

Starting as a mentor

This guide is intended as a quick, concise starting point for mentors to outline the role and help them to get started. It summarises information from the Partnership Handbook and mentor training and all mentors are advised to access both these sources of guidance. The leaflet was devised by school mentors and university tutors during a partnership day at the university in 2011.

Expectations of your student teacher

It is important to base your mentoring on realistic assumptions about what your student teacher needs and what you can expect of them.

SE1 At the start of SE1 a student teacher may not have any experience of leading a class of pupils. They may need support in basic aspects of using their voice, positioning themselves in the room and managing the space. On the other hand some students start the course with years of experience of teaching in various contexts, and such guidance may be unnecessary.

SE2 At the start of SE2, student teachers are still at very different stages of development. Passing SE1 means the student teacher has made satisfactory progress, not that they have fully met the Standards.

Transition information All student teachers will have information in their PDJ at the start of each SE to help you work out what their main strengths and targets are. This is designed for mentors to use.

- At the beginning of SE1 students will have a record of a university tutorial with suggested initial targets for SE1. These should inform your first meeting and the timetable you devise for the student.
- At the beginning of SE2, you will find a summary of the student's teaching experience, the previous SE1 assessment form and suggested targets for SE2.

Using this information helps to smooth the transitions between the school and university.



Being a mentor

Mentors are subject specialists who undertake three essential roles in school:

- (1) Training the student teacher
- (2) Assessing the student teacher
- (3) Providing pastoral support

At times it can be difficult to balance all three so mentors should liaise with their PCM and university tutor who can step in to assume some tasks.

Whole school issues

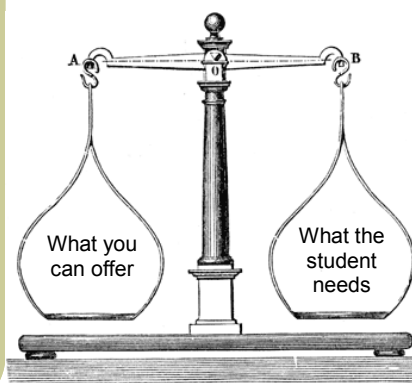
The mentor should also liaise with the PCM to ensure student teachers gain a sense of whole school life, for example through:

- Parents' evenings
- Pastoral experience - perhaps attending tutor time, assemblies and pastoral staff meetings
- Supporting trips and site visits
- Attending INSET and whole staff meetings
- Observing colleagues in other departments to see a wider range of teaching strategies
- Helping with extra-curricular events

Devising a timetable

The timetable is one of the most important decisions you make about the training. The student teacher's experience of the placement will, to a large extent, be shaped by the classes they meet and the topics they teach.

Clearly the timetable will be a balance between what you can offer and what the student teacher needs.



It is useful to think about the following issues before you make a final decision:

- What topics are coming up and what are the student teacher's subject knowledge strengths and weaknesses? It is useful to address some weak areas but giving them all unfamiliar topics will be daunting and difficult.
- What previous experience of different year groups has the student had?
- Is there a balance between key stage 3 and 4?
- What kind of behavioural issues are likely with each class? Is it appropriate for this student at this stage?
- Is the class teacher likely to be sufficiently supportive to help the student?

It is worth discussing this up front, and doing so often avoids problems later.

YOUR WEEKLY ROUTINE...

The weekly mentor meeting

Student teachers are entitled to a weekly meeting with their mentor, and this is one of the key responsibilities outlined in the partnership agreement. There is a suggested agenda in the PDJ but the main purposes of the meeting are:

Training

The interaction between the student teacher and mentor is one of the main ways in which the training is managed in the school. The student can ask questions, test out their developing understanding and discuss their training needs; the mentor can provide advice and set clear targets and training activities for the week ahead.

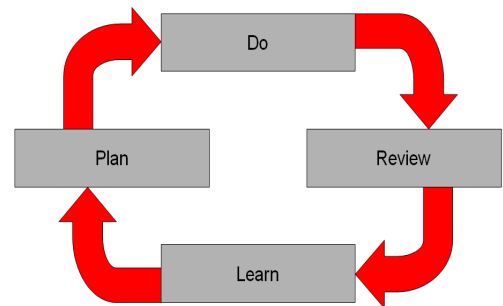
Assessment

The weekly meeting also provides an opportunity for the mentor to gauge the extent to which the student is making progress in their understanding and their teaching.

