



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE UC PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

The Professional Experience component of Teacher Education is conducted in partnership with schools. The UC Faculty of Education values the professional expertise of participating schools and we are seeking to ensure the support we provide is consistent with this professional partnership. To achieve the desired outcomes of Professional Experience, it is necessary that all participants have a clear understanding of their own role and responsibilities as well as being familiar with the role and responsibilities of other key personnel involved. The relationship between participants is based on clear communication and cooperation.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

When Preservice Teachers (*PSTs*) are assigned to a school they are under the administrative responsibility of the Principal. The Principal's responsibilities include:

- Endorsing the offers of placements arranged by the School Professional Experience Coordinator (*SPEC*) before returning details to the University;
- Welcoming Preservice Teachers to the school;
- Ensuring staff are aware that Preservice Teachers do not have legal responsibility for students and therefore **are not to be given sole responsibility** for the supervision of students.

SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE COORDINATOR (*SPEC*)

The *SPEC* is appointed by the Principal to coordinate and oversee the smooth running of Professional Experience within the school.

The *SPEC* is regarded as holding a unique pedagogical role: a 'leader of learning' within the school that enhances the *PST* experience.

This includes:

- Making *PSTs* aware of the roles teachers assume outside of classroom teaching hours;
- Modeling professional identity and professional responsibilities in a wider school context;
- Facilitating opportunities for *PSTs* to understand the collaborative nature of teaching and the role of administrative and executive staff;
- Promoting the importance of Professional Experience for *PSTs* within the school culture;
- Facilitating the establishment of a collegial working team among the Mentoring Teacher/s (*MT*), the *PST* and the University staff members;

- Monitoring PST progress and welfare and liaising with the University regarding placements, concerns about progress, PST achievement reports, MT payment processes etc.;
- Allocating or arranging class placements;
- Providing an orientation to the school including activities such as introduction to the staff, providing information about staffroom responsibilities and parking arrangements, appropriate procedures for using resources including computers, photocopiers and telephones;
- Briefing on school and system policies and organisation relevant to the Professional Experience (schools may produce and provide an Orientation Information Booklet to Preservice Teachers);
- Explaining the legal obligations while in the school including Occupational, Health and Safety policies used in the school;
- Providing opportunities to attend staff meetings and other relevant professional activities occurring during professional experience;
- Arranging opportunities to observe other classes and specialist areas within the school.

MENTORING TEACHER (MT)

As a general rule, the Mentoring Teacher should have at least three years teaching experience. However, the SPEC, in collaboration with the Principal where necessary, is able to make a professional judgment on the experience and commitment of staff members to take on the important mentoring role.

The role of a mentor is the development of *functional* teachers (socialisation) as well as to encourage PSTs to reflect on their beliefs, practices and understandings in light of their new experiences, teacher identity. (Walkington, 2005)

The MT has a vital role in fostering the professional learning of PSTs. Professional Experience allows PSTs to work closely with practitioners willing to share their work as classroom teachers, and members of the wider school community.

Mentor Teachers

- Provide PSTs with access to classes and students in a space at which theory can be put into practice – the extent of this access is ultimately at the discretion of the Mentor Teacher.
- Assess PSTs lesson plans for suitability for specific groups of students – PSTs must allow adequate time for this.
- Wherever possible, make provisions for the PST to attend meetings the mentor attends regardless of the hour.
- Contact the SPEC and UC's Intervention and Support Team to flag concerns as early as possible when a PST is at risk of failure.

AT THE FIRST SCHOOL VISIT, MENTORING TEACHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Negotiating with the PST the timing for Professional Experience to occur;
- Making available class lists, relevant background information, teaching programs, and class management policies and procedures;
- Outlining the school's expectations for planning and preparation;
- Guiding the PST towards resources and specialist personnel who are available within the school.

IN SUPPORTING THE PRESERVICE TEACHER DURING PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE, MENTORING TEACHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Assisting the PST to achieve the targets of the Professional Experience;
- Assisting students to work with the PST, including introducing them as a teacher;
- Providing an appropriate desk/work space, and introduction to other teachers in the staffroom;
- Providing opportunities for success by avoiding situations where inexperience may lead to failure (teaching experiences should provide appropriate challenges and also have an expectation of success);
- Modeling teaching techniques that complement and supplement the feedback given;
- Providing documentation, such as planning materials as models of good practice;
- Reviewing and commenting on all teaching plans at least one day prior (or by arrangement) to their implementation;
- Encouraging critical reflection upon his/her learning, and engaging in professional conversations with the PST;
- Assisting to improve the planning, implementation and evaluation of teaching through regular written and oral feedback;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the PST during the Professional Experience with reference to the expectations for the level of placement and in consultation with the SPEC and Regional School Support Staff as required;
- Regularly discussing progress and suggesting areas for continued focus;
- Facilitating opportunities for the PST to work with and receive feedback from other teachers in the school;
- Completing the Interim Feedback form *midway* through the Professional Experience as a means of sharing an understanding of progress and developing an action plan for the remainder of the placement; **the PST is responsible for uploading this form to their appropriate Professional Experience unit UCLearn (Canvas) site.** Where a Placement is for 10 days only, an interim report is not essential unless there are concerns with the PST. However, a specific feedback conversation between mentors and PSTs is desirable around the midpoint of the Placement;

