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Getting Down to Business
A Guide for Beginning Teachers

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Foreword

by Steve James, CEO, Teachers Mutual Bank

Starting out as a teacher can be exciting yet challenging - students to face, colleagues to meet, vital information to remember…so this handbook is an essential reference guide for you as a new teacher, as you negotiate your way around the requirements of school life.

Written by local teachers who recognised a need in this area, “Getting Down to Business” is packed with vital information and insights. Here you will find a wealth of knowledge to dip into, not only on the many aspects of joining a whole school community, but also the practicalities of starting work – from setting up your classroom to claiming deductions on your tax return.

Teachers Mutual Bank has been supporting teachers for over 40 years, so we understand the commitment you’ve made. As a mutual bank, we are specialists in financial services, who are also passionate about education. We’re advocates for you. We’re here to give teachers and their families’ better options and ultimately, a better way of life. That’s why we put you first in everything we do.

Teachers Mutual Bank is delighted to support this very practical guide to the world of working in schools, because like us, this guide is here to support you. We congratulate the University of Western Sydney on providing a much-needed resource for new teachers.

Steve James

Introduction

Our vision in creating this guide was to provide beginning teachers with practical advice that assists them in the transition from University to the school environment.

Our Objectives

- To assist new teachers to build upon the skills and knowledge derived from their teacher education programs, helping them to undertake the many tasks and meet the expectations that come with being part of a school community
- To ease the pressure on new teachers, as well as their schools, while adjusting to their new roles.

Acknowledgements

This guide has been produced by local teachers from all sectors of schools, Department of Education (DEC), Catholic and Independent, in the Greater Western Sydney area, to share the skills and knowledge of decades of teaching experience at all levels.

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It gives us a head start when we are going into schools . . . I think nearly all the questions I had to ask . . . were covered in the book.
Anthony Loutas, Master of Teaching (Secondary)

There are aspects in the book that I would not even have considered until my first day of teaching and now I can be prepared.
Mitchell Watkins, Master of Teaching (Primary)

The guidebook explains nearly every aspect a beginning teacher needs when starting in the workforce.
Marc Vassallo, Master of Teaching (Secondary)

I really think that I would use it all the time. I really like that it covers in detail all facets of teaching from admin to behavioural management.
Adam Vincent, Master of Teaching (Primary)

Disclaimer

UWS makes no guarantee, warranty or promise, express or implied, concerning the content or accuracy of the information contained in this guide.

The information contained in this guide is current at the date of publication, however readers must check sources and websites referred to in this guide for any updated information or changes to legislation, regulations or policies. This guide is not to be considered a substitute for comprehensive legal, financial or professional educational advice, but is a starting point for new teachers to conduct their own research and investigation. Your school may have policies different from the examples in this guide.

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This guide includes examples of forms, records and policies which are provided for information only and are not intended to replace existing forms, records and policies which apply at any particular school. The reader must consult with their school to determine what forms, records and policies apply particularly at that school.

Who's who in your school?

The names of the various roles in schools will change depending on whether you are in a DEC school, a Catholic school or an Independent school. The following is a list of positions and roles commonly found in a school environment.

These are very broad descriptions which do not necessarily reflect all the roles in all types of schools.

School Education Director (SED) – public schools

Public schools are divided into large regions/areas which are then divided into different school education groups that include both the primary and high schools in that area. For example Blue Mountains, Mt Druitt and Hawkesbury. Each SED has a district that he or she is responsible for and principals refer to their SEDs when there is a need for administrative or leadership advice.

Principal – all schools

The principal is the person in charge of the day to day running of the school. Principals are also sometimes called Headmasters or Headmistresses.

Deputy Principal – public high schools and primary schools
Assistant Principal – Catholic schools

This is the position below the principal and will often take on the role of acting principal if the principal is absent. In some schools the roles of the deputies (if there is more than one) will be divided into year groups. For instance, one deputy may be allocated years 7, 9 and 11 to oversee while the other deputy will oversee the remaining year groups. In some schools the duties of the deputies may be divided into welfare and academic roles. Each school works out its own system. Teachers choose which deputy to speak to depending on the need – for example, a problem with a year 7 student is taken to the deputy overseeing that year group.

Assistant Principal – public primary schools

Assistant principals are executive teachers in public primary schools. They usually supervise a stage group, i.e. Early Stage One and Stage One or Stage 2 or Stage 3 or a Support Unit. In this capacity they are responsible for

- supervising teaching programs
- teacher efficiency
- overseeing assessment tasks and schedules
- staff development
- ensuring that reports are completed accurately and on time, and
- student welfare and discipline for their allocated stage.

Teachers can refer to their assistant principal for support with disciplinary and learning issues in the classroom. They provide leadership to the teachers in their stage and serve as mentors to new teachers or teachers experiencing difficulty. In addition to this, they often lead curriculum and special programs such as the Learning Support Team, the Student Welfare Team, the Literacy Committee, Positive Behaviour For Learning, and the Maths Committee. They are also responsible for managing the budget allocated to their stage or committee.

In larger primary schools, there are assistant principals and deputy principals. In these cases the above responsibilities are shared according to the needs of the individual school.

Senior Executive

This refers to the principal and deputy principals in public schools and the principal and assistant principals in Catholic Schools.

Executive

This refers to the principal, deputy/assistant principals and head teachers/faculty coordinators. The Executive meets on a regular basis throughout the year to oversee the running of the school, discuss issues arising, develop new programs or policies and to generally keep everyone up to date with school matters.

Who's who in your school? (continued)

Head Teacher – most high schools
Faculty/KLA Coordinator – Catholic schools

Each faculty area (Maths, Science, English etc) has its own head teacher or faculty coordinator. In a small school, one person may take care of several faculties, for example, English/HSIE or Maths/Science. The head teacher/faculty coordinator is responsible for his or her staff, teaching the syllabus content, providing effective assessment tasks, ensuring that reports are completed on time, maintaining acceptable standards of behaviour in the classrooms and ensuring that appropriate resources are available.

Schools will usually allocate other duties to their head teachers/faculty coordinators, for example the English head teacher/faculty coordinator might organise school photo day or the PDHPE head teacher/faculty coordinator might organise parent/teacher nights. Sometimes these activities are organised by other teaching staff.

Some head teachers/faculty coordinators don't have a faculty area, for example, the head teacher of Teaching and Learning, the head teacher Welfare or the head teacher Administration.

Teachers can refer to their head teachers/faculty coordinators for support with major disciplinary issues in the classroom, however, don't call on him or her too often as you may lose your own authority in the classroom. Generally, a head teacher/faculty coordinator will expect you to take charge of your own classroom management.

Year Advisor – high schools
Year Coordinator – Catholic schools

This role is usually taken on by a classroom teacher who receives a period allowance (time off face to face teaching duties) to look after the welfare of the students in one year group. This is not a disciplinary role. Year advisors are there to assist students who are experiencing difficulties at school or home or to advise them on welfare or academic matters. Some schools will also have assistant year advisors.

In Catholic schools the year advisors are called year coordinators and have a similar role, which includes discipline. They have equal status to the faculty coordinators.

Schools will often arrange regular year group assemblies so that the year advisors can keep contact with the whole year group and keep them up to date with relevant school news.

Religious Education Coordinator (REC) – Catholic schools

The religious education coordinator has a specific responsibility for implementing learning programs, resources and the professional development of staff in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education. They are responsible for all liturgical and religious ceremonies throughout the school including masses and school liturgies.

They work closely with the other members of the executive and leadership team in regards to curriculum, discipline and student welfare. They often lead particular social justice activities such as Project Compassion and the Vinnie's Winter Sleep Out.

Careers Advisor – high schools

Careers advisors advise students on which subjects to take in relation to their anticipated career paths. Careers advisors develop knowledge and contacts within different industries and tertiary education institutions which help them to guide students into roles that suit their interests and abilities. Careers advisors will also help arrange work placement for students as a part of their high school studies. They teach students skills such as resume writing, telephone skills, assessing their strengths and how to make portfolios.

Aboriginal Student Coordinator – most schools

The title of this role often changes but the duties stay the same. This role is very similar to the role of year advisors except that it focuses on the welfare, academic and cultural needs of Aboriginal students and does not focus on one year group.

Support Teacher Learning Assistance (STLA) – primary and high schools

STLAs work closely with the school's Learning Support Team to prioritise teacher and student needs. STLAs work individually or with small groups to assist students experiencing difficulty in the classroom. They also team teach. STLAs work across many faculties and subject areas. They advise teachers on modifying work and assessments for students with special needs. In many schools, the STLA is responsible for special exam provisions for students who are sick, disabled or injured.

Students are usually assessed when they first enrol in the school to determine if they need assistance. Teachers who are concerned about any of their students can ask for another assessment to be carried out. In most schools, you will need to fill out a LST Referral form to access the STLA. During this process, you will need to outline the measures that you have already put into place to support the student requiring extra assistance and discuss the referral with your supervisor. Your attendance at the LST meeting when the referral is discussed is important so that the best plan to support the student can be developed.

Student Learning Support Officer (old Teachers' Aides [Special])
Teachers' Aides – Catholic and independent schools

Teachers' aides assist teachers with preparing for lessons, and giving one on one support, or helping small groups of students within a class. They are always supervised by a qualified teacher.

SLSOs are utilised in mainstream settings to support students with learning and behaviour issues, who have been given funding to assist them at school. They are also used to support students with disabilities who are enrolled in mainstream settings. SLSOs assist students with disabilities to meet their physical needs (including toileting, medication and feeding) in mainstream and support unit settings. SLSOs are also used to support students with disabilities during integration into a mainstream setting.

School Counsellor – all schools

School counsellors work with students experiencing welfare problems either at school or at home. Students can refer themselves to the school counsellor or they can be referred by their teachers or parents. Confidentiality is respected. School counsellors may move between schools or remain at one school on a fulltime basis. Many school counsellors will organise workshops or programs for students at risk. They work closely with outside agencies, such as the police, hospitals, psychologists and the Department of Community Services.

School Administrative Staff (SAS) – public schools

SAS staff includes the office staff at schools as well as the general assistant or grounds person. Get to know the SAS staff at your school – they hold a wealth of information and are a very important part of the functioning of the school. The library assistants, teachers' aides or Student Learning Support Officer (SLSO) and laboratory assistants are also part of the SAS team.

Although the cleaners are usually employed by independent contractors, they should be included in this group.

Laboratory assistants work with the Science staff. They are usually responsible for organising the materials and chemicals needed for experiments. The lab assistant will also know what materials can be used by each age group as some chemicals can only be used by senior students.

The TAS assistants assist teachers and order the materials/supplies for food preparation, textiles and design and technology. The TAS assistant would also be responsible for maintaining the equipment within the faculty such as sewing machines, various saws and drills etc.

Each school will have procedures for how to get help from SAS staff. This may include having repairs done in your classroom, having work photocopied, ordering supplies, booking the school bus, organising an excursion, dealing with maintenance issues or applying for leave.

Each person in this group has an important role in the smooth functioning of the school and their input should be acknowledged.

Information Technology (IT) Coordinator – all schools

Depending on the size of the school, there may be a full-time IT coordinator or a teacher who also acts in this capacity.
The IT coordinator will help with IT issues or problems or refer them to service personnel if there is a major problem within the system. The coordinator may also be responsible for booking IT rooms. In public schools there is also IT support on district and regional levels.

School policies and where to find them

As well as government policies, school sectors and schools develop their own policies.

Catholic Schools

The Catholic Education Office, in each Diocese, provides its schools with advice and recommendations on the development and implementation of its policies. You can access this information at websites such as:
http://www.parra.catholic.edu.au – Parramatta Diocese
http://www.ceosyd.catholic.edu.au – Sydney Diocese
http://www.cso.brokenbay.catholic.edu.au – Broken Bay Diocese
http://www.dow.catholic.edu.au – Wollongong Diocese

Public Schools

You can also access policies and information on public schools from the Department of Education and Training website at:
https://www.dec.nsw.gov.au
These standard policies for public schools include:

» Aboriginal Education and Training
» Assessment and School Reports
» Performance and Assessment of Teachers
» Use of electronic communication devices
» Uniforms
» Excursions, and many others.

Independent Schools

As independent schools cover a large range of interests and philosophies, there is not one set of policies. The Association of Independent Schools of New South Wales describes the diversity of independent schools on its website,
http://www.aisnsw.edu.au

The independent sector is made up of different groups or small systems of schools as well as many individually operated schools. Independent schools vary widely in size from small rural schools with fewer than 20 students to large regional and metropolitan schools with more than 1500 students. Independent schools are located in all areas of NSW covering metropolitan, regional and rural and remote areas of the state.

All independent schools in NSW are registered by the NSW Board of Studies and are educationally and financially accountable to the Board and to the Australian and NSW governments.

Many independent schools are operated along religious lines, including:

» Christian Schools
» Lutheran Schools
» Jewish Day Schools
» Catholic (non-systemic) Schools
» Islamic Schools
» Uniting Church Schools
» Presbyterian Schools
» Anglican Schools

In addition, many independent schools do not follow a particular religious philosophy, such as grammar schools and other non-church schools. Others follow certain types of educational philosophies such as Rudolf Steiner Schools and Montessori Schools.

A significant number of independent schools in NSW operate boarding facilities. There are 25 independent special schools in NSW that cater for students with disabilities and other ‘special needs’, some of these are for students with severe and multiple physical, emotional and learning disabilities. There are also some schools with a high proportion of students from indigenous backgrounds.

School policies and where to find them (continued)

Broad policies

As you can see, the policies of independent schools can vary widely along with their focus and philosophies, however, some policies remain the same no matter what school sector you work in. One of these is the child protection policy. You can access this information on the NSW Commission for Children and Young People website which has The Working with Children Employer Guidelines at *www.kids.nsw.gov.au*

There will be a policy on reporting and recording accidents and incidents for staff and students. This is an important policy that you should become familiar with. There should be a standard policy within your school sector.

While many policies are standard on a government level, or within a school sector, schools will have a number of different policies developed and implemented to suit their school community. Some of these policies will include:

» Welfare
» Discipline and detention
» Homework policy (faculties may also have their own homework policies)
» Computer access
» Assessments
» Accidents and incidents.

The following is a basic faculty homework policy, which is provided as an example only. You must consult with your school to determine your school's policy.

To find school policies, ask your SAS staff, head teacher/faculty coordinator or assistant/deputy principals. Many schools will have policy documents centrally located in each faculty or in the office or in the library. You will need to be familiar with faculty and school policies from the beginning of the year. Are there particular procedures for handing out assessments, organising excursions, forms of discipline used (i.e. lines, detentions, afternoon detentions, parental contact), staff absences? There may be policies in place that:

» Require assessment tasks refer directly to the subject syllabus, note the outcomes being assessed and provide a marking matrix
» Require teachers to check with their head teachers/assistant principals/deputy principals before making any form of parental contact (some schools suggest you document all contact)
» Provide guidelines for excursions, such as how much notice is given and how excursions are linked to the syllabus
» Incorporate a level system for student conduct, which affects who can attend excursions, when a student is moved from one level to another and who has the authority to do this
» Affect how much photocopying can be done by each teacher, whether approval needs to be sought for large amounts, whether a photocopier code is used for each teacher to keep track of output, when the administration staff are responsible for photocopying
» Explain who to contact if you are absent because you are ill, what time to ring and how to leave work for your class.