The learning cycle (right) shows the stages students go through in order to learn from their experience and the mentor meeting is crucial to the 'review' and 'learning' stages.

The flow diagram on the opposite page outlines a suggested structure for the meetings.

It is essential to plan a time for these meetings and to negotiate the agenda so that both the mentor and



student can discuss the issues that seem most important to them. The mentor may not observe the student teacher every week, so the mentor meeting provides a space to discuss feedback from others in the department, agree the main issues arising and the next steps for the week ahead.

Target-setting and the PDJ

“The professional development journal is used effectively to track trainees’ progress towards the Standards. The journal has been carefully planned and structured over time to reflect feedback from trainers and trainees. It suggests suitable training activities on a weekly basis and brings a good structure to school based training.”

London Met Ofsted inspection report, 2011

The PDJ is one of the most important documents in the training year. It provides a snapshot record of the student teacher’s progress. The PDJ includes:

- Targets from university tutorials to start each school experience.
- Transition information to help smooth the transition between SE1 and SE2.
- A record of the student’s progress week by week, with personalized targets and a record of their response to those targets.
- Suggested agenda items for each week, to help ensure students cover everything they need at the right time in the course.

- Assessment information for SE1 and SE2, including the mentor’s review of how well the student is doing in relation to the Standards for QTS.

Whilst the PDJ is the responsibility of the student teacher, the mentor should check it each week and sign off the notes to ensure they are an accurate record of the training.

Top Tip

Ask student teachers to complete their review of the week before your meeting and use this as the basis for discussion.

Induction and starting to teach...

Students are often keen to start teaching as soon as possible on their school experience but there are good reasons to delay the start until they have completed an induction phase.

Students have a *School Profile Booklet* to complete which takes at least a week, and which is designed to help students think about the school, students’ needs and strategies they might use.

The teaching should be phased in after this period. Those with plenty of pre-course school experience may

