

Mentor Teacher – Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for taking on the role of Mentor Teacher for Edith Cowan University's Initial Teacher Education program.

It is important that you read through the Planning, Teaching and Assessment guidelines and any other important documentation that is sent to you from our Professional Experience Office. Below are frequently asked questions that may assist you.

Do I need to make initial contact with the Pre-service Teacher?

- It is the Pre-service Teacher's responsibility to make initial contact with you. Please look out for an email from the Pre-service Teacher or phone message left for you with your administration. Pre-service Teachers are notified via SONIA Online of their placement usually two weeks prior to commencement. Please respond to them as quickly as you can as they will be excited to hear back from you. If you do not hear from them within an appropriate period, please contact ECU's Professional Experience Office at placementseducation@ecu.edu.au.

When will I receive professional experience documentation from the University?

- You will receive documentation (professional experience placement guidelines and Pre-service Teacher evaluation links) via email close to when the Pre-service Teacher is due to commence. If you have not received any communication by Tuesday of the first week, please contact formseducation@ecu.edu.au. Please ensure you check your 'junk' folder prior to contacting.

Who will the University Supervisor be?

- The University Supervisor is employed by ECU and undergo University Supervisor professional learning each semester. ECU employs retired teachers, teachers currently working in the education system and university academic staff.
- The University Supervisor will be in contact with the Pre-service Teacher first and will meet you after they have arranged their first meeting with the Pre-service Teacher. At times, the University Supervisor may wish to have a conversation with you before or after they view the Pre-service Teacher lesson.

Do the Pre-service Teachers go to specialist classes?

- The Pre-service Teachers are expected to mirror their Mentor Teacher however, it would be a valuable opportunity for the Pre-service Teacher, especially in 1st year, to go and view how other teachers in the school teach, to develop more tips and tricks to assist their learning. This is up to your discretion. If Pre-service Teachers are completing a longer professional experience, they will need the allocated DOTT time to catch up with planning and marking.

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Do the Pre-service Teachers need to stay for the duration of the placement?

- Professional experience is a full-time commitment and Pre-service Teachers have access to professional experience dates at the start of the year. Pre-service Teachers are expected to complete full days and full weeks while at the school. Pre-service Teachers are not to leave early for appointments, picking up children etc. and should leave no earlier than what is expected from the school. They are expected to attend all staff meetings (unless deemed by the principal as not appropriate or necessary) and other meetings where appropriate. Pre-service Teachers are expected to show interest and participate, where appropriate, in the staff meeting. They are not to be working on lessons plans etc. while in attendance at staff meetings.

Can Pre-service Teachers attend camps /excursions?

- Our Pre-service Teachers are covered by insurance to attend camps and excursions. They may be worried about fitting in the number of lessons they need to complete so please speak to the University Supervisor or ECU's Unit Coordinator if you or the Pre-service Teacher is worried about the reduced amount of time to complete their minimum number of lessons.

Who do I contact if I am having any trouble/issues with the Pre-service Teacher?

- If you are having an issue with a Pre-service Teacher (e.g. they are not submitting learning experience plans on time, turning up too late to school, leaving too early, not taking advice), and you are comfortable to do so, please have an initial conversation with the Pre-service Teacher. If you are not comfortable or you have had the conversation and they are not changing their ways, please contact the University Supervisor ASAP. The University Supervisor will have a conversation with the Pre-service Teacher and if required, they will contact the University.

Who do I contact if I am having trouble/issues with the University Supervisor?

- If you are experiencing an issue with a University Supervisor, your Principal or School Practice Coordinator needs to contact the supervision team at superviseducation@ecu.edu.au.

The Pre-service Teacher is at risk of failing, what do I do?

- You need to contact the University Supervisor ASAP so that measures are put in place to support the Pre-service Teacher and yourself. If the Pre-service Teacher is at risk of failure, they should be well informed of how their placement is travelling, i.e. there should be no surprises.

The Pre-service Teacher has not shown up to professional experience and has not advised the Mentor Teacher or the school? Who should I do?

