply?

- Australian citizens or permanent residents and are currently enrolled in a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP); **and**
- Students enrolled in a placement unit who are studying a Bachelor of Master's degree in one of the following courses: Education, Nursing or Social Work; **and**
- Students must be completing at least 30 hours minimum per week during their placement; **and**
- Students receiving Australian Government Income Support (ISP); **or**
- Those students who need to work a minimum of 60 hours over a continuous 4 week period during the **most recent study period** (i.e. not during holidays or placements) **prior to application submission** or commencing your mandatory application, whichever is sooner; **and**
- Not earning over \$6,000 over the continuous four-week period (pre-tax) during this period.

If you are unsure whether you are eligible to apply, the Commonwealth Government has created a [CPP Eligibility checker](#).

How much?

Eligible students receive **\$331.65 per week** (as of 1 July 2025), benchmarked to the Austudy rate.

What does it help with?

CPP is designed to ease financial stress by helping cover placement-related expenses like:

- Travel
- Accommodation (if placement is far from home)
- Materials and uniforms
- Lost income from reduced work

For more information please refer to the **Information about the Commonwealth Prac Payment via this link:** https://apply.une.edu.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/5610/~/information-about-the-commonwealth-prac-payment#loaded



Roles and Responsibilities During Placement

This section explains the roles of:

- Supervising Teacher (ST);
- Teacher Education Student (TES)
- Professional Experience Liaison Officer (PELO)
- Office for Professional Learning (OPL).

The University depends on school, centre and agency personnel being familiar with professional experience requirements. If you need further support or clarification at any time, please contact the Office for Professional Learning – were here to help.

SUPERVISING TEACHER

If you are experiencing any difficulties while supervising a TES, please contact the Office for Professional Learning (OPL) as soon as possible for advice or assistance.

Support may include:

- Clarification of professional experience guidelines.
- Advice on assessing TES or Guidance on what to do as a student does not meet the required standards.

Important:

- Supervising Teachers should **not** discuss student concerns solely with the visiting Professional Experience Liaison Officer (PELO). It is essential to notify the **Office for Professional Learning first**.
- Contact details for the OPL can be found at the front of this handbook or online at une.edu.au/opl.



Before the commencement of the placement, the Supervising Teacher (ST) will:

- be sent an overview of the professional experience relevant to the TES's specific requirements for their unit of study and level of teacher education.
- become fully aware of the requirements for this professional experience placement as specified in the accompanying documentation.
- provide the TES with background information about the class/ students and, where appropriate, provide the TES with work to prepare prior to professional experience placement.

During the placement, the ST will:

- introduce the TES to the class/students so that the TES is seen to be a respected teaching colleague.
- discuss the expected standards and routines of the classroom with the TES at the beginning of the professional experience placement.
- Contact the Office for Professional Learning immediately if they require clarification or advice.



Image: UNE Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences & Education

- have contact with the PELO to discuss any matters surrounding the professional experience placement and advise the student about these concerns.
- provide guidance by giving constructive feedback on lesson preparation and presentation and checking lesson plans prior to implementation (UNE's directive to TES's is 'No Plan, No Teach');
- provide ongoing discussion and constructive feedback to the TES and participate in regular discussions and written evaluations of at least one lesson per day, using the *Lesson Evaluation Sheet*.
- use the *Specific Requirements* as an ongoing checklist throughout the placement.
- complete the *Interim Report* at the mid-point of the placement if the specific professional experience placement contains an Interim Report requirement. The Interim Report requirements will be included in the information document overview sent before the placement commences.

- allow the TES to observe him/her in the process of teaching, and discuss and share models of their own lesson planning/programming, strategies and implementation
- encourage and support the TES in understanding critical reflection of their own practice and observations and be honest in their evaluation of the TES's ability and progress.



- STs should not feel obliged to pass a TES if they have not met the required standard of teaching for the specific level of the placement or have not conducted themselves professionally);
- raise any concerns to the OPL immediately, either by way of the 'Assistance Request Form' or by phoning 02 6773 3898;
- scan and email the 'At-Risk' Action Plan to the Office for Professional Learning if the TES is 'At-Risk' of failing the placement. Discuss the 'At-Risk' Action Plan with the TES, addressing the areas identified for improvement and providing opportunities for the student to improve based on any negotiated goals.

For more information regarding the assessment process for professional experience, see the section titled *Assessing the Teacher Education Student*.

After the placement, the ST will:

- complete the *Final Professional Experience Report* and *Attendance Register* (Not all placements require an *Attendance Register*);
- the OPL team are unable to finalise the TES's results until *the Professional Experience Report* and the *Attendance Register* have been submitted;
- we ask that the *Professional Experience Report* is submitted to the OPL within two weeks of the final day of placement to expedite this part of the process;
- discuss the *Professional Experience Report* with the TES on the last day of the placement;

The Claim Form and *Tax File Number* (TFN) are to be emailed to the Office for Professional Learning. To oplreports@une.edu.au.

Teacher Education Student (TES)

The Office for Professional Learning is always available to provide guidance, support and assistance. If you are experiencing challenges during your placement, please don't hesitate to reach out.

You are encouraged to seek help rather than manage difficulties alone, please make use of the support and recourses available to support you.



- If you are experiencing challenges during your placement, you can seek assistance from:
- **Supervising Teacher**
- **Practicum Coordinator**
- **School Principal or Centre Director**
- **Office for Professional Learning (OPL)**
- **Professional Experience Liaison Officer (PELO)**

Before the commencement of the placement, the TES will:

- commence the placement only after they have enrolled in a unit with professional experience, submitted a *Placement Application* to the OPL and have received a confirmation email (sent from the OPL to both the TES and designated ST).
- have completed a Working with Children Check (or equivalent check if not in NSW), have full clearance and have completed all other mandatory requirements for placement (these must be completed and uploaded to InPlace before submitting a *Placement Application*).
- make contact and establish clear channels of communication with the ST to negotiate expectations and teaching load.
- provide the NSW School or centre with copies of your other mandatory certificates as well as completing the PST Acknowledgement form once a placement is confirmed.
- be informed about the importance of professionalism (this includes punctuality, dress code, attitude and commitment, building rapport, preparation, *No Plan, No Teach'* policy and confidentiality)

- be aware of the requirement for remaining at the school/centre/agency for the full duration of the school/centre/agency day and beyond, if necessary, to attend staff meetings and extra duties.
- notify **both the OPL and the placement school/centre/agency** when the dates of the placement or the ST listed on their confirmation email change during their professional experience. Notification of this adjustment(s) to the OPL is required immediately to ensure it is recorded in TES placement records.



