



Teach for Australia Pathway: Evaluation Report Phase 1 of 3 (April-July 2010)

Submitted to
DEEWR – Pathways Section,
Quality Teaching Branch

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The views expressed in the report are based on the contribution of all stakeholder groups but remain the responsibility of the authors. They do not necessarily represent the views of DEEWR or any one individual or organisation involved in the evaluation.

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ACRONYMS

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
MGSE	Melbourne Graduate school of Education, University of Melbourne
TFA*	Teach For Australia – the organisation (see note)
TFA Pathway*	The Teach for Australia Pathway (see note)
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VIT	Victorian Institute of Teaching

***Note:** The public name of the program is Teach For Australia. To clarify the distinction between the program name and the Teach For Australia organisation, this document refers to the program as the new Teach for Australia Pathway ('TFA Pathway'). This name represents the national program being implemented as a component of the Council of Australian Government's *Smarter Schools – Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership* (TQNP) agreement. The program is a 'new pathway into teaching' (a reform initiative of the TQNP) which comprises the Teach For Australia organisation, the University of Melbourne and is (at this stage) supported by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Australian Government.

Throughout this document 'program partners' is used to refer to the organisations which currently support the delivery and/or funding of the Teach for Australia Pathway: the Teach For Australia organisation, the University of Melbourne, the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

The term 'stakeholder' includes the program partners, as well as the Educational Advisers, the Associates, Mentors, principals and other school staff, and students.

1. INTRODUCTION

This Report (Part 1) is designed to provide a summary of data gathered on the operation of the Teach for Australia Pathway to date.

Data were collected via site visits with schools and phone interviews with the program partners, the Associates, their mentors, principals and other school personnel, and the Educational Advisers over April through July 2010.

The information gathered to date aims to provide early feedback on how the program is being implemented – to synthesise emerging themes in the delivery of the program and to inform future development and implementation.

Reports in March 2012 (Part 2) and in March 2013 (Part 3) will also capture information on the effectiveness and efficiency of program delivery, as well as assessing the evaluation's key critical questions (see below). Of particular interest will be any changes made to the Initial Intensive for Cohort 2, and the introduction of the Leadership Development Program (for example, the provision of Leadership Coaches for Cohort 1 Associates in their second year will be a new element to the program in 2011).

A literature review and document analysis will be ongoing. These will track the development of the perceptions of the program in the wider community. They will also provide key information on the development and perceptions about similar programs overseas. Other key issues to be explored are research into the effectiveness of models of teacher preparation and student outcomes from these. The evolution of teacher training models and the perceived effectiveness of different pathways into the profession will be tracked and reported on.

1.1 The purposes of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation being conducted by ACER is to assess whether the delivery of the Teach for Australia Pathway initiative (2009-2012) can be modified to better achieve intended outputs and outcomes, and whether the initiative is achieving its expected outcomes.

The evaluation comprises three phases. The purpose and timing of the evaluation phases are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Timing and purpose of evaluation

Timing of Evaluation	Purpose of Evaluation	Timing of Reports*
April-July 2010	Assess the effectiveness of the delivery to-date of Year 1, Cohort 1.	Report Part 1 September 2010
End-Cohort 1/ Year 1, Cohort 2 April-October 2011	Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of Cohort 1/Year 1 of Cohort 2, and evaluate the key critical questions that comprise part of the formative evaluation.	Report Part 2 March 2012
End-Cohort April-October 2012	Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, and Evaluate all the key critical questions. (Summative evaluation.)	Report Part 3 March 2013

**Reports of each phase will be completed with a final report comprising the three parts to be prepared in March 2013.*

Key critical (research) questions

The key critical research questions comprise a large component of the evaluation analysis to be presented in Report Part 2 (March 2012) and the Report Part 3 (March 2013).

This report is a preliminary attempt to begin to address questions 1-3 below, and mainly focuses on delivery of the program to date. The first online census of Associates to be completed in October 2010 will also address questions 1-3 and will be reported later.

Note that modifications or refinements to these questions may be required as the evaluation develops.

The questions that will be considered in the second evaluation phase are:

1. What are the key factors that influence success in terms of achieving initiative objectives (including indentifying barriers to national implementation)?
2. Is the employment based teacher education adopted by the Teach for Australia Pathway a cost effective approach?
3. Does the employment based teacher education program, the Teach for Australia Pathway, deliver effective teachers?

The third phase will attempt to assess all the key critical questions – the Phase 2 questions listed above – as well as the following:

4. Is the Teach for Australia Pathway helping to raise the status of the teaching profession?
5. What features of the Teach for Australia Pathway have a positive impact on the quality of teaching?
6. What impact have Associates had on student performance in targeted schools?

2. METHOD

ACER is employing a mixed method approach constituted by both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the key critical questions.

During 2010, 2011 and 2012, ACER will be collecting data from a variety of sources. These are outlined below. Quantitative methods will be used to gather information to benchmark and track particular aspects of interest (some of which will be identified by qualitative methods); for example the development of skills and attitudes.

Qualitative data give richness and depth to the evaluation findings, capturing aspects not accessible to quantitative investigations. They also provide a means to test and confirm potential relationships revealed by the quantitative analyses.

2010/2011/2012 Data Collection	
April-June	Qualitative phase: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation stakeholder interviews• Associate interviews (sample: 10)• Focus groups with Educational Advisers (4), telephone interviews with principals of Placement Schools (5), mentors (10), staff from: MGSE (4), VIT (1), DEECD (1), DEEWR (1) TFA (3)
May-July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case Studies of 5 Placement Schools
October	Quantitative Phase: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online Census of Associate Teachers
<i>Ongoing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literature review on employment-based teacher training and other comparative programs• Administrative records of Teach For Australia and the University of Melbourne, including data analysis and other relevant sources• Media coverage mapping

Interviews and case study visits will recommence in 2011 for Cohort 1 in their second year and the first year of Cohort 2.

