

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## For students from Western Sydney University participating in School-Based Placements Professional Experience Placements

**\*Please Note:** If you are a Western Sydney online student any reference to vUWS relates to your Canvas

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# BEFORE PLACEMENT

## Special Requirements

### **I am having issues enrolling in my Professional Experience Subject. What is stopping me?**

Please check that you have met all the Special Requirements for this subject. The Special Requirements are related to the legislative requirements for educators in NSW and these are external requirements and must be completed prior to enrolling. For more information [click here](#).

### **When do I need to complete LANTITE?**

LANTITE is a mandatory enrolment requirement for PE2, PEK-6, PEx4 and PPE4. To fulfill this requirement, you must successfully complete both the Literacy and Numeracy components of LANTITE before enrolling into your final school based professional experience. This means that you must complete LANTITE at least one Semester before you are planning to register in your final professional experience subject.

### **Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)**

#### **Is there any room for credits towards my professional placement based on my experience in classrooms over the past 3 years? I am currently a Student Learning Support Officer at a Primary School.**

Students can apply for Credit for Prior Learning for Professional Experience; however, this will not be through the same process as other units. The University is required to follow NESA policy. Please refer to the [Credit for Prior Learning Protocols](#) document. Students can only receive a reduction in days required for their placement rather than the credits for the unit.

Please be aware that credit can only be granted for employment as a Conditionally Accredited **Teacher** and not for employment in roles such as SLSO or other positions within the school.

#### **If I have a teaching role at a school/community languages school as a conditionally accredited teacher, can I apply for CPL?**

Based on the current NESA policy, you may be eligible for credit of prior learning. Please refer to the [Credit for Prior Learning Protocols](#) document. Students can only receive a reduction in days required for their placement rather than the credits for the unit.

### **Do I need to be fully vaccinated against COVID to undertake my placement?**

As of 1 August 2022, it is no longer a requirement of the Department of Education that all education and care workers and volunteers be double vaccinated against COVID-19 to work in a school (some exceptions apply). **It is however still a requirement for Early Childhood Centres.**

### **What do I need to do before I start my placement?**

Refer to PE Handbook – Section 1 Roles and Responsibilities

### **Do I need a name badge?**

Yes. Pre-Service Teachers must order their own badge at least 4 weeks before the start of their placement. Please refer to instructions on how to order your Name Badge in vUWS. You only need to purchase your badge once as it can be used for all your professional experience placements.

### **Can I use my own name badge?**

No, please see above for ordering details.

### **What is a conflict of interest?**

For the context of Professional Experience, we categorise the following as a Conflict of Interest:

- You are currently employed at a school (unless pre-approved by the Director of Professional Experience)
- You have relatives enrolled as students at a school (including your own children).
- You have relatives or close friends employed (siblings, parents, etc) at a school.
- You have other close relationships with a school (e.g., chaplaincy, sport coach).

**You are not to attend a school where your children are currently attending as students.** Your connection with the school is solely as a parent, and this could potentially strain the parent-teacher relationship if your performance is unsatisfactory. Being on professional experience exposes you to private and confidential information about children and families, information that might not be suitable for you to be aware of as a fellow parent.

**Attendance at a school for Professional Experience is not allowed if there is a conflict of interest.**

### **What do I do if I have identified a conflict of interest?**

If there is a school that you have identified as a conflict of interest, you need to record this information in the conflict-of-interest section of your profile on InPlace.

If you have been allocated to a school/centre and you believe this poses a conflict of interest, please email the placements team to notify them immediately on [EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au)

## **Placement Allocation and Location**

### **What is InPlace?**

InPlace serves as our student placement system, maintaining a database of schools and students in need of placement each semester. Instructions on how to use InPlace can be found [here](#)

### **Can I do placement at the school where I am working as an SLSO?**

No. When you are employed as an SLSO, you have a different role to that of a teacher. It is often difficult for you and the school to see you in the role of a teacher, and this causes issues for pre-service teachers. Students in our GYOTT program need to contact the GYOTT Program Advisor to discuss this arrangement.

### Can I do placement at a school where I have a teaching contract?

Yes, if you are a final year (PE2 or PPE4) student and you are conditionally accredited as an Initial teacher. Please refer to Waiver of Appendix B of the NESA Professional Experience [Policy here](#) for more details. If you are completing TEAC7106 please organise to meet with the subject coordinator to discuss prior to applying.

