

## Frequently Asked Questions

Please find below some of the most frequently asked questions associated with professional experience placement.

For a more comprehensive guide to professional experience please refer to the [Professional Experience Requirements](#) document which sets out the rules and requirements around professional experience placements.

### A. PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF PLACEMENT:

**1. Can I arrange my own placement?**

No, pre-service teachers are not permitted to arrange their own placements. This is the responsibility of the Professional Experience Placement Team.

**2. When will the professional experience calendar be made available?**

The Professional Experience Calendar is made available in October each year. Pre-service teachers can access the Calendar on the [School of Education Website](#) or the [Professional Experience Pre-service teacher Centre](#) on MySCU.

**3. What is the placement process?**

The [Placement Process](#) is available on the [Professional Experience Student Centre](#) Blackboard Site.

**4. What is a conflict of interest?**

A conflict of interest can be one of the following, but is not limited to:

- your place of employment
- where you have close relatives attending or employed or working at the site (eg. partner, parent, sibling, child)

Pre-service teachers are asked to use their professional discretion when declaring conflicts of interest.

**5. Can I complete my placement where I have a conflict of interest?**

No, it is a requirement that pre-service teachers complete placements where there are no conflicts of interest.

**6. What do I do if I have been placed at a site where I have a conflict of interest?**

Inform the Professional Experience Placement Team immediately by emailing [educationplacements@scu.edu.au](mailto:educationplacements@scu.edu.au).

**7. How do I inform the Professional Experience placement team of a conflict of interest?**

Pre-service teachers declare conflicts of interest on the Pre-service Teacher Placement Agreement (PSTPA) made available to them by the Professional Experience Placement Team once you have enrolled in a professional experience unit. If you have already submitted your PSTPA and need to add a new conflict of interest, inform the Professional Experience Team immediately by emailing [educationplacements@scu.edu.au](mailto:educationplacements@scu.edu.au).

**8. When and where do I obtain my SCU Lanyard and Name Badge Holder for placement?**

The Professional Experience Centre will forward the SCU Lanyard and Name Badge Holder to pre-service teachers by mail before the commencement of your first placement. Pre-

service teachers are only provided with one SCU Lanyard and Nambe Badge Holder for the duration of your studies, so please keep them in a safe place.

**9. Is there any financial support available to assist me with costs associated with placement?**

Pre-service teacher loans are available for pre-service teachers about to commence placement for a minimum of two weeks. Click on the link provided for more information <https://www.scu.edu.au/current-pre-service-teachers/services-and-support/pre-service-teacher-loans/>

**10. Can I enrol in more than one professional experience unit per session?**

No, pre-service teachers are normally not approved to enrol in more than one professional experience unit per session. Pre-service teachers should seek enrolment, study plan and course progression advice from the Client Services Team by phone 1800 005 687 or email [schooled@scu.edu.au](mailto:schooled@scu.edu.au).

**11. My placement officer has informed me that I am classified as out-of-zone, what does this mean?**

Pre-service teacher placements are classified as either in-zone or out-of-zone. In-zone placements are undertaken in a placement site that is deemed local to one of the SCU Campuses (the SCU “footprint”). The in-zone geographical area is from Macksville in the South to Upper Coomera (South East Queensland) in the North. All other areas are classified as out-of-zone.

**12. Can I undertake all of my placements at the one site?**

Pre-service teachers will normally undertake each placement in a different site unless there is a special program or requirement.

**13. When can I contact my mentor teacher?**

Ideally pre-service teachers should contact their placement site during the same week that placements have been made available in [SONIA Online](#). Pre-service teachers are required to contact their placement site prior to commencing their placement. Pre-service teachers should ensure they read the ‘Important Information for Pre-service Teachers’ section of the Placements Tab for information on what is required.

**14. Will I be placed in a school/centre near my home?**

The Professional Experience Placement Team do their best to place pre-service teachers close to home but this is not always possible. Pre-service teachers are expected to travel up to 90 minutes or 90 km.

**15. Will I need a Blue Card or Working with Children Check if I am an interstate pre-service teacher**

All pre-service teachers are required to have a working with children check from their State or Territory. Please refer to the ‘[Mandatory Placement Criteria](#)’ section of the [Professional Experience Student Centre](#) for further information on Working with Children Checks.

**16. I live close to the NSW/QLD border, do I need to have both a NSW Working with Children Check and a Qld Blue Card?**

Given the potential of border closures due to COVID-19, during 2021 students living close to the NSW/QLD border are only required to have a WWCC for the state in which they live. (eg. if you live in Tweed Heads, you will only require a valid NSW WWCC. If you live in Burleigh Heads, you are only required to have a valid Qld Blue Card. Please refer to the ‘[Working](#)

[with Children Checks – All States](#)’ section of the [Professional Experience Student Centre](#) for further information on Working with Children Checks.