Where appropriate, interview and focus group questions will be revisited. Questions will remain much the same for Cohort 2 Associates in their first year, to facilitate comparative analysis. Questions for stakeholders, and for Associates in their second year, will be revised as appropriate based on the expectations of the program and data received throughout 2010.

2.1 Methods of data collection (Phase 1): April-July 2010

The phase of the research reported here was designed to gather data concerning:

- stakeholders' reasons for joining the program;
- the development of the necessary partnerships, procedures and processes;
- stakeholders' experiences of becoming involved in the program;
- the operation of the project in its first year, including stakeholders' perceptions of its current processes and its future promise; and
- stakeholders' intentions for future involvement/developments.

This report provides a synthesis of the information gathered from the Structured Interviews and the case study visitations conducted over April through July 2010, covering the qualitative data-collection for this year. A quantitative census survey of Associates during Term 4 2010 is under development based on the specifications for the project and the data thus far collected.

- ❖ **Structured interviews** (telephone) with key TFA Pathway program partners (DEEWR, DEECD, VIT and MGSE), other stakeholders (Principals, Mentors and Educational Advisors) and program participants (Associates) were carried out by the evaluation team.

The purpose of the interviews was to: a) sensitise the evaluation team to the key issues and their emphases within the survey, and b) for participants to elaborate and expand on issues arising from the literature, broad intentions of the program, program outcomes and their own experiences with the program.¹

The interview schedules for various groups overlapped in their content. This was done because it provides an opportunity to gather and analyse data on the same issues from multiple perspectives, i.e. triangulation. It also allowed context to be explored and understood in greater depth than with a survey. The text of the questions used in interviews for each stakeholder group is in Appendices 1A-1M.

Interview subjects such as Associates, Mentor Teachers, Educational Advisers, Principals and other staff were selected by convenience sampling, with a preference not to interview participants more than once over the course of the evaluation in order to canvass views and experiences as widely as possible across these groups. Program partner interviews were selected in consultation with the relevant organisation.

Interviews were recorded by hand and electronic transcripts made.

- ❖ **Case study visitations** to five Placement Schools, three metropolitan, two regional, were conducted. These involved interviews/focus groups with Associates, Mentors, Principals, other staff, students and parents/caregivers and school community members. Questions used in interviews were the same as those utilised in telephone interviews.

¹ All interviews are confidential and no names of individuals and/or schools are identified in any correspondence or reports. Where interviews were audio recorded, these were used by the evaluation team as a memory aid only. Full transcripts were not made. Audio recordings will be stored securely for the duration of the project and at the conclusion all recordings will be destroyed.

Table 2 shows the tally of stakeholders interviewed to date. Table 3 shows the number of focus groups of parents and students conducted.

Table 2. 2010 Stakeholders Interviewed

Telephone and face to face interviews			
DEECD	1	Associates	30
DEEWR	1	Mentors	22
MGSE	4	Principals	9
TFA	3	Other school staff	13
VIT	1	TOTAL	84

Table 3. 2010 School on-site Parent and Student Focus Groups

School site interviews: Number of focus groups	
Parents ²	1
Students (focus groups)	9

Analysis

All interview transcripts were typed and filed in e-folders on ACER's intranet server. After all transcriptions were complete a series of documents were created which aggregated comments on specific aspects and issues by each group of stakeholders. Content analyses were performed on each set of comments by an ACER team member. The documents were forwarded to other team members, without the results of the content analyses, for independent analysis for themes and issues. Independent judgements were compared, collated and results finalised.

2.2 Future methods of data collection (Phases 2 & 3)

In Phases 2 and 3 of the evaluation, data collected will continue to build an understanding of how the program is developing, how any earlier issues have been resolved, the development of Associates as teachers, and the influence of the program on the participating schools and beyond.

The interview questions with stakeholders will continue to be mapped against the evaluation key critical questions (noted previously) to ensure each question is adequately addressed.

Quantitative data collected via the online census will allow both tracking of the development of the cohorts as teachers and comparisons between the cohorts. It will also permit comparisons with other groups of teachers, via the use of the standardised instruments included in the census of Associates.

Measures of teacher efficacy (perceptions of one's effectiveness) will continue to be employed in the census, as these have been shown to correlate with true effectiveness – that is, teachers who believe they are effective tend to produce better results for their students and to have students who are in turn higher in self-efficacy.

² Owing to one parent respondent, parent interview responses are not contained within this report to protect confidentiality.

Student data have not been pursued in this evaluation because few associates are teaching or will be teaching subjects that are examined by standardised tests, such as NAPLAN, and the complex factors that impinge on student achievement make other means of judging student performance unreliable.

Information gathered via qualitative means will also provide insights into Associates' professional growth and performance. Associates have proven honest and astute judges of their own teaching, and material gathered during interviews has provided insight into their development as teachers and should continue to do so. In addition, information collected from those most familiar with the Associates as teachers, including Mentors, Educational Advisors and students will continue to provide valuable insights into their practice and how it is developing.

Qualitative data will thus provide insights into information collected via quantitative means and enrich the understandings these provide. Use of the same questions for each cohort of Associates at discrete points in their development (first year, second year, following second year for Cohort 1) over successive years will allow comparison of perceptions of successive cohorts and tracking of attitudes to the program as it develops.

While issues arising from the quantitative data phases will inform subsequent interview questions, qualitative data may also inform the questions included in the online censuses in a reciprocal fashion.

Similarly, interviews with other program partners and stakeholder groups will allow comparisons of attitudes to the program at different time-points and tracking of the development of the program, from the perspective of the key groups involved.

It should be noted that there are limitations to the extent to which the key critical question can be answered via any one evaluation. In particular, it will be difficult to reliably answer the question of whether the TFA Pathway has had an effect on teacher status. The time span covered by the evaluation is relatively short and changes to major social attitudes take more than a couple of years to manifest. In addition, there are number of Australian initiatives designed to attract talented people to teaching and to increase its status. As such, it would be very difficult to reliably attribute any increase in the status of teaching to any one program.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

This section summarises the views of the various stakeholders of the TFA Pathway. The views are arranged under ‘topic headings’ to synthesise the key issues raised to date.

