APLP PDPA

Partneriaeth Dysgu Proffesiynol **Yr Athrofa**
Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership

Trawsnewid Addysg Gyda'n Gilydd Transforming Teaching Together

APLP ITE Handbook 2026-7

Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Yr Athrofa
Centre *for* Education
Addysg i Gymru | Education for Wales

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes (both PGCE and BA) run by the University of Wales Trinity St David (UWTSD) through the Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP). Additional materials providing more detail and additional support are linked from this handbook, and all materials are available electronically.

The primary audience for this handbook is school-based teacher educators, those colleagues who are mentors, senior mentors and network leads, however it will also be helpful for student-teachers, university based teacher-educators as well as colleagues in the wider education sector and potential student-teachers as well.

For mentors, a digital copy of this handbook can be found on the APLP SharePoint at Handbooks & Guidance and www.athrofa.cymru/mentors

A Welsh copy is available on the APLP SharePoint at Llawlyfrau a Chanllawiau and www.athrofa.cymru/cy/mentoriad

For student-teachers, digital copies can be found on Moodle.

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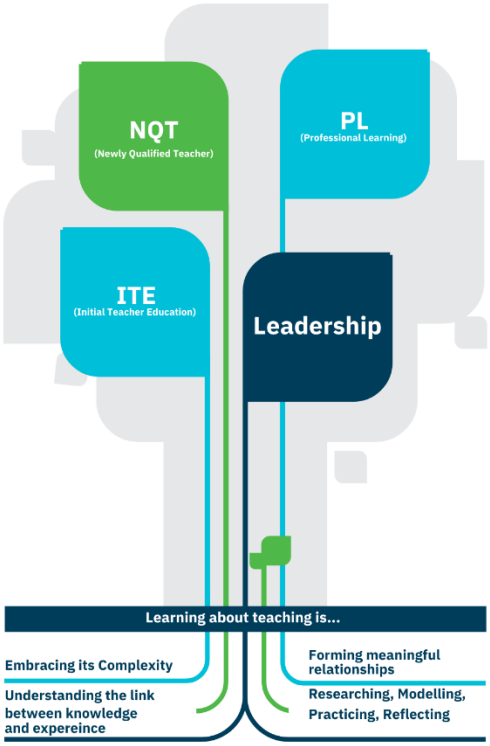
An introduction to the APLP

Yr Athrofa: Professional Learning Partnership (referred to throughout this document as the APLP) was launched in 2018 to prepare the next generation of teachers ready for a new curriculum in Wales. The APLP combines the expertise of the school sector and all its practical, hands-on experience with the expertise of the higher education (HE) sector, from the understanding of careful research design and delivery to the highly-skilled art of teaching teachers and would-be teachers. Our programmes were revised and reaccredited by the EWC for first delivery from September 2024.

The geographic spread of the APLP's component parts means that we look east and west and know rural and urban Wales. Proud of our heritage and the distinctive nature of the nation we serve, the APLP is unashamedly ambitious, drawing upon international best practice to inform our work at home and, vice versa, it is eager to share our expertise in both local and global classrooms. We work with over one-hundred and thirty schools across Wales, as shown in the image below:

The APLP is involved in supporting all stages of education throughout and beyond Wales, as shown in the stylised tree model below. The focus of this handbook is on ITE programmes. Please contact us for information about other opportunities, including bespoke accredited professional learning.



The partnership is governed and run in partnership between the University and our 14 Network Lead schools, and each of our partner schools works with one of these lead schools. For the academic year 2025-26 our Network Lead schools are:

- Bishop Gore School *(EM, Sec)*
- Cadle Primary School *(EM, Pri)*
- Cowbridge School *(EM, Pri/Sec)*
- Ebbw Fawr Learning Community *(EM, Pri/Sec)*
- Maes yr Haul Primary School *(EM, Prim)*
- Parkland Primary School *(EM, Prim)*
- Pembroke Dock Community School *(EM, Prim)*
- Pontarddulais Primary School *(EM, Prim)*
- Queen Elizabeth High School *(W/EM, Pri/Sec)*
- St. Thomas Community School *(EM, Prim)*
- The Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School *(EM, Pri/Sec)*

- Ysgol Bro Preseli *(WM, Pri/Sec)*
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Lon Las *(WM, Pri/Sec)*
- Ysgol Llanhari *(WM, Pri/Sec)*

(EM = English medium; WM = Welsh medium; W/EM = Bilingual Network; Pri = Primary Network; Sec = Secondary Network; Pri/Sec = Mixed Primary and Secondary Network)

The APLP model of initial teacher education (ITE) is transformative in essence. In our view, teachers who are transformative actively seek opportunities to gain new insights and use these to influence their own practice to enhance education in Wales and beyond.

Some of the of the key features of the Partnership's approach to ITE include:

- Student-teachers are placed in networks consisting of a Lead School and a number of Partner Schools;
- Student-teachers will engage in a range of activities and experiences that support critical thinking and shared reflection and identification of next steps for development, e.g. bridging;
- Assessment of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) will be shared between the school-based teacher educator and the university-based teacher educator;
- Networks are supported by a named University Tutor

The APLP SharePoint

All documents relating to the partnership can be found on our SharePoint site and Athrofa website

https://uowtsd.sharepoint.com/teams/PDPA-APLP/SitePages/Home.aspx

www.athrofa.cymru/mentors

Access to this is accessed using school based Microsoft accounts, rather than having an additional username and password. For most colleagues this will be their Hwb account.

New mentors can be granted access to SharePoint by completing this form - Cais am Fynediad i SharePoint Access Request (office.com)

This handbook contains a range of links to documents available on SharePoint. If you are attempting to access a specific document before logging into SharePoint, it may prompt you to request access. As a result, please ensure that you are logged in and can access the base level home page first, and then follow a document's hyperlink, it will enable you to view the document.

Student folders can be found within each Network folder below:

Bishop Gore School

Bishop of Llandaff CIWHS

Cadle Primary School

Cowbridge CS

Ebbw Fawr CL

Parkland Primary School

Pembroke Dock CS

Pontarddulais Primary School

QEHS

St Thomas PS

Ysgol Bro Preseli

Ysgol GG Lon Las

Ysgol Llanhari

Ysgol Maes yr Haul

The APLP ITE Programmes

The APLP offers both a three-year undergraduate BA Primary Education with QTS and a one year Postgraduate Certificate in Education with both primary and secondary pathways.

Core Curriculum

The two programmes share a common curriculum, with the BA students completing a spiral curriculum which revisits five core modules in more depth each year. These modules are:

- Leading the learning: What, how and why am I teaching?
- The learner: Who am I teaching?
- Learners, schools and communities: Where am I teaching?
- Researching the learning: What, how and why am I teaching?
- Welsh in Professional Practice

In addition, BA students complete a module focussed on the development of professional numeracy, literacy and digital competence in their first year. In their second and third years, they choose one 'deepening practice module' from the list below:

BA2

- Additional Learning Needs – Inclusive Practice
- Reading and Children's Literature
- Science and Technology
- Health and Wellbeing

BA3

- Additional Learning Needs – Role of the ALNCo
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Expressive Arts
- Humanities

Student-teachers from both programmes also take part in:

- a two-day 'phase swap' experience;
- an electives placement;
- a two-day alternative experience.

More details about these can be found on page 34.

Professional Teaching Practice

Each programme includes 120 days school placement in one of our partner schools. These placements are organised by Network Leads, and student-teachers are not expected to arrange their own placement.

PGCE

Student-teachers complete two placements. For student-teachers on the primary pathway, one will be in lower primary (reception to Yr 2) and one in upper primary (Yr 3 – Yr 6). These placements may be in either order.

BA

BA1 student-teachers complete a placement in lower primary.

BA2 student-teachers complete a placement in upper primary (Yr 3 – Yr 6)

BA3 student-teachers select a phase for their final placement

Dates for placement for all year groups can be found in the calendar - https://teamup.com/ksyu78okbjkw1h7vtc

Students must complete 120 days and demonstrate they have met the QTS standard of the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership in Wales (professional-standards-for-teaching-and-leadership-interactive-pdf-for-pc.pdf (gov.wales)).

Student-teachers may be asked to complete additional days beyond the published placement blocks in order to achieve this.

Bridging

The APLP model for bring together theory and practice is 'Bridging'. In this approach, student-teacher move through phases of 'meet', 'test' and 'share', with reflection stages between. This can be seen in the visual below:

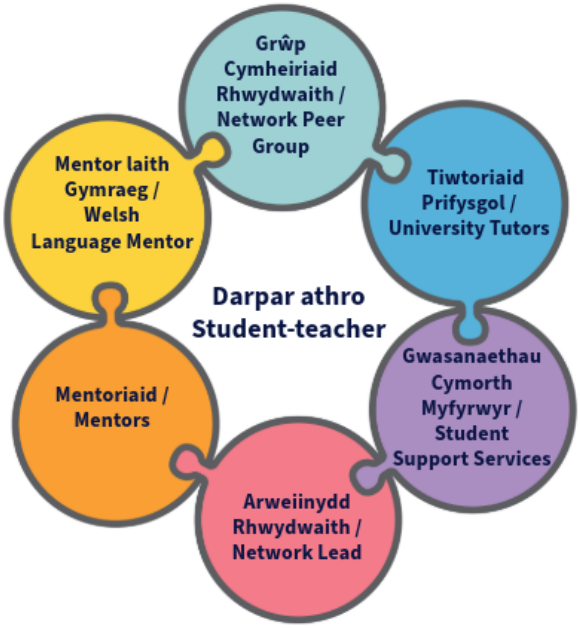
The approach for Bridging varies slightly between each year group, but in all cases it allows student-teachers to work with both school-based and university-based teacher-educators to consider one particular element of practice. This is sometimes (but not always) linked to an element of one of the taught modules.

