

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For **Mentor Teachers** supporting Western Sydney University  
Pre-Service Teachers during Professional Experience.

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This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet is designed to provide Mentor Teachers with support and answers to common queries. Our goal is to ensure you have access to all the resources and information needed to guide support our students during their professional experience.

It is important to read through the **Professional Experience Handbook** and any other important documentation that is sent to you from our Professional Experience Office, most of our Professional Experience resources are also available to Mentor Teachers on the School of Education [website](#) .

Thank you for taking on the role of Mentor Teacher for Western Sydney University's Professional Experience Program.

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

No, it is the Pre-service Teacher's responsibility to make initial contact with the Centre Director or Schools Professional Experience Coordinator at least two weeks prior to the placement commencement date.

### **What are the primary responsibilities of the Mentor Teacher?**

The Mentor Teacher is responsible for supervising, mentoring, and assessing the Pre-service Teacher. Key duties include modelling quality teaching practices, understanding professional experience requirements, and liaising with the University Advisor.

Refer to the relevant WSU Professional Experience [handbook](#) for detailed outline of a Mentor Teachers' role and responsibilities.

The Early Childhood Based Professional Experience guides can be found [here](#) .

### **How do I find who the University Advisor will be?**

The Placements Team will send an email to your school/centre Professional Experience coordinator once your University Advisor has been assigned. This typically occurs during the first week of placements.

## What are the primary responsibilities of the University Advisor?

The University Advisor from Western Sydney University collaborates with School Professional Experience Coordinators, Centre Directors, Mentor Teachers, and Pre-service Teachers. Responsibilities include fostering positive relationships, contributing to Pre-service Teacher learning and supporting Pre-service Teachers during challenges. Refer to the relevant WSU Professional Experience handbook for detailed outline of the University Advisors role and responsibilities.

## Who do I contact if the University Advisor is unable to assist me with my concerns?

Please contact the Professional Experience Team at [EduPex@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPex@westernsydney.edu.au) and we will be able to assist further.

## What is the Supervision Cycle in Professional Experience?

The Supervision Cycle involves three key stages: Before the Lesson, Presenting the Lesson, and After the Lesson. It emphasises feedback, goal setting, and continuous improvement throughout the teaching and planning cycle. Refer to WSU Professional Experience [handbook](#) for detailed outline of a mentor teachers' role and responsibilities.

## Do I need to provide feedback on every lesson?

Yes, providing feedback (written and/or verbal) is ideal for the Pre-service Teacher to reflect on strengths and areas for improvement. We ask that you provide one piece of written feedback per day on the provided feedback form. Keeping copies of your feedback is recommended for making professional judgments in the end-of-placement report or to discuss with the University Advisor if there are concerns with the Pre-service Teacher.

## When and how are reports completed?

Mentor Teachers are responsible for completing both interim and final reports.

The **interim report** is required for Pre-service Teachers undertaking a 4 or 6-week placement and focuses on the Pre-service Teacher's progress. This is due at the mid-way point (end of week 2 or 3).

While the final report should be completed in the last few days of the Professional Experience. The Pre-service Teacher must have the opportunity to read and discuss the final report with the Mentor Teacher. The completion of the interim and final report is the responsibility of the Mentor Teacher.

After completing the interim and final report, please share a copy with the Pre-service Teacher, who is required to submit it to their University Advisor.

**Copies of the Interim and Final Report will be emailed directly to the School/ Centres Professional Experience Coordinator.**

## **How do I get a copy of the final reports to complete?**

Report templates are emailed to the Centre Director / School PE Coordinator to distribute direct to the Mentor Teacher, you can ask your School/Centre PE Coordinator or email the placements team [EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au) to request a copy.

## **How should Mentor Teachers handle concerns about a Pre-service Teacher's progress?**

If you encounter issues with a Pre-service Teacher, and you feel comfortable, initiate an initial conversation with the Pre-service Teacher. If you are uncomfortable or have already had a conversation without seeing improvement, please contact the University Advisor. The University Advisor will engage in a conversation with the Pre-service Teacher and, if necessary, contact the University.

Mentor Teachers should adhere to the university's 'At Risk' Process designed to provide support to pre-service teachers facing challenges in meeting professional experience requirements. Additional information about the process, including required forms, can be found [here](#).

**NB: Early intervention and open communication are key to addressing and resolving any challenges.**

## **Can Mentor Teachers leave Pre-service Teachers in charge of students?**

No, the Pre-service Teacher should never be left alone in charge of children during Professional Experience, as they must not assume legal responsibilities.

## **What if I am absent?**

Please consider who can supervise your student if you are absent. To avoid confusion, inform the student about who the replacement supervisor will be. It is okay for Pre-service teachers to work with a casual teacher where there are unavoidable absences during the placement period. If for any reason you cannot continue as the mentor teacher, please ensure the University Advisor is notified as soon as possible.

## **What if the student is absent?**

Pre-service teachers must notify you no later than 8:00 am on the day of their absence, they are required to also inform the University Advisor. Absences of three or more days (this is in total during the placement period) require a medical certificate, and students must negotiate makeup days. If your Pre-service Teacher is having excessive absences and this is causing disruption, please contact the University Advisor.

## **What do I do if the Pre-service Teacher has not shown up and has not advised the Mentor Teacher, University Advisor, or the school?**

Please inform the University Advisor ASAP and they will manage the situation from there or alternatively, contact the Professional Experience team at [EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au)

## **What hours are pre-service teachers expected to attend?**

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 the full teaching day and are not to leave early for appointments, picking up children etc.

Start times for each centre and school differ, The Centre Director or Professional Experience Coordinator should communicate the expected arrival and departure times to Pre-service Teachers. Attendance at an Early Childhood service commences 30 min prior to the start of the allocated shift time and pre-service teachers should be available to attend staff meetings or planning meetings outside of the shift hours. School attendance is mandatory at least 30 minutes before the start of the school day and 30 minutes after its conclusion. Pre-service teachers must also be available to attend meetings before and after school. Pre-service Teachers are required to complete a daily register, recording both arrival and departure times. This attendance sheet must be signed by the Mentor Teacher at the end of each week.

## **What if I am concerned about a Pre- Service Teachers wellbeing?**

If a student discloses a concerning situation to you in confidence, please remind them that WSU provides free and confidential support services for all students. [Click here](#) for the complete list of support services. If you need assistance, please reach out to the University Advisor.

## **What if a Pre-service teacher is injured whilst on placement?**

Pre-service teachers must follow the reporting procedures in their school/centre and contact the University Advisor or the Professional Experience Team to report any injuries. For more information, please refer to the Professional Experience [handbook](#).

## **Can pre-service teachers attend school excursions while on placement?**

Yes, preservice teachers are allowed to attend excursions, sports carnivals, and other such activities with their Mentor Teacher. If the pre-service teacher is required to attend an overnight excursion or camp, please see the Professional Experience [handbook](#) for this process.

## **What is my responsibility for the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) – Final School based placements only.**

Mentor Teachers are not expected to have extra workload for WSU\_TPA support. Normal expectations include discussions on teaching, planning, students' needs, and providing feedback. The responsibility for the Teaching Performance Assessment rests with the Pre-service Teacher, covering elements like self-analysis, reflection, professional planning, and communication.

## **Where can I find more information about pay claim forms?**

After the completion of the Pre-service Teacher's placement, the Professional Experience Team will send the pay claim details via email to the Centre Director or School Professional Experience Coordinator.

In instances of shared supervision, you will be required to specify, on the pay form, the number of days of supervision and provide the name of the job-sharing teacher.