

Edinburgh Teacher Education Partnership

# Report on school placement survey 2024



**Queen Margaret University**  
EDINBURGH



**THE UNIVERSITY**  
*of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Napier  
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Cover photo by Christopher Farrugia on [Unsplash](#). The image of baby sea turtles making their own way into the water was used by a workshop participant to describe the necessary independence and proactivity of student teachers, with school staff encouragement.

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The raw data will be stored on a secure server for a period of 3 years (to June 2027) and may be accessed for further analysis with the permission of the Partnership. Please address enquiries to [tepartnerships@ed.ac.uk](mailto:tepartnerships@ed.ac.uk)

## About the survey

### Background

In 2023, the Edinburgh Teacher Education Partnership\* distributed online questionnaires of open text questions to students on school placements, as well as to in-school mentors and regents (school staff responsible for coordinating student teachers and probationers). The aim was to gather feedback on placement experiences in order to improve conditions for the coming academic year and the responses were collated in a report. It was agreed that the process should be refined and repeated in 2024, as part of the partnership's ongoing commitment to high quality teacher education.

The primary purpose of the 2024 survey is to evaluate school placements and improve the experiences and processes within them, across the partnership. A working group of staff from the universities and local authorities meet regularly throughout the year to discuss placement matters and what changes might be made. This survey has fed into those discussions. The analyses may also have a wider benefit, contribute evidencing to ongoing research in teacher education in Scotland that can influence future national decision-making.

*\*The three universities are the University of Edinburgh, Napier University and Queen Margaret University. The six local authorities are Fife Council, Edinburgh Council, East Lothian Council, Midlothian Council, West Lothian Council and Scottish Borders Council, although students may be placed in other local authorities.*

### Timeline

Nov – Dec 2023	Drafting of questionnaires
15 Jan – 5 Feb	Student online questionnaire #1 open
Feb 2024	Analysis of student responses and short summary shared with core partnership team
18 Mar – 18 Apr	Mentor / Regent / University Tutor online questionnaire open  Draft report created and shared with partnership team (3 institution and 6 local authority representatives)
23 April	Partnership Meeting to discuss preliminary findings Summary of findings and partnership responses created and shared with participants
May	Student online questionnaire #2 and University Tutor questionnaire open Analysis of responses and review of all questionnaire data
13 June	Workshop event to discuss findings with representatives of different respondent types
June	Final report

## Methodology

The survey comprises five online questionnaires to different placement actors:

- Student #1 – open to all those that were on placement in the first semester of 2023/4
- Student #2 – open to all student teachers
- Mentor – open to all schoolteachers that were designated as a mentor of student teachers from one of the three universities in the partnership
- Regent – open to all school staff that had the role of the practical coordination of student teachers in their school
- University tutor – open to all those working full- and part-time for one of the universities as support to student teachers and responsible for in-school visits and observations (assessment).

In 2024, there were two questionnaires for student teachers: one in January-February about the first semester placement, and another after the Easter vacation regarding the second (or first / and third, depending on course) placements. The student questionnaires were identical except for questions that asked about future placements in the first and end-of-placement assessment in the second. Single questionnaires were distributed to in-school mentors, regents, and university (placement) tutors in March-April, with the university tutor questionnaire extended to the end of May to encourage further responses.

The questionnaires were developed by the core Partnership staff team and administered by a researcher from the University of Edinburgh. The questions draw on the themes and issues that emerged from responses from 2023, as well as recent teacher education research literature.

As a change from 2023, most of the questions were multiple choice. This aimed to make the task quicker for the participants and easier for the researcher in terms of data management and analysis. Open text questions were still incorporated to encourage individual reflection and elicit more detailed responses.

Qualtrics survey software was used to administer the questionnaires, saved securely within a University of Edinburgh account. The results from Qualtrics – count and percentages in tabular form - were exported to Excel and saved in a secure folder. Open text data was also saved in the same Excel files. Nuanced results, such as per institution or per local authority, are possible with further analysis but are not presented within this report. Due to resource constraints, the data were not explored as a statistical analysis but this is also an option for future work.

Initial findings from the first student questionnaire and the mentor and regent questionnaires were discussed at a Partnership meeting in April, followed by a summary response to participants, in order to share some of the findings and give an indication on the next steps that may be taken by the Partnership.

Responses from the second student questionnaire were analysed and incorporated with the first questionnaire. The two sets of data are presented separately and as combined totals in this report, although, for the most part, the responses were similar and so there is no detailed comparison.

The process culminated in an on-site workshop with invited participants, covering the four types of actor/respondent (student teacher, mentor, regent, university tutor), and along with the core partnership team and researcher. This workshop invited further reflection and group discussion of the survey findings, and an opportunity to suggest changes that might be made in the future.



## Summary of analysis

### Key issues

#### Survey themes

The 2024 survey was informed by responses from the previous survey in 2023 and by recent research literature on the topics of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and teachers' early career professional development. This means that certain themes and issues were expected to be prominent in responses, whilst others emerged from the final questions to each group inviting suggestions for improvement in any aspect of the placement.

All questionnaire respondents were asked about the support that they felt they received from the school and the university, and about the elements of practice that they felt were more effective than others. Students were asked about support for their well-being, their developing sense of agency and identity as a teacher, and their integration into the school community, as well as their experience of practical support (digital access, finance, travel) and their assessment. Mentors were asked specifically about support for their own professional learning in that role and Regents were asked about the school culture as a supportive environment for beginning teachers. University tutors were asked specifically about their working relationship with schools and about their capacity to communicate with other actors.

#### Emerging narratives in school placement practice

In the survey workshop with representatives from the different core groups, participants were presented with and discussed three emerging narratives that made a transversal exploration of the data and particular tension points in placement practice. The description of these narratives takes into account the original data and the workshop discussions, whilst accepting the biases of different actors.

#### ***1 – The development of classroom practice as a negotiated journey***

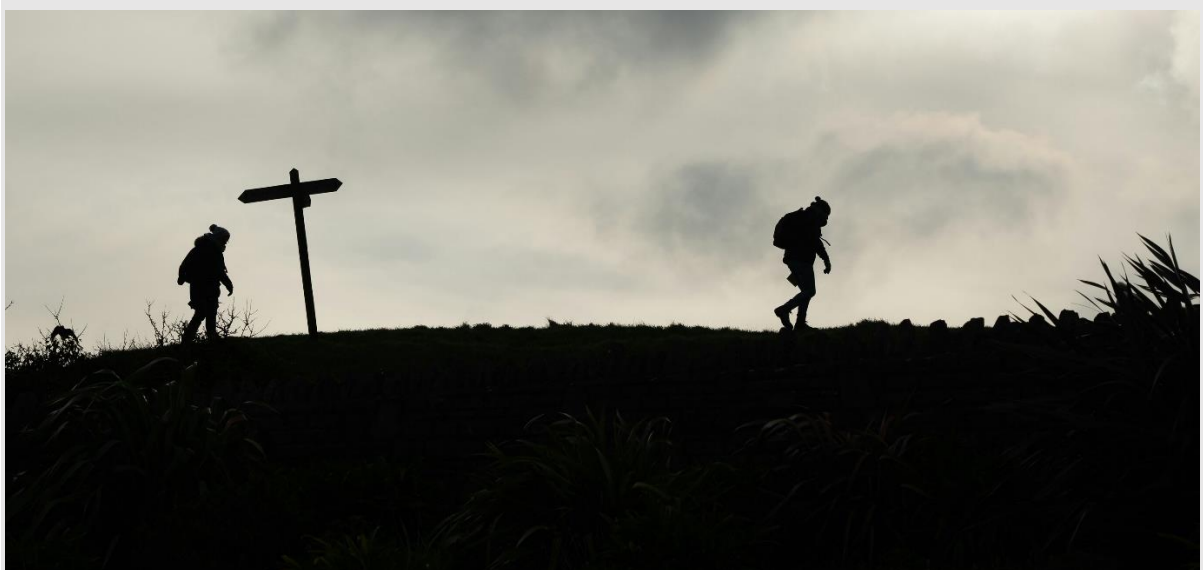


Photo by [Nick Fewings](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Whilst the majority (over 80%) of students felt supported and trusted by the school staff in their placement practice, a potential tension point is in the question of what kind of classroom practice is

being supported and developed. This is hinted at in the words of one student, “I was expected to teach like they do,” expressing their frustration at feedback that suggested they should be emulating the school staff or approach, rather than developing their own individual approach. This attitude may or may not have been lost in translation, given that mentors, regents and tutors express some concern over the lack of initial classroom practice competence, including in lesson planning and behaviour management.

The extreme coaching approach to ‘do as I do’ may be a well-meant, efficient intervention but may sit in conflict with students that described their appreciation of more responsibility and freedom to design and experiment with classroom teaching. ‘Imitating’ may be a necessary part of development. It may also reflect a tension between the preparation for classroom practice by university-based teacher educators and the school-based enacted ‘reality’ of teachers, captured in the words of one regent who felt that students arrived with “too much theory and not enough practical advice.” Whilst the study of theories of teaching and learning may open up possibilities for developing one’s own unique pedagogy, this is potentially in tension with the expected preparedness of students for the start of their first placement. On the other hand, mentors may prefer, or have been hoping to, take a more hands-off approach to guiding students in their journey. When a more active approach is needed, mentors may feel surprised, disappointed or unduly burdened. It begs the question as to whether all teachers should be expected to be in-school teacher educators and scaffold development beyond their current experience or competence. *The issue of expectations is further explored in the third narrative.*

Tangible practical aspects such as digital access play a role, where only half of students had immediate access and a quarter continued to have little or no access to teaching resources. Students valued subject competence as a strong contributing factor to their developing practice, which begins in the university space and continues in the school place, and which may be strongly linked to resources in those subjects with a practical element (science experiments, sports, cooking) and more generally in the fast-evolving use of digital tools for teaching and learning. Hence the responsibility for resource access and capacity for use is spread across different roles.

## **2 – Accepted suffering in well-being and workload**

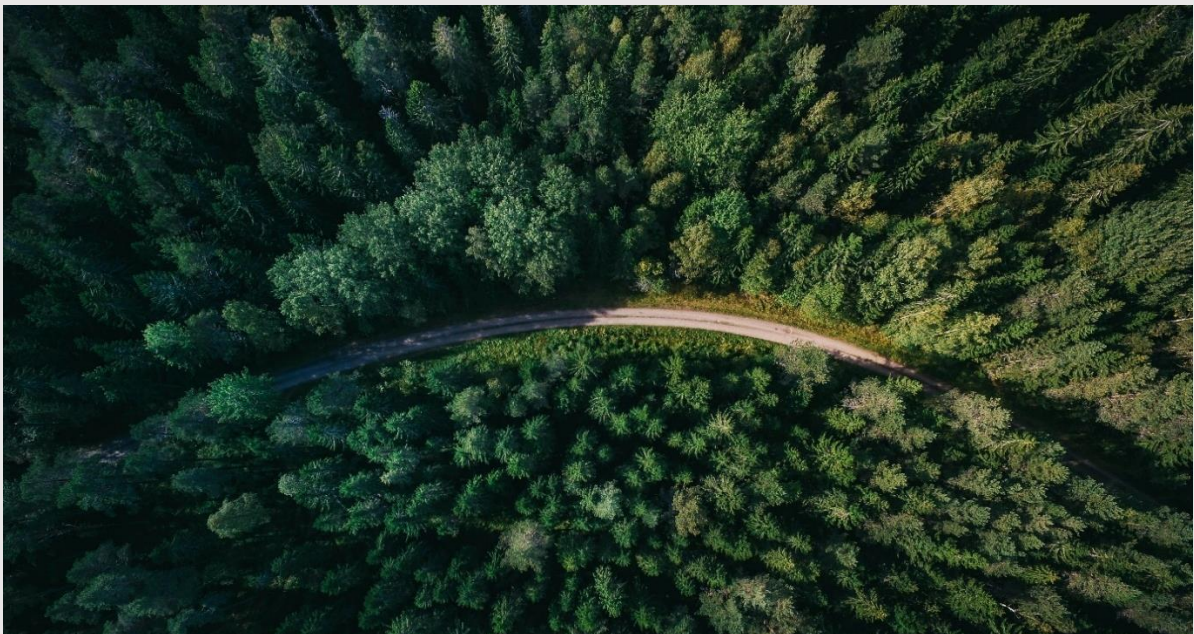


Photo by [Geranimo](#) on [Unsplash](#)

There appears to be a tacit acceptance across the actors that the placement roles add significant workload and place a strain on well-being and that this burden must be endured in order to gain from the experience. As an observer or as an actor, one might question whether the school placement and its complex demands are overwhelming to the point of being detrimental; or whether it is a site of rich growth, as might be a narrow path through a dense forest.