- Completing and emailing the electronic *Final* report at the end of the Professional Experience to (peoffice@canberra.edu.au) **no later than one week after completing their placement**;
- Completing an *Intervention and Support* report at any stage where the PST is making unsatisfactory progress; the MT and SPEC are responsible for emailing this report immediately to the Placement Office at UC (peoffice@canberra.edu.au);
- Discussing reports with the PST;
- Attending all information sessions associated with Professional Experience.

MTs should note that PSTs do not have the legal responsibility for students and therefore are not to take over the sole charge of groups of students.

PRESERVICE TEACHER (PST)

As a general rule, for the duration of Professional Experience, PSTs will be regarded as being attached to the staff of the school and under the general supervision of the School Principal and SPEC, in addition to being under the direct supervision of the Mentoring Teacher/s.

Preservice Teachers take responsibility for their learning, ensuring that they:

- Are familiar with all components of their Professional Experience program;
- Become familiar with the unique contextual factors that characterise each educational setting;
- Meet before Placement with the SPEC and MT to
 - negotiate a schedule of attendance (see *UC Professional Experience Planner for current year*)
 - Make themselves aware of the school's opening and closing hours for both students and teachers and know the MT's expectations for observation of these;
 - Attend the times agreed for teachers at that school;
 - **Provide all documentation (including the Professional Experience Report) to their MT at the initial meeting;**
 - Take responsibility for uploading the *Professional Experience Planner* and the *Interim Feedback Report* to the dedicated drop boxes on the relevant Professional Experience unit UCLearn (Canvas) site;
 - Ensure all resources borrowed from the school are returned prior to completion of the experience;
- Fulfill any specific curriculum requirements for their individual programs and make appropriate arrangements for meeting the conditions of ongoing University units during Professional Experience;
- Discover the agencies and institutions that provide support to teachers;

- Conform to school policy concerning dress and professional behaviour;
- Conform to school and Directorate policies regarding appropriate use of ICT resources;
- Adjust quickly to the school setting in a manner that allows teachers to accept them as colleagues and students to accept them as teachers;
- Ensure that they contribute to and sign the **final report**, in a timely manner (no later than one week after completion of the Professional Experience placement.) The final report is then emailed by the Mentor Teacher to the Placement Office.

Preservice Teachers should be mindful at all times to maintain confidentiality.

PLACEMENT TEAM

The Placement Team is located in Careers UC, Building 1, Level C, Room 42 and administers placements across the University, including those for Teacher Education courses. Placements are coordinated via *InPlace*, UC's Placement Management System. All information relating to placements will be communicated through the Placement Team including the facilitation of Mentor Teacher payments.

UC SCHOOL SUPPORT TEAM (SST)

The supervision and evaluation of Preservice Teachers is the role of the Mentor Teacher with support from other school staff. Additional support is available from UC via the School Support Team. The team consists of academic members of staff from the Faculty.

All team members will be responsible for:

- Responding to Intervention & Support reports indicating unsatisfactory progress by discussing the issues with MT and PST and, in consultation with both MT and PST, record an agreed plan that will assist successful completion of the Professional Experience;
- Suspending the placement where such a plan cannot be agreed in a timely manner;
- In consultation with the MT and SPEC, extend the Professional Experience by up to 5 days if it is agreed that this is likely to allow the PST the opportunity to complete successfully;
- Notifying the Placement Team, Professional Experience Unit Convener and the Director of School Partnerships of any variations to the professional experience placement, and the outcomes of any Intervention and Support;
- In the event of the Professional Experience placement being evaluated as *unsatisfactory* on a Final Report, make recommendations to the Professional Experience Unit Convener on appropriate further action.

Note: It is not the role of the School Liaison Team to 'inspect' lessons of Preservice Teachers. While we do not exclude the activity, the observation of isolated lessons by University staff not familiar with the class, the school, or the previous progress of the Preservice Teacher is not the intention of their role. Another teacher from within the school being more familiar with the context, is more likely to provide useful feedback. School Liaison staff will more typically operate through facilitating professional conversations, clarifying expectations, and providing placement advice.

References

Walkington, J. (2005). *Becoming a teacher: Encouraging development of teacher identity through reflective practice*. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*. Vol. 33. DOI-10.1080/1359866052000341124