

Professional Experience Guidelines

FOR PRESERVICE EDUCATORS AND USQ STAFF

**The Professional Experience Guidelines for
Professional Experience Administration**

2011

4/2/2011

Important Addresses

Professional Experience Website: www.usq.edu.au/education/profexp

Toowoomba Professional Experience

Faculty of Education
University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba QLD 4350
AUSTRALIA
Phone: 07 4631 2359
Fax: 07 4631 2598
Email: professional.experience@usq.edu.au

Springfield Professional Experience

Faculty of Education
University of Southern Queensland
PO Box 4196
Springfield Central QLD 4300
AUSTRALIA
Phone: 07 3470 4300
Fax: 07 3470 4301
Email: springfieldprofexp@usq.edu.au

Fraser Coast Professional Experience

Faculty of Education
University of Southern Queensland
PO Box 910
Hervey Bay QLD 4655
AUSTRALIA
Phone: 07 4194 3181
Fax: 07 4194 3188
Email: profexpeduc@usq.edu.au

Working with Children Check

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian requires that all adults working/undertaking professional experience with children under the age of 18, in the State of Queensland are required to possess a current suitability card (Blue Card). A Preservice Educator **cannot** commence any professional experience activity until they have registered their current Blue Card with the USQ Professional Experience Office.

Blue Card (Working with Children Check) queries and renewal

Blue Card Contact Centre on 1800 113 611
<http://www.ccyipcq.qld.gov.au/employment/index.html>

Professionalism

As visitors to educational settings and as learning members of the profession, Faculty of Education Preservice Educators are expected to demonstrate professionalism in all aspects of their approach to Professional Experience. All Preservice Educators are expected to dress and conduct themselves in a manner that will enhance the reputation of USQ and reflect the professional standards for teachers.

Queensland College of Teachers

<http://www.qct.edu.au/>

Glossary of Terms

A TEAM Liaison

Specific assistance and guidance can be offered when a Preservice Educator is placed “at risk” by Day 5. The A TEAM Liaison works with the Mentor, Site Coordinator and Preservice Educator to support an outcome for the Professional Experience that is in the best interests of all parties.

Academic Coordinator Professional Experience

An academic staff member who may be consulted regarding an “at risk” Preservice Educator. The staff member may activate an A TEAM liaison to assist in the “at risk” process.

Administration Coordinator Professional Experience

An administrative USQ staff member who coordinates the administrative aspects of professional experience including securing appropriate placements. This person is a significant point of contact for placement officers, Site Coordinators, Preservice Educators, academic and liaison staff.

“At risk”

Mentors should not be reluctant to formally place Preservice Educators “at risk” no matter how difficult this may be for all parties. Preservice Educators require open and full evaluation of their performance, together with specific feedback, and the process of “at risk” designation should be seen in this light. The “at risk” process should ideally be activated by Day 5 in the placement, given that it is necessary to have evidence to support this conclusion. Mentors and Preservice Educators should see this process as a formal signal that specific development is required, in order to successfully complete the requirements of the Professional Experience in the specified number of days.

Blue Card

A positive notice from the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian includes a Working with Children criminal history check. A Blue Card is required for all Professional Experience placements in Queensland and must be authorised for USQ. Legal requirements for Professional Experience outside of Queensland are the student’s responsibility.

Calendar

The dates for all Professional Experiences are set in an annual calendar and publicised on the Professional Experience website. All USQ Students are expected to attend Professional Experience during the specified dates. The Professional Experience Calendar corresponds to designated block codes in SONIA and specific dates for the internship. All experiences need to be completed within a semester of study in order for grades to be finalised.

Completion Record

The Preservice Educator’s university results and grades for a course cannot be finalised until a Completion Record for either pass or fail for the required number of days is submitted using SONIA. The online Completion Record should be completed by the Site Coordinator or Mentor within five (5) days of completing the Professional Experience. However, it is more reassuring when the Completion Record is finalised on the last day of Professional Experience and the Preservice Educator is informed of the successful conclusion of the Professional Experience as they leave the school or centre.

Confirmed Placements

It is the students’ responsibility to check SONIA for their confirmed placement before they can commence Professional Experience at a site. A confirmed placement on SONIA ensures that the mail out pack with all the USQ booklets and documentation has been sent to the site. USQ students are covered by insurance, supported by a liaison and the placement details are authorised. Do not commence any placement or make contact with a site until it has been confirmed on SONIA.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest involves a conflict between a person's personal or professional interests and their interests as a student. Some examples of conflict of interest: the student has a close relative who works at a site where they may be placed; the student has a close relative who attends a site where they may be placed; the student has a working relationship with the site where they may be placed; the student has previously attended the site in another capacity.

DET Professional Experience/Internship Overview

Preservice Educators who intend to seek employment in a Queensland state school should request their Mentor to complete a DET Professional Experience/Internship Overview at the conclusion of each Professional Experience for their professional folio. All employment applications are the student's responsibility and mentor feedback reports are not required by USQ. A copy of the DET Professional Experience/Internship Overview is provided as a courtesy at the back of each Professional Experience Booklet. However, students should consult the DET website www.teach.qld.gov.au for specific information about the employment application process.

ePortfolio

The USQ student eportfolio system is used by students to document their qualifications, skills and experiences in a digital resource. The eportfolio is an ongoing project which students use to document their learning journey and incorporate assessment artefacts from a variety of courses e.g. EDC3100 and EDC4000.

Graduate Intern

The final year Preservice Educator who has successfully completed all other courses will undertake an Internship under direction of a Mentor. A graduate intern may teach up to 50% of the Mentor's teaching load unsupervised. Approval of the internship arrangements is required through USQ and other authorisations (e.g. QCT Internship Authorisation) may also apply.

Internship

This is the final unsupervised experience for Preservice Educators who have successfully completed all other courses. The Internship focuses on the professional work of teachers and relies on the Mentor and other site staff to induct the graduate intern into the profession by taking on many of the responsibilities of a registered teacher. In Queensland, USQ organises QCT Internship Authorisation for graduate interns to take full responsibility for half of a regular full-time teacher's classroom load, without the direct supervision of a Mentor, and work in a secondary role with Mentor teacher(s) for the second half of that fulltime load.

Key Learning Area (KLA)

Queensland schools develop school curriculum plans across eight Key Learning Areas (KLAs) which are The Arts, English, Health and Physical Education, Languages Other Than English (LOTE), Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) and Technology.

Liaison

A casual or academic staff member of the Faculty of Education who is responsible for liaising with sites during professional experience and Internship placements. This person is usually the site's first point of contact with the University. The role of the USQ Liaison has changed substantially over time and it is no longer deemed appropriate to observe and comment on a Preservice Educator's performance. USQ Liaison act whether on site or at a distance, as the contact point between Preservice Educators, their Mentors, Site Coordinators, the Course Examiner and the Faculty of Education.

Local Request Professional Experience Preference Form

A hard copy form, for students in the local area surrounding Toowoomba, Springfield or Fraser Coast campuses to nominate sites and their preferences to be placed for Professional Experience. USQ uses this information to source a placement on behalf of the student. This paper form is used to support the SONIA electronic preference system and for placing GDTL students in local schools.

Make Up Day

It is a requirement for the course that Preservice Educators complete all professional experience days in full. The number of days for each course is specified in the Professional Experience Booklet and is a requirement to pass the course. Students should negotiate to make up any days missed due to illness, public holidays or show holidays with the Mentor and Site Coordinator.

Mail Out Pack

The mail out pack contains a copy of The Professional Experience Booklet, payment claims for the Mentor and the Site Coordinator, instructions for completing the SONIA electronic Completion record for entering the students' Professional Experience results as either pass or fail for the required number of days and other documentation that is useful to facilitate the Professional Experience. The Professional Experience office posts the mail out packs in the week before the placement is due to commence. The mail out pack is addressed to the Site Coordinator, who distributes Professional Experience information to the Mentors. For placements overseas, the mail out pack is sent electronically to the Site Coordinator's email address.

