

**School of Education**

**Professional Experience Policy**

**(School Teaching & Learning Committee)**

**Overview**

Professional experience is a compulsory requirement of all Initial Teacher Education and early childhood courses. This policy and procedures document provides for professional experience placement in a school or early childhood setting and assessment guidelines for professional experience as part of the School of Education’s requirements in relation to compulsory professional experience placements.

**Scope**

This policy sets out parameters surrounding students’ undertaking of the professional components of their Initial Teacher Education or early childhood course.

This policy applies to:

1. UNE students undertaking Initial Teacher Education or early childhood courses (teacher education students);
2. supervising teachers of UNE students undertaking professional experience; and
3. UNE representatives.

**Policy**

**1. Professional Experience**

* 1. Where professional experience is a requirement of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), the University will meet the requirements of the [Professional Experience Framework](http://nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/DownloadDocument.ashx?DocumentID=1180).
  2. The University will only facilitate placements or internships for teacher education students where the placement setting complies with the requirements of the [Fair Work Act](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Pay/unpaid-work).
  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 a unit and with the authorisation of the University.
  4. The University reserves the right not to place a student in a professional experience setting where the performance, personal or professional, conduct of the teacher education student does not meet the required standard.
  5. In the event of a conflict between this policy and the *Supervising Teacher’s Handbook: Reference Guide for Mentoring a UNE Teacher education student,* this policy shall take precedence.

**2. Professional Experience and the Teacher Education Student**

* 1. Teacher education students must submit all required documents to the Office for Professional Learning by the due date and receive a Confirmation of Placement Notification before starting a placement.
  2. Teacher education students who undertake placement without receiving a Confirmation of Placement will be required to immediately terminate their placement. A repeat of the placement will be compulsory and no completed days in the terminated placement will count towards the professional experience placement requirements.
  3. Professional experience placements:
     1. Professional experience placements will normally be completed in a full-time block, e.g. 20-day placements over a consecutive four (4) week period.
     2. Reasonable efforts are made to provide a placement in the teacher education student’s preferred geographic area. However, this cannot be guaranteed because the decision to accept teacher education students in placements is at the discretion of the school principal or service director.
        1. Teacher education students will be required to travel for placement at a distance set by the Office for Professional Learning. This distance will not exceed 90 minutes of travel time from area of preference.
     3. Variations to placements are at the discretion of the Office for Professional Learning after discussion with the principal or service director at the original and/or revised placement setting.
     4. A graduate-level (final) placement must be completed in full-time capacity in a prescribed block. No variation to the block is allowed.
     5. The splitting of a placement is not allowed 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.
     6. Placement is not allowed outside formal enrolment in a unit with a mandatory professional experience requirement.
     7. All teacher education students must hold a valid NSW Working with Children Check (or equivalent interstate clearance for placements outside NSW) and all relevant Anaphylaxis and Child Protection Certificates before they begin a placement. No teacher education student may undertake a placement without providing evidence of meeting all these requirements.
     8. Placements are normally unpaid in a school, service or centre setting in accordance with the [Fair Work Act Student Placements information](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Pay/Unpaid-work/student-placements).
     9. Paid in-service placements may be undertaken providing the in-service placement is comparable to 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 cannot be completed as in-service in accordance with NESA’s policy: [*NSW Supplementary Documentation: Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education*](http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/2890147a-312e-40d9-8145-d5327c1829a5/professional-experience-in-ite-policy.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=)*.*
     10. In accordance with NESA’s [*NSW Supplementary Documentation: Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education*](http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/2890147a-312e-40d9-8145-d5327c1829a5/professional-experience-in-ite-policy.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=), all students must complete in-school professional experience placements in at least two school settings.
     11. Teacher education students must inform the Office for Professional Learning, in advance of the placement, 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.
     12. If teacher education students are affected by unanticipated circumstances during the period of the placement, they must advise the Office for Professional Learning as soon as practicable. Subsequent adjustments cannot compromise the academic integrity of the course.

