

ACT model for Professional Experience agreements

High quality professional experience is underpinned by strong collaborative partnerships between the initial teacher education provider and schools. The formal Professional Experience agreement details the expectations and responsibilities of all parties in the professional experience placement. The agreement articulates explicitly the expectations about the nature, purpose and requirements of the professional experience program and placement, the support from the ITE provider, the role of the mentor teacher and the assessment of the initial teacher education student. A formal Professional Experience agreement is required for each professional experience placement in an ACT school.

Professional Experience agreements in the ACT comprise a two tier approach. The ACT Professional Experience framework is an agreement between the ACT's two initial teacher education providers, the three school sectors and the Teacher Quality Institute. This framework is a commitment by the parties to work collaboratively to ensure that professional experience in the ACT is of the highest quality. Separate school level agreements with initial teacher education providers support each professional experience placement. These agreements can be with a school sector, a single school or a collective of schools. School level agreements are updated for each professional experience placement period.

ACT Pre-Service Teacher register

The Pre-service teacher register, administered by the Teacher Quality Institute, is an initiative which is unique across Australian jurisdictions. It provides an opportunity for initial teacher education students involved in professional experience in ACT schools to experience how the professional teacher registration process works. The register will enable the Teacher Quality Institute to collect valuable data on professional experience in ACT schools and will maintain a record of professional experience for each initial teacher education student. Initial teacher education students will have access to the Teacher Quality Institute web portal and its resources.

The expectation is that every initial teacher education student undertaking a professional experience placement in an ACT school or educational setting is included on the Pre-Service Teacher register. Inclusion on the register indicates to principals that the initial teacher education student has a valid Working with Vulnerable People card or equivalent and is eligible to undertake a professional experience placement in an ACT school.

ACT Ready to Teach assessment

Enhancing the capability of teachers is vital to raising the overall quality of Australia's school system and lifting student outcomes. Australian parents, students and communities must be confident that all initial teacher education graduates have been rigorously assessed and found to be ready to teach prior to graduation from an ITE program.

Genuine assessments of readiness to teach capture the complex skills required for teaching. An authentic and rigorous assessment of readiness to teach necessitates initial teacher education providers and schools working in partnership throughout initial teacher education programs. This includes determining the pre-service teacher's ability to effectively integrate theory and teaching practice and assisting them to collect supporting evidence.

All initial teacher education programs across Australia include a teaching performance assessment which is completed in conjunction with a final year professional experience placement. Initial teacher education graduates from ACT based initial education programs are required to successfully complete the ACT Ready to Teach assessment comprising a successful Teaching Performance Assessment and a successful final Professional Experience Assessment.

High Quality Professional Experience in ACT Schools



Essential Elements for High Quality Professional Experience

High quality Professional Experience is critical to ensuring that newly qualified teachers are ready to teach. Professional Experience provides the opportunity for prospective teachers: to learn and practice the art of teaching; to reflect on and learn from their experiences; to observe and be mentored by experienced teachers; to experience working in a school community; and, to commence their professional life as a teacher.

Supportive High quality professional experience is enhanced through the selection of quality trained mentors to work alongside initial teacher education students. Initial teacher education provider staff support mentors and initial teacher education students throughout the professional experience placement. Quality mentors understand learning and are confident in sharing their expertise, knowledge and teaching practice. Quality mentors are skilled in assisting initial teacher education students to interpret data and student feedback to effectively plan and modify their teaching. Ideally, mentors in high quality professional experience programs are Highly Accomplished or Lead teachers.

Reflective High quality professional experience supports and models the reflective practices and feedback techniques embedded in nationally accredited initial teacher education programs. High quality professional experience programs expect mentor/supervising teachers will provide regular written feedback using well designed observation tools. Mentors work collaboratively with initial teacher education students to plan and deconstruct lessons continually seeking to improve teaching effectiveness. Use of the Australian Professional Standards and ACT professional conversation prompts focus reflection and feedback on analysing and improving teaching practice and the impact on student learning.

Consistent High quality professional experience is assured through a rigorous approach to the assessment of initial teacher education student achievements against the graduate level of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Consistency and reliability across the professional experience program is achieved by the use of an agreed common assessment tool. Initial teacher education providers provide training for school partners in the assessment process and moderate assessments across the professional experience program. Assessment during the final professional experience placement certifies attainment of the graduate standards and 'readiness to teach'.

Flexible High quality professional experience is responsive to the differing needs of initial teacher education students and programs and to different school contexts. High quality professional experience programs are informed by, and adapt to, evidence based research and evaluation. Initial teacher education providers and schools explore, and use, different models for integrating professional experience and initial teacher education programs. Partnership agreements encourage collaboration across schools to share professional experience placements, to source quality mentors and to ensure a breadth of school contexts and teaching experiences.

Collaborative High quality professional experience is underpinned by strong collaborative partnerships, between the initial teacher education provider and schools. Formal partnership agreements document the expectations and responsibilities of all parties in the professional experience placement. The agreement articulates explicitly the expectations about the nature, purpose and requirements of the professional experience program and placement, the support from the university, the role of the mentor teacher and the assessment of the initial teacher education student. A formal partnership agreement is required for each professional experience placement in ACT schools.

Integrated High quality professional experience requires whole school commitment. Principals are deliberate in their choice of mentors and supervisors for initial teacher education students and support them with formal mentor training. All school staff are actively engaged in welcoming and involving the initial teacher education student in the daily life of the school. The school has a formal orientation program which outlines clearly its expectations of the initial teacher education student during the placement. The professional experience supervisor ensures that initial teacher education students are encouraged to attend and participate in all school activities during the placement period.

Planned High quality professional experience is well planned to ensure the school experience links closely to the objectives of the initial teacher education program. High quality professional experience programs are structured to ensure initial teacher education students access a range of schools and at least one substantial professional experience placement. These programs ensure placements in a minimum of two different school environments with opportunities for teaching across different year levels and student groupings. The program allows understanding and confidence to be built through observation and small group experiences prior to commencing a whole class teaching role.