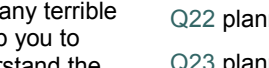
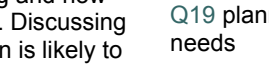
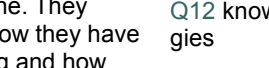
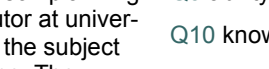
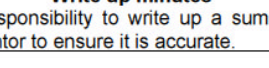
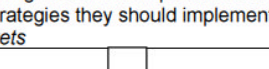
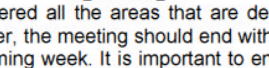
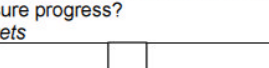
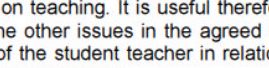
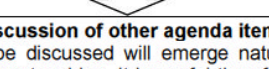
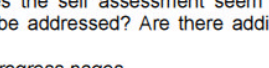
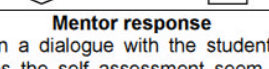
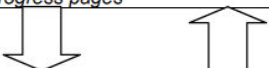
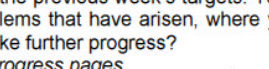
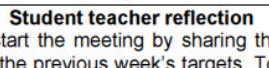
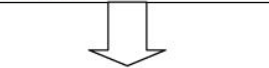
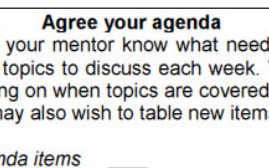
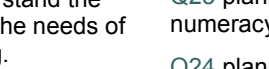
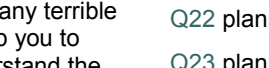
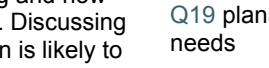
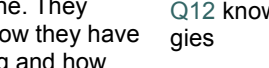
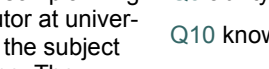
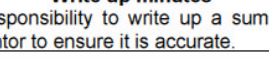
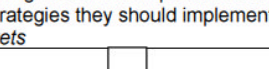
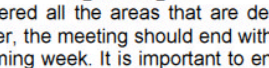
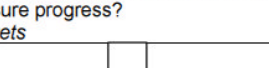
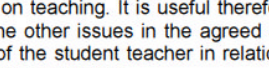
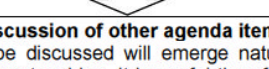
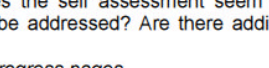
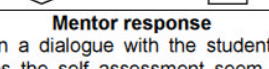
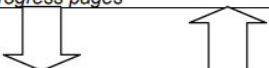
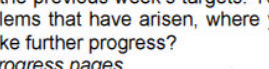
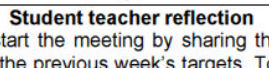
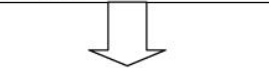
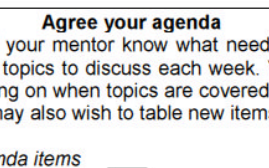
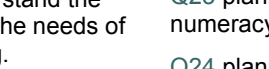
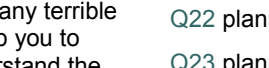
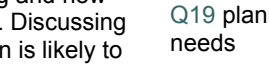
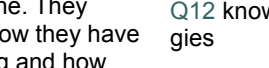
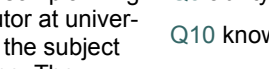
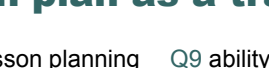
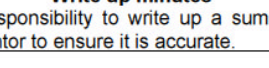
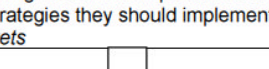
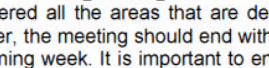
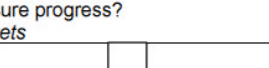
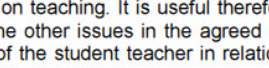
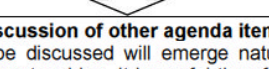
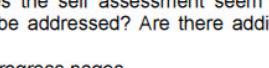
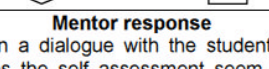
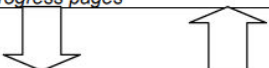
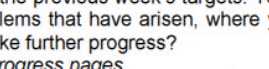
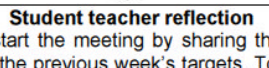
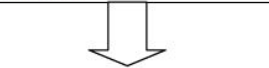
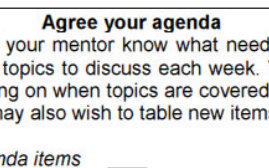
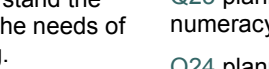
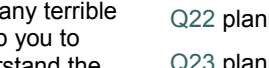
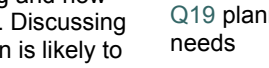
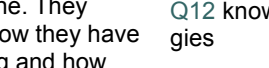
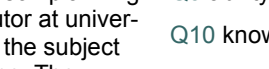
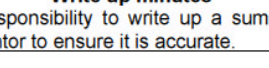
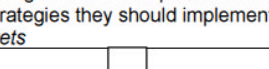
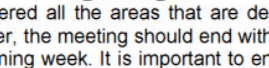
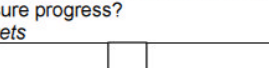
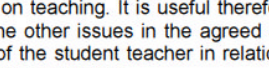
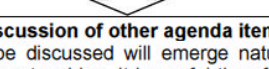
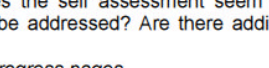
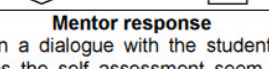
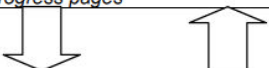
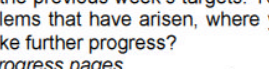
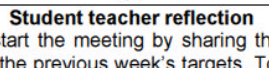
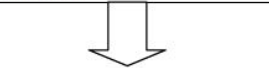