1. Any days missed due to absence must be completed at a later date negotiated by the teacher education student and the supervising teacher.
   1. Conflicts of interest
2. Potential or actual conflicts of interest may arise on a professional experience placement such as family members enrolled or on staff or on paid employment, in the same setting as the teacher education student.
3. Teacher education students may only be placed in a setting in which a conflict of interest may occur when the principal, director or delegate confirms that the concerns will not burden staff or affect the outcome of the professional experience placement.
4. Failure to notify the School of Education Office for Professional Learning of a potential or actual conflict of interest may result in the placement being terminated and/or an unsatisfactory result being recorded for the placement.
   1. Placements must meet the following requirements:
5. Settings must provide an experience of a range of teaching and learning activities.
6. 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.
7. Early childhood settings must cumulatively provide experience of a range of early childhood programs and age groups.
8. Bachelor of Special and Inclusive Education (Primary) placements must ensure the specialist placement and the final placement are in different school settings.
9. 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 Supplementary Documentation: Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education*](http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/32179d57-1797-46a8-b8eb-4a08fb8f2fc3/Professional+Experience+in+ITE+Policy+-+Jan+2017.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=) 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 an Australian School setting in Australia.

**3. Professional Experience Assessment**

* 1. A teacher education student will be assessed against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers or the Early Childhood Qualification Guidelines (Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority, ACECQA) if they are undertaking professional experience in a school or early childhood setting respectively.
  2. A student must meet required Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at the Graduate level, or the ACECQA Specifications to successfully complete a professional experience placement.
  3. Students undertaking a specialist TESOL program [e.g., MAppLing, MEd (TESOL), GradCertEdStud (TESOL)] must complete a successful professional experience placement to meet qualification requirements of state-based departments of education, NEAS or equivalent.
  4. Assessment of a teacher education student while on a professional experience placement will be completed by the supervising teacher(s) with input from the principal, director, coordinator or delegate as required.
  5. Supervising teachers will base their assessment of a teacher education student on the *Assessment* guidance in the *Supervising Teacher’s Handbook: Reference Guide for Mentoring a UNE Teacher Education Student.*
  6. Where multiple supervisors are required, a joint recommendation must be made on one report.
  7. A supervising teacher must ensure that a *Progress Guide —* *‘At Risk’ Action Plan* is administered and an Action Plan is completed where a teacher education student is giving cause for concern, or is deemed ‘At Risk of Failing’. The Action Plan should have demonstrated pathways for the teacher education student to pass their professional experience placement. Failure of the teacher education student to follow the Action Plan will result in an Unsatisfactory result for their Professional Experience Report.
  8. A principal, director or coordinator may override an assessment recommended by a supervising teacher to pass or fail a student if they have reason to believe that the supervising teacher has not properly assessed the teacher education student against the Professional Standards or Guidelines as per the handbook and relevant documentation.
  9. Upon completion of the professional experience, the supervising teacher will recommend the teacher education student be passed or failed for the professional experience, but the University determines the final grade in consultation with the supervising teacher and other parties as per clause 3.4.
  10. A grade of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory will be awarded for the professional experience placement.
  11. A teacher education student professional experience placement is failed, terminated or withdrawn, they will be required to complete remediation in a form set by the School of Education. Enrolment in future placements will not be permitted until the remediation process has been satisfactorily completed.

**4. Termination of Professional Experience Placement**

4.1 Grounds for termination of a professional experience placement include but are not limited to:

1. failure to reasonably co-operate with staff and work effectively in the placement setting;
2. demonstrated attitudes and actions antithetical to the profession of teaching;
3. absence from the professional experience placement without satisfactory explanation, approved leave or the necessary documentation;
4. deficiencies in knowledge and understanding of subject disciplines, the curriculum and/or planning for learning;
5. failure to communicate adequately;
6. no demonstrated improvement after an Action Plan has been implemented;
7. failure to meet the requirements of one or more of the Fundamental Skills Assessment;
8. breaches of University regulations, policies and/or procedures; and,
9. breaches of applicable policies, procedures and protocols of the placement setting and/or the [NSW Department of Education and Communities Code of Conduct](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/careers-centre/why-choose-us/code-of-conduct) and/or regulations or the law.