Homework and Bookwork Policy

Homework

Teachers will set homework on a regular basis. Depending on the topic being studied, this may include:

- Completing title pages
- Completing unfinished class work (answering questions, worksheets, drawing or writing)
- Revising work for class assessment tasks
- Research and/or model assessment tasks.

Homework will directly relate to the topic being studied and is set to extend a student's understanding of the topic and to develop his/her skills and knowledge in the subject area.

Teachers will regularly check that the homework is completed and will follow up on an unfinished work. Homework completion is a part of each student's yearly assessment and is recorded on his/her final report.

Bookwork

Teachers will check each student's bookwork regularly. A bookwork mark will be given and included in each student's overall assessment record in the subject area.

Each student's book should have:

- An appropriate cover, including the student's name and the subject area
- Margins, headings and dates for each lesson
- Completion of the set work
- Neat presentation of the work
- Quality and correctness of class exercises, questions etc.

It is each student's responsibility to ensure that his/her homework is completed and his/her bookwork is completed to the acceptable standard.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to monitor the work completed in their child's work book and to make written comments to the student or teacher.

Faculty Staff

Find out from your immediate supervisor what policies are used in the school that affect the day to day business of teaching. Make a list of the policies that affect you and your students and then begin gathering the information. Check with your supervisor, beginning teacher coordinator, assistant/deputy/principal and the office staff. Create a file for yourself of all of the policies so that you can quickly refer to them. When you know what is expected of you, it makes your job so much easier. Some schools will give a policy folder to beginning teachers.

Setting your career standards

Going into a school for the first time as a beginning teacher can be an exciting yet daunting experience.

There are so many things that you are trying to get your head around – all of them new. You are beginning a career that is challenging, complex, demanding and very rewarding. Keep the following points in mind as you begin your teaching career:

1. Dress like a professional – your appearance is one of the first things that people notice about you and students are no exception. If you dress appropriately, taking pride in your appearance and presenting yourself with confidence, your students will have more respect for you. Your appearance and the way you carry yourself demonstrates that you are taking your teaching role seriously.
2. Think like a professional – you are beginning a profession that influences the way other people think and feel about their lives and the lives of those around them. Make sure you make appropriate decisions about the interactions you have with students and staff, consider your language. Maintain a professional role.
3. Act like a professional – in everything you do ensure your actions conform to the expectations of the teaching profession. Whether it is respecting confidentiality, doing lesson preparation, interacting with students, staff or parents or doing your playground duty, make sure that your actions are appropriate and follow the policies and guidelines set out by your school and education sector.

Contact and organise a visit to the school prior to your first teaching day. Introduce yourself to your head teacher/faculty coordinator/ assistant principal/deputy principal and principal. If you are teaching across faculties (high schools) this time will allow you to see both faculty areas and meet both head teachers/faculty coordinators. This initial contact will also allow you to become familiar with:

» The layout of the school
» The main policies of the school
» How the school day is organised
» The school/classroom rules or expectations
» What you are teaching and when.

Take the time to ask the following questions:

» How long is the period? (high schools)
» How long do I spend on each topic?
» Do I have my own classroom? (high schools)
» If not, who am I sharing it with? (high schools)
» What resources or technology are available in the room?
» What is the ability mix in the class group?
» Are there students who finish early that I should be prepared for with additional activities? Do these students need to be challenged in the work they receive?
» Are there student health issues that I need to be informed about?
» Are there student behavioural issues that I need to be informed about?

Setting up your classroom

Not all teachers are lucky enough to have their own classrooms.

In the high school sector you may be required to move from room to room depending on whether or not you are teaching across faculties, you are sharing a class and/or the timetable allows you to have one set room. If any of these is the case, you will need to negotiate with other teachers who also use that room on a permanent or semi-permanent basis before making any changes.

The types of things you need to consider when setting up your room include:

- Age groups
- Student desks and chairs
- Access to power supplies
- The position of a permanently fixed whiteboard/chalkboard
- Additional equipment, such as:
  - computers, data projectors
  - overhead projectors, interactive whiteboards
  - mobile whiteboards or chalkboards
  - wheelchairs
  - storage areas/book shelves/cupboards
- Outside distractions
- Where to place your desk to maximise visual supervision of the children and to limit student movement around the classroom
- Students' special needs such as physical disabilities, hearing or sight impairment, behavioural difficulties
- The type of lesson you are planning.

Seating plans

How you arrange your students within the room will depend on your personal preferences and the behaviours and abilities of the students in your classes. Many teachers have no set plan and allow their students to sit wherever they like from class to class, however, other teachers prefer to sit their students in specific groups in set positions around the room.

Different seating plans have advantages and disadvantages. You may change your plan throughout the year, or have one plan for group lessons and another for practical classes. Many teachers begin the year with an alphabetical order seating plan.

While placing your students in strict alphabetical order is both a professional and personal choice, there are some advantages. These include:

- Learning the names of your students quickly – using their names from day one is an important part of building your teacher-student relationship
- It is much easier to mark the roll as you can see quickly who is missing and easily have eye contact with each student as you mark the roll
- Passing out assessment tasks and gathering them up when they are completed is made easier as they are already in alphabetical order
- It is easier to work out who owns the inevitable sheet/assessment task that does not have a name on it
- Often students will end up next to friends anyway, however, alphabetical order also allows students to increase their friendship groups.

Practical subjects or activities that require a lot of group work will also affect the layout of your room and how you divide the students into groups. Again, the groups may be based on friendship groups, alphabetical groupings or student abilities.

School and classroom expectations/rules

Most schools have a clear and basic set of school rules or expectations. The term 'expectations' is seen as being a more positive approach to school engagement. These expectations or rules should be on display in your room. Students can also benefit from displaying the expectations or rules in visual formats as well as written ones. The expectations or rules will often be included in student diaries and distributed to students at the beginning of the school year.

Setting up your classroom (continued)

If you want to add rules specifically for your classroom, make sure they are also on display in your room. Go over these rules with your students and have them write the rules in the front of their books (photocopy the rules for beginning writers). Set the standard of behaviour and work that you expect from day one. You cannot reprimand a student for not following your rules if you have not explained them in the first place. Ensure that the rules are clear, fair, realistic and not too many for the students to follow.

Many teachers work with their students to decide on a set of rules, however, if you have a lot of different classes (as in high schools) this may not be possible. One set of rules makes it easier for both the teacher and the students to be consistent in their behaviour. There are many books and websites accessible for beginning teachers to help them design rules. Some areas you may need to consider include:

- Roles and responsibilities in group work
- Use and care of equipment and books
- Asking for help
- Entering and leaving the classroom
- Noise levels
- Moving around the classroom
- Presentation of work
- Lateness to class and missed work through absenteeism
- Participation in class discussions
- Consistent consequences.

You may introduce the main rules on the first day of class, and then teach other rules or procedures as they are needed. Allow your students time to settle into your class routines.

Stationery supplies

No matter what age group you teach, you can never have enough pens, pencils, rubbers, sharpeners, glue sticks and extra exercise books. Unfortunately schools work on a budget and cannot always supply teachers with all the extras they need. Find out what is available at your school and then begin to stock up with any extras (such as craft materials or stickers etc). Always keep a copy of the receipt. Check with your head teacher/assistant/deputy principal to find out what purchases you can be reimbursed for. Find out who needs to authorise your claim and the school account it needs to be charged to. Keep copies for your records. Remember that many schools cannot reimburse a credit card, so check beforehand on how you should pay for these items.

Most department and major stationery stores have sales during the Christmas school holidays. Some stores will offer discounts if you are a member of a teachers' association. There are also educational bookshops that specialise in the needs of teachers. Keep all of your receipts. Whatever you can't claim back from your school, you may be able to claim on your taxation return. Check with your accountant or the taxation office.

Photocopying

Different schools have different guidelines for photocopying. As you can imagine the cost of photocopying is a huge expense over the whole school. Some schools have photocopying codes allocated for each teacher (which can get complicated when you are teaching three subjects across the school and need to use a different code depending on what you are photocopying). This allows the school to track the cost of photocopying to each faculty's budget. Some schools will limit how many copies you can do before you need authorisation from your head teacher/faculty coordinator/assistant/deputy principal, or need to put the print job through the administration staff. Other schools have no policies in place.

There are instances when some schools may charge students the cost of photocopying (for example, replacement copies of homework books or assignment sheets), and keep specific records about what items have charges attached.

Find out what the policy is at your school and make sure that you allow plenty of time to get your photocopying done. Don't do bulk lots during busy times, save them until after school when the demand on the photocopiers is not as high. Most schools only have three or four photocopiers to be shared amongst the whole of the teaching staff. Find out how to change a toner cartridge – it will save you time, rather than waiting for someone else to do it. Most photocopiers have instructions on the actual machine on how to do this.

One way to save time and reduce the cost of photocopying is to create class sets of the material to be reused whenever you teach that unit of work. If you create activities/questions that cover the content within the photocopied sheets, and the students complete their work correctly, there is no need for the students to keep the sheets and they can be reused with another class. Using an overhead projector in class or using a website during an IT lesson can also cut down on paper use.

Classroom equipment

Some schools will have data projectors, laptops, interactive whiteboards or overhead projectors that can be used to reduce photocopying. For example, instead of photocopying a model essay, it can be emailed to all your students and they can read it on their computers. Make sure you take advantage of all school equipment and its various uses. The school will often offer training. You can also learn how to use equipment from manuals, or on websites and vodcasts.

School rolls

School attendance rolls are legal documents and as such should be marked accurately. There are specific guidelines for the annotations you should make on the rolls to record attendances, absences and obtaining notes from home etc. Check these out and make sure you follow the directions. It is also important that you make eye contact with each student to ensure that it is actually that student responding to his or her name being called.

Once the rolls are marked they go to the administration staff to enter the attendance details for each student on their files. Your annotations need to be accurate to ensure that the student files are accurate. You will also need to sign your roll.

In some schools, the roll is done by students scanning their ID cards, or fingerprints. There will be a policy for latecomers or absent students. Absent students' parents may be phoned, or sent an email or SMS. This could be the responsibility of the SAS staff or teachers.

Class rolls

Teachers also keep their own class rolls. Student attendances can change throughout the day due to sickness, family commitments or truancy. Primary teachers can quickly pick up when a student is no longer in their class, but it is harder for high school teachers as students move from class to class throughout the day. Your faculty may keep all rolls in a central area, or allow you to keep them on your desk. Make sure your rolls are not 'hidden'. If you are absent, your head teacher (or whoever is organising your cover) will need to be able to find them easily.

Class rolls are important when keeping track of who received or completed different assessment tasks, given out on a particular day. Class rolls are also a double check for school rolls – if an error has been made and a student has received a note home for an absence, confirmation of attendance can be gained by the class roll as well as the dated work completed in the student's workbook.

Schools will often have an absentee sheet sent out to teachers during the day. This sheet will list the students who are officially absent for the day. Teachers are asked to check the list against their class rolls to find any discrepancies. This system checks for students who have arrived at school late or left early without notifying the office, or for students who are truanting. The absentee sheets are then returned to the office for follow-up.

Setting up your classroom (continued)

Teacher's journal

There is usually a place for class rolls, and sometimes assessment marks, in the back of your teacher's journal. These are generally available at education bookshops or may be ordered through your school. Some schools provide journals for their staff, while others cover part of the cost. The journals are broken down into primary format or four, six or eight period days, so make sure you purchase the one that suits the way your school day is arranged. The journal is used to make notes on what you teach, when you teach it, when you do playground duty and when you hand out assignments etc. Some schools expect you to use an electronic journal. There is a wide selection available on the internet, both free and by subscription.

Dealing with behavioural problems

Schools will have a discipline policy as part of their welfare policy. You should check the policy to find out the procedures your school uses for behavioural problems. The following are suggestions that may be adjusted to suit your school discipline policy and your personal teaching style:

Classroom Strategies:

To be used for behaviour such as:

- General talking
- Low-level noises
- Unfocused and not working
- Other behaviours that should be *dealt with at the teacher level* i.e.
  - passing notes,
  - throwing paper,
  - looking out the window,
  - calling out
  - calling across the room
  - eating in class
  - not paying attention
  - using a mobile phone
  - using an mp3-style music player etc.

1. Refocus the student on the work he or she should be doing. You may need to explain more clearly how the student could begin the task. Proximity, eye-contact and non-verbal communication are also helpful when redirecting off task behaviour.
2. Ensure that the work provided suits the capabilities of the student (i.e. adjust expectations for gifted and talented students and for those students on life skills or with lower literacy abilities). Have a back-up plan i.e. stop the video and do other work if students can't be quiet.
3. Try approaching the topic from another angle, or involve the students in a role play instead of doing written work – writing every student's name on the board, before allocating them roles will increase their curiosity and their focus on you and what you are doing.
4. For more disruptive behaviour, counsel the student privately outside the classroom, find out if there is a problem that may require the student being given some 'downtime' in class.
5. Return student to classroom, move to another seat (isolate within the room) if needed.
6. Continued disruption – advise student that his or her options are as follows:
   - Improve behaviour and complete the set work.
   - Attend a detention at recess/lunch or afternoon if behaviour is more severe.
   - Phone call home as needed.
7. **After all of these strategies** have been used and if behaviour continues, or if major incidents occur, then refer to the head teacher/faculty coordinator/assistant principal.

- Do not leave students unattended outside the classroom. They still need to be continually monitored to ensure they stay on task, and teachers have a duty of care to supervise students at all times
- For primary age students organise a time-out area within your classroom. Younger students can not be left alone for any period of time
- If you do need to talk to a student outside the room, stay at the open door to address them, ensuring that your class is never left unattended. Conflicts, accidents or other problems can occur extremely quickly and your duty of care is continual.
- Do not automatically send students to the head teacher/faculty coordinator/assistant principal or other nearby teachers – this only lessens the authority you have in the classroom.

There are many books and websites that cover dealing with student behavioural problems. Each student, incident and teacher is different and you will develop strategies that suit your students and yourself as your experience grows.

A word of advice – it is better to begin the year with strict expectations and then relax a little as you begin to understand the personalities and abilities of your students, than to have little or no control and try to gain it later.

E-learning

Delivering learning by electronic means

What is e-learning?