Some students express their own conflict in managing their own well-being whilst also wishing to reach their full potential in the placement experience: “We need sleep ... but we also want to create good lessons,” as one student states. Whilst school and university staff may acknowledge these efforts, some question the attitude of students or at least their proactivity and preparedness for the demanding work, stating that some have “completely unrealistic ideals of what this job is actually like.” Comments such as these may also relate to student ambitions in terms of classroom practice and what may be achieved within the confines of a few short lessons. Placements are short and students may be disappointed not to be having an immediate life-changing impact on young people. There is a tension between their imagined professional identity and the current reality at this point in their journey. What does seem to be a strong positive influence for students is the staff around them that can provide positive feedback to help with their confidence and mental and emotional well-being. *This links to the first narrative on development classroom practice as well as the third on expectations.*

Most mentors agree that the role adds stress to their professional lives but most also agree that undertaking the role benefits them professionally. Tension, however, arises where the role is cast in isolation, without a supportive school culture, or where there is the feeling of their own mentoring competence being judged at the point where mentors and university tutors should be collaborating to support student progression. For all three groups of staff actors – mentors, regents, and tutors – this pressure to effectively support student progression is seemingly increased when they lack information about specific student individual needs or circumstances that might require targeted support. School staff take on a dual burden of supporting both student classroom practice and mental health.

Schools and local authorities accept the burden of integrating students into their communities of practice but the complexity and sheer numbers, combined with probationer placements (formal teacher induction), means that some may slip through the net in terms of support. Students are equally sensitive to this burden and may feel guilt that they are adding to the stress and workload of their professional colleagues.

### **3 – The communication of shifting expectations**

Improving the communication of expectations is the common concern that united all groups of respondents in the survey. The lack of clarity and consistency of expectations was expressed by one regent stating that they “often feel in the dark”, and this is from the respondents (regents) that mostly described their main role as being the link co-ordinators between the school and university, and in whom one might expect the greatest clarity of expectation.

Three-quarters of university tutors sense that students receive mixed messages from their universities and schools in terms of expectations. Linking this to the development of classroom practice (*see first narrative*), this confusion may be caught up in notions of inculcating students into the developed approach and culture of certain teachers or departments, in some conflict with a sense of personal pedagogy that is ‘cherry-picked’ from observation and reflected experimentation. From the student perspective, they describe school staff uncertainty or surprise regarding placement tasks, which diminish their confidence in having a robust support network and clear sense of direction of progression.



Photo by [Ali Kazal](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Whilst there may be more tangible expectations embedded in the placement process, such as the completion of university assignments or the checklist of Professional Standards, there are many more expectations woven into the community. These may be self-defined by different actors rather than centrally agreed, for example where respondents refer to a sense of 'high level' mentoring competence, or others describe their perception of where a student should be along a spectrum of classroom teaching competence from week to week.

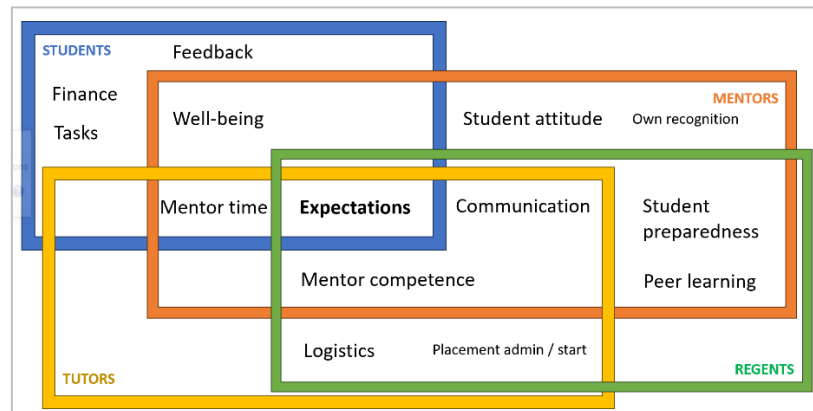
Within their questionnaire responses, all groups call for an improvement in the expectations relating to placement tasks, to attitudes by all actors, and to the progression of students. As an example, the role of the school headteacher and/or senior leadership team seems to be little discussed or formally set out and yet students and staff refer to the importance of the whole school culture as a supportive community, rather than relying on dedicated individuals. Another mutual concern is the discrepancy between schools, universities and local authorities in terms of what is done or offered, where actors would prefer more consistency across the partnership, although without losing a sense of diverse experiences offered by the different placements. In terms of progression, expectations may precede Initial Teacher Education and lie outwith the whole partnership community, for example where staff may expect students to have more prior experience of working with young people before starting their course or even applying as a candidate.

Like a spinning compass, expectations may shift according to the actor or context. Who sets the expectations for the placements and the partnership as a whole, and how these are communicate or negotiated, are crucial questions for setting up placements as meaningful journeys for all concerned.



## From the perspective of different groups

The survey target participants – students, mentors, regents, and university tutors – form the core community of actors within which school placements are carried out and experienced. Nevertheless, through the narratives of the open text responses, this community is a more complex web of influencers and support, including family, friends, colleagues, well-being counsellors, class teachers, head teachers, and local authority officers.



*Key concerns raised by different groups and the overlaps*

### Students

Students are mostly positive about the support received from their university and their school, and positive about their mentor experience. However, some students report struggling with basic needs, such as having adequate notice of a placement or access to digital resources.

Students note that it would be beneficial for their mentors to have more time to dedicate to the role and some form of support to develop their own mentoring competence. Some students are also sensitive to different expectations, a lack of communication, or a lack of clarity on what is expected.

Students value the opportunity to be observed and have constructive feedback on their teaching, whereas other aspects of the placement seem less important or frequent. Students are fully aware of the high mental, emotional and physical demands and make attempts to cope with these. The human support is important to their own well-being.

### Mentors

Mentors are largely positive about the communication with universities and about the clarity of expectations, although some stress that this could be significantly improved by regular meetings and coherent guidelines, for example. Some mentors would like to know more about student needs in advance and some difficult challenges were described because of not knowing.

It is positive to note that many mentors value supporting student teachers and gain from it, although many also refer to the time commitment, increased stress, and lack of recognition. Most mentors have not attended any professional learning opportunity in the last 3 years but would like to.

### Regents

It seems that most regents understand their role as mainly liaising between staff in their school and setting up the various opportunities for students. They are more concerned about the preparation from placements and may be stretched if they also have probationers to take care of. The suggestions

for improvement – communication, clarity of expectations – are similar to the mentors. Some regents would also be interested in peer learning from other regents.

### **University (Placement) Tutors**

For the most part, tutors believe they have enough time and resources for their role, and have a good relationship with school staff, but are of the opinion that the mentoring needs help to improve, along with the process at the start of placements. The tutors' observations seem to reinforce the opinions and experiences of the other stakeholder groups in that more protected time is needed to effectively carry out their roles and that communication and coherence could be improved across the partnership.

## Going forward

Ideas for future development and improvement were invited through the questionnaires and have been discussed by the partnership as part of the survey process. Suggestions were also made by the workshop participants, representing the different actor groups. In general, it was suggested that these collaborative discussions are continued to enable joint ownership in the creative process of change.

### **Clarity of expectations:**

- New text documents and videos are being developed by universities and local authorities.
- Reiterate that individual students progress at different rates. This potentially means that the student experience may be completely different between placements; or that mentors may have a confident and independent student one semester and one with more support needs the next.
- Consider plotting the Professional Standards levels along a timeline of the placement journey.

### **Mentoring:**

- Discuss the provision of protected mentor time with the relevant Scottish authorities.
- Launch (planned for Autumn 2024) of new online course for teachers across Scotland written by the University of Edinburgh with the ability to include this in their professional review portfolio for GTCS recognition. One local authority has also introduced a new mentor programme.
- Consider whether mentors should have a certain number of years' experience or develop guidance on how to select appropriate teachers for the role and on expectations.

### **Preparation for placements:**

- More advance notice for all actors.
- Investigate the possibility for students to visit schools, or for students and staff to meet in advance, perhaps with school staff input to university-based sessions.
- Share the university syllabi with school staff so that the prior learning is known.

### **Whole school community culture of support:**

- Invite regents to reflect on ways in which a supportive culture could be improved, including engaging headteachers and the senior leadership team.
- Seek opportunities for regent peer learning.
- Consider how to build trust in order that issues can be more easily shared and addressed.

## The data in detail: responses from different participant groups

### Part A – Students

#### QUESTIONS 1-4: Response rate by HE institution, local authority, course, and placement setting

##### Q1 - Please choose your HE institution

As some respondents did not proceed past the basic information questions (1-4), there are around **160 responses in total** that reflect opinions and experiences.

	Jan	May	Total	
Napier University	32	9	41	22%
Queen Margaret University	25	10	35	19%
University of Edinburgh	72	39	111	59%
			187	

*\*QMU Primary student-teachers were only just beginning their first placement at the start of 2024 and so did not take part in the first questionnaire.*

##### Q2 - Please choose your local authority

Almost half of students (45%) were placed within City of Edinburgh local authority. 36% were in 4 neighbouring authorities, whereas 19% were further afield in 12 other authorities. This may have some impact on communication or sense of connection between university, local authority and school although no respondents mentioned this specifically.

Selected Choice	Jan	May	Total	%
City of Edinburgh	55	24	79	45%
East Lothian	11	4	15	8%
Fife	11	9	20	11%
Midlothian	8	3	11	6%
Scottish Borders	0	4	4	2%
West Lothian	9	5	14	8%
No local authority (independent school)	1	0	1	1%
Other – please state	24	9	33	19%

Aberdeenshire (4), Ayrshire (2), Dumfries and Galloway (1), East Renfrewshire (1), Falkirk (6), Glasgow City (4), Highland (3), North Lanarkshire (5), Renfrewshire (1), South Lanarkshire (3), Stirling (1), West Dunbartonshire (2).

### Q3 - Please choose your course type and subject

MA Physical Education, PGDE Primary, and PGDE Biology and English courses had more respondents than other courses.

*Data may be compared with course enrolment to generate a response rate.*

	Jan	May	Total	%
BA/BA (Hons) Education Studies (Primary)	14	1	15	8%
MA (Hons) Primary Education with Gaelic	4	1	5	3%
MA (Hons) Physical Education	20	16	36	20%
PGDE Primary	16	4	20	11%
PGDE Secondary Art & Design	3	1	4	2%
PGDE Secondary Biology	14	6	20	11%
PGDE Secondary Business Education	4	4	8	5%
PGDE Secondary Chemistry	2	2	4	2%
PGDE Secondary Design & Technology	0	0	0	0%
PGDE Secondary Drama	2	1	3	2%
PGDE Secondary English	10	5	15	8%
PGDE Secondary Geography	2	0	2	1%
PGDE Secondary History	0	2	2	1%
PGDE Secondary Home Economics	3	6	9	5%
PGDE Secondary Languages	3	2	5	3%
PGDE Secondary Maths	8	2	10	6%
PGDE Secondary Music	1	0	1	1%
PGDE Secondary Physics	3	0	3	2%
PGDE Secondary Physical Education	3	2	5	3%
PGDE Secondary Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies	0	0	0	0%
PGDE Secondary Dual Science	0	0	0	0%
PGDE Secondary Geography and History	0	0	0	0%
PGDE Secondary Physics and Maths	0	0	0	0%
MSc Transformative Learning and Teaching	4	3	7	4%
MSc Dance Science and Education with TQS	2	0	2	1%
Other	1	0	1	1%
	119	58	177	

### Q4 - Please state the setting for this placement

	Jan	May	Total	%
Early Years	4	0	4	2%
Primary	34	10	44	25%
Secondary	78	48	126	71%
Further Education (16+) college	1	0	1	1%
Other – please state*	2	0	2	1%

\*1 = Primary and Secondary (Nursery – S3); 1 = did not state



**Q5 - How far do you agree with the following statements about expectations and support?**

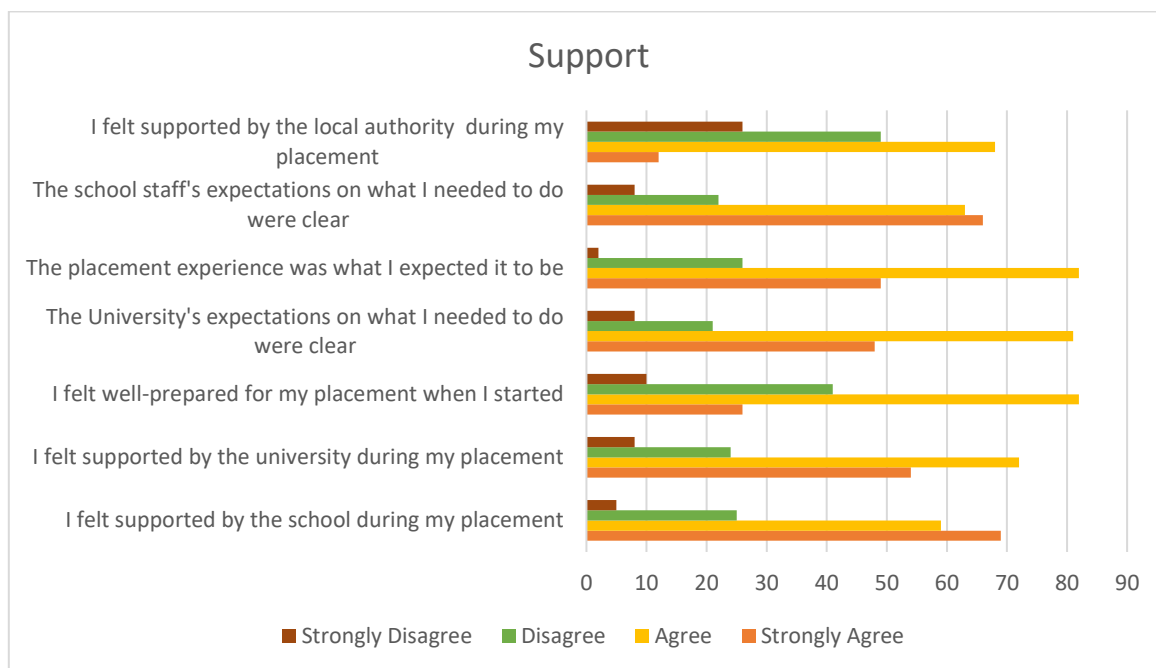
Around 80% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt supported by their school or by their university.

68% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt well-prepared for their placement, although a higher proportion (83%) agreed or strongly agreed that the placement experience was what they expected it to be.

The university expectations seem clear to most students (81% agreed or strongly agreed), as do the school expectations (82% agreed or strongly agreed).

It was noted before distributing the questionnaire that students were less likely to be aware of local authority support or have sustained contact. This is reflected in the responses where only around one half of students felt supported by the local authority (52% agreed or strongly agreed).

	Total	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
I felt supported by the school during my placement	158	69	44%	59	37%	25	16%	5	3%
I felt supported by the university during my placement	158	54	34%	72	46%	24	15%	8	5%
I felt well-prepared for my placement when I started	159	26	16%	82	52%	41	26%	10	6%
The University's expectations on what I needed to do were clear	158	48	30%	81	51%	21	13%	8	5%
The placement experience was what I expected it to be	159	49	31%	82	52%	26	16%	2	1%
The school staff's expectations on what I needed to do were clear	159	66	42%	63	40%	22	14%	8	5%
I felt supported by the local authority during my placement	155	12	8%	68	44%	49	32%	26	17%



## Q6 - About your professional relationship with your mentor: how far do you agree with the following statements?

The responses between January and May were similar.

87% of students agreed (or strongly) that they had enough observation and feedback from mentors and slightly less (83%) felt that they had regular or enough meetings to support their development.

79% agreed (or strongly) that reviewing lessons helped with planning, but the majority (91%) felt that it helped to talk through successes and concerns.

Most (89%) felt trusted by their mentor and most felt that their mentor listened and showed empathy (87%) or gave advice in a sensitive way (81%).

Although a small proportion of the total responses, some students reported that they did not experience at least one of these forms of support. For example, 13 did not review lesson plans with their mentor and 8 did not have regular or enough meetings.

	Total	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Did not happen at all	
I had enough observation and feedback from my mentor	158	84	53%	53	34%	11	7%	7	4%	3	2%
Reviewing lesson plans helped with my planning	159	55	35%	70	44%	17	11%	4	3%	13	8%
It helped to talk through successes and concerns with my mentor	158	79	50%	64	41%	5	3%	2	1%	8	5%
I felt trusted by my mentor	158	97	61%	44	28%	13	8%	2	1%	2	1%
My mentor listened to me and showed empathy	159	92	58%	46	29%	10	6%	7	4%	4	3%
I had regular or enough meetings with my mentor to support my development	159	87	55%	45	28%	17	11%	2	1%	8	5%
My mentor gave advice in a sensitive way	160	83	52%	47	29%	17	11%	7	4%	6	4%



### Q6b - Please add 1-2 sentences on how the mentor experience could be improved

There were 94 responses in total across the two questionnaires volunteered by students. A few responses are selected here to illustrate the summary points.

A number of respondents took the opportunity to state how **positive** the experience had been, rather than suggest improvements:

*"There is nothing that could have been improved. My mentor was amazing."*

*"It was genuinely perfect!"*

*"I feel lucky to have had 2 incredibly supportive mentors, both being different in their approach and what I needed at the time ... The former being much more structured with feedback and resources given to me, and the latter giving me much more freedom because I was feeling more confident."*

Multiple respondents observed that mentors did not have **enough time for the role**, being preoccupied with other in-school responsibilities. The same or other respondents felt that mentoring could be improved if the mentors themselves were more **competent in that specific role**, despite being experienced teachers:

*"I would go weeks without any feedback... when I asked for feedback on the lesson I taught she said that she was "sorry but she was just too busy"."*

*"She was a principal teacher and did not have enough time to meet with me. To improve my experience, having a mentor who had time to mentor me, as well as training on how to support a student teacher on my course, would've made a massive difference. As it was, I did not feel I had any support from my mentor teacher during this placement."*

Some respondents felt that their mentor was not appreciative of their student-teacher challenges or wider circumstances, and that both mentors and other staff could be heavily critical, or inconsistent, in their **feedback**.

*"While I felt generally supported by my mentor, there were occasions when I felt a bit more empathy and sensitivity was needed from them and it felt difficult to open that conversation, although this might have been due their particular personal circumstances at the time."*

*"My mentor was supportive but the other teachers were not. I was expected to teach like they do... Felt bullied by other teachers at times."*

*"It is just hit and miss. Some mentors don't seem to want to be mentors, it seems like you are a burden on them. Others are brilliant. I don't think the uni can influence that. Perhaps [there] should be a short GTCS course to be a mentor?"*

Some respondents sensed that mentors were not fully informed of the university **expectations** – of their role as mentor and/or of what student-teachers should be undertaking or achieving.

*"I have been very lucky with my mentor teachers. However, they have sometimes been confused about their role and asked me what was required. Perhaps more communication is needed between the university and schools to ensure mentors are aware of the tasks and deadlines."*

*"I do feel that more information given directly to mentors in advance would be helpful, as when I shared guidelines at the start of placement, my mentor was surprised as to how much was expected of them."*

Some respondents commented on the **challenging working relationship** between mentor and mentee, some referring to the circumstances or attitudes of the mentor as being influential.

*"I felt that my mentor teacher was a little early in her career to then have a student, she was still trying to find herself within her profession... While she was a lovely person the dynamic was tricky to navigate."*

*"My mentor wanted me to teach in the way they taught rather than allowing me to put into practice what I had learned at university and develop my own professional practice."*

**Q7 - Developing your classroom teaching: what were the 3 most important factors that had a positive influence during this placement? Indicate these by writing 1, 2 or 3 in the boxes with 1 being the most important.**

The response scores suggest that many students find observing other staff teaching particularly important to the development of their own classroom teaching (62% responses and lowest mean score of 1.79). Being confident in subject areas and having strategies for behaviour management are also important (over 40% of responses and mean score lower than 2).

Also of some importance is knowing how to adapt approaches to pupils with different learning needs (33%).

Students recognise the influence of guidance by their department or other staff, something that was also highlighted in 2023, suggesting that placement development is a school community process to a certain extent. It may be noted that this was not selected by respondents in the second round (May), which suggests that staff guidance may be less important to students later in their placement year.

Team teaching and attending additional professional development sessions seem to have been less important to the respondents, but this does not necessarily diminish these as approaches, and their perceived lower importance may be because they are less prevalent across the partnership.

*Statements are presented in the order in which they occurred in the questionnaire:*

Factor	JAN		MAY		COMBINED		
	Count	Average score	Count	Average score	Count	% total	Average (Mean)
Observing other staff teaching	75	1.80	23	1.78	98	62%	1.79
Having strategies for behaviour management	45	2.04	19	1.74	64	41%	1.89
Being confident in my subject area(s)	41	1.78	28	2.11	69	44%	1.95
Knowing how to adapt my approach to pupils with different learning needs	37	2.11	15	2	52	33%	2.05
Guidance by department (or other) staff	33	2.00	0	-	33	21%	2.00
Having a clear idea of my input to the lesson	28	2.07	16	1.88	44	28%	1.98
Having the opportunity to test out ideas and approaches learned in university sessions	17	2.24	7	2.14	24	15%	2.19
Team teaching	12	2.08	9	2.22	21	13%	2.15
Attending extra professional development sessions, such as school in-service days or twilight workshops	2	2.00	0	-	2	1%	2.00
Talking to other student-teachers	12	2.17	10	2	22	14%	2.08
Input from my university tutor	4	2.25	7	1.86	11	7%	2.06
Being confident with the digital and other equipment in the classroom	15	2.53	10	2.7	25	16%	2.62
Total responses	109		48		157		



**Q8 - Growing sense of agency and identity: In your placement, what was helping you to gradually become more independent and build your own identity as a teacher? Choose up to 3 of the most helpful aspects.**

Having the class teacher allow the student to take responsibility for most or all of the lesson has helped many students to feel more independent and build their teacher identity. 88% of students selected this across the two questionnaires.

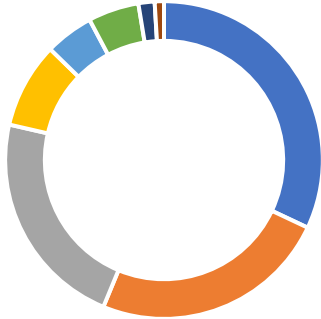
Also helpful to a significant number of students has been freedom in designing and preparing lessons (66%) and the mentor being supportive of the student developing as an individual (61%).

Although the opportunity to run extra-curricular activities was mentioned by some students in the 2023 survey, the response rate in terms of independence and identity is relatively low (14%), as is being part of a network or online forum (5%). It may be that fewer opportunities are taken, or, simply, that the other elements were more helpful (respondents could only choose a maximum of three).

*Statements presented in descending order of count.*

Choice	JAN		MAY		COMBINED	
	Per Cent	Count	Per Cent	Count	Per Cent	Count
The class teacher let me take responsibility for most or all of the lesson	88%	95	87%	41	88%	136
I was given more freedom in the design and preparation of lessons	65%	70	70%	33	66%	103
My mentor was supportive of me developing as an individual	62%	67	60%	28	61%	95
Taking an active part in department or other staff meetings	29%	31	13%	6	24%	37
Reflection activities as part of the university course (e.g. journal, portfolio, assignments)	19%	20	2%	1	14%	21
Taking responsibility for an extra-curricular activity	11%	12	21%	10	14%	22
Being part of a teacher network or forum (e.g. local authority peer network, curriculum subject community, social media channels for educators)	2%	2	11%	5	5%	7
None of the above	3%	3	2%	1	3%	4
Total responses		108		47		155

## Agency and identity



- The class teacher let me take responsibility for most or all of the lesson
- I was given more freedom in the design and preparation of lessons
- My mentor was supportive of me developing as an individual
- Taking an active part in department or other staff meetings
- Reflection activities as part of the university course (e.g. journal, portfolio, assignments)
- Taking responsibility for an extra-curricular activity
- Being part of a teacher network or forum (e.g. local authority peer network, curriculum subject community, social media channels for educators)
- None of the above



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**Q9a - Well-being: which of the following have contributed most to a positive state of well-being whilst on your first placement? Choose 3 that have contributed most.**

The elements that have reportedly contributed most to student well-being so far have been the support of school staff and receiving positive feedback, with almost two-thirds of students selecting these across the two questionnaires.

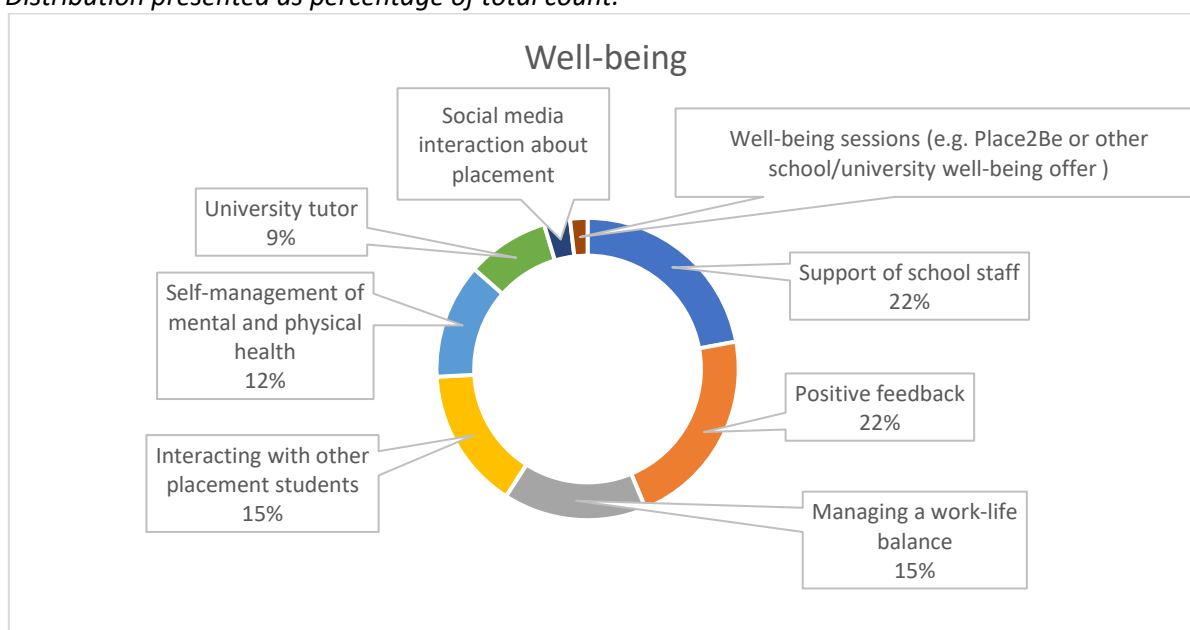
Between one third and one half recognised managing a work-life-balance, interacting with other placement students, and self-management of mental and physical health as contributing.