### I know someone who works at the local primary/secondary school. Can I ask them to give me a placement?

No. Students must not organise their own placements. You may email the PE team: [EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au) with the details, but there is no guarantee that you will be placed at that School/Centre. There are many factors considered when sourcing placements. Also, there may be a conflict of interest for you. If there is a school that you have identified as a conflict of interest, please register this in [InPlace](#) in the conflict of interest section of your profile.

### Can I find my own placement?

No. Students must not organise their own placements, or approach Schools/Centres directly for placement. All Universities have a signed agreement with the NSW Department of Education confirming that the sourcing of placements must be completed through the university and not through individual students.

### Can I complete a placement in a rural or regional location?

Yes, there are two options that allow students to complete a placement in a rural location (**Available for M.Teach PE2 only & B.Ed PE3 and PE4 only**):

**Option 1:** If you have a family member or accommodation in a rural / regional area you can request a placement school in this community. Please email the placements team to request a placement in the particular community on [EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au)

**A minimum of 3 months prior to the start of the placement (preferably the semester before your placement.** There is no guarantee that we will be able to source an appropriate placement in the community requested.

**Option 2:** The NSW Department of Education offers some funded rural placements each semester. Please watch out for the Expression of Interest (EOI) form for this opportunity.

If you have accepted an NSW DoE Rural Scholarship and must complete placements in a rural area, please contact\_email the placements team to notify them as soon as you accept your scholarship on [EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au)

### I prefer not to be allocated to a faith-based school. Can I submit such a preference?

Yes, you can update the religious preference section in [InPlace](#) with these details. For sensitive matters, please contact the placements team – [EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au)

### **I do not have a car to get to and from placement. Will I have to travel far by public transport?**

You must update InPlace with your preferred mode of transport to attend placement. Students must expect to travel up to 90 minutes from their place of residence as entered in MySR under term residence. While 90min is the maximum, we do aim to keep students within 60 minutes from their home if driving, 75 minutes on public transport where possible.

### **How far will I have to travel to my placement?**

Students must expect to travel up to 90 minutes from their place of residence as entered in MySR under term residence. Any changes to a student's address in the 8 weeks prior to the scheduled start of placement must be emailed to the PE Team ([EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au)) as well as being updated by the student in MySR under term residence. While 90min is the maximum, we do aim to keep students within 60 minutes from their home if driving, 75 minutes on public transport where possible.

### **I moved house and forgot to update my address in MySR. What do I do?**

You must update your residential address in MySR. This information is then automatically fed into InPlace. Any changes to a student's address in the 8 weeks prior to the scheduled start of placement must be emailed to the placements team ([EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au)) as well as being updated by the student in MySR under term residence. If not, your placement allocation may be based on your previous address.

### **I have been allocated a placement and it is more than a 90-minute commute from my home. What do I do?**

Please contact Placements Team immediately by sending an email to [EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au)

### **I have a medical condition and would like to apply to be considered for alternate arrangements for my placement. How do I do this?**

Approval for a Placement Reasonable Adjustment Plan (PRAP) is required for any alternative arrangements to be acknowledged during placement. Your PRAP needs to be finalised at least 6 weeks prior to the placement start date. This link will take you to the [Disabilities Team webpage](#) for more details. We can only make placement adjustments for students who have a PRAP.

### **I have a special event/holiday occurring during the placement period. Can I take leave and/or change my placement dates?**

This is not normally considered. Students need to be available during the placement date range to attend placement. Students are informed of these dates at the start of semester. However, if the plans are outside your control, email your Professional Experience APA with the details for consideration, but there is no guarantee a request will be approved.

### **What do I do if I withdraw from placement before the start date?**

Send an email to the Placements team [EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au), as well as the Subject Coordinator and PE Academic Program Advisor immediately. We do not get notification through the student management system of your withdrawal, and we need to either remove you from our placement list or notify a school of your withdrawal.

### **Do I need to contact my allocated school/centre before the start of placement?**

Yes. Refer to PE handbook and PE Checklist on vUWS.

### **What do I do if I get a Jury Summons before I start my placement?**

As soon as you receive your Summons, please send a copy to the PE Team ([EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au)). We can provide a letter for you to send with your application for exemption.