E-learning in one form or another has been around for 30 years, and there are many examples that are now included under this heading. However, the simplest way to define e-learning is that it's the delivery of learning, training or education by electronic means. Of course this definition opens up an extraordinarily wide range of delivery methods that is still expanding. E-learning in its earliest forms can be traced back to the 1980s to what was then known as computer-based training.

It was not until the late 1990s with the internet becoming widely available, plus a number of related technologies including electronically published documents, that e-learning as we know it today really gained momentum.

How and why is e-learning helpful as a teaching technique/tool?

E-learning can be helpful as a teaching technique/tool, as it enables a teacher to record his or her knowledge or ideas so that they can be accessed by a learner via the internet and/or an electronic device. This means that once e-learning has been developed, it's potentially available to an unlimited number of users at any time and anywhere.

This has come about due to the standardisation of delivery technologies and a reduction in distribution and development costs. For example, students can now access e-learning in much the same way as they access anything else on the internet. There is usually no requirement for special players or software; you just click on a webpage item and start learning. This learning could consist of a procedure on how to conduct a physics experiment that was recorded on video and then published on YouTube. Or it could be a highly interactive e-learning module that was developed to illustrate the effect of human activities on the environment.

When should I use e-learning?

Some important factors to consider when thinking about whether to develop an e-learning resource are:

- What is the subject matter?
- Who is your audience and what is its level and size?
- What are your audience expectations?
- What learning outcome/s do you wish to achieve?
- Does your audience have access to the same software programs as you?
- Which form do you want the learners to use to publish their work?
- How do you want to store the work and information long term?
- What existing hard copy resources do you have that can be converted to e-learning resources?
- How do you want the resources distributed in the future to other teachers or learners?

After you have assessed these factors, you should be in a position to decide whether the development of an e-learning resource is appropriate.

Different methods to develop e-learning

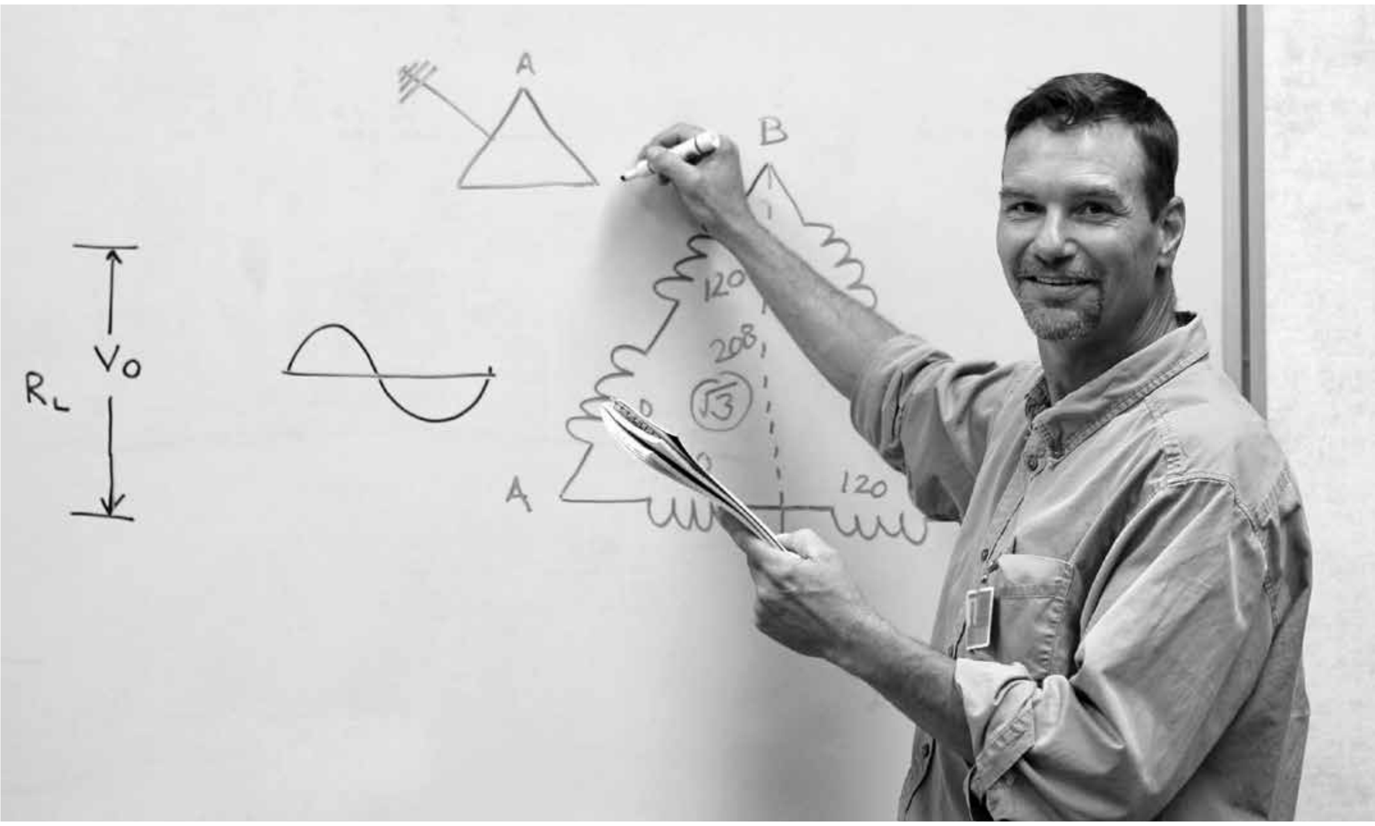
There are many ways that the delivery of learning, training or education by electronic means can be achieved. Almost any form of word processing, desktop publishing, website, video, audio visual or specialist e-learning software can used. You will need to assess whether the proposed approach to be taken is the most appropriate.

Of course, you will need the skills to use the relevant software tools.

E-learning content can be developed for primary school students, high school students or adults. The content and structure of the e-learning lesson or module is up to the teacher. For example:

- Lower primary school students could be given a worksheet that has pictures of fruit that need to be labelled. Students can then be directed to a website that already has the fruit labelled and students can copy the names of the fruits onto their sheets, or
- Junior high school students could be given either a hard or electronic copy of instructions on how to create an animated outline of a research project they have been given, which they have to present to the class at a later date, or
- Senior high school students could be sent an electronic document that has both content and activities on it. They could then be directed to a website and asked to research and analyse information before completing the activities on the e-document and returning it to the teacher electronically for marking, or
- You could convert existing electronic documents into a series of portable document files (PDFs) that are distributed electronically to your learners as pre-reading, prior to a face-to-face class. The PDFs could also be set up with text entry fields that enable the learner to record answers to questions. These responses could then be saved for evaluation or discussion.

Other examples of creating e-learning documents are Microsoft Word forms (see box) and electronic presentations using commonly available presentation tools such as Microsoft PowerPoint. PowerPoint presentations enable you to combine text, graphics, sound and video into an e-learning presentation that can be distributed using a number of methods. There are also more specialised e-learning tools available that enable you to produce "streamable" content accessed from a website. For instance, tools such as Adobe Captivate and Camtasia Studio allow you to record computer screen actions and screen content. This may include how to complete a particular software procedure. It can also include presentation content that you would normally use in a classroom session. You can incorporate a voiceover, sound effects, music or additional video that can then be published to a website, learning management system, CD or DVD.



E-learning (continued)

Creating a form in Word

Forms are an easy way to create e-learning documents. Creating a form allows you to send a document to your students electronically for them to fill out. The main document is locked down so that only the fields you have created can be changed or filled in. To create a form you need to have the **Developer** tab available on your document. This is located at the top of your tool bar and below the name of the document.

To add the **Developer** tab,

» Click on the large round **Office** button on the top left hand corner of the screen
» Click the **Word Options** button at the bottom
» Click **Popular** in the left hand pane
» Under the **Top Options** group, make sure that there is a **tick next to Show Developer Tab**
» Click **OK**

Converting a word document to a form (to be filled in) is a simple as:

1. Complete all the information on your document, including tables or diagrams and graphics
2. Click on **Developer** tab on the top of your tools bar
3. Click on **Design Mode** to create your form
4. Click on the document where you want to add a control, click on the control you want to add. For example,
   a. If you want the students to answer questions with text you would use/click on the **Rich Text control (Aa)**. A control will appear on the screen with your cursor inside it. Repeat this procedure at every point in the document where you want to add a text control
   b. If you want to provide your students with a choice of answers you need to insert the **Drop-down List** control. This is a little box with lines on the left and arrows pointing up and down on the right. A control will appear on the screen with your cursor inside it. To add entries to your list click on **Properties** in the **Controls** group, click **Add,** add a **Display** name and **Value** (usually the same), Click **OK** to add to the list**.** Repeat until you have added all your possible answers/entries
   c. If you want your students to check whether something is true or false, or vegetable, animal or mineral etc, then you would insert the **Check Box** control. Click on the form where you want to insert the control. On the **Developer** tab, click the **Legacy tools** control (folder icon with tools crossing over it and drop-down arrow). Choose the **Check Box Form Field** (the tick). Do these at each point on the document where you want to give your students a choice to answer
5. Prepare the form to be filled out by locking it. This will allow the control areas to be accessed but will not allow the text to be changed. To do this you need to:
   a. Open the form that you want to lock.
   b. From the **Developer** tab, deselect the **Design Mode**, to finalise the form.
   c. From the **Developer** tab, in the **Protect** group, click **Protect Document** and **Restrict Formatting and Editing** on the pane which appears to the right of the screen
   d. Under **Editing restrictions**, check the box **Allow only this type…**
   e. Select **Filling in forms** from the drop down box
   f. Click Yes, Start Enforcing Protection
   g. Create a password and enter it
   h. Click **OK** and **Save** your form

6. To Unprotect your form, so that you can make changes to it, if you need to:
   a. Open the form that you want to unlock
   b. From the **Developer** tab, in the **Protect** group, click **Protect Document** and click **Restrict Formatting and Editing**. The protect document task pane will appear.
   c. Click **Stop Protection**
   d. You can now change the form. Remember to lock it again once you have finished.

You can check out the Microsoft Word website for further instructions on how to create a form in Word.
The Apple website has instructions on how to create forms using a Mac.

Developing a basic e-learning lesson or unit

The initial stages of developing an e-learning lesson or module are not unlike developing any other learning resource. You firstly need to assess the content and to determine what the learning objective/s will be. For more complex e-learning documents, you may need to develop a content specification which includes the topics and subtopics that will be covered during the lesson/unit.

You need to develop the script or storyboard around this. The script includes all text and/or voiceover content and graphics. For more ambitious projects you may include video, sound effects and music. References to all e-learning components must be included in the script in the same way as if you were making a movie. This enables you to keep track of where you are during the development process, and to complete the project in a systematic manner.

If changes are made during development, the script should also be updated so that you always have an accurate reference point. This is particularly important for larger projects, and for e-learning that may need to be updated in the future. Being able to refer back to a final version of the script makes updating e-learning content less time-consuming in the future.

Software available on the internet

A huge number of useful applications are now available on the internet, often for free. These can improve the quality of your teaching, as well as save time and effort. Internet searches using phrases such as ‘teaching resources primary mathematics’ will assist you in finding these applications. Types of sites you might like to look for include:

» Anti-plagiarism sites - these allow you to check if students have copied essays instead of writing their own
» Subject specific sites – for example, an interactive site on Shakespeare’s Globe theatre
» Graphic organiser and mindmap sites
» Sites to make puzzles, vocabulary lists or cloze passages
» Assessment, rubric and test making sites

There are also many other sites for professional organisations that contain free resources for their members to use.

Using technology to distribute and access e-learning

As mentioned earlier, the improved methods for distributing e-learning have had a major impact on e-learning’s usefulness and popularity. E-learning content can now be accessed by a much larger audience. Once the initial project is completed, unlike conventional printed material the cost of providing e-learning to additional users via an internet webpage is negligible.

Many schools now have laptops and electronic whiteboards available for teaching. There are both advantages and disadvantages with using technology as a teaching resource.

Advantages include:

» Students can access the internet in class for research etc
» Students can learn to think critically about the veracity, relevance and usefulness of internet sites
» More than one class can be taught at the same time, either in the same school or between different schools
» Resources can be personalised for each student/student group
» Teachers and students can access resources, teaching plans or assessments at home
» E-learning resources can be easily edited to reflect changes in the syllabus
» Multimedia can be used to make lessons more interactive and enjoyable.

E-learning (continued)

Disadvantages include:

- Set-up time (if the equipment is not set up permanently in your classroom) and the need to hire/access technology support staff to set up e-learning systems and to provide on-going support
- Classroom management issues, for example, ensuring that students are not accessing games or other content when they should be working
- The need to train staff to use the technology effectively
- The time taken to create/design the new resources, ensuring that there is quality content as well as engaging visual effects. E-learning resources accessed through the internet should be checked for accuracy
- The need to have back-up lessons ready in case there is a problem with the technology.

As a new teacher, you should make sure you are familiar with any school policies in regards to laptop and electronic whiteboard use. For example, there may be policies about:

- How to book a whiteboard, if they are not supplied in each classroom
- Booking laptops, if students don't have their own
- When laptops can be confiscated from students who are misusing them
- How work is to be distributed to students (school website or email etc.)
- What type of work students should do if they forget their laptops or have problems with their technology.

Computers and interactive whiteboards are now used all over the world, and many teachers have developed resources for many different subjects. A search of the internet may save you from having to create a new resource – something may already be available. Teachers in NSW government schools, for example, should check TaLE on the Department of Education and Communities website for interactive units.

In addition to webpage access, there are a number of other ways that e-learning can be distributed or accessed. These methods include, for example, via CD or DVD, a learning management system (e.g. Moodle), via a third party site such as YouTube or a slide sharing site such as Slideshare, or possibly email if the e-learning files are small.

Sending an e-learning task by email is very simple, especially as most school systems now provide students with email accounts, allowing you to create an email distribution list for each of your classes. This is easily done by:

- Going into **'Contacts'** on your email system
- Clicking on **'New'**
- Clicking on **'Distribution List'**
- Giving your list a name, for example **Year 11 Advanced English**
- Entering the names of your students and their email addresses
- Making sure you save the list before you close it.

The procedure for distributing your tasks by email:

1. Access your school's internet portal
2. Open your email account
3. Click on **'New'** on the top left hand side
4. Click on the **'To'** button, insert the distribution list for that class
5. Click **OK** at the bottom of this window
6. In the subject box, type **the name of the task**
7. Give your students clear instructions for the task, for example

Student Instructions:

1. Open the attachment "The Vikings – Explorers and Craftsmen – Email Task 1.doc"
2. Read carefully through the activity sheet
3. Complete each section of the activity sheet
4. Save the completed worksheet as "The Vikings Task 1 your name.doc", for example, if your name is John Smith, you would save your worksheet as "The Vikings Task 1 John Smith.doc"
5. Send me your completed task by clicking on 'Reply' and attaching the completed worksheet "The Vikings Task 1 your name.doc". Your completed work is due by ……………

8. Add the e-learning attachment by either clicking on the icon of the paper clip or clicking on the word **'Attachment'**
9. Press **'Send'** – the lesson will then go to all students in your class

Using Blogs

Put simply, a blog (web log) is a shared on-line journal where participants can read or add information. Articles, graphics and video entries can be posted for other people to view or comment on. This type of electronic format allows users to reflect on posted articles, to share opinions and discuss various topics with other users of the blog site. Postings on a blog are usually in chronological order with the most recent entry shown at the top.