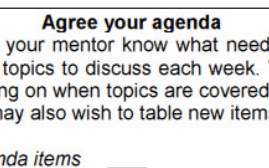
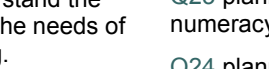
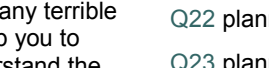
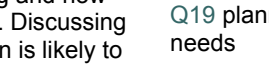
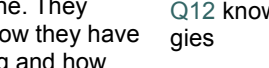
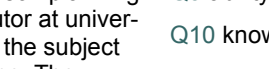
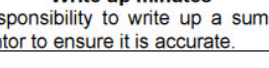
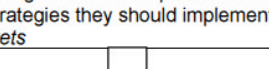
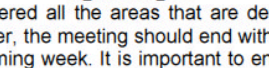
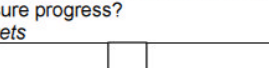
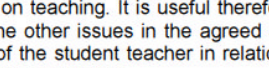
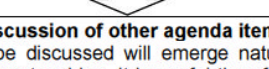
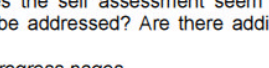
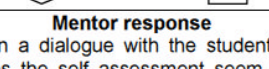
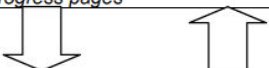
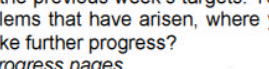
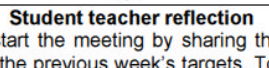
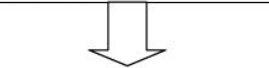
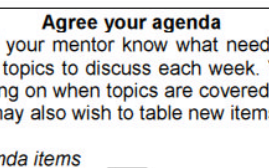
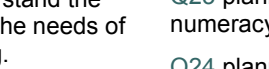
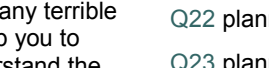
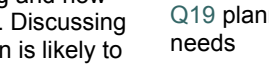
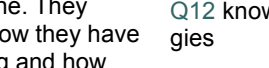
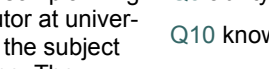
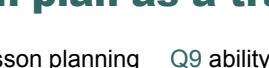
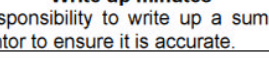
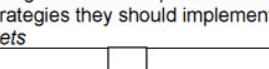
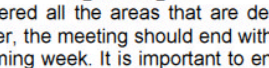
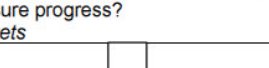
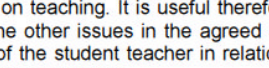
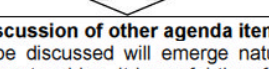
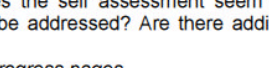
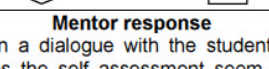
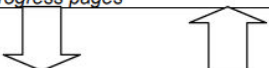
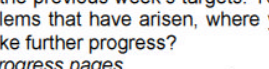
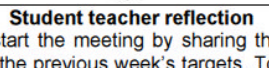
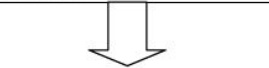
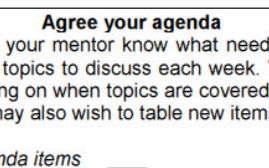
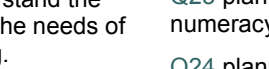
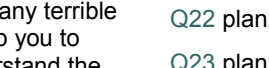
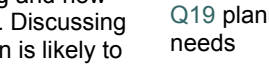
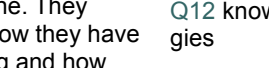
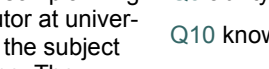
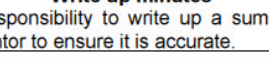
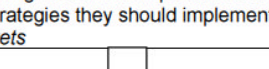
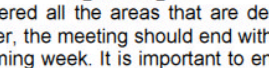
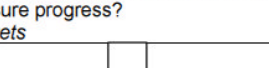
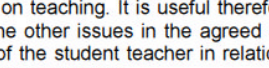
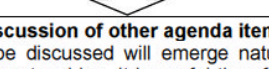
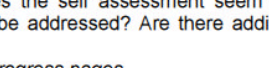
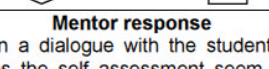
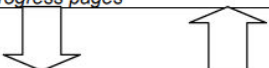
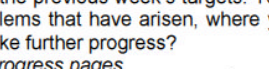
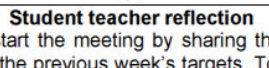
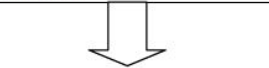
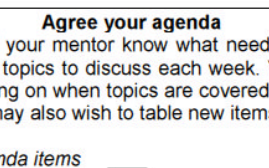
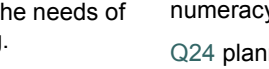
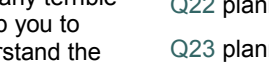
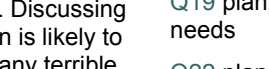
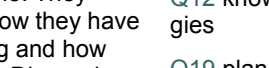
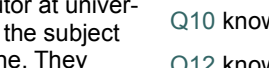
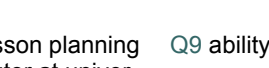
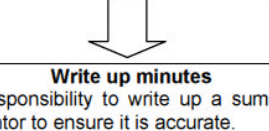
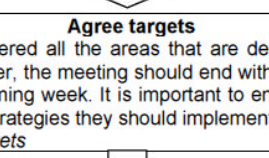
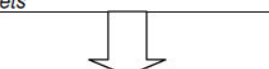
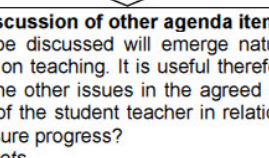
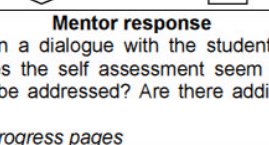
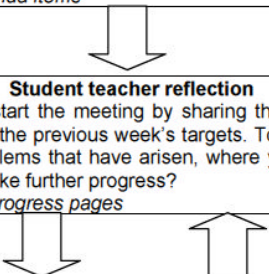
start whole class teaching, others may start more slowly, e.g. running a starter or plenary to build confidence; or setting a homework task.