During the placement, the TES will:

- NOT be left solely in charge of the class or individual students at any time (excluding TESs on the second phase of their internship), including, but not limited to, providing private transport for students to or from venues beyond the school/ centre/agency grounds.
- 'shadow' their ST daily, becoming involved in all the duties attached to staff membership.
- adapt to the specific routines, policies, workplace health and safety, ethical constructs and ethos of the school/centre/agency.
- consult with the ST, practicum coordinator, school principal/centre director or the Office for Professional Learning if they are experiencing issues of any kind.
- contact the Office for Professional Learning immediately if for any reason they wish to withdraw from the placement.
- negotiate to make up all days that are missed during the placement and email the OPL with the new dates relating to this.
- make-up days should occur within two weeks of the original final date of the placement. Please contact the OPL if further consultation about this is required.

After the placement the TES will:

- discuss the *Professional Experience Report* and provide a copy of the *Attendance Register* to the ST on the last day of the placement (ensure that the *Attendance Register* has been signed, and dated);
- the *Professional Experience Report* will be made available to the student through InPlace;
- ensure all borrowed resources are returned to the school/centre/agency;
- contact or be contacted by the Office for Professional Learning if the result of their professional experience placement is Unsatisfactory.

The Support from a Liaison Officer: Higher Education Provider Amendment 2023

The School of Education, in accordance with the 'Professional Experience Framework', employs external liaison officers to visit TES's during their professional experience placement. Professional Experience Liaison Officers (PELOs) are experienced educators who undertake the responsibilities of University liaison during professional experience placements. When feasible, a PELO or a School of Education lecturer will visit a TES during their placement to:

- observe;
- support;
- provide quality feedback;
- evaluate;
- make professional judgements;
- liaise with the ST;
- advise schools/centres/agencies about using the Progress Guides to identify if a TES is 'At-Risk' of Failing;
- advise the Office for Professional Learning about any issues that may have been identified regarding a TES's placement.



The PELOs are adept at assessing how TES's conduct themselves in the classroom and surrounding environment. Through conference with the ST and the TES, a PELO gauges how the TES:

- maximises their professional experience through effective planning, communication and organisation;
- commits to the ethos of the school/centre/agency;
- builds meaningful and appropriate rapport with staff, students and the

school/centre/agency community;

- imparts their skills and knowledge relating to specific contexts and curriculum content;
- makes use of or creates resources in order to inspire students to learn;
- identifies and targets various learning styles or needs and calls upon suitable pedagogy;
- accepts constructive advice and criticism from a ST and strives to improve.

Please note: PELOs are assigned their visits by the Office for Professional Learning. Visits are scheduled for all placements at the discretion of the OPL and not based on requests from TES's. If geographical constraints prevent a visit from being scheduled a phone call will replace this process.



Image: UNE The CJ Hawkins Homestead

Please note: UNE representatives, after consultation with the ST and after viewing relevant documentation regarding a TES's placement, can assist with assessing a TES but are not responsible for making the final decision about whether or not the

TES should pass the professional experience placement. They can, however, support the TES and STs through an 'At-Risk' of Failing process, should it be requested.

The Professional Experience Liaison Officer (PELO)



Image: UNE Lazenby

PELOs are UNE's qualified educational representatives employed by the Office for Professional Learning who are assigned to TES's to support, mentor and facilitate their professional learning and development during placement. This can be by way of phone, face-to-face, virtual or email contact. A PELO is not responsible for assessing the TES to determine a pass or fail grade for the placement but is deeply engaged in facilitation of lesson planning and teaching strategies. Their main role is to provide informed support and mediate when required.

Before the commencement of the placement, the PELO will:

- make 'Introductory' phone or email contact with the TES and ST;
- provide a 'Courtesy' phone or email contact with the TES before the mid-point of the placement.
- At mid-point of placement, the PELO will, where possible, schedule a face-to-face visit to the school/centre or alternatively, arrange a Teams/Zoom meeting. This virtual meeting will inform the PELO Report. In some cases, PELOs might engage via email communication.

During the placement the PELO will:

- assist both the TES and ST by clarifying expectations and the process for assessment
- during the professional experience placement;
- support the TES in their efforts to meet a successful outcome for the placement by providing them with guidance about planning, presentation, resources, classroom management, organisation and interactions as well as strategies for managing the demands of professional experience;
- contact the OPL should the TES or ST have concerns and ensure the school/centre follows due process.

After the placement the PELO will:

- provide the OPL with a **written report** relating to the student's progress during their placement.
- liaise with the OPL regarding the visit or the student's or ST's contact about the professional experience.

Information About the Office for Professional Learning

The Office for Professional Learning has administrative responsibility for all educationally- based professional experience placements.

Before the commencement of the placement the Office for Professional Learning (OPL) will:

- negotiate with industry partners to enhance access to quality opportunities in schools, services, centres and agencies in a variety of geographic locations;
- ensure TES's are appropriately placed and supported while on-site with qualified staff and with quality documentation and procedures;
- ensure clear communication lines for University and school/centre/agency staff and TES's in relation to any issues relating to professional experience;
- ensure all TES's have complied with statutory regulations such as a Working with Children clearance, Department of Education Child Protection and Awareness Training module, and ASCIA Anaphylaxis Training, and are prepared for their placement;
- monitor TES's' pattern of experiences to ensure a diversity of settings and reduce potential issues associated with conflict of interest and fairness in relation to access to placements.

During the placement the Office for Professional Learning (OPL) will:

- make initial contact with the ST by email, phone or SMS to check the TES is settled and working appropriately; ?? Do we do this? – Should it say – be available for support to both TES's and ST's throughout the duration of the placement.
- provide support to the school/centre/agency and to the TES where they have been identified as being 'At-Risk' of Failing a professional experience placement.

After the placement the Office for Professional Learning (OPL) will:

- ensure all documentation is submitted to the University and checked (i.e. *Professional Experience Report, Attendance Register, claim form/s and tax declaration/s*);
- process payment to supervisors;
- provide support and guidance to the TES's who either did not pass their placement or experienced difficulties during the placement;
- the Office for Professional Learning does not teach or oversee the development of content knowledge relating to specific curriculum areas of students on placement.



