



Education and Training

Professional Pathways

Guidelines for ACT public school teachers

“The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers”

McKinsey & Company 2007

Fostering professional accountability and critical reflection

Supporting professional learning

Improving student outcomes

Continuous improvement for teachers

Everyone Matters



Professional Pathways - At a glance

Professional Pathways is the performance management and development framework for ACT public school teachers and School Leaders B and C. *Professional Pathways* supports the continuous improvement of performance through effective goal setting and evidence-based feedback.

Goals

The *Professional Pathways Plan* should identify and record realistic and agreed goals and strategies for the school year. Developed through professional discussion with the supervisor, these goals should:

- reflect the priorities of the School Plan
- be based on the day to day work of the teacher
- reflect the teacher's level of experience
- use measurable school-based data as evidence of achievement.

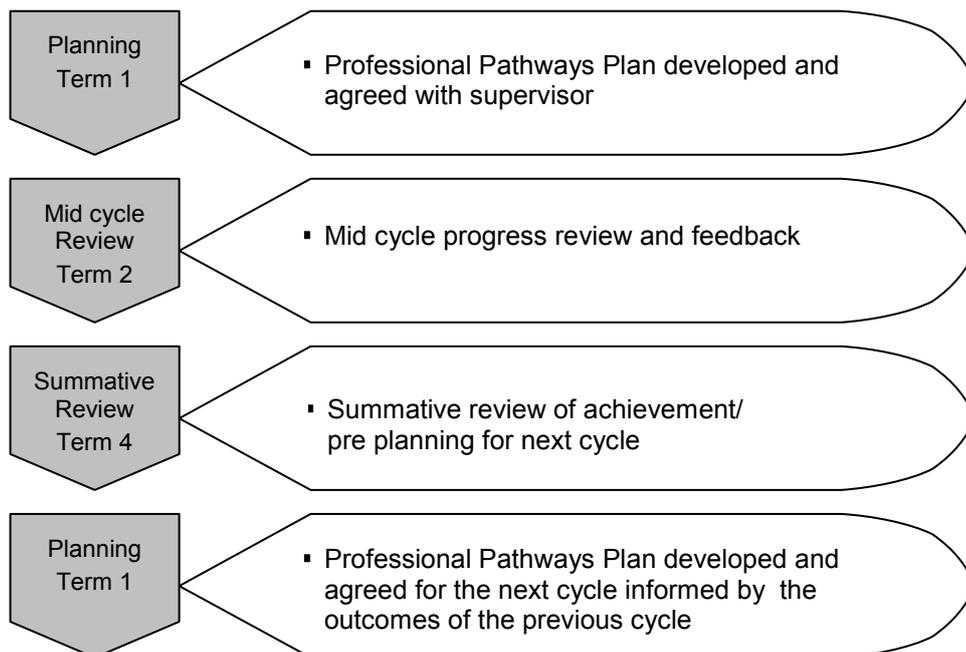
At any stage of the *Professional Pathways* cycle, goals can be revised in response to changing professional responsibilities or performance needs.

Feedback

The professional discussions held as part of the *Pathways* process should provide the teacher with meaningful feedback that supports ongoing learning and development. Supervisors provide performance feedback based on evidence of the teacher's current performance and the extent to which the goals in the Plan have been met.

Annual Process

The annual process provides a framework for continuous reflection and feedback.



PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS

The Department and the Australian Education Union (AEU) agree that the continual development of a teacher's professional skills and knowledge should occur as a normal part of their professional role in a school. This is acknowledged in the *ACT Department of Education and Training Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement 2009 – 2011* (the Agreement), Clause 151.

Revised professional descriptors and a planning and reflection tool have been included to assist self reflection and professional discussion. Planning templates now include reference to career planning to comply with the annual professional discussion provisions of the Agreement (Clause 131, 161 and 162).

