



How to... Get started in your partnership

To get the most out of your STEM Professionals in Schools partnership, it's important to get to know your partner and explore the different ways you can work together.

Facilitating partnerships

STEM Professionals in Schools connects primary and secondary school teachers and STEM professionals with a broad range of expertise and experience to enhance STEM learning in Australian classrooms.

Each partnership is unique as it's about identifying each person's areas of expertise and working together to bring STEM skills to life in the classroom.

Developing your partnership

After receiving your partnership confirmation email, contact your partner via phone or email. A key benefit of the program is the flexibility to design a partnership that works for you and your partner.

Different partnership models to consider include:

- mentoring (for teachers and students)
- site visits or field trips
- running specialist STEM clubs or extension activities e.g. coding or maths clubs
- career talks and presentations
- hands-on demonstrations or experiments
- providing support for specialist projects
- online engagement e.g. lesson development over Teams, virtual presentation or Q&A session.

Top tip: start with a conversation

Where possible, arrange an initial catch-up with your partner. Ideally, we recommend meeting in person, but if that's not practical, connect online or over the phone. These early conversations can help build trust, uncover shared interests and set your partnership up for success.

Examples from existing partnerships include:

- Over flat whites and great conversation, teacher Erin and STEM professional Tony explored how their strengths, perspectives and passion for STEM education could come together to create meaningful opportunities for students. Their first coffee catch-up sparked innovative ideas for future learning experiences.
- Teacher Kevin and STEM professional Rebecca launched their partnership with an online meeting via Teams, where they shared their professional backgrounds, discussed what they hoped to gain from the program and explored ideas for future activities. Their next session will bring another teacher and a student into the conversation to help shape these ideas into a more detailed plan.

On the next page, you'll find tips for getting to know your partner.

Getting to know your partner

The following information may guide you in getting to know your partner, to ensure you have a rewarding partnership experience. Make notes of your discussion and keep them handy for future reference.

Like in all good relationships, communication with your partner is key! When talking with your partner, be open about your time commitments and working style, the expertise you are bringing to the partnership and importantly, what you want to gain from the partnership.

A successful partnership is built on open conversation and shared expectations. The prompts below can help guide early discussions about how you'll work together and what you'd like to learn from each other.

“Communication is everything! Show your enthusiasm and feed off each other’s energy. Share ideas, celebrate successes, and remember that this is a partnership, where both parties work together for a goal.”

Jess White, STEM Professional, Western Australia

If you are an educator

What to share with your STEM professional

- How best to contact you and when you're usually available
- Your role, your teaching plan and year levels
- Your preferred way of communicating (email, phone, online meetings)
- What excites you about STEM and your students
- What you hope students will gain from the partnership
- Any ideas, inspiration or support you're looking for

What to learn from your STEM professional

- Their current role and workplace
- How they use STEM skills in their day to day work
- Their interests, strengths and areas of expertise and experience
- What excites them about STEM
- What they hope to gain from the partnership

If you are a STEM professional

What to share with your educator partner

- Your role, workplace and areas of expertise
- How and when you're available to connect
- Your preferred communication style
- What excites you about STEM and your career journey
- Why you joined STEM Professionals in Schools
- What you'd like to gain from the partnership

What to learn from the educator

- Their classroom context, curriculum priorities and student needs
- How STEM is currently taught in their setting
- What would be most helpful or valuable for their students
- Any constraints or considerations to be aware of
- Ideas they're keen to explore together

For more tips, ideas and peer support

join the STEM Professionals in Schools LinkedIn group

STEM Professionals in Schools is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education.

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