Conflict of Interest During Placement

Conflict of interest on a professional experience placement is any situation where there could be perceived or actual favouritism or over-familiarity towards a TES undertaking professional experience.

An example of *conflict of interest* includes members of the supervisory relationship being linked through family/relative status or close friendships at the placement school or centre. This includes a family member working at the school/ centre/agency or one's own children attending that school/centre/agency. Such situations may introduce an actual or perceived conflict between personal interests and University regulations.

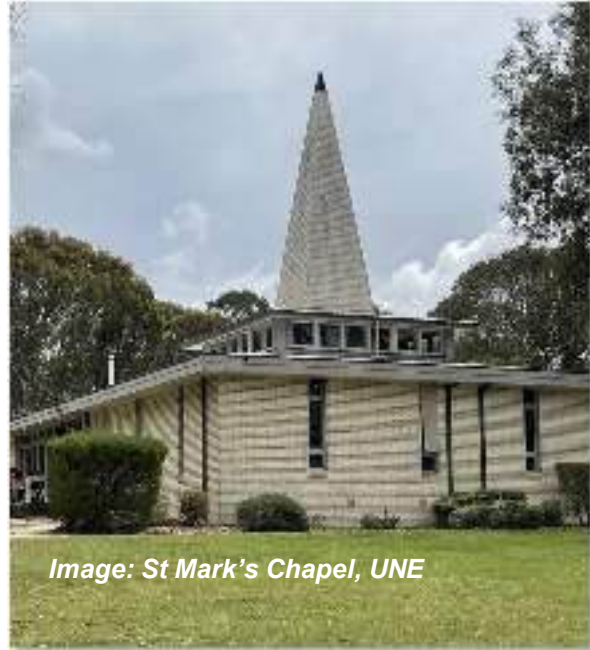


Image: St Mark's Chapel, UNE

UNE's Code of Professional Conduct, including the requirement to declare any such conflicts of interest, binds supervisors as contracted UNE assessors of professional experience units. Where a TES is granted permission to teach at a school/centre/agency where their spouse or children attend, they should not teach, work with or supervise any of these family members (or close friends) under any circumstance.

Please note: all potential *Conflicts of Interest* **must** be declared before the placement commences and approval is reliant upon discussions between the OPL and the school/ centre/agency. This can be achieved by way of a letter from the Principal/Director to include with the Placement Form.

Attendance and Make-Up Days

TES's must attend all required days in order to successfully complete each professional experience placement. This rule applies to all TES's across all Education degrees, without exception. They must comply with the attendance schedule for their placements in order to meet both degree and accreditation requirements. Completion of 'make-up' days will be in negotiation with the Supervising Teacher. The OPL should be notified of negotiated dates as soon as possible.

TES's are required to notify the OPL of make-up days and must submit new dates to the OPL as soon as possible. The make-up day should occur immediately following a placement, or within two weeks of the final day of the placement.

Waiving days of TES's attendance as a result of public holidays or natural disasters is only considered on a case-by-case basis and will require an interview with the OPL Leadership team and at the discretion of the OPL. Days missed from a professional experience cannot be added to a following, different professional experience.

When a TES is absent for three (3) or more days due to illness, a doctor's certificate will be required.

Attendance at any days that are considered mandatory by the ST or principal/ director as part of the professional experience placement will count as days not needing to be 'made up'. Examples of days that do not need to be 'made up' could include but are not limited to: professional development days, athletics or swimming carnivals or cross-country events. More information regarding sports days and excursions can be found in the section titled *Excursions*.

Repeated absences from placement, whether they are explained or unexplained, can affect classroom continuity and student learning. A placement may require termination if a TES's lack of attendance affects student outcomes, regardless of reason. For more information please see read the section titled *Grounds for Exclusion*.



Medical Certificate

A medical certificate is required when the TES is absent for more than three (3) days during the placement. The TES should note the absence on the Attendance Register and submit the medical certificate to the OPL via AskUNE at the end of the placement.

Absences due to natural disasters and other extenuating circumstances

Events such as natural disasters, pandemics such as COVID-19 and other unforeseen anomalies may impact upon a TES's attendance during a professional experience placement. Any waivers issued against the required days for a professional experience due to such an event will be put-into-effect at the discretion of the Office for Professional Learning.

Excursions

Excursions often occur while a student is on professional experience and are excellent opportunities for TES's to garner further information about the running of a school/centre/agency. Excursions may include:

- associated sporting events;
- camps;
- short excursions leaving the school/centre/agency grounds while assisting with the supervision of a class/group.

Under the University's Student Personal Accident policy and General and Product Liability insurances, TES's are covered, providing:

- the professional experience placement is a mandatory requirement of the TES's University course; and
- the excursion is recognised and undertaken as a component of the TES's University-endorsed professional experience placement.

Excursions must not exceed any more than **one-quarter of a placement**. For any days outside this rule, consultation must be sought with the Office for Professional Learning. TES's on their final placement are advised not to engage with excursions. During an excursion, TES's should not be left alone to attend to or supervise students under any circumstance.



Image: UNE School of Education

Dress Code

TES's are required to be appropriately dressed, befitting a professional career. Individual schools/centres/agencies will have particular requirements with which the TES must comply, for example, covered-in shoes, sun-smart clothing, broad-brimmed hats, ties, covered tattoos or removal of some piercings. TES's must honor the requirements of the dress code of the school/centre/agency where they are completing placement. Should there be no policy for staff dress code at the school/centre/agency, reasonable, appropriate dress should be discussed and agreed to by the TES, the ST and/or the principal/director.

Communication with ST's

Before Professional Experience

All TES's are expected to contact their ST well in advance of the period of placement. They are encouraged to take every opportunity to meet with and engage in pre-planning prior to the commencement of professional experience placement. This communication may need to occur by phone or electronically. A TES who does not contact their ST in preparation for the teaching experience may not be permitted to complete that professional experience at the discretion of the OPL in consultation with the school/centre/agency.

During Professional Experience

Throughout the professional experience placement, it is expected the TES and the ST will collaborate over planning, effective teaching, classroom management, etc. 'At mid-point of the placement the TES and ST should discuss and complete the *Interim Report*.

For more information, see the section titled *Assessment*.