Less influential, but still noted by some were the university (placement) tutor, social media interaction about placements, and well-being sessions. However, their relative low score may be because they are more rare as an opportunity or less promoted by staff.

Statements presented in descending order of count.

Choice	JAN		MAY		COMBINED	
	Per Cent	Count	Per Cent	Count	Per Cent	Count
Support of school staff	64%	69	57%	26	61%	95
Positive feedback	64%	68	54%	25	60%	93
Managing a work-life balance	46%	49	37%	17	43%	66
Interacting with other placement students	39%	42	50%	23	42%	65
Self-management of mental and physical health	33%	35	39%	18	34%	53
University tutor	21%	22	35%	16	25%	38
Social media interaction about placement	9%	10	4%	2	8%	12
Well-being sessions (e.g. Place2Be or other school/university well-being offer)	5%	5	7%	3	5%	8
Total responses		107		48		155

Distribution presented as percentage of total count.



**Q9b - Please add 1-2 sentences to expand on the options in Q9 that you chose, or about the ones that you did not. What helped your well-being, or could be improved?**

There were 90 volunteered responses to this question; 62 in the first questionnaire and 28 in the second. A few responses are selected here to illustrate the summary points.

A number of respondents expressed the general but significant challenge of achieving a **work-life balance** coupled with the cost of living, and the trade-off with high expectations of themselves.

*“Well-being is a difficult balance, because we need sleep and time off to recharge, but we also want to create good lessons.”*

*“The school travel times were unrealistic. Oftentimes, I had no choice but to work once returning from the school and during weekends. The intense workload felt overwhelming and made taking a break feel impossible.”*

Respondents describe a lack of **human support** – from university tutors or from mentors – as being a particular cause of isolation and further worry. Conversely, those who did feel supported – by family, by school staff, or by peers – recognised this as a positive contribution to their well-being.

*“It very much has been a positive experience from all staff in the department and the school. They work well as a team and have welcomed me fully into the team. The resources are such that i didn't need to spend 3+hours on each lesson like in previous placements which has made managing a work/life balance a lot easier.”*

*“My cluster link and university link did not contact me at any point, except for to organise observation. My university tutors made little connection between coursework and placement. My mentor teacher did not have guidance for what my progress should look like, so frequently gave me negative feedback. The complete lack of support made me isolated and vulnerable.”*

*“The immediate feedback of my mentor after each lesson really helped me grow and take into consideration the grey areas that need to be analysed. Moreover, the support offered by other staff at school like ... team teaching and helping me with the provision of exemplars was an added help.”*

*“I would have greatly benefited from weekly calls from my University Based Educator. Instead of the only one being in week 3 out of 7. Some time it felt like we had been left to it and I missed that grounding contact with the university.”*

A few respondents felt that some **course tasks** – ePDP, written assignment, twilight sessions –, although necessary, were poorly timed, too large to complete, or seemed less relevant to their daily work and need for reflective dialogue with peers. On the other hand, one respondent noted that the reflection diary was useful. Another described the **culture of improvement** as an important factor.

What supported me when I struggled the most was knowing that there was room for error. I value the course's approach to include 'improvement areas' rather than focusing on reaching rigid goals at specific times, and acknowledging that everyone will develop the teacher's sets of skills in different order/different stages.

The **complexity** of the placement experience was noted, with a high demand on **energy**, coupled with less sleep as students tried to accomplish all tasks:

*“The placement was exhausting as there was a lot going on with learning new technology, and learning how to manage pupils. I would have liked to have been fluent in the digital presentation side of things before I arrived in school as it would have been one less thing to juggle.”*

Other positive contributions to well-being included **physical exercise** (running or cycling) and additional **mental health** opportunities such as the Place2Be sessions or simply talking to other students.



### Q10 - Integration into the school community: how far do you agree with the following statements?

156 students responded to this question across the two questionnaires. The results were similar between the first (January) and second (May) questionnaires.

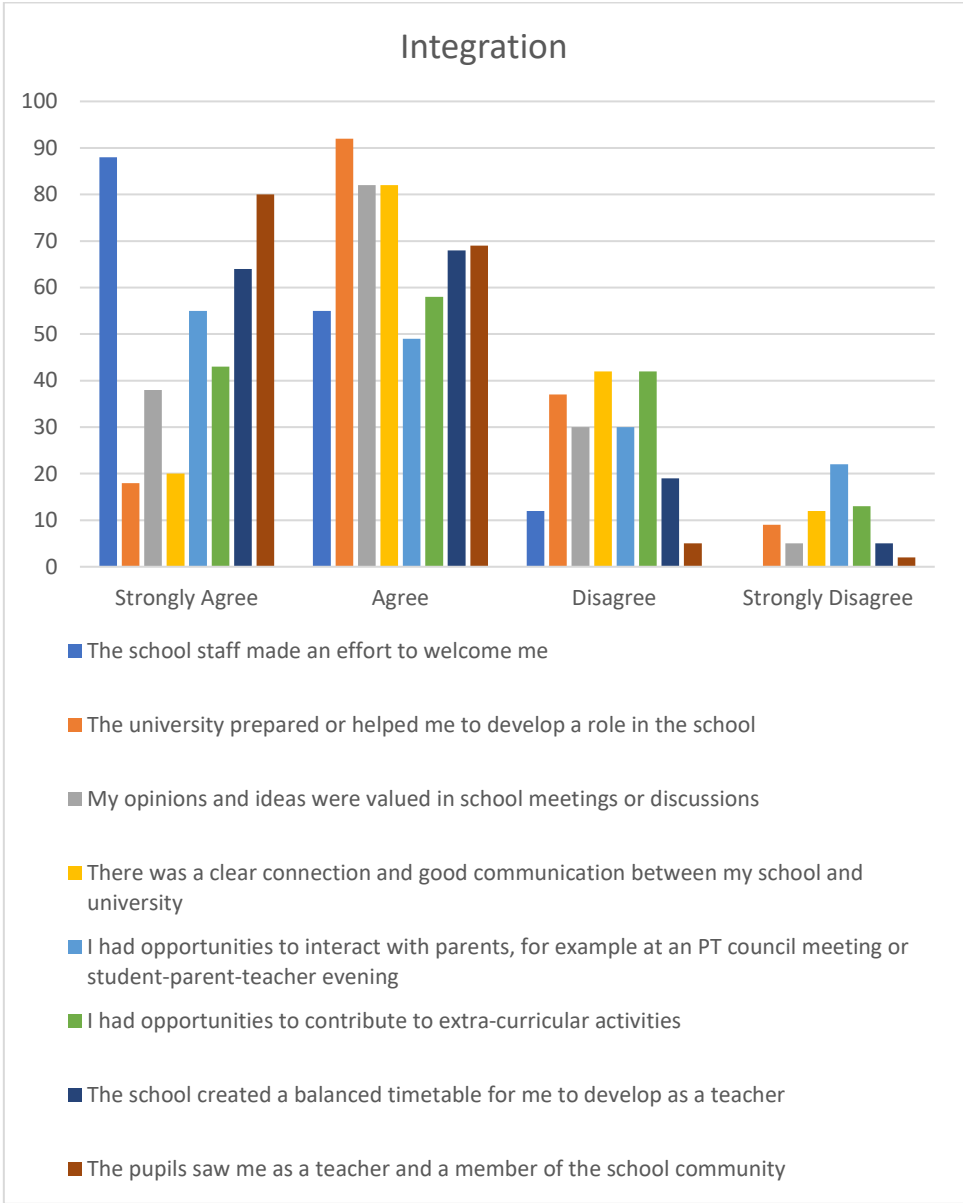
A very large proportion of students that responded to this question felt that the school staff made an effort to welcome them (92% agree or strongly) and that the pupils saw them as a teacher and member of the school community (95% agree or strongly).

A large proportion also felt that the school had created a balanced timetable for them to develop as a teacher (85%) and three-quarters (78%) felt that their opinions and ideas were valued in school meetings or discussions.

Two-thirds of students (66%) had some opportunity to interact with parents and two-thirds (65%) had opportunities to contribute to extra-curricular activities.

Only 66% felt that there was a clear connection and good communication between the school and the university, although how and why this might be the case is not explored as part of this question. A similar proportion (71%) felt that the university prepared or helped students to develop their in-school role, although there were more students agreeing than strongly agreeing, and 30% disagreeing (or strongly).

	Total	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
The school staff made an effort to welcome me	155	88	57%	55	35%	12	8%	0	0%
The university prepared or helped me to develop a role in the school	156	18	12%	92	59%	37	24%	9	6%
My opinions and ideas were valued in school meetings or discussions	155	38	25%	82	53%	30	19%	5	3%
There was a clear connection and good communication between my school and university	156	20	13%	82	53%	42	27%	12	8%
I had opportunities to interact with parents, for example at an PT council meeting or student-parent-teacher evening	156	55	35%	49	31%	30	19%	22	14%
I had opportunities to contribute to extra-curricular activities	156	43	28%	58	37%	42	27%	13	8%
The school created a balanced timetable for me to develop as a teacher	156	64	41%	68	44%	19	12%	5	3%
The pupils saw me as a teacher and a member of the school community	156	80	51%	69	44%	5	3%	2	1%



**Q11.1 - Practical support: We would like to know your experience of the practical arrangements for this placement. Please answer Yes or No to the following.**

This question was only asked in the first questionnaire (January).

Most students (94%) stated that they had been able to travel to and from school with few difficulties and that the school was a reasonable distance from their home (90%). This seems a positive response overall, although a number of individual students refer specifically to the location and travel cost of their placement in the following question as being something that needs improving.

Only just over half (52%) of students were happy with the financial support available.

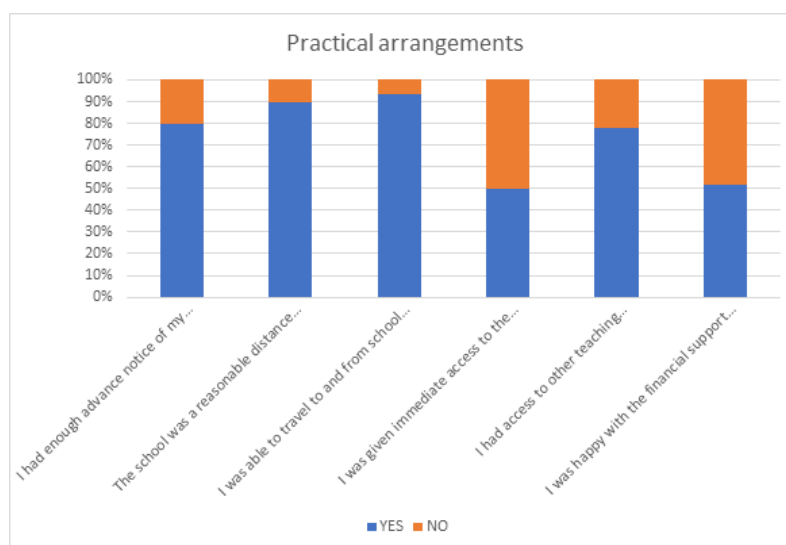
One particular concern from 2023 was having enough advance notice of placements to be able to prepare. Whereas most students responded positively in this 2024 survey, 20% said they did not have enough notice.

Most students (78%) had access to teaching resources in the school or department but a significant proportion (22%) said they did not.

Still a point of concern from 2023, only half of students (50%) said that they were given immediate access to the school server and digital resources.

Statements are presented in the order in which they occurred in the questionnaire

	YES		NO	
I had enough advance notice of my placement school to be able to prepare	86	79.6%	22	20.4%
The school was a reasonable distance from my home	97	89.8%	11	10.2%
I was able to travel to and from school with few difficulties	101	93.5%	7	6.5%
I was given immediate access to the school server and digital resources	54	50.0%	54	50.0%
I had access to other teaching resources in the school/department	83	77.6%	24	22.4%
I was happy with the financial support available (Napier and University of Edinburgh)	53	52.0%	49	48.0%



**11.2 - Course assessment: We would like to know your experience of your formative and summative assessment. Please give a value 1-5 to the following where 1 has been a very positive experience and 5 is a very negative experience (and N/A if this has not been part of your placement requirement).**

This question was asked only in the second questionnaire (May).