The findings show the following to be key strengths of the program:

1. The use of a rigorous selection process for Associates that has – in most cases – successfully chosen high quality candidates with the necessary ability and personal attributes to succeed in the program.
2. The quality of the MGSE preparation program.
3. The provision of significant support to the Associates.

The findings suggest a number of considerations for future implementation concerning aspects of the Initial Intensive, the Associates’ placements, and mentor selection. These are listed in the section immediately following these findings.

Note: Where the title ‘School Personnel’ is used, this refers to a combination of principals, Mentors and other school staff. (For the purposes of this evaluation, School Personnel does not include Associates.)

3.2 Participating in the New Pathway

Reasons for Getting Involved

Interviews of all stakeholders included questions as to why they or their organisation/school had become involved in the Teach for Australia Pathway (the TFA Pathway). In all cases the TFA Pathway was seen as providing opportunities and/or addressing felt needs.

❖ Associates

A large proportion of the Associates interviewed had at least considered teaching as a career before encountering the TFA Pathway.

A major attraction for those who were considering teaching was the opportunity to go straight into the classroom without a further year or more of study and the ability to earn a living while studying.

❖ School Personnel

For the majority of principals interviewed, the key attraction of the TFA Pathway was the possibility of accessing younger ‘hand-picked’ teachers who came highly recommended as academically accomplished, enthusiastic, and keenly interested in teaching. For the many of the principals, attracting and retaining teachers had been an issue at their school.

That most Associates were supernumerary was a major selling point as schools in these cases gained 0.8 of an extra staff member or more. (Note: supernumerary placement of Associates was provided to support the early establishment of the program, Cohort 1. Cohort 2 Associates will fill vacancies.)

Some principals also mentioned the staff development opportunities provided by the pathway, especially the Mentor training provided by MGSE.

For other school personnel, initial reactions to the program were mixed, varying between opposition through wariness to curiosity or enthusiasm. In all cases, initial scepticism or wariness was seen to dissipate once staff met the Associates and engaged with the program.

My training was four years of study that included a Dip Ed. That is three years for a degree plus one year. TFA seemed to be taking short cuts although that view was only fleeting. As soon as you meet the people, TFA can be seen to work.

I was a bit shocked – I felt the Associates were being thrown into the classroom after 6 weeks. Now I think it's a fantastic program – it's hard for the Associates but there are lots of positives.

❖ **Educational Advisers**

Educational Advisers typically became involved in the TFA Pathway because of their interest in teacher education and/or working with young teachers to aid such teachers' professional development.

They were also attracted to the ideals of the program and the opportunity to have involvement in something that 'potentially had wider impact' on disadvantage and educational achievement.

❖ **Teach For Australia**

Informants from TFA credited the selection of the program to the existence of successful models overseas, which have worked well in comparable settings. For TFA personnel the program seeks to engage highly talented people who want to make a difference in areas of social and educational need. The program also aims to enhance the status of teaching and encourage talented people to consider teaching as a career choice.

❖ **The Melbourne Graduate School of Education**

The Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) sees itself as proactive in the reform of teacher education and interested in exploring new models. Having heard positive reports of Teach for America and its outcomes, involvement in the TFA Pathway was seen as a natural progression.

The development of the TFA Pathway at MGSE benefited from existing teacher preparation programs: its design and implementation also fed back into the Master of Teaching.

❖ **Government and Regulatory Supporters**

DEEWR noted that the TFA Pathways is funded under the *Smarter Schools – Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership*, with services contracts created with the Teach For Australia organisation and the University of Melbourne aimed at providing a 'new pathway into teaching' with the principal purpose of attracting high-quality graduates to teaching. DEEWR also cited the prospect of creating a non-traditional pathway into teaching that would enhance connections between teaching theory and practice as a core reason for supporting the initiative.

The DEECD also cited the attraction of high quality graduates to teaching, particularly in the areas of maths and science, as the core reason for participating. DEECD is keen to use the program to meet teacher shortages, noting that Cohort 1 recruitment was not focused on this need. (For Cohort 2 recruitment in 2010, Teach For Australia is addressing these concerns by targeting those from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.)

The VIT noted that the program closely resembles other programs already in existence, particularly the Victoria University Career Change Program. Further, the Melbourne Graduate School of Education's (MGSE's) involvement in the program was highly regarded, given its experience in providing strong support to participants in its in-school teacher education programs.

Shaping the Program and Working Together

The beginning of a new and novel undertaking understandably makes heavy demands on those who are partners to it. Processes, procedures, roles and expectations take some time to be established, refined and accepted by all. Many of the comments made by stakeholders about the process of launching the TFA Pathway bear witness to the predictable issues that arise at the start of any multi-party collaboration.

The differences between the missions of the various partners was commented on as a major challenge, as were the issues to which this gave rise in the early phases of program development.

Some school principals also commented on the consequences (in their case for their schools), of the difference in emphasis between the TFA organisation, for which the program is a means for addressing educational disadvantage, and other stakeholders' perspectives on it.

My own greatest reluctance was that the TFA program is said to target 'disadvantaged' schools. This means that schools get painted in a particular light. Schools are very aware of their image. We don't see ourselves as at all disadvantaged, and we don't want the community to see us that way either. This is a very highly regarded school, the school of choice in this area.

Other school staff also occasionally raised the issue of involvement in the program as leading to negative publicity for the schools through labelling as disadvantaged.

The difficulties of obtaining the consent of all parties to the Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) gave rise to some of the challenges reported by informants during the first phase of the evaluation.