**17. Are there forms I need to complete for placement?**

Yes. Pre-service teachers need to complete and upload forms to [SONIA Online](#) in order to be eligible for professional experience. Refer to the ‘[Essential Information/Mandatory Placement Criteria](#)’ section of the [Professional Experience Student Centre](#) for further information on mandatory placement criteria.

**18. What is a Pre-service Teacher Placement Agreement (PSTPA)?**

A PSTPA is Mandatory Placement Criteria document required submitted prior to each placement. It is an electronic form on the ‘Forms’ tab within [SONIA Online](#). PSTPAs are made available to students by the Placement Team once students have enrolled in a professional experience unit. The PSTPA contains important placement information (eg. confirmation of address, conflicts of interest) and also contains the School of Education Code of Conduct. Students must submit a PSTPA in order to be eligible to undertake each placement.

**19. How do I apply for a Blue Card or Working with Children Clearance?**

Refer to the ‘[Mandatory Placement Criteria](#)’ section of the [Professional Experience Student Centre](#) for further information on mandatory placement criteria.

**20. Where do I find information on Anaphylaxis Training?**

Refer to the ‘[Mandatory Placement Criteria](#)’ section of the [Professional Experience Student Centre](#) for further information on mandatory placement criteria.

**21. Where do I find information on Child Protection Training?**

Refer to the ‘[Mandatory Placement Criteria](#)’ section of the [Professional Experience Student Centre](#) for further information on mandatory placement criteria.

**22. Do I have to complete my placement in the scheduled calendar times allocated?**

Yes, professional experience placements need to be undertaken during the allocated dates.

**23. Can I undertake my placement 2 or 3 days per week?**

No. Unless this is a requirement of the professional experience unit pre-service teachers need to attend five days per week as they should demonstrate sustained teaching as required by a qualified teacher. Undertaking placement on a full-time basis is an accreditation requirement.

**24. Can I delay my placement to go on holidays?**

No, this does not align to the [Professional Experience Requirements](#). Pre-service teachers need to plan holidays so they commence well after the completion of professional experience and not within teaching or professional experience times.

**25. Can I complete an overseas placement?**

At this time there are set requirements for professional experience as a result of accreditation guidelines. Pre-service teachers wishing to undertake an overseas placement should email their request to [educationplacements@scu.edu.au](mailto:educationplacements@scu.edu.au). Current accreditation rules note that a final professional experience cannot be completed overseas.

**26. Can I undertake internal units if I am on my placement?**

This is the choice of the pre-service teacher however, as professional experience can be demanding on time and commitment, it is recommended that pre-service teachers NOT complete other units at the time of undertaking a placement (e.g. Session 3). If a placement clashes with internal units, pre-service teachers should revise their study plan.

**27. Where do I find Sonia online?**

The URL for [SONIA Online](https://sonia.scu.edu.au/SoniaOnline/Default.aspx) is as follows: <https://sonia.scu.edu.au/SoniaOnline/Default.aspx>. The directions for [SONIA Online](#) are also noted on the [Professional Experience Student Centre](#) located on MySCU.

**28. Where do I find the Professional Experience Pre-service teacher Centre?**

The [Professional Experience Student Centre](#) is located on MySCU

**29. What do I need to do in order to view my placement details?**

Once pre-service teachers have completed and uploaded all the documents required for professional experience and the staff have placed pre-service teachers into schools or centres, the placement can be viewed on [SONIA Online](#).

**30. My circumstances have changed and I can no longer undertake my placement as planned, can I delay my placement?**

If a pre-service teacher is unable to undertake a placement in the approved scheduled time for that unit, he/she must apply, via a [Placement Adjustment Application](#), for approval to complete the placement during the next scheduled placement period. Placement Adjustment Applications will be considered by the Professional Experience Committee. Grounds for placement adjustment are:

- health (including impacts of religious fasting)
- compassionate circumstances
- religious observances or celebrations
- serious unforeseen personal events
- selection in State, National or International sporting or cultural events
- rendering genuine and unforeseen emergency service in a professional or voluntary capacity
- rendering any service (including undertaking training) in the Defence Reserves.

**31. What is the Placement Adjustment Application process?**

The [Placement Adjustment Application](#) process is noted on the [Professional Experience Student Centre](#).

**32. I am registered with Access and Inclusion as I have special requirements, do I need to inform the Professional Experience Centre?**

Yes, in order to best support you with your placement, it is helpful to the Professional Experience Placement Team to be aware of your special requirements as registered with [Access and Inclusion](#). Provide details of your special requirements to the Placement Team via [educationplacements@scu.edu.au](mailto:educationplacements@scu.edu.au).