Mentor

The supervisor who accepts responsibility for a Preservice Educator. Preservice Educators must be supervised at all times. They do not have authority to take responsibility for any student groups. Therefore, they cannot be asked to teach, do playground/bus duty, and take responsibility for a sporting group, excursions, etc. unless accompanied by a Mentor.

Online Professional Experience Resources

Curriculum and teaching materials, class activities, assessment items, lesson plans and much more are available for students to access for **FREE** through the USQ Library. More detailed information is provided in [FYI \(Education\)](#). The USQ Library also holds a wide range of physical Professional Experience Resources, explained in this brief [overview of resources and ways to access](#). For ideas or instruction in new technology, or teaching ideas in general, the [Professional Experience resources wiki](#) is a growing resource that you can contribute to, and continue to access throughout your career.

Placement Officers

USQ staff in the Professional Experience office at each campus who organise and facilitate Professional Experience placements.

Professional Experience Booklet

There are 5 different Professional Experience Booklets which describe the requirements for Professional Experience in each course. Students are required to download their copy of the Professional Experience Booklet for their specialisation (e.g. GDTL/GDTO, Early Childhood, Primary, Special Education or Secondary/TVE). The Professional Experience office posts a copy of the Professional Experience booklet to the Site Coordinator in the week before the Professional Experience is due to commence. Students are required to download their copy from the USQ Faculty of Education professional experience website.

Professional Experience Guidelines (this document)

This document is designed to give you an overview of the processes used to administer professional experience, which is an embedded component of preservice education courses at USQ. The Professional Experience Guidelines is supported by the professional experience website, the course StudyDesk, the SONIA system and the Professional Experience Booklets for each specialisation.

Preservice Educator

USQ students who are placed in sites for professional experience are called Preservice Educators in recognition of their development and learning in the work place.

Priority Country Area Program (PCAP)

Rural and remote placements may be assisted by the Priority Country Area Program (PCAP) and information about accommodation, transport and financial support is available through the Rural Education website which is linked from the rural opportunities page of the Professional Experience website.

Professional Experience

A term that encompasses embedded Professional Experience in state schools, Catholic schools, independent schools, private schools, special schools, childcare centres, industry, community-based education contexts, adult education environments and non-school settings as a requirement in a related university course.

Professional Experience Placement Application Form

A hard copy form which is used by students in situations when they required to secure their own placement. Students are permitted to approach sites directly, providing they are outside the local area surrounding a campus, interstate or overseas, securing their internship or when they have been specifically advised by the Professional Experience office to negotiate their placement due to the nature of the request. The details for the placement must be confirmed on SONIA before commencing Professional Experience in the site.

Professional Experience Folder

Preservice Educators will collate a folder of resources while they are on Professional Experience, as evidence of their planning. The folder can contain lesson plans, class lists, observation records, school/context policy documents and teaching review comments and Weekly Feedback.

Queensland College of Teachers (QCT)

The Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) is a Queensland government statutory authority. Its purpose is to regulate, enhance and promote the teaching profession in Queensland in the best interests of the public and the profession.

Referee Statement

Preservice Educators who intend to seek employment in a Queensland state school should collect a Referee Statement from their Mentor at the conclusion of each Professional Experience for their professional folio. All employment applications are the students' responsibility and mentor feedback reports are not required by USQ. A copy of the DET Referee Statement is provided as a courtesy at the back of each Professional Experience Booklet. However, students should consult the DET website www.teach.qld.gov.au for specific information about the employment application process.

Site

This refers to any child care centre, kindergarten or preschool, primary school, high school, non-school setting or any other site where a professional experience placement is undertaken.

Site Coordinator

A member of staff from the host site who is responsible for liaising with the Professional Experience office, coordinating the Preservice Educators and their Mentors and providing professional induction for Preservice Educators. They are responsible for ensuring that the Professional Experience Completion Record is completed electronically for each Preservice Educator at the site, and submitted within 5 days of completing the Professional Experience.

SONIA

SONIA provides Preservice Educators and staff with an online tool to manage the Faculty of Education placement process. SONIA can be used for Preservice Educators to register preferences for placements and to view their placement site details. Liaisons, sites and university academic staff use SONIA to view site and student placement records. Site coordinators use SONIA to enter results via the Completion Record.

Teaching Areas Form

Students that intend to teach in a Queensland secondary school are required to nominate two teaching areas (e.g. science, mathematics, SOSE, etc) and provide evidence for their capability to teach these subjects with courses that have been/will be studied at university. The Professional Experience office will use these teaching areas to ensure that suitable mentors in high schools are obtained for professional experience.

Weekly Feedback

Each Professional Experience Booklet contains a Weekly Feedback form which is used by the Mentor to give the Preservice Educator written feedback and guidance. This report should be worked through and discussed with the Preservice Educator on the last day of each week. When extra guidance is recommended the "at risk" process should be initiated on Day 5 of the Professional Experience.

Professional Experience

At USQ, Professional Experience is a component of a course of study. Undergraduates must successfully complete **80 days of supervised Professional Experience** in order to graduate and register as a teacher in Queensland. Graduate students, such as those studying the Graduate Diploma in Learning and Teaching, must successfully complete **55 days of supervised Professional Experience** in order to graduate and register as a teacher in Queensland. In addition, there is a requirement of **20 days Internship or unsupervised professional placement** in order to complete the required total of **100 days (BEDU)** or **75 days (GDTL/GDTO)** professional experience.

It is a requirement that the majority of the supervised professional experience placements (e.g. 40 days for the Bachelor of Education and 30 days for the GDTL) occur in Australian schools, in order to meet the requirements of the program and to become eligible for teacher registration with QCT.

USQ students are referred to as 'Preservice Educators' while they are on Professional Experience. As visitors to an educational setting and as learning members of the profession, USQ students are expected to demonstrate professionalism in all aspects of their approach to Professional Experience. All Preservice Educators are expected to dress and conduct themselves in a manner that will enhance the reputation of USQ and the teaching profession.

USQ students must accept that Professional Experience is scheduled for specific dates in the calendar and strict adherence to these dates is required for successful administration. With over 3000 placements annually, USQ students will take significant responsibility for the administration of their Blue Card, some placement organisation and it is their responsibility to manage their time around other personal and workplace commitments. All Preservice Educators in a particular course will attend Professional Experience at the same time. Exceptions may arise for interstate/overseas students when the school term dates differ from those in Queensland and other exceptional circumstances that are supported by substantial supporting documentation.

In Queensland, Preservice Educators must have a current Working with Children (Blue Card) from the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian and it must be authorised with USQ in order to attend Professional Experience. It is essential that students are proactive in applying for a Blue Card as soon as they are enrolled and they are required to renew their card at least 30 days before it is about to expire. From 2010, Blue Cards will remain valid for 3 years and students should anticipate renewing their Blue Card at least 6 weeks before the expiry date so that their ability to attend Professional Experience (and progression to graduation) is not disadvantaged. For placements outside Queensland, criminal history checks and other legal requirements are the student's responsibility. Ultimately, all criminal history checks that are required to work with children are the student's responsibility and a placement is not possible in Queensland without a current Blue Card which has been authorised by USQ.

Sourcing sufficient numbers of placements is extremely difficult, and to meet the demands for places the Professional Experience office works within these constraints:

- Some sites prefer to deal with a particular university e.g. Griffith, JCU, QUT
- Some sites have a preference for Preservice Educators completing a particular course e.g. only 4th years, or only GDTL students
- Some sites insist that the USQ Professional Experience office arranges the placement, while other sites prefer to interview prospective Preservice Educators for their suitability before considering them for a Professional Experience
- The number of available mentors might be limited by staffing issues, site activities and student assessment schedules e.g. NAPLAN testing

Professional Experience Courses

Each course has a scheduled date for Professional Experience. The Professional Experience Calendar is the source for timetabled information for embedded Professional Experience for each course of study. Only Preservice Educators who are enrolled in the correct course and have the relevant legal checks can be placed for professional experience.

Professional Experience Courses in Undergraduate Programs

Professional Experience Courses are developmental in nature and should wherever possible be taken in a specified order. There are three core courses that are compulsory components for all specialisations – EDC1400, EDC3100 and EDC4000.

