

Fact sheet

Observation and feedback

How can you get the best out of working with a mentor and / or colleague?

Observation can be a very effective form of professional learning (for both the observer and the person being observed), but there are some protocols that can help to maximise the benefits from observations.

Observation is embedded in the process to move to full registration with VIT and there are spaces to document these observations within the Evidence of Professional Practice template (available in [PDF](#) or [Word](#) format).



Observation forms part of the Inquiry process to move from provisional to full registration in two ways

1. The PRT must observe the practice of another teacher as part of their own professional learning.

They could observe their mentor or another experienced colleague who holds full registration with VIT. Observations should be linked to the focus of the Inquiry or part of identifying areas of focus for the Inquiry. This observation forms part of the PRT's professional learning to support their Inquiry. There must be at least one of these observations.

2. While the PRT is implementing their action plan (teaching their Inquiry), they must be observed by their mentor and / or other experienced colleagues who hold full registration with VIT.

The purpose of these observations is to provide direct feedback to the PRT about an aspect of their practice. Feedback is critical to the process and should be focussed on supporting the PRT's Inquiry. This feedback may inform adjustments to the action plan to adapt to the identified needs of the learners. There must be at least three of these observations.



Alyssa McKenna (registered teacher) with learners
Beaconhills College

Pre-observation

Before an observation takes place, there should be a conversation to set out what is being observed and the focus / purpose for the observation (linked to the PRT's Inquiry). This allows the teacher being observed to give the observer some guidance which in turn allows the observer to provide targeted, evidence-based feedback. The observer can then consider whether any data tools would support the feedback for this observation.

Protocols for the observation and conversations should be set out early on and will include

- what the observer will focus on
- whether or not the observer has any role in the lesson beyond observation and gathering data
- any data / measurement tools to be used that will support focus of the observation (linked the PRT's Inquiry)
- identifying a time for a post observation discussion as soon as possible after the observation.

Observation

The observer attends the lesson and gathers evidence / feedback based on the already agreed and clear in their role. It's important that both people understand the observer is there to provide targeted feedback for their colleague, not to assess their teaching.

Data tools that relate directly to what is being observed may provide a useful way to frame the observation and conversations around it.

VIT's Inquiry requires the PRT to be observed three times while teaching their Inquiry, these observations may all be done the mentor or could be done by multiple teachers, as long as the observer holds full registration with VIT.

Post-observation

This follow up conversation is a crucial part of the process. Ideally this conversation happens as soon as possible after the observation; it should also happen in a place where both people can talk and listen comfortably and undisturbed.




PRTs should take the time to self-reflect after this conversation and then formally document the observation by recording the date of the observation, the name and VIT registration number of the observer as well as a reflection on the conversation and feedback / data provided and how it has supported their Inquiry.

General points about feedback

Feedback is an important part of development as a teacher. Once a focus is set to help guide the feedback given the PRT can view this feedback as a positive, targeted contribution from experienced teachers. Although the experienced teacher is providing the feedback, the PRT has been involved in identifying what the focus is and how it relates to their own development.

Feedback provided to VIT by mentors and other education leaders in the workplace consistently confirms that the observers find being part of the observations and conversations helps them to improve their practice as well.

VIT support

<p>Resources</p>  <p>register for a PRT seminar</p> <p>download PRT resources</p>	<p>Professional Practice team</p>  <p>comprised of teachers, the team is available at prt@vit.vic.edu.au</p>	<p>Online support</p>  <p>read our FAQs for PRTs</p> <p>explore our full suite of PRT fact sheets</p>
---	--	---