Introduction
The annual professional discussion between individual classroom teacher and principal and/or supervisor affirms and draws together practices that support and recognise teacher development and promote a capable and sustainable teaching workforce. These practices include:

- Professional Pathways
- career planning by teachers
- teacher transfer entitlement
- classroom teacher incremental progression.

At a convenient time during terms one or two each year, individual classroom teachers have a professional discussion with their principal and/or supervisor focusing on the teacher’s performance, career plans and, where applicable, transfer entitlement options and incremental progression.

These guidelines are designed to assist principals, supervisors and teachers to conduct the professional discussions, in accordance with clauses 131 and 160-162 of the ACT Department of Education and Training Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement 2009-2011.

Purpose of the annual professional discussion
Teaching excellence develops with experience, opportunities and support. The annual professional discussion is a forum for each classroom teacher and their principal and/or supervisor to reflect on and discuss the teacher’s current performance and professional responsibilities at the school and to plan opportunities for continuing improvement and professional growth.

The annual professional discussion enables the principal and/or supervisor to give the teacher supportive feedback on achievements and areas for development and, where appropriate, work through any performance issues. Opportunities are explored for the teacher to undertake professional roles and responsibilities within the school in accordance with their Professional Pathways and career plans.

The principal plans with the teacher the optimum time for them to use transfer entitlement, with regard to the teacher’s career plans and the needs of the school to sustain and renew educational programs. Incremental progression, where applicable, is discussed in relation to expectations of performance and professional responsibilities outlined in clauses 131 and 144 in the Agreement (and in Attachment A to these guidelines). An overview of the process is at Attachment B.
Guiding principles
The annual professional discussion will:

- promote a dynamic public education system, which develops skilled and resilient teaching staff
- support classroom teachers to continually improve their performance
- be linked to the provision of professional development and support
- promote the professional empowerment of all teaching staff in career planning and development
- value individuals and their capacity to positively contribute to schools and the ACT public education system
- promote workforce planning at the school level by principals in discussion with staff to sustain and renew schools’ educational programs.

Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual professional discussion</td>
<td>A professional discussion taking place at least annually between individual classroom teachers and their principal and/or supervisor, focusing on the teacher’s performance, career plans, transfer entitlement options and incremental progression, in accordance with clauses 131 and 161-162 of the Agreement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career plans</td>
<td>Any planning for career development or advancement undertaken by a classroom teacher, for example, as part of their Professional Pathways plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom teacher</td>
<td>A permanent or long term temporary teacher employed in the Classroom Teacher classification, in accordance with clauses 131, 133, 148 and 221 in the Agreement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expectations of performance</td>
<td>Expectations of classroom teacher performance in the three stages of New Educator, Experienced Teacher 1 and Experienced Teacher 2 specified in clause 131 in the Agreement (and in Attachment to these guidelines).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expectations of professional responsibilities</td>
<td>Expectations of classroom teacher professional responsibilities in the three stages of New Educator, Experienced Teacher 1 and Experienced Teacher 2 specified in clauses 131 and 144 in the Agreement (and attached to these guidelines).</td>
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<td>Incremental progression</td>
<td>Increments are annual salary steps within the Classroom Teacher classification. In accordance with clause 148 in the Agreement, teachers are placed on the classroom teacher increment scale based on recognition of qualifications and prior experience. Movement through the increment scale is based on performance and is in</td>
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recognition of competence, developing expertise and the assumption by the teacher of broader professional responsibilities, as detailed in clause 131 (and in Attachment to these guidelines).

Pathways to Improvement
An early intervention program to assist permanent school based teachers improve their professional practice and work performance in a positive, constructive and non-threatening climate and manner, in accordance with clauses 155-157 in the agreement.

Professional Pathways
A dynamic, forward planning tool aimed at providing teachers with feedback and advice on their performance and development in a supportive and confidential environment, in accordance with clauses 151-157 in the Agreement.

Transfer entitlement
Provisions applying to all teaching classifications for transfer between schools, as specified in clauses 160-171 in the Agreement.

Under-performance action
Actions that may be undertaken by Director Human Resources, in accordance with clause 158 in the Agreement, following assessment of the work performance of a teacher as unsatisfactory at the end of a Pathways to Improvement period and recommendation by the principal/manager.