	Early Childhood	Primary	Special Education	Secondary	TVE
1st Year	EDC1400 10 days				
	EDE2101 15 days	EDP2111 10 days	EDP2111 10 days	EDS2401 15 days	EDV3401 7 days
2nd Year	EDE2010 15 days	EDP2222 15 days	SPE3001 15 days	EDS2402 15 days	
	EDC3100 15 days				
3rd Year		EDP3333 15 days	EDP3333 15 days		EDV3500 8 days
	EDE4103 25 days	EDP4130 15 days	EDP4130 15 days	EDS4401 25 days	EDV4440 40 days
4th Year	EDC4000 20 days unsupervised				

Core Courses

Professional Experience Courses in the Graduate Diploma (GDTL or GDTO)

Professional Experience Courses should wherever possible be taken in a specified order but there are options for part time enrolments. In both the BEDU and the GDTL/GDTO, the internship or professional placement (EDC4000) is the final core course with an unsupervised professional experience for 20 days.

	GDTL and GDTO (New Students in 2010 and Transition)
First Semester	EDG2000 15 days
	EDG2001 or EDS2401 15 days
Second Semester	EDG3000 25 days
Professional Placement	EDC4000 20 days unsupervised

Core Courses

Professional Experience Booklets

The scope and sequence for Professional Experience in each specialisation is described in The Professional Experience Booklet.

There are 5 different Professional Experience booklets:

- The Professional Experience Booklet for BEDU EARLY CHILDHOOD and Bachelor of Early Childhood
- The Professional Experience Booklet for BEDU PRIMARY
- The Professional Experience Booklet for BEDU SPECIAL EDUCATION
- The Professional Experience Booklet for BEDU SECONDARY and BEDU TVE and Bachelor of VET
- The Professional Experience Booklet for Graduate Diploma of Learning and Teaching (GDTL and GDTO)

The requirements to successfully complete the objectives of the Professional Experience in the specified number of days are elaborated for each Professional Experience in The Professional Experience Booklet and supported by material on the StudyDesk. The Professional Experience Booklet, which is relevant to students attending the site, is posted to the Site Coordinator in the week before the Professional Experience start date. For overseas placements, the mail out pack is sent electronically to the Site Coordinator's email address. The mail out packs contain a copy of the booklet, Mentor and Site Coordinator payment claim forms, instructions for entering the students' results at the conclusion of the Professional Experience and other useful information to assist and support the university's requirements for Professional Experience.

When a host site has not received The Professional Experience Booklet by the first day of the experience, please consult with your Site Coordinator (or check the inbound mail for the site). If necessary, contact the Professional Experience Office and another copy will be sent. However, these booklets are provided online to all students. It is the student's responsibility to access their electronic copy of the Professional Experience Booklet for their specialisation and have it readily available throughout the Professional Experience.

Successful Professional Experience

In order to achieve a successful professional experience, you are encouraged to become involved in all of the professional activities and responsibilities that are required in the work place, in consultation with and under the supervision of your Mentor.

Working with Children and Legal Checks

You must have a current Blue Card authorised by USQ, for all placements in Queensland. Your Blue Card details and the expiry date are recorded in SONIA. If you are not in Queensland, it is your responsibility to complete and comply with the criminal history checks or legal requirements that apply for your context. Although the Professional Experience office can assist with Blue Card applications, authorisations and renewals; the actual responsibility for a Blue Card lies with you. Keep copies of all communication with the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian; this includes retaining a copy of the positive notice letter which is sent with your Blue Card.

Documentation

Print a copy of The Professional Experience Guidelines (this document) and The Professional Experience Booklet for your specialisation. Have copies of any special instructions that have been provided through your course StudyDesk and other curriculum resources e.g. a lesson plan template or other documents that might be associated with course assessment which might be linked to your Professional Experience. Check your diary and the school calendar and make a note of any public holidays, Show holidays or significant school events that might occur during the scheduled Professional Experience block. The dates for all scheduled Professional Experiences are set for each course and are clearly stated on the Professional Experience Calendar, which is publicised on the Professional Experience website. Keep a copy of your documents for your records. You should endeavour to collect evidence of your professional experience throughout your degree, to support your applications for employment. Mentor feedback, referee reports and professional references are your property. It is your responsibility to collect and manage your documents, which you can add to your resume for presentation when you are applying for jobs.

Placement Procedures by Campus

Responsibility for placement of students should fall to the campus of enrolment.

Fraser Coast:

Students enrolled through the Fraser Coast campus and require placements within 50 km or approximately 1 hour travel time of the Fraser Coast Campus should follow the “Students Local to Campus” process as outlined on the Professional Experience website. Students seeking placements further than 50 km from the Fraser Coast campus should follow the process as outlined on the Professional Experience website.

Springfield:

Students enrolled through the Springfield campus are placed by the Springfield Professional Experience Office.

Toowoomba:

Students enrolled through the Toowoomba campus and require placements within 50 km of the Toowoomba Campus should undertake the “Students Local to Campus” process as outlined on the Professional Experience website. Students seeking placements further than 50 km from the Toowoomba campus should follow the process as outlined on the Professional Experience website.

Organising a Placement

There are three (3) different placement processes used to arrange a Site and a Mentor to host a student for Professional Experience. The particular process that is used depends on a number of factors such as geographical location, supervised Professional Experience or internship, semester 3 placements, permission for students to approach sites, and the specifics of the request or the site. You will be advised of the “correct” placement process for your context through your course StudyDesk or your USQ uemail.

In general USQ students are advised to complete one (1) of the following processes to be placed for Professional Experience:

- register your local preferences electronically in SONIA (SONIA preference dates are advertised to students through uemail and your course StudyDesk for sites in the area surrounding a campus)

OR

- register your local preferences in hard copy on the **Local Request Professional Experience Preference Form** (for sites in the area surrounding a campus required by GDTL students or other local students that were unable access the SONIA preference system)

OR

- source your own placement using the **Professional Experience Placement Application Form** (for securing an unsupervised internship, or for placements interstate, overseas and further away from a campus, or for when the Professional Experience office instructs you to approach a site in your area or at the request of the site)

Confirmation

The Professional Experience office will provide regular updates on placements through your course StudyDesk or by viewing SONIA. Do not contact the Professional Experience office to ask if your placement has been confirmed. Most placements will be confirmed at least 10 days before the Professional Experience is due to commence. It is your responsibility to check that your placement is confirmed on SONIA. However, some placements, particularly in the secondary school are extremely difficult to secure and might be achieved at the last moment. It is imperative that you check your USQ uemail regularly but do not expect to be individually contacted about your placement. From your confirmed placement on SONIA, record the details for contacting the Site Coordinator, your Mentor, the year level and your USQ liaison. Have a general understanding of the site and their expectations. Perhaps view their website and ensure that you know the general location, layout and organisation of the site. Expect an uemail from your USQ Liaison or take the initiative and introduce yourself.

First Contact

Your placement is confirmed on SONIA which means the mail out pack has been sent to the site, and you are now able to contact the site. However, the site may not have opened the mail and your Professional Experience is usually not the highest priority for the Site Coordinator. Make your first contact by phoning the Site Coordinator in the week before the Professional Experience is due to commence. Have a thorough understanding of the requirements of your Professional Experience and be prepared to make a good first impression. Have a list of questions already prepared to show that you are willing to fit in and speak with confidence when the site asks about your requirements for Professional Experience. Schools are busy places; be polite and professional, and do not be discouraged if the site seems only vaguely prepared for your placement.

Orientation

Although not always possible, it is desirable to meet your mentor and visit the site before you actually begin your placement. It is your responsibility to know the school's location and plan your travel route. If you attend the site for an orientation, you should consider staying on the site for a full day, which can then be used to count as a make up day (if required for a public holiday or Show day). Use this time to familiarise yourself with the class timetable, routines, school layout, site procedures, student's names and current class projects. Your Mentor may be able to advise you on your teaching responsibilities and you can get a head start on your planning.