### **When will I receive my placement allocation?**

Your placement allocation will be available from InPlace 2 to 3 weeks prior to the placement start date.

### **When will I be given access to the PE Handbook?**

You can find the PE Handbook on the SoE website; access it [here](#). This is also available on your vUWS site.

### **Will I have to attend any lectures or tutorials for my PE subjects prior to attending placement?**

Yes. All professional experience subjects have face-to-face tutorials as well as online modules that need to be completed. Please refer to your vUWS and your Subject Outline.

## **DURING PLACEMENT**

### **Am I required to attend university classes for other units whilst on professional experience?**

No, your university timetable is structured so that no classes are scheduled during your professional experience placement. Students are expected to attend, be present and focussed during the school day as specified in the PE Handbook. The only exception is if you have an advising meeting with the University Advisor (this face-to-face or through zoom). If you have a non-School of Education Elective that has classes with attendance requirements during your placement period, please email the appropriate Professional Experience APA.

### **What do I do if I need to leave early each day to collect my children from school?**

It is your responsibility to organise care for your children while you are on placement. You need to be putting in a full working day, because this is what will be required once you are working in a School. Students have ample notice to organise care before start of placement. If your childcare arrangements have changed suddenly, urgently contact the PE Academic Program Advisor.

### **What will I need to wear on placement?**

You will be required to dress in attire in line with the individual school's policy. Please ensure you talk to your mentor teacher about appropriate attire before you begin the placement. You must also wear your University Pre-Service Teacher Badge during your placement. The NSW Department of Education Dress policy is available through your professional experience vUWS site.

### **What exactly am I doing on my Professional Experience Placement?**

Each placement subject has different requirements. However, they follow a similar pattern. You will start with a set number of observation days to help you become familiar with your allocated class/es and observe your mentor teacher's classroom and teaching strategies. You will then move to planning and teaching lessons, building over your placement time to taking on most of the teaching. Please see the PE Handbook and your subject vUWS site for your subject's placement schedule.

### **Am I required to attend my placement every day?**

Yes, pre-service teachers are required to attend the placement every day to meet the requirements for teaching.

### **What time will I start and finish my placement?**

Each school varies in the time of their school day. The School Based Professional Experience Coordinator will need to inform Pre-service Teachers of the expected arrival and departure time.

It is expected that you will be in attendance at least 30min prior to the start of the school day and 30min after the end of the school day. You must be available for meetings before and after school.

You are required to complete the attendance register daily, recording both arrival and departure times and have this initialled by your Mentor Teacher.

### **What do I do if I am sick while I am undertaking my placement?**

If you are sick for any days during your placement you must:

1. Contact the school and your University Advisor by 7.30am on the day of absence.
2. Complete an Absence Form available on vUWS portal.
3. Negotiate with the school or centre to make up the days for your illness.

**Note:** It is not possible to make up missed days when lectures or tutorials are scheduled. If a pre-service teacher is absent during their placement for three or more days, you will be required to provide a medical certificate. Please also note that if a school believes that your absences is having an impact on the Mentor Teacher or class, they can terminate your placement.

### **What if something has come up unexpectedly and I want to take leave during placement. What do I do?**

Pre-service teachers are not permitted to negotiate placements days with their Mentor Teachers, nor to absent themselves from their placements for matters such as holidays, weddings, childcare or work. Any special requests must be emailed to the placements team [EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au)

### **Can I delay my placement if I am sick or injured?**

Yes, however, there is a process to follow and if the delay in placement is more than a week or two, you will be advised to Withdraw Without Penalty and re-register when the subject is next on offer. Please email the placements team [EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au)

### **I have injured myself while on placement, what do I need to do?**

Pre-service teachers must follow the reporting procedures in their schools. Contact must be made with the University Advisor or the Professional Experience Team to report the injury.

Please refer to the Professional Experience handbook for more information.



### **Can I attend school excursions while on placement?**

Yes, it is expected that you attend excursions, sports carnivals, and other such activities with your Mentor Teacher. If you are asked to attend an overnight excursion or camp, please see the Professional Experience handbook for this process.

### **I have a part-time job. Can I do my placement part-time?**

No, regardless of your study pattern, professional experience placements are only offered full time. This is because of the preference for schools. It is not possible for them to coordinate multiple pre-service teachers on placement (sometimes from different universities and programs) at the same time unless they attend full time. It is also the preference of schools, for consistency and continuity, which benefits the schools' students and the pre-service teachers.