Image: Among the Gardens of UNE

Withdrawal from a Practicum Placement by the TES

There are some circumstances that may require a TES to withdraw from the professional experience placement.

Applications for withdrawal without penalty must be in writing. **Any** claim for special consideration must be supported by documentary evidence.

Any TES who withdraws from a placement, irrespective of the reason, **must** advise the following, in writing, immediately:

1. Principal of the school or Director of the centre or the Practicum Coordinator;
2. Office for Professional Learning.

Please note: A TES who voluntarily withdraws from a placement before its completion will be deemed to have failed the placement. The exception to this is where an application for special consideration is submitted to the Office for Professional Learning and grounds for special consideration have been accepted. In this case, permission will be granted for the TES to repeat the placement in full. The decision for special consideration may be made in conjunction with the Course Coordinator.

This process applies especially to TES's who have been identified as 'At-Risk of Failing their professional experience placement and who have been given additional support through the implementation of the Action Plan contained within the 'At-Risk' Action Plan.

Should a TES 'At-Risk' of Failing withdraw from the school/centre/agency before the completion of the placement and, therefore, not meet the requirements of the Action Plan, they will be deemed to have failed the placement as incomplete.



Image: UNE Earth Studies

Section B: Assessment and Expectations

Expectations for the TES

While on placement, all TES's are expected to adhere to the following requirements:

- participate fully within the life of the school/centre/agency in order to embrace the range of experiences and best practices it has to offer and be open to and appreciative of the professional expertise of staff;
- remember they are a guest in the placement school or centre and should, listen, learn, show respect, and be professional. TES's should acknowledge they have been provided with a unique learning opportunity;
- work actively in the setting, initially as contributors to the management of the environment, then through working with small groups of children and, where appropriate, in whole-class planning and implementation;
- contribute to the development of school/centre/agency-based resources and learning environments;
- apply professional behaviour, including the use of good manners, clear communication and common courtesies. If there is a problem, this should be openly discussed with the ST (any further action should be addressed by contacting the OPL or the allocated PELO). The intent to develop these skills is essential for professional growth;
- arrive at the classroom/school/centre at least 15–30 minutes before



Image: Austin & Earl Page Colleges, UNE

school/centre/agency starting times, and remain after finishing times to organise resources and to be available for discussion and planning with the ST;

- remain with the ST until final duties are completed. TES's are expected to attend staff meetings and should forward-plan with their work/ family commitments to meet these requirements for the duration of the placement;
- prepare thoroughly for all aspects of the placement. Before and after school/centre/ agency times are preparation times. Time should not be taken from interactions with children/students to photocopy or prepare plans/materials, or to write up observations/reflections;
- present planning or documentation to the ST prior to the teaching/ planned learning experience or planned interactions with students (the timing of this consultation should be negotiated with the ST). STs will need to sight this documentation in sufficient time to allow changes to be made.

Assessing the TES

There are important documents and resources that need to be used in order to accurately assess a TES's progress, capacity and suitability to teaching. These documents include:

- the *Specific Unit Requirements*;
- the *Interim Report*, to be completed at mid-point of the placement;
- the *Professional Experience Report* at the end of the placement.

Assessment Criteria

UNE TES's are assessed against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers or the Early Childhood Qualification Guidelines. The descriptors contained in these Standards or Guidelines form the basis for evaluation in the *Professional Experience Report*.

TES's are to be assessed against each Standard Descriptor at the level relevant to their progress in their teacher education course. The grading system is as follows:

Placements Preceding Final Graduate Practicum:

- E: Exceeds expectations;
- C: Competent;
- D: Developing;
- AN: Attention Needed;
- N: Not Developed.
- NO: No Opportunity.



Graduating, Final Practicum:

- E: Exceeds expectations;
- D: Developed;
- N: Not Developed.



Image: UNE Dixon Library

If a Standard Descriptor cannot be at least partially demonstrated, please provide an explanation in the appropriate comment section on the report.

For the Graduating, final placements it is expected that TES's will be operating at the Graduate Level and demonstrating they are mostly 'Developed' throughout the placement.

If you require further clarification about the assessment criteria, please do not hesitate to contact the Office for Professional Learning.

To help guide your assessment of a TES's demonstration of the descriptors, see the Assessment Continuum from the *Professional Experience Framework* document. It indicates the range of evidence you can use when making your assessment of each Standard Descriptor. It can be viewed on the website of the Office for Professional Learning: une.edu.au/opl.

Clarification of Assessment Marking Criteria

Placements Preceding Final Graduate Practicum

E: Exceeds Expectations

When the development of a Standard Descriptor is graded at a very high level for the placement, considering the TES's level and knowledge of teaching and acknowledging they are not yet at the graduate level. This grading should be indicated if the ST believes the TES is performing well above the level of TES's at the particular stage of their course.



Image: St Albert's College UNE

C: Competent

When the TES is meeting the placement's requirements, considering their level and knowledge of teaching and acknowledging they are still in the early phase of their teacher training and not yet at the graduate level. This grading is for TES's who are demonstrating a consistent level of confidence and consolidated understanding against a Standard Descriptor.

D: Developing

When the development of a Standard Descriptor indicates the TES is working towards continued improvement in this area and their level of teaching is sound, considering their current level and knowledge of teaching and acknowledging they are still in the early phase of their teacher training and not yet at the Graduate Level. This grading is for TES's who demonstrate they are building their knowledge and skills against the criteria of a Standard Descriptor.

AN: Attention Needed

When the development of a Standard Descriptor requires further attention, considering the TES's current level of teacher training.

Where this grade is indicated, the ST should consider the specific Standard Descriptor and how this will impact future placements if the skills required to meet this criterion are not addressed at this point. This grading is for TES's who need to focus on and implement feedback presented to them before they can achieve the criteria of a Standard Descriptor.

Please note: Should a ST have concerns regarding the number of 'AN' ratings, they should contact the OPL for further consultation.

For the *Professional Experience Report*, issuing students with predominantly 'AN - Attention Needed' may indicate that further consideration should follow as to whether the TES is deemed competent enough to pass the placement. If a decision is made that the TES has not met requirements and is to

be presented with an Unsatisfactory Result, it is important that due process has been followed up to this point (i.e. completing and submitting the relevant documents to the OPL).

