



Professional Experience Requirements (All Programs)

The following requirements guide and inform the Faculty of Education Professional Experience Programs.

Enquiries should be directed to the Professional Experience Centre via email as follows:

- Earlychildhood.placements@scu.edu.au
- School.placements@scu.edu.au
- FoEAdmin.placements@scu.edu.au

ECE - Early Childhood Education
PEx – Professional Experience

PST – Pre-Service Teacher
PEC – Professional Experience Centre

PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENT

As a condition of any type of PEx – including placement, volunteering, laboratory work, research, or community-engaged learning – PSTs are required to provide evidence of compliance and health protection before participating in any of these activities. Note:

- a. **Student compliance is a mandatory, legislative and regulatory requirement;**
- b. To be able to attend placement, students must be compliant; and
- c. Students must meet the requirements of both Southern Cross University and the external organisation. This will ensure the safety of students and others.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 PEx placements (referred to as “placements”) will be negotiated with the site by the PEx Centre. PSTs should not contact sites to negotiate their own placements as this is in opposition to the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and Southern Cross University guidelines.
- 1.2 PSTs are not permitted to request specific site placements.
- 1.3 Pre-service teachers are not permitted to be paid whilst undertaking a PEx placement.
- 1.4 The following exceptions apply to 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3:
 - a. ECE workplace placement (refer to PEx Student Centre)
 - b. NESA Conditional Accreditation Final placement (Refer to PEx Student Centre)
 - c. QCT Permission to Teach Final placement (Refer to PEx Student Centre).
- 1.5 While every effort is made to place PSTs as close to their residential address as possible, at times, the lack of available sites may mean that significant travel to and from a placement will be required. This is especially true in large metropolitan areas, where placements are competitive or in remote areas where sites are few.
- 1.6 The PEx calendar will be made available late in the previous year. **It is the PST’s responsibility** to become familiar with the PEx calendar for the year in which they will be undertaking their placement. Please note that PSTs must be available for all placement days in the scheduled format for the PEx unit in which they are enrolled.
- 1.7 **It is the PST’s responsibility** to become familiar with the Mandatory Check Due Dates for the relevant PEx unit. Refer to PEx Student Centre.
- 1.8 PSTs who vary their study plan, take leave or undertake an overseas exchange that impacts a placement need to be aware that this may impact their course completion date.
- 1.9 **It is the PST’s responsibility** to check the PEx Student Centre Blackboard Site and SONIA Online regularly for updated information regarding placement and associated PEx information.
- 1.10 **PSTs are responsible for** ensuring their Immersion Logs, and Interim and Final reports are submitted through Sonia Online by all required parties.
- 1.11 Once a PEx report has been finalised by the Unit Assessor **it is the PST’s responsibility** to keep the original in a safe place.
- 1.12 PSTs should wear suitable SCU identification on placement and dress professionally. It is also appropriate for PSTs to wear a name badge provided to them by the placement site.

- 1.13 Non-mandatory SCU Faculty of Education polo shirts for placements are available for purchase through the School Locker Website.
- 1.14 PSTs must be willing to make their own travel and accommodation arrangements (if required) and cover all associated costs associated with their placement.
- 1.15 PSTs must be familiar with and adhere to site (school or service) policies and procedures during placement.
- 1.16 PSTs undertaking placements in school settings, must complete placements in at least two different schools, unless there is a specific program or requirement.
- 1.17 Placement sites will be released to PSTs prior to the commencement of the placement.
- 1.18 **PSTs are responsible** for contacting their placement site before commencing their placement. This is for reasons of WHS and induction. Not doing so may result in the placement being withdrawn.
- 1.19 **PSTs must take responsibility** for being informed of site/state requirements and ensure that they are eligible to undertake a placement regarding that state's policies and procedures.
- 1.20 PSTs must check their SCU email regularly for communication and instructions from the PEx Centre.
- 1.21 Permission to undertake a placement will always be at the discretion of the Director PEx in consultation with the Faculty of Education Executive Dean.