**33. Do I have to let the Professional Experience Centre know if I will be pregnant during my placement?**

Yes, to ensure your safety and wellbeing during placement, pre-service teachers who are pregnant are required to provide a medical certificate to [educationplacements@scu.edu.au](mailto:educationplacements@scu.edu.au) to validate their fitness to process to their placement.

**34. I have a medical condition that may impact on my placement, what do I need to do?**

Provide the Professional Experience Placement Team with details of your medical condition via email [educationplacements@scu.edu.au](mailto:educationplacements@scu.edu.au).

**35. Can I be absent from my placement to attend a wedding?**

Pre-service teachers are not permitted to negotiate placements days with their Mentor Teachers, nor to absent themselves from their placements for matters such as holidays, weddings, childcare or work. Any special requests must be directed to the Placement Team via [Placement Adjustment Application](#) and emailed to [educationplacements@scu.edu.au](mailto:educationplacements@scu.edu.au).

**36. When do I have to complete LANTITE?**

Please refer to the School of Education website [Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education \(LANTITE\)](#).

**37. Why am I blocked from seeing my placement details?**

Students are normally blocked from seeing their placement details in [SONIA Online](#) due to outstanding Mandatory Placement Criteria (eg. PSTPA, Anaphylaxis, Child Protection, WWCC). Refer to the 'Alert' announcement on the 'Placement' tab of [SONIA Online](#) for clarification on what placement criteria is outstanding. Once the Placement Team have verified you have submitted the outstanding placement criteria document your placement will be cleared to view.

**B. DURING PLACEMENT:**

**1. Am I required to attend my placement every day?**

Yes, pre-service teachers are required to attend the placement every day to meet the requirements for teaching. Attending every day demonstrates pre-service teacher teachers can maintain a sustained teaching period.

**2. What do I do if I become ill while I am undertaking my placement?**

If a pre-service teacher is absent during their placement for two or less consecutive days, they will be required to complete a [Make-Up Day Form](#). This form must be returned to the Professional Experience Centre along with the Attendance Record on completion of the placement, to verify the missed days have been completed.

A [Placement Adjustment Application](#) and supporting documentation/medical certificate, is required for absences of three or more consecutive days. Medical certificates should be attached to the pre-service teacher Attendance Record and returned on completion of the placement.

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

Yes, however, there is a process and there are requirements. Please see the [Professional Experience Requirements](#) and complete a [Placement Adjustment Application](#).

**4. What happens if I self-withdraw from my placement?**

A self-withdrawal from a placement will generally mean a grade of Fail. Pre-service teachers must contact their University Adviser to discuss their circumstances before deciding to self-withdraw from placement.

**5. Is there support if I am having difficulty in my placement?**

Yes, pre-service teachers are assigned a University Adviser, who will provide support by phone/email/zoom while you are on placement. University Advisers will make initial contact with you during your first week of placement. Your University Adviser name and contact details are available in the Placements section of [SONIA Online](#). You will also have the support of a mentor teacher and site coordinator.

**6. Will I have assignments due during my placement?**

If pre-service teachers decide to undertake a placement while completing other units they will have other assignments due. This is deemed to be the pre-service teacher's choice so they should approach the relevant unit assessor to determine if there are any considerations.

**7. Can I attend excursions while on placement?**

Yes, pre-service teachers can so long as the excursion is within the professional experience placement times. If pre-service teachers are assisting a school/centre outside of the professional experience times then they will need to be registered as a volunteer with the school/centre. Any attendance at an excursion needs to be registered with your University Adviser and the Professional Experience Centre by completing a "[Notification of School Camp/Excursion](#)" Form.

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

Pre-service teachers must report the incident to SCU through the '[Riskware](#)' online management system as well as the incident report normally used by the site in which you are placed. Further information is available on the Professional Experience Student Centre. The incident must be reported within 24 hours of the incident.

**C. ON COMPLETION OF PLACEMENT:**

**1. Where do I upload my prac report?**

Pre-service teachers are required to upload a copy of their prac report to the Professional Experience Unit Grade Centre in [Blackboard](#) (MySCU).

**2. Where can I obtain a copy of my finalised professional experience report?**

Finalised professional experience reports are available for pre-service teachers to download from the Professional Experience Unit Grade Centre in [Blackboard](#).

**3. What happens if I fail my placement?**

If a pre-service teacher fails a placement they will meet with the Director of Professional Experience or Unit Assessor to review and reflect on the circumstances. Pre-service teachers can apply to undertake the placement again however, a further failure may result in an exclusion.

**4. How do I request a letter for QCT indicating the number of professional experience days completed?**

The Professional Experience Centre will be able to provide you with this letter. Email [educationplacements@scu.edu.au](mailto:educationplacements@scu.edu.au) to submit your request.

**5. Can I fast-track the release of my grade?**

No, there is a University-wide approval process for submitting grades that must be adhered to by Unit Assessors. Grades will be submitted/released to students by the University gazetted timeframes.