N: Not Developed

When the development of a Standard Descriptor is unsatisfactory for the placement at the TES's required level of competence. This rating means the TES has definitely not met the required level.

Any concerning areas that may be building to an 'N - Not Developed' on the *Professional Experience Report*, need to be addressed with the TES to develop ways to ensure they can attempt to meet the requirements for the professional experience before its end. If major concerns are warranted, or feedback is not being implemented, an '*At-Risk*' Action Plan should be completed through a collaboration between the ST and TES.

For the *Professional Experience Report*, the Office for Professional Learning does not stipulate a particular number of 'N' ratings as automatically failing a TES. However, if a large number of 'N' ratings have been recorded on the report, please carefully consider the final grade.

'NO': No Opportunity

The TES did not have the opportunity to fully demonstrate the Standard Descriptor. However, discussions between the TES and the ST confirm that the TES's teaching is appropriate for their current stage of development and knowledge surrounding this Standard Descriptor. Acknowledging that they are still in the early stages of their teacher training. The TES is expected to have further opportunities in future placements to demonstrate this Standard Descriptor.



Image: UNE TC Lamble Administration Building

Graduating, Final Placements

E: Exceeds Expectations

When the development of a Standard Descriptor is graded at a very high level for a final and graduating placement. This grading should be indicated if the ST believes the TES is performing well above the level of TES's at the graduate level stage of their course.



Image: UNE Natural History Museum

D: Developed

When the development of a Standard Descriptor has been achieved for a final and graduating placement. This

grading is for a TES at the graduate level who is demonstrating consistent competency with their knowledge and skills against the criteria of a Standard Descriptor.

N: Not Developed

When the development of a Standard Descriptor is unsatisfactory for a final and graduating placement.

This rating means the TES has definitely not met the required level for a Graduate Level professional experience. Any concerning areas that may be building to an 'N - Not Developed' on the *Graduating Professional Experience Report*, needs to be addressed with the TES to develop ways to ensure they can meet the requirements for the placement before its end. If major concerns are warranted, or feedback is not being implemented, an 'At-Risk' Action Plan should be completed through a collaboration between the ST and TES.

For the *Graduating Professional Experience Report*, if more than one 'N' rating is indicated, please carefully consider if the TES's level of competency meets the graduate level standards.

Completing Evaluation for TES's Feedback

Feedback plays an integral part in the development of a TES's teaching practice. Through professional discussion, verbal cues, written notes and formal evaluation, the ST should provide regular, constructive feedback.

For lesson evaluations, the *Lesson Evaluation Sheet* has been provided to assist the ST with observing, reporting, reflecting and commenting on individual lessons taught by the TES. The ST may wish to refer to this feedback when composing the *Professional Experience Report*. As required, lesson plans must be written and presented prior to the lesson. The *Lesson Evaluation Sheet* is underpinned by the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.



Image: UNE Dixon Library

STs are asked to complete an *Interim Report* and discuss this feedback with the TES. This gives an opportunity to ensure the placement is progressing satisfactorily or to raise concerns with the TES or Office for Professional Learning regarding placement progression.

Evaluation

Please Note: **Placements five (5) days in length or shorter** do not use all assessment documents mentioned in this handbook, and do not contain an *Interim Report* requirement. Should there be any issues or concerns regarding a TES placed at your school/centre on a five- day placement that need to be addressed further, please contact the Office for Professional Learning immediately for assistance.

The documentation included as part of the evaluation for TES's is as follows:

- *Lesson Evaluation Sheet*;
- *Interim Report*;

- *Specific Requirements;*
- *Assistance Request form;*
- *'At-Risk' Action Plan and Placement Requires Termination Forms.*

The Office for Professional Learning's evaluation for TES's has been designed to:

- a. track the progress of the TES throughout their placement;
- b. provide constructive feedback based on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers or Early Childhood Qualification Guidelines;
- c. provide an opportunity for the TES to formally reflect upon their teaching practice and consider ways to improve their skills;
- d. alert the TES, school/centre and OPL if a TES is *'At-Risk'* of Failing; and
- e. terminate a placement, if required.



Please note: All of the assessment documents are important in the reporting process for a TES's placement. The information about the TES documented in these reports should be used to assist with the completion of the *Professional Experience Report*. The *Assistance Request Form* can be submitted to the OPL at any time throughout the placement should the ST wish to alert the OPL about concerns relating to the TES's progress, professional conduct or suitability to teaching.



The TES is progressing Satisfactorily

If the TES successfully meets all the requirements for the placement, the following steps are taken:

1. The ST will complete an Interim Report (if the placement is 10 days or longer):
 - a. The *Interim Report* regarding a well-performing student entails ticking the appropriate boxes and offering short statements to outline areas of strength and target areas for improvement to enable the TES to achieve a satisfactory result by the end of the placement.
2. The ST can use the *Specific Requirements* document can be used at the end of each week, to guide discussion in consultation with the TES
 - a. The *Specific Requirements* document is there to help guide and support the TES and the ST throughout the placement.

The TES is 'At-Risk' of Failing'

If at any time during the placement the TES is not meeting the required outcomes, the Interim Report becomes a significant resource of support and an instrument to identify the level of a TES's performance. Once they are considered as 'At-Risk' of Failing the comments in the *Interim Report* will be specific to ensure the student fully understands what is required to meet the requirements. In this case,



the following steps MUST be taken by the ST immediately, in order to support the TES:

1. the ST requests that another educator in the school/centre provides a second opinion (preferably the principal/director, head teacher, assistant principal or staff member in a supervisory role) by observing and evaluating the TES's performance (this evaluation should be based on the requirements for the TES's level of training);
2. if collective judgement deems the TES to be 'At-Risk' of Failing, the ST submits the **Assistance Request Form** to the Office for Professional Learning without delay: the ST, with the TES, will complete an 'At-Risk' Action Plan and submit the document, signed by both parties, to the OPL for record keeping;
 - a. the ST contacts the OPL by emailing the *Assistance Request Form* expressing concerns about the TES's progress;
 - b. the OPL Team will email the ST the 'At-Risk' Package;
 - c. a member of the OPL Team will contact the ST and/or the TES regarding the placement. Immediate communication should occur between the OPL and the relevant members of school/centre staff to decide whether the placement should proceed with the implementation of an Action Plan or whether the placement should be terminated.
3. the ST, with the TES, will complete an 'At-Risk' Action Plan and submit the document, signed by both parties, to the OPL for record keeping;
4. the STs will monitor the progress of the 'At-Risk' Action Plan for re-assessment on the date negotiated. STs are encouraged to contact the OPL at any time to discuss any concerns with a placement.