Arrival

On your first day in the site, report to the Administration block and follow the procedures to sign in as a visitor. You should plan to arrive at the site at least 30 minutes before the first lesson or the commencement of the shift. Your Site Coordinator will usually arrange an induction for you and set the expectations for you while you are a guest in the site. If you are unsure about any of the processes, ask for clarification. Do not assume that the site has an understanding of the requirements of your Professional Experience. All universities use different processes and you may need to explain the assessment process for successfully completing the Professional Experience in the required number of days; particularly if you are also completing an assignment that is linked to your Professional Experience. Your USQ liaison will check in with the Site Coordinator to make sure that you have arrived and that you have settled in; they will also notify the Professional Experience office if you fail to turn up.

Identification

You are required to present your Blue Card (or equivalent legal requirements) to the Site Coordinator for sighting. You should consider wearing a name badge and some sites will insist that you wear a Visitor badge or some other form of identification.

Appearance

Every site has the right to accept or reject a visitor on their premises. Ensure that the standard of your dress and grooming is professional and consistent with the expectations of your context. Smart casual dress is usually appropriate and it is safer to dress conservatively if you are unsure. Some sites have strict dress codes and particular requirements that relate to visible tattoos, body piercings, clothing items (e.g. denim jeans, t-shirts with slogans, footwear) and acceptable hair styles/colours. You should have a hat for play ground duty and for participating in outside activities. As a guest at the site, students are expected to respect the requirements of the site or they may be asked to leave.

Professionalism

Attend the site for the required number of days and negotiate any make up days for illness (provide a medical certificate to the Professional Experience office for 3 days or more) or public holidays. You are a guest at the site; have a professional attitude and respect the confidentiality that is expected from you by this community. Placements for Professional Experience are usually secured months in advance and require significant negotiations between the Professional Experience office, Site Coordinators and Mentors. Sites are under no obligation to host USQ students, places are very limited and Mentors can be very disappointed and annoyed when students do not arrive for Professional Experience. Inform the Professional Experience office immediately if you decide to withdraw from a course or when other circumstances occur that mean that you will not be able to attend Professional Experience. The Professional Experience office needs this information in order to show courtesy to the site and your placement may be given to another student. If you do not meet your obligations for professionalism and attendance, the site is likely to grade you as unsuccessful for the Professional Experience which is generally recorded as a fail for the course.

Liaison

Your USQ liaison is provided to support and assist the smooth operation of the Professional Experience. It is your responsibility to take advantage of this support by making early contact with your liaison, particularly if the Professional Experience is not proceeding smoothly. Contact the Professional Experience office if you do not receive any contact from your liaison. Sites that are in the local area surrounding a campus are usually visited by a liaison. However, liaison is also conducted via email and phone for distant sites which are outside the local area surrounding a campus.

Planning

You should present your planning to your Mentor before teaching any lessons, preferably the day before teaching the lesson. Minimal planning or poorly prepared lessons are unlikely to result in a successful lesson. Your mentor can refuse to allow you to teach if your lessons are not prepared adequately and this will usually initiate the “at risk” process, which could lead to an unsuccessful Professional Experience. All Preservice Educators will collate a Professional Experience Folder while they are on their Professional Experience. This should be made available to Mentors for appraisal as part of the Weekly Feedback. The folder will be appraised according to the inclusion and appropriateness of the items listed below:

- observation records
- class details
- teaching/learning/assessment plans and records
- teaching review comments
- school/context policy documents
- resources which could prove helpful to a beginning teacher i.e. names of textbooks, copies of assessment activities, samples of student work at different quality levels, names of suppliers, catalogues, names of reference books, class hand-outs, etc.

Teaching

Use your planning but remember to stay flexible and allow yourself the opportunity to adapt. Keep in touch with your learners and take advantage of the teachable moment. It is inevitable that you will feel challenged by the students’ behaviour throughout the Professional Experience. Ask your mentor for guidance, be familiar with the behaviour management policy (if applicable) and be prepared to implement strategies that are consistent with a supportive learning environment. Although you are a guest in the site, the requirements for the Professional Experience, the focus area for your course (e.g. mathematics, ICT or diversity) and the amount of teaching you are to attempt are suggested in the Professional Experience Booklet. The suggestions are a guide to ensure that you demonstrate the minimum levels of skill and proficiency in order to successfully pass the Professional Experience.

Feedback

Before, during and after your lessons you should seek feedback from your Mentor about your planning and lesson delivery. Listen respectfully for the intent behind “warm” and “cool” feedback because constructive criticism is as difficult to deliver as it is to receive. Incorporate and reflect on a variety of different strategies and try to accept their advice where appropriate. Your employment applications may require evidence of your performance on Professional Experience through written feedback from your mentor. The Professional Experience Booklets contain a Weekly Feedback form, and examples of the Referee Statement and the DET Professional Experience/Internship Overview. Written feedback is your responsibility and your property. It is your responsibility to collect evidence of your teaching skills while you are on Professional Experience. Do not send any written feedback to the Professional Experience office.

Departure

At the end of each day, be available for 30 minutes after the last scheduled lesson to discuss your Professional Experience with your Mentor and follow the sign out procedures. Ensure that you resolve any queries so that you can build on a stronger foundation every day. On the last day of your Professional Experience, return all resources, keys and site property to your Mentor. It is your responsibility to ensure that your result for pass or fail is entered by the site. Your university results and grades for this course cannot be finalised until the Completion Record is submitted via SONIA. Ensure that the Site Coordinator completes the SONIA electronic Completion Record for the required number of days within five (5) days of concluding the Professional Experience. However, it is more reassuring when the Completion Record is finalised on the last day and you are informed of the successful conclusion of the Professional Experience as you leave the site. Thank the site, say goodbye to the students and ensure that all aspects of the Professional Experience are concluded in a professional manner. The true test of a successful Professional Experience is the site's willingness to host you (or another Preservice Educator) for another Professional Experience placement.

Organising a Placement

All placements must be confirmed on SONIA before you commence in the site. A SONIA "block code" is established to confirm your placement with the dates for the experience and the details for your Mentor and Site Coordinator. A mail out pack with the Professional Experience booklet and payment information for the staff is sent to the site at least 5 days before you commence the placement. If you commence a placement without confirmation on SONIA:

- you are **not** covered by USQ insurance policies
- the mail out pack has **not** been sent to the site
- you are **not** supported by the university for liaison and your Mentor cannot be paid
- the days that you have attended are **not** recognised for your course and your Mentor will be unable to enter a result in the SONIA Completion Record

Do not commence any placement until you have checked that it is confirmed on SONIA.

USQ students should not be placed at a site where there is a potential or perceived conflict of interest, e.g. family or employment connection. It is very embarrassing for students when the site reports to the Professional Experience office that a connection exists through paid employment, children attending at the site or that a partner/relative is already employed at the site. In the case of students that are employed, it is a USQ and a Queensland College of Teachers requirement that students engaged in professional experience are not accepting payment for employment while at the site on Professional Experience. It is the student's responsibility to recognise and declare any possible conflict of interest so that the highest standards of ethical behaviour are maintained. The discovery of an undeclared conflict of interest will usually necessitate the student's withdrawal from the site. It is acknowledged that there may be extenuating circumstances that make a connection with a site unavoidable, particularly in rural or remote regions where there may be limited available sites. In these circumstances, the student should ensure that all possible steps have been taken to avoid differential or inequitable treatment.

There are 3 processes that are used to organise professional experience placements:

1. SONIA

SONIA is a web-based program that manages the placement process for students, liaison and faculty staff. The SONIA site records the history for each placement, the Blue Card expiry date, accepts preferences for local sites, confirms placements and accepts electronic Completion Records for successful attending all the requirements of the Professional Experience in the specified number of days.

Students who are in the local area for sites in the region surrounding Toowoomba, Fraser Coast and Springfield, will need to enter preferences for a Professional Experience placement using SONIA. Schools and sites have expressed their preference for dealing directly with USQ in our local areas and do not appreciate working directly with students. The placement arrangements are made between USQ and the Site Coordinators, not with individual teachers or staff at the site. In the interests of fairness for high demand sites, students enter preferences and are allocated a site based on geographical preferences and the placement offers made by schools and sites. Students are encouraged to be realistic about placement opportunities; there is an acute shortage of available mentors throughout South East Queensland and sustained competition for placing students from other universities. This constant struggle to meet demand means that it is extremely difficult to secure sufficient placements.