The team around the student-teacher and supporting wellbeing

We recognise that at the same time as being a hugely rewarding profession, teaching is also extremely demanding, and that initial teacher education can be especially demanding. To support our student-teachers, the APLP operates a 'team around the student-teacher', which incorporates support for professional and academic progress as well as pastoral wellbeing.

This team has a flexible role in supporting different sets of competencies, e.g. being successful in the classroom, collating evidence for QTS, or developing research skills whilst offering pastoral support during more challenging times.

The 'team around the student-teacher' includes:



In order to develop confidence and self-reliance, student-teachers are expected to be pro-active in using the team around the student-teacher to solve problems and sustain their own wellbeing. However, we recognise that studying to be a teacher is challenging and that different levels of support are needed for individuals in different aspects of the programme. We understand that one-size-does-not-fit-all and our 'team around the student-teacher' has been designed with this in mind.

Who's who?

Due to the complex nature of partnership working, university and school-based teacher educators work together in a variety of roles to support student-teachers throughout their programmes. An overview of the roles and responsibilities has been provided below, with additional details available from page 41

School-based teacher educators

Network Lead:

A senior member of staff within the lead school with designated time for the development of the APLP. The Network Lead co-ordinates ITE activity, maintains good communication and feeds into quality assurance processes across the network.

Senior Mentor:

A senior member of the teaching staff who is responsible for co-ordinating Professional Teaching Experience (PTE) for a number of student-teachers in a partner school (within a network) and supports specific aspects of PTE, e.g. joint lesson observation, contingency process. The Senior Mentor is responsible for the QA of the provision within the partner school.

Class / Subject Mentor:

The first port of call during PTE who supports the student-teacher in collating evidence for QTS and becoming an independent teacher.

The Class/Subject Mentor supports the student teacher's subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge development.

Welsh Language Mentor:

A named person who can support the development of Welsh language skills within the school setting, and ensure that student-teachers are able to have the necessary experiences to collect evidence required for the Welsh Language Framework.

University-based teacher educators

Subject / Phase specialists with a teaching and research role in the university including supporting subject/AoLE expertise, the development of research skills and contributing to published work.

Within this broad heading, some colleagues will have specific roles, outlined below:

Bridging Link Tutor

A university-based teacher educator linked to a specific network to co-plan and co-deliver Bridging sessions at the Lead Network School.

Link Tutor

The Link Tutor ensures effective communication between the university and network schools. They are the Personal Tutor for Primary PGCE students, support Joint Review Visits and QTS Reviews for BA student-teachers, and attend Network meetings each half term. They monitor intervention processes and work with Network Leads to deliver quality assurance activities and the Bridging programme.

Personal Tutor

Each student teacher is allocated a personal tutor who will provide pastoral support throughout the programme. This will include weekly 'check-in' emails while on placement, and undertaking school visits and QTS reviews.

Programme Manager

Programme Managers oversee a specific cohort of students to ensure their academic and professional success. They oversee attendance and work with student reps to ensure that the programmes run coherently. Contact details can be found on page 48

Supporting student-teacher wellbeing

We encourage student-teachers to take a proactive approach to supporting their own wellbeing. This is not only an important aspect of successful completion of any ITE programme, but of career sustainability in the longer term.

To support this, the university team support the '25SS' approach to email communication – we ask for up to two working days to deal with emails (although we aim to reply as quickly as we can), no emails are sent after 5pm, an no emails are sent on a Saturday and Sunday.

In addition, student-teacher receive a range of tools and support to manage their own wellbeing, including advice on time-management and access to a range of university tools and services outlined below. We make use of the analogy of the 'stress bucket' to help students think about their own levels of stress and wellbeing, and provide a vocabulary to help them discuss it. You can find more details about this approach here.

We encourage student-teachers on placement to continue this proactive approach to managing their resilience and wellbeing, and we encourage mentors to discuss this with them as part of their regular meetings. In addition, personal tutors will send a weekly 'check-in' email to student-teachers while on placement. This helps to provide a continuity of support across the programme.

If you have concerns about the well-being of a student teacher on placement, please act sooner rather than later. Examples of issues with wellbeing might be shown by:

- Low mood or persistent sadness;
- Loss of interest or appetite;
- Fatigue or low energy;
- Poor concentration;
- Low self-confidence or self-deprecating comments;
- Agitation or slowing of movements.

This is not a definitive list and any change in behaviour which gives cause for concern should be acted upon.

Please note that once you have notified us, you may be asked refer the student-teacher to UWTSD Student Services team if there are concerns about a student's behaviour, safety, or overall situation, using the 'cause for concern' form. This is submitted to the Student Services team who will triage accordingly. Wherever possible, partners are encouraged to fill out this form together with the student and share their concerns with them at the earliest opportunity.

https://live.uniticms.com/uwtsd/register/?form=welfare

Student-teachers have access to a wide range of additional support services via the UWTSD Student Services team. These include:

All UWTSD students are introduced to 'Togetherall'**, a 24/7 access online mental health support resource** used across the higher education (HE) sector. The service ensures all students can get support as they need it and empowers them to improve their wellbeing by taking an active approach to improving mental health.

Togetherall offers:

- 24/7 online support, meaning support is not dependant on campus access;
- Structured self-administered courses that promote mental wellness;
- Peer support and networks monitored by mental health professionals.

How to refer students:

- Students can sign up using their UWTSD email address;
- They just need to visit www.togetherall.com and register;
- Once registered they create an anonymous username and can make use of the resources.

More about the service is available online via the organisation's website.

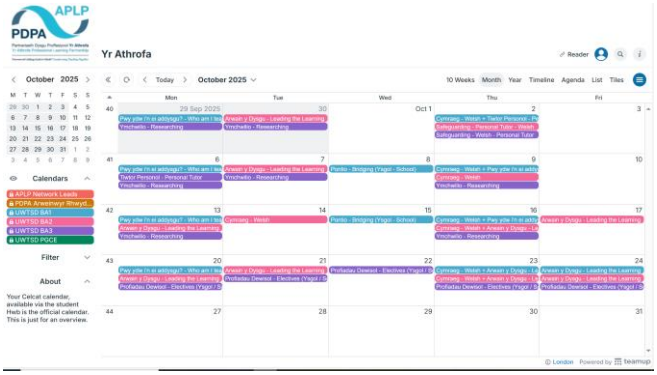
Myf.cymru is a mental health and wellbeing website resource which has been developed in response to the shortage of resources in the medium of Welsh.

All students have access to use the 'Sorted: mental health' for FREE. Student-teachers can download on your phone and unlock all of the content by using our university specific codes.

https://www.feelinggood.app/onboarding/uwtsd-en/

APLP Programme Calendar 2026-7

You can view an up to date programme calendar by visiting https://teamup.com/ksyu78okbjkw1h7vtc



This will provide an overview of each year group, as well as key partnership dates.

Key dates for each year group can be found in the respective sections of this handbook, and in the relevant PTE guidance which can be found at PTE Handbook

Students on the one-year PGCE programme follow either a primary pathway, or one of our subject specific secondary pathways.

Two thirds of the course is based in schools, across two professional teaching placements (see below)

Students complete five academic modules over the course of the year. These are:

- Leading the Learning (with QTS): what, how and why am I teaching? (ECAD6051)
- The Learner: who am I teaching? (ECAD6050)
- Welsh in Professional Practice (ECAD6052)
- Learners, Schools and Communities: where am I teaching? (ECAD7006)
- Researching the Learning: what, how and why am I teaching? (ECAD7006)

In the PGCE programmes, students are able to claim university credits for completing placement, and for the submission of their Welsh portfolios.

Bridging

Students will undertake a range of 'Bridging' experiences to complement their professional teaching experiences.

Each bridge is co-delivered by university and school based teacher educators in the Network Lead schools. Details of the focus of the bridge, and the work to be undertaken by the student-teachers during the 'test' phase will be shared with colleagues via the APLP newsletter.

Professional Teaching Experience (PTE)

Professional Teaching Experience affords student-teachers the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills to practice. As a result, this element of the programme is vital in developing professional, reflective and effective teachers. The dates of PTE for PGCE student-teachers can be found below:

PTE1:

Preparation period – Secondary **(all dates in PTE schools unless otherwise stated)**	**Preparation Period – Primary** **(all dates in PTE schools unless otherwise stated)**	**Teaching**
23.09.26 - **Network Lead School** 29.09.26 01.10.26 06.10.26 08.10.26 13.10.26 15.10.26 20.10.26 22.10.26	**23.09.26 -** **Network Lead School** 29.09.26 02.10.26 06.10.26 09.10.26 13.10.26 16.10.26 20.10.26 23.10.26	**20.10.26-15.01.27**

PTE2:

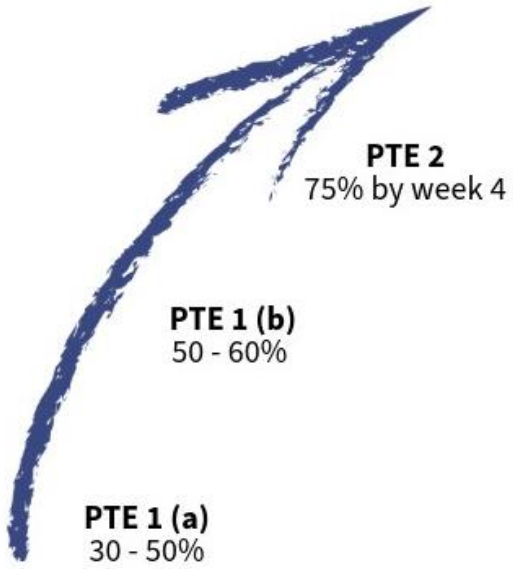
Preparation period – Secondary (all dates in PTE schools unless otherwise stated)	**Preparation period** – Primary (all dates in PTE schools unless otherwise stated)	**Teaching**
15.02.27 22.02.27 01.03.27 15.03.27	16.02.27 23.02.27 02.03.27 16.03.27	05.24.27 – 06.07.27 **Easter Holiday** – 22.03.27-04.04.27 **Bank Holiday** – 03.05.27 **Writing Day** - 04.05.27 **Summer Half Term –** 31.05.27-04.06.27

A graduated approach to teaching

Student teachers have a full-time learning timetable. The balance between teaching and other activities changes over the year – 'a graduated approach'. The start of the course includes a blend of team teaching, delivery of part of a lesson / group teaching. Alongside this, they should undertake focused observation and be given time to plan lessons, including co-planning with more experienced colleagues.