2. ENROLMENT INTO PEx UNITS

- 2.1 **PSTs are responsible for enrolling into their PEx units as early as possible** for the year. Leaving enrolment to the last moment will have implications on the timing of placement.
- 2.2 It is recommended that PSTs NOT enrol in any other units in the same Term as their PEx unit, unless there is a PEx co-requisite unit, or a PST's personal course progression requires this.
- 2.3 Engagement with pre-placement residential/workshops is required. Mandatory attendance and a gatekeeping assessment task may be implicated. Refer to the relevant PEx Unit site for details.

3. PSTs WITH SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 PSTs who are registered with Student Equity and Inclusion and who have any concerns about their placement must contact the PEx Centre. Refer to the University's Inherent Requirements <https://www.scu.edu.au/engage/student-equity-and-inclusion/inclusion-services/inherent-requirements/>.
- 3.2 A student may be deemed unsuitable for professional experience if there are concerns about their ability to safely and effectively participate in a professional experience activity, either before the activity commences or during it. The Faculty's Fit for Practice guidelines are to be followed – refer to separate document for details.
- 3.3 Further, if PSTs have concerns about their ability to undertake their placement and fulfil their full range of duties, they should obtain medical advice and notify the Director, Professional Experience. Refer to the University's Inherent Requirements <https://www.scu.edu.au/engage/student-equity-and-inclusion/inclusion-services/inherent-requirements/>
- 3.4 PSTs who are pregnant or have a pre-existing medical condition are required to indicate this on their placement form.
- 3.5 PSTs must notify the PEx Centre if they are aware that their work performance or conduct in placement sites could be adversely affected as a result of taking a prescribed drug. Their designated placement site may also have to be informed if the prescribed medication may impact a PST's placement.
- 3.6 Support is offered through SCU's Student Equity and Inclusion <https://www.scu.edu.au/engage/student-equity-and-inclusion/>

4. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 4.1 Placements must not be undertaken in a site where a PST has a conflict of interest. Examples of conflict of interest include but are not limited to, the following. A site:
 - a. which is their place of employment (excluding Early Childhood Workplace Placements, Conditional Accreditation Placements and Permission to Teach Placements)
 - b. where they have close relatives attending, employed or working at the site (e.g. partner, parent, sibling, child)
 - c. where they are a member or have a close relative on the site's board.
 - d. where they are the owner or director of a childcare centre.
 - e. where they have a close relative who is the owner or director of a childcare centre.
- 4.2 **PSTs are responsible for declaring any sites where they have a Conflict of Interest** to the PEx Centre. Conflicts of interest are declared on the Placement Form required for each placement.

- 4.3 PSTs must immediately disclose to the PEx Centre if they have been placed in a site where they have a conflict of interest. Not doing so may result in a deferred placement or a Fail Grade.
- 4.4 The Director PEx, in consultation with the PEx Centre, reserves the right to withdraw a placement should a PST fail to disclose a conflict of interest.

5. TIMING OF PLACEMENTS

- 5.1. Placements must be undertaken during a scheduled placement period.
- 5.2. International PSTs must undertake their placement in a full-time block format (5 days a week) regardless of their visa status.
- 5.3. If a PST is unable to undertake a placement in the approved scheduled placement period for that unit, they must withdraw from the unit and re-enrol when the unit is available, and they can commit to completing the placement.

