

PRE-SERVICE TEACHER  
PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE POLICY  
2022



## Rationale

Varsity College acknowledges the essential role schools play in providing the pre-service teacher access to quality practical experience opportunities. Varsity welcomes its professional responsibility in relation to supervision of pre-service teachers and prioritises the placement of students studying at universities in the SE Queensland region, especially on the Gold Coast and Tweed.

At Varsity College, we offer our pre-service teachers qualified Supervising Teachers who have a minimum of 3 years full time teaching experience and who are committed to supporting the development of best practice within their classrooms. Our aims are to:

- provide meaningful learning experiences for pre-service teachers whilst ensuring on-going quality of teaching and learning for our students;
- ensure a coordinated response to university requests for placements; and
- establish and maintain effective working relationships with a range of universities.

Varsity College recognises the mutual learning, which may occur for both the Supervisor and the Pre-Service Teacher when effective partnerships are formed. By continually referring to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST), we are able to facilitate opportunities where pre-service teachers can develop competency reflecting graduate standards, which closely align to the Graduate Teacher Performance Assessment (GTPA) or Quality Teaching Performance Assessment (QTPA) as prescribed by the relevant university.

Due to the reciprocal nature of this unique relationship, our Supervising Teachers are able to capture evidence of where they are demonstrating highly accomplished or lead competencies of the APSTs as a direct result of this opportunity.

At Varsity College, we extend pre-service teacher learning by providing professional development opportunities outside the classroom. Our pre-service teachers are invited to attend tours and talks, which may include:

- understanding support roles within the school – Guidance Officer, Support for Learning Teacher, Dean of Students and Heads of Departments.
- visits to our Wellbeing Space where our Deputy Head of Support for Learning explains how we cater for the diverse learning needs of our students.
- workshops on how to complete One School Incident Reports and Essential Skills for Classroom Management (ESCM) workshops.
- opportunities to undertake classroom profiling sessions and feedback.
- taking a look at Literacy Support programs, flexible classroom spaces, age appropriate pedagogies and formative assessment.

## School Placement

For ethical and professional reasons, Varsity College is unable to place pre-service teachers who may be already employed by the school in another capacity or who have a close family relative (husband, wife, partner, parent, child, niece, nephew, aunt, uncle or cousin) currently working or enrolled on the same campus. Further, pre-service teachers who attended Varsity College as a student within the preceding five years will not be placed with staff members who taught them in their senior years of schooling.

Varsity College will allocate no more than one pre-service teacher per semester to an eligible Supervising Teacher, and will offer no more than one practicum placement to each Pre-Service Teacher per year to encourage experience in a wide variety of school contexts.

## Duty of Care

Pre-service Teachers, while given increasing responsibility during a practicum, must still be recognised as teachers in training and as such should NEVER be left unsupervised. The Supervising Teacher maintains full liability for both the educational and safety aspects of the children in their class.

## Roles Outlined

**School Leaders** – The school principal, deputy principal and Heads of Department.

**School Coordinator** – The school's facilitator of the practical experience program.

**Supervising Teacher** – The classroom teacher who directly supervises and assesses the pre-service teacher.

**Pre-service Teacher** – The student teacher.

**University Liaison** – A representative as appointed by the university.

## Roles and Responsibilities of School Leaders

Upon receiving a copy of the Expression of Interest paperwork, School Leaders will:

- review applicants and provide the School Coordinator with a list of those applicants who have been approved.
- be prepared to provide feedback to any teacher who did not meet the approved list.
- refer to supplied list of approved practicums and notify the School Coordinator should it be decided that changing circumstances warrant a withdrawal of a previously approved Supervising Teacher.
- advise the School Coordinator with direction pertaining to professional issues which may arise during a practical experience which fall outside regular parameters.

## Roles and Responsibilities of the School Coordinator

Upon receiving a placement request from the university, the supervisor will:

