SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

School-Based Professional Experience FAQ

Quick Reference Guide

A practical guide to preparing for, attending and completing your School-Based Professional Experience placement.

Placement at a Glance:

- ✓ Complete Special Requirements before enrolling
- ✓ Check your InPlace To Do List and upload mandatory training certificates
- ✓ Keep your placement preferences and personal details up to date
- ✓ Attend the full placement and report any absence promptly
- ✓ Submit your Final Report and timesheet on Ultra

IMPORTANT

The University arranges School-Based placements. Do not contact schools to request your own placement.

Use this guide alongside your Professional Experience Handbook, Subject Outline, subject site, University email and InPlace instructions. For Western Sydney Online students, references to Canvas also apply to your online learning platform.

1 BEFORE PLACEMENT

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

I am having trouble enrolling in my Professional Experience subject. What may be preventing my enrolment?

You must ensure that you have met all Special Requirements. These are legislative and University requirements for educators in NSW and must be completed before enrolment. For more information about Special Requirements, click here.

Once enrolled, you must also complete the following mandatory training courses for School-Based placements:

- Anti-Racism Policy
- Aboriginal Cultural Education
- Code of Ethics and Conduct Training, which includes Ethics and Conduct

All three courses must be completed through MyPL.

After Week 1 of the semester, check your To Do list in InPlace for instructions. Certificates of completion must be uploaded to InPlace as part of your placement eligibility requirements.

When do I need to complete LANTITE?

LANTITE is a mandatory enrolment requirement for PE2, PEK-6 and PEx4. You must successfully complete both the Literacy and Numeracy components before enrolling in your final School-Based Professional Experience subject. You should plan to complete LANTITE at least one semester before your final placement. For more information about LANTITE click here.

CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

Can I receive credit based on my previous classroom experience?

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) is only available for students enrolled in designated Professional Experience subjects, including PE1, PE2, PEX3 and PEx4. Eligibility is limited to students who are employed a teaching role who hold Conditional Accreditation with NESA. Employment in non-teaching roles, including as an SLSO, is not eligible. Approved CPL applications result in a reduction of placement days only and do not provide credit for the entire subject.

I teach at a community language school and am conditionally accredited. Can I apply for Credit for Prior Learning?

Yes, you may be eligible to apply. Your application will be assessed against the relevant eligibility requirements.

PREPARING FOR PLACEMENT

What do I need to do before starting placement?

- [ ] Read Section 1, Roles and Responsibilities, of the Professional Experience Handbook.
- [ ] Students must read and understand the inherent requirements before commencing this subject. These outline the core skills and professional behaviours you are expected to meet, particularly while on placement. Click here to learn more
- [ ] Attend all scheduled lectures and tutorials. Complete all required online modules.
- [ ] Review the Professional Experience information available on Ultra or Canvas Sites.
- [ ] Complete all mandatory requirements and make sure to action and complete the To Do list in InPlace.
- [ ] Order University Pre-Service Teacher name badge.

Your placement requirements will be explained in detail during your lectures and tutorials.

Is financial support available while I am on placement?

Eligible students may be able to receive the Commonwealth Prac Payment to assist with placement-related costs. Students are responsible for reviewing the eligibility requirements and submitting the relevant application. Click here to learn more about Commonwealth Prac Payment.

Do I need a name badge?

Yes. You must order your official University Pre-Service Teacher name badge at least four weeks before placement and wear it throughout your placement. You cannot use your own name badge.

PREGNANCY AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

I am pregnant. Do I need to notify the University before starting placement?

You should notify the Professional Experience Office as soon as possible if you are pregnant and will be undertaking a Professional Experience placement.

You must visit your GP, obstetrician or treating medical practitioner before commencing placement and obtain a medical clearance document confirming that you are fit to undertake your Professional Experience placement.

You must have the medical clearance document with you on your first day of placement in case the placement school requests it. It is also recommended that you provide a copy to the Professional Experience Office before your placement begins.

Can I complete Professional Experience while pregnant?

Pregnancy does not automatically prevent you from completing Professional Experience. However, you must be medically fit to meet the attendance, teaching and participation requirements of the placement.

You should discuss the placement requirements with your GP, obstetrician or treating medical practitioner before placement begins.

What if I need placement adjustments because of my pregnancy?

If you require reasonable adjustments, you must contact Western Sydney University Disability Services and arrange an approved Placement Reasonable Adjustment Plan, known as a PRAP. The University can only arrange or formally recognise placement adjustments where an approved PRAP is in place.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

What qualifies as a conflict of interest?