6. PLACEMENT ADJUSTMENT APPLICATIONS

- 6.1. All placements must be undertaken in the scheduled placement period. If a PST has extenuating circumstances that preclude them from the placement period, they must complete a Placement Adjustment Application for review by the PEx Committee. Placement Adjustment Applications are available for students to download through the 'Forms' Tab of SONIA Online. Supporting documentation must be provided.
- 6.2. Placement Adjustment Applications must meet the following grounds for placement adjustment to be considered for approval:
 - a. health (including impacts of religious fasting)
 - b. compassionate circumstances
 - c. religious observances or celebrations
 - d. serious unforeseen personal events
 - e. selection in State, National or International sporting or cultural events
 - f. rendering genuine and unforeseen emergency service in a professional or voluntary capacity
 - g. rendering any service (including undertaking training) in the Defence Reserves.
 - h. Termination of placement
- 6.3. The following circumstances are not grounds for placement adjustment:
 - a. Weddings
 - b. Holidays
 - c. Childcare
 - d. Work commitments
 - e. Transport issues
- 6.4. Submission of Placement Adjustment Application and supporting documentation does not guarantee that placement adjustment will be granted.
- 6.5. Deferred placements not completed in the approved timeframe will receive a Fail grade for the PEx unit. PSTs may re-enrol when the unit is next available.

7. LOCATION OF PLACEMENTS

- 7.1 **It is the PST's responsibility to** keep their address updated in 'MyEnrolment', ensuring they have identified their 'Preferred' address.
- 7.2 PSTs will be placed according to their 'Preferred' address in MyEnrolment. The 'Preferred' address imports into the SONIA Placement Database. It may impact a PST's placement if they relocate after submitting their Placement form.
- 7.3 PSTs must contact the PEx Centre if they think they may need to move before a placement commencing, to discuss this possibility and advise of the revised location.
- 7.4 If PSTs are considering an international placement, they must first contact the PEx Centre via educationplacements@scu.edu.au to check eligibility.

8. MANDATORY PLACEMENT CHECKS (MPCs)

- 8.1. **It is the PST's responsibility to be deemed compliant with their mandatory placement checks**, ensuring they have submitted all mandatory placement check documents to SONIA Online by the published due date. If MPCs are not submitted by the due date, placement will be deferred to the designated deferred placement period (which may have course progression implications).
- 8.2. Mandatory placement check documents must be submitted for each and every placement.

- 8.3. **It is the PST's responsibility to know** the due dates for their MPCs. Due dates are available on the PEx Student Centre.
- 8.4. If a PST fails to complete their MPCs by the published due date, placement will be deferred to the designated deferred placement period. However, this option is only available once. Consequently, PSTs who do not complete the MPCs twice will Fail the unit.

9. CHILD PROTECTION

- 9.1. To be eligible for placement, PSTs must complete the relevant child protection training for the state where they are undertaking placement. Please refer to the PEx Student Centre for further information and the weblink to the accepted training module for PSTs.
- 9.2. All PSTs must also ensure they comply with the working with children legislation requirements of the State/Country where their placement is occurring.
- 9.3. PSTs must provide evidence to the PEx Centre via SONIA Online by the published due date, that they have applied/met the legislation requirements of the relevant State/Country to be eligible to undertake placement. Please note that a Working with Children Check can take an extended period of time, so PSTs should commence the process early to prevent it from impacting placement.
- 9.4. It is mandatory that PSTs residing in close proximity to the NSW/QLD border (within postcodes 2484 to 2490 and 4217 to 4230) are required to have both a valid QLD Blue Card and NSW Working with Children Check. This is a non-negotiable requirement.
- 9.5. If a PST is accused of a legal matter pertaining to child protection, the PST will be withdrawn from the placement immediately until the matter is investigated. If a PST is deemed guilty of the offence, the PST will receive a Fail grade for the placement and hence the PEx unit. The relevant authorities will then deal with this matter.

10. ANAPHYLAXIS TRAINING

- 10.1. It is a requirement that all PSTs are trained in anaphylaxis management before they undertake any placements. Please refer to the PEx Student Centre for further information and the weblink to the accepted training module for PSTs.