Professional Pathways Introduction

Professional Pathways is a dynamic, forward planning performance management and development framework that provides teachers and their supervisors with tools to support effective self reflection, targeted goal setting and meaningful feedback. The *Professional Pathways Plan* may be varied during the school year to reflect changing professional needs or new responsibilities.

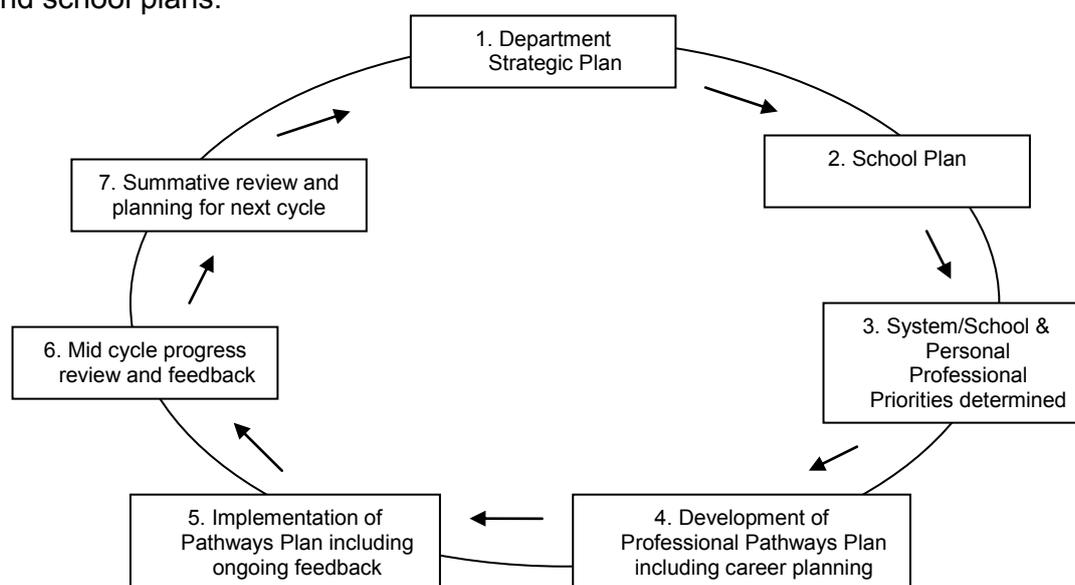
The *Professional Pathways* process reflects the Department's commitment to:

- improving student outcomes
- fostering individual accountability and critical reflection
- supporting individual action on performance information
- providing teachers with career planning opportunities.

The guiding principles of *Professional Pathways* are to:

- support the continuous improvement of professional performance
- focus on outcomes resulting from performance
- be based on explicit measures of performance
- focus on system and school priorities
- increase teacher effectiveness through critical reflection and feedback
- be linked to professional development and support
- provide collegiate support for career goal setting
- be formative in nature as well as summative.

The diagram below shows how *Professional Pathways* is developed and implemented for each teacher. The cycle also shows the steps involved in supporting the implementation of system and school plans.



At any stage of the cycle goals can be revised in response to professional performance improvement needs.

Key information

The principal is responsible for ensuring all permanent teachers develop an annual *Professional Pathways Plan* (for new educators on probation the Probationary Assessment is their *Professional Pathways Plan*).

The Principal also fulfils the role of the Supervisor for some staff.

Principals sign the Professional Pathways Plan and receive and sign the Summative Review Report. Principals are responsible for securely storing a copy of all teachers' Pathways Plans.

Principals/Supervisors

- hold professional discussions with teachers to establish areas of agreed professional improvement and to negotiate goals
- meet with the teacher at least three times during the year to assist the teacher to: develop the *Plan*, review evidence of the achievement of goals, provide meaningful feedback and facilitate appropriate professional support
- ensure that areas for improvement are identified and addressed and that the process is conducted in a professional, objective and fair manner
- Supervisors (and Principals as Supervisors) sign the Pathways Plan, Mid cycle Review and Summative Review Report.