Examples include:

- Being employed at the placement school, unless the arrangement has been formally approved
- Having children or relatives enrolled at the school
- Having family members or close friends employed at the school
- Having personal or professional connections with the school, including coaching, chaplaincy or volunteer roles or if you have previously worked at the school
- Any other relationship that may affect, or appear to affect, the independence of your placement and assessment

What should I do if I identify a conflict of interest?

You must update the Conflict-of-Interest section of your InPlace profile.

PLACEMENT ALLOCATION AND LOCATION

What is InPlace?

InPlace is the University's placement management system. It is used to manage placement eligibility, placement allocations and placement-related information.

You are responsible for regularly checking your InPlace account and making sure that your personal details, address, transport preferences and conflict-of-interest information are current.

Can I complete placement at a school where I am employed as an SLSO?

Generally, students cannot complete their Professional Experience placement at a school where they are employed in a non-teaching role, including as a School Learning Support Officer (SLSO). However, some students enrolled in TEAC2048 (PEX1) who have been employed as an SLSO at a school for more than one year may be eligible for consideration.

If this applies to you, please contact the Professional Experience Team at EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au for further information before making any placement arrangements.

Can I complete placement at a school where I am employed as a teacher?

Students undertaking their final Professional Experience placement may be eligible to apply for the Employment Based Program, formerly known as Waiver B.

Can I organise my own placement or contact schools directly?

No. Students must not organise their own placements or contact schools to request a placement. All placements must be arranged by the University in line with relevant agreements and placement requirements.

Can I complete placement in a rural or regional area?

Yes. The following options may be available to eligible MTeach PE2, BEd PEx3 and BEd PEx4 students.

Option 1: Student-requested rural or regional placement
If you have accommodation or family support in a rural or regional area, you may request that the University investigate placement options in that location. Email the Professional Experience Office at EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au at least three months before your placement, preferably during the previous semester. The University cannot guarantee that a suitable placement will be available.

Option 2: NSW Department of Education funded rural placements
The NSW Department of Education may offer funded rural placement opportunities. Students should monitor University communications and Expressions of Interest for available opportunities. Click here for more information.

Option 3: NSW Department of Education Rural Scholarship recipients
If you have accepted a scholarship that requires you to undertake rural placements, notify the Professional Experience Office as soon as possible. Click here for more information.

I prefer not to be allocated to a faith-based school. Can I request this?

Yes. Update your placement preferences in InPlace. If your request relates to a sensitive personal matter, contact the Professional Experience Office at EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au

I do not have a car. Will I have to travel far by public transport?

Students may be required to travel for up to 90 minutes each way to attend placement. You must keep your transport preferences and residential address updated in InPlace and MySR.

Limited placement availability, particularly in some teaching areas and secondary school settings, may mean that a placement cannot be located close to your home.

I moved house and did not update MySR before the cut-off date. What should I do?

Update your address in MySR and contact the Professional Experience Office immediately at EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au. Updating your address after the cut-off date does not guarantee that an existing allocation can be changed.

I have caring responsibilities that may impact my Professional Experience placement. What should I do?

Please contact Student Welfare to obtain a Carer's Verification Statement (CVS). The Professional Experience Team cannot consider placement location requests based on caring responsibilities without a CVS. Once obtained, please contact EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au as soon as possible to discuss your placement requirements.

Do not wait until your placement is due to commence.

My placement is more than 90 minutes from my home. What should I do?

Contact the Professional Experience Office immediately at EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au and provide details of the travel time and route. Do not contact the school or withdraw from the placement unless instructed by the University.

Do I need to contact the school before placement?

Yes. Once instructed by the University, you must contact the school before your placement begins. Refer to the Professional Experience Handbook for instructions.

When will I receive my placement allocation?

Placement allocations are generally released through InPlace approximately two to three weeks before the placement start date. You will receive an email from the Professional Experience Office when your allocation is available.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS, DISABILITY AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

I have a medical condition, disability or injury and require placement adjustments. What is the process?

You must contact Western Sydney University Disability Services to discuss a Placement Reasonable Adjustment Plan, known as a PRAP. A PRAP is required for any placement-related adjustments associated with a disability, medical condition, injury, mental health condition or pregnancy. Your PRAP must be finalised at least six weeks before your placement start date.

The University can only arrange and formally recognise placement adjustments where an approved PRAP is in place. This link will take you to the Disabilities Team webpage for more details.

What happens if I request a PRAP after the cut-off date?