11. LITERACY AND NUMERACY TEST FOR INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (LANTITE)

- 11.1. All PSTs enrolled in the Faculty of Education at Southern Cross University must complete the LANTITE. This excludes students enrolled in the Graduate Diploma of Education (Early Childhood) and Master of Teaching (Early Childhood).
- 11.2. PSTs are expected to attempt the test before the end of the first year of their Australian ITE degree qualification, unless they have already sat both components of the test and have met the standard.
- 11.3. PSTs are required to complete and pass the LANTITE before their final professional experience unit. For further information on the LANTITE please refer to the Faculty of Education Website.

12. CODE OF CONDUCT

- 12.1. **It is the PST's responsibility** to comply with the standards and expectations as detailed in the Southern Cross University, Faculty of Education Code of Conduct whilst on placement, regardless of the jurisdiction or site in which they are placed.
- 12.2. A breach of the Code of Conduct whilst on placement may lead to a termination of the PST's placement, by either the placement site or the University, resulting in a Fail grade for the PEx unit and potentially exclusion from the Course and the University.
- 12.3. PSTs must submit a Code of Conduct Declaration as part of their PST Placement Agreement (it is one of the mandatory placement checks). Failure to do so will prevent the PST from participating in any placements.
- 12.4. As part of their course's professional requirements, PSTs must address all PEx Staff, including the Director PEx, professionally at all times in all interactions.

13. ATTENDANCE

- 13.1. PSTs must attend all scheduled placement days and be present for the whole day. Placements in school settings must be undertaken in a full-time block format (5 days a week) to meet NESA accreditation requirements.
- 13.2. If an absence occurs due to illness or misadventure, **it is the PST's responsibility** to inform the site of their absence as early as possible and make up the days missed at the end of the current placement. **It**

is also the PST's responsibility to complete and submit the "Make-up Day" form, available in the Forms Tab of SONIA Online.

- 13.3. If a PST is absent during their placement for two or less consecutive days, they will be required to complete and submit a "Make-up Day" form; no medical certificate is required.
- 13.4. If a PST is absent during their placement for three to five consecutive days, they are required to complete and submit a "Make-up Day" form and provide a medical certificate as supporting documentation.
- 13.5. If a PST is absent from their placement for more than five consecutive days, they are required to complete and submit a "Make-up Day" form and provide a medical certificate as supporting documentation. The continuance of the placement will then be assessed by the University Placement Adviser (UPA) in consultation with the Site/University Liaison Officer (SULO), placement site and the PST.
- 13.6. PSTs who have unexplained absences from their placement site and have not had an approved Placement Adjustment Application or submitted a Make-up Day Form will be deemed to have abandoned the placement. This will result in a Fail grade for the placement and the PEx unit.
- 13.7. All PSTs must adhere to the arrival and departure times specified by the site. Normally, PSTs would be present at least 30 minutes before the start of the site day and be available for various commitments for at least 30 minutes at the end of the day.
- 13.8. PSTs are required to make themselves available for after-hours staff meetings and any after-hours duties.

14. PART-TIME PLACEMENTS (ECE Placements Only)

- 14.1. ACECQA and SCU allow placements to be undertaken in a part-time capacity in early childhood settings only. The attendance pattern is required to be a minimum of three days a week, with the same three days each week. International students, however, must complete their placements in a full-time block (5 days a week, 7.5 hrs per day) regardless of their visa status.
- 14.2. Part-time placements must be completed by a specific end date, unless approval is received through Placement Adjustment.

15. PSTs WHO SELF-WITHDRAW FROM PLACEMENT

- 15.1. If a PST self-withdraws from a placement due to special circumstances, **it is the PST's responsibility to submit a Placement Adjustment Application within 10 working days** of withdrawing from the placement. The University's Rule 3.4 Grounds for Special Consideration are:
 - a. health (including impacts of religious fasting)
 - b. compassionate circumstances
 - c. religious observances or celebrations
 - d. serious unforeseen personal events
 - e. selection in State, National or International sporting or cultural events
 - f. rendering genuine and unforeseen emergency service in a professional or volunteer capacity
 - g. rendering any service (including undertaking training) in the Defence Reserves.
- 15.2. If a PST submits a Placement Adjustment Application and is approved for a second attempt at the placement, they will be granted a deferred placement to the designated deferred placement period. However, this option is only available once. Consequently, PSTs who self-withdraw from placement a second time will receive a Fail grade for the unit.
- 15.3. PSTs who do not submit a Placement Adjustment Application (along with appropriate supporting documentation) within 10 working days will receive a Fail grade for the placement and hence the PEx unit.