At the beginning of their first PTE, around 30% of their timetable should be taken up with 'teaching', rising to 75% by the end of the last PTE.

This is illustrated in the image, below:



The graduated approach offers a learning environment where observation, coaching, co-teaching and reflection with others are integral part of the programmes. The graduated approach to teaching consists of two strands:

I. A planned series of activity for non-teaching time;
II. A planned experience of coaching and co-teaching through which experienced teachers model and scaffold the student-teachers' journey from novice to independence.

Student-teachers should be given general, **whole-class** responsibilities from the very beginning of PTE e.g., taking responsibility for managing whole class routines – welcoming and releasing pupils from the class, arranging and clearing resources, and taking the register. Student-teachers should experience the wider role of the teacher where possible, e.g.,

playground duty, attend assembly, support visits or after school clubs.

It is essential that Class/Subject Mentors should actively encourage student-teachers to foster innovation while operating within the boundaries set by departmental and curriculum plans. This not only nurtures the growth of inventive teaching methods but also empowers student-teachers with the necessary skills to conduct self-reliant and original teaching.

Additional information relating to PTE can be found in PTE guidance booklets, here:

PDPA-APLP - Handbooks & Guidance - All Documents (sharepoint.com)

Professional Development Seminars

Over the course of a PTE, Senior Mentors are expected to provide a series of professional development seminars for student-teachers in their schools. The topics covered in these seminars is chosen at the discretion of the Senior Mentor/s, and can be based on the emerging needs of the student-teacher. A selection of topics which have been covered previously have been included below:

- Effective use of ICT in the classroom
- Welsh language development
- Managing the learning environment
- Planning
- Marking
- The writing of 'one page profiles' with ALNCO
- Parents' evening preparation

Placements

The organisation of placements is a network-focused activity. This ensures that there is a closer consideration of the types of experience received by each student-teacher, as well as greater opportunity for effective partnership working. In order to ensure that placement activity takes account of all considerations, the following process is adhered to:

Student-teachers

All student-teachers are asked to complete a form providing their personal details and any specific circumstances that need to be considered within the placement process.

By July of each year, all BA2, BA3 and all confirmed BA1 and PGCE intake students will have been required to complete the form. Any BA1 or PGCE students who have a conditional offer will be asked to complete the form as soon as is practically possible following confirmation of their place on the course.

Network Lead & Partner Schools

During the summer term, Network Leads request placement offers from partner schools based on the principles that student-teachers are placed in pairs or groups to ensure opportunities for peer support and reflection. Once allocations have been made across the network, the partner schools are asked to confirm placements electronically on SharePoint.

Students on the three-year BA Primary Education with QTS programme follow a spiral curriculum, which allows them to revisit some of the key ideas in teaching in a range of contexts.

In their first year (BA1), student-teachers focus on Foundation Learning in nursery – Yr 2 in their modules and placement.

In the second year (BA2), student-teachers focus in university and on placement on upper primary, from years 3 to 6.

In their third year (BA3), student-teachers select a phase for their placement.

The BA spiral curriculum includes the following modules in each year group:

- Leading the Learning (with QTS): what, how and why am I teaching?
- The Learner: who am I teaching?
- Welsh in Professional Practice
- Learners, Schools and Communities: where am I teaching?
- Researching the Learning: what, how and why am I teaching?

In addition, students in BA1 complete a 20 credit module which focuses on planning for the cross-curricular frameworks.

BA2 and BA3 students select one 'Deepening Practicing' module from the following menu:

BA2

- Additional Learning Needs – Inclusive Practice
- Reading and Children's Literature
- Science and Technology
- Health and Wellbeing

BA3

- Additional Learning Needs – Role of the ALNCo
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Expressive Arts
- Humanities

Professional Teaching Experience (PTE)

Professional Teaching Experience affords student-teachers the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills to practice. As a result, this element of the programme is vital in developing professional, reflective and effective teachers. The dates of PTE for BA student-teachers can be found below:

BA1:

Preparation period	**Teaching**
Mini Bridges 09/11/26 16/11/26 23/11/26 30/11/26 07/12/26	PTE1a – 04.01.27-22.01.27 PTE1b – 15.02.27-05.03.27

BA2:

Preparation period	**Teaching**
Mini Bridges: 9/11/26 16/11/26 23/11/26 30/11/26 07/12/26	PTE2 – 04/01/27 – 19/02/27

BA3:

Preparation period	**Teaching**

School Engagement Day: 22.10.26 Student-teachers are also expected to arrange four pre PTE days with their placement school: two during the autumn term and two during the spring term. Arrangements should be made directly between the student-teacher and school at a mutually convenient time.	PTE3: 01/03/27 – 15/05/27 Note: Tasks identified for the 'preparation period' (see p.10/11) may be completed during the pre-PTE engagement period, but MUST be completed by 01.03.27 Easter break: 22.03.27 – 11.04.27 (please note student teachers receive three weeks' leave) **Easter break:** (please note student-teachers receive three weeks' leave)

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Student teachers have a full-time learning timetable. The balance between teaching and other activities changes over the year – 'a graduated approach'. The start of the course includes a blend of team teaching, delivery of part of a lesson and part of a lesson / group teaching. Alongside this, they should undertake focused observation and be given time to plan lessons, including co-planning with more experienced colleagues.

At the beginning of their first PTE, around 30% of their timetable should be taken up with teaching, rising to 75% by the end of the last PTE.

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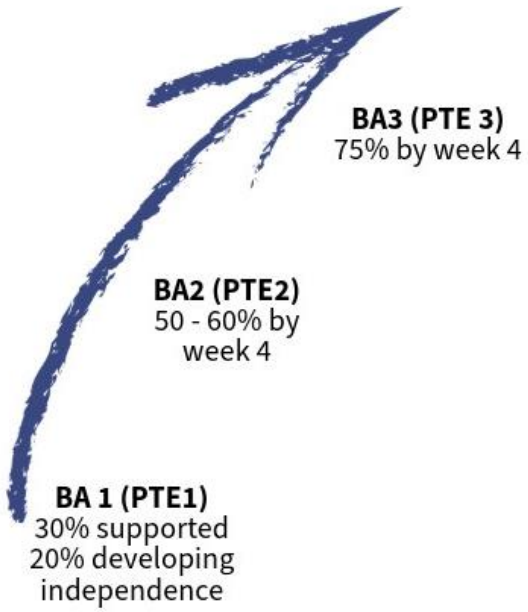

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- Safeguarding
- Anti-racism
- Effective use of ICT in the classroom
- Welsh language development (with the Welsh Language mentor)
- Managing the learning environment
- Effective Planning
- Marking, feedback and assessment
- The writing of 'one page profiles' with ALNCO
- Parents' evening preparation

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The organisation of placements is a network-focused activity. This ensures that there is a closer consideration of the types of experience received by each student-teacher, as well as greater opportunity for effective partnership working. In order to ensure that placement activity takes account of all considerations, the following process is adhered to:

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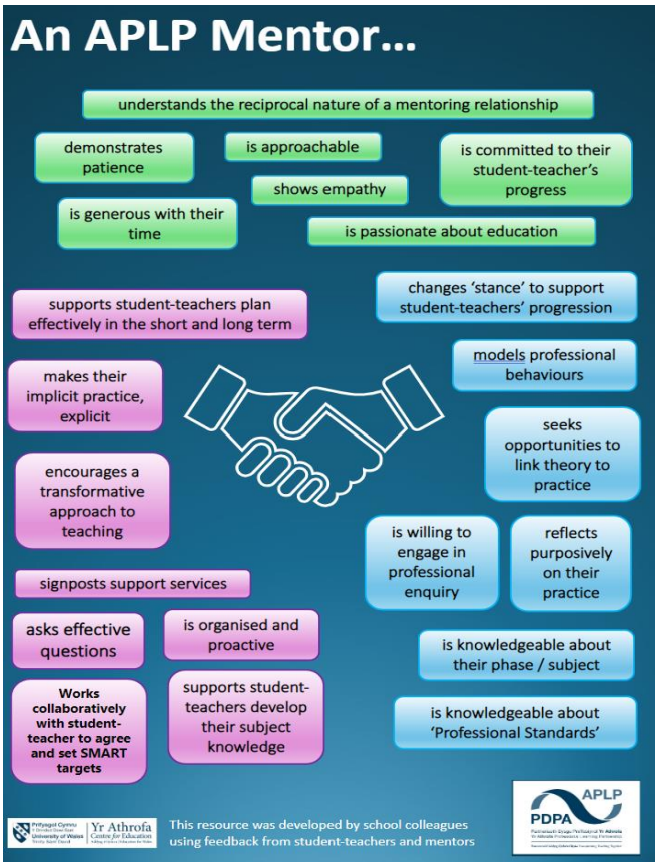
APLP Model of Mentoring

As a partnership, we understand that high-quality mentoring is essential in developing student-teachers into professional teachers. Mentoring, therefore, is at the heart of the student-teacher/experienced teacher relationship and is a key component in the APLP approach to teacher education.