Students will be advised through their course StudyDesk when SONIA is open for viewing and when they must register preferences for local sites. Students can view and register their preferences for selected sites who have agreed to work in partnership with USQ. SONIA will accept the preferences and allocate students to sites based on availability or geographical location. When the allocations are confirmed on SONIA, the students will be able to make contact with their site and make arrangements to meet their mentor.

2. Local Request Professional Experience Preference Form

A paper based (hard copy) form is used to support the SONIA (electronic) preference system for local sites. Instead of entering preferences in SONIA, the Professional Experience office may request students to enter their preferences on the **Local Request Professional Experience Preference Form**. The form is used by the Professional Experience office to source local placements for GDTL students, and in other circumstances when students are unable to lodge their preferences in SONIA. When the allocations are confirmed on SONIA, the students will be able to make contact with their site and make arrangements to meet their mentor.

3. Professional Experience Placement Application Form

The paper based (hard copy) **Professional Experience Placement Application Form** is used for students to organise their own placement when they are sourcing sites interstate, overseas or outside the local area of a campus, when they are participating in an unsupervised internship (e.g. EDC4000) or when they have been given permission to approach sites directly to source their own placement. In all cases, the Professional Experience Office is available to manage and assist the placement of students and confirm the details of the placement on SONIA.

Students who are interstate, overseas or outside the local area of a campus have permission to approach sites to organise their own placement. Basically, students are in a better position to source their own placement because they have local knowledge of the sites which are available to them. Although the Toowoomba Professional Experience Office is available to assist, students are more likely to secure the placement that suits their requirements by formally introducing themselves to the site and making their arrangements directly with the site before returning the Professional Experience Placement Application Form to the Professional Experience office. When the placement details are confirmed on SONIA, the students will be able to verify the arrangements and commence at the site.

EDC4000 is a final, unsupervised experience, and part of this professional process permits interns to source their own placement. Students participating in an unsupervised Internship (e.g. for EDC4000) are encouraged to return to a site that they have previously attended for Professional Experience and often with a Mentor that has previously supervised them. In most cases, a graduate intern is more likely to secure their internship placement during their last supervised professional experience placement. Although graduate interns have permission to approach sites directly, experience has shown that these placements should be organised early and tend to proceed smoothly to graduation when you are already known to the site. Although the Toowoomba Professional Experience Office is available to assist, students are more likely to secure their placement by completing the Professional Experience Placement Application Form with a site during their last supervised Professional Experience. The form needs to be submitted to the Professional Experience office with an unofficial Academic transcript, at least 4 weeks before any placement is due to commence. USQ uses this information to request the Internship Authorisation from QCT for all internship placements in Queensland schools. When the placement details are confirmed on SONIA, the students will be able to verify the arrangements and commence at the site.

Professional Experience Placement Process

This outline is a list of the administrative tasks that are required for successful professional experience.

- Apply for and obtain a Blue Card which is required for all placements in Queensland. Ensure that your current Blue Card is authorised with USQ. Make a note of the expiry date and keep copies of your documents for renewing or replacing a lost or stolen card. The legal requirements or criminal history checks for other Australian States and overseas are the student's responsibility
- Read the Professional Experience Guidelines (this document) carefully and thoroughly. Print a copy of the Professional Experience Booklet for your specialisation e.g. BEDU (Primary). Make sure that you fully understand the purpose of the required number of days and the requirements of the embedded professional experience in the course of study. Have a thorough understanding of the planning and teaching that is required while attending the site, particularly if there is an assessment item attached to the Professional Experience.
- All USQ Students are expected to undertake Professional Experience during the specified dates. It is not permitted to make individual arrangements with sites to change these dates. Attendance for the required number of days is compulsory and essential for successful completion of the Professional Experience. You must make-up days for Public Holidays and days missed due to Private School holidays or days that are not acknowledged in the Queensland School Calendar e.g. Tasmania operates with 3 semesters. In exceptional circumstances, changes to the dates are requested in writing to the Professional Experience Office and will require substantial supporting documentation
- Check your UConnect emails, Course StudyDesk and SONIA regularly. Communicate in a timely manner to all requests from the Professional Experience Office by email. SONIA is a web-based program that manages the placement process for students, liaison and faculty staff. The SONIA site records the history, Blue Card expiry date, confirms placements and accepts electronic records for successful completion for the required number of days. Do not commence any placement until you have checked that it is confirmed on SONIA
- Make appropriate arrangements for child care for your own children (if applicable) and make appropriate arrangements for your own paid work (if applicable) during professional experience. Think ahead, because your availability for paid work will be limited by the time commitment required for Professional Experience
- Prepare for professional experience effectively. Planning and preparation should be undertaken in consultation with your Mentor. If you are unable to attend on any given day, notify the site and present a medical certificate for absences of 3 days or more. Organise to make up days missed so that you successfully complete the required number of days
- Be proactive to ensure that you are assessed as pass or fail and that the Site Coordinator enters your results in the electronic Completion Record, which is submitted via SONIA on the last day of Professional Experience

Placement Process in the Local Area Surrounding a Campus

(e.g. local to the area surrounding Springfield, Toowoomba and Fraser Coast)

- Most schools and sites request that USQ organise placements within our local area for regions around the Springfield, Toowoomba and Fraser Coast campuses
- Unless you have been specifically advised otherwise, students will enter preferences using SONIA for our local schools and sites
- The **Local Professional Experience Preference Form** is used in the place of SONIA for GDTL students or at the request of the Professional Experience office
- In some circumstances students will be required to follow a different process and source their own local placement e.g. the internship, some centres, specific educational communities and when you have been advised by the Professional Experience Office that you are to approach the site
- Check SONIA for your confirmed placement. Notify the Professional Experience office immediately if a conflict or potential conflict of interest exists at your allocated site. It is your responsibility to find out the school location, how long it will take you to get there and to be punctual and professional at all times
- Make contact with your Site Coordinator to ensure they know when to expect you. Ask about parking protocols and follow them. Organise your clothing and physical appearance as appropriate to your site context. Ask about dress standards if necessary. Attend a site-based induction session, if applicable. Carefully read all site protocol information and policy Guidelines either provided to you or available online and comply with requirements
- Expect contact from your USQ Liaison or you can initiate this contact by introducing yourself by using their details which were included with your placement confirmation details on SONIA

Placement Process for Non Local Students

(e.g. interstate and overseas)

- Students who are interstate and overseas have permission to approach sites to organise their own placement. Basically, students are in a better position to source their own placement because they have local knowledge of the sites which are available to them. Although the Toowoomba Professional Experience Office is available to assist, students are more likely to secure the placement that suits their requirements by formally introducing themselves to the site using the **Professional Experience Placement Application Form**.
- Ensure that your current Blue Card is authorised with USQ or you have completed the legal requirements or criminal history checks for your State / Country, and make a few JP certified photocopies....just in case they need to have a copy for their records.
- Download your Professional Experience Booklet and other materials from your course StudyDesk and the Professional Experience website; a Letter of Introduction is provided for you on the Professional Experience website to assist the initial communication with the site. Read all information, make a copy for your mentor, and take it with you when you have an appointment with the site.
- Research the school or site by checking their website and familiarise yourself with a few of their useful documents such as the Behaviour Management policy or the school philosophy or religious affiliation. Know a little about the teaching approaches that are used by the school and make sure that you are comfortable that you can "fit in". Think about how you will respond when they ask you "Why do you want to do your Professional Experience at our site?"
- From their website and your research, you should know the name of the School Principal or Deputy Principal or Director. Make an appointment to visit the site and speak with them about a Professional Experience placement. Leave your name and a contact phone number. They may already take students from other universities so ensure that they know you are from USQ, because each university has different processes.
- At your interview, be specific and make a request for a suitable Mentor or year level. Be able to speak with confidence about the expectations for satisfactory completion of the required number of days, teaching and planning responsibilities and the SONIA completion record which are all outlined in The Professional Experience Booklet. Suggest how you can contribute to the site and that your presence contributes to their site community e.g. the Mentor can satisfy the Queensland College of Teachers Continuing Professional Development requirement to maintain teacher registration
- After negotiating your own placement, the Professional Experience Office will require this information in writing, in order to log all the details into SONIA. Complete the **Professional Experience Placement Application Form**, at least 4 weeks before any placement is due to commence, and return it to the address on the form. The details are recorded in SONIA in order to send the Professional Experience Booklet to the site, Mentor and Site Coordinator payment claim forms, recording your results for successful completion of the required number of days and logging your days as evidence for completing the course. Do not commence any placement until you have checked that it is confirmed on SONIA.