Of particular concern to Educational Advisers was the delay in gaining access to the Placement Schools until near the end of Term One 2010, because of delays in signing the relevant MOU. Informants also highlighted that progress has been made on coming to agreement on MOUs. (It is anticipated that this approach will provide for smoother and quicker resolution of issues in negotiating future MOU agreements.)

Personnel from the VIT also noted that initial difficulties over recruitment and Permission To Teach are being successfully negotiated, such that the second cohort of Associates are being chosen with skills shortages in mind, particularly science, mathematics and ICT.

The parties concerned had shown preparedness for flexibility and adaptation as the program was 'rolled out'.

Becoming a Placement School: The Schools' Experience

Schools' experiences of the process of becoming a Placement School were varied. The extent to which schools understood the pathway prior to commencement also varied considerably. The program's novel nature and newness were the major sources of uncertainty.

All school personnel reported that initial scepticism tended to dissipate when staff met and worked with the Associates, the majority of whom had become accepted and respected in their schools.

Associates also commented on difficulties caused by lack of adequate preparation in some cases.

3.3 Recruitment of Associates

The recruitment process for Associates was regarded by all stakeholders, with a few exceptions, as very successful. Associates were typically described as 'talented, energetic and committed'.

The rigorous selection process is seen by school personnel to be a strength of the program. Mentors and principals have consistently highlighted certain qualities possessed by Associates. The top two cited are confidence and initiative. Associates were recognised to be passionate about their subject and their teaching; possessing a professional and positive attitude, as well as excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

The main concern for many stakeholders was the scarcity of Associates recruited who were able to teach in school-based disciplines and/or areas of staff shortages, including maths and science. (It is noted that Cohort 2 recruitment in 2010 has been aimed at addressing these concerns. It should also be noted that many of the placements made in Cohort 1 were as additional staff, above the current staffing allocation. Cohort 2 Associates will fill vacancies as a sustainable program model.)

In most cases, the Associates quickly earned the respect of those with whom they worked or taught. After some concerns among some staff, informants described the reaction to the Associates as mostly very positive, both among school staff and students.

There's been a really good response overall. The majority of staff are impressed by their professionalism and preparation both as teachers and individuals. They are sparky, lively and confident. They volunteer. They fitted in very easily. They appear to have been here for years.

The students have responded well. My Associate is good at seeing them as individuals. Her approach is very calm.

The initial reaction of staff [was] ... similar to my own (a little insulted etc...) but once the Associates were settled in at the school, that response became more positive. The Associates have made positive contributions to the school and are seen as regular teachers by staff.

3.4 Associate Education and Preparation

Initial Intensive – MGSE Component

The Associates regarded their Initial Intensive and ongoing education with MGSE to be of very high quality and helpful for their preparedness and professional development, although, as its name implies, it is very intense and demanding.

The training itself was fantastic. It did give us what we needed – a lot of theory, and the opportunity to learn it/try it.

I was really impressed with Melbourne Uni: it was the most satisfying educational experience I have had ... We had teachers who can teach, teaching you how to teach.

It was one of my better, more exceptional academic experiences. There were 45 others, live-in; I thoroughly enjoyed it. Academically it was very stimulating, but physically and mentally demanding. The quality of the lecturers was exceptional. They were very professional and knowledgeable. If uni had been like that I might have stayed. It was really full on, but I wasn't under any illusion it would be easy. I knew I'd have to work hard – long hours. Shock to the system but not a big transition for me – it was harder for some, due to essays, living on campus etc.

A small minority remarked that they would not have considered the program had they realised how intense it would be.

The Associates were particularly complimentary about MGSE staff and the quality of the learning experience they received and also appreciated the opportunities for feedback and the prompt action that occurred as a result.

The need for a more practical orientation was noted by some Associates, especially in the case of behaviour management and some of the discipline-specific pedagogy areas. One Associate provided a more specific comment regarding student welfare issues:

I would have liked some additional support around welfare – perhaps at the Initial Intensive. How to deal with kids with high emotional needs. We're specifically coming into disadvantaged schools. We got information about the legal/reporting requirements. But that doesn't help you know what to say when you're face to face with a kid telling you about a really abusive home life. I mean, if a kid says they've been abused, yes, we report it, but what do we say to the kid? What are the protocols? We have a lot of issues at this school – there are five counsellors and they are busy, so it may be unusual, but it would help to have more information. I've been able to get some information from the counsellors.

Other school-based personnel also suggested that a supervised practicum would be an advantage:

I think there should be more time in schools before placement, more opportunity to look at data and types of students – after all the program is about improving the outcomes of disadvantaged kids, and really, Associates aren't able to think about improving student skills.

(Note: a Summer School program will be introduced to the Cohort 2 Initial Intensive to improve the quality of time in schools prior to placement.)

There seemed to be a fairly consistent link between Associates' requests for more classroom experience and school-level support. Those Associates who felt they were receiving a lot of support at the school level, including some team teaching or assistance with lesson planning, and constructive mentoring, were more likely to feel that the Initial Intensive had been well balanced. Those whose in-school support was more limited in these areas tended to feel that the Intensive had not provided them with enough practical tips to manage their classrooms more confidently in the first weeks of teaching.

Responses to the discipline-specific pedagogy component were also mixed, partially a product no doubt of the unit being taught by a variety of people. Several Associates, however, raised the issue of initial uncertainty about their teaching timetable: what areas they would be teaching and to what year levels. This impacted on the Initial Intensive, where some Associates felt that the subject-specific methodology was not always as appropriate as it might have been.

Initial Intensive – TFA Component

Associates' responses to the TFA component of the intensive were mixed, and comments were offered that the roles of MGSE and TFA should be better-defined and more aligned.³

I think the roles of TFA and MGSE should be better defined. TFA felt they had a teaching role but I think they would have been better concentrating on creating the cohort/peer group dynamics. I would have preferred more time concentrating on MGSE assessments and producing better quality there than dealing with the TFA training program as well and doing the work for that.

The practical aspects of the TFA intensive component were not all culturally relevant in Australian schools (while they may have been in the US or UK) but I appreciated the anecdotes and tips provided.