If at any stage of the year a principal or supervisor has a concern over professional performance, they should revise the *Pathways Plan* with the teacher to include a goal targeting the area for improvement. This may involve substitution or addition of a goal as appropriate.

Teachers

- develop and record a *Professional Pathways Plan*
- develop a minimum of three goals, including at least one personal improvement goal and one goal that aligns with the School Plan
- come prepared to meetings and bring draft documents for discussion.

Teachers may choose to have a professional mentor to support and encourage them as part of *Professional Pathways*. This mentor may be a peer at level or above. The mentor does not undertake the role or the responsibilities of the supervisor.

Teachers may choose to share the *Plan* with their colleagues. Teachers have ownership of their *Plan* for the continuing development and improvement of their professional skills and talents.

Professional discussion

In conducting their professional discussion the teacher and their supervisor will have regard to relevant factors, including

- a focus on improving student educational outcomes
- the priorities of the Department of Education and Training, including the *Strategic Plan 2010-2013, Everyone Matters*
- the School Plan and the needs of the school
- curriculum assessment and reporting data and other data
- the school setting, including whole of school roles and responsibilities, management and team structures, the school community, and parents as partners
- other factors that may affect the teacher's circumstances, such as part time work and leave arrangements
- the requirement for teachers to participate in professional learning
- the requirements of Section EE (Teacher transfer) in the *ACT Department of Education and Training Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement 2009-2011*.

The *Professional Descriptors for Teachers* and the *Planning and Reflection Tool* can be used to assist professional discussion and negotiation of goals.

Professional Pathways Plan

The *Plan* should take account of the expectation that, as experience and expertise increases, individual teachers will contribute more to school and system capacity building. The number of goals may vary depending on individual circumstances and the size and complexity of the goals and should be negotiated and agreed between the teacher and the supervisor.

In the *Plan*, the teacher and supervisor need to identify and record realistic and agreed goals and strategies for the school year. The *Plan* will focus on the teacher's:

- professional work performance
- professional improvement goals
- professional learning
- pathways for development
- personal growth and career development
- whole of school role and responsibilities
- implementation of the ACT Quality Teaching model
- information technology training needs
- and other relevant training needs.

Resolving Differences

The teacher can seek to resolve any concerns with the *Professional Pathways* process by consulting with the principal at any stage in the cycle, in line with current procedures. The Department's internal review procedures apply if a resolution cannot be reached, as outlined in the Agreement (Section S).

Pathways to Improvement

Further detail on the *Pathways to Improvement* process will be provided separately.

Records Management for the Professional Pathways Plan

A copy of the *Professional Pathways Plan* will be retained and stored securely by the principal and a copy handed to the supervisor. The teacher will retain the original of the *Plan*.

Information regarding professional development and other training needs may be used in planning school and system wide professional development programs. Otherwise, disclosure of information in a teacher's *Plan* is at the teacher's discretion.

Professional Pathways Plans may not be used as a source of information for any employee selection processes.

Attachments

- Professional Descriptors
- Planning and Reflection tool
- Professional Pathways Plan
- Mid-cycle Review Summary
- Summative Review Report

Reference Material

- *ACT Department of Education and Training Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement 2009-2011.*
http://www.det.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/99411/Enterprise_Agreement_web.pdf
- *Department of Education and Training Strategic Plan 2010-2013*
http://www.det.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/109955/DET_Strategic_Plan_2010-2013.pdf
- *A classroom practice guide – Quality teaching in ACT schools*
https://index.det.act.gov.au/resources/pdf/Curriculum_A_Classroom_Practice_Guide.pdf
- *Continuing the discussion about classroom practice – Quality teaching in ACT schools*
https://index.det.act.gov.au/resources/pdf/Curriculum_Continuing_The_Discussion_Classroom.pdf
- Professional Learning Calendar
<http://activated.act.edu.au/calendar/eventsmenu.aspx>