Placement Process for Graduate Interns and EDC4000

(e.g. internships, unsupervised placements and professional placements)

- Graduate Interns have permission to approach sites to organise their final placement using the **Professional Experience Placement Application Form**. They are responsible for gaining and negotiating their own placement and for conducting themselves in ways that preserve that relationship. Internships are not paid positions, and school mentors are not remunerated. Although the Toowoomba Professional Experience Office is available to assist, interns are more likely to secure their placement while they are already attending the site or by returning to a site that they have previously attended for a supervised Professional Experience
- Ensure that your current Blue Card is authorised with USQ or you have completed the legal requirements or criminal history checks for your State / Country, and investigated other requirements that might apply outside Queensland
- Download your Professional Experience Booklet and other materials from your course StudyDesk and the Professional Experience website; a Letter of Introduction is provided for you on the Professional Experience website to assist the initial communication with the site. Read all information, make a copy for your Mentor, and complete the **Professional Experience Placement Application Form** with the Site Coordinator, usually while you are attending the site for your last supervised Professional Experience
- Be able to speak with confidence about the expectations for satisfactory completion of the required number of days, teaching and planning responsibilities and the SONIA completion record which are all outlined in the Professional Experience Booklet. Graduate Interns will demonstrate the levels of skill and professional behaviour appropriate for a beginning teacher. Graduate Interns will take full responsibility for half of a regular full-time teacher's classroom load, without the direct supervision of a Mentor, and will work in a secondary role with Mentor teacher(s) for the second half of that fulltime load.
- Now that you have sourced your own placement, the Professional Experience Office will require this information in writing with a copy of your Unofficial Academic Transcript by returning the **Professional Experience Placement Application Form** at least 4 weeks before any placement is due to commence. USQ will use these details to request Internship Authorisation from the Queensland College of Teachers on your behalf. The details are recorded in SONIA in order to send the Professional Experience booklet to the school, recording your results for successful completion of the required number of days and logging your days as evidence for completing the course (and for QCT).
- Do not commence any placement until you have checked that it is confirmed on SONIA.

The “At Risk” Process

By Day 5 of any professional experience, a Mentor or Site Coordinator should notify the Liaison of any concerns about a Preservice Educator for any reason. The Preservice Educator should be placed “at risk”, usually by Day 5. Whilst it is possible that this may occur at any stage, an “at risk” form would normally be completed no later than 5 days before the end of the block placement. It is not appropriate to fail a student without following the “at risk” procedure.

The “at risk” process involves the following:

- through regular written feedback, the Mentor will notify the Preservice Educator of any concerns about performance
- the Site Coordinator and the USQ Liaison will be informed and plans agreed for assisting the Preservice Educator to resolve the areas of concern
- Mentors should keep copies of all written feedback provided to the Preservice Educator as evidence of attempts to resolve the concerns
- the decision to place the Preservice Educator “at risk” will be made by the Mentor in consultation with the Preservice Educator, Site Coordinator and the USQ Liaison usually at the time that the Weekly Feedback form is completed, usually at Day 5. Early notification is essential and the “at risk” process should be initiated when providing weekly feedback so that the student has an opportunity to make improvements
- the Mentor will complete the “at risk” notification form and ensure that the Professional Experience Office, the Preservice Educator and the Site Coordinator each receive a copy
- the Academic Professional Experience Coordinator and the Course Examiner will offer an **A Team** USQ Liaison to provide on-going assistance to the Preservice Educator who is “at risk”
- specific assistance and guidance will be made available to the Preservice Educator “at risk” by the **A TEAM** Liaison who will also work with the Mentor, Site Coordinator and the Course Examiner
- Preservice Educators “at risk” may be provided with opportunities to observe others’ teaching and learning environments and to have their own teaching and learning processes observed and to engage in discussion and reflection on these observations with assistance by the **A TEAM** Liaison, in consultation with the Course Examiner
- if the Preservice Educator shows suitable improvement in the identified area/s, he or she passes the Professional Experience and continues with the course. If not, the A TEAM liaison will consult with the Preservice Educator and the Mentor, and liaise with relevant university staff to give advice on appropriate options
- the outcome of the “at risk” process will be pass or fail for the requirements of Professional Experience in the specified number of days



“AT RISK” FORM

The “At Risk” process should ideally be initiated by Day 5 or immediately when concerns are raised.

Student Name:	
Course Number:	
Course Name:	
School/Site:	
Site Coordinator/Mentor:	
Contact Details:	

This USQ student has been placed “at risk” of not meeting the requirements for this Professional Experience as identified in the Professional Experience Booklet for this course.

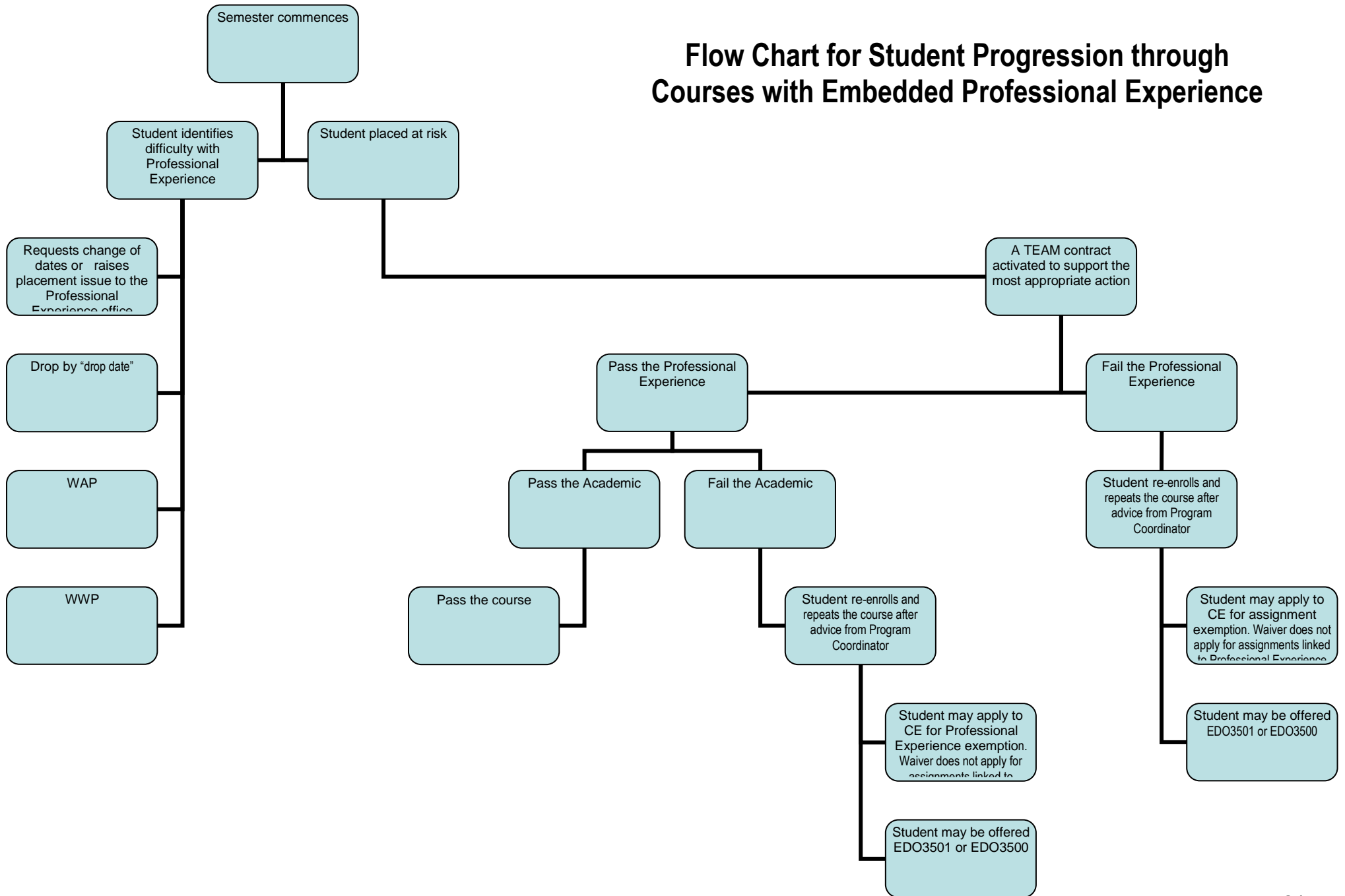
The following statement outlines the professional standards in which significant progress is required for success in this Professional Experience (attach a separate page if necessary).