The student responses to a five-point scale indicate that the observed lessons by mentors, other teaching staff, and university tutors have been mostly positive experiences and judged to be more positive than other forms of assessment.

Student responses were mixed when reflecting on the task of completing course assignments and sensing their relevance and benefit, with most responses placed in the middle of the scale and across it.

Experiences of compiling a portfolio of evidence were similarly mixed with negative, neutral and positive responses.

For each assessment approach, around a quarter of students indicated a more negative experience. The reasons for these may be usefully explored further.

*Scores over 10 have been highlighted*

Choice	negative					positive	
	5	4	3	2	1	Count	Has not happened
Compiling a portfolio of evidence	2	8	10	12	8	40	9
Completing my course assignments (e.g. researching and writing essays)	1	9	14	11	9	44	3
Experiencing the relevance and benefit of course assessments to my school placement activities	3	8	13	10	10	44	3
Observed lessons by mentor or other teaching staff	7	6	1	13	19	46	1
Observed lessons by university tutor	3	7	2	10	19	41	5
Other assessment	0	0	1	0	1	2	



**Q12.1 - What do you think will make a positive difference to you and fellow student-teachers when you undertake your next placement(s)? What will you take forward in terms of the placement process, or hope will be done differently?**

There were 68 responses to this question. It was only asked in the first questionnaire (January). A similar question (12.2) was asked in the second questionnaire (May).

Several respondents hoped that there would be more **time and information before going to their next placement** in order to prepare fully. Some pointed to not knowing far enough in advance or not having up-to-date contact details.

*"I was informed of my placement two days in advance, and had no time to contact my mentor teacher. I was never connected to online servers or resources, which significantly hindered my teaching ... I felt that I was set up to fail."*

Some respondents referred again to the **practical arrangements** for the first days of placement, i.e. having access to WiFi and the school's digital resources and administration.

*"Not having access to printers, wifi, computers or any other digital equipment makes planning for and delivering lessons more complicated, as we depend all the time on our mentor teacher granting us access."*

Several respondents referred to a hope for better **communication between their university and placement school**.

*"On the same page at all times."*

A number of respondents referred again to the need for **financial aid** and **coping with other life demands**.

*"Having to balance having a job and working a 9-5 through the week was extremely stressful."*

*"No consideration seems to be given during placing to students with young families. I rely entirely on paid childcare which only opens at 8am."*

Respondents also referred back to their points about **support from mentoring, and the staff in-school**. They hoped for the same or a better experience, appreciating where they had received positive support and describing where it had been less positive.

*"My class teacher ... recognised I needed time to go over lesson plans ... and was willing to give that time. She had a different style of teaching to what I envisioned for myself but was able to let me be creative and experiment with new strategies... Other students did not have this opportunity. It was difficult to feel part of the school as a whole however. The HT didn't really engage or say hello in passing, ask how you were getting on. It didn't feel they were particularly welcome, likely because they know you are only there for a short 6 weeks and so haven't got the time to get to know the students. However all teachers were students at one point in time - and it would make a world of difference if they could be acknowledge this and be more welcoming/approachable during your time there. They may not realise it, but they are setting an impression, just as much as you are, and I would have thought they wanted to sell themselves and the school in the best way possible."*

## 12.2 - How could placement experiences be improved next year and in the future to maximize student-teacher learning and practice?

There were 28 voluntary responses to this question. It was only asked in the second questionnaire (May). A similar question (12.1, above) was asked in the first questionnaire (January).

Due to the timing of this questionnaire, a few students commented on the particular challenge of **placements at this stage in the school year** when there are potentially fewer classes to teach and less time to develop:

*“The 3rd placement expectations/ teaching hours need to be reviewed as there are limited classes available at this time of year. It is a short placement with public holidays. I am not convinced it is the best placement for an enquiry.”*

*“Placement three being 5 weeks was impossible. This is not enough time to develop, especially considering the end of year routine shifts due to different events resulting in less time to relationship build and learn and develop as a teacher.”*

Students reflected on the cross-over between **the university and the school as spaces of learning**. There was a suggestion that the schools could better provide time or opportunities to complete university assignments, and another suggestion that universities might provide more opportunities for teaching, even by inviting pupils in.

Students also made similar observations to previous comments about the **coherence of expectations**:

*“The schools need to know more about how the university side of things works for the students. Too many times on placement I have had mentors who have no information on what the university’s expectations are for this placement, which puts the student in a difficult position.”*

*“Maybe more check ins with the university tutor and mentor - making sure students know that they are on the same team.”*

*“Better guidelines from university for schools in managing workload, the placements should be a positive learning environment for students and clear stages of progression ie number of lessons should only increase when key milestones met... The feedback from teachers should not be to compare to experienced teachers, as this is not the outcome at this stage.”*

## Part B – Mentors

65 mentors responded to the survey questions, from a total of 78 that started the questionnaire (ticked the acceptance box to proceed). There was a slight decline towards the latter questions (to 53 responses).

### 1 – How many years have you been teaching in schools (not including your induction/probationer year)?

Of the respondents, there is a full range of years of experience of teaching in schools.

	Percentage	Count
1 - This is my first year post-probation	2%	1
2-4 years	17%	11
5-7 years	23%	15
8-10 years	11%	7
11-15 years	18%	12
16-20 years	17%	11
More than 20 years	12%	8

### 2a – Preparation for placements: We would like to know about the information and support that you received before the placements began this school year. Please answer Yes/No.

Mentors are mostly positive about the advance notice, clarity of university expectations, and clarity of assessment types and processes.

Most mentors feel that the information they receive about students is sufficient, although just under a third do not feel this is – or was – sufficient.

	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
Were you given enough advance notice of being a mentor to a student teacher?	60	4	94%	6%
Were the university's expectations of student placements made clear?	53	9	85%	15%
Was the information received about the student sufficient in order to support them from the beginning of the placement?	45	18	71%	29%
Were the different assessment types and processes clear?	56	7	89%	11%

**2b - What could be improved for you to better prepare for placements?**

A number of mentors stated that it would be better to have **access to the students' prior reports**, including health concerns:

*"If we had known a few things earlier about past experiences we could have planned and prepared to support them more."*

Mentors are concerned that they know nothing but the name of the student and are unable to pre-plan or tailor their support. One mentor referred to a significant learning support need that remained concealed and another discovered one that had gone undiagnosed.

A few suggested being able to meet students or having them visit the school before day one.

Other comments referred to **course administration**: wanting to see templates or examples of paperwork, and receiving this in good time before the placements commence.

A few mentors described a difference in **expectations of the partnership universities** or said that greater coherence was needed:

*"Edinburgh's PDP is a huge amount of work whereas Napier is far more realistic."*

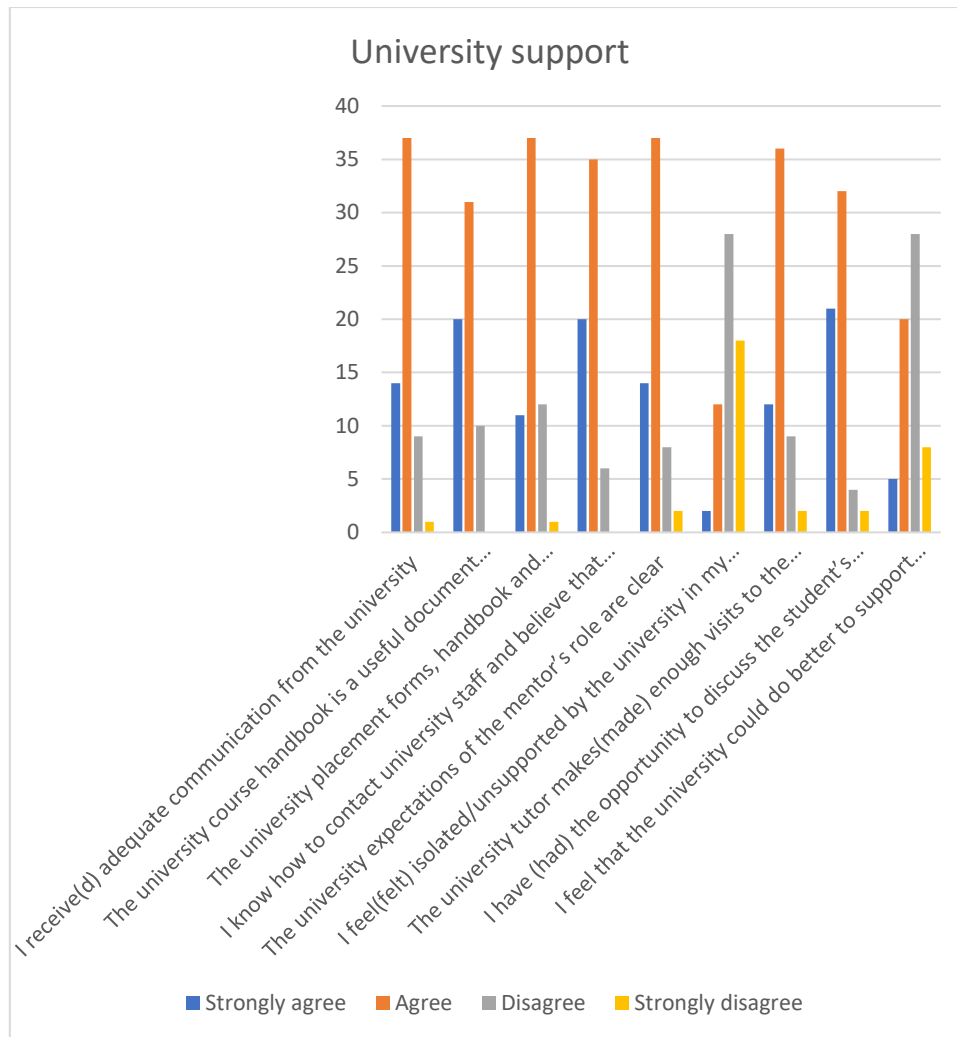
**3a – Partnership with the university. We would like to know if and how you have felt supported by the university whilst the students have been on placement. Please say how far you agree with the following statements.**

Most mentors were positive (agree or strongly agree) that the communication from universities is adequate (84%) and that the resources are useful (84%) and accessible (79%), although some still disagreed, suggesting that some improvements may still be made.

Mentors were mostly positive about contacting university staff (90%), discussing student performance (90%), and receiving placement tutors in-school (81%).

23% still stated that they felt unsupported by the university(ies) and 41% agreed that universities could do better in supporting mentors.

59-61 responses	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Strongly + Agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I receive(d) adequate communication from the university	14	37	9	1	61	84%	23%	61%	15%	2%
The university course handbook is a useful document for my role	20	31	10	0	61	84%	33%	51%	16%	0%
The university placement forms, handbook and assessment information are easily accessible (e.g. to download from a website)	11	37	12	1	61	79%	18%	61%	20%	2%
I know how to contact university staff and believe that they will respond quickly	20	35	6	0	61	90%	33%	57%	10%	0%
The university expectations of the mentor's role are clear	14	37	8	2	61	84%	23%	61%	13%	3%
I feel(felt) isolated/unsupported by the university in my mentoring role	2	12	28	18	60	23%	3%	20%	47%	30%
The university tutor makes(made) enough visits to the school	12	36	9	2	59	81%	20%	61%	15%	3%
I have (had) the opportunity to discuss the student's performance and grades with a member of staff from the university	21	32	4	2	59	90%	36%	54%	7%	3%
I feel that the university could do better to support mentors	5	20	28	8	61	41%	8%	33%	46%	13%



**3b - Please explain what was particularly helpful or could be improved in the university's support.**

Some mentors highlight good **communication with university tutors**: “My student’s tutor was great at getting in touch and answering questions I had.” On the other hand, some had the opposite experience: “I never met anyone from the university. There was only one crit over 2 placements.”

More than one mentor suggests having video calls: “Universities/ tutor(s) could schedule a short (30 mins max) online meeting at the beginning on the placement and at the mid-way point. I understand that there is a midway report, but i think a face-to-face meeting is invaluable.”

Some mentors noted that the **handbook** is useful, but that it could be improved with a “clear explanation of what is expected [from mentors] on a ... weekly basis.” This suggested by more than one individual.

Two mentors refer to the university being less receptive to their (mentor) concerns about passing a student. This fits with the comments in Q2b about the **coherence of expectations**.



