

Professional experience

Participant roles and responsibilities

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Overview

Professional experience is the component of an initial teacher education program in which pre-service teachers develop and demonstrate their skills in the classroom. Its purpose is to provide structured opportunities for pre-service teachers to consider and undertake in practice the work of teaching, to relate the practice to knowledge and understanding they are developing in their program, and to demonstrate a positive impact on student learning. It is above all else a period of workplace-based learning. The *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers* report and Australian Government response to this report, identify strengthened professional experience as one of the keys to improve teacher education in Australia.

This document describes the roles and responsibilities of the key groups that share responsibility for the professional experience component of initial teacher education programs, which include:

- professional experience sites
- supervising teachers
- pre-service teachers
- providers of initial teacher education
- education systems.

Each of these groups has specific and complementary responsibilities in supporting professional experience. In order to develop strong partnerships, focused on student achievement on site, these groups should seek opportunities to increase their understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities.

An important ingredient of success in professional experience is the contribution of the supervising teacher. Providers of initial teacher education, education systems, and professional experience sites share

responsibility for ensuring that supervising teachers have the skills, knowledge and professional attributes to support pre-service teachers during their placements.



Professional experience sites

Schools and early childhood settings have an important role to play in supporting initial teacher education and contributing to the learning experiences of pre-service teachers through the provision of professional experience placements. This includes opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop, practise, demonstrate and understand the impact of their teaching skills in a range of settings with a range of learners.

Critical to the effectiveness of the placement, is the relationship between pre-service teachers and placement staff, including the supervising teacher. Strong support for professional experience from the principal and other leaders is key to effective placements. A whole-of-organisation approach to supporting pre-service teachers, including induction and assessment of pre-service teachers will ensure a quality experience.

The professional experience site:

- develops a professional learning and growth culture, that inspires pre-service teachers to become and remain teachers
- encourages effective teachers with good support and coaching skills to take on the role of supervising teacher
- establishes strategies that celebrate the importance and value of professional experience and highlights benefits to the community
- supports the work of the supervising teacher as well as their professional learning to acquire skills in assessing, supervising, and coaching pre-service teachers
- clarifies, in collaboration with providers, roles and expectations for assessment of pre-service teachers, particularly the designated role for supervising teachers
- supports pre-service teachers to meet the placement objectives, including having an impact on student learning
- provide a learning program that focuses on all aspects of teachers' work, as well as providing the opportunity for pre-service teachers to participate purposefully in the life of the professional experience site
- works closely with providers to ensure the objectives and planned components of each placement are clear and well documented
- supports innovation and research in professional experience
- recognises its responsibility to the profession in regards to the development of emerging teachers via contributing to the availability of quality placements

Supervising teachers

The role of the supervising teacher is to support pre-service teachers in meeting the requirements of professional experience, including meeting the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* at the graduate career stage. The skills of professional experience supervision are related to successful classroom teaching, and include coaching, assessment, professional communication and the provision of feedback based on evidence. In collaboration with colleagues, effective supervising teachers foster a culture where pre-service teachers are engaged in meaningful conversations regarding their impact on student learning and their own progress, successes and challenges to encourage reflection and collaboration. These skills may require development, and supervising teachers may need opportunities to learn to perform their roles well.

The supervising teacher:

- demonstrates understanding of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*

- demonstrates a clear commitment to supervising and developing pre-service teachers with a focus on helping them understand and improve their impact on student learning

- assesses the professional practice of pre-service teachers rigorously and fairly against the requirements of the placement and the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* at the graduate career stage, and provides evidence-based feedback to pre-service teachers

- takes responsibility for their own professional development as a coach, advisor, and assessor

- acts as a role model to pre-service teachers by participating actively in all aspects of a teacher's professional life

- assists pre-service teachers to work with and learn from other teachers who are effective in particular areas

- demonstrates their professional commitment by including pre-service teachers in professional activities and positioning them as active contributors