Teaching and Learning	
Building Relationships	
Reflective Practices	
Site Coordinator/Mentor signature	.../.../.../
Student signature	.../.../.../

After signing, keep a copy for the site, give a copy to the student and send this form to the Toowoomba Professional Experience Office in order for USQ to provide additional support through the A TEAM Liaison.

Professional Experience Faculty of Education University of Southern Queensland Toowoomba Qld 4350 Phone: 07 4631 2359 Fax: 07 4631 2598 Email: professional.experience@usq.edu.au	USQ Coordinator: A TEAM Liaison (5 hour contract): Recommendation: .../.../...
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Flow Chart for Student Progression through Courses with Embedded Professional Experience



Student Progression and Professional Experience

A consistent approach is required to manage program progression after a student has failed either the Professional Experience or the academic requirements in courses with an embedded professional experience.

After having gone through the due process to reach a fail decision for either the Professional Experience or the academic components of a course, the fail represents a hurdle which will result in a failing grade for the course. Whatever the reason for the failing grade for a course, the default position will be that the student must re-enroll and repeat the course.

When a student has failed the Professional Experience (but passed the academic), the student will:

- Confirm the failing grade with the Course Examiner
- Seek enrolment advice from the Program Coordinator
- Reenroll in the next offer of the failed course or seek an invitation into EDO3501 or EDO3500
- Repeat the professional experience and attend the required number of days in full
- When the assessment items are the same in the subsequent offer of the course, the student may apply to the Course Examiner for exemptions for the assessment items that have been completed successfully. However, an exemption is not always in the students' best interest. The student is entitled to repeat the tasks and to submit the assessment items in order to achieve a higher grade.

When a student has failed the academic components (but passed the Professional Experience), the student will:

- Confirm the failing grade with the Course Examiner
- Seek enrolment advice from the Program Coordinator
- Reenroll in the next offer of the failed course or seek an invitation into EDO3501 or EDO3500
- Repeat the professional experience and attend the required number of days in full
- The student may apply to the Course Examiner to waive attendance in the Professional Experience block, because the professional experience days have been completed successfully. However, the student is entitled to repeat the professional experience in order to benefit from the learning experience as a result of failing and repeating a course
- When an assessment item is directly linked to the Professional Experience, no exemption for the Professional Experience will be granted. The professional experience days and the assignment will both be repeated
- The student is required to successfully complete the course assessment in order to achieve a pass overall. However, the student may apply to the course examiner for credit when a similar assignment has previously been completed successfully. However, the student is entitled to repeat the assignments in order to achieve a higher grade for the course
- When an exemption is granted for the Professional Experience, the Course Examiner will notify the Professional Experience office so that a note will be placed in SONIA and a placement is not required

The Completion Record and SONIA

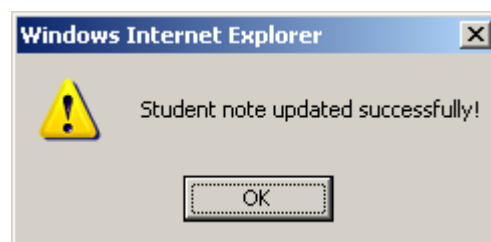
University results and grades for each course cannot be finalised until a Completion Record is submitted using SONIA. The online Completion Record should be completed by the Site Coordinator or Mentor Teacher within five (5) days of the Preservice Educators (USQ Student) completing the Professional Experience. However, it is more reassuring when the Completion Record is finalised on the last day and the Preservice Teacher is informed of the successful conclusion of the Professional Experience.

1. **SONIA** can be found at the following web address <http://sonia.usq.edu.au/education/>
2. Select **Setting** in the box on the left of the screen. **Log on** to the site by entering your **USER ID**, **PASSWORD** and selecting **Continue**

USER ID	USER ID : this appears on the Student Notification letter sent to the Site Coordinator; this cannot be made available to students
PASSWORD	2005

3. You will be able to see your **site details** and update this information if necessary using the modify links at the bottom of the detail
4. The tabs along the top left will allow you to access further information. Click on **Blocks** to see the confirmed details of placements you have offered. Student names will appear once the places are confirmed. You may have Preservice Educators in one or more of these blocks, which will need to be completed individually.
Please note: the dates are set for the main cohort. If students have approval for variations these dates will not appear here
5. Open the **[View Student List]** for the current block at your site
On the details page enter:
 - The number of days each Preservice Educator completed at your site
 - Select either Pass or Fail, as assessed by each Preservice Educator's supervising Mentor

6. After you have entered the above details, click the **Update** button (under the list of Student Names) to save the data. A dialogue box will appear to indicate the successful update of the Preservice Educator's result.
Please note: this is not a warning or error



7. **Log out** - when you are finished
8. For supervised experiences that attract payment, please complete the **Claim for Professional Experience Allowances** form for each Mentor Teacher (Form A) and the Site Coordinator (Form B) for the nominated number of days immediately after the submission of the online Completion Records. Forms are included in the mail out however, electronic copies are available on the Professional Experience website (<http://www.usq.edu.au/education/profexp/forms>)

Please note: Completed **Claim for Professional Experience Allowances** forms cannot be processed until the online Completion Record is submitted. Under the current Industrial Agreement, there is no payment for Mentors or Site Coordinators for hosting an Intern or a student attending an unsupervised experience in Queensland.

Professional Responsibilities

Absences

The specified number of days for each Professional Experience are required in full to meet the requirements of the course, of the program and for teacher registration with QCT. If you are absent for any reason on a scheduled day, inform the site (before 7.45 am) and your USQ liaison. Acceptable reasons for absence from Professional Experience include a University Examination or a condition supported by documentation (e.g. medical certificate). You must negotiate the make up day for any absence, public holiday, Show holiday or any missed day with your Mentor so that the full, specified number of days are completed. An absence or change of 3 days or more to the dates of the internship, must be reported to the Professional Experience office. USQ will inform QCT on your behalf to adjust the dates of your internship in a Queensland school.

Communicating with the University

The Professional Experience office facilitates over 3000 placements every year and logistically does not have the resources to contact and respond to students on a one-to one basis. You are required to be proactive and enroll in your courses early, regularly engage with your course StudyDesk, read your USQ emails carefully and confirm your placement by checking SONIA before you contact the site. Communication with the Professional Experience office should be in writing, and preferably by email and using your USQ email account which clearly states your full name, student number and course code. The Professional Experience office is an administration centre for the processing of forms. Do not expect an individual reply from the Professional Experience office; you will be contacted by email if there is a problem with your placement. Most placements in the area surrounding a campus are organised by the Professional Experience office and you have to wait to find out where you will be going. Students that have been permitted to approach sites to source their own placement have negotiated the arrangements themselves and are simply waiting for confirmation on SONIA. All students must check for their confirmed placement on SONIA. Your first point of contact is your USQ liaison and their details are recorded in SONIA for you. You should be proactive and introduce yourself to your liaison and seek support at the earliest opportunity, if required. However, if you do not have contact from your liaison, notify the Professional Experience office. In situations where difficulties arise or you are placed "at risk", the USQ liaison must be contacted.