Ongoing Study

As with the intensive, most Associates have found the ongoing training useful, thought-provoking and worthwhile.

The majority of Associates were managing the ongoing training requirements, although some did note that completing the MGSE assessments at the same time as fulfilling class and school commitments was proving a challenge. Some noted that requests for extensions and alterations to due dates had been met with understanding and flexibility.

A few Associates felt that assignments could be better managed. For example, some due dates were at particularly busy times in the school year, such as the end of Term 2 when report writing was being undertaken. In another case, there was a comment about the format of an assignment, which was changed several times and after Associates had begun work on it.

A few Associates felt that some of the assignments were not as well tailored as they might be to their current experience. The one assignment particularly highlighted was an essay on leadership, which some felt would have been more appropriate at a later date in the two year course.

³ ACER notes that the TFA Practical Sessions provided to Cohort 1 are under revision.

Generally, where Associates had been allocated a day off, or two half days where they did not have to be at the school, time for assignments as well as preparation and marking was more manageable. By contrast, where Associates had not received their 0.2 FTE allocation in a block and were at the school for a full five days, this time tended to be used to manage school workload rather than for the academic workload.

Associates themselves, however, were often less concerned about the demands than others were on their behalf.

They've got a big load and they have been thrown in the deep end. There is a lot going on for them.

I wasn't clear about the expectations on the Associates themselves and didn't understand their load. They are exhausted from teaching and there's a big risk of burning them out.

3.5 Associate Support

The majority of Associates regarded the support they received as adequate or better.

Generally, Associates were very comfortable with their Mentors and found the relationship to be a very important aspect of their ability to 'find their feet' in the school environment.

Many Associates also noted that their Mentor was able to provide them with advice on teaching and classroom management techniques, and in some cases the mentoring role had developed into a mutual critical friendship.

For a minority of Associates the mentoring relationship had not been a satisfactory and/or useful one. In a small number of cases it had broken down completely and the Associate no longer worked with his or her Mentor.

Mentors' views of the individual Associates they mentored were generally positive. They found the Associates to be confident, enthusiastic and responsive, often seeking out advice but also comfortable working on their own initiative.

Associates' comments about the support received from other school staff were mostly very positive. This support was particularly valued where Mentor-Associate relations were strained.

Some of the best advice is from the other teachers in my discipline e.g. I can ask 'I am covering this topic next, which materials have worked best?'

In a few cases, support available at the school-level was perceived by Associates as extremely limited.

Difficulties with the signing of the relevant MOU had led to a delay in Educational Advisers gaining access to Placement Schools, as noted. Once initial difficulties were overcome Associates came to regard the Educational Advisors ('Ed A') as a valuable source of support.

My Ed A was great – in class observation and copious notes which was very useful.

Best support comes from the Ed A who comes up from Melbourne once a fortnight. My Mentor at the school is still getting her head around the program; I find the Ed A really helpful.

The Ed A has been my greatest source of support. I speak to my Ed A approximately three times a week and I'm very grateful that the Ed A is so available to provide assistance.

3.6 Mentor Selection and Training

Lack of clarity over the role meant that the process of selecting Mentors varied widely across schools.

Some mentors 'were tapped on the shoulder', others volunteered. For many Mentors the chance to work in the new pathway was welcomed, both for the opportunity to give back to the profession via helping to develop new staff and because of how participation would provide opportunities for personal professional growth.

Some remarked that Mentor selection could be problematic, particularly in those schools which lacked sufficient time, information about what the program entailed, the expectations placed on Mentors and/or which Associates the school would be hosting.

One Associate remarked:

I think there is a flaw in the current program and that is that there is no selection process for Mentors. The Mentor role needs to be taken seriously – I think there needs to be a definition of what makes a good Mentor, before people apply for the role. People didn't know what was expected of them. We have the additional load of working with a teacher who isn't on the same wavelength.

Mentor's views of the quality and utility of the MGSE training were by and large positive, with some dissenting opinions and a few caveats.

I found the training material on teacher methods to be useful and wonder why this type of PD was not available to all teachers (not just those participating in the TFA program). I believe that the training adjusted my perspective, rather than adding to it: I have always viewed myself as having many of the qualities and styles that the training emphasized. On the other hand, some of the theoretical aspects of the course were new to me and these were useful.

... it was not necessarily just about mentoring e.g. implementing change at school, and the emotional aspects of people's reaction to change. I learned more than I have been able to apply.

No Mentors interviewed were taking the more involved assessed option. The reasons given were generally to do with a lack of time and felt no need to gain further qualifications.

3.7 The Associates and their Placement Schools

Associates' experience of orientation to their Placement Schools varied somewhat but, with a few exceptions, was seen as useful and helpful overall. Placement schools by and large were

seen to expend a good deal of effort to make sure that Associates were introduced to the school and its routines and requirements.

While schools were chosen to host Associates on the basis of their educational disadvantage, some Associates remarked that they thought their schools varied considerably in school culture and climate. Associates also noted that the climate of the school in which they or their TFA Pathway colleagues were teaching had a noticeable effect on student attitudes and at times behaviour.

One stakeholder noted of one Placement School that it was 'toxic', which was unfavourably affecting the Associates' well-being and opportunity to develop as teachers.

As noted previously, there seemed to be a fairly consistent link between Associates' requests for more classroom experience during the Initial Intensive education and the level of in-school support provided, i.e., the less the level of support, the greater the espoused need for more classroom experience prior to placement.

3.8 Associates as School Citizens and as Teachers

The Associates quickly became valued members of staff in their Placement Schools.

The general opinion of the Associates' willingness to be involved in school life beyond the classroom was very high, as was the value placed upon the contribution they were making.

Very much involved – camps, ambassador programs, sports. They have become staff representatives on school committees. They've also seen that you 'teach the whole child'.