16. EXCURSIONS/SCHOOL CAMPS

- 16.1. PSTs undertaking placements are covered by the University's travel, personal accident, public liability and professional indemnity insurance, provided the placement is undertaken as part of an approved course or unit.
- 16.2. SCU Policy does not cover excursions undertaken outside of a placement.
- 16.3. PSTs who are requested to attend an excursion that is more than one day in length whilst undertaking their placement, are required to:
 - a. complete the "Notification of School Camp/Excursion during PEx Placement" form available in the Forms section of SONIA Online.

- b. Inform their University Placement Adviser (UPA) of the excursion/school camp details.

17. INCIDENT AND HAZARD REPORTING

- 17.1. If a PST is injured whilst undertaking their placement, an Incident/Hazard Report must be submitted online within 24 hours of the incident. The Incident Accident and Hazard Online Report weblink can be found on the PEx Student Centre in the 'Forms' section and on the <https://www.scu.edu.au/education/education-profession/professional-experience/>
- 17.2. Incidents and Hazards can be reported two different ways:
 - a. Through 'RiskWare' online management system. Link provided: <https://www.scu.edu.au/staff/hr-services/workplace-health-and-safety/reporting-an-incident-or-hazard/> or
 - b. RiskWare pocketSafety mobile application. Simply download the pocketSafety app onto your mobile device.
- 17.3. In addition, PSTs must complete the incident report normally used by the site where they are placed.

18. PSTs AT RISK POLICY

- 18.1. When a PST is deemed to be at risk of not meeting the requirements of a placement, the PST may be provided with a Developmental Support Plan (DSP). The DSP can be given to the PST at any time during the placement. If the PST fails to meet the requirements of the DSP they will receive a Fail grade for the placement and hence the unit. For further information, please refer to the PEx Handbook "At Risk Policy" section.

19. EXCLUSION

- 19.1. Under the University's Exclusion Rule 2.10 (119), the University will issue a Warning Notification to students where they have (a) failed compulsory PEx or fieldwork requirements of the course.
- 19.2. Under the University's Exclusion Rule 2.10 (120), a student may be excluded from the University where they have (a) failed compulsory PEx or fieldwork requirements for the second time, either in the same or different unit.

20. SUPPORT OF YOUR PLACEMENT

- 20.1. The University engages staff to support PSTs before, during and after their placement. The roles of the support people are outlined in the PEx Handbook.
- 20.2. **It is the PST's responsibility to contact** their designated University Placement Adviser (UPA) at the commencement of their placement.
- 20.3. SCU also provides Counselling and Equity and Inclusion Services.
 - a. [Counselling Services](#): Phone 02 6626 9300 or Email counselling@scu.edu.au (Coffs Harbour, Lismore and Gold Coast campuses).
 - b. [Student Equity and Inclusion](#) (Email: inclusion@scu.edu.au, Phone 02 6626 9514.)
- 20.4. The [SCU Out-of-Hours Crisis Support Line](#) is also available after-hours. Phone: 1300 782 676 or text 0488 884 143.
- 20.5. At times, a PST's family, partner or friends may be able to offer personal support during the placement but specific information related to courses, placement processes or assessments should be referred to relevant staff in the Faculty of Education. Please note: The Faculty of Education cannot disclose any specific details related to the placement, and parents/carers are not to contact the school or early childhood setting on behalf of the PST. Concerns should be referred to the Faculty of Education which will then contact the relevant school/early childhood setting.