Confidentiality

Preservice Educators should abide by the protocols for seeking permission, maintaining confidentiality and recording observations in a non-judgmental manner. An abuse of confidentiality is unprofessional and the criticism of sites or staff may be considered defamatory. A situation may arise where a student at the site discloses personal information that relates to sexual assault, neglect or abuse. There are legal obligations to follow the site policy and procedure for reporting specific events, which may even involve the police. You should ensure that you know, understand and comply with the process for reporting these types of disclosed information, even if this means breaking the student's confidence.

Conflict of Interest

USQ preservice education programs are subject to approval processes including approvals from Queensland College of Teachers (QCT). If a preservice teacher has a usual paid role as a teacher aide then they cannot complete their professional experience in that school. It presents a conflict of interest but also does not allow the student to experience a range of school settings if they complete all of those experiences in the one school. If a preservice teacher is being paid as a teacher aide while completing their Professional Experience then it would suggest that they are not meeting the requirements of that professional experience. Supervised professional experience should also not be completed in schools where a spouse/ partner is employed. These expectations are not negotiable.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment has been abolished in most sites, in most independent schools and in Queensland state schools since 1995. Preservice Educators are prohibited from being involved in any activity that involves corporal punishment.

Criminal History Check

Preservice educators are required to complete the relevant legal checks for working with children; in Queensland this is known as a Blue Card. USQ students must be proactive in applying for a Blue Card, completing the authorisation for USQ and renewing the card at least 30 days before the expiry date.

Discrimination

Anti-discrimination aims to promote equal opportunity by protecting people from unfair discrimination in certain areas of activity, sexual harassment and objectionable conduct. The University of Southern Queensland Equal Opportunity Policy <http://www.usq.edu.au/legaloffice/antidiscrim> covers areas associated with discrimination, personal harassment, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, policy for people with disabilities, equal opportunity for women in the workplace and a policy on multiculturalism. If you believe that you are being harassed, you should discuss the issue with your mentor (if appropriate) then with your site coordinator, USQ liaison and the Student Equity Office.

Duty of Care

Mentors have a legal responsibility for the physical and intellectual well being of their students. The standard of care required is that of a reasonable teacher with the skills, insights and qualifications appropriate to the profession. Except in the case of an unsupervised internship, a Preservice Educator should not be left unsupervised with the students. A Preservice Educator should know the whereabouts of their mentor at all times, and should be able to summon them immediately if necessary.

Ethics

The teaching profession expects high standards of ethical behaviour from its members. This expectation is evident in the Qualities of a USQ Graduate <http://www.usq.edu.au/qualgrad>. Preservice Educators are expected to abide by the Code of Ethics from the relevant authority, such as the Code of Ethics for Teachers in Queensland by the Queensland College of Teachers <http://www.qct.edu.au/> and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/>. Educators have a significant duty of care for all students. It is not appropriate for Preservice Educators to engage in personal relationships with students or to develop intimate relationships with people from the site community, even after the Professional Experience has concluded. You should ensure that there is no actual or perceived conflict between your interests and your studies as a Preservice Educator.

Health Issues

If you have health concerns which could potentially affect your studies or professional experience, you are encouraged to disclose your issues with USQ Disability Resources. It may also be appropriate to inform the Professional Experience office or the Site Coordinator of your circumstances through a confidential discussion. Student Services can provide free, confidential, psychological assistance through USQ Counselling Support. The counsellors are professionally accredited staff who will work with you to understand and manage a wide range of issues including career, personal and financial matters. Although pregnancy is not an illness, you should be aware that Professional Experience involves early starts, long days, physical activity and lifting. If you are pregnant, you are encouraged to share this information with the Professional Experience office and your site. USQ works within the requirements for Queensland teachers which states that teachers should not attend sites for the 6 weeks before the birth and 6 weeks after the birth. Professional Experience is scheduled for specific and designated blocks in the calendar and Preservice Educators should seek advice from the Professional Experience office if they are pregnant.

Insurance

Preservice Educators on USQ preapproved course related placements which have been confirmed on SONIA are covered (subject to certain limitations) under the university's Personal Accident, Public Liability, and Professional Indemnity Insurances. Students that participate in work experiences of their own volition or undertake placements that have not been confirmed on SONIA are not covered under USQ's insurance.

Photography

In general, there are limited reasons for USQ students to take photographs of children while they are on Professional Experience. Where this kind of photographic evidence is required for a course or assignment, the permission would be managed within the course and relate directly to the course objectives. Students should be guided to work within the policy of the site before attempting to take photographs e.g. only the child's work, or anonymous children (blurred face, hat covering face, photo taken from an angle to obscure the face). It is not the role of the professional experience office to manage permission forms for photography or for making observations. Although photograph/observation permission forms which have been checked by the USQ legal office can be accessed by course teams, there has been a gradual shift in public opinion about maintaining privacy and photographing children. In general, it is not considered socially acceptable to take, store and distribute photographs of other people (in some cases even your own children at sporting events etc). There is the added complexity of photographs dispersing or appearing through social networking sites or other electronic media (such as Facebook) at a later time. Some parents might be offended when asked to complete a permission form and this has the potential to jeopardise USQ's relationship with the site and they may refuse to host a Professional Experience student. The permission forms are available for the course examiner and the course teams to consider as part of their academic discussions, but the management of the forms is beyond the scope of the Professional Experience office.

Professional Experience Resources

Curriculum and teaching materials, class activities, assessment items, lesson plans and much more are available for students to access for **FREE** through the USQ Library. More detailed information is provided in [FYI \(Education\)](#). The USQ Library also holds a wide range of physical Professional Experience Resources, explained in this brief [overview of resources and ways to access](#). For ideas or instruction in new technology, or teaching ideas in general, the [Professional Experience resources wiki](#) is a growing resource that you can make a contribution; this is a resource that you can continue accessing throughout your career.

Pupil Free Days

It is expected that students will attend and be involved in pupil free days, as part of their professional experience. However, in some instances a student may not be able to be accommodated due to individual school/DET/Catholic/Independent activities that are planned for the pupil free day. In these cases, the student will be required to negotiate a make up day, so that the required total number of days is completed successfully.

Queensland College of Teachers

All school teachers in Queensland must be registered with the Queensland College of Teachers. USQ approaches the QCT for Internship Authorisation in Queensland schools for EDC4000. All other teacher registration and employment applications are the student's responsibility.

Workplace Health and Safety

Sites should have a risk Management Policy and a Workplace Health and Safety Policy. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with these policies, particularly the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures.

Professional Experience Office Administration

Administration	Role	Duties
Toowoomba reception (Simon)	Inquiries and referrals	Telephone and email Blue Card processing Forms and filing Mail
Toowoomba and student support (0.5) (Laura)	Placements and enrolments	Springfield placements Student support Maintain student spreadsheets Upload Professional Experience results
Toowoomba (Mel)	Placements	Early Childhood Primary and Special Ed
Toowoomba (Sally)	Placements	Secondary and TVE Liaison information and contracts Forms control on J drive SONIA blocks
Fraser Coast (Lisa)	Placements	Fraser Coast placements
Springfield (in progress)	Placements	Springfield placements
Community engagement (Anna)	Project Administration	Isolated Children's Project Transition to Teaching Education Commons Youth Leadership Project Priority Country Area Program (PCAP) International placements Webpage control
Professional Experience (Denis)	Administration coordinator	SONIA control Rural and remote placements Approval for variances Liaison payment Mentor and Site payment Printing Professional Experience booklets
Professional Experience (Karen)	Academic coordinator	Professional Experience Calendar Professional Experience Booklets Professional Experience Guidelines A Team activation Sub committee meetings Forms control PCAP enrichment
International (Petrea)	International Placements	Sarasas Ektra School Bangkok, Thailand Montana State University with schools in Montana, USA