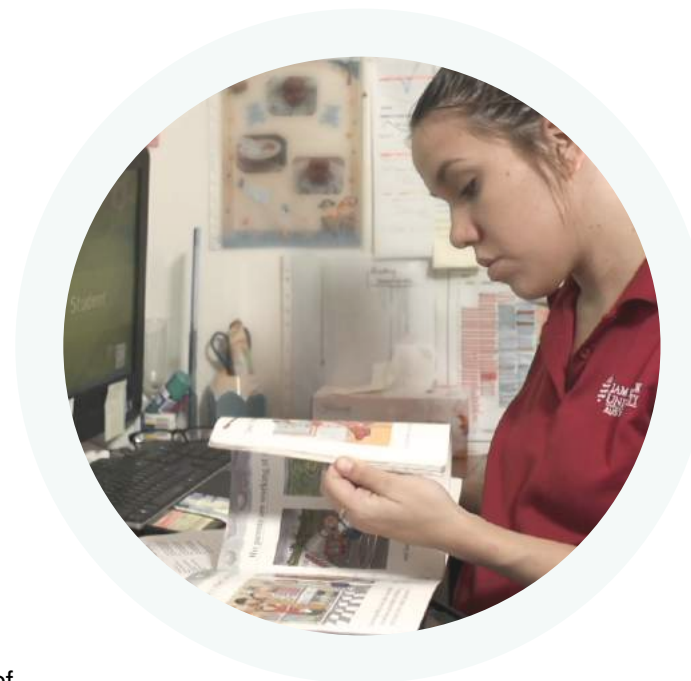
- supports the integration of work-based learning with coursework and other provider-based learning undertaken by pre-service teachers through collaboration with colleagues and provider staff

- demonstrates a commitment to partnerships by participating in joint activities, such as collaborative cross-institutional professional conversations and research projects

- collaborates with the professional experience coordinator, the provider professional experience director and school/early childhood leadership to provide early and appropriate support and advice to pre-service teachers experiencing difficulties in meeting the requirements of the placement

Pre-service teachers

The role of the pre-service teacher is to undertake professional experience with commitment, both as a key component of their initial teacher education program and as an opportunity to participate in the life of the professional experience site and contribute as a professional. When undertaking professional experience, pre-service teachers learn about being a member of the teaching profession through the example set by supervising teachers as well as through the organised modelling and assessment that occurs through each placement. Central to the development of pre-service teachers is their engagement with and demonstration of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* at the graduate career stage as they progress through their program.



The pre-service teacher:

- understands the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*

- sets learning goals and targets for their own growth and reflection

- reflects on and applies advice and feedback from supervising teachers, professional experience coordinators and school/early childhood leaders, and works to improve their practice and impact on student learning

- undertakes placements in a professional and diligent manner, complying with the expectations of their provider and the placement site's policies and procedures

- ensures sound preparation for each placement so that they meet the objectives and requirements of professional experience

- participates fully in the life of the professional experience site throughout the placement

- understands the complexities of the professional experience site and community setting

- takes responsibility for their own learning

- reflects on and collects evidence of their impact on student learning

Initial teacher education providers

Providers of initial teacher education have responsibility for the development and delivery of higher education programs suitable for the professional preparation of teachers. In Australia, these programs must be accredited by the teacher regulatory authority in the appropriate jurisdiction and meet the requirements of the *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures*. Program Standard 5 outlines the requirements for the professional experience component of initial teacher education programs, including the structure of professional experience, the activities to which pre-service teachers are exposed, and the provision of high quality supervision and assessment.