The use of blogs is becoming more common in schools as teachers use them to communicate with their students. They enable students to collaborate on tasks, post questions, check resources, obtain assessment tasks and other information, 24 hours per day. They are also useful for teachers, who can keep track of student learning for assessment and recording.

A simple search of the internet using the phrase 'creating a blog' will link you to many websites that provide step by step instructions for setting up a blog site for free. However, you should check your school's policies about using this type of technology.

There are also many blog sites where teachers can link with other teachers around the world to discuss aspects of teaching such as e-learning and classroom management.

The devices for viewing and interacting with e-learning continue to expand. Apart from the traditional PC or laptop computer, e-learning can now be accessed from mobile phones, portable game players, and tablet computers. It's taken a while, but the use of e-learning has now become part of many more people's lives. This trend will undoubtedly continue into the future.

E-learning for professional development

E-learning is also important for teacher professional development. There are literally thousands of sites available on every possible aspect of teaching from time management to Gifted and Talented learning, or assessment of ESL (English as second language) learners.

As well as participating in face to face workshops and staff development days, beginning teachers can find other training areas that are of interest to them on the internet. For example, if you teach in a boys' school, your principal may not want to run a workshop on girls' education, however, if this is your area of interest, you could participate in e-learning for that area.

E-learning is especially important for rural teachers, or teachers who don't have access to professional development that addresses a specific need in their school. Professional development offered through e-learning can vary from reading through professional journal articles through to completing accredited postgraduate university degrees online.

Linking the syllabus to assessment tasks to reports

Programs

A program is a summary of everything you intend to teach in that subject/unit. It will include syllabus outcomes, topics taught, resources used and time taken to cover the topics. Often, the unit program will also include aspects of a register. This means that you can include the dates you taught the topics and comments on how the unit went as a whole. This allows you to reuse the same program each year, incorporating your new comments for each student group.

Check with your assistant principal or head teacher/faculty coordinator to see if the school or faculty already has its programs made up. You may need to use the exact program if it is already made. You may also be expected to modify it, or even to create your own new program to suit the needs of your students or syllabus changes.

Different schools will require different information. For example, your program may need to incorporate the Quality Teacher Program (QTP) ideas, or links to the Bible or have an English as Second Language (ESL) or Aboriginal focus. If you need to create your own program, the internet and your school should have many different examples.

The following are copies of a primary level program with room for evaluation, a detailed high school program, incorporating the aspects of a register, and a blank register.

Mathematics: Term 1 – Measurement					
Lesson	**Working Mathematically Outcomes**	**Outcomes**	**Teaching/Learning Activities**	**Resources**	**Evaluation**
1	WMS1.2 Predict what the equal arm balance will do when using a variety of masses	MS1.4 Compare and order the masses of two or more objects and then check using an equal arm balance	MASS *choose a variety of objects from the room and then order masses using both hefting and arm balances *try to find objects in the room that will balance using the arm balances	Equal arm balances	
2	WMS1.2 Predict what the equal arm balances will do when using a variety of masses	MS1.4 Place objects on both sides of an equal arm balance and an unequal balance	MASS *use equal arm balance, discover what happens when an item is taken from one basket and the other item is left *complete comparing mass stencil	Equal arm balances stencil	
3 & 4	WMS1.2 Predict what the equal arm balance will do when using a variety of masses	MS1.3 Place objects on both sides of an equal arm balance and an unequal balance	MASS *use an equal arm balance to compare a variety of objects *discover the differences in masses and record a stencil	Equal arm balances stencils – balanced and unbalanced	
5	WMS1.2 Predict what the equal arm balance will do when using a variety of masses	MS1.4 Use an equal arm balance to find objects that have the same mass	MASS *Use an equal arm balance – balance one larger item with a collection of small items *complete the stencil	Equal arm balance stencil	
6	WMS1.1 Ask questions related to time	MS1.5 Name and order the days of the week	TIME *discuss the names of the days of the week and the inclusion of 'day' in them *have all students say the names of the days and then complete the stencil	Days of the week stencil	
7	WMS1.1 Ask questions related to time	MS1.5 Name and order the months of the year	TIME *discuss the names of the months of the year *have all students repeat the months of the year and then complete the stencil	Months of the year stencil	

Stage 4 Mandatory History – Societies and Civilisations of the Past

Year 8 – Medieval Europe

Unit Description:
Students acquire basic skills and the ability to conduct historical inquiries while communicating the knowledge learnt about ancient, medieval and early modern societies from both European and non-European perspectives.

Inquiry questions:
- What do societies and civilizations of the past tell us?
- How have past societies and civilisations contributed to our society today?

Resources:
Teacher History Library
Medieval Life – Chapter 8
Digging up History – The Castle and Church – Introduction and Chapters 3 - 5

Videos:
Inside a Castle's Gates
Robin Hood, Robber or Hero

Suggested site studies include:
- Museum visit

A virtual site or an archaeological/museum site.

Suggested teaching strategies:
- Text books
- Timelines and diagrams
- News articles
- Research assignments
- Source analysis, document comprehension
- Empathy tasks
- Maps
- Poster
- Film analysis.

Targeted outcomes:
The student:
- Analyses the usefulness and reliability of historical sources
- Understands how historical context affects the way history is interpreted
- Conducts basic historical research
- Effectively communicates his/her findings using oral, written or ICT forms.

Life Skills Outcomes:
The student:
- Understanding times and chronology
- Investigating how people lived during historical times
- Understanding and investigating the impact of different people and events in world history
- Exploring and communicating different perspectives about historical people and events.

Working Historically:
Historical skills to be integrated into this topic:
- Correctly sequencing events
- Using the correct historical terms and concepts in specific contexts
- Identifying different types of sources and perspectives
- Communicating the usefulness of sources
- Researching information from a range of sources.

ICT Skills:
Appropriate for this topic may include:
- Locate, select and organise information from a range of reliable IT sources, including a website
- Use an image bank to gather and reference relevant historical images
- Use IT to communicate through a desktop published document.

Linking the syllabus to assessment tasks to reports (continued)

Students learn about:	**Students learn to:**	**Integrated teaching, learning and assessment (Teacher Register, including date taught)**	**Suggested assessment strategies/evidence of learning/ feedback**
» The origins of the society or period » Daily life of men and women » Civics and citizenship in the society or period » Rights and freedoms » Beliefs and values of that historical period » Impact of significant people and/ or events » Trade and contacts with other peoples » The legacy of the ancient, medieval and early modern world.	» Identify the origins of the society or historical period » Understand and describe how men and women lived within the social structure » Describe how people were governed » Explain the beliefs and values of the society within the context of that time » Recognise and analyse the importance of significant people and/or events during the period » Outline the impact of contacts with other peoples » Recognise the legacy of that period and how it influences the world today.	**Introduction:** » Origins of the society? Norman conquest/Bayeux tapestry » Chronology of key events » Key words and their meanings » Trade and change in society » Communication – how was news spread? Dates taught: ______ **Feudal system:** » Levels and roles of society » Social pyramid » How were people governed? » Was it possible to change your social position? Dates taught: ______ **Life in a medieval village:** » Using sources to answer historical questions » Analysis of street scene » Sign language – Medieval shop signs. Dates taught: ______ **Castles:** » The who, what and why of a castle » Floor plan of a castle » Medieval tools – still in use today. Dates taught: ______ **Beliefs and values:** » Role of the Church – social position and influence » Witch hunts » Crime and Punishment. Dates taught: ______ **Becoming a knight:** » Training to become a knight – why do it? » Knights and their weapons » Changing times equals different types of knights » Film study. Dates taught: ______ **The Black Plague** » What was it? » How was it spread? Myths and facts » Cures and beliefs » Source study and report/empathy writing » How did society cope? Effects? Dates taught: ______ **The Crusades:** » Who was involved? » How many were there? » What was the children's crusade? » Why did they take place? » What were the results? Dates taught: ______	1 Comprehension and analysis questions 2 Sequencing events 3 Mapping activities (Map of World) 4 (in groups) Empathy task e.g. knights, peasants etc. 5 Document activity – comprehension 6 Film study – can modern films accurately reflect historical societies? Why? Why not? 7 Research/model assignment 8 Note making 9 Topic Tests 10 Comparisons of old and new i.e. tools, shop signs, social pyramids, communications, punishments, diseases General: Written answers demonstrate an understanding of the topics studied Note making Class discussion **Research assignments/essay writing**

Teacher's Evaluation

Signature

Date

English Faculty Register

Teacher's name: **Term:** **Year:** **Unit:**
Stage/Year: **Duration:**

Focus Outcomes (page 13 of Syllabus)	**Cross Curricular Content (pages 9 – 11 Syllabus)**

Outcomes	Content	Activities & Strategies	Resources	Assessment

Evaluation:

Signature: ______________________

Linking the syllabus to assessment tasks to reports (continued)

Finding resources

Although you will have produced a lot of resources during your studies, the first year or two as a full time teacher is spent creating new units of work. It is best to create a separate folder for each unit and to file them in year groups so that you can quickly access them again in the future. Remember to make backup copies digitally or by photocopying. If you use a website, make a printout or screen capture, as websites often change.

There are many methods of accessing resources. Although your head teacher/faculty coordinator/assistant principal and fellow teachers will be very helpful with resources, it is also important to develop your own. Every teacher has a different teaching style and his/her resources often reflect that. Here is a list of useful places to look for resources:

- Check out your school library – there is usually a teachers' resource section which will have many resources you can use immediately or adjust to suit your needs
- Check out your local educational bookshops which cater for all year groups
- Keep an eye out at opportunity/charity shops and garage sales – you will be amazed at what people get rid of. You can often pick up copies of books to add to your class sets for as little as twenty cents each
- Network with your ex-class mates, swap and share resources to expand your own library
- Not surprisingly, many ex-teachers sell their resource libraries online. It's worth a look
- The internet has many examples of units already done. Some sites charge you to join but many do not and you can download the information for free. Simple searches like "grade 2 geography teaching resources" will provide you with an extensive list of sites to access. Useful search criteria words for finding websites include:
  - Program
  - Unit
  - Printable
  - Worksheet
  - SOW (scheme of work)
  - Learn
  - Teach
  - Study guide
  - Lesson
  - Lesson plan
  - Assessment
  - Interactive
  - Student
  - Teacher
  - School
  - Subject names (overseas, English is often called 'Language Arts' and HSIE is often 'Humanities').
- Websites such as the History Channel or the BBC website provide printable resources and access to interactive web resources for students to use
- If you are working for the Department of Education and Communities, you can access resources from its webpage at *https://www.dec.nsw.gov.au* Click onto the Teaching and Learning Exchange (TaLe) for quality primary and secondary resources
- Check out professional associations' (English, Science, Geography etc.) publications and websites. It is also useful to attend their annual conferences or training days. It is not only great for professional development and networking, you also leave with an abundance of resources as well
- University and community libraries
- Your teachers' union
- Other schools (you might try emailing the appropriate faculty, or joining a local schools' network group for specific faculties or teaching areas).

It is important to acknowledge the work of others and to investigate the conditions of your school's CAL (Copyright Agency Limited) licence. To become more familiar with copyright laws you can access *http://www.copyright.com.au*

Assessment tasks

For this section, we are focusing on take-home assignments, rather than in-class tests. Most of this you will have covered in your studies so we will just add a few suggestions that might help. These include:

- State what outcome/s is being addressed with the assignment. This links directly to your assessment records and later to completing the students' reports. This also ensures that there is a direct link between what the student is doing and what they are meant to be learning. The student, teacher and parents understand why the assignment has been set
- Provide your students with step by step instructions on how to complete the task, no matter what age group you are teaching. Some students will not read everything on the page, especially in a paragraph format, however, they can easily follow dot point instructions. This also ensures there is no confusion on what they are meant to be doing. You can add checkboxes for students to tick as each part is completed
- Include a marking rubric on the assignment sheet. This will give students the understanding that if they want to achieve top marks they have to complete everything to the standard within the marking rubric. It also makes it easier for you if students question their marks
- Allow enough time for students to complete the task but not enough that it is forgotten. Try not to set assignments over holiday breaks, remember that students also have family commitments. If you must set assignments near holidays allow time on either side of the holidays for the assignment to be completed. You can set some projects or major assignments over a whole term and incorporate them into the class work
- There will be policies to follow on how much time students have, the procedure if an assessment task is missed through absence, and what to do if the task is not done or is late. Following these procedures is particularly important for the Higher School Certificate, as the documentation will form part of the records used if a student appeals his or her mark. Many schools will have a computer based assessment system for issuing tasks and recording marks.

Linking the syllabus to assessment tasks to reports (continued)

Obviously, the detail you include and your expectations will vary depending on the task and the year group you are teaching. The structure of an assessment task outline will vary, however, the information that should be included remains the same. A basic guide for creating an assessment task would be:

School Emblem Here

School Name Here

YEAR ________ MUSIC
Assessment Task Outline

Name of Topic Here

Type of Assessment here

Course Component	
Task no and date due	**Task #** **Due Date**
Weighting and total marks	**15% of year's total assessment mark** **(mark /30):**
Outcomes	By completing this task, each student will demonstrate: **List outcomes here**

Example Only

Task outline

Explain the task here.

Context

Put the task into context. i.e. the course being studied and how this task fits in.

Steps for planning and guidelines for completing the tasks

This is where you would include specific instructions for the task, including scaffolds and explicit instructions with examples of what is expected. This should take at least a page.

Assessment criteria

In this task, you will be assessed on your ability to:

Outline the task criteria – what is expected of them, the outcomes that need to be met.

This is followed by the Marking Criteria

Here is an example of an assessment task (for an extension year 12 group) that has the rubric and outcomes included:

Extension History – Research Assignment

Part A:
Choose two of the following historians to research:

- Jacques Derrida
- Leopold Von Ranke
- Barbara Tuchman
- Mark Bloch
- Richards Evans
- The Venerable Bede
- Tacitus
- Eric Hobsbawn
- Henry Reynolds
- Annales School
- Karl Marx
- Hayden White
- Keith Jenkins
- Keith Windshuttle
- Anne Summers
- Edward Gibbon
- Michel Foucault
- Herodotus

Write at least two A4 pages on each historian. Discuss/complete the following for *each* historian:

- His or her *context* (i.e. period of time, beliefs etc.) You may refer to religious, political or personal contexts
- How each historian *constructed or recorded* history and beliefs
- The *aims and purposes* of each historian in their professional work
- *Biases or beliefs* that may have affected the way they recorded history
- Complete an analysis of how that historian's work has been regarded at different times in history.