The APLP Mentor Development Programme (MDP), places emphasis on ensuring that mentors understand *how* student-teachers learn to teach and are able to adapt the form of mentoring to effectively support different stages of progression.

School and university-based teacher educators, using feedback from student-teachers, created the following graphic which highlights the dispositions that APLP mentors possess.



A copy of this poster can be found, here:

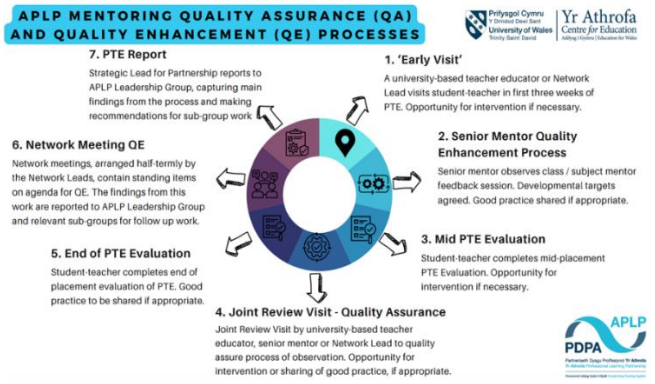
PDPA-APLP - Handbooks & Guidance - All Documents (sharepoint.com)

The Mentor Development Programme (MDP)

All mentors in the APLP complete Essential Mentor Training. Rather than relying on a cascading model, we provide multiple pathways to ensure all mentors have direct access to professional learning: in-person sessions, an online recorded version, optional drop-in sessions throughout the year, and recorded refreshers. This approach empowers Senior Mentors in their schools and ensures they have ownership of mentor development, particularly given their role in quality assurance processes.

'Mini guides', as shown below, highlight effective mentoring strategies from Grade 1 and have been created to support mentors in schools. These can be found, here:

PDPA-APLP - Handbooks & Guidance - All Documents (sharepoint.com)



Additional information relating to these process can be found, here: [PDPA-APLP - Handbooks & Guidance - All Documents (sharepoint.com)]

Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Mentoring

The APLP has developed a robust Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE) programme which supports mentors and ensures that quality standards are being met during PTE. The intended outcomes of these processes are:

- high standards of mentoring across the partnership;
- high levels of student-teacher wellbeing;
- early identification of the need for interventions as appropriate, ensuring that student-teachers make effective progress.

The QA and QE processes are for PTE can be seen in in the graphic below:

APLP approach to mentoring

Whilst there are a plethora of mentoring and coaching strategies available to teacher educators, the APLP advocates the use of the following strategies to support student-teacher learning:

- Eliciting student-teachers' preconceptions about teaching and learning;
- Support student-teachers' reflection by assuming the 'role of the discussant';
- Making the experienced teacher's implicit practice, explicit;
- The setting of purposeful and effective targets.

Additional detail and supporting strategies for each of these concepts are outlined, below.

Getting to know your student-teacher

Burn, Hagger and Mutton (2015) argue that eliciting student-teachers' preconceptions about education, is an important part of their education in becoming a teacher. As such, class and subject mentors are encouraged to spend time acquainting themselves with their student-teachers' backgrounds and experiences to date. This needs to go beyond generic conversation and to focus on sources of inspiration for the student-teacher. Burn, Hagger and Mutton (2015 p. 49) state that:

"Taking time early on to ask about those previous experiences and sources of inspiration will give you important insights into some of the views that your trainee holds about teaching and learning, and into the contexts in which they were developed. Understanding those roots will help you both to appreciate the emotional attachment that your trainee might have to those ideas and enable you to support them in evaluating their relevance and meaning in their current context."

As a result, we suggest using some of the question prompts below to develop this understanding and to give a vital point of reference that can be used in feedback throughout the mentor / mentee relationship. This is a worthwhile endeavour when building a relationship with any student-teacher, irrespective of the time of the year.

- Who inspired you to become a teacher? Why was this?
- What was your experience of school like?
- What lessons did you enjoy / not enjoy in school? Why do you think this was?
- Have you observed any lessons that felt were particularly effective? Why do you think this was?
- In your opinion, how do you think you learn best?
- What motivates you to want to learn?
- What type of relationships did you have with your teachers? What impact did this have on well-being and learning?
- How do you think your own experiences of education will impact on you, as a teacher?

It would be worthwhile to share your own experiences and thoughts in response to the questions. This would give the student-teacher insight into some of the reasons underpinning and driving some of your actions in the classroom.

The role of the discussant

The role of the discussant is to support student-teachers assume an 'inquiry stance' and to 'be sceptical' through the use of open pedagogical questioning. By this we mean being able to ask good questions of your own teaching and learning. Often this includes being sceptical by not accepting things at face-value, but exploring the 'why and how' of teaching.

This promotes student autonomy and ownership, enhances their ability to articulate pedagogical choices and reasoning, and to encourage the consideration of all the learners in their care. This is akin to what Furlong and Maynard (1999 p 180) identified as being vital components of school-based learning. This could be characterised as follows:

How students can be supported in ways that will encourage them to develop deeper and more complex understandings of the assumptions they are making in that practical professional knowledge

Importantly, the role of the discussant is not to 'tell' or 'join the dots' for student-teachers and this is a temptation which needs to be resisted, despite how difficult or awkward the conversation may seem. Often, remembering what the role is *not*, is an effective strategy for recognising what *it is*. In this case, remembering the following points may be helpful:

The role of the discussant...

- Is **NOT** providing an answer
- Is **NOT** providing an explanation
- Is **NOT** filling the space with your voice

When assuming the role of the discussant, it is important to recognise and consider the following:

- It can feel uncomfortable (with adult learners)
- It requires the discussant to 'hold the space' for thinking
- It Is easier when your learners know what to expect (and are supported to feel capable and resilient)

Asking open pedagogical questions such as 'why?', 'how do you know?' and 'was this the case for ALL of your children?' prompt this deeper thinking and evaluation. This type of questioning is something that teachers will be familiar with through their own classroom practice and will be aware of its power in enhancing purposeful discussion and deeper thought. Sherrington (2019, pp. 30-31) created number of questions which are based on Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction (Rosenshine, 2012) for teachers. However, in this case, they have been selected to support mentors when asking questions of their student-teachers:

- That's interesting, what makes you say that?
- That's true, but why do you think that is?
- Can you give an example of where that happens?
- Why? Are you sure? Is there another explanation?
- What is the evidence that supports that suggestion?
- But what's the reason for that? And how is that connected to the first part?
- Is that always true or just in this example?
- Is that a direct cause of the effect or is it just a coincidence, a correlation?

It is important to note that this line of questioning is beneficial to both student-teacher and mentor. Whilst the student-teacher is prompted to reflect more effectively on their practice, it will also offer the mentor the opportunity to see the thought process behind some of the decisions which have been made and to determine the level of understanding.

Levels of listening and active listening

The level and quality of listening in conversation between mentors and student-teachers can have a substantial impact on what is absorbed and therefore, what is likely to be acted upon in the future. For example, working from the bottom of the table, where listening is cosmetic, consider the impact of this type of listening on a student-teacher during feedback. As a result, it is important that student-teachers are aware of their own levels of listening during feedback sessions and that appropriate resources are signposted if there are concerns over their ability to internalise information which is shared.

Additionally, as a mentor, it is important that you aim for 'deep' levels of listening to engage fully with what student-teachers may be telling you. Indeed, at this level of listening it is also important that you at least engage with what student-teachers might not be telling you, through reading other signs such as body language:

Level of listening	Features
Deep	Listening diligently, reading and responding to body language
Effective	Listen carefully and purposefully
Conversational	'Everyday' listening we do with friends and family
Cosmetic	Half listening whilst thinking or doing something else

'Mindtools' state that when it comes to levels of listening, standards are generally low and that an alarming amount of information is not retained during conversations:

> "...research suggests that we only remember between 25 percent and 50 percent of what we hear, as described by Edgar Dale's Cone of Experience. That means that when you talk to your boss, colleagues, customers, or spouse for 10 minutes, they pay attention to less than half of the conversation."
>
> (Active Listening, n.d)

To ensure that mentors and student-teachers are gleaning as much from a feedback session as is possible, it is suggested that the resources below are accessed by both parties so that expectations are clearly understood:

This video can also be accessed using the hyperlink and QR code, below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fhubblecontent.osi.office.net%2F&source_ve_path=Mjg2NjQsMTY0NTAz&v=t2z9mdX1j4A&feature=youtu.be

Modelling the learner/teacher paradox

Elaine Sharpling, Director of Research at Yr Athrofa, discusses the unique position of student-teachers as both a learner and teacher in her blog, *Red stripes'– how do we support student-teachers through a journey of reform?* (Sharpling, 2020). This blog addresses the challenges that student-teachers face in learning in public and encourages mentors and mentees alike to have honest and open conversations around classroom practice. Burn, Hagger and Mutton (2015, p.58) suggest modelling the behaviours expected of student-teachers in this regard is a purposeful strategy:

> "The most effective way of sustaining your trainee's dual identity as both teacher and learner is by embracing both roles yourself, clearly demonstrating the importance of continued learning as intrinsic to your professional identity as a teacher."

Therefore, taking opportunities to demonstrate your commitment to professional learning and continual reflection can be powerful in removing the perceived 'master and apprentice' relationship between yourself and the student-teacher. It also allows the student-teacher to see that the role of a teacher is one of continual development, therefore offsetting the feeling of vulnerability that many feel.