The initial teacher education provider:

- ensures that pre-service teachers have an understanding of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*

- collects and reports on data regarding pre-service teacher performance against the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* at the graduate career stage

- supports supervising teachers in the assessment and development of pre-service teachers during professional experience

- shares the responsibility for providing opportunities for professional learning and development for supervising teachers, including working together with professional experience sites to identify the key features of the role of a supervising teacher and support arrangements to assist supervising teachers to develop their skills and knowledge

- provides supervising teachers with formative and summative assessment tools that are clear in their expectations and assist supervising teachers to make and record judgements and advice against the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* at the graduate career stage, ensuring consistency across the provider's professional experience sites

- provides information and documentation, such as professional experience handbooks and associated materials, and that is supported by open communication, to professional experience sites and supervising teachers that is explicit about the focus and expectations for each placement

- encourages pre-service teachers to actively reflect on and collect evidence of their impact on student learning during placements

- identifies and recognises outstanding supervising teachers for the key role they play in the development of pre-service teachers and celebrates these contributions in tangible ways with the wider education community

- is accountable for the outcomes of professional experience so that pre-service teachers meet the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* graduate career stage. This includes assessment, in collaboration with supervising teachers and other colleagues, of pre-service teachers against the Standards, including their impact on student learning

- develops clear and consistent processes for pre-service teachers who are identified as 'at risk' of not meeting the requirements of the placement

- promotes the importance of professional experience within their own institution, such as supporting academic staff in regard to professional experience development and research

Education systems

Education systems and sectors have an important stake in the development of classroom ready beginning teachers, and need to work closely with providers of initial teacher education in the delivery of professional experience. Education systems also foster the exchange of good practice and work closely with schools and professional experience sites to ensure that professional experience is consistent with quality teacher preparation.

The education system:

- engages with regulatory authorities, providers and professional experience sites to implement appropriate tools, protocols, and practices in regards to common approaches to the assessment of pre-service teachers, giving confidence that pre-service teachers complete professional experience with the skills to take their place as beginning teachers and to have an immediate impact on student learning

- engages with providers and professional experience sites in the development of teacher education policy and practice, including clear policy support for school/early childhood leadership to provide organisation-wide support for professional experience

- works with providers and professional experience sites to maximise the availability of quality placements, including opportunities for pre-service teachers in a range of settings

- supports school/early childhood leadership to further develop partnerships with providers

- initiates high-level partnership activities with providers and professional experience sites to develop strategies that celebrate the importance and value of professional experience, and highlight the benefits to professional experience sites and their communities



- supports the development of formal protocols that include clear roles and responsibilities in the delivery of professional experience in and across different sites

- acknowledges, supports and recognises the crucial role of supervising teachers

Resources

There are a number of resources available to support the provision of quality professional experience. Alongside these guidelines, the Supervising Pre-service Teacher learning program and the professional experience good practice case study videos are available through the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership website: <<http://www.aitsl.edu.au/>>

Many jurisdictions have also released resources that focus on the provision of quality professional experience, which complement and are complemented by these roles and responsibilities.

Key components of effective professional experience

a report by Associate
Professor Rosie
Le Cornu

12 quality practice case studies in professional experience

Register for the

Supervising Preservice
Teachers

learning program

Glossary

Classroom

Physical environment where learning takes place, including:

- classrooms in schools
- rooms in early childhood education and care services
- other areas where teaching and learning occurs

Education system

An entity with responsibility for the provision and oversight of schools and for the quality of education provided by them, or a formal association of otherwise independent and self-governing schools and other educational sites

Initial teacher education provider

An institution providing one or more accredited initial teacher education programs

Pre-service teacher

A student enrolled in an accredited initial teacher education program

Professional experience

Any component of an accredited initial teacher education program that comprises workplace learning in a school or other educational site relevant to a program

Professional experience coordinator

A person appointed by a school or other educational site to coordinate the range of professional experience placements occurring at that site

Professional experience director

A person appointed by an initial teacher education provider to take responsibility for the academic and administrative management of the initial teacher education professional experience program

Professional experience sites

Any site dedicated to the learning of children and young people, including early childhood, primary, middle and/or secondary schools or their equivalent

School/early childhood leadership

A person, or team, with the responsibility of shaping a school/early childhood setting vision, culture and environment so all members of the school community maximise student learning

Students

Students/children taught by a teacher in a school/early childhood setting or other education settings

Supervising teacher

A registered teacher responsible for coaching, providing feedback to and assessing pre-service teachers during work-based learning in professional experience sites

