Guidelines for developing formal partnerships that meet the requirements of Program Standard 5.1

These guidelines have been developed in consultation with a range of participants as a resource for initial teacher education (ITE) providers and their partners in documenting professional experience partnerships in accordance with Program Standard 5.1 of *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia – Standards and Procedures* (2015). Providers and their partners may, of course, develop partnerships in an alternative format. The accompanying template is to enable partners to formalise partnerships to facilitate the delivery of programs, particularly professional experience for pre-service teachers.

The development of a formal partnership is an opportunity for prospective partner institutions and sites to explore the purpose and scope of their joint activity and the ways in which they intend to work together. In jurisdictions where systemic approaches to agreements have been developed, providers and their partners are able to enhance these. They may do this by exploring with individual or clusters of schools the ways they can work together to improve the learning of pre-service teachers, school teachers, institution staff and of course school students themselves.

Many providers and their partners already have partnerships in place that meet Program Standard 5.1, and in some jurisdictions these partnerships have been developed at the system level. These guidelines have drawn on those existing arrangements, and the generosity with their time and resources of those involved is acknowledged by AITSL.

Program Standard 5.1 specifies that “formal partnerships, agreed in writing, are developed and used by providers and schools/sites/systems to facilitate the delivery of programs, particularly professional experience for pre-service teachers. Formal partnerships exist for every professional experience school/site and clearly specify components of placements and planned experiences, identified roles and responsibilities for both parties and responsible contacts for day-to-day administration of the arrangement.”

Although these are the elements required by Program Standard 5.1, partners may wish to extend the range of their activities beyond these requirements. This extension may include arrangements for such activities as joint research opportunities, professional learning and development of teachers and university staff, and opportunities for school/site staff to work through the partnership activities towards credit for higher degree studies.

Some existing partnerships have also found that the sharing of data relating to professional experience is a useful component of their formal partnerships. This is particularly the case with some system-level agreements, where the data exchanged contributes to workforce planning. The data may include numbers of pre-service teachers enrolled in specific subject areas or sector of schooling preparation, or numbers and locations of professional experience placements.

The partners with whom providers develop formal partnerships may be entire education systems, districts, clusters or hubs, or individual schools/early childhood sites. Program Standard 5.1 requires that every professional experience site must be included within the ambit of a formal partnership which is agreed in writing. It follows that providers should not place pre-service teachers in settings that do not fall within the ambit of a properly concluded arrangement.

Partnership is collaborative work through which parties agree to undertake significant activity together. It is a logical expectation that the actual planning and development of formal partnerships be undertaken collaboratively among all of the parties involved in the partnership.

The following template outlines the sections of a partnership arrangement and provides advice about the intended content of each section.

**Note:** These guidelines and the template provided are not intended to be, nor do they constitute, legal advice. Partnership arrangements may be developed in a range of ways and not all partnerships need to be legally constituted partnerships. Providers wanting to take a legal approach to their partnership arrangements should seek legal or other professional advice before acting or relying on this guidance or the partnership template.

Partnership template

**This partnership is agreed in writing on [date] between:**

1. **[Name of provider] and**
2. **[Name/s of other partners]**
3. **Background**

This section provides information about the role and importance of professional experience in the initial preparation of teachers and the place of partnership in its delivery. It may also provide a summary of the philosophical and theoretical bases on which the provider’s programs have been developed.

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| [Insert background information here] |

1. **Definitions**

The language of professional experience, and of school/site-provider partnerships more generally, is used differently across institutions and contexts. In this section, key terminology is defined in the context of each particular partnership for the purpose of clarity and conciseness as well as to provide emphasis. These terms are likely to refer to specific personnel such as pre-service teachers, school coordinators, provider professional experience coordinators, supervising lecturers, and so on. They may also refer to activities, such as observation lessons, practicum, internships, extended experience and demonstration lessons.

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| [Insert definitions here] |

1. **Purposes**

In this section, the purposes of the formal partnership will be identified and spelt out. It is not intended that this section describe the purpose of professional experience itself.

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| [Insert purposes here] |

1. **Scope**

Here the partners should clearly state in a comprehensive manner all of the aspects of their partnership that are covered by the formal partnership.   
Partners should also make specific reference to aspects of their partnership that are not within its scope as deemed relevant, including aspects covered by other arrangements/agreements.

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| [Insert scope here] |

1. **Implementation / conditions**

There is a wide range of activities undertaken in effecting professional experience partnerships, and these are guided by key agreed protocols, processes and procedures. This section of the document should list these and provide some detail of their significance and execution. Note that the later “Roles and responsibilities” section will include many of these with details about responsibility for them.

Headings within this section should include, but are not limited to:

* Overview of the components of placements and planned experiences. *(Note: The specific details of each individual placement are likely to be outlined in any schedules developed as part of the formal partnership).*

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| [Insert implementation / conditions here] |

1. **Roles and responsibilities**

Provides details of the individuals and/or sections of organisations with responsibility for the enactment of the range of actions that together contribute to the successful execution of partnership activities and the achievement of objectives. It is expected that this section will draw heavily on the AITSL document available at <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/initial-teacher-education/ite-reform/professional-experience/roles-and-responsibilities>.

Headings within this section should include, but are not limited to:

* Initial teacher education provider roles
* Responsible contacts from provider for day-to-day administration of the professional experience arrangements
* School/early childhood site based roles
* Responsible contacts from the school/site for day-to-day administration of the professional experience arrangements
* System roles

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| [Insert roles and responsibilities here] |

1. **Term of the formal partnership**

The anticipated timeframe of the formal partnership is included here, with starting and finishing dates and any special milestone events.

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| [Insert term here] |

1. **Review**

In this section, the parties agree to arrangements for the evaluation, review and revision of the partnership, including such components as frequency, initiation and responsibilities. Many partners will wish to conduct annual reviews of their partnerships in light of institutional developments, placements required or changes in personnel. Others may prefer to link review arrangements with the timeframe specified in Section G.

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| [Insert review here] |

1. **Signatures of representatives**

There needs to be evidence that the formal partnership is agreed by the parties to it, and this is usually indicated by the signing of the partnership arrangement by representatives of each partner.

**[Provider] signature:**

**[Partner/s] signature:**

**Schedules**

It is suggested that the preceding, main body of each partnership be generic to all partnerships to which a provider is party. It is then suggested that those features that individualise and differentiate a particular partnership with a partner/s be attached as schedules, annexes or attachments to the template. There is a range of topics for possible inclusion in annexes, such as numbers of placements agreed to in a year, names of a school’s team of supervising teachers, arrangements for training and development of supervising teachers and supervising lecturers, financial arrangements and commitments (if any).

Please include schedules, annexes or attachments as required.