**4a – Support from the school. We would like to know if and how you feel/felt supported by the school during the student’s placement. Please say how far you agree with the following statements.**

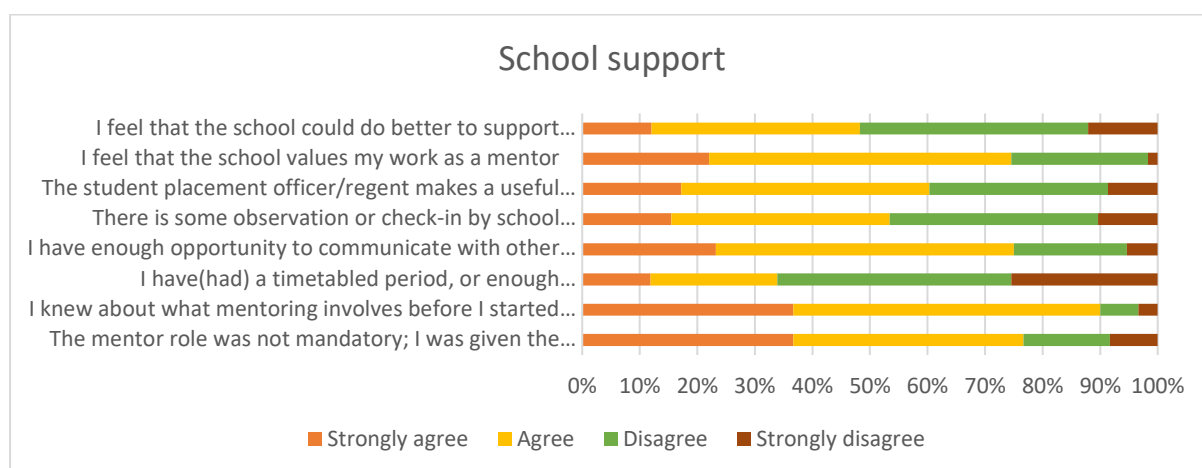
Mentors were generally less positive about the school support, compared to their responses about the university support. Just under half (48%) feel that the school could do better to support them.

Most mentors know about what the role involves in advance (90%), however only three-quarters (77%) have a choice in taking on the role. A similar proportion feel that the school value their work as a mentor (75%) but a quarter do not.

75% have enough opportunity to communicate with other staff and, therefore, track the student’s progress, although fewer feel that the regent makes a useful contribution (60%) or see that school leaders are involved in giving feedback (53%).

Only 34% have enough recompensed time or a timetabled period to complete their mentoring tasks. Mentors highlight needing more time for mentoring tasks in their responses to Q2b and Q3b, as well as Q4b.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Strongly + Agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The mentor role was not mandatory; I was given the choice by the school and wanted to do it	22	24	9	5	60	77%	37%	40%	15%	8%
I knew about what mentoring involves before I started this year	22	32	4	2	60	90%	37%	53%	7%	3%
I have(had) a timetabled period, or enough recompensed time, to complete mentor tasks	7	13	24	15	59	34%	12%	22%	41%	25%
I have enough opportunity to communicate with other staff whose lessons the student/s is/are teaching in	13	29	11	3	56	75%	23%	52%	20%	5%
There is some observation or check-in by school leaders to provide different feedback	9	22	21	6	58	53%	16%	38%	36%	10%
The student placement officer/regent makes a useful contribution to the placement	10	25	18	5	58	60%	17%	43%	31%	9%
I feel that the school values my work as a mentor	13	31	14	1	59	75%	22%	53%	24%	2%
I feel that the school could do better to support mentors	7	21	23	7	58	48%	12%	36%	40%	12%



**4b - Please explain what was particularly helpful, or could be improved, in the school’s support.**

28 mentors made the effort to respond to this question.

A high number of responses describe needing – or ask for – more **time to support student teachers**. This includes protected timetable periods and availability for staff cover (for example to allow for observation).

*“More needs to be done to recognise the extra work mentoring a student brings and time given to the teacher to do their own work.”*

One mentor describes using a sick day to complete university paperwork:

*“I have really enjoyed mentoring this year however, I feel that more time should be allocated to mentors to write up final reports. The pre-Christmas report took me one whole work day to complete and I was very fortunate that I was sick at the time and was able to complete it on a work day however, if this was not the case I would have had to write up the final report on a weekend day in my own time when I am not getting paid. More time should be given to mentors to complete the final reports.”*

Mentor experiences of school support is mixed. Some are very grateful for the **input of their regent or head**, whereas another remarked that regents should pay attention to student teachers and not just probationers (induction year teachers).

**5 – Relationship with students (mentees): We would like to know how you have experienced your professional relationship with the student teacher(s). How far do you agree with the following?**

The mentor relationships with students are largely (93%) positive and mentors find it easy to establish a sense of trust (90%). This seems supported by students being clear on the expectations (83%) and being responsive to feedback (84%).

A particular positive point is that most mentors feel that they learn from the professional discussions with students, although a fifth (21%) feel it is difficult to give the students the support they need or want. More an observation from the mentors is that 57% see students struggling with developing agency and sense of professional identity.

The significant point of concern is that **most mentors (83%) feel that the role adds stress to their work**.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Strongly + Agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Our working relationship(s) has/have been mostly positive	29	25	4	0	58	93%	50%	43%	7%	0%
Students are clear on what is expected of them in terms of course requirements	22	26	8	2	58	83%	38%	45%	14%	3%
I find that students are responsive to feedback	23	26	7	2	58	84%	40%	45%	12%	3%
It is easy to establish a sense of trust with students	20	32	5	1	58	90%	34%	55%	9%	2%
I find it difficult to give students the support that they need or want	3	9	34	12	58	21%	5%	16%	59%	21%
Mentoring adds some stress to my own professional work	15	33	8	2	58	83%	26%	57%	14%	3%
Many students struggle with developing their agency and sense of professional identity	12	21	21	4	58	57%	21%	36%	36%	7%
I learn from the professional discussions that I have with students	8	44	6	0	58	90%	14%	76%	10%	0%

**6 – Your own mentoring approach: What approaches have you found to be the most effective or influential in supporting your student teacher(s) to develop their pedagogy and sense of identity? Please choose max 3 from the following.**

Here the statements have been re-ordered largest to smallest % from the presentation in the questionnaire.

The observation of students and giving feedback, and one-to-one meetings are reported as the most effective or influential, although they may also be, traditionally, the most popular approaches.

It may be interesting to hear from mentors why these approaches are felt to be more influential than coaching, for example. 34% of mentors see giving feedback on lesson plans as effective or influential, which may be interesting to compare with student opinions (in 2023 some said that this was time consuming and a less helpful exercise).

Very few mentors believe leaving students to manage themselves as effective for development of pedagogy and sense of identity.

<i>Total 58 responses</i>	Percentage	Count
Observation of students teaching and giving feedback	84%	49
One-to-one meetings to listen to their concerns and questions	76%	44
Coaching on specific aspects: e.g. demonstrating lesson activities and techniques	40%	23
Giving feedback on lesson plans in advance	34%	20
Informal contact with the student throughout the day	28%	16
Encouraging students to become an active member of staff around the department/school	19%	11
Advising students to observe others until they feel more confident	16%	9
Leaving the student to manage themselves unless they ask for help	3%	2

**7 – Training for mentors. Have you attended any of the following in the last 3 years? (If not, please select “None of the above”)**

Out of 56 respondents, 40 (71%) state that they have **not attended** any of the listed types of professional learning opportunity for mentors **in the last 3 years**.

Relatively few have attended one or more of the types. This is in contrast to the same respondent’s replies to Q8 where there seems to be a desire amongst some for guidance and other learning opportunities. The same desire was noted in the findings of the 2023 survey.

This finding may be considered in the context of what the universities, local authorities and schools state that they offer, and the popularity (attendance, feedback) of this.

Total 56 responses	Percentage	Count
Formal professional learning course on mentoring student teachers	4%	2
Local authority training for mentors	7%	4
University meeting or seminar for mentors	14%	8
School meeting or in-school twilight session for mentors	5%	3
Other (please state)*	5%	3
None of the above	71%	40

\*Other examples were: being a ‘cluster tutor’ some years ago; support from other universities; online meeting with university

**8 - Which of the following would you like the opportunity to have, that would make a difference to your mentoring? Choose all that apply.**

There is a fairly even interest in guidance or other professional learning across the mentoring tasks, slightly more so in maximising the limited time with students, linked to the desire for more time for mentoring tasks (see previous questions).

The idea of formal recognition – the example given being a certificate – is felt by two-thirds of mentors to potentially make a difference to their mentoring experience.

Total 53 responses	Percentage	Count
Guidance on how to best use limited time with student	42%	22
How to support self with the pressure and significantly increased workload	38%	20
How to have conversations with student teachers	25%	13
How to work effectively with student teachers in the classroom	30%	16
How to train other new mentors	23%	12
Peer learning to exchange approaches with other mentors locally	34%	18
A formal Professional Development certificate to recognise mentor experience	64%	34
Other (please state)*	9%	5

\*None were related to professional learning but reiterated points made in Q9 and Q10.

**9 - We wish to ensure a close and meaningful partnership between the school, the university and the local authority. Please suggest how this might be improved. (Open text)**

25 mentors responded to this question.

One third referred to **improving the communication** from the university and between the mentor, tutor and student as a 3-way dialogue. Whilst mentors recognise the appropriate distance of the university once the placement is underway, they appreciate regular visits.

One fifth of respondents suggest to improve the **coherence of expectations** across different partners. One mentor suggests a university-led session to clarify expectations and another suggests that school teachers could visit a session(s) at the university to meet students and understand the teaching and learning that takes place. One mentor feels that, whilst students have been capable this year, their attitudes have been wanting:

*“Students this year have been quite disinterested and had great skills but lacked the want to put in effort, they seemed unaware of what they were being asked to do.”*

In terms of **better preparing for placements**, mentors refer to having sufficient information about students in advance and one suggests a visit day to the school. One complains about the lack of device and internet/server access for students.

One fifth of respondents return to the **role and workload of the mentor**. Two mention the need for more or protected time for mentoring tasks; two would like improved access to professional learning opportunities or a dedicated mentor handbook; and one would like improved recognition of mentoring: *“the work carried out to support the next generation of teachers.”*

**10 - Is there anything else that would help to ensure that the experience for school mentors remains positive? (Open text)**

20 mentors responded to this question and there was a variety of response topics.

In terms of improving students’ development, mentors again refer to having **advance notice** and **more information on students**. Increasing the amount and frequency of **classroom experience** is suggest by one mentor, whilst another suggests improving the **grading** to more nuanced than (un)satisfactory. One mentor also feels that the **GTCS guidance** is too technical and could be simplified or contextualised better for students.

One mentor mentions improving the **partnership communication** whilst another feels that the placement tutors can sometimes seem judgemental:

*“Some tutors [are] intimidating and make you feel as if you are being assessed - a bit more empathy for the increased workload and stress supporting a student brings would be appreciated.”*

From the side of the school, one mentor feels that their school’s **welcoming attitude** to students is helpful, whereas another feels that a **community approach** to developing students could be better than feeling that *“the placement is not the sole responsibility of the mentor.”*

Five mentors return to the matter of needing more **time and recognition** for their role, as well as **opportunities for professional learning**.

## Part C – Regents

There were 36 valid responses to the regents' questionnaire (out of 37 that started it). This may be compared with the total number of regents in the partnership to generate a response rate from the full sample.

### 1 – The regent's role within the school. Are you a:

	Percentage	Count
Class teacher	6%	2
Principal teacher	22%	8
Depute	58%	21
Head teacher	6%	2
Other SMT position	3%	1
Other role (please state)	6%	2

More than half of respondents couple the regent role with their role as a depute.

These proportions may or may not be reflective of all current regents within the partnership.

### 2 – What do you see your role as Regent being? Choose the 3 main elements from the following.

The majority of regent respondents (89%) see their main role as being liaising with the mentor and other school staff. More than half (58%) support probationers.

Only a third see a main part of their role as arranging additional profession learning opportunities and a similar proportion recognise liaising with universities as a main element.