4.2 The University may terminate a teacher education student’s professional experience placement on the basis of 4.1 and/or on the recommendation of the Principal, Director or delegate of the placement setting.

4.3 Where the principal, director, or their delegate recommends a termination of a professional experience placement they must sign the *Progress Guide: Placement Requires Termination* on the relevant Progress Guide.

4.4 A teacher education student who has had their professional experience placement terminated will be deemed to have failed the placement.

4.5 A teacher education student who has had their professional experience placement terminated may be precluded from future professional experience placements and/or a return to the original placement setting.

4.6 A teacher education student who is precluded from further professional experience due to the termination of a placement under 4.2 may be asked to show cause under section 17 of the *General Rules*.

**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 Students/teacher education students participating in professional experience placement are responsible for:

1. complying with the relevant UNE Rules and Policies;
2. undertaking criminal probity checks, vaccination status, and other conditions as required at their own cost;
3. complying with all applicable policies, procedures and protocols of the placement setting and/or the [NSW Department of Education Code of Conduct](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/careers-centre/why-choose-us/code-of-conduct);
4. committing themselves to full and active participation in the placement and its assessment; and
5. at the earliest opportunity, raising with the Office for Professional Learning any issues impacting adversely on their participation in the placement.

6.2 Supervising Teacher is responsible for:

1. providing supportive supervision to the teacher education student and providing regular feedback on his or her progress during the placement;
2. ensuring that adequate and appropriate information is provided to the teacher education student about the applicable policies, procedures and protocols of the placement setting;
3. assessing the teacher education student against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers or the Early Childhood Qualification Guidelines (ACECQA) and recommending to the Office for Professional Learning a result based upon the teacher education student's performance relevant to level of placement; and
4. completing all required and relevant paperwork and submitting it to the Office for Professional Learning.

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:

1. ensuring that professional experience placements comply with all relevant Government legislation and regulations and University rules and policies, where appropriate;
2. ensuring that staff within the School are aware of and comply with this policy and the related procedures; and
3. ensuring that teacher education students in the School are adequately notified of the existence of this policy and the related procedures.

**7. Records Management**

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

**8. Authorisation**

Substantive amendments to this policy and procedures must only be made by the School of Education Teaching and Learning Committee.

**Definitions**

**Action Plan** is contained within the Progress Guide: ‘At Risk’ Action Plan. It is to be used to create goals for the teacher education student to facilitate learning for a satisfactory outcome of placement.

**Placement** means an abbreviated wording for professional experience placement.

**Professional Experience is** ‘on the job’ preparation for teaching undertaken by a teacher education student in a school or early childhood setting.

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

**Progress Guides** are a set of reports completed by the supervising teacher with the teacher education student throughout the placement (only if the placement is longer than five days) or at any time the teacher education student is ‘At Risk of Failure’.

**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.

1. 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.
2. Enrolled student means a student who has been admitted to a UNE course of study at UNE or elsewhere and who is enrolled in a unit at UNE.

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

**Teacher Education Student** is a tertiary education student studying an initial teacher education or Early Childhood course at the University of New England.

**UNE Representative** means a University employee (casual, fixed term and 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 Supplementary Documentation: Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education*](http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/32179d57-1797-46a8-b8eb-4a08fb8f2fc3/Professional+Experience+in+ITE+Policy+-+Jan+2017.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=)

*Fair Work Act 2009*

*Higher Education Standards Framework (Thresholds Standards) 2011*

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

[NSW Supplementary Documentation: Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education](http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/DownloadDocument.ashx?DocumentID=1263)

Records Management Policy

School of Education Partial Credit Policy

Student Behavioural Misconduct Rules

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

*Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*

**Administration**

# Document type: Policy

**Administering entity:** School of Education, Office for Professional Learning

**Date approved:** 2 September 2015

**Approved by:** School of Education Teaching & Learning Committee

**Indicative time for review:** 5 years from date of approval

**Responsibility for review:** School of Education Teaching & Learning Committee

**Updated:** 15 February 2018

**Update approved by:** School of Education Teaching and Learning Committee