

## **Professional Experience Placements:**

### ***Professional Experience Mentor Visits***

As a first point of contact, [professional experience mentors](#) are a source of advice and support for pre-service teachers on professional experience placements, as well as for supervising teachers.

Professional experience mentors will undertake site visits to pre-service teachers in their penultimate (second last) placement when the school site is within reasonable travel distance. For remote, interstate, or overseas sites, the professional experience mentor will communicate with the pre-service teacher through email and phone.

There are a range of potential purposes for making site visits; these may vary according to the context and needs of the pre-service teacher. As a general rule, the goals of site visit include:

- (1) Observing and providing formative feedback on the pre-service teacher's practice;
- (2) Facilitating a conversation with the pre-service teacher and supervising teacher(s) about the pre-service teacher's progress;
- (3) Providing in-person advice to the pre-service teacher and the supervising teacher;
- (4) Building relationships between the University and the school site.

Ideally, the visit involves an opportunity to observe the pre-service teacher 'in action' but this is not always possible or essential. The professional experience mentor may also like to interact with students (but not teach), so that their presence in the learning space is as natural and unobtrusive as possible. If it can be arranged, having an opportunity to speak with the pre-service teacher and supervising teacher individually, then all together, is helpful. A visit normally involves the professional experience mentor being on site for about an hour, but this can vary according to context, the timetable, and the needs of the pre-service teacher.

The [Visit Communication Form](#) helps document key points from any observations and conversations. Although the advice of the professional experience mentor may help confirm an assessment of the pre-service teacher's progress, the purpose of the visit is not to conduct a formal assessment of the pre-service teacher's practice nor does the Visit Communication Form represent part of the formal assessment of the placement. The visit is intended to be formative and supportive in nature. The supervising teacher(s) maintains responsibility for completing the assessment reports for the placement.

**Advice for pre-service teachers:**

1. *Be proactive.* Your professional experience mentor has a complex and busy schedule, so anything you can do to make it easy in terms of arranging the visit will be appreciated. For example, you might send a copy of your timetable and facilitate communication with your supervising teacher to assist in confirming a suitable time, or you might make changes to your duties in order to accommodate the timing of your professional experience mentor's visit.
2. *Be prepared.* Having your planning and reflection documents ready for your professional experience mentor to view will help make the most of the time. Similarly, if you are familiar with and have ready access to the interim report, expectations document, assessment report form, this will mean you can drive the conversation about your experience and progress more effectively.
3. *Be yourself.* Remember, your professional experience mentor is coming to support you, not judge you. Where relevant, introduce your professional experience mentor to the students and make them feel comfortable in the learning space. Take the opportunity to reflect honestly about your experience, knowing that your professional experience mentor is an experienced educator who cares about the profession and about you.

**Advice for supervising teachers:**

1. *Be proactive.* If there is information that would be helpful for the professional experience mentor to know prior to the meeting, we recommend making direct contact with them via phone as early as possible.
2. *Be prepared.* If you can be familiar with the assessment report form, that's a great start. Be ready to advise on whether (and why) the pre-service teacher is on track to complete the placement successfully and what plans are in place for them to further develop their practice.
3. *Be yourself.* As a supervising teacher, your professional judgment is respected and valued. The professional experience mentor will be there primarily to listen to you and the pre-service teacher.

***The following points connect information from the placement expectations with implications for the visit:***

**Planning and reflection documents**

Throughout the final placement, pre-service teachers are expected to maintain a comprehensive observation file and a reflection journal in a format that best meets their individual needs. These documents should provide a foundation for routine discussion with the supervising teacher and for assessment of the pre-service teacher. In addition, pre-service teachers are expected to maintain a resource file including school policies and learning resources. The maintenance and use of these files is assessed by the supervising teacher.

*Pre-service teachers are not required to submit planning or reflections to the University, but they are encouraged to have such records ready for viewing and/or discussion when the professional experience mentor visits the site.*

## Assessment

Pre-service teachers will be assessed against selected focus areas within the Australian standards. The Interim Report should be completed and emailed to the PE Office at the completion of Week 2. The final Assessment Report Form must be completed in full and returned to the Professional Experience Office via email on the final day of placement, or as soon as possible after the placement is completed. The final Assessment Report includes developmental indicators designed to assist pre-service teachers and supervising teachers understand the desired levels of achievement for the final placement.

*During a site visit, professional experience mentors may focus the conversations on points raised in the Interim Report and ask about the pre-service teacher's progress in relation to the final assessment. This provides a helpful indication about the opportunities and supports a pre-service teacher might need in order to successfully complete the placement.*

## Cautionary Advice Notice

If at any point the Supervising Teacher, professional experience mentor or pre-service teacher has concerns that one or more of the standards in the assessment report would not be met by the end of the placement, it is vital that the [Cautionary Advice Notice \(CAN\)](#) be completed in collaboration with the above parties, and returned to the Coordinator, Professional Experience as soon as possible *within* the placement.

*Where a CAN has been submitted, the professional experience mentor may draw on the comments on the CAN in a conversation about concerns, goals, progress, and supports. The visit may also help determine whether a CAN should be completed in order to initiate relevant supports.*

## Key contacts

Designation/Campus	Contact details
General Enquiries:	Professional Experience Office Ph: 6324 3791 <a href="mailto:Professional.Experience@educ.utas.edu.au">Professional.Experience@educ.utas.edu.au</a>
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