Image: Robb College, UNE

The initial decision to recommend the grade of 'Unsatisfactory' on the *Professional Experience Report* is made by the school/centre, however, this may require some consultation with the Office for Professional Learning. The Office for Professional Learning then applies this grade to the TES's academic record.

Due Process

The school/centre must ensure, using the steps outlined in this section, that if the ST deems a TES as 'Unsatisfactory,' due process has been followed (as outlined in the '*At-Risk*' package). In line with the OPL's ***Professional Experience Policy***, the OPL will have the final decision over the awarding of the grade but would not normally overturn the ST's judgement unless due process was not followed.

If due process is not followed, the TES has the right to appeal and, if successful, will be granted a repeat professional experience placement without academic penalty. TES's whose appeals are upheld will always be required to repeat the entire professional experience placement and will not be **granted approval to complete only part thereof**.

Implementing the '*At-Risk*' Action Plan

The '*At-Risk*' Action Plan has been designed to allow a direct discussion around areas of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers that are not being achieved by the TES while on the placement. For any questions, please contact the Office for Professional Learning.

There are five sections of the '*At-Risk*' Action Plan, as outlined below:

- Section A: Identified areas and/or Graduate Descriptors for improvement
- Section B: Action Plan
- Section C: TES Response/Plan for Action
- Section D: Further Action Plan goals and concerns
- Section E: TES Response/Plan for Action.

The following steps are to be followed when establishing the '*At-Risk*' Action Plan:

1. ST completes Section A and Section B of the 'At-Risk' Action Plan;
2. a date for implementation is given by the ST;
3. TES completes Section C.



Evaluating the Action Plan

By the date for evident improvement, the ST will evaluate the progress of the TES to meet the goals of the 'Action Plan'. There are three criteria for this evaluation:

- the Action Plan has been adequately addressed;
- the Action Plan has been adequately addressed but further areas for concern have been identified; or
- there has been insufficient improvement and so the placement requires termination.

The Action Plan Has Been Adequately Addressed

The negotiated goals in the Action Plan have been met and the placement can be further assessed by following the OPL *Handbook* documentation and the *Weekly Review* discussion guidelines. The ST will continue the supervision of the placement to completion and submit the 'At-Risk' Action Plan documents to the OPL for record keeping.

The Action Plan has Been Adequately Addressed yet Further Areas for Concern Have Been Identified

Further goals will be required to achieve a 'Satisfactory' grading for the placement. This may mean a placement requires extension. If this is the case, negotiation with the Office for Professional Learning and the TES will need to occur. The following steps are required:

1. the ST will contact the OPL to discuss further action;
2. if agreed that further improvement can be made with a Further Action Plan, the
3. the ST will complete Section D;
4. the ST will set a date for improvement to be evident;
5. the TES will complete Section E.



There has Been Insufficient Improvement and The Placement Requires Termination

If the TES is unable to achieve the goals negotiated in the Action Plan (part of the 'At-Risk' Action Plan), the ST will be required to terminate the placement. The following steps are required:

1. the ST notifies the OPL at the earliest sign that the TES will not meet the required targets of the Action Plan.
2. the ST notifies the TES that progress has not been made on the Action Plan, or it is unlikely the candidate will meet the requirements for the relevant level of teacher education.
3. the ST completes and submits the *Placement Requires Termination* form to the OPL.
4. The TES will receive official confirmation from the OPL stating that placement has been terminated and remediation must occur.

The ST should not feel obliged to pass the TES if all goals in the Action Plan have been achieved but they are still not meeting the overall requirements for the professional experience unit.

The Professional Experience Placement Requires Termination

A TES's placement will be terminated if they breach any of the rules stated in the *Grounds for Exclusion* section of this handbook.

A termination should not be based on personal bias but on a situation where the well-being of others in the school/centre and/or education of the students is seriously compromised due to

conduct of the TES (or if every means taken to assist the TES to achieve a satisfactory result has not been successful).

If situations such as these arise, the following steps must be taken:

1. the ST should first consult with the school principal/centre director and then alert the Office for Professional Learning as soon as a decision has been made to terminate the placement.
 - The ST submits the *Placement Requires Termination* document to the OPL.
2. *Grounds for Termination* box should be marked and *Reasons for Terminating the Placement* section completed.
 - The TES is notified by the OPL that the placement will be terminated and the reasons should be stated clearly as to why this has occurred;
3. the TES must leave the school/centre immediately.



Image: UNE Museum of Antiquities

Please note: if a TES's practicum is terminated, and the *Placement Requires Termination* form has been sent to the OPL, the *Professional Experience Report* does not require completion. However, it will need to be stated on the *Placement Requires Termination*, in the section provided, why the placement was terminated.

In the event that a TES's placement is discontinued at the request of the ST or principal/director, the TES **must** leave the school/centre immediately and **not** make further contact with the school/centre/ST or anyone else relating to the placement, including school/centre students. The TES will be contacted by the OPL and an interview will be scheduled (face-to-face or by telephone) for further support and clarification about the termination.

Completing the Professional Experience Report

The *Professional Experience Report* is the document that TES's will present to prospective employers and requires assessment against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers or the Early Childhood Qualification Guidelines.

It is important to complete each section in this report, not only with an appropriate grade but by also providing written evidence/examples in the relevant section of how the descriptor has been demonstrated by the TES.

1. The ST must complete the *Professional Experience Report* and present the TES with either a '*Satisfactory*' or '*Unsatisfactory*' result on the final day. A copy of the Professional Experience Report, whether '*Satisfactory*' or '*Unsatisfactory*', can be accessed through InPlace by the TES once submitted. If the grade is '*Unsatisfactory*', the TES will be contacted by the OPL team to arrange appropriate support.



Image: UNE the Gardener's Shed

Please note: *Professional Experience Reports* are considered professional reference documents and should be presented in a professional manner, with all sections completed including comments sections.

Reports regarding a TES's progress while on professional experience are recommendations made to the University of New England regarding their progress as assessed against the relevant standards. The final decision and application of grades regarding the assessment of the TES lie with the University as per the UNE Assessment Rule. It is important that clear documentation is maintained with TES's '*At-Risk*' of Failing to ensure clear and specific communication, including completion of the Action Plan, and honest appraisal of a TES's ability is maintained.