- Please inform the University Supervisor ASAP and they will manage the situation from there or alternatively, contact the Professional Experience Placements Office at placementseducation@ecu.edu.au.

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The Pre-service Teacher is unwell and had to go home. Do I need to inform anyone, and do they need to make up the day?

- No, you do not need to inform anyone but please keep a record of it. The Pre-service Teacher may need to make up the time they missed at the end of the placement. The make-up day will depend on the length of the placement. *Days missed during a 1st year 2-week block placement, will require to be made up.*
- Any absence of 2 or more days will require a medical certificate.
- All absences (including going home from school due to illness) require the Pre-service Teacher to complete an 'Notification of Absence from Professional Experience' form. They need to send this form to their University Supervisor. All Pre-service Teachers have access to the form.

I haven't received any information about the placement or any evaluation forms

- Please check your emails (including your junk folder) and if you cannot locate your email, please let your University Supervisor know ASAP. They will ask you to confirm your email address to ensure the University has the correct email address listed for you.

Do I provide feedback on every lesson?

- It would be ideal for you to provide feedback (written and/or verbal or both) so the Pre-service Teacher can assess how they have gone, what they did well and what they can work on. If they have your feedback in writing, they can refer back to it and reflect in more detail. They are required to keep written feedback in their Professional Experience file, so it is important for the Pre-service Teacher to have written feedback. It is a good idea to photocopy your feedback, so you have it to show the University Supervisor and use it to make professional judgements when completing your evaluation.

How much assistance do I need to give the Pre-service Teacher?

- This will depend on where the Pre-service Teacher is in their learning process. Some Pre-service Teachers will need more assistance, others less. Please talk to the University Supervisor if you are concerned with the level of assistance required.

How far in advance does the Pre-service Teacher need to hand in a Learning Experience Plan?

- The general rule of thumb is **2 days** prior, where practicable. This allows you to read the plan, correct and give advice when and if needed and allows time for the Pre-service Teacher to make corrections. Pre-service Teachers should not be teaching lessons if their learning experience plans have not received prior approval from the Mentor Teacher.

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How will I know how much teaching the Pre-service Teacher should be doing?

- Placement guidelines are emailed prior to Pre-service Teacher commencement. You can also access the guidelines on the ECU Professional Experience website <https://www.ecu.edu.au/schools/education/professional-experience>.
- Please read the guidelines carefully. Pre-service Teachers also have a copy of this documentation. This is the **recommended minimum**. If you feel they are capable of more (without overwhelming them) and they are happy to take on more, do so at your discretion. The time in front of the class should increase each week so please ensure their teaching is incremental and that you are not overloading them, even if they seem capable. They will be willing to please so please be mindful of them saying 'yes' even though extra work may cause them to feel overwhelmed.

The Pre-service Teacher is having difficulty pinpointing areas of strength and weakness. What can I do?

- Some Pre-service Teachers have access to a 'Monitoring tool' (3rd and final year Pre-service Teachers) and we ask them to honestly review each step and identify where they feel they are situated. This can be used as a valuable tool and a basis for discussion for the Mentor Teacher and the University Supervisor to assist the Pre-service Teacher to achieve success. Pre-service Teachers also have access to a copy of the assessment so they are aware of what they will be assessed on, and this can be used to help identify areas of concern or strength.

The Pre-service Teacher is really struggling with a lesson. Should I step in to assist?

- Only if you feel you absolutely need to. Please do not jump in straight away to assist as the Pre-service Teacher needs time to see that things are not going according to plan and time to re-evaluate on the spot. If they are incorrectly teaching a concept, then you may need to step in. It also might mean that you step in for a small part and then step back. Pulling up the Pre-service Teacher in front of the class may embarrass them and cause undue anxiety – this will require your professional judgement.

The Pre-service Teacher does not respond well to my advice and/or does not incorporate my corrections

- Please either have a chat with the Pre-service Teacher or discuss this with their University Supervisor ASAP.