Extensively involved outside the classroom – not necessarily extracurricula, but over and above classroom teaching. My Associate is student leadership coordinator and also organises the SRC. She also takes the high achievers in year 7 for reading – takes them on excursions etc. I've also asked her to do things like coordinate year level-wide data collection – with her corporate background she's exceptionally efficient, and she has the ability to think strategically, see issues and works to resolve them.

My Associate has immersed himself in all sorts of things – has embraced every opportunity. I think in comparison to first year out teachers – it depends on the individual, how confident, social they are.

3.9 Perceptions of the Associates

When school personnel and Educational Advisors were asked to make judgements about the classroom performance of the Associates they explicitly compared them to either students on practicum or first year out teachers. Compared to these groups, their classroom performance was (in the majority of cases) judged very positively.

... above average, a lot more confident ... Anybody who's had a few more worldwide experiences has an advantage. They can educationally engage their students. All [] are working at a higher level than first year out.

Associates here are universally superior to other graduates we've had: their relationship with students, commitment to getting the job done right, thorough preparation.

They recognise there are issues and they are learning, but they are passionate and they enjoy being in the classroom.

I have one graduate teacher and I'd say they are on a par with that person. In the past we've had graduate teachers who were not as good as the Associates. During the year we have 25-35 pre-service teachers from different universities – hard to pick between them.

Mentors' views of the Associates as teachers were more nuanced, perhaps given their closer working relationship with them. However, their views were mostly very positive, particularly about the Associates' relationship with students.

The Associates are quite young which has been an advantage – they relate well. Also, they're knowledgeable, bright and enthusiastic, and this comes across. They use technology well in the classroom – are comfortable with it and make good use of available resources – and that engages the students. The Associates have also responded well to students and genuinely like the students. One is quite involved in extracurricular activities. They want the students to succeed/do well and you can see that in their relationships.

The Associates were eager to get into the classroom – very excited. They have had some challenges – they're really positive though – even when things go wrong. They can put it down to experience and get back up again, which can be different to other beginning/student teachers.

[] is so keen to get involved with everything with [the students]; she makes it clear she likes being with them. She has been so positive about the students that they have responded to that.

Some reservations were expressed by Mentors, in the main about classroom management issues.

The Educational Advisers regarded the large majority of Associates as displaying considerable promise as classroom practitioners. The Education Advisers attributed the Associates' potential as teachers to a combination of their strong discipline knowledge, commitment to teaching, personal characteristics and the quality of the education program. Six Associates are viewed as being alongside the very best beginning teachers.

Opportunities to interview students were few; however, those who were interviewed were largely enthusiastic about their experiences in Associates' classes.

Students were also willing to discuss times when classes did not go so well, for example because of classroom management issues.

3.10 Associates' Self-Perceptions

The most searching and critical comments about the Associates as teachers were made by the Associates themselves. This may be because they are most familiar with the challenges they have experienced by beginning a demanding new profession; and/or it may be a reflection of their high personal standards, which was commented upon by other stakeholders.

The majority of Associates however reported that they were enjoying teaching, particularly the relational, interpersonal aspects.

A number of the Associates remarked on their own lack of awareness about the degree of skill involved in teaching.

As with most beginning teachers, classroom management caused the most issues.

There is some evidence that the classes that Associates were first assigned to teach have had a major impact on the challenges they experienced, with senior classes and Year 7s relatively less challenging, as behaviour was less of an issue.

3.11 The Future

All stakeholders were asked their opinions about the likely future of the TFA Pathway and whether they felt it would produce quality teachers.

Associates' views of the program were mixed and the complexities of launching a new initiative had a noticeable effect on their attitudes. This included their perceptions of relationships among stakeholders and the degree to which they felt that participating schools understood the program and what was expected of them.

All Associates who were interviewed stated their intention to complete the program; however two remarked that they had previously considered leaving because of difficulties they had encountered.

Of the 30 Associates interviewed, 19 intended to remain in teaching after the initial two years, with four undecided. In terms of what they would be doing in five years, most considered that too far in the future for firm plans. Several, however, stated they most likely would be involved in education of some description, either in the school system or elsewhere.

4. CONSIDERATIONS

The following are key issues that ACER has identified via stakeholder interviews (April-July 2010) that could be used to inform future developments and improvements to the program.

Many of the issues reported by those interviewed as part of the evaluation will be much reduced in significance in future years, as these were the consequence of selecting a relatively high proportion of Associates whose discipline specialities did not allow them to teach in areas of high need. With advanced notice of what subjects are to be taught, the discipline specific pedagogy component of the initial intensive can be more appropriately tailored. In addition, schools will be able to plan more effectively, including more effective selection of Mentors, which should substantially ameliorate many issues reported by informants.

Initial Intensive

- More emphasis on classroom management is needed.
- More opportunities to observe and practice teaching is desirable.
- The quality of the teaching in the discipline specific pedagogy subjects is uneven and needs to be made more consistent.
- A more consistent approach between TFA and MGSE would be beneficial.
- Cultural differences between Australia and other countries in which *Teach for All* programs are run should be taken into consideration.

Associate Placement

- While among the program aims is addressing educational disadvantage, recognition should be given to the impact on beginning teachers of the climate of the school in which they first practice. It would be best to avoid placing Associates in schools characterised by poor climate and problematic staff-staff or staff-student relations.
- Consideration should also be given to the classes that Associates are asked to teach. While it may be difficult in the context of juggling school timetables, it would be preferable if Associates' early experiences are with student groups that are less demanding.
- Care should be taken to avoid publicity that portrays the placement schools as in some way 'failing' or poorly performing.
- Schools should be made aware of the expectations placed on Associates as part of their ongoing training with MGSE. Where possible the 0.2 allowance should be offered as a bloc rather than spread over a timetable week.
- While the issue appears to have now been resolved, assigning Associates to teach out of their discipline area should be strongly discouraged.