The University may not have sufficient time to arrange or communicate adjustments if your PRAP is not finalised at least six weeks before placement. If the required adjustments cannot be implemented before placement, you may need to withdraw and re-register when the subject is next offered, once your PRAP has been approved. Contact your Professional Experience Program Lead and the Professional Experience Office as soon as possible to discuss your circumstances.

AVAILABILITY, LEAVE AND WITHDRAWAL

I have a holiday or event during the placement period. Can I request leave or reschedule my placement?

Holidays, weddings, employment commitments, childcare arrangements and personal events are not normally accepted as reasons to miss, delay or reschedule placement.

Students are advised of placement dates and are expected to remain available for the full placement period. If circumstances outside your control affect your placement availability, contact your Professional Experience Program Lead and the Professional Experience Office. Approval is not guaranteed.

What if I withdraw from the subject before placement begins?

You must immediately notify, the subject coordinator and the Professional Experience Office at EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au

What if I decide to withdraw during placement?

You must **immediately** notify your:

University Advisor, Supervising Teacher or school Professional Experience Coordinator, Subject Coordinator and the Professional Experience Office at EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au

Do not leave the placement without notifying the University and the school.

Can I leave placement early each day to collect my children?

No. Professional Experience is a full-time placement, and you must attend for the school's required hours. You need to arrange alternative childcare before placement begins.

OTHER PRE-PLACMENT QUESTIONS

I have received a jury summons. What should I do?

Complete the Professional Experience and Attendance Letter Request Form (Available on our website here) to request a jury duty letter.

When will I receive the Professional Experience Handbook?

The Professional Experience Handbook is available on the School of Education website and on your subject Ultra or Canvas page.

Will there be lectures or tutorials before placement?

Yes. All Professional Experience subjects include tutorials and online modules. Some subjects also include lectures.

2 DURING PLACEMENT

ATTENDANCE AND HOURS

Do I attend University classes for other subjects while I am on placement?

You are not normally expected to attend School of Education classes during your scheduled placement period. If you are enrolled in a non-School of Education elective with compulsory attendance, contact the relevant academic staff member and the professional experience subject coordinator before placement begins.

Do I need to attend every placement day?

Yes. Full attendance is required to meet the placement requirements. All missed placement days must be reported and may need to be made up.

What are the expected start and finish times?

You are expected to:

- Arrive at least 30 minutes before the school day begins and remain at the school for at least 30 minutes after the school day ends.
- Attend for a minimum of seven hours each day, follow any additional attendance requirements set by the school
- Record your attendance each day and have your attendance record signed by your Supervising Teacher

Professional Experience is a full-time commitment. You must remain available for all required school activities during your placement.

Can I complete placement part-time?

No. Professional Experience placements must be completed on a full-time basis.

I cannot afford to take time off work. Can I complete placement part-time?

No. Professional Experience is a full-time placement requirement.
If you are experiencing financial hardship, contact the University's Student Welfare Service to discuss available support. You should also review your eligibility for the Commonwealth Prac Payment.

ABSENCE, ILLNESS AND INJURY

What should I do if I am sick during placement?

If you are absent due to illness, you must:

1. Contact the school and your University Advisor by 7.30 am on the day of your absence.
2. Complete the required Absence Form. Provide medical documentation where required.
3. Contact the Professional Experience Office if the absence may affect your ability to complete the placement. Arrange to make up missed placement days, subject to approval and the school's availability.

If you are absent for three or more days, you will be required to provide a medical certificate.

What if something unexpected happens during placement?

You must contact your University Advisor and the Professional Experience Office as soon as possible. Pre-service teachers are not permitted to negotiate changes to placement dates directly with their Supervising Teacher or take leave for holidays, weddings, childcare, employment or other personal commitments.

All requests must be referred to the Professional Experience Office at EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au.

Can I delay placement because of illness or injury?

A delay may be considered based on your circumstances, medical advice, subject requirements and the school's availability.If the delay is longer than one or two weeks, you may be advised to withdraw without academic penalty, where eligible, and re-register when the subject is next offered. Contact your Subject Coordinator, and the Professional Experience Office immediately.

What if I am injured during placement?

Follow the school's reporting procedure and notify your University Advisor or the PE Team.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND PARTICIPATION

What should I wear on placement?

Wear professional attire that complies with the school's policies and expectations. Discuss any questions regarding clothing with your Supervising Teacher or the school's Professional Experience Coordinator. You need to wear your official University Pre-Service Teacher name badge.

Can I attend excursions and school events?