References
ACT Department of Education and Training Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement 2009-2011, in particular, clauses
131 Classroom teacher incremental progression
144 Individual workloads and professional responsibilities
148 Developing classroom teachers
149 New Educator support
150 Professional learning
151-154 Professional Pathways
155-157 Pathways to Improvement
158-159 Under-performance action
160-171 Teacher transfer
199 Managing employee absences

Assessment of Long term and Short Term Contract Teachers and Probationary Teachers, 2011


Public Sector Management Standards 2006, Section 281
 Procedures

1. Participants

1.1 Each individual staff member employed in the Classroom Teacher classification at the school, including permanent and long term temporary teachers, must be given the opportunity to participate in an annual professional discussion with the principal and/or supervisor.

1.2 The principal should participate in the annual professional discussions as far as possible. In circumstances where this is not practicable due to the large number of staff, a deputy principal or supervising executive teacher may delegate for the principal as required.

1.3 In particular, the principal should participate in the annual professional discussion when planning a teacher’s use of transfer entitlement or when concerns about a teacher’s performance or fulfilment of professional responsibilities will be discussed.

1.4 The principal or classroom teacher may ask the teacher’s supervisor to participate in the discussion with them, as appropriate. A teacher may request that a colleague accompany them at the discussion.

2. Scheduling

2.1 Principals should aim to schedule annual professional discussions with classroom teachers during the first semester (terms 1 and 2) where possible. This is to ensure that:

- discussions concerning teachers’ use of transfer entitlement take place before the Classroom Teacher Transfer Round
- there is time to address any performance issues identified, with appropriate support, for example, through a Pathways to Improvement Plan.

2.2 An annual professional discussion may be scheduled in second semester when:

- the teacher is on extended leave during first semester
- the teacher is appointed to the school in second semester.

2.3 Annual professional discussions should be scheduled at a convenient time for all participants and allow time for extended conversation.

2.4 Principals/supervisors and teachers may wish to conduct a follow-up from an earlier professional discussion, for example, to review the teacher’s progress towards agreed professional goals at any stage during the year.

3. Professional focus

3.1 The annual professional discussion is a forum for the participants to discuss professional matters concerning the teacher’s performance, career plans, transfer entitlement options and incremental progression.
3.2 The climate for discussion should be open and collegial, involving exploration of issues and evidence to reach mutual understanding and sound professional judgements.

3.3 Discipline issues or personal matters should not be raised except when these are clearly relevant to the professional matters being discussed.

3.4 Keep a record of any decisions and agreed actions arising from the discussion.

4. Four elements of the discussion

4.1 Teaching performance and professional responsibilities

4.1.1 Expectations of classroom teacher performance and professional responsibilities in the three stages of New Educator, Experienced Teacher 1 and Experienced Teacher 2 are specified in clauses 131 and 144.2 in the Agreement (and in Attachment to these guidelines).

4.1.2 The first part of the discussion should focus on how well the classroom teacher is currently meeting these expectations at the appropriate stage in their teaching career.

4.1.3 Evidence for meeting expectations can be drawn from a range of sources including, but not limited to:

- the teacher’s own reflections
- teaching plans and records
- recent and current Professional Pathways Plans
- probation and contract assessments
- observations by principal, supervisor and colleagues
- records of students’ learning achievements.

4.1.4 Principals and supervisors should use the discussion as an opportunity to provide teachers with evidence-based and supportive feedback on their professional growth, achievements and contributions.

4.1.5 Within this context, any concerns about performance and/or fulfilment of professional responsibilities should be explored with the teacher, with a view to jointly planning actions and support needed to address them, for example, through the teacher’s Professional Pathways Plan or a Pathways to Improvement Plan. A record of issues and actions should be made to assist implementation and future review.

4.1.6 The outcomes of this discussion will inform judgements by the principal concerning the teacher’s use of transfer entitlement (see 4.3 below) and incremental progression (see 4.4 below).

4.2 Career plans

4.2.1 Career planning by teachers is encouraged through Professional Pathways because of its benefits for the individual teacher and for schools and the system in developing a capable and sustainable teaching workforce.
4.2.2 The annual professional discussion provides a forum for a classroom teacher to discuss their career plans with their principal and/or supervisor.

4.2.3 The discussion should explore opportunities within the school for the teacher to take on professional roles and responsibilities that will assist in gaining experience and skills to support their career development.