Utilising learner perspectives

If your student-teacher is finding it difficult to separate personal and professional feedback, the mentor could assume the role of the discussant to further develop understanding and critical reflection on learner's learning. Hattie (2012 p. 164) provides the following questions to inform such practice:

- What did and did they not understand in the lessons?
- What did they do when they did not understand?
- Did they seek help (or not)?
- What were the reactions from their peers to their learning?
- Did they believe they were listened to by this teacher?
- What was the nature of discussion among students during the lessons?
- What questions did they ask and what would they now still wish to ask?
- Were there multiple opportunities to learn, re-learn and re-learn again?

Making the implicit, explicit

In any given lesson, Kennedy (2006, p.205) argues that teachers are trying to balance as many as six competing elements at any one time:

1. Covering desirable content;
2. Fostering student learning;
3. Increasing students' willingness to participate;
4. Maintaining lesson momentum;
5. Creating a civil classroom community; and
6. Attending to their own cognitive and emotional needs.

The reasoning behind decisions that are made when addressing these considerations is rarely explicit to observers. Indeed, they may not even be recognised by teachers who may be calling on subconscious knowledge 'in the moment'. Once that moment has passed, the knowledge can offer disappear with it, leaving the observer unable to access and understand the events that have taken place.

Burn, Hagger and Mutton (2015, p. 14) articulate this challenge in *Beginning Teachers' Learning:*

"...if we are to support beginners effectively, we first need to acknowledge just how complex the task of teaching is. If we do not adequately recognise the challenges involved in planning and structuring sequences of learning activities for up to 30 individuals, in devising and targeting questions, and framing effective feedback to their varied responses, then we will fail to prepare our trainees for the shock of that discovery"

Much like student-teachers, mentors may well feel vulnerable and reluctant to justify and explain their actions. Eraut (2000, p.120) warns of the dangers of explaining away actions to enhance their student-teacher's perception of them as a professional, rather than sharing an honest commentary on the events. This again prevents the student-teacher from accessing the inner thoughts of a teacher and the constant reflection, doubt and thinking that takes place to enhance learning.

"(1) to provide a defensible account rather than a description of practitioners' actions and (2) to create an impression of professional control over situations which inspire confidence in them as persons/ It may seek to disguise rather than to share uncertainty and risk-taking."

As a mentor, there are steps that can be taken to mitigate some of these challenges.

- Make it clear from early in your student-teacher / mentor relationship that you expect to be asked questions around your practice and be as open as possible when answering.
- Provide context on the children in the class/es and share internal knowledge you may hold with regards to particular situations.
- Mentally acknowledge your actions in the class and be ready to share the rationale after the session.
- Ask your student-teacher to film a lesson and provide a commentary on critical incidents.

How to make the best use of lesson observation

Burn, Hagger and Mutton, (2015) explain the significance of lesson observation, below:

> "...as an experienced teacher, able to read a classroom fluently and to select from an extensive repertoire of well-tunes strategies, it can be all too easy to forget just how much you have learned over time, how many of your deliberate practices have now become routinised, and on how many different kinds of insight you are drawing."

The APLP mini-guide aims to support student-teachers in developing an understanding of what they are observing in a classroom and to provide question stems and prompts in order to make the implicit, *explicit*.

Student-teachers are not likely to have appropriate strategies to unpick what they are observing and may lack confidence in questioning others to help arrive at this point. Similarly, experienced practitioners may not always realise the impact or nature of their actions. These questions seek to bridge this gap and to support and further their understanding. It is primarily based on the findings of Kennedy (2006) who concludes that teachers are trying to address no fewer than six competing concerns at any point. Please refer to the 'lesson observation' mini-guide for additional strategies, here: Handbooks & Guidance

Setting SMART Targets

Ambitious, achievable and purposeful target setting is something all mentors should aspiring to. Such target setting is a powerful tool in equipping student-teachers with the skills required in order to make progress.

Whilst formative targets will be set in learning journals and fortnightly mentor meetings, they also play a key role in supporting progress when agreed in Professional Conversations and on summative reports.

A suggested model for setting targets is adapted from Fletcher-Wood (2016):

- ✓ ***Praise –*** *what has the student-teacher done particularly well?*
- ✓ ***Probe –*** *on which aspect of teaching and learning do I want to focus? What did the student-teacher notice about that aspect?*
- ✓ ***SMART Target –*** *what do I want the student-teacher to change about his/her teaching?*
- ✓ ***Practice/Reinforcement/Plan –*** *how can we turn this idea of change into reality?*

Additional guidance on setting SMART targets has been provided, below:

SMART is an acronym that supports effective target setting. To ensure that targets are clear purposeful, they should be:

Specific (simple)
Measurable (meaningful)
Achievable (agreed, attainable)
Realistic (reasonable, realistic)
Time-bound (time-based, timely)

Further guidance can be found below:

Examples of SMART Targets

Target 1:

Establish clear routines at the start of lessons to ensure that learners are ready to learn

Provide learners with clear instructions so they are aware of transition expectations. Evidence of success may be that children are seated, looking towards the front and there is no evidence of low-level disruption. Aim to meet this target within two weeks, as part of your teaching of the new maths topic.

Target 2:

Ensure that you are challenging 'more able and talented' learners in literacy sessions by introducing resources that extend their vocabulary

Provide 'olive' group with resources that extend their vocabulary and encourage them to choose ambitious synonyms for common verbs in their creative writing. Evidence of success should be evident in the learners' LLC books and through their self-assessment. Attempt to meet this target within one week, following our creative writing session on Thursday.

Target 3:

Begin to build purposeful relationships with parents/carers by greeting them in the morning and afternoon at the school gate.

Introduce yourself to parents/carers at the gate. Where appropriate, provide positive feedback on some of the learners' efforts to the parent/carer who collects from school. Indicators of success may include a positive impact on learners' efforts in class. Meet this target within one week.

Target 4:

Improve the effectiveness of transitions

Carefully plan how you will draw one part of the lesson to a close and move onto the next.

Ensure that you have considered how resources will be distributed and how students will be encouraged to link their learning from one part of the learning to the next. Ensure you minimise opportunities for students to be off-task. Use some of the strategies you identified from last week's observation in each of your lessons this week.

Difficult Conversations

There may be times when mentors are required to have potentially difficult conversations with their mentees. In order to support mentors and student-teachers in such situations, an extract from *The Teacher Educator's Handbook* (White 2022, p.14), which includes suggested strategies to help frame the conversation, has been included below:

No one likes having a confrontational conversations but if we value our students, colleagues or employees, we need to make time to talk honestly, rationally and clearly if there is a problem that needs dealing with. Having a plan will help. While dealing with a difficult issues, we are also modelling a process that shows respect for all, so we need to be professional and keep control of our emotions.

❖ **When?**

Having the conversation sooner rather than later will avoid extending any anxiety you have. Consider what will be happening for both of you after the conversation. It isn't helpful to have a difficult conversation last thing on a Friday, or immediately before teaching a challenging class.

Allow enough time for the person to digest what is being said and to reflect. Make sure they have opportunity to express themselves.

❖ **Where?**

Finding a private and professional location is important.

❖ **What will you say?**

It is important to stick to the facts. Describe carefully the behaviour that has triggered the conversation. Describe the impact of the behaviour on others, for example. Students, colleagues or yourself. Ensure the person understands why a change is needed.

Have the Teachers' Standards and your own school/partnership policies to hand. If you need to draw attention to something within them, give the person time to read and reflect before responding. (Usually this level of detail is not needed).

❖ **Where should your focus be?**

You must show respect for the individual as a person, focusing on their behaviour and not the individual.

You need to focus too on the solution, the way forward – what will the future look like? Are there specific procedures to put in place, or is a verbal commitment needed?

❖ **What about afterwards?**

Reflect on how you could have done better and then move on. Think about how you can affirm the person when you next see them.

Mentor activity during PTE

The changing of stance of mentors (providing appropriate support relative to the student-teachers' progress) is a fundamental element of the APLP model of mentoring. As a result, each PTE contains a series of key events which support this approach. These have been outlined, below:

- **Induction into PTE school** (including Safeguarding training, dissemination of key policies, orientation to school ethos etc)
- **Preparation period** (provide opportunity for student-teacher to observe experienced teachers, meet key members of staff etc.)
- **Early visit**: Each student-teacher and mentor will be visited by a University Tutor or Network Lead within the first two weeks of PTE to 'check in'.
- **Senior Mentor QA activity:** Each Class/Subject Mentor will work with their Senior Mentor to identify strengths and develop their practice.
- **Professional Conversation**: Designed to facilitate deep reflection in relation to progress that student-teachers have made
- **Mid Placement Report:** (excluding BA1). A summative report recording student-teacher progress and identifying SMART targets to aid progress.
- **Joint Review Visit:** A visit from a University Tutor, Senior Mentor or Network Lead to observe a lesson and quality assure provision.
- **End of Placement Report:** A summative report recording student-teacher progress and identifying SMART targets to support future progress.

Please note that specific dates, relative to the PTE, can be found in the accompanying PTE Guidance Booklets. These documents can be found, here: PDPA-APLP - Handbooks & Guidance - All Documents (sharepoint.com)

Mid and End of Placement Reports

What is the Mid and End of Placement Report?

At each reporting point, the Class/Subject Mentor and/or Senior Mentor must complete the report as a formative assessment of the student-teacher's progress to date.

Considerations:

Where the opportunity hasn't yet arisen for a student-teacher to engage in certain aspects of provision please make a note of this in the Review.

What is the deadline for submitting the reports?

Please see the PTE guide associated with the student-teacher's programme of study.

Where do I find the template for the reports?

This is available on the APLP SharePoint, here: Reporting templates

What am I reporting on?