Agree your agenda

Take time to ensure you and your mentor know what needs to be discussed during the meeting. We have suggested topics to discuss each week. You may need to change the order of some topics, depending on when topics are covered in school-based Professional Studies. You or your mentor may also wish to table new items for discussion in a particular meeting.

PDJ resource: suggested agenda items



Assessment and moderation

Assessing lessons and the School Experience

Lesson observations—formative assessment

At London Met we do not grade individual lessons. Each week, one lesson should be formally observed and the notes written up on the London Providers form. This provides formative assessment which consists of comments on the lesson and lesson plan, a statement about the key strengths evident in the lesson, and a few targets, which outline the areas for development in the next week or two.

Lessons should NOT be graded using OfSTED criteria for qualified teachers at any point. Student teachers should NOT receive numerical grades for individual lessons.

The ONLY exception to this is the specific assessment pack designed to give feedback on SEN / EAL mid-way through SE2. This is designed to help focus students on securing further progress in the final phase of SE2. Details of this observation are in the Partnership Handbook.

End of placement—summative assessment

SE1 The final assessment at the end of SE1 is not graded. Mentors are asked to make a recommendation of Pass or Fail, although there is also a Pass with Concern grade if mentors feel there are significant problems that should trigger a Cause for Concern procedure at the start of SE2. The judgement is based on whether the student teacher has been professional, and whether they have been able to make progress. If the answer is yes to both questions, we recommend a Pass grade. The PDJ also includes a new form in 2011-12 to gather some feedback in relation to the Standards - this is a simple tick sheet and is designed to help you indicate areas of strength / weakness.

SE2 The final placement is assessed against the Standards for QTS and is graded according to OFSTED criteria for Initial Teacher Education. The criteria are published in the Partnership Handbook. The final grade should NOT be based on the 'best' lesson observed, but on the overall level achieved, which enables the mentor to take into consideration all recent lesson observations, mentor meetings, lesson plans, samples of work and evidence collected for the Pebble Pad portfolio. This overall judgement should be discussed with the university tutor towards the end of the placement so moderation can take place.

SE2 midpoint observation To ensure students and mentors have begun the conversation about final grades in good time to address weaknesses, we recommend mentors use the observation pack on 'Inclusive teaching' in the Partnership Handbook. This is the only lesson which should be graded and is based on extracts from the final assessment criteria.

The role of the university tutor and quality assurance of school experience

Each student will have a university tutor assigned during their school experience. The tutor's role is to check that the school is providing good quality training and carrying out accurate assessment. This enables us to ensure there is parity across the whole partnership of schools.

During their visits to schools the university tutor is also able to provide help and support where necessary, and so they may run mentor training workshops, conduct paired observations, or run training sessions for students to address areas of weakness.

Most of these visits will be carried out by a tutor assigned to the school to work with all students, but we will try to arrange for subject specific visits during SE2. If you would like to arrange such a meeting, for example to support a new subject mentor, or to moderate a judgement where subject knowledge is the problem, then please contact the course leader for your subject. Contact details are in the Partnership Handbook.

Partnership documents are available on-line at:

www.londonmet.ac.uk/depts/doed/partnership/partnerships_home.cfm