Part B:
Research the following schools of thought on the study of history (historiography). Summarise their beliefs. Write a half A4 page for each.

- Dialectical materialism
- Empiricist historiography
- Relativism historiography
- Post-modern historiography.

Part C:
Include an alphabetical bibliography (title, author, publisher/web address), using Harvard style of referencing. Include a statement for at least five (5) of the books/websites explaining how useful they were and why.

Your explanation needs to be a paragraph long.

Due Date:____________________________

Linking the syllabus to assessment tasks to reports (continued)

Marking Guidelines

Outcomes:

A student -

1.1 analyses and evaluates different historical perspectives and approaches to history and how these affected the interpretations of historical events and people

2.2 explains, argues, discusses, analyses and evaluates historical issues through detailed and well-structured texts

Students answer questions such as:

- Who are the historians?
- What are the purposes of constructing and recording history?
- How has history been constructed and recorded over time?
- What are the various ways history can be approached?

Students learn to complete:

- An analysis of various historians and their historiography practises
- Summaries on the approaches used by various schools of thought in historiography
- Annotated bibliographies.

Sections:

A) Three historians (each section completed) .... /20
B) Definitions/explanations of schools of historiography .... /10
C) Bibliography and explanations . ………….…….... /10

Marks 0 – 15 (Basic)	Marks 16 – 30 (Satisfactory)	Marks 31 – 40 (Well-developed)
» No/limited understanding of the requirements » One or more sections of the task are not completed to the specific criteria » Information chosen is irrelevant » Poor bibliography – no annotations » Fewer than five websites/books used for research	» Able to locate relevant information and use it to complete the task requirements » Attempts to complete each section of the assignment, however, information is limited and may not address the outlined criteria fully/ in detail » Language levels and clarity are not consistent or not sophisticated » Limited bibliography, e.g. includes 5 references but not explained or explanations are limited	» Able to locate, select and organise evidence from a variety of sources to address each section of the assignment fully » Communicates at a high level, through well-structured texts to evaluate complex historical information » Detailed and relevant information obtained from research » Extensive bibliography, five references provided with detailed annotations

A more detailed marking rubric might look like this:

Marking Criteria
(This is an example of a Performance Criteria, Stage 5, Music. NOTE: these are based on the syllabus outcomes)

Mark	Criteria
17–20	» Demonstrates a high level of technical mastery with few or no technical errors in rhythm or pitch » shows a real sense of understanding the piece and performs with a high degree of musical sensitivity » performs confidently and fluently, communicating effectively with ensemble and audience.
13–16	» strong level of technical mastery, with some occasional minor errors in rhythm or pitch » shows an understanding of the piece and demonstrates some musical sensitivity to the stylistic features » performs competently and communicates well with the audience and ensemble.
9–12	» holds the piece together, despite errors in pitch, rhythm » shows some understanding of the piece with some stylistic interpretation evident » performs competently with some communication evident within the ensemble and audience.
5–8	» performs with lapses in pitch and rhythm, and several 'stop-start' attempts » shows poor understanding of the piece » performs less than competently » shows little use of communication within the ensemble and with the audience.
1–4	» performs with major errors in pitch and rhythm, and frequent 'stop start' attempts » shows very poor understanding of the piece » performs less than competently with no communication between the ensemble and audience.

There are times when you may want to create a separate mark sheet for each student showing how his or her assessment mark was reached and to provide further feedback. An individual assessment mark sheet might look like this:

Student's Name:____ **Year Group/Class:** _____________

Subject: ____

Marking Criteria

	Activity	E	H	S	Sa	El
	Learning Activity 1- Definitions					
	Learning Activity 2- Percussion Table					
	Evaluation Activity- 3:2:1					

	Step	Mark	E	H	S	Sa	El
	Sound Source Table	/15					
	Venn Diagram	/15					
	Musical Invention	/10					

		E	H	S	Sa	El
	Worked effectively during lessons and managed the stages for the task well					
		Yes		**No**		
Completed all tasks on time						

Linking the syllabus to assessment tasks to reports (continued)

Teacher's Feedback

Student Evaluation and Comments

Keeping assessment records

Schools will use different ways to record assessment tasks. Sometimes this is done on paper, sometimes with computers. Sometimes head teachers record all class marks, sometimes the individual teacher is responsible. Teachers should always keep their own record of students' assessment marks, even when there is a faculty record being kept.

It should be noted that not all outcomes can always be addressed on the reports. Outcome 1 in an English syllabus may be broken down into Outcomes 1.1 – 1.6. Although each should be addressed during class time, it may not be possible to include them all on a student's report. When you plan lessons and programs, make sure you cover the outcomes your faculty requires.

Before you begin keeping assessment records, find out what outcomes are addressed in the reports. See whether you are required to include class rankings or class averages. Look at the year before (you could check with the administration staff or your supervisor) and find out if any changes are expected. You can then begin to set up your assessment tasks and assessment records to match the outcomes addressed on the students' reports.

You should arrange your assessment records to allow for more than one outcome to be addressed in each assessment task. For example, part A might address research abilities, part B might address analysis skills and part C might address a student's written communication skills. Clearly break these down in your marking records, while including a total for ranking and class averages. When you have worked out the students' achievement levels or grades (explained further down) you can then include them next to the mark for each section or overall mark.

The following is an example of a class assessment record:

Year 7 English

Student's name	Poetry Assignment			Movie Review	Class test	½ yearly result
	Part A – Research /20	Part B – creative writing /20	Total /40	Textual Analysis /20	Language techniques /20	/80
Student A	15	16	**31**	**14**	**12**	**57**
Student B	12	10	**22**	**13**	**14**	**49**
Student C	10	8	**18**	**12**	**15**	**45**
Student D	17	15	**32**	**18**	**17**	**67**

Example Only

Another method of keeping assessment records is to create individual assessment sheets for each student. These are time consuming to fill in, however, they are extremely useful when doing reports, to make comments on individual students that you can refer back to later in the year and during parent/teacher interviews. You can also staple late notes for assessment tasks or student behaviour records to the back of them – keeping everything in one place.

The following is an example of an individual student assessment sheet:

Student Assessment Record – English

Student's Name:____ Class:___________________________

Outcomes (as listed on student reports)	**Tasks and Comments** (name assessment tasks i.e. 'poetry task', as it corresponds to the outcome)	**Level of Achievement**					
		A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**½ yearly and yearly grade for each outcome**
Recognises and uses the correct narrative structure							
Composes different types of texts using different language techniques							
Analyses different textual structures							
Understands and uses visual literacy techniques							
Understands and explains the relationships between different texts							
Communicates clearly using written and ICT produced texts							

Additional notes and comments:

Book marks and dates:	**Final mark of each assessment and general comments:**

Teacher's name:____ Date:_________

Working out achievement levels/grades

It is a lot easier to work out achievement levels or grades than you might think. Some schools or teachers might not like to use the traditional A, B, C, D and E, which is why levels such as Excellent, High, Substantial, Satisfactory and Not Satisfactory have been introduced. The wording of these levels will change between schools.

This should be done collaboratively with teachers teaching your year level and/or subject to ensure consistency of teacher judgement.

Working out your grades is as simple as breaking down the overall mark of an assessment task into different levels. For example:

41 – 50	=	A	=	Excellent
31 – 40	=	B	=	High
21 – 30	=	C	=	Substantial
11 – 20	=	D	=	Satisfactory
0 – 10	=	E	=	Not Satisfactory

If you find that the assessment task was much easier than you had expected, you might change the grades to:

45 – 50	=	A	=	Excellent
36 – 44	=	B	=	High
26 – 35	=	C	=	Substantial
16 – 25	=	D	=	Satisfactory
0 – 15	=	E	=	Not Satisfactory

Your school may have a set policy on how this is to be done. Your school sector may have a standard set of grades to ensure consistency in reporting. Check this out before you develop your own breakdown.

If you use the individual assessment sheets, you would enter the assessment task under the appropriate outcome and tick the relevant achievement level. If the student completes a number of tasks that address that outcome, you will then be able to make a professional judgement at report time as to how the student has performed based on the ticks/levels of achievement attained. If the school report asks for one overall grade for the year, you can then look over the results for each outcome and determine what that grade would be. This is very useful when talking to parents as you can show them how their child has performed in each assessment task, and you don't have to worry about revealing the marks of other students by having a class mark book open. Again, this is a personal choice.

Class rankings

Working out the positions that students come in overall assessment marks would be easier if students didn't double up and get the same marks in tests. For example, you might have three students who received 18/20 and four who received 13/20. So how do you work this out?

Student Name	Mark Received	Class ranking	No. of students counted
Student A	19/20	1	1
Student B	18/20	2	2
Student C	18/20	2	3
Student D	15/20	4	4
Student E	13/20	5	5
Student F	13/20	5	6
Student G	13/20	5	7
Student H	13/20	5	8
Student I	12/20	9	9

In this example you can see that more than one student can occupy the same ranking position. While Student I may have achieved the fifth highest mark in the class, there are eight other students with higher marks and therefore his or her class ranking becomes ninth in the class. Many schools have a computer program which will do the ranking for you.

If a student misses a task because of illness, you may need to give an estimated mark, usually made by working out the average mark he or she received for his or her other tasks.

Reports

Schools have differently designed reports. You need to become familiar with the report format used at your school. You need to know:

» If the reporting system is fully computerised (most are nowadays)
» What outcomes are addressed
» How student results are reflected in achievement levels
» Whether class positions are included on the reports
» How much space is given for teacher comments
» If the school has a comments bank that is used or accessible to the teacher
» What types of comments are expected – some schools want you to only address academic results, whereas some are happy for you to address more personal aspects of the students' schooling such as enthusiasm, team leadership etc.
» When teachers have to do their reports by
» Who proofreads reports
» Who prints, collates and files reports
» When they get distributed to students.

Marking and recording assessment tasks is very time consuming. You need to have all of your outcomes assessed and records up to date well before the reports are due to be finished. As a beginning teacher, you should allow at least two weeks to do your reports.

Linking the syllabus to assessment tasks to reports (continued)

Ensure you use each student's name when writing your comments. Don't create a standard response that does not reflect your student as an individual. Don't just copy and paste one or two comments and use them for every child. Students and their parents notice this repetition very quickly and it reflects on your teaching practices.

Some schools may have a bank of comments that has been agreed upon by the staff. Each comment reflects a different level of student achievement in each Key Learning Area. Check out whether your school has these comments and if you are expected to use them.

Don't just repeat the words that are already shown in the ticked section of the outcomes. Link the outcomes together to provide parents with more understanding of how their child is doing at school. An example of an outcomes-based comment could be:

"[Student's name] has developed a very strong understanding of the terminology used in his geography studies and demonstrates this in his extended written responses."

An example of a comment reflecting a student's personal attitude toward his or her learning could be:

"[Student's name]'s research task reflected his creativity, knowledge and enthusiasm for the study of Geography".

Be careful not to make value judgements about students. If there is an area for the student to work on, make sure that it is preceded with a comment outlining what they have done well, and that the area of concern is outlined as positively as possible.

Communicating with parents/guardians

Check with your school for policies on teacher-parent/guardian communications.

Parent/teacher night

Check with your school for policies on teacher-parent/guardian communications.

Different schools organise their parent/teacher nights differently. Some schools will only have one parent/teacher night each year, others will have a senior parent/teacher night and then a junior one, while others will have parent/teacher nights based on year groups. All parents and guardians are invited to attend parent/teacher nights.

Parent/teacher nights are sometimes organised to take place in one venue like the school hall, or different subjects and year groups might be placed in venues around the school. Find out how your parent/teacher nights are organised.

Generally, the date is set for parent/teacher night and teachers and students are given booking sheets. Students check with their parents as to which teachers they want to see. They then go to their teacher/teachers and book a time that suits both the parents and the teacher/s. Things that you need to do include:

» Allow enough time to discuss the student's progress and to answer any parent's questions
» Be mindful of time. You will usually have parents booked in one after the other, so if there is more to discuss and the time is up, suggest to the parent/guardian that they ring the school the next day to make a further appointment. Don't try to arrange an appointment then – it will take up more time.
» Allow enough time for parents to move from one venue to another between interviews
» Make sure that you find out which parent/guardian will be coming in for the interview
» Find out how to address the parent/guardian. Many parents have different surnames from their children. Make a note of who is coming on your booking sheet
» Always be diplomatic and professional in your dealings with parents, remember it is their son or daughter you are discussing
» Refer any problems to a more senior member of the teaching staff or promise the parents that you will follow up on their enquiry and you will get back to them or get a more senior staff member to get back to them
» Make sure that you follow up on any promises or agreements you make with the parents or their child
» Have your assessment records and class rolls with you so that you can accurately discuss your students' achievements and attendance with the parents
» Collect your class books to show to the appropriate parents
» Record any requests, issues or problems you may have had during parent/teacher night so that you have a permanent record and can follow up on them
» If you know that there have been on-going problems between the student/family and the teacher or the school, make sure you let your head teacher/faculty coordinator/assistant principal know that the family is coming in and when
» If parents ask for the name of your head teacher/faculty coordinator/assistant/deputy principal or principal so they can discuss a matter they are unhappy with, supply the appropriate name and contact number. Don't be confrontational. Let the parents know that you will advise the requested person of the up-coming contact. When you are free or the next day, let the appropriate staff member know what is happening. Record everything.

Keeping accurate welfare records

Your schools welfare policy should include instructions on the procedures used to record student welfare issues. Schools will use different welfare reporting software. Find out what system is used at your school and become familiar with it. Student welfare issues include:

» Poor attendance or truancy
» Poor academic progress
» Missed assessment tasks
» Requests made by parents for students to be assessed for academic support
» Bullying
» Classroom and playground behaviour
» Students refusing to follow school rules or reasonable teacher instructions

Communicating with parents/guardians (continued)

- Confrontations between students
- Confrontations between teachers and students
- Discussions between parents and school staff
- Disclosures made by students in relation to forms of abuse or major problems at home.

It is important that your welfare records are correct and state the facts. Don't make judgement calls, just record what took place. A copy is generally sent to the office to be filed in the student's school file. Keep a copy for yourself and give a copy to the staff member appropriate for the issue in that report. Always follow your school policy carefully, and be aware of the relevant legislation. Remember that legislation often changes so it is important to keep up to date.

Respect the privacy of your students and don't leave these reports where other students can see them. Definitely don't take them to class.

Don't assume that the behaviour or problem is a one-off, so it doesn't need to be reported. There may be problems for that student in more than one area across the school and he or she never receives help because no-one is completing reports. For example, a student may be having difficulty coping with library work as well as in the classroom, however, if neither the librarian nor the teacher reports it, the student may never receive the academic support he or she needs.