Yes. You are generally expected to attend excursions and school events with your Supervising Teacher where these activities form part of the school program. Refer to the Professional Experience Handbook for requirements relating to excursions, overnight activities and other off-site activities.

Can I negotiate placement days directly with my Supervising Teacher?

No. You must not negotiate changes to your approved placement dates directly with your Supervising Teacher or school. Any request to change placement dates must be submitted to the Professional Experience Office at EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au.

SUPPORT DURING PLACEMENT

Who will support me during placement?

Support is available from:

- Your Supervising Teacher, The school's Professional Experience Coordinator
- Your University Advisor and the Professional Experience Office

What can I expect from my Supervising Teacher?

Refer to the Roles and Responsibilities section of the Professional Experience Handbook. Your lectures, tutorials and online learning activities will also explain the roles and responsibilities of the student, Supervising Teacher, school and University.

What should I do if I experience difficulties during placement?

Raise the matter as early as possible. First, speak with your Supervising Teacher. If the issue is not resolved, contact the school's Professional Experience Coordinator and your University Advisor. If the issue is serious, sensitive or remains unresolved, contact the Professional Experience Office.

How will I know who my University Advisor is?

You will be notified by email when your University Advisor has been allocated. Their details will also appear in InPlace.

My Supervising Teacher has not received the placement documents. What should they do?

Ask your Supervising Teacher to contact the school's Professional Experience Coordinator, as placement documents are initially sent to the coordinator. If the documents cannot be located, the school can email the Professional Experience Office at EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au.

I am worried about preparing for my Teacher Performance Assessment. What support is available?

Teacher Performance Assessment resources are available on your subject site; you should also contact your University Advisor or the subject coordinator if you need assistance. The Teacher Performance Assessment applies to PE2, PEx4 and PEK-6 students undertaking their final placement.

PLACEMENT REPORTS

How does my Supervising Teacher receive the final report?

The final report is emailed to the school's Professional Experience Coordinator. If the school has not received the report, the coordinator can contact the Professional Experience Office at EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au.

2 AFTER PLACEMENT

AT-RISK PLACEMENT

What happens if I fail my placement?

Students who are at risk of failing will be managed through the At-Risk Process outlined in Section 3, Progress and Assessment, of the Professional Experience Handbook. Refer to the Handbook for information about the process and possible outcomes.

SUBMITTING DOCUMENTS

What documents must I submit after placement?

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

How do I submit my final report and timesheet?

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

How do I obtain a copy of my final report?

Your Supervising Teacher will provide you with a completed and signed copy of your final report on the last day of placement. You are responsible for sighting, signing, and submitting the report on Ultra. It is essential that you save a copy of this document, as it must be provided to NESA or the Department of Education for employment purposes.

TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

When will I complete my TPA? (Final School-Based placements only)

The Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) is completed as part of your final placement. The submission of your Case Study and Presentation is due a week after placement finishes. Prior to placement starting, you will receive information about available presentation times and how to book your TPA session. Information about due dates is available in Subject Outlines and vUWS. This requirement does not apply to students exiting with the Master of Teaching (Early Childhood: Birth-5 Years).

What if I can't attend my scheduled TPA appointment?

The TPA is a formal assessment. If you are unable to attend your scheduled presentation, you must submit an Extension Request via WesternNow. If you have already booked a time, contact the relevant academic staff to advise them and then get in touch with the TPA Coordinator to reschedule.

GRADUATION, NESA AND AITSL DOCUMENTS

I need a letter for AITSL. How do I request this?

Please click here to request an AITSL Supervised Teaching Practice Statement. Processing may take up to three weeks. If you are currently enrolled, processing will begin after final grades are released, with the statement issued approximately three weeks thereafter.

NESA has requested a Completion Letter. How can I get this?

Please visit the WSU Completions and Conferral Webpage for further information on how to order this document.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you couldn't find the answer to your question about Professional Experience, we encourage you to visit the Pre-Service Teacher Resource Page, which contains additional information, guides, forms and resources to support you throughout your placement journey.

If you require assistance or cannot find the information you need, please contact the Contact the Professional Experience team EduPEX@westernsydney.edu.au for all Professional Experience enquiries.

Or call:

- Early Childhood 02 9772 6396 (Beth Gibson)
- Primary 02 9772 6663 (Daniel Macey)
- Secondary 02 9772 6349 (Sharmaine Danby)
- Team Manager 02 9772 6119 (Rowa Omari)

For Academic Program Advice, please email the Academic and Program Support team at Enquirieseducation@westernsydney.edu.au