<i>Total 36 responses - re-ordered largest to smallest</i>	Percentage	Count
Liaising with the mentor and school staff	89%	32
Supporting probationers	58%	21
Providing direct student support and overseeing welfare	47%	17
Performing GTCS admin	39%	14
Arranging additional CPD opportunities for student-teachers	33%	12
Liaising with universities	28%	10
Co-ordinating with schools	0%	0
Other not mentioned here (please state)	0%	0



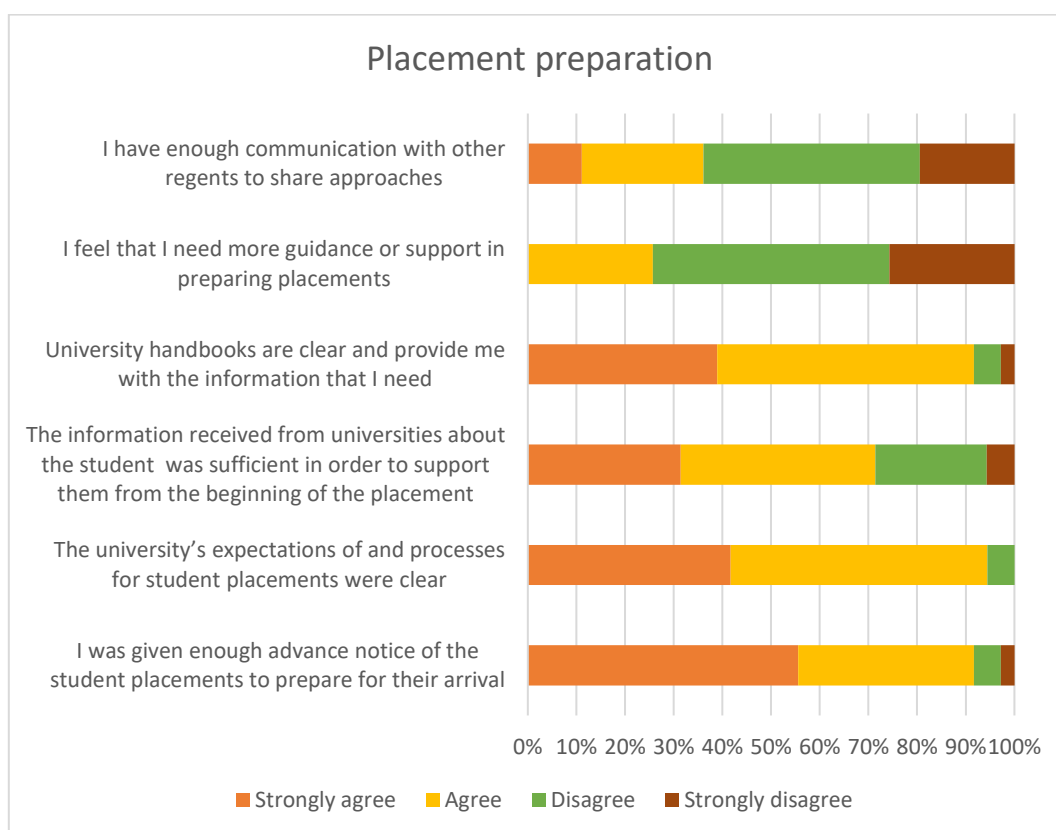
### 3a - Preparation for placements: We would like to know about the information and support that you received before the placements began. How far do you agree with the following?

Despite the concerns of mentors (see previous section), the regents here feel that they had enough advance notice (92% agree or strongly agree), the university expectations were clear (94%), and the university handbooks provide them with adequate information (92%).

However, like the mentors, fewer (71%) agree that the information received about students was sufficient to support them from the start of the placement.

Less positively, one quarter (26%) feel that they would benefit from more guidance or support in preparing placements and only one third (36%) feel that they have enough communication with other regents to share approaches.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Strongly + Agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I was given enough advance notice of the student placements to prepare for their arrival	20	13	2	1	36	92%	56%	36%	6%	3%
The university's expectations of and processes for student placements were clear	15	19	2	0	36	94%	42%	53%	6%	0%
The information received from universities about the student was sufficient in order to support them from the beginning of the placement	11	14	8	2	35	71%	31%	40%	23%	6%
University handbooks are clear and provide me with the information that I need	14	19	2	1	36	92%	39%	53%	6%	3%
I feel that I need more guidance or support in preparing placements	0	9	17	9	35	26%	0%	26%	49%	26%
I have enough communication with other regents to share approaches	4	9	16	7	36	36%	11%	25%	44%	19%



### 3b - What could be improved in the preparation phase?

23 regents responded to this open text question.

Just under half of the respondents referred to improving the **preparation for placements**. Specific examples include: having important information about student needs and previous placements; meeting students earlier; and generally having more notice of placements in advance.

One third referred to the **communication between partners** as needing improvement. Specific reference was made to improving the clarity and coherence of expectations. One regent suggested that some communication between schools might be useful.

A few regents expressed an interest in **peer learning between regents** in order to share and improve their own approaches.

Two regents stated that they could not think of anything specific to improve in the preparation phase.

### 4 - What do you feel are your approaches that are giving / have given the most effective support to students on their placement? Choose a maximum of 3.

The majority of respondents feel that their communication with school staff – perhaps understood as a liaison approach – is one of the most effective ways of supporting students.

Other responses were spread across the approaches of giving a welcome tour, arranging shadowing and professional learning sessions, and observing the student teacher in the classroom.

Fewer respondents selected making sure that students have access to resources, which may be interesting to explore, given the complaints by students and mentors about this point.

Very few regents see having one-to-one meetings as being particularly effective compared to other options. This may be an infrequent practice across the partnership.

<i>Re-ordered largest to smallest %</i>	Percentage	Count
Monitoring the placement by communicating with the school staff	81%	29
Welcoming the student teachers with a tour of the school	50%	18
Arranging a variety of shadowing opportunities with different staff	42%	15
Arranging professional development sessions on different topics	36%	13
Observing the student teacher and giving feedback	33%	12
Having a close working relationship with the other school staff	31%	11
Making sure that students have access to online and offline resources	17%	6
One-to-one meetings between you and the student teacher	8%	3

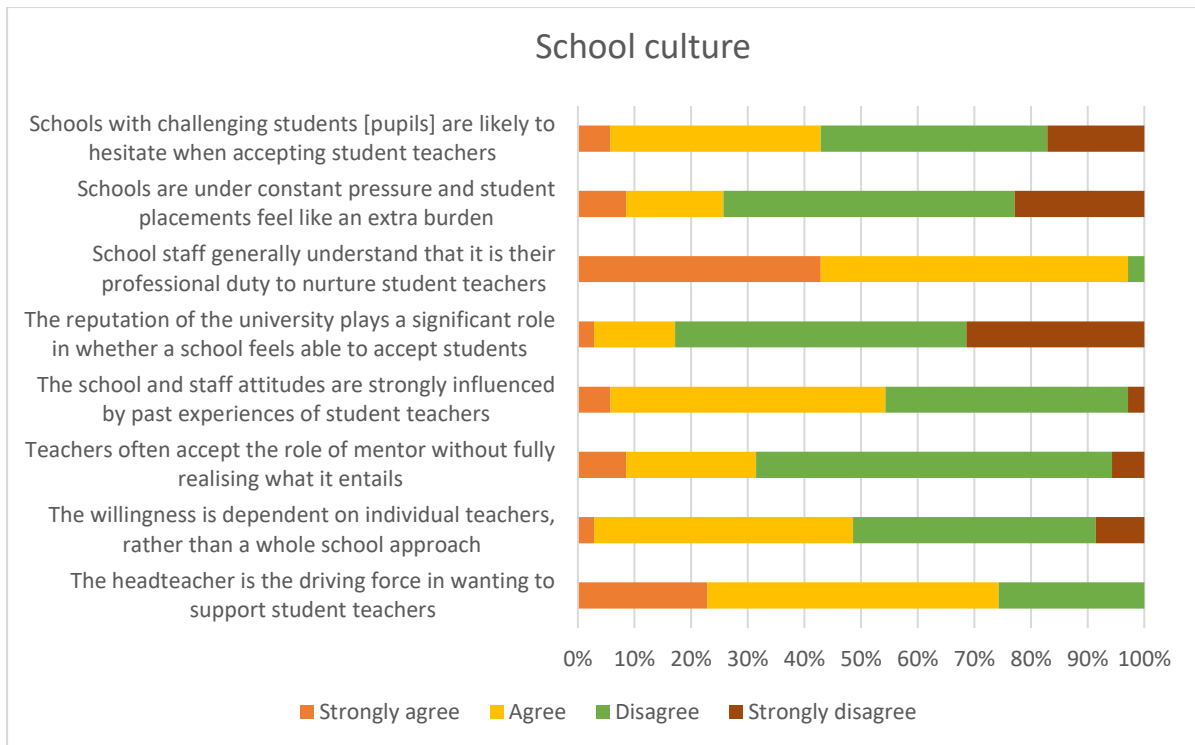
**5a – School culture of beginning teacher support: What has been your impression of the school culture in terms of willingness and capacity to nurture student teachers? How far do you agree with the following?**

A very large proportion (97%) believe that their staff generally understand that it is their professional duty to nurture student teachers. Three-quarters (74%) believe that the school head is a driving force in fostering a willingness to nurture student teachers. However, half of the respondents (49%) believe that this willingness is more dependent on individual teachers, rather than being an approach of the whole school.

Only 6 of the respondents feel that the reputation of the university might play a role in whether a school feels able to accept students. On the other hand, around half (54%) feel that past experiences of hosting student teachers influence current school and staff attitudes. Slightly less (43%) agree that schools with “challenging students” [pupils] might hesitate to accept student teachers.

One quarter (26%) agree that schools are under constant pressure and student placements feel like an extra burden and slightly more (31%) believe that teachers often accept the role of mentor without fully realising what it entails.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Strongly + Agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The headteacher is the driving force in wanting to support student teachers	8	18	9	0	35	<b>74%</b>	23%	51%	26%	0%
The willingness is dependent on individual teachers, rather than a whole school approach	1	16	15	3	35	<b>49%</b>	3%	46%	43%	9%
Teachers often accept the role of mentor without fully realising what it entails	3	8	22	2	35	<b>31%</b>	9%	23%	63%	6%
The school and staff attitudes are strongly influenced by past experiences of student teachers	2	17	15	1	35	<b>54%</b>	6%	49%	43%	3%
The reputation of the university plays a significant role in whether a school feels able to accept students	1	5	18	11	35	<b>17%</b>	3%	14%	51%	31%
School staff generally understand that it is their professional duty to nurture student teachers	15	19	1	0	35	<b>97%</b>	43%	54%	3%	0%
Schools are under constant pressure and student placements feel like an extra burden	3	6	18	8	35	<b>26%</b>	9%	17%	51%	23%
Schools with challenging students [pupils] are likely to hesitate when accepting student teachers	2	13	14	6	35	<b>43%</b>	6%	37%	40%	17%



### 5b - Please make further comment on supporting a positive school culture.

6 regents responded to this question.

4 commented on their own positive attitude or that of their school:

*"I feel it is important and vital to support students as those are our future teachers. Being in schools is the most important learning experience for them."*

*"We have a duty to accept student teachers. We were all there once too."*

*"The whole school ethos is supportive of student teachers and although student can be challenging, we would make sure that students are shared across staff so that no one teacher is over burdened by having to have students more than once within a session."*

One describes the careful consideration of finding the right mentors and classes for students:

*"All teachers feel pressure to support students and in particularly challenging classes this can be an extra change to routine affecting students, teacher workload and individuals in classes. [It is ] Not a good experience for anyone. Mentors and classes need to be carefully selected, not an expectation. [I/we] Understand a range of experience needs to be given for students to experience all classes but the children's learning is the priority and staff wellbeing important."*

One regent used this question to voice their concern about the capacity of students:

*"There is considerable concern that students are not being taught even the basics of classroom professional practice - too much theory and not enough practical advice and guidance about what makes an effective learning environment."*

**6 - What do you feel are your approaches that are giving / have given the most effective support to staff involved in placements? Choose a maximum of 3.**

The popular choices in this question – acting as a communication channel and contacting the university - reaffirm the belief highlighted in Q2 and Q4 that a main part of the regent role is liaising.

Responses are spread across the other approaches listed, although engaging senior staff and leading sessions received a lower count. The engagement of senior staff may be worth exploring given the student comment about being recognised or valued by the school head (Part A) and that a supportive school culture is perceived as being influenced by the school head (Q5a).

<i>Re-ordered largest to smallest %</i>	Percentage	Count
Acting as a communication channel between university, teachers and student-teachers	77%	27
Contacting the university when there are issues to be addressed	66%	23
Encouraging mentors to engage in professional development	34%	12
Having regular meetings with mentors and other teachers	31%	11
Taking responsibility for administrative work, such as checking deadlines and signing off documents	31%	11
Engaging the headteacher and senior leadership team in student placements and the work of staff	23%	8
Leading sessions to discuss student placement processes	14%	5
Other (please state)*	3%	1

*\*"I hold a meeting at the start of each academic year to go over the expectations of every mentor within our school community. I also meet regularly with the SDO in Learning and Teaching to give regular feedback on what is going on with students and mentors."*

**7 – During this year, what was the content of your discussions with university (placement) tutors? (Allocate a percentage – the total should add up to 100, indicated in the table)**

This question explored the type of exchange that the school has with the university, between the regents and placement tutors. 33 regents responded.

The dominant content of discussions seems to be feedback from observing students – presumed to be post-assessment - and the placement practical arrangements.

Regents are less likely to discuss difficulties with students, perhaps because this happens less frequently. However, regents are also less likely to discuss moments of success.

<i>Re-ordered by average score, highest to lowest</i>	Average
Feedback from observing the student in their teaching	23.03
Informing of, or asking about, practical arrangements for starting the placement	17.98
Clarifying university course requirements (e.g. portfolio, assessments, grading)	7.71
Alerting the university to a student facing a difficulty or crisis	7.48
Discussing the removal/relocation of a student from the school or course	4.3
Debating the current or future role of the school in partnerships	4.04
Describing specific moments of individual student success	3.33
Other (please state)*	3.03

\* *"Very few of these things have been part of my role"*

**8 – Based on your experience this year, what improvements could be made to better support your role?**

19 regents took the time to respond to this question and the topics varied but were similar to mentors’ suggestions.

Half of the comments referred to **improving communication**: having more advance notice of placements; knowing more about specific student needs or difficulties in advance; and more communication from the university, including more tutor visits.

Two regents referred to needing **clearer guidelines and expectations** and two referred to having **more time** as improvements.