If an assistant/deputy/principal arranges for a parent interview because of behavioural, learning or attendance problems, it is important that staff have been recording each incident. Documentation is extremely important. Welfare records can demonstrate a problem in one area of a student's education or problems and issues that affect all areas of a student's education.

Phone calls to parents/guardians

Check with your school for policies about teacher contact with parents. Some schools request that you clear the contact with your head teacher/faculty coordinator/assistant principal first before making any parental contact. Whether you need to clear the contact or not, it is important that you record details of the contact on the student's welfare record.

It may be advisable to talk with your supervisor before ringing parents while you get to know your class. Sometimes it is advisable to conduct a phone call with your supervisor present using the speaker phone to provide you with extra support.

Remember to be diplomatic and professional in your dealings with parents, it is their son or daughter you are discussing. If you must contact the parents during work hours, apologise for interrupting them at work and ask if you can take a few minutes of their time. Be fair and state the facts. Do not make judgements on the personality of their child, stick to academic issues or specific behavioural problems.

Make sure that you have done everything possible on a school level, before you contact home. Don't lose your authority in the classroom by contacting home as soon as there is a problem. You may find that you have followed every level of the school's discipline policy and your head teacher/faculty coordinator/assistant principal has suggested it is time to contact the parents. Document this.

Many parents like to be kept informed of developing or on-going problems. This allows the parents and school to work together to avoid an escalation of the problem. Try to balance this with some positive feedback. You don't want every contact with the parents to be a problem-solving exercise.

The following checklist provides a guideline for conducting a phone call to parents.

Phone Call Checklist:

Teacher: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

Student Name: ______________________________

Parent/Guardian Name: ______________________________

Home Phone: ______________________________

Work phone: ______________________________

Mobile: ______________________________

Problem/Issue: ______________________________

Make notes about some of the following important points you might cover in the phone call. Have copies of the student's welfare reports on hand to refer to.

1. Start the phone call with a statement of concern
2. Describe the behaviour that prompted the phone call. Be specific
3. Describe the steps that you have taken to solve the problem
4. Ask for parent input
5. Present your solutions to the problem or issues in terms of what you will do and what you would like the parent to do
6. Ask the parents if they have any questions or if there is anything specific they would like you to do
7. Express confidence in your ability to solve the problem or issue
8. Explain to the parents that there will be follow-up communication from you

Don't forget that you can ring parents at any time to report positive experiences about their child. This can be very powerful for building relationships between yourself, the parents and the student.

Always document every phone call you make to parents.

Parent/Guardian Conference

There may be occasions when it is necessary to organise a conference with a parent. If this is the case, a head teacher/faculty coordinator/assistant principal or deputy principal may also be involved. Check with your immediate supervisor before you arrange a parent conference. There may be a school policy in place.

Don't take an adversarial approach when organising/participating in a parent conference. If possible arrange seating in a circle or sit at an oval/round table. Seek the input and advice of the parents.

Communicating with parents/guardians (continued)

The following table provides a guideline for conducting a parent conference:

Parent/Guardian Conference Checklist:

Teacher:

Year level/grade:

Date of Conference:

Student Name:

Parent/Guardian Name:

Problem/Issue:

Make notes about some of the following important points you might cover in the conference or meeting. Make sure that you have copies of the student's welfare reports with you so that you can give specific details or show the parents (if appropriate – remember to respect the privacy of other students who might be included in the report)

1. Thank the parents for their time
2. Explain your concerns, updating the parent/s on the situation
3. Describe the specific problem and present any documentation
4. Describe what you have done to solve the problem
5. Listen to the parental input
6. Ask the parents if there is something they think they or you could do to help solve the problem
7. Discuss what you need the parent/s to do to help solve the problem
8. Determine a plan of action. Explain to the parent/s what you will do to help solve the problem or issue
9. Let the parent/s know that you are confident that the problem can be resolved
10. Reassure the parent/s that there will be follow-up contact from you.

Try to finish the conference on a positive note. For example, report on something positive the student has done, or the positive outcomes that the school, parents and student can achieve as a group. Thank the parents for their time and assistance in resolving the issue. These positive touches can be very powerful in building relationships between yourself, the parents and the student.

Always document parent/guardian conferences.

Organising an Excursion

Many things need to be taken into account when you are organising a school excursion.

Your school may have an excursion policy that you must follow. Here is a dot point list of many of the things to consider:

- Connect the activity to the syllabus and explain its purpose to students
- Decide on a date that does not clash with other school activities/excursions or assessment tasks
- Plan for a day when you would normally have that class or year group, it will make it easier to work out cover (explained later)
- Consider the needs of students with disabilities, including transport, meals and toileting
- Arrange transport (including wheelchair access if necessary, not all bus companies have buses that accommodate wheelchairs)
- Allow travel time to and from the venue, including possible delays. Ensure you are back for school buses
- Make a tentative booking with the transport company and get a quote. Find out how payment is made (i.e. on the day or via an invoice)
- Make a tentative booking with the venue, get a quote, find out how payment is made and what ratio of teachers to students they want, if the venue has wheelchair access
- Work out the cost (explained below)
- Complete a risk report (your school should have a standard form)
- You may need to ensure specific staff are attending such as teacher's aides
- Check that the required first aid qualifications are up to date for the teachers attending
- Submit your proposal to your head teacher/faculty coordinator/assistant principal for approval (there should be a form your school uses to do this)
- Confirm the date in the school calendar
- Confirm your transport booking
- Confirm your venue booking
- SAS staff often need a few days to get a cheque ready for you to pay the transport company or the venue, so allow plenty of time between the close off date for payment and the date of the excursion
- Complete the permission note for students to take home (there is probably a standard one on your school computer system to fill in), including:
  - Date of excursion
  - Class group going
  - Where the group is going
  - A description of the excursion and how it connects to the syllabus
  - Type of transport used
  - Cost of the excursion
  - Departure and return times
  - Any food that needs to be taken for lunch etc.
  - School uniform if required for the day
  - Additional spending money if required i.e. "refreshments may be purchased at the venue"
  - Which teachers will be going on the excursion (ask a deputy or assistant principal if they would like to join you, they enjoy the student contact and it eases class covers)
  - Room for any parental comments, such as medical conditions, swimming levels, student allergies, any special needs (e.g. teachers' aides, medicine, no sun exposure)
- Let the administration staff in the office know the date of the excursion and a cut off date for payment, give the office a copy of the permission note
- Make sure you have copies of the health care plans and emergency care plans for students with medical conditions. Take a copy on the excursion with you, for ready reference if needed
- Let the canteen manager know if you are taking a whole year group for the day
- Ensure that you have enough student numbers by the closing date to continue with the excursion. It may mean that you have one bus load of students instead of two
- Advise the venue if you have a change of student numbers.

Organising an Excursion (continued)

Working out the cost

Most venues let a certain number of teachers in for free as they are there to supervise the students. Although you don't need to include teachers into the costing of an excursion, you do need to include them into numbers for transport or if the numbers at a venue are limited. Working out the cost of an excursion can be done as follows:

Please note that the following is an example only (actual figures and numbers will vary).

Quote by bus company		$555
Number of seats		56
Number of teachers		2
Allow four spare seats for sick students, if students need to be separated or for last minute student extras		
Number of students expected for excursion		= 50
Transport cost for each student	$555	÷ 50 = $ 11.10 (round up)

It is wise to round this amount up to $12 as you are then covered for any students who drop out or if you don't quite get the student numbers you had hoped for, or if there is some other unexpected expense. Follow the school policy about costing.

Quote by venue	$35 per student
Total cost to each student	$47.00

Arranging cover for your classes

Some schools will have an 'excursion pool' of teachers who cover excursions. You may need to organise your own cover, or this may be one teacher's responsibility in the school.

If you are a primary school teacher and you are taking your whole class on the excursion, there will be no need to cover your class, however, you will need to work out what to do with the left over group of any students that come to school but do not attend the excursion. Check that you do not have a playground duty that day. If you do, make sure that you swap your duty with another teacher and let your supervisor know. You may also be able to swap your RFF time, but this is not always possible. RFF is Release from Face to Face teaching – time when another teacher takes your class so that you have planning, programming time etc. This is generally two hours a week for primary.

In a high school situation there are two ways to organise teaching cover for your other classes while you are on an excursion.

1. If you are only taking your own class (let's say it is called 7B) then you need to look at the timetable for 7B and see which teachers the class was due to have that day. You can then contact each of those teachers to cover your classes for the period they were meant to have 7B.
   You will still need to organise for any left over students to be supervised. See your head teacher and work out an arrangement with other staff. You may even be able to use one of the other 7B teachers depending on how many classes/periods you need to cover for that day.
2. If you are taking the whole year group on the excursion you need to:
   - Work out how many students are going
   - How many students are staying at school
   - Work out how many teachers are going with you – some year 7 teachers from your faculty will stay behind and can be used with the class cover
   - Get a copy of all the year 7 timetables and work out which teachers would normally have a year 7 group that day

- Allocate some of the remaining year 7 teachers to cover your classes and the classes of the teachers going on the excursion (see below)
- Allocate the other remaining teachers to cover the left over students
- If there are more teachers available than groups/classes to be covered, give them a break and allocate a half period cover each, if possible
- Make sure that you also cover any playground duties as well. Remember that you can not put someone on a playground duty if they have a teaching period both before and after it. Staff need a break too.

Try using a table so that you can visually work out which period or group is covered. For example *(please note that the names used in the following example are purely fictional and are not intended to be real. Any reference to a real person is unintentional and coincidental):*

Cover for year 7 excursion:

Period	Available teachers normally teaching year 7	Left over group 1	Left over group 2	Mrs Jones' classes	Mr Vaughan's classes	Miss Abraham's classes
1	Mr Smith Miss Khan Mr Elmasri Miss Elfore Mrs King Mr Petrie*	Mr Smith Room 6	Miss Khan Room 9	Year 10 Geography Mr Elmasri Room 7	Year 10 Geography Miss Elfore Room 8	Year 10 Geography Mrs King Room 10
Recess				Mr Merrick		
2	Miss Pastel Miss Miller Mr Campbell Mr Brown Mrs Halford Mr Merrick	Miss Pastel Lab 1	Miss Miller Lab 4	Year 8 Geography Mr Campbell Room 7	Year 8 Geography Mr Brown Room 8	Year 8 Geography Mrs Halford Room 10
Recess						
3	Mr Jordana Mrs Van Den Hoek Mr McAuliffe Mrs Jackson Miss Edwards Mr Lee	Mr Wardana Mrs Van Den Hoek (to share cover) Art room 3	Mr McAuliffe Mrs Jackson (to share cover) Art room 2	Non-teaching period	Non-teaching period	Non-teaching period
Lunch					Miss Edwards (Lunch 1)	Mr Lee (Lunch 2)
4	Mr Glenwood Mr Pearce Mrs Arvanitakis	Mr Glenwood Mr Pearce (to share cover) Computer room 1	Mrs Arvanitakis *Mr Petrie (to share cover) Computer room 2	Year 7 – on excursion	Year 7 – on excursion	Year 7 – on excursion

* Mr Petrie has agreed to swap his non-teaching period (from period 4 to period 1) so that he can cover the left over group.

Make sure that you give each of the teachers on the table a copy and a couple of days notice. The room numbers have also been included in the table.

Organising an Excursion (continued)

Leaving work for your classes

Make sure that you leave the work, clearly marked for the class and period, on your desk where the covering teacher can easily find it. Everything should be photocopied and/or textbooks should be on the table ready to go. Include:

1. A class roll
2. A lesson outline
3. Work that is self-explanatory (remember the covering teacher does not usually teach this subject)
4. Enough work for the whole period
5. Additional activity sheets for students who finish early.

The same applies when leaving work for casuals if you are taking time off and a casual is brought in to teach your classes for any period of time. You should ensure that everything is clearly marked and set out so that the casual teacher can just pick up the work and go with it.

Leaving work for the left-over groups

Remember that you are leaving work to cover the whole day. Make sure that you vary the activities and make them relevant to their normal school work. Do not give these students work that will advance them beyond the students on the excursion.

Get a couple of small boxes. Label them with Group 1 or Group 2. Include a roll for each group so that both the students and the teachers know who is in each group. Set the roll up so that the teachers can mark it each period to ensure that students are in attendance. Leave a packet of work sheets for each period in each box, clearly marked for the covering teachers. Include a packet of additional activity sheets for students who finish early.

If the computer rooms are free, you could book the left-over groups in to complete a publishing or research exercise during one of the periods.

Being part of the whole school community

Each school has policies and traditions regarding communications

School communication

While daily or weekly printed notices are still common, more schools are using the email system to notify staff about daily information, events or other important information.

Welfare and incident reports on student or parent contact are generally recorded on the school computer system. Many schools will request that a printout of the report is made and forwarded to the appropriate staff for follow-up, for example, the school counsellor.

The school calendar, found on the school computer system, is also an important source of information in relation to many aspects of school life including excursions, staff meetings, parent/teacher nights, exam periods and reporting schedules.

Student health care and emergency care plans

One area which causes concern in schools is the treatment of any medical condition experienced by a student (including epilepsy, asthma, anaphylaxis and diabetes). Schools must have emergency care plans for students with medical conditions which detail what should be done for each student. These plans guide the teachers and school staff on how to help students dealing with medical conditions.

If you have a student with any medical condition in your class, you should make yourself aware of their particular situation. It is also important to be aware of any students in your school with medical conditions as you may be placed in a position to help them in the school buildings or playground. Check the school policy on how to manage these situations within your classroom or the playground.

Schools will often display notices in a discreet place in the staff room or office to advise staff about students with medical conditions that may require treatment at school. Professional development training in first aid may be offered through the school. Remember to respect the privacy and dignity of students in relation to their medical conditions.

Use of the clinic

Be aware that each school will have a system for how students can access the clinic. Students must be sent to the clinic with a note from their teacher. Some schools may want sick students accompanied by another student until they are under the supervision of the office/clinic staff. Learn your school policy and make sure that you follow it at all times. The clinic staff will also assist with younger students, monitoring illnesses and the taking of medication.

It is the role of the school to notify parents/guardians if students are sick and need to go home, however, this is sometimes a problem when students with mobile phones contact home first. Students should be sent to the office to notify parents and to have their school records noted if they are leaving school early.

Use of technology

Monitoring student use of technology is always a problem. Students are usually not permitted to access the internet unless a teacher is present, or a teacher/librarian when using library computers. Most schools will have a process that must be followed regarding what students can and can't access. Some schools have a contract which the students sign to confirm that they know and respect the school rules on the use of technology. It is important to know and respect what these requirements are as students will usually be one step ahead of us in terms of the latest gadgets and methods for internet use.