Mentors are considering the student-teacher's progress in relation to the Professional Standards for QTS. You will report against each standard to demonstrate whether the student-teacher is 'on track' to meet the QTS descriptor by the end of their programme, 'not yet on track', 'exceeding expectations' or 'cause for concern' (CfC). If a student-teacher is a CfC, it is expected that this would have already been brought to the attention of the University-based teacher educator and/or the Network Lead as well as the student-teacher.

The Professional Conversation

The professional conversation is a part of the APLP model of mentoring and is designed to facilitate deep reflection in relation to progress that student-teachers have made. The conversation should be a positive one; where there is an opportunity to discuss experiences from their Professional Teaching Experience, identifying areas of strength in their skill-set and emerging targets for the future. The Professional Conversation should be the basis of the mid and end of placement report.[1]

The professional conversation **is**:

- ✓ An opportunity for student-teachers to reflect on the progress they have made and articulate the progress they believe they've made in key aspects of their practice in a supportive and encouraging way.
- ✓ An acknowledgement of the variety of experiences student-teachers have had.
- ✓ A holistic approach to discussing the QTS standards, and an opportunity for student-teachers to focus on some of the standards they feel they've particularly addressed since beginning their PTE.
- ✓ An opportunity for student-teachers to discuss and agree on targets for moving their practice forwards.
- ✓ A collaborative approach towards completing the relevant summative report.

The professional conversation **is not**:

× A deficit model where student-teachers feel they are on the back-foot.

× An interview or test to assess the student-teacher's progress towards QTS.

Evidence to support the Professional Conversation

Earl & Timperley (2009) argue that "conversations that are grounded in evidence and focused on learning from that evidence have considerable potential to influence what happens in schools and ultimately enhance the quality and efficiency of student learning." Making use of evidence is therefore an integral part of supporting the Professional Conversation. Here are some ideas of the sorts of sources of evidence that may be referred to during the Professional Conversation:

- ❖ Comments engaged with in the Learning Journal
- ❖ Notes from fortnightly weekly meetings
- ❖ References to further reading and professional learning opportunities taken
- ❖ References to module content and assignments and how they may have led to progress in practice

When will the Professional Conversation take place?

Professional conversations take place before the mid-placement reports are completed. Please see the Professional Teaching Experience guide and https://teamup.com/ksyu78okbjkw1h7vtc for more details.

[1] Please note that mid-placement reports are not required for BA1 student-teachers

Where and how will the Professional Conversation take place?

The main points of discussion during the Professional Conversation will be used to compile either the mid or end of placement report which will then be saved on the APLP SharePoint. The professional conversation should be arranged by the Class / Subject Mentor and should last for about 45-60 minutes.

Professional conversation timeline

Before

- Student-teachers should be given at least 2 days' notice of when their Professional Conversation will take place so that they have time to prepare, and be told at that time who will be facilitating the meeting.
- The student-teacher should be invited to start by choosing an aspect that they would like to share as evidence of engagement and achievement and that they can prepare for.

During

- The student-teacher should be asked to speak about their chosen aspect and refer to evidence they have of engagement and achievement. Please note: student-teachers should not be expected to prepare a PowerPoint or other form of presentation.
- The class/subject mentor should listen to what the student-teacher has to say and ask questions pertinent to what the student-teacher is saying.
- There should be a reflective element to the Professional Conversation where the student-teacher looks back at previous targets and identify how progress made has allowed them to move their practice forwards.
- The class/subject mentor should make notes that will then inform the relevant report.

Following

- The mid-placement report should be drafted by the Class / Subject Mentor and should be read by the student-teacher before it is submitted as a final version on the APLP SharePoint website.

Network working

The APLP is comprised of fifteen Lead Partner Schools who each oversee a 'network' of partner schools. It is the responsibility of the Network Lead to co-ordinate ITE activity and to feed into quality assurance processes across the network.

The relationship between Class / Subject Mentors and Network Leads is key in maintaining a high-quality teacher education provision in schools.

Network Meetings

Network meetings enable enable Senior Mentors and Network Leads from across each network to meet to discuss matters relating to school-based experiences. These meetings are organised by Network Leads and take place during a fortnightly window on the APLP Calendar. These can be viewed here:

https://teamup.com/ksyu78okbjkw1h7vtc

During these meetings, a range of topics are discussed, which may include:

- Student-teacher progress
- Upcoming PTE deadlines (e.g Professional Conversation window, mid-placement report deadline etc.)
- The sharing of effective mentoring practice
- Quality assurance activity
- Partnership events

Please note that all Senior Mentors are expected to attend Network Meetings. Where this is not possible, a replacement member of staff from the partner school is expected to attend in their place.

Arranging PTE placements

Student-teachers are allocated a network once enrolled on a BA or PGCE programme. This is typically a network whose schools are located in the same geographical region as the student-teachers' home address. Student-teachers' address details, previous work experience and their access to a car/motorbike is then shared with Network Leads to allow a PTE placement to be organised. Wherever possible, a student-teacher will be placed in a PTE school within a 40-mile radius of their given address. In exceptional circumstances, student-teachers may be asked to travel further than 40 miles.

Prior to allocation, partner schools are asked to complete a 'placement offer' for student-teachers to enable Network Leads to allocate an appropriate student-teacher to a school. This form can be found here:

https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=-REPTm4EBUWcuNshUjEeIVlOGCcHuntKgyyu51pyfHpUQkhNMEY2RDlPWFdIQVhMRFFIMkpBT1lKOS4u

Network Leads are best-placed to oversee this process due to their knowledge of their network.

APLP Events

All school partners are invited to APLP events, which include the Additional Learning Needs Conference, Aiming for Excellence and Partnership Days. Details relating to these events are shared in the weekly newsletter.

Where can additional information be found?

Whilst this handbook contains an overview of the various elements of the APLP, additional guidance and documentation is also available. For school-based partners, these documents can be found on APLP Sharepoint using below. Please note that student-teachers also have access to these documents through Moodle.

PTE Guidance Booklets

Guidance for PTE (BA and PGCE) contain specific information relating to expectations of student-teachers and mentors during each placement block, including important dates. These documents can be found, here:

Handbooks & Guidance

PhaseSwap Guidance

BA2 and PGCE Student-teachers are provided with the opportunity to spend time exploring practice in a primary school or secondary school settings. This allows student-teachers to experience teaching and learning within a different age phase and context to their chosen age phase.

BA2:01/01/26

PGCE: 4-5/01/2027

Additional guidance can be found, here:

Handbooks & Guidance

Electives Guidance

The electives experience is a non-assessed professional development opportunity for BA3 and PGCE student-teachers. It takes place in a school setting and focuses on gaining a deeper knowledge and understanding of an area related to a personal interest. The student-teachers follow a particular subject or theme of interest by engaging in activities such as:

- Observation
- Conducting interviews
- Reading research
- Engaging in professional dialogue

BA3: 18/01/27 – 22/01/27

PGCE: 08/03/27 – 10/03/27

Guidance documentation can be found, here: Handbooks & Guidance

Alternative Experiences Guidance

Experiencing education in diverse settings is essential for children's development and is a crucial aspect for student teachers to understand. These environments offer unique opportunities for children to learn through hands-on activities, fostering creativity, independence, and can create a deeper connection with the natural world. Such experiences can promote physical health, social skills, and emotional wellbeing, providing a well-rounded education beyond the traditional classroom. For student-teachers, gaining insights into these varied educational settings is invaluable. It equips them with innovative teaching strategies and a broader perspective on child development, enhancing their ability to create engaging and effective learning experiences. Moreover, having this knowledge and experience makes student teachers more versatile and attractive to future employers,

demonstrating their commitment to comprehensive and dynamic education.

As such, student-teachers are required to complete two days Alternative Placements during the PGCE year and in year 2 of the BA programme. They will need to consider where they would like to attend and contact organisations to arrange this.

PGCE Alternative Placement

WB 15/02/27

Sample letters and scripts on the Alternative Placement tile are available for student-teachers on Moodle. These will support student-teachers in contacting organisations and navigating conversations surrounding the Alternative Placements. Previous examples of where students have attended, include; forest schools, outdoor learning centres, museums and prisons.

Intervention Processes and Procedures

Occasionally, a student-teacher identifies themselves - or is identified by one or more of the 'team around the student-teacher' - as needing additional, structured, and more intensive support. At this point, the APLP will implement support plans and activate an Intervention Process.

There are many reasons why student-teachers might reach a point of needing support plans to be implemented. Activating the Intervention Process allows support to be put in place at the earliest stage and ensures that the student-teacher is given the best opportunity to succeed, through timely action planning and specific target setting. Consequently, through working in partnership, the situation often can be retrieved and changed to one of success.

Please note that there are three stages to the Intervention Process. In instances where there is limited / no progress following initial interventions, student-teachers may progress to stages 2 (enhanced intervention) and stage 3 (notification of failure).

Intervention Processes and Procedures can be found, here: Intervention Process

Learning Journal Guidance

The Learning Journal is a key document in documenting student-teacher reflection and progress. Engagement with the journal is expected daily, with mentors and student-teachers commenting, questioning and reflecting on experiences during PTE. It should also document student-teachers' strengths and areas for development and feed forward to support progress, with strategies, resources and experiences suggested. Additional guidance, which includes question stems and prompts and examples of effective use of the Learning Journal, can be found, here: Handbooks & Guidance

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

The APLP has developed a range of Quality Assurance and Enhancement processes to support student-teachers and mentors whilst on PTE. These include:

- Early visits
- QA of mentoring undertaken by Senior Mentor
- QA activity in Network meetings
- Joint Review Visits to PTE schools
- Student-teacher feedback and PTE evaluations at mid and end of placement points

Additional guidance relating to these activities can be found, here: PDPA-APLP - Handbooks & Guidance - All Documents (sharepoint.com)

Welsh Language

APLP ITE programmes are designed to support the Welsh Government's ambition of seeing one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. This commitment is reflected in the Memorandum of Agreement underpinning the work of the APLP and the roles and responsibilities attached to this are outlined below.