Mentor Selection

- Mentors should wherever possible be volunteers. They should also be selected from among staff recognised for the quality of their practice.
- More formal structure in support offered by Mentors to Associates may be beneficial. For example, minimum requirements for number and frequency of classroom observations and suggested topics for inclusion in observations and feedback might be considered.

5. CONCLUSION

Stakeholders regard the TFA pathway as a promising initiative with the potential to attract talented graduates to teaching. As with any complex innovation, the TFA pathway has experienced what some stakeholders refer to as ‘teething problems’. The necessity to build relationships between multiple partners, negotiate new procedures and design novel processes provides ample opportunity for difficulties that will necessitate adjustments and ‘fine tuning’. Stakeholders were by and large confident that the good will associated with the initiative would guarantee successful negotiation of these challenges.

Strengths of the program, from the perspectives of stakeholders are:

1. The use of a rigorous selection process for Associates that has – in most cases – successfully chosen high quality candidates with the necessary ability and personal attributes to succeed in the program.
2. The quality of the MGSE preparation program.
3. The provision of significant support to the Associates.

In a sense, the strengths of the program are also potentially its vulnerable points. The importance of the provision of excellent support to Associates opens the way to issues where this is lacking. A better understanding and more explicit statement of what is required of Mentors and a more rigorous selection process for these important team members are highly desirable. The current situation has resulted in many Associate-Mentor relationships that are highly successful and mutually beneficial but in a significant number of cases this relationship has not fulfilled expectations, and this has the potential of undermining the clinical model, which relies on successful in-school support structures.

While stakeholder opinion of the MGSE education program is overwhelmingly positive, it is by necessity theoretical in nature, and as such constitutes talking about school teaching rather than demonstrating it. Once in schools, the Associates continued to value the preparation they had and were receiving, however, they also came to recognise the highly practical nature of teaching and the complexity of the skills required to do it well. The Associates’ accounts of their experience demonstrate that, as with any beginning teacher, classroom management has proved their most challenging issue. Maintaining a positive and productive classroom climate is a skill that requires considerable experience (which can include observations) to develop.

A large number of Associates noted that, before they commenced their own placement, more time in schools observing and practising teaching would have been very beneficial in helping to learn the art of classroom management.⁴ If this is not practicable, the use (as trialled by some schools) of team teaching for the first two terms, may be a way to provide supported experiences and opportunities for Associates to observe experienced teachers.

Time and space for reflection is required if exemplary teaching practices are to develop. The experience of beginning teaching is often very taxing and always challenging. If the challenge is too great there is the danger that its demands may overwhelm the beginning teacher’s resources to the extent that survival trumps personal growth. From the perspective of the

⁴ ACER understands that the use of Portal Schools is to be discontinued from Cohort 2 and that MGSE will trial a Summer School during the Initial Intensive as a means of providing Associates with hands-on classroom experience. We also note that, in response to Associate feedback, MGSE provided additional material on behaviour management in the Mid-Year one Intensive during the school holidays at the end of Term two, which was well received, and that some of this additional material may be provided in the Initial Intensive for Cohort 2.

Associates interviewed, there are a number of important factors that affect the chance of successfully making the transition to exemplary practitioner. These are:

- Appropriate Associates' attributes
- Good school climate and culture
- Good school-level support structures, with a thorough understanding by all stakeholders of their roles and responsibilities
- Careful selection of Mentors
- Appropriate year level of classes assigned to Associates
- Associates to teach in appropriate discipline area.

If Associates are to gain the maximum benefit from their Placement School experience it would seem wise to ensure that their first year is more 'swim' than 'sink', and certainly – to mix metaphors – not a baptism by fire. This would be most likely to occur where the Placement School environment is supportive and characterised by good staff-student and staff-staff relationships; Mentors are well chosen; the Associates are teaching in discipline areas in which they are well-versed and they have been assigned classes that are more easily managed.

APPENDICES: PHASE 1 INTERVIEW GUIDES

APPENDIX A. Associates

1.0 Recruitment

- 1.1 How did you hear about TFA and why did you apply?
- 1.2 Would you have considered teaching were it not for TFA?

2.0 Initial intensive/ongoing training

- 2.1 How did your expectations about the 6 week intensive measure up to the actual experience? Did the course provide you with preparation for the subjects you are teaching?
- 2.2 Now you have been teaching for a while, what are your views on the intensive, and the on-going requirements? Would you change anything?
- 2.3 What do you understand the TFA 'leadership framework' to be? How well do you think your leadership skills have been developed thus far?

3.0 Placement school

- 3.1 How were you introduced to your placement school? How did you feel the school community responded to you (and TFA peers)? What 'induction' did you receive to the school and your role?
- 3.2 What kind of support are you receiving? Who has been the most help? What additional support would you like?
- 3.3 What are your overall perceptions of the school? And the relationship between staff and students?

4.0 Teaching and involvement

- 4.1 What have been the challenges for you in this first term of teaching? What has your teaching experience been like? What is it like to be in class?
- 4.2 Have you been involved in any professional learning at the school? If so, has it been useful?
- 4.3 Are you involved in other aspects of school life, outside teaching? How are you finding this involvement?

5.0 General

- 5.1 What is your overall perception (so far) of the TFA program?
- 5.2 Do you think you will complete the 2 year program? Do you intend to stay in teaching after the 2 years? Why/not? Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?
- 5.3 Is there anything else you can tell me about your experience to date?

APPENDIX B. Placement School Principals

1.0 School involvement

- 1.1 Why did you choose to involve your school? What was attractive about the program, what were the major selling points? What did you see your school gaining from involvement?
- 1.2 What was the initial reaction of you/your staff to the TFA concept (not the associates personally)?

2.0 Associate placement

- 2.1 How many associates do you have? How many are supernumerary? (Would you be involved if positions were not supernumerary?)
- 2.2 How well prepared did you think the school was to support the associates? Were the expectations of your school made clear to you?
- 2.3 What is your understanding of the TFA 'leadership framework'? How is the school involved and how well are the associates supported to develop leadership skills?
- 2.4 What has been/is the reaction of your staff to the associates as individuals? How well are the associates supported?