Teachers need to know and enforce the school policy in relation to mobile phones and mp3-style music players etc. in the classroom and school grounds. Each school will have a different system for booking a computer room or technology centre. For example, teachers may book into a technology centre using a booking sheet located in the library or you may need to go through the IT Coordinator. Teachers can also access data projectors, interactive whiteboards and video equipment.

Being part of the whole school community (continued)

Make sure that you sign the equipment out and return it on time in the same condition that you borrowed it. If there is a maintenance problem with the technology you have used, make sure that you let the appropriate staff know so that it can be fixed before the next person tries to use it.

School committees

In your first year of teaching you will be busy creating units and getting used to balancing all your duties as a teacher, so you may not have a lot of time to join school committees. However, once you are more settled it is great for your professional development to get involved with the committees in your school. Don't overload yourself by joining too many committees at once as you may not get a period allowance and meetings usually take place during break times or before and after school. Committees provide you with:

- A better understanding of how the whole of the school operates
- Input into the focus area of the committee
- A chance to network with other staff members across the school
- Team building skills
- CV entries on team work, areas of expertise, communications skills, your ability to collate information and present it in a formal report or oral form.

There are different types of committees depending on what area of school life your school is reviewing or focusing on. These include:

- Welfare Committee
- Report Review Committee
- School Promotion Committee
- ICT Committee
- Gifted and Talented (Students) Committee
- Literacy Committee
- OH&S Committee
- Numeracy Committee
- Learning Support Team
- Community Involvement Committee.

Other school activities

Committees are not the only way in which you can get involved in whole school activities. There are other aspects of school life to which you can contribute. There is a lot of satisfaction in getting to know your students in activities outside the classroom. Other school activities could be:

- Assisting the Student Representative Council (SRC)
- As editor of a student-run school newsletter
- Coaching a school sports group
- Running an after-school homework centre
- Organising various activities such as a school choir, school band, chess club or other areas of interest
- Assisting a year advisor
- Taking active student focused roles during sports or swimming carnivals
- Helping with the annual school magazine.

Remember not to overload yourself. Terms 2 and 4 are often incredibly busy with assessment tasks, marking, completing reports and attending parent/teacher nights, never mind the daily lesson preparation and other school commitments. Most additional school activities take place in your off-class time. You are still expected to complete your normal teaching duties. Be careful not to burn yourself out, especially in the first year or two.

Leaving students outside your classroom

Remember, your students must be supervised at all times – you have a duty of care towards them. A teacher's duty of care includes the classroom, school buildings and the playground.

Never leave a student unattended outside a room, or in a room by him or herself, or a group of students alone in a room. Dangerous situations can easily arise in only moments. Students who are supervised are less likely to bully or tease other students or to damage property. Leaving disruptive students outside your classroom affects the learning environment of teachers and students in other classrooms. If students are disruptive under a teacher's supervision, they can definitely cause havoc when left alone, bored and unsupervised.

Leaving students unattended outside your room renders you negligent in your duty of care as a teacher. Not only are they getting behind in the school work, which only makes them more frustrated when they return to class, they may also be injured due to lack of supervision.

The Department of Education and Training Teachers and Law Conference (2005) described a teacher's duty of care as having two main components. The duty to provide:

1. Adequate supervision and instruction, and
2. Safe and suitable premises and equipment.

(reference: *http://www.nswtf.org.au/campaigns/law/resources/care.html*)

Playground duty

When you receive your teaching timetable for the year, you will also be rostered to do playground duty. This is included as part of your teaching load. You will also notice that if you are rostered for playground duty in a high school, you will generally have some non-teaching time before or after the duty. Primary teachers rarely have a break before or after playground duty.

You need to attend to your playground duty as soon as possible after the bell goes for that break time. This means that you should not keep students in for a detention – you will need to follow up later with the detention. You should not take your time cleaning up your classroom before wandering down to the playground. Your duty of care extends to your playground duty responsibilities. If an incident happens in your playground duty area and you have not attended to your rostered duty, you could be seen as negligent in your duty of care.

Lunchtime playground duty is often broken into two parts, shared by two different teachers. As a courtesy to your fellow staff members, it is important that you arrive on time to relieve the teacher on duty.

Staff attendance/absences

Each school sector will have a policy defining the expected hours of attendance at school. For example, in public schools it is generally expected that you will arrive on the school premises half an hour before the commencement of the school day. This allows you time to prepare for your day and to be ready for roll call, morning assemblies or playground duty.

Make sure that you arrive at school on time. Notify your school as soon as possible if an unexpected delay, such as a traffic accident or holdup occurs.

If you are going to be absent let your school know the day before, if possible. You need to check with your school as to who you need to notify about your absence and by what times. Some schools will have a cut-off time of 9 pm at night and by 7 am in the morning. This allows the person covering the absences to arrange for cover for your classes and playground duties.

Being part of the whole school community (continued)

If you are going to be absent for more than one day let your school know. Check your school sector policy on staff absences and when you are required to provide a medical certificate. If you take both the Friday and Monday off, you may need a medical certificate that covers the four days. You will need to confirm this with your school.

You also need to become familiar with your other leave entitlements. You may be entitled to a number of days each year for FACS (family and community services) leave or other personal leave. This type of leave allows for family illnesses, funerals or other family and community commitments. Check this leave policy for your school sector.

Make sure that you leave work for your classes if you know that you will be absent. See Leaving work for your classes in the Organising an Excursion section of this booklet.

Staff meetings

Schools will organise their full staff meeting times differently. Some will have weekly meetings after school hours, some will have them monthly, while others will extend break times during the day to have additional staff meetings. It is important that you attend the staff meetings, unless you are rostered on playground duty, or have another important meeting to attend. Schools are very understanding of family commitments, however, it is noticed when the same staff members do not fulfil their professional responsibilities and attend staff meetings.

Staff meetings are important as they keep staff up to date with:

- What is happening in your education sector
- Changes or events happening in your school
- Student welfare issues and professional development opportunities.

Staff meetings also provide you with an opportunity to network with other staff members you don't usually get the chance to meet.

Staff protection

There are some basic rules for ensuring your own safety as a teacher, both professionally and on a welfare level. These include:

- Making sure that you cover the syllabus when creating units of work
- Ensuring you keep accurate assessment records
- Ensuring you keep accurate attendance records
- Completing registers to confirm that the correct content/skills have been taught
- Following school policies in relation to school activities, discipline and welfare issues
- Acting in a professional manner towards students and other staff
- Advising the school when you are going to be absent
- Leaving work for your classes during absences (if you know ahead of time)
- Keeping detailed and accurate welfare records in relation to dealings with students and parents
- Arriving to class on time and prepared for your lesson
- Attending all playground or additional school duties on time
- Avoiding situations that would allow yourself to be alone with a student in a classroom
- Never allowing students to enter a classroom unsupervised, for example during lunchtimes. If a conflict, theft or accident happens your duty of care makes you responsible.

Professional development

The role of the NSW Institute of Teachers in relation to professional development can be found at *http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/Continuing-ProfessionalDevelopment.html*

The NSW Institute of Teachers states:

Professional development strengthens your knowledge base and supports your commitment to effective teaching and learning. It allows you to build and refresh your skills and to participate actively in your career development. You should have access to, and engage in, high quality professional development for the whole of your teaching career.

Check with your supervisor/head teacher/faculty coordinator about opportunities for professional development in your school. School funding and staffing limitations may affect how often you can attend a course or other professional development opportunity. Find out what you are entitled to attend each year.

For professional development programs, check your daily notices, teaching association newsletters, university alumni websites or school sector websites. You may be asked to share what you learn with the rest of the faculty or school staff. Make notes and collect as many resources as you can to share with the staff at your school.

What it means to be a teacher

The writers of this guide would like to leave you with their thoughts on what it means to be a teacher.

Being a teacher to me means you learn something new everyday and that everything you do and say, matters. As a teacher you learn that you can make a difference to a student in their learning and more significantly, for them as a person.

There are countless ways that teachers build emotionally and relationally healthy learning communities that lead to opportunities for learners to achieve competence and to be caring, secure, confident human beings.

Teachers are decision-makers who make countless important decisions every minute. We certainly know that something worthwhile takes hard work and dedication. We know that learning never stops and that with disappointments there are also rewards.

Teaching is a career that allows you to nurture young minds. You're more than someone who imparts knowledge and teaches outcomes. You're a mentor, role model, motivator and mediator. It is a profession that allows you to give of yourself and one that has a profound impact on your life. It is one journey I am grateful to have embarked on.

Claire O'Brien, Caroline Chisholm College

Teaching is a very rewarding career which is constantly evolving. You have to be able to adjust to the changes you face – daily and from year to year. I find teaching challenges me to embrace new ways of thinking, technology and different attitudes.

It is inspiring to see young people change and grow as they move through the school system. I find it a privilege to be involved in helping students to work at improving their thinking as well as growing as a person. Hopefully they are developing the skills which equip them for dealing with the many challenges life puts before them.

An effective teacher is a good listener, a creative classroom practitioner and above all else, passionate about their role. You love what you do and care about the future of each student you come into contact with.

Jenny Elliott, Penrith Anglican College

Being a teacher means that you will be a member of one of the most challenging, most rewarding and most fun professions in existence. You'll spend a lot of time laughing if you become a teacher.

One great thing about teaching is that you know you are doing something worthwhile. At the end of the day, you will have made an impact on a person's life in some way. And you'll always be remembered. We all look back on our days at school, no matter how old we get or what we end up doing with our lives.

There's nothing like being grabbed by someone in a supermarket who says "Hey, do you remember me? I was in your class!" and then you spend the next 20 minutes talking about the day that the class and you had some kind of adventure together. Like the day the soft drink bottle rockets all shot off sideways and everyone got wet and the principal came out to see what was happening and ended up having a go as well, and ended up dripping like the rest of us. Fantastic job, teaching.

Fiona Pollock, Sir Joseph Banks High School

Teaching is a wonderful career choice. It constantly challenges you to reinvent yourself for the benefit of your students. It never fails to reward you for hard work and consistently provides opportunities to see the wonderful rewards children attain through your work. Teaching must be a passion. Armed with this passion you have the power to change people's lives regardless of gender, socio-economic status, race or religion. To know that you have had a positive impact on the lives of other human beings is both a humbling and powerful feeling that is not exclusive to teaching, but remains a major reason I continue to teach.

It is also rewarding to know that you have had the opportunity to add to the moral development of the next generation. As teachers we provide our students with education in values both explicitly and through the way we interact with them and others. This impacts directly on the direction society takes. What a fantastic thing to be involved in!

Mark Davies, Lawson Public School

Teaching is a career for those who enjoy, and are passionate about, helping children to be the best that they can be regardless of ability, race, gender or socio-economic differences. Getting to know and inspire the diversity of students in our public schools is a privilege and has taught me a great deal about teaching, the world and myself. My life is richer because I am a teacher, and every day I strive to inspire and challenge students to learn from me as I learn from them.

Rachel Haywood, Werrington Public School

Accreditation and the National Professional Teacher Standards

Accreditation – meeting specific standards for each stage of your career development

What is accreditation?

Accreditation indicates that teachers have met specific standards for each stage of their career development. The purpose of the standards is explained as:

The National Professional Standards for Teachers are a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality. They define the work of teachers and make explicit the elements of high-quality, effective teaching in 21st century schools that will improve educational outcomes for students. The Standards do this by providing a framework which makes clear the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required across teachers' careers. They present a common understanding and language for discourse between teachers, teacher educators, teacher organisations, professional associations and the public.
(National Professional Standards for Teachers, 2012, p.2).

These standards are:

1. Know students and how they learn

1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students
1.2 Understand how students learn
1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds
1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities
1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability

2. Know the content and how to teach it

2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area
2.2 Content selection and organisation
2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting
2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies
2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

3.1 Establish challenging learning goals
3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs
3.3 Use teaching strategies
3.4 Select and use resources
3.5 Use effective classroom communication
3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs
3.7 Engage parents/carers in the educative process

4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

4.1 Support student participation
4.2 Manage classroom activities
4.3 Manage challenging behaviour
4.4 Maintain student safety
4.5 Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically

5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
5.1 Assess student learning
5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning
5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements
5.4 Interpret student data
5.5 Report on student achievement

6. Professional Engagement
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning

7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community
7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities
7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements
7.3 Engage with the parents/carers
7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities

Organisation of the Standards

The National Professional Standards for Teachers comprise seven Standards which outline what teachers should know and be able to do. The Standards are interconnected, interdependent and overlapping.

The Standards are grouped into three domains of teaching;

» *Professional Knowledge,*
» *Professional Practice and*
» *Professional Engagement.*

In practice, teaching draws on aspects of all three domains.
Within each Standard focus areas provide further illustration of teaching knowledge, practice and professional engagement. These are then separated into Standard Descriptors at four professional career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead. (National Professional Standards for Teachers, 2012, p.4).

Professional Knowledge
1. Know students and how they learn
2. Know the content and how to teach it

Professional Practice
3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning
4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments
5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Professional Engagement
6. Engage in professional learning
7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Accreditation and the National Professional Teacher Standards (continued)

What are the levels of proficiency?

Teachers in Australia are accredited against these Professional Teaching Standards at four career stages:

- Graduate Teacher (the standards to be met by graduates of approved courses of teacher education)
- Proficient (mandatory accreditation, following a period of initial practice as a teacher)
- Highly Accomplished (voluntary accreditation to provide a focus for ongoing development as a practising teacher)
- Lead (voluntary accreditation, recognising teaching excellence).

Each of these levels of proficiency has a certain set of standards that you must achieve. You can find the statements setting out the standards for each career stage at http://www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au.

As a graduate teacher your supervising teacher or mentor will assist you in the process of applying for accreditation.

Who is responsible for the Teacher Standards?

Australia is moving towards a common set of national professional teaching standards. These represent a contemporary view of teaching practice throughout Australia. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership is responsible for the development of the new National Professional Standards for Teachers. The Institute's website is http://www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au

Prior to this, individual states and territories were responsible for developing and implementing teacher standards and accreditation. For instance, the NSW Institute of Teachers was responsible for developing teacher standards in that state.

Transition to the National Professional Standards for Teachers for mandatory levels of accreditation will occur in NSW during 2013 and 2014.

Continuing Professional Development

As teachers you are required to continually upgrade your knowledge and skills. There are many opportunities for teachers to participate in ongoing professional learning that will count towards courses completed for accreditation. Professional development programs are available through your employer, teaching associations, your university alumni newsletter and universities.

Education Knowledge Network

Outcomes:

The UWS Education Knowledge Network offers courses for teachers, students and parents that focus on many aspects of teaching and learning. These courses are recognised by the New South Wales Institute of Teachers with UWS being an endorsed provider of professional development for the maintenance of accreditation at Proficient level. The scope of Endorsement includes all elements of the Professional Teaching Standards at this level.