The path for developing the Welsh language depends on close collaboration between the following partners:

- Rhagoriaith, the University's Centre for Welsh Language Services
- University Tutors
- Lead Partner Schools
- Partner Schools and Language Mentors

The development of the Welsh Language Competency Framework for Teachers in 2019-2020, and the requirements of the Welsh Government, means that it is now the key tool for measuring the linguistic progress of our prospective teachers:

https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/welsh-language-competency-framework-for-education-practitioners.pdf

As part of that work, there will be a need to ensure a standard programme of language development and acquisition training for student teachers and a robust support structure that will enable them to fulfil their potential by:

- moving along the continuum of the Framework during their time at university
- developing as teachers who are able to present Welsh, as a subject and medium, through exciting and innovative methods in line with the requirements of the new Curriculum.

To achieve this, each partner's contribution to the process is clearly defined below.

University of Wales Centre for Welsh Language Services

Context

During 2019-2020, Rhagoriaith was responsible for guiding the creation and piloting of the Framework on behalf of the Welsh Government. They ensured that all prospective teachers had the opportunity to receive language and methodology sessions during their time at the University and were also levelled against the Framework by Centre staff.

To ensure their key role in the process, Rhagoriaith held a number of sessions with the University Tutors, Network Leads and language mentors.

In 2025-2026, Rhagoriaith will continue its role in offering language training sessions to students during their time at University. It will also continue the role of moderating the portfolios of prospective teachers and confirming them against the Framework (see further details on portfolio content below).

Lead Schools

The APLP lead schools are jointly responsible with the University for assisting with the development and promotion of the Welsh language.

Lead Schools assist in the implementation of the Language Competence Framework by:

- identifying a Welsh Language Co-ordinator to ensure support for student-teachers' Welsh language development across the network
- identifying Language Mentors within the partner schools in order to develop student-teachers' Welsh language skills and measure them against the Framework - establishing support clusters where necessary.

As with all other aspects of the accredited model, the University, networks and lead schools are required to demonstrate progress in this aspect of the model. **Network meeting agendas** should therefore record the discussion and planning processes around them.

Requirements of the Language Competency Framework for Student-teachers:

All student- teachers are asked to assemble an annual portfolio of materials that provide evidence of how they use and present Welsh as part of their training. Student- teachers are required to upload their portfolio of evidence to the PLP.

'Partnership in Action' – The benefits of being part of the APLP

The Research and Enquiry sub-group of the APLP Leadership Group has created a document to capture the benefits of being part of the APLP for UWTSD, partner schools and student-teachers. This document also responds to Estyn's *Supplementary guidance: Inspecting schools that are lead schools in an initial teacher education partnership* and provides schools with prompts that schools can adapt to their own contexts. This document can be found, here:

Partnership in Action

Professional Enquiry for Lead Partner Schools

Supporting schools to develop an enquiry approach that is focused on practice is a key part of our partnership work. Some of you have already engaged in this process and had the valuable opportunity to present your findings to the wider partnership. These are important pieces of work as we move towards developing a research-engaged profession in Wales.

We are keen to ensure that we support another cohort of schools to complete an enquiry cycle during the 2025/26 academic year. We will be able to support eight lead schools during this period.

The model is tried and tested and schools will be supported by two university tutors throughout the process. The structure of the model involves participation in four workshops in the first instance, each of about two hours.

The workshops will cover the following:

- Action research and identifying a research question
- Accessing research knowledge
  - Using the EBSCO database provided through EWC registration
  - Knowing how to read research critically and for key points
- Research ethics in the classroom
- Research design and research tools

The workshops will be followed by two further bespoke sessions with individual lead schools or groups/clusters who choose to work on a common area of enquiry, with the aim of completing a cycle by the end of the next academic year. The university team work with you as critical friends, supporting the process of enquiry and the development of the skills and dispositions of enquiry.

The dates of the final workshops will be negotiated with the participating schools but will cover:

- Making sense of data: analysis and findings
- Evaluation and next steps.

The focus of the enquiry is a matter for your school community but it must have real value for **your** school in **your** context. It may however be of interest to you that the university team has recently been

focussing on enquiry in the context of learning progression – this may be a focus that you wish to consider.

If you are interested in engaging in an enquiry cycle, which comes at no additional financial cost to lead schools, please contact our partnership office (partnership@uwtsd.ac.uk), indicating the following:

- The preferred area of inquiry for your school/cluster/group, should you have this in mind already, if not we will work with you develop this.
- The guaranteed support of your SLT for the enquiry process and the sharing of your findings

You may be aware that we also offer a commercial programme of professional learning *Introduction to Professional Enquiry (*details on our website) which builds on and benefits from the university's involvement in the National Professional Enquiry Project (NPEP), a Wales-wide collaborative project supporting teachers across the country to become research-engaged and research-active. This programme is open to all schools. APLP lead schools may wish to prioritise engagement with the *Professional Enquiry for APLP lead schools* (PEALS) in the first instance.

Professional Learning

As discussed, the APLP is a partnership of schools and the university working together to produce and deliver programmes of professional learning across the continuum of teacher education. These programmes are, of course, not restricted to ITE and include the provision of development opportunities for teachers at every stage of their professional career.

The APLP is therefore committed to:

- Developing and modelling a genuinely collaborative approach to ITE and professional learning in Wales;
- Contributing to the national agenda for education improvement by building capacity through teacher education for the wider education workforce.

For further information about the MA in Education, please contact Nanna Ryder n.ryder@uwtsd.ac.uk

For further information about the Doctorate in Education (EdD), please contact the Programme Director, Dr. Catherine Morgan c.morgan@uwtsd.ac.uk or visit: www.uwtsd.ac.uk/doctorate-education

The APLP also aims to deliver a portfolio of programmes focused on developing professional teachers who:

- Meet the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership;
- Are ready to deliver the new Curriculum for Wales and enable children and young people to fulfil the four purposes;
- Understand the relationship between intellectual and experiential knowledge and are capable of leading classroom and school-based inquiry that is focused on positive impact for learners;
- Are transformative teachers who embody the APLP model of transformative learning.

As part of their Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), Lead Partner Schools are committed to:

- Ensuring school-based staff are supported and provided access to appropriate professional learning to ensure that they can provide high-quality mentoring and support for ITE students;
- Make development and professional learning opportunities available to university-based Athrofa staff where appropriate.

Options could include:

- Supporting staff to increase their qualifications to levels 7 and 8 through the MA in Education or Doctorate in Education (EdD);
- Releasing staff to support the co-construction and co-delivery of professional learning programmes;
- Attending and contributing to workshops/seminars to support sharing of inquiry-based practice;
- Knowledge exchange activities, learning visits, etc.

Network Lead

General overview of roles and responsibilities:

1. Ambassadors for the Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership representing the co-ownership, governance and delivery of the ITE programmes;
2. Support marketing and recruitment of high-quality candidates to teaching;
3. Contribute to the strategic direction, self-evaluation and quality assurance of their network and feed this into the wider partnership;
4. Co-ordinate the activity within the network and maintaining effective communication to all stakeholders;
5. Lead network meetings, [2 per term] distribute minutes, emphasise the importance of Senior Mentors feeding back the information, e.g assignments relating to PTE;
6. Ensure that attendance records for network meetings are accurate;
7. Ensure that Network Meeting agendas and minutes are uploaded onto APLP SharePoint in a timely manner;
8. Manage the network budget allocation;
9. Ensure that Senior Mentors are clear about their responsibilities and the expectations in line with the MoA e.g. attendance of Partnership Days;
10. Support the mentor development programme;
11. Ensure that all mentors in the network have completed the Grade 1 Mentor Training and that Senior Mentors have delivered the training in their respective settings;
12. Ensure the assessment of QTS is consistent and quality assure summative conversations;
13. Ensure the requirements of the Welsh Language Development Pathway are met within their network;
14. Lead Bridging activities in collaboration with the University Tutors;
15. Ensure elements of the programme such as Electives and Phase Swap are high-quality experiences and comparable with a broad range of experiences offered;
16. Attend APLP Leadership Group Meetings;
17. Identify any Professional Learning needs and liaise with University Tutors to secure appropriate input;
18. Identify and share effective practice across the network.

Before placement:

1. Collect placement offers from partner schools and allocate students to placements;
2. Liaise with Senior Mentors to assign student-teachers to partnership schools;
3. Ensure PTE expectations, including deadlines and Intervention Processes are shared with the network during Network Meetings;
4. Ensure network is 'good to go' for Professional Teaching Experience (PTE), including communicating any strategic targets from the APLP Leadership Group.
5. During induction, deliver the 'Meet the Network Lead' sessions to student-teachers;
6. Liaise with Senior Mentors to consider series of seminars for professional development of student-teachers;
7. Network meeting agenda should ensure that provision for the Welsh Language Pathway is discussed e.g role of Welsh Language Co-ordinator [Network Lead School] and Language Mentors [Partner Schools] in supporting trainees on PTE.

During placement:

1. Ensure that high-quality mentoring occurs for all student-teachers placed in the network;
2. Liaise with University Tutor to carry out Early and Joint Review Visits in to ensure consistency of mentoring across the network;
3. Host Network meetings half termly;
4. Liaise with Senior Mentors where appropriate regarding the Intervention process and provide training when necessary;
5. Host the meet and share aspects of Bridging;
6. Monitor student-teacher wellbeing and follow procedures if concerns arise;
7. Ensure that Senior Mentors are monitoring attendance record for student-teachers within their school;
8. Ensure that Partner Schools complete APLP documentation.