Satisfactory Result

A TES will receive a '*Satisfactory*' result upon meeting the criteria applicable to their level of teacher education. The *Professional Experience Report* should reflect the ongoing use of assessment documentation in the grading of their teaching against the Standards and comments regarding their suitability to teaching. If, throughout the placement, the TES has been receiving sound results or has shown suitable improvement by listening to critical feedback, the TES should be deemed '*Satisfactory*' and pass the placement.

Unsatisfactory Result



A ST who records the result on the *Professional Experience Report* as 'Unsatisfactory' will have followed due process by previously indicating to the TES, through the use of the relevant assessment documentation and implementation of an Action Plan, that issues or concerns had arisen and required attention.

An 'Unsatisfactory' Result on the

Professional Experience Report should not come as a surprise to a TES but instead be the final evaluation from the ST when, after support and following the correct process of completing the 'At-Risk' Action Plan, the TES has been unable to fulfil the requirements of the *professional experience unit*. STs or principals are asked to promptly liaise with the Office for Professional Learning when the TES has been assessed as Unsatisfactory so support for the TES can be arranged.

Teacher Education Students who for whatever reason fail a professional experience placement must complete an additional support program, at the discretion of the OPL, prior to repeating a placement.

Please note: The University acknowledges that the process of assessing a TES 'At-Risk' of Failing is demanding and potentially stressful. The University sees support of STs and principals/directors as a priority so contact with the OPL is an important part of this support.

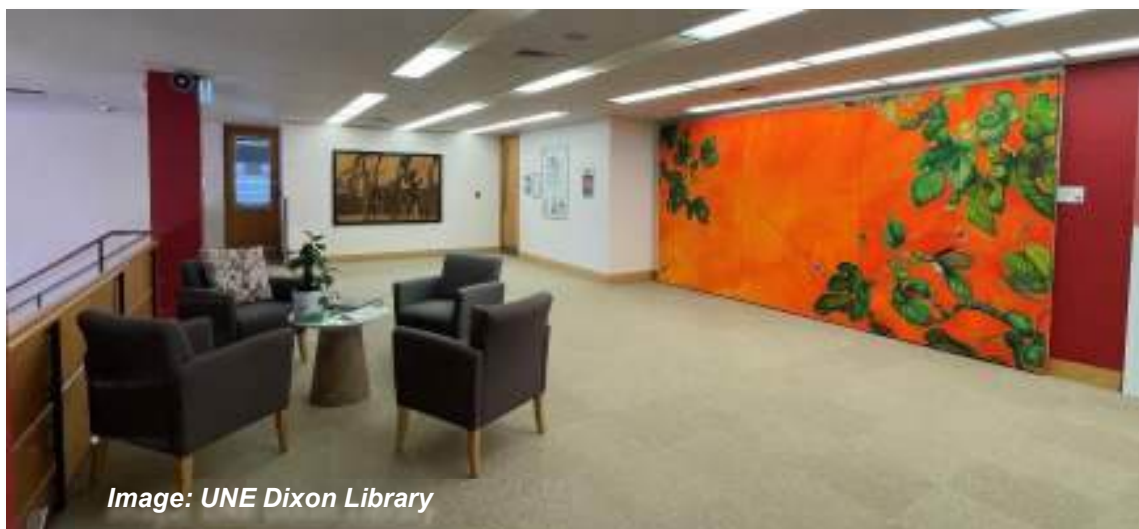


Image: UNE Dixon Library

Grounds for Exclusion

In some instances, the principal/director and/or the University may require a TES to leave the school/centre/agency and discontinue the professional experience placement. This situation can occur even if the TES has not been identified as 'At-Risk of Failing' under the normal provisions for professional experience.

Please see Appendix 1 and visit The NSW Department of Education link <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2004-0020>

TES's may be excluded from a school/centre/agency and thus fail the professional experience placement for any of the following reasons:

- inability to reasonably cooperate with staff and work effectively in the school/centre/agency environment;
- demonstrated attitudes and actions antithetical to the profession of teaching;
- absence from the professional experience placement without satisfactory explanation, approved leave or the necessary documentation or continual explained absences which hinder the learning of the classroom students and the learning outcomes of the TES;
- deficiencies in their knowledge and understanding of their subject disciplines, the NSW or Australian Curriculum and/or planning for learning;
- an inability to meet the requirements of one or more of the Fundamental Skills Assessment;
- breaches of University regulations, policies and/ or procedures or code of conduct for students;
- deficiencies in their communication skills;
- breaches of departmental/system/school/centre/agency/University regulations or the law.



Image: UNE Bistro Foyer

TES's who have been excluded from a school/centre/agency, and thus failed, or had the professional experience placement terminated, may be precluded from pursuing opportunities for further professional experience or entry to schools/centres/agencies. If a TES demonstrates serious deficiencies or misbehaviour in one or more of the above areas during a school/centre/agency placement, they may be liable for further action under the 'Show Cause' provisions of the University. This policy may also apply when a student has failed a professional experience more than once.



Image: UNE Bistro Reception

Please note: The School of Education reserves the right not to place a TES in a school/centre/agency or other professional experience setting in any instance where the performance, personal conduct or professional conduct of the TES does not meet the required standard, regardless of whether the TES is enrolled in a professional experience unit or component.

Teachers and principals/directors are accountable to parents and school/centre/agency systems to provide quality learning opportunities and outcomes for their students and need to be confident that any TES's placed in their schools/centres/agencies can support and maintain teaching programs and standards.

Extension of Placement

In some cases, where the ST does not believe they have had sufficient opportunity to gauge the TES's development and cannot, therefore, assess the TES as meeting the placement requirements, the ST may negotiate with the Office for Professional Learning and TES an Extension of Placement.

An example is if a TES is only starting to undertake the required teaching load in the fourth week of a 20-day placement because of school camps, NAPLAN, school musicals, etc, or if the TES will not meet the requirements in 20 days but has the potential to achieve a 'Satisfactory' outcome with further teaching. In this case an Extension of Placement may be granted. This situation includes a student who may have been noted as 'At-Risk' or Failing yet has shown improvement in their teaching as per the requirements of the Action Plan and requires further experience to meet these goals.