One regent referred to **student preparedness**, particularly for placement 1: *"A particular focus on classroom management and lesson planning as part of this needs to be evident. Students are arriving in schools claiming to have no knowledge of how to plan a lesson and it has a very significant, detrimental impact on their placements. Very clear guidance around expectations also needs to be evident e.g. punctuality and workload."*



**9 – Based on your experience this year, what improvements could be made to better support student placements in general across the partnership?**

19 regents responded to this question.

Many of the comments reiterated the points made in Q8 and elsewhere.

Some comments of note elaborated on **student preparedness**, or gave specific ideas such as an **eLearning module**, a **student ‘contract’**, or **shortening the observation weeks**:

*“[Students] need more preparation about the realities of working in a school. Many are not able/not willing/unaware of the requirements of planning a lesson. They seem shocked by student behaviour and that they are in charge (with support obviously) in the classroom. More and more students are coming to us with completely unrealistic ideals of what this job is actually like. Some are not able to take constructive criticism and will avoid getting feedback from staff, they often don't realise that they may need to seek feedback from teachers (staff are busy people they need students to be more proactive).”*

*“Observations weeks are too long. Students should be given a day or so then should be getting involved as much as possible and interacting with children. It is important students see their role as one that can assist and they should strive to be proactive.”*

*“Within my own school, I have written a basic contract of expectations for all new student teachers to read and sign at the start of their placement. This has allowed students to see what we expect from them whilst teaching in our school community. It also highlights areas they may not be aware of in relation to school behaviour policy/procedures, time-keeping etc. Student teachers have found this helpful.”*

*“A more structured programme in school which gives clear ideas of experiences the student would benefit from i.e. shadowing an S1 class, placement in primary school etc.”*

*“I'm not sure if maybe an elearning module to access would be better than an online/in person meeting - it would mean staff could access in their own time and/or refer back to.”*

## Part D – University (Placement) Tutors

A total of 28 valid responses (moving past the initial agreement page) were recorded from 48 respondents. Only 20 of these moved past the first question, giving response to the full questionnaire.

*Percentages are not given below as the raw numbers are low.*

### 1a - Preparation for placements: We would like to know about the information and support that you received before the placements began. How far do you agree with the following?

Most university tutors agree that they are given enough notice to prepare students and share relevant details so that students might be supported. Most tutors feel that the handbook provides them with the information they need, and the university's expectations and processes are clear.

Although most feel adequately consulted or informed during placements, one quarter disagree with this and do not have the opportunity to discuss placements colleagues and senior staff.

	Agree or strongly	Disagree or strongly	Total	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I was given enough advance notice of school placements to help my students to feel prepared	24	4	28	14	10	3	1
The university's expectations of, and processes/protocols for, student placements are clear	26	2	28	15	11	2	0
I was given enough time to share relevant details (particular needs or concerns) about student profiles so that they could be supported from the beginning of the placement	24	4	28	13	11	3	1
The university handbook is clearly written and provides me with the information that I need regarding placements	26	2	28	16	10	2	0
I am adequately consulted or informed during the preparation of placements	21	7	28	11	10	6	1
I have the opportunity to discuss placements with colleagues and senior staff (shared goals, possible changes to curriculum)	21	7	28	12	9	6	1

### 1b - What could be improved to assist your role in the preparation of students for placements?

Of the 16 respondents to this open text question, one half (8) said that **confirming placements well in advance** would be an improvement and support their own role.

*“More contact with schools to prepare them for students, being able to be more transparent about students.”*

*“Students are prepared well for placements. Unfortunately, sometimes there are last minute changes to placement settings and this is difficult for students.”*

Other suggestions vary and include: **better guidance**, such as a checklist of evidence or time management suggestions; students to **visit schools in advance**; better **communication with schools**; **observation time**; and knowing **specific student needs**:

*“Being given an observation time for all placements (even 1-2 days for P2 and P3)”*

*“Students to have the opportunity to visit their schools before placements. They get nervous before going on placements and it will be a concern with the observation week being removed in the new academic year.”*

*“I often feel in the dark about students when assigned to work with them on placement. I do not know their targets or developments from prior placements, I do not know about their support needs or circumstances. It is often embarrassing to be told something by a student when a lot of placement time has elapsed.”*

### 2a - During placements: What is your experience of being able to give ongoing support to your students during their placement? How far do you agree with the following?

In terms of **communication**, most tutors agree (or strongly) that they are able to keep track of students and that digital tools make this easier. Most disagree (or strongly) that they only need to contact students if they get in touch about a specific issue and three quarters agree (or strongly) that it is important to send regular messages to remind students of expectations.

In terms of **time**, most tutors agree that they have sufficient time to stay in regular contact with and to visit students, although most do not strongly agree.

Responses differ over whether it benefits students **to have less contact** as a similar number agree (8) and disagree (9).

Nearly three-quarters of tutors (14) also agree that students can feel **conflicted between the advice or feedback** from schools and universities.

	Agree or strongly	Disagree or strongly	Total	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The partnership communication is set up in a way that makes it easy to keep track of students on placement	19	1	20	6	13	1	0
It is important to send students regular messages to remind them of university expectations	15	5	20	7	8	5	0
I only need to contact students if they get in touch with me about a specific issue	2	18	20	0	2	12	6
I have sufficient time in my own work to stay in regular contact with students	16	4	20	6	10	4	0
I have sufficient time in my own work to be able to visit students in school	18	2	20	5	13	2	0
Digital tools, e.g. e-portfolios, make it easier to track student progress	19	1	20	9	10	1	0
It benefits students to have less contact with the university once they begin placements	8	12	20	0	8	9	3
Students can feel conflicted between advice or feedback from school and the university	14	6	20	3	11	5	1

## 2b - How might your capacity to support students be improved?

3 respondents clearly stated that improving the **time that mentors have** would improve their own tutor capacity to support students:

*“Difficult due to time constraints for those working in schools. Mentors being allocated time would help significantly, then you are not just relying on good will.”*

*“Ringfenced time for mentors to have weekly discussions with University tutors”*

Other specific suggestions include: addressing **logistical and technical issues**; better **communication**; **professional learning** opportunities; and the opportunity to **work with students on particular competences**:

*“Clearer, more concise communication of key placement requirements from university to placement schools early in the placement would prevent problems further down the line.”*

*“My student cohort is spread over the [area] so physical visits are logistically demanding.”*

*“To have someone check in with me during placement as once placement starts I have very little contact with the university and things can get quite tricky if multiple students require different supports and trying to keep up with regular placement tasks.”*

*“It would be good to be able to spend more time over the year with my students, working on areas of teaching they miss having short placements.”*

### 3 - Communication between stakeholders: Do you have enough opportunity to share information and discuss issues with different people involved in placements? Would you prefer less, the same or more?

There are very few suggestions that other stakeholders could be communicated less with.

Most tutors appear content to continue the same level of communication with senior staff and local authority officers. Around three quarters to two thirds are also content to continue the same level with student teachers (15) and other university colleagues (14).

Tutors appear more divided on the preferred level of communication with regents, mentors and other classroom teachers that are supervising students with nearly half stating they would prefer more.

	LESS	THE SAME	MORE	TOTAL
Student teachers	0	15	6	21
Mentors	0	12	9	21
Other classroom teachers supervising students	1	12	8	21
Regent	2	10	9	21
Headteacher and senior leadership team	2	18	1	21
Local authority officers	3	17	1	21
University colleagues	0	14	7	21

#### 4a - Different elements of a placement. Based on your experience of placements this year, and the informal feedback you may have received from students, which elements are functioning well, and which need improvement?

In this table below, the statements (rows) have been re-ordered from the original questionnaire to group those elements that tutors believe are working well and those needing improvement.

<i>Re-ordered to group elements working well and needing improvement.</i>	Working well	Could be improved	Needs significant work	Total
Development of classroom practice (including informal observations)	12	7	0	19
Portfolios, including reflection tasks	12	8	0	20
Course assignments	12	7	0	19
Engaging in wider school activities (e.g. extra-curricular, parent meetings)	11	8	0	19
Formal lesson observation (assessment)*	9	1	0	10
Mentoring (meetings and mentor relationships)	6	13	0	19
Engaging in additional professional learning opportunities	9	10	0	19
The placement allocation process	7	10	3	20
Initial welcome to school (access to resources, introduction to staff and school processes)	6	12	1	19

Just over half of tutors feel that the development of classroom practice, portfolios, course assignments and engaging in wider activities are working well in support of student progression, although the remainder of tutors feel that all of these could be improved.

Fewer tutors commented on formal lesson observation, possibly because of not being involved in this, and of those that did respond, the majority feel it is working well with no need for improvement.

There are elements that more tutors believe could be improved: mentoring, engaging in additional professional learning, the initial welcome into school, and the placement allocation process. A few tutors also suggested that the latter two need significant work.

**4b - Please add anything else that needs improving, or is working well, or expand on your given answers above.**

11 tutors took the time to respond to this.

Of these, 4 specifically mentioned improving coherence across the partnership:

*"It is so dependent on each individual placement schools. Some schools have a very structured programme in place for students whilst others take a more informal approach."*

*"Some schools have great ... programmes others it is non-existent."*

3 refer to improving the working conditions or engagement of mentors:

*"Mentors need dedicated time to be able to do the job."*

*"The areas which I have identified as 'could be improved' indicate when the mentor has not engaged with the materials or when there is no regent involvement. In these cases, I feel unable to do anything to change the levels of engagement from the mentor/regent."*

Other specific suggestions include making sure that students have diverse experiences in different schools and reviewing the high workload of students.

**5 - Your working relationship with partnership schools: we would like to know about how you nurture and maintain your own relationships with school departments and the staff involved in student placements (select all that apply).**

All tutors report that their working relationships with schools are mostly positive. A large proportion also state that they make time to talk to department staff, as well as knowing some staff from having worked together.

Half of tutors have worked in one or more of the schools that they visit and just under half know the partnership schools well.

A much smaller number – less than one quarter – typically have a conversation with a school leader with they visit. None of the tutors stated that they are in regular contact with Regents.

4 tutors said that they feel that school staff are often reluctant to engaged with university staff and 3 tutors stated that they would like to have a better relationship with school staff.



In the table below, the responses have been re-ordered from the original questionnaire to present them from largest to smallest count.

<i>20 responses - sorted largest to smallest count</i>	Percentage	Count
I feel that my working relationship with schools is mostly positive	100%	20
When I visit students, I also make time to talk to department staff	90%	18
I know some staff in schools as we have worked together for some years	70%	14
I have worked as a teacher/leader in one or more of the schools	50%	10
I know the partnership schools well from years of working on the ITE programme	40%	8
When I visit schools, I usually have a discussion with the head or member of the Senior Leadership Team	20%	4
I feel that school staff are often reluctant to engage with university staff	20%	4
I would like to have a better relationship but I do not have the time or capacity to change this	15%	3
I am in regular contact with Regents	0%	0

## 6 – Based on your experience this year, what improvements could be made to better support your role?

Of the 13 tutors that responded, 5 referred specifically to needing **more time for the tutor role**, including placement assessment (similar to allocating time for student assignments) and school visits, especially those tutors with a high number of students.

*“[I] spend up to 20 hrs [or] more speaking to schools, writing reports and mentoring the students online.”*

Two tutors reiterated the need for a shared understanding of **student expectations and standards**.

Other suggestions for improvement include: **professional learning for the tutor role**; **well-being support** for when students are struggling; and **communication between universities and schools** on the placement expectations.

Two tutors referred again to **mentors/teachers needing CPD opportunities and support**, suggesting that this offer might prevent mentors from shying away from tutors:

*“You can tell that face-to-face communication is avoided as the teacher is trying to protect themselves from not doing a very supportive job for that student.”*

*“Looking at improving the CPD on offer for mentors. That would make my role easier, as there would be shared expectations/clarity of mentoring experiences.”*

*“Initial communication between university and placement school setting out requirements of the placement.”*

## 7 – Based on your experience this year, what improvements could be made to better support student placements in general across the partnership?

Out of the 18 respondents, almost half (8) make the broad suggestion of **incorporating (more) professional learning opportunities and guidance for the different partnership roles**, or comment that more should be done to raise the competence within roles.

*“Consistency in the expectations and support of mentors, however this is no fault of the mentors. The mentor role needs to be more clearly defined and professional learning put in place to develop mentors.”*

Almost one quarter (4) refer to a general need to **clarify expectations**: *“Clarity of teaching expectations, portfolio expectations...”*

More than one tutor refer to the need for **dedicated time for roles** (3) and a general **improved coherence** (2) across local authorities and the partnership.

*“Dedicated time and professional recognition of the work that mentors in schools do. Dedicated time for university and regents to work together on exploring practices that support students.”*

Individual suggestions are: having **pre-placement meetings** and more considered **placement allocation with travel demands**; reviewing the **frequency of tutor visits**; reviewing the content of **practice foci** (teaching basics but also SEN and anti-racism); and improved **student well-being** support.

*“Agreed service levels of support for students rather than making up from own student experience.”*