- send out to all staff (or approved staff) a list of required placements and request an Expression of Interest (EOI) from interested teachers.
- collect and forward expressions of interest to Heads of Department for consultation.
- forward approved Supervising Teacher lists onto the university placement office for possible Pre-Service Teacher match.
- advise Supervising Teachers of successful Pre-Service Teacher appointment and supply the appointed Supervising Teachers with a digital copy of the relative practical experience handbook, as it becomes available.
- allocate a Supervising Teacher no more than one Pre-Service Teacher supervision per semester.
- offer no more than one practicum placement each year to each Pre-Service Teacher to encourage Pre-Service Teachers to engage in a variety of teaching contexts.
- update school leaders with successful Supervising Teachers as supplied by the universities.
- meet with Pre-Service Teachers on their first day to do a school facilities tour and orientation talk.
- be available to both Supervising Teachers and Pre-Service Teachers to work through questions or difficulties which may arise during the course of the practicum.
- organise and schedule one professional development opportunity per week for Pre-Service Teachers at times where there are two or more students on site.
- Provide Pre-Service Teachers with details of other appropriate professional development opportunities.
- liaise with the university representatives to schedule visits of Pre-Service Teachers.
- observe at least one lesson of each final placement Pre-Service Teacher and write formal reports on behalf of universities where a liaison is not provided.
- observe and provide feedback to first, second and third placement Pre-Service Teachers when time allows.
- discuss assessment of the Pre-Service Teachers with their Supervising Teachers.
- supply Supervising Teachers with an A4 version of the APSTs for easy reference.
- contact the university to clarify any issues which may arise or to report any cases where a Pre-Service Teacher is deemed by the Supervising Teacher to be 'at risk'.
- together with the Supervising Teacher, write "At Risk" action plans to support identified Pre-Service Teachers who are at risk of failing the practicum.
- accept and review final reports from Supervising Teachers and provide feedback of any adjustments required.
- sign all relative attendance documents and reports.

## Roles and Responsibilities of the Supervising Teacher

Before submitting an EOI all teacher candidates should check that any planned leave does not clash with the dates of the practical experience for which they are applying. Further, teachers must ensure when applying to supervise a first, second or third placement Pre-Service Teacher that they have taught for a minimum of 3 years full time. If applying to supervise a final placement or Masters student, teachers must ensure they have 5 years full time experience. Teachers who do not have the required experience must obtain support from their Head of Department to apply.

Supervising Teachers will not be allocated more than one Pre-Service Teacher per semester.

**Please be aware that submitting an EOI does not guarantee a placement.**

After being matched with a Pre-Service Teacher, the Supervising Teacher will:

- read the professional experience handbook which will be supplied digitally by the School Coordinator and note key dates around the expected teaching load and the timing of both interim and final reports.
- provide the Pre-Service Teacher with a convenient way they can contact the Supervising Teacher. A school email as a minimum would be appropriate.
- provide the Pre-Service Teacher with a class roll and a photo roll (optional) to assist their student with the orientation process, and a copy of the TrackEd class profiles for planning purposes.
- negotiate a time for arrival and expected departure with the Pre-Service Teacher and provide the Pre-Service Teacher with dates and times of all meetings which form part of their normal week.
- introduce the Pre-Service Teacher to all other members of the relevant year level or subject teams.
- take the Pre-Service Teacher on all playground duty.
- invite the Pre-Service Teacher to sit with the Supervising Teacher at all meetings and PD days so that they feel included at all times and so that Supervising Teachers are able to clarify learning as the opportunities arise.
- make a dedicated time each day to review Pre-Service Teacher reflections from the previous day, discuss upcoming lesson requirements and to support the Pre-Service Teacher with planning ideas.
- provide daily written and verbal feedback to the Pre-Service Teacher. As a guide, the Pre-Service Teacher should receive written feedback which is linked to the APSTs on one lesson each day.
- review the practical experience folder. Ensure that it contains all items as listed in the student handbook and is made available each day.
- work with the Pre-Service Teacher to cross check demonstrated capabilities. With the Pre-Service Teacher, look for areas where competency has not been demonstrated and discuss ideas to address identified gaps.
- ensure the Pre-Service Teacher provides adequate supervision and guidance of students to maintain the quality provision of teaching and learning for students.
- liaise with the School Coordinator with any areas of concern or if the Pre-Service Teacher may be 'at risk'.
- complete a digital copy of reports. In the event that a digital copy of the report is unavailable, handwritten reports should be legible and free of errors or blemishes (such as liquid paper). Please note, most universities now have a digital copy of their report but may supply a paper copy for the Supervising Teacher's early reference only.
- allow time to discuss both the interim and final reports with their Pre-Service Teacher. The Supervising Teacher should be prepared to negotiate these reports if the Pre-Service Teacher is able to show evidence of a standard that may have been overlooked.
- send the final report to the School Coordinator for review and feedback. This should be done no later than two days before the due date.
- scan the signed report and keep a copy of this to send to the university if requested. For online reports, ensure they are submitted on the due date or final day of placement.
- return all claims for payment paperwork to the university along with any other documentation requested.

## Role and Responsibilities of Varsity College Staff

All staff at Varsity College, regardless of whether they are directly supervising a Pre-Service Teacher, and regardless of a Pre-Service Teacher's age, will respect the power imbalance which exists between Teachers and Pre-Service Teachers in training. Teachers are in a unique position of trust, authority and influence. All Varsity staff will take responsibility for establishing and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries to protect the integrity of the practicum as well as the welfare of the Pre-Service Teacher ([Boundaries: A Guideline for Queensland Teachers \(PDF, 254KB\)](#)).