A request for an Extension of Placement must be made with reasonable notice to the TES and the Office for Professional Learning. All parties must be aware of a potential need to extend a placement in advance of the final day of the placement and the TES must be aware of the reasoning behind the extension request.

A TES who withdraws from a placement before completing a negotiated extension of the placement (after having agreed to complete extra days) will be deemed to have failed the placement as incomplete.

Section C: Legal Policies and Procedures

Privacy Laws

Students who are on professional experience must not post any information or pictures regarding their school/centre/agency (including but not limited to: class, ST, staff, principal/director or other professional experience students) on Social Media. All TES's who are enrolled at UNE must adhere to the Australian Privacy laws and all relevant UNE policies.

Insurance

Accident Insurance

The following information is provided to assist TES's should there be any accident while undertaking professional experience placements.

Under its insurance program the University of New England maintains a Student Personal Accident Policy. This policy provides cover for accidental injury for students engaged in activities directly related to an approved course which includes practical and/or community placement, fieldwork and all other associated activities relevant to the approved course which are authorised by the University. The cover for accidental injury is subject to strict policy conditions, and various exclusions apply. This policy does not cover pandemics and natural disasters. Also, Illness Insurance (including COVID related illness) is not covered under UNE's insurances.

Accidents/Incidents occurring whilst in pursuance of the approved course should be reported by the TES, in writing, within 48 hours to both the Office for Professional Learning (peo@une.edu.au) and UNE Insurance (insurance@une.edu.au).



Image: Earle Page College, UNE

Workplace Health and Safety (WHS)

Each setting in which a TES is undertaking placement is expected to observe appropriate Workplace Health and Safety regulations. TES's have the responsibility to ensure they have the intellectual, physical, psychological and social competence to successfully complete the professional experience placement. TES's should only apply for a professional experience placement if they are confident they are capable of completing it successfully.

TES's should ensure they are familiar with the expectations of the setting in terms of lifting, exposure to infection, posture and positioning for computer use and/or other repetitive tasks in a school/centre/agency or setting. TES's should observe correct hygiene and safety practices to protect themselves, and the staff and students with whom they are working. TES's who are, or may become, pregnant before or during their professional experience placement should consult their doctor before commencing a placement regarding potential health risks and inform the Professional Experience Office and the school or centre of their pregnancy. Most placement settings have their own policies regarding staff who are pregnant and TES's are required to abide by those policies. TES's should contact the Office for Professional Learning with any specific queries in relation to their pregnancy and professional experience.

To safeguard TES's in case of an accident, they must provide personal details including any health management plans, e.g., asthma, diabetes, etc, and next-of-kin details.

TES's are expected to adhere to all WHS policies and laws of the school/ centre/agency at which they are undertaking professional experience.



Image: UNE Psychology

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 (Threshold 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

ST's Handbook: Reference Guide for Mentoring a UNE Pre-Service Teacher.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011



*Image: UNE Memorial Garden –
In Memory of Students and Staff who gave their lives in WWII*



Image: UNE Celebrating its 70th year in 2024

The images in the Professional Experience Handbook were provided by Susan Moore,
Placement Officer, Office for Professional Learning, UNE

Appendix 1: School of Education, Professional Experience Policy



School of Education Professional Experience Policy (School Teaching & Learning Committee)

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) STs (ST) of UNE's TES's 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 TES's (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 TES 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 TES

- 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 TES's 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 TES's preferred geographic area. This, however, cannot be guaranteed because the decision to accept TES's for placements in specific schools or centres is at the discretion of the school principal or service director.
 - 2.3.2.1 TES's 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 TES 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 as a result of the Graduate Teacher Performance Assessment task (GTPA) expectation and requirements (GTPA Booklet, p.5 *'Requirements for the learning sequence are that it is sustained over the period of placement'*).
 - 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 TES and the school/centre, and not the OPL/UNE.
- 2.3.7 All TES's 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 TES 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. Evidence of employment will be requested (Usually an employment period of 12 months will be suggested).
- 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 different school settings aligning with the requirements for their UNE course.

For example, at least two placements in two primary school settings for the Bachelor of Education K-6) teaching degree.

- 2.3.11 It is expected that UNE TES's in the first year of their studies will attempt the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial TES's (the test) ([LANTITE](#)). TES's enrolled in an Initial Teacher Education degree are required to successfully complete [LANTITE](#). It is expected this test will be completed in a TES'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 TES 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.
- TES's 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 TES 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 TES's 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 TES's 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 TES, the ST 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 TES and member of staff or student body (e.g., A TES attends a placement in the same school where their child attends).
- (b) TES's 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 TES 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 TES 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 TES while on a professional experience placement will be completed by the ST(s) with input from the principal, director, coordinator or delegate as required.
- 3.5 STs will base their assessment of a TES 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 STs 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 TES to pass their professional experience placement. Failure of the TES 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 ST to pass or fail a student if they have reason to believe that the ST has not properly assessed the TES against the Professional Standards or Guidelines as per the Handbook and relevant documentation.
- 3.9 Upon completion of the professional experience, the ST will recommend the TES be passed or failed for the professional experience, but the University determines the final grade in consultation with the ST 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 TES'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 TES'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 TES will be expected to re-enrol in specific professional experience placement unit to complete a 'Satisfactory' placement. Although STs are responsible for submitting the *Professional Experience Report*, TES's 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 TES 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 ST, 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 TES 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 TES'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 TES who has had their professional experience placement terminated will be deemed to have failed the placement.
- 4.5 A TES 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 TES 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 TES 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 TES's 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 ST is responsible for:

- a) providing supportive supervision to the TES 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 TES about the applicable policies, procedures and protocols of the placement setting;
- c) assessing the TES 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 TES'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 TES 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 TES's 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 ST at the point of arising concerns relating to the TES's progress during the placement.

Action Plan is contained within the 'At-Risk' Package. It is to be used to create goals for the TES 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 TES in Schools or Early Childhood setting.

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

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

Weekly Review Sheet is a template for the ST to provide weekly, culminating feedback against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APSTs) to the TES 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.

ST 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 TES during a professional experience placement.

TES 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
ST'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>

Information about the Commonwealth Prac Payment

https://apply.une.edu.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/5610/~information-about-the-commonwealth-prac-payment#loaded

Become a teacher

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teach-nsw/become-a-teacher/pre-service-teacher-hub>