### **I cannot afford to take leave from work to do a full-time placement. Can I do a part-time placement?**

No, your Professional Experience placement is fulltime. If you are under financial stress please contact [student welfare](#).

### **Who will support me while on placement?**

You will have the support of a mentor teacher and the professional experience coordinator at the school, along with your University Advisor.

### **What can I expect from my Mentor Teacher?**

Please refer to Roles & Responsibilities section of the Professional Experience Handbook.

### **Is there support if I am having difficulty during placement?**

Yes. Speak with your Mentor Teacher about your concerns. Try to be specific in identifying what you are concerned about. You need to speak to the Professional Experience Coordinator at your school if you are unsuccessful in your discussions with the Mentor Teacher.

Your University Advisory is always available to discuss concerns that you may have also. It is important that you make contact early rather than leave it until it is too late.

### **How do I find out who my University Advisor is?**

The Placements Team will send you an email once your University Advisor has been allocated. The details will then be available in InPlace.

### **My Mentor Teachers did not receive any documentation before my placement. Where can they get this?**

Ask the Mentor Teacher to contact the Placements Team - [EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au)

### **I have concerns about my preparation from the TPA. Where can I get assistance?**

There are resources, exemplars, tutorial notes and hints available on your subject vUWS site. Revisit the content in the vUWS site. Your University Advisor will also be able to answer questions related to the TPA. **Note:** the TPA is only relevant to PE2, PE4 and PEK-6 (i.e., final placement) students.

### **What happens if I decide to self-withdraw after my placement has started?**

You must notify your University Advisor and the Placements Team immediately if for any reason you wish to withdraw from the placement. Please note: Academics can only award a Satisfactory Grade or an Unsatisfactory Grade for Professional Experience Subjects. A withdrawal (W) grade is dependent on your individual application.

### **How do I get a copy of the final report for my Mentor Teacher to complete?**

Report templates are emailed to the School PE Coordinator to distribute direct to the Mentor Teacher. Your Mentor Teacher can ask the School PE Coordinator or email the placements team [EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au) to request a copy if they need one.

## **AFTER PLACEMENT**

### **What happens if I fail my placement?**

Students will go through the At-Risk Process that is outlined in Section 3 – Progress and assessment, in the Professional Experience Handbook. Please refer to the section regarding the outcome of this process. Students will be able to reattempt the subject in a later semester.

### **What documents do I have to submit after my placement?**

Students are required to submit a final report and their time sheet on vUWS. Please ensure these are signed by you **and** your mentor teacher prior to submission. Along with this some subjects will require additional documents (such as the TPA or reflections) that will be outlined on the relevant section of the subject outline and vUWS.

### **How do I submit my final report?**

There is a page on the vUWS site for submission of documents. Please ensure when submitting all documents that they are in PDF, legible, and signed by both Mentor Teacher and student (photos/images are not accepted).

### **When will I do my TPA? (Final school-based placements only)**

The TPA will be completed after the final placement (please note this does not include students exiting with a M. Teach Early Childhood (Birth – 5years). Approaching the end of your placement, you will be contacted with the timeslots that are available and details of how to book your TPA presentation.

### **What if I cannot attend my scheduled TPA appointment?**

The TPA is an assessment activity and like all assessments, if you are unable to meet the deadline you must submit an Extension Request through WesternNow. If your presentation time has been booked,

please ensure you contact the relevant academics to apologise for being unable to attend. You will then need to contact the TPA coordinator to reschedule your TPA.

### **How do I get a copy of my final report?**

Your Mentor Teacher will provide you with a copy that you need to submit to vUWS on the final day of your placement. It is suggested that you sight and sign the report on this day and then scan and submit on vUWS. It is essential that you save a copy of your report. You must submit all your professional experience reports to NESA/Department of Education for employment purposes.

### **I need a letter for AITSL.**

Please complete this [form](#) to request an AITSL Supervised Teaching Practice statement from Western Sydney University. Approval may take up to three weeks. If currently enrolled, processing begins after your final grade release, with an additional three weeks for statement generation.

### **NESA has requested a Completion Letter**

Please visit the [WSU Completions and Conferral Webpage](#) for further information on how to order this document.