## Roles and Responsibilities of the Pre-Service Teacher

- All Pre-service Teachers at Varsity College should:
- provide a full Blue Card Positive Notice in relation to working with children and proof of full COVID vaccination on the first day of a placement, including any 'lead in' day.
- undertake orientation with Human resources on the first day of placement.
- accept a review of Pre-Service Teacher's social media presence will be undertaken by the school prior to placement and that any content found that it is deemed contrary to school expectations may result in cancellation of the practicum.
- negotiate arrival times with the Supervising Teacher and be punctual.
- find out when all staff and year level or faculty meetings, playground duty, parent/teacher meetings and relevant professional development sessions have been scheduled so that you can attend.
- be prepared – plan lessons ahead of time so that they can be reviewed by the Supervising Teacher no less than one day prior to implementation.
- be organised – have all resources ready before each lesson to ensure seamless transitions in the classroom.
- have written reflections from the previous day ready to show the Supervising Teacher each morning.
- continue to develop individual understanding of the APSTs.
- be professional – teachers who work for the Department of Education Queensland are bound by *Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service*. At all times during the practicum, maintain appropriate professional boundaries with all members of staff.
- keep confidential all and any information to which the Pre-Service Teacher becomes party during their time at the college, including, but not limited to, personal details of students and staff, student performance data, college data and assessment items.
- use the IT services provided by the college in an appropriate and professional manner; failure to comply may lead to the termination of the placement.
- make no contact either via email or phone with parents or agencies dealing with student welfare concerns unless directly supervised by the Supervising Teacher.
- be accountable – know the professional experience teaching expectations and be mindful of your personal goals. Be familiar with the reporting framework and regularly make annotations to show evidence of competence. Be prepared to set goals with the Supervising Teacher during the practicum to ensure you are able to demonstrate each standard.
- return all resources belonging to the school or to the Supervising Teacher before the final report is issued.
- dress professionally at all times.

**Please see Appendix A for COVID-19 conditions and requirements**

## Roles and Responsibilities of the University Liaison

All University Liaisons visiting Varsity College should:

- provide support to Pre-Service Teachers by clarifying expectations of the practicum early in the placement.
- contact/negotiate with the School Coordinator about the timing of all visits.
- request that the School Coordinator inform the Pre-Service Teachers and Supervising Teachers about the appointment times agreed upon.
- liaise with the School Coordinator about the Pre-Service Teacher's progress.
- assist the School Coordinator and the Supervising Teacher, when necessary, to complete an 'At Risk' support plan and submit a copy of this to the university placement office.
- sign in and out at the office when onsite for visits.

**Please see Appendix A for Covid-19 conditions and requirements**

## Appendix A

### Conditions pertaining to the effective management of health directives relevant to Covid-19

**Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations:** In line with Queensland Government policy, university students on practical placement, students on school work experience and students undertaking traineeships in education settings (including early childhood education and care settings) must be fully vaccinated before their practicum commences and be able to demonstrate proof of vaccination. Universities now have in place processes that require students to provide proof of their vaccination status prior to a placement being sourced. Pre-Service Teachers should see the university and Queensland Government COVID-19 website for further support.

Please note, this mandate will also apply to all visitors, including tertiary/university liaisons or representatives of Registered Training Organisations.

**COVID Lockdowns:** In the event of the school going into full or partial lockdown due to COVID, Pre-Service Teachers will continue with their practicums in line with the school plan. Pre-Service Teachers will be expected to:

- liaise closely with their Supervising Teacher and the School Coordinator in regards to the school plan.
- recognise that during a COVID lockdown, their Supervising Teacher may be allocated to one of three positions:
  - teaching students who are still present at school,
  - teaching students on online platforms, or
  - planning future units of work and preparing resources.

This role may change daily and the Pre-Service Teacher will work to support their Supervising Teacher in whatever role they have been allocated.

- if teaching online, recognise that online teaching may not follow the steps of a 'normal' classroom lesson. However, regardless of the nature of the teaching environment, Pre-Service Teachers will still be expected to submit lesson plans to the Supervising Teacher if they have been allocated responsibility for a specific teaching resource, experience or session.
- become familiar with the various online platforms to be used by their year level.
- work closely with their Supervising Teacher and other teachers on their year level to prepare online educational resources that can be uploaded to the appropriate online platform.
- If working online, ensure that before logging in to co-conduct an online learning session that they have met briefly (visual not just auditory) with their Supervising Teacher prior to the session to:
  - ensure that their environment and attire is suitable and that personal information or belongings are not visible or are discrete;
  - ensure that the technology is functioning correctly;
  - ensure that they have submitted any lesson plan in advance;
  - ensure that resources are prepared; and
  - ensure that they continue to complete their observations and reflections even in an online environment.