Following placement:

1. Ensure that student-teachers are placed in an appropriate next placement;
2. Gather feedback from Senior Mentors on any strengths and challenges;
3. Disseminate key themes from student-teachers' evaluation of PTE in network meeting;
4. Provide opportunities for 'handover' session between partner schools.

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Senior Mentor

General overview of roles and responsibilities:

1. Co-ordinates PTE within a school and monitor to ensures a high-quality student-teacher experience;
2. Contribute to the development of the network through attending and participating in network meetings and liaising with the Network Lead;
3. Feedback at a whole-school level and disseminate the Partnership newsletter; ensure that there is a whole school commitment to Initial Teacher Education;
4. Engage with the Network Lead on Quality Assurance and self-evaluation processes that identifies areas of strength and development.

Before placement:

1. Ensures Memorandum of Agreement is signed and returned to the Partnership Office – partnership@uwtsd.ac.uk or partneriaeth@pycydds.ac.uk;
2. Attend Senior Mentor Training and ensure training is delivered in their own context prior to PTE starting;
3. Liaise with Network Lead to agree suitable placements;
4. Assign student-teachers to specific mentors and to the relevant classes/forms/subject groups;
5. Ensure that Subject/Class Mentors are clear about their responsibilities and the expectations in line with guidance documents;
6. Plan induction activities for the start of placement including; an introduction to safeguarding, ethos and culture, professional behaviour, behaviour policy and marking policy;
7. Check suitability of timetables with Subject/Class Mentors to ensure equity of experience in terms of expected workload;
8. Liaise with Network Lead to consider series of seminars for professional development of student-teachers;
9. Liaise with the Network Lead to support wider activities e.g. Bridging, and shares information with relevant staff for example, governors, class mentors;
10. Identify any professional development needs in relation to the roles and responsibilities of the senior mentor and class/subject mentor.

During placement:

1. Welcome student-teachers to placement and ensure that they are part of the staff team;
2. Support the arrangement of an 'early visit' to ensure mentors and student-teachers have all the information needed.
3. Monitor student-teacher progress online [PTE file and PLP] and advise in learning journal on emerging targets. Discuss such targets in person with class/subject mentor;
4. Support Class/Subject mentor engagement with students in wider placement activities e.g. Bridging, Small scale action research assignment;
5. Ensure attendance record are accurate [PLP];
6. Observe one feedback session between the student-teacher and Class/Subject Mentor, per PTE. In these sessions, the Senior Mentor is to observe the Class/Subject mentor engaging in dialogue with the student-teacher which promotes reflection on the learning and the drawing out of emerging personal targets;
7. Take part in the 'Joint Review' process for student-teachers placed in the school.

8. The Senior Mentor must proofread and ensure that all mid and end of placement reports are uploaded to SharePoint by the appropriate deadlines. They must also ensure that any targets are appropriate to the student-teacher and meet the Partnership's expectations;
9. Handover discussion between Senior Mentors within the network where key information and the main themes of the end of placement report are discussed. Information should also be shared with regards to student-teachers who are on Intervention Process so that the upcoming PTE school are aware of the circumstances.

Subject / Class Mentor

General overview of roles and responsibilities:

1. Develop student-teachers on a day-to-day basis by providing high-quality experiences and be the first point of reference for support in planning, pedagogy, assessment and building positive working relationships;
2. Offer high-quality mentoring and coaching, target setting and support the graduated introduction to teaching [workload and teaching methodologies];
3. Support the student-teacher on elements of the programme such as bridging, small scale action research assignments, electives, and phase swap; and give time for any related planned activities;
4. Keep up-to-date with APLP documentation.

Before placement:

1. Complete Mentor Development Programme Grade 1;
2. Meet with Senior Mentor to agree placement of student-teacher and go through any documentation and key milestones; eg Mid-Placement report, End of Placement report and Joint observations etc;
3. Unless PTE1, engage with prior reports to support transition between placements;
4. Ensure access to APLP SharePoint is obtained

During placement:

1. Meet regularly with Senior Mentor to discuss student-teacher progress;
2. Support planning eg planning meetings or joint PPA sessions;
3. Provide regular feedback to student-teacher e.g. orally or recorded in the learning journal
4. Support the graduated introduction to teaching through team teaching;
5. Fortnightly shared reflection using an evidence-based conversation and agree targets to action;
6. Support the student-teacher in meeting their responsibility for the Welsh Language Development Pathway;
7. Discuss learning journal observations, based on student-teacher's 'Learning Timetable' opportunities e.g. observations of other teachers etc.;
8. Support student-teacher with wider placement activities e.g. by considering assignment titles and deadlines; bridging
9. Engage with the professional conversation process which informs reporting at Mid-Placement and End of placement assessment points;
10. Complete all required reports and submit to Yr Athrofa SharePoint.

University-Based Teacher Educator

General overview of roles and responsibilities:

1. Develop practical wisdom in student-teachers – that is the coming together of specialist practical theory and practical experience in the classroom;
2. Demonstrate intentional modelling - scaffolded opportunities that deliberately orientate the student-teacher to effective teaching and learning;
3. Lead professional learning and facilitate knowledge sharing across the sector (knowledge mobilisation);
4. Support student-teachers in thinking critically about knowledge and about generating good theories about education;
5. Bring specific pedagogical knowledge to the school setting and facilitates access to enquiry through the Professional Enquiry Schools Programme;
6. Mobilise research activity across the curriculum to give schools access to practice that is theoretically informed , research active and practice-driven;
7. Conducts discipline/field-specific research and support/facilitate close-to-practice action inquiry;
8. Engage with the quality assurance processes around the assessment of student-teachers in relation to Qualified Teacher Status – both within and across networks;
9. Co-ordinate presentations and sharing of knowledge at the APLP conference;
10. Deliver high-quality university-based input explicitly linking module content to the QTS standards and PLP.

Before placement:

1. Prepare student-teachers for assignments directly related to PTE;
2. Co-construct and co-deliver Bridging with Network Lead;
3. Support Network Leads and student-teachers in enquiry-led activity;
4. Create communities of practice based on subject/phase.

During placement:

1. Regular well-being check-ins with student-teachers;
2. Advocate and support the network provision for the Welsh Language Development Pathway;
3. Identify any training needs and liaise with strategic lead to secure appropriate professional learning;
4. Liaise with school-based partners to carry out Early and Joint Review visits in to ensure consistency of mentoring;
5. Support Senior Mentor and Network Lead with Intervention Processes, if required.

Following Placement:

1. Contribute to the evaluation of bridging and feed into strategic planning;
2. Provide ongoing support to schools for enquiry-led learning;
3. Facilitate reflection on student-teachers' return to the university setting;
4. Monitor student-teacher progress through engagement with SharePoint e.g. End of Placement Report
5. Monitor and ensure that internal records (e.g 'Healthcheck') contains up-to-date information
6. Share wider learning with the APLP Strategic Leadership Group.

Link Tutor

General overview of roles and responsibilities:

1. Support the Network Lead, Senior Mentor and Subject/Class Mentor to mentor student-teachers placed in the network/networks;
2. Collates data from within and across networks in order to evaluate provision and ensure high quality outcomes for QTS
3. Support Network Lead with the evaluation of electives and phase swap;
4. Attend network meetings and liaise with Network Lead re. agenda items e.g. APLP Leadership Group targets and documentation;
5. Attend Network meetings and encourage the sharing of practice across the network and in partnership-wide meetings

Before placement:

1. Attend Network Meetings and support Network Lead in sharing of PTE expectations;
2. Support Network Lead with organising PTE placement, as appropriate.

During Placement:

1. Liaise with Network Lead to ensure that high-quality mentoring occurs for all student-teachers placed in the network;
2. Share effective practice with Network Leads and the Strategic Lead for wider dissemination.

Following placement:

1. Ensure evaluation of PTE, mentoring, and engagement with planning and reflection is undertaken and feeds into working of APLP Leadership group.

Network Contact List

Role	Name / E-mail address
Partnership Administrative Office	partneriaeth@pycydds.ac.uk partnership@uwtsd.ac.uk
Academic Director	Dave Stacey David.stacey@uwtsd.ac.uk
Programme Manager PGCE Secondary	Ian Jones ian.jones@uwtsd.ac.uk
Programme Manager PGCE Primary	Jayne Morgan Jayne.morgan@uwtsd.ac.uk
Programme Manager BA	Laura Emanuel Laura.emanuel@uwtsd.ac.uk

APLP Lead School	APLP Network Lead:	Link Tutor
Bishop Gore School	Andrew Thomas Andrewthomas@bishopgore.net	Ishmael Lewis ishmael.lewis@uwtsd.ac.uk Ian Jones ian.jones@uwtsd.ac.uk
Bishop of Llandaff CiW Secondary School	Charlotte Dodwell dodwellc@bishopofllandaff.org	Daisy Wilson d.wilson@uwtsd.ac.uk
Cadle Primary School	Jamie Davies Daviesj302@hwbcymru.net	Jess Roberts jessica.roberts@uwtsd.ac.uk
Cowbridge School	Katharine Harper kharper@cowbridgeschool.co.uk	Lilian Martin l.martin@uwtsd.ac.uk
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community	Charlotte Blatchford cblatchford@ebbwfawr.co.uk Beverley Timothy-Webber btimothy-webber@ebbwfawr.co.uk	Laurence Thomas Laurence.Thomas@uwtsd.ac.uk

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Ysgol Llanhari	Lloyd Owens Lowens@llanhari.com	Rachel Bendall Rachel.bendall@uwtsd.ac.uk

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