

# A Fresh Start

## Professional Experience Partnership Agreements



Professional Experience Partnership Agreements will strengthen links between school sectors and higher education institutions to ensure a coordinated approach to supporting quality professional experiences for Queensland initial teacher education programs.

The department's *A Fresh Start: Improving the preparation and quality of teachers for Queensland schools* strategy is focused on ensuring that all Queensland schools have access to the teaching workforce they need to boost student performance and ensure young Queenslanders are well-prepared for life after school.

The *A Fresh Start* strategy demonstrates a renewed commitment to addressing issues across the areas of:

- teacher supply
- initial teacher education, and
- supervision, mentoring and induction.

The establishment of Professional Experience Partnership Agreements is a key initiative within the *A Fresh Start* strategy that will provide a new mechanism for managing professional experience undertaken in Queensland schools. The agreements will ensure:

- a strategic approach to professional experience placements through strong and enduring partnerships
- a common professional experience reporting framework
- innovative and best practice models of clinical practice within initial teacher education programs
- supervision models that focus on developing the capacity and competence of both mentors and preservice teachers, and
- a closer alignment with workforce needs.

The agreements will also foster collaboration and enhance the professional growth between stakeholders. Ultimately this will improve the capacity for, and quality of, professional experience placements in Queensland schools.

### Professional experience placements

Professional experience – sometimes referred to as the 'practicum' or an internship – is a core component of all initial teacher education programs, providing preservice teachers with an opportunity to link theory and practice in a workplace context.

The professional experience component of each initial teacher education program must include no fewer than 80 days of well-structured, supervised and assessed teaching practice in schools in undergraduate and double-degree programs and no fewer than 60 days in graduate entry programs, in accordance with the *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures*.

The demand for professional experience placements in Queensland schools, and the complexities associated with arranging them, have increased substantially with growth in student numbers and the number of higher education institutions offering initial teacher education programs.

Currently nine higher education institutions in Queensland compete for professional experience placements in schools. This is in addition to a number of preservice teachers studying online or in other states or territories who seek professional experience placements in Queensland schools. In recent years, Queensland schools have provided more than 13 000 professional experience placements each year.

There are currently no formal agreements, legislation or policies that commit Queensland schools or school systems to providing professional experience placements.

Expectations regarding higher education institutions and their engagement with schools and systems are incorporated into Australian Government funding agreements.

## The Professional Experience Partnership Agreements

The agreements acknowledge the mutual responsibilities of both higher education institutions and schooling sectors in providing quality professional experiences, and will ensure that the interests and needs of all stakeholders are addressed.

The agreements will ensure a coordinated approach to placements and seek to:

- formalise the commitment of schooling sectors to providing professional experience opportunities for preservice teachers
- facilitate a coordinated approach to the number and blend of professional experience placements provided by each sector, ensuring these are reflective of anticipated workforce demands
- stipulate the variety of locations and settings in which professional experience will be undertaken, for example in rural or remote locations or special education settings
- identify opportunities for enhanced experiences and internships
- support improved selection of supervising and mentor teachers in schools
- clarify the support and training available to schools to ensure supervising teachers have appropriate mentoring skills
- provide for the current remuneration processes for supervising teachers to be reviewed, and
- include a common professional experience reporting framework to ensure a consistent approach to expectations and assessment of preservice teachers.

All three schooling sectors will introduce the agreements. Higher education institutions seeking to place preservice teachers in Queensland schools for the purposes of professional experience will need to enter into these agreements.

## Development

The Department of Education, Training and Employment will develop a standard agreement on behalf of the state and non-state schooling sectors and in consultation with higher education institutions.

The agreement will provide for employing sectors and institutional perspectives and expectations to be adequately accommodated and clearly articulated.

## Consultation

Consultation and stakeholder collaboration is essential for the success of the initiatives contained within the *A Fresh Start* strategy.

The department will lead consultation and approval processes with key stakeholders including schooling sectors, higher education institutions and the Queensland College of Teachers during the development and implementation of the agreements.

For Independent Schools Queensland, individual schools will be encouraged to be party to agreements with the institutions with which they wish to partner.

## Implementation

Implementation will be managed by the department and overseen by the *A Fresh Start* Reference Group on behalf of the three schooling sectors.

The department will develop and report against a detailed implementation plan including stakeholder engagement.

In recognition of the timeframes associated with the development and review of initial teacher education programs, interim Professional Experience Partnership Agreements will initially be implemented for all approved initial teacher education programs before the 2014 school year.

It is expected that from the start of the 2015 school year all professional experience undertaken in Queensland schools as part of an initial teacher education program will only be possible under a signed agreement between a higher education institution and the schooling sectors.

## Further information

More information about *A Fresh Start: Improving the preparation and quality of teachers for Queensland schools* is available at: [www.flyingstart.qld.gov.au](http://www.flyingstart.qld.gov.au)