Information regarding the EKN program can be found at
http://www.uws.edu.au/education/soe/education_knowledge_network

You can link your Professional Learning Program to the UWS Master of Education (Leadership). The Education Knowledge Network can now partially fulfil the requirements for units of study in this program.

Accreditation and the National Professional Teacher Standards

Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Professional Engagement

Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Know the content and how to teach it

Know students and how they learn

Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Financial Literacy for Early Career Teachers

Increasing your understanding of financial concepts will help you to make smart financial decisions.

As a new teacher you are beginning a career which has required extensive training for work in the classroom and as part of the school community. On a personal level, there is another area in which you should increase your knowledge and skills – financial literacy.

The beginning of your teaching career is a time when you should consider:

- Your current and future financial needs, for example saving to buy a house or a car
- What you can and can't claim on your taxation return
- Your superannuation.

What is financial literacy?

Financial literacy is having sufficient understanding of financial concepts to make effective decisions about the management of money.

Managing your finances can be difficult to navigate, due to the range of products and services on the market, your future retirement needs, and importantly, compulsory superannuation. Therefore, having a good awareness is essential. This section will help you get to grips with some of the key issues.

Financial literacy can be divided into two areas – **financial knowledge** and the **skills** to use it.

You need **financial knowledge** to:

- Manage your income and expenditure
- Manage your savings and debt
- Understand how daily expenses such as rent, mortgage payments, utility bills or insurances affect your finances
- Understand how to access funds and all the tools and products available to you – such as internet banking and credit cards
- Understand consumer rights and responsibilities
- Understand the more complex elements of investment, such as prospectuses, compound interest calculations, high risk investments and diversification
- Ensure your financial decisions take into account your anticipated retirement needs.

The **skills and attributes** required to use this knowledge are generic. You need to be:

- Willing to increase your knowledge about financial products and services
- Able to analyse your situation critically to assess how best to achieve your financial needs and goals
- Able to communicate your needs clearly to ensure they are met
- Able to assess financial records
- Willing to seek financial advice when needed.

How can I improve my understanding?

Speak to people you know who have good money management skills or enrol in a course run by reputable organisations like your local community education college. Read the personal finance pages in your local paper or online, or check out websites like the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) consumer website (*www.asic.gov.au*), or consumer publications like Choice. Some websites exist especially to compare financial products, such as *www.InfoChoice.com.au*.

Always read the fine print for financial products, such as credit cards, and contracts before you sign. Be sure you understand the terms and conditions and look for any hidden charges or criteria.

The Australian Government and a number of organisations including ASIC and the Financial Literacy Foundation are actively contributing to increasing financial literacy. Each has identified a number of key concepts as essential learning to improve financial literacy. Generally these are a combination of:

» Mathematical literacy
» Basic money management skills
» An understanding of financial products, and
» Knowledge of consumer rights and responsibilities.

A simple internet search using the words “Financial Literacy Australia” will locate government and financial industry sites which provide services, free of charge, that help to improve financial literacy.

Setting Financial Goals

It’s a good idea to choose and follow a path towards long-term financial goals. As with anything else in life, without financial goals and specific plans for meeting them, we drift along and leave our future to chance. A wise man once said: “most people don’t plan to fail; they just fail to plan.”

Short-term goals

Short-term goals should take no more than about one year to achieve.
For example:

» Reducing your credit card debt and the amount of credit you use
» Cutting your spending by $100 a month (for example, by making coffee at school rather than buying takeaways).

Medium-term goals

Medium-term goals are stepping stones that will help you achieve your long-term goals.
For example:

» Saving a deposit for a home
» Completing further professional development or training courses.

Long-term goals

Long term goals may include:

» Saving enough money to put your children through university
» Buying a holiday home
» Retiring at 65.

Careful planning and follow-through are required if you want those goals to eventuate.
With the right strategy, meeting your financial goals can be easy and stress-free.

Some tips:

» Be specific – it is very difficult to reach your goals if you are not specific about them
» Be realistic – aim for things that you can achieve with careful planning
» Divide your financial strategy into short-term, medium-term and long-term goals
» Make a plan to achieve each goal
» Revisit your goals regularly to monitor your progress.

Creating a budget

A good starting point for your financial strategy would be setting a budget for your current situation. This will allow you to keep track of where your money goes and show where you can improve, including how much you could save. To create an effective budget you will need to track your expenses. Be realistic and honest. If you can do this for a longer period, such as three months, you will get a better idea of how you use your money. You will need to:

- Gather all your financial records – bank statements, rent receipts, utility bills etc
- Record all your monthly income (use your net – after tax – income)
- Work out what your monthly expenses are for essential and non-essential items. Some of these expenses may be fixed (i.e. rent) while others may be variable (i.e. food, electricity). Include, for example:
  - Rent or mortgage
  - Insurances
  - Utilities like water, electricity, phone
  - Loan repayments and credit card payments
  - Child care
  - Home maintenance
  - Car expenses and maintenance
  - Other transport costs
  - Medical expenses
  - Food
  - Clothes
  - Books, internet services
  - Hobbies
  - Children's school needs, toys etc
  - Entertainment
  - Gifts
  - Sport
  - Other leisure activities
- List who you are paying the money to
- List everything you spend on a daily basis (keep receipts)
- Track what you pay cash for and what you charge to credit
- Be honest about the things you buy that you don't really need – these could be highlighted
- Total your monthly income and expenses (hopefully your income exceeds your expenses)
- Make adjustments to your expenses – work out what you don't need, how you are wasting money, how you can save money
- Work out a set amount that you can save towards one of your goals
- Review your budget monthly.

Taxation Returns and Keeping Records

Do you have the appropriate financial documents to support your claims at tax time? You need to keep financial records:

- As evidence of your income and expenses
- To assist in the preparation of your tax return
- To ensure that you claim all you are entitled to claim.

The Australian Taxation Office (*www.ato.gov.au*) provides detailed information on how long you should keep specific records, however as a general rule it advises that you keep written evidence of your claims for five years.

Teachers may be able to claim the following:

- Conferences, seminars and training courses
- Computers and software that are used for work-related purposes
- Out-of-pocket expenses for school excursions, school trips and camps
- Motor vehicle and travel expenses to work-related events
- Professional library
- Teaching aids

You must be able to substantiate your claims for deductions with written evidence if the total amount of deductions you are claiming is greater than $300. The records you keep must prove the total amount, not just the amount over $300. If the total amount you are claiming is $300 or less, you need to be able to show how you worked out your claims, but you do not need written evidence.
If you incurred an expense that was both work-related and private or domestic in nature, you can claim a deduction only for the work-related portion of the expense.

If you received an allowance (for example, for equipment or travel) that is included in your annual income for taxation purposes, you may be able to claim a deduction for the expenses covered by the allowance, but only to the extent that you actually incurred those expenses. That is, if you received an allowance of $500 and your expenses were $300, you can only claim the $300 as a deduction

Refer to your registered tax agent and the Australian Taxation Office website for more detailed information.

Questions that might be asked

Do you have appropriate documentation to support motor vehicle and travel expenses?
For example, have you maintained a travel diary to support travel that is six days or more? Has a correctly compiled log book been kept where the 'log book method' has been used to claim work-related car expenses? Do you satisfy the relevant conditions in order to claim a tax deduction for motor vehicle expenses where you have been carrying bulky equipment?

Have you considered the rules with respect to claiming home office, a proportion of electricity costs when home office is used, mobile phone and internet expenses?
For example, mobile phone expenses will need to be calculated with regard to itemised accounts, noting work and non-work related calls against total cost (even if the fees are capped). If you are claiming home office expenses, has a distinction been drawn between a home office which is merely used as a convenient location to carry out particular duties and a home office which would be considered a place of business?

Remember, tax laws change often, so it is wise to check the current situation with the ATO or your registered tax agent.

Questions you may want to ask

I have had to pay for child care during the year. Is this claimable on my tax return?
These expenses are not claimable as a tax deduction. Eligible taxpayers may be able to claim the 30% Child Care Tax Rebate.

I am expected to maintain a well groomed appearance. Can I claim these expenses?
Expenditure on personal grooming and haircuts are generally not deductible. There are exceptions for taxpayers in the performing arts fields.

Can I claim fees paid to my tax agent?
Fees paid to a registered tax agent for preparation of your return, amendments and generally handling your tax matters are all deductible. You can also claim travel to your registered tax agent. Registered tax agents are the only people legally able to charge for the preparation of tax returns.

I buy tea towels from a charity each year when they ring me. Can I claim them?
No. You are receiving something for the money expended. This is considered to be a purchase not a donation. The same applies to the purchase of raffle tickets.

Is there a limit on how much I can claim as a tax deduction each year?
There is no limit on the amount claimed each year. The expenditure must be work-related and you may need receipts to substantiate the expenditure. Keeping incomplete, incorrect or no records at all may be limiting your ability to claim deductions. If in doubt about a claim, seek advice from a registered tax agent.

The Australian Taxation Office does occasionally target specific occupations for more intense scrutiny of taxation returns and claims from people working in those occupations. So honesty is the best policy when making claims for deductions.

Superannuation

Background

Superannuation was introduced in Australia in 1992 by the then Labor Government. The compulsory "Superannuation Guarantee" system was part of a major reform package to address issues arising from Australia's anticipated major demographic shift (ageing population) in the coming decades. The combination of an ageing population and the anticipated increases in age pension payments would place an unaffordable strain on the Australian government's general revenue, the economy and working Australians. The reform package was a "three pillars" approach to retirement income:

- A safety net consisting of a means-tested government age pension system
- Private savings generated through compulsory employer and employee contributions to superannuation
- Voluntary savings through superannuation and other investments

The Superannuation System

Superannuation is an investment designed to provide money for your retirement. Most people start contributing to superannuation when they start work. Employers make mandatory contributions to superannuation on each employee's behalf, currently a minimum of 9% of the employee's wages. This contribution is called the Superannuation Guarantee. Your superannuation contribution is currently taxed at a generous rate of 15%. Your superannuation fund manager aims to increase your superannuation savings by investing your contributions into a number of wealth-creating assets (such as shares, property trusts, government securities and cash).

Information on superannuation can be found on many different web sites including:

- Australian Taxation Office website, search for 'superannuation for individuals'
- The default super fund through your employer, for example, First State Super *http://www.firststatesuper.com.au/*

Sites such as the above offer information on your entitlement to super contributions, how to build and keep track of your super and how and when benefits are paid.

There are two main kinds of superannuation fund:

Defined benefit funds – the value of your retirement benefit is defined by a set formula which, for example, may take into account your length of service and age at retirement. Defined benefit funds used to be common in the public sector. They are also used by some large companies.

Although there are still some existing defined benefit funds, it is difficult to join a defined benefit fund today.

Accumulation funds – your retirement benefit depends on how much you accumulate over your working life, this is the money paid into the fund plus investment earnings, less any administrative expenses and costs.

There are a number of different types of accumulation super funds. Your fund will fall into one of these categories:

- Industry Funds
- Corporate Funds
- Retail Funds
- Public sector (government) funds
- Self-managed or DIY Funds

Most employees have the right to choose to which fund they will contribute. However, some industrial awards and enterprise agreements specify the superannuation fund into which employees' contributions are to be paid. Your employer will pay the mandatory superannuation contribution on your behalf to the fund of your choice or the employer default fund. You can find out more about the Superannuation Guarantee from the Australian Taxation Office.

Personal / Extra contributions

Under the third pillar of the Australian Retirement System, you can choose to top up your superannuation savings out of your own pocket. There are two types of additional contributions you can make:

- After tax contributions (from your net income), and
- Salary sacrifice (before tax).

Salary Sacrifice

A salary sacrifice arrangement is commonly referred to as salary packaging or total remuneration packaging. The employee agrees to forgo part of his or her current salary or wages in return for the employer providing him or her with benefits of a similar value (for instance contributing the equivalent of that benefit to the employee's superannuation account).

The government has also introduced a number of initiatives to make contributing extra amounts to super more attractive.

Government co-contribution

This is an initiative which encourages low or middle income earners to make extra contributions to their superannuation and boost their savings. The Australian Taxation Office calculates your eligibility to receive the co-contribution based on your tax return and information from your super fund.

If you are eligible, you may be able to receive the super co-contribution from the government by making additional personal super contributions to your complying fund or retirement savings account (RSA).

Spouse/partner's superannuation

It is also possible to contribute to your spouse's or partner's superannuation. You may be able to claim a tax offset if your spouse/partner earns no income or has a low income.

There is a lot to think about if you are considering making personal or extra contributions to your own or your spouse superannuation. It pays to find out as much as you can.

Accessing your superannuation prior to retirement

ASIC and the Australian Taxation Office have issued warnings about illegal schemes that offer early access to your superannuation.

For information on how you can legally have early access to your superannuation, for example in the event of a terminal medical condition, please contact the Australian Taxation Office or visit its website.

It is important to seek professional financial advice in relation to your own specific financial situation. Tax laws change often and this guide can only provide you with a very general idea of the things you need to learn more about. Always check the current laws with a taxation professional.

UWS Contacts

UWS Alumni

Alumni Services will facilitate your ongoing involvement in the University community. Part of its role is to create a series of networks, provide a diverse range of activities, services and opportunities to reconnect with former colleagues and other graduates.

Graduates of the University of Western Sydney, whether they are in Greater Western Sydney, Australia or around the world, continue to make an impact in their communities and in their working lives. Each and every day UWS graduates are bringing knowledge to life.

For more information on UWS Alumni, visit any of the following websites:

New Alumni	*http://www.uws.edu.au/alumni/graduations*
UWS Alumni Latest News and Events	*http://www.uws.edu.au/alumni/events_and_latest_news*
Keep in Touch and Alumni Memberships	*http://www.uws.edu.au/alumni/keepingintouch*
GradLife and Alumni Benefits	*http://www.uws.edu.au/alumni/gradlife*
Alumni Chapters	*http://www.uws.edu.au/alumni/chapters*

Education Knowledge Network

A full program of innovative one day and school based professional learning courses has been developed with input from teachers, schools, DET and CEO and University advisors. These courses have been designed to support teachers in their personal development and learning in a practical, stimulating and pertinent way. All courses have a practical as well as theoretical basis. The Education Knowledge Network is a NSW Institute of Teachers endorsed provider, all EKN professional learning courses are endorsed at a professional competence level.

For more information on the Education Knowledge Network and current courses, see *http://www.uws.edu.au/education/soe/education_knowledge_network*

UWS Contact Service Centre

The Contact Service Centre (CSC) is a 25-seat call centre which employs current UWS students to service course information enquiries from prospective students via phone, email and web. The CSC services more than 120,000 phone calls per year, responds to over 16,000 emails per year and produces daily mail outs of course information packages of approximately 12,000 per year.

For prospective student enquires call 1300 897 669 or email *study@uws.edu.au*

General Enquiries

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