4.2.4 The teacher’s career plans will also be an important consideration in the discussion concerning transfer entitlement options (see 4.3 below). By transferring to new settings regularly throughout their careers, teachers gain a broad experience and contribute to the renewal of school communities through incorporation of new perspectives.

4.3 Transfer entitlement

4.3.1 The annual professional discussion is a key process for achieving the objectives of transfer entitlement, in particular:

- the professional empowerment of all teaching staff in career planning and development
- workforce planning at the school level to sustain and renew educational programs.

4.3.2 Principals plan the optimal placement time of individual teaching staff through the annual professional discussions with reference to the teacher’s Professional Pathways and career plans and the needs of the school to sustain and renew educational programs. Decisions about when the teacher uses their transfer entitlement should be based on these discussions.

4.3.3 Transfer must not be used to solve performance issues. Teachers who are experiencing performance issues will not be permitted to use their transfer entitlement until they have undertaken sufficient development with principal and colleague support (see 4.1 above).

4.3.4 Generally, the first placement period for classroom teachers is five years, adjusted for any period of temporary position placement or contract at the school. They may use transfer entitlement in their fourth or fifth year.

4.3.5 Subsequent placements periods are up to a maximum of 10 years. Following a placement of five years the principal and teacher, through the annual professional discussion, will determine the remainder of the placement period. Teachers may use transfer entitlement at any time in their fifth to tenth year.

4.3.6 Teachers not subject to the previous mobility provisions until 2012 will be deemed to be in their eighth year of placement in 2010.

4.3.7 Please refer to clauses 162-171 in the Agreement for further details of placement period, use of transfer entitlement and provisions for exceptional circumstances.
4.4 **Incremental progression**

4.4.1 Movement through the classroom teacher increment scale is based on performance and is in recognition of competence, developing expertise and the assumption by the teacher of broader professional responsibilities.

4.4.2 Expectations of classroom teacher performance and professional responsibilities in the three stages of New Educator, Experienced Teacher 1 and Experienced Teacher 2 are specified in clauses 131 and 144.2 in the Agreement (and in Attachment to these guidelines).

4.4.3 On the basis of discussion of the teacher’s fulfilment of these expectations at the relevant stage (see 4.1 above), principals, where applicable, should discuss their incremental progression.

4.4.4 This discussion is not applicable to classroom teachers at the top increment level (1.8).

4.4.5 Classroom teachers on increments 1.1-1.7 who meet these expectations at the relevant stage should progress to the next increment level at their next increment date. This will be the case for the majority of classroom teachers.

4.4.6 Where a teacher on an increment 1.1-1.7 is failing to meet expectations of performance and/or professional responsibilities, despite clear direction, supervision and support, the principal should form a judgement, in discussion with the teacher, about whether or not to recommend deferral of salary payment of the next increment for a period of time.

4.4.7 The delegation exists under the *Public Sector Management Standards* to defer incremental advancement based on the teacher’s ‘diligence, efficiency or attendance for duty or if disciplinary procedures have been commenced’.

4.4.8 With respect to this focus of annual professional discussion, the principal may recommend to Director, Human Resources that salary payment of a teacher’s next increment be deferred for a specified period of time in certain circumstances. These may include non-fulfilment of professional responsibilities (which may also be discipline matters), such as:

- a pattern of non-attendance without submitting the required leave documentation (unauthorised leave), in contravention of clause 199 in the Agreement and the Mandatory Procedures for Managing Employee Absences
- non-participation in the Professional Pathways program, including Pathways to Improvement, in contravention of clauses 151-157 in the Agreement
- non-attendance at required professional learning days, in contravention of clause 150 in the Agreement.
4.4.9 When a principal decides to recommend deferral of salary payment of an increment, they should document the reasons for the decision, including the outcomes of the discussion with the teacher, and give notice in writing to the teacher.

4.4.10 The teacher has the right under clause 83 of the Agreement to appeal the principal's decision to defer salary payment of an increment.

4.4.11 Classroom teacher increment dates have been occurring throughout the year. From 2011, all classroom teachers will be moved to a common increment date of 27 January, in accordance with clause 130 in the Agreement. This is being done to assist principals to consider teachers' incremental progression during the annual professional discussion.

5. Confidentiality

5.1 Matters discussed in the annual professional discussion should remain confidential to the participants, except as otherwise agreed by the participants or disclosure to a relevant Departmental officer is required.