3.0 Associate teaching and involvement

- 3.1 How have students responded to the associates so far?
- 3.2 Associates are already in the classroom. At this point, how do they rate against other beginning teachers (both those on practicum and those in first year out?)
- 3.3 From what you have seen so far, do you think the TFA 'employment-based teacher training' model will produce quality teachers at the end of 2 years? (in comparison to other pathways?) Why/not?
- 3.4 To what extent have Associates involved themselves in the life of the school – extra-curricular activities? Have the associates had a noticeable impact in any way that you're aware of?
- 3.5 In what ways (if any) are Associates different from other beginning teachers?
- 3.6 What feedback have you received from the wider school community about TFA? (parents, local community)

4.0 Finance

- 4.1 What direct/indirect costs to the school result from the presence of Associates? Are there any unintended/unanticipated costs?
- 4.2 From your perspective, and compared to other teacher training models you've experienced, is the TFA model cost effective? Are there opportunities to make the program more cost-effective?

5.0 General

- 5.1 What is your overall perception (so far) of the TFA initiative?
- 5.2 What do you see the school as having gained from participation in the program? What are the benefits?
- 5.3 From what you have experienced so far, do you intend to continue a relationship with the TFA program?
- 5.4 Is there anything else you can tell me about your experience to date?

APPENDIX C. Mentors

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Why did you get involved? What did you see yourself gaining from involvement?
- 1.2 What was your initial reaction to the TFA concept (not the associates personally)?

2.0 Associate placement and support

- 2.1 How many associates are in the school?
- 2.2 How well prepared did you think the school was to support the associates? Were the expectations of your school made clear to you/staff?
- 2.3 What has been the reaction of staff to the associates as individuals? As teachers?
- 2.4 How supportive is the school of your role as mentor?

3.0 Associate teaching and involvement

- 3.1 How have students responded to the associates so far? How have the associates responded to the students? To being in the classroom?
- 3.2 From what you have seen so far, do you think the TFA 'employment-based teacher training' model will produce quality teachers at the end of 2 years? (in comparison to other pathways?) Why/not?
- 3.3 To what extent have Associates involved themselves in the life of the school – extra-curricular activities? (compared to other beginning teachers/other staff in the school)

4.0 The mentor role

- 4.1 Have you mentored a beginning teacher before?
- 4.2 Have you undertaken the MGSE mentor training? If yes, did you undertake the assessed/non-assessed version of the course? Why? How useful was the training? In what way did the training change your perceptions of mentoring/of teaching?
- 4.3 How have you mentored the associate? What sort of assistance have you provided?
- 4.4 How does the mentoring role link to TFAs 'leadership framework'?

5.0 General

- 5.1 What is your overall perception (so far) of the TFA initiative?
- 5.2 Is there anything else you can tell me about your experience to date?

APPENDIX D. Placement School Staff

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Why did your school get involved? What do you see the school gaining from involvement?
- 1.2 What was your initial reaction to the TFA concept (not the associates personally)?

2.0 Associate placement

- 2.1 How many associates are in your school? (and in your department etc. as relevant)?
- 2.2 How well prepared did you think the school was to support the associates? Were the expectations of your school made clear to you/staff?

3.0 Associate teaching and involvement

- 3.1 How have students responded to the associates so far? How have associates responded to students?
- 3.2 From what you have seen so far, do you think the TFA 'employment-based teacher training' model will produce quality teachers at the end of 2 years? (in comparison to other pathways?) Why/not?
- 3.3 To what extent have Associates involved themselves in the life of the school – extra-curricular activities?

4.0 General

- 4.1 What is your overall perception (so far) of the TFA initiative?
- 4.2 Is there anything else you can tell me about your experience to date?

APPENDIX E. Students

1.0 In class

- 1.1 How do you feel about [subject/s]?
- 1.2 How do you feel about the teaching of [subject]? What sort of things do you do? What is it like being in the class?
- 1.3 How does the teaching of [subject] compare to: Other subjects you study? The teaching of [subject] last year/in previous years?

APPENDIX F. Parents

1.0 General Awareness

- 1.1 Have you heard of Teach for Australia? Can you tell me what you know about it? What is it?
- 1.2 Where did you find out about it? What information have you received from the school? What have you found out from other sources, such as the media?
- 1.3 What is your opinion of Teach for Australia? What/who has influenced your opinion (e.g. the media, your children, other parents, school staff)?

2.0 School-specific Awareness

- 2.1 How is Teach for Australia connected to/involved in your children's school? (how many Associates are there, how long will they stay, what do they teach, etc)
- 2.2 Do you know if your children have any classes with a Teach for Australia Associate? Have your children made any references to these classes?

3.0 General

- 3.1 Is there anything else you can tell me about your experience/knowledge/opinion of the TFA program to date?

APPENDIX G. Portal School Principals

1.0 School involvement

- 1.1 When and how were you approached?
- 1.2 Why did you choose to involve your school? What was attractive about the program, what were the major selling points? What did you see your school gaining from involvement?

2.0 General

- 2.1 What is your overall perception (so far) of the TFA initiative?
- 2.2 Is there anything else you can tell me about your experience to date?

APPENDIX H. DEEWR Staff

1.0 Background

- 1.1 What were the reasons behind the decision to create a new pathway into teaching and why was the TFA model chosen?

2.0 Victoria and national implementation

- 2.1 What do you consider to be the key factors for success in Victoria and how have these areas developed to date?
- 2.2 What are the potential barriers to national implementation? How can these be overcome and in what time-line?

3.0 Finance & business partnership

- 3.1 What does cost effectiveness mean in the context of teacher preparation? What aspects of TFA make it cost effective or otherwise? What could improve its cost effectiveness?
- 3.2 How do you see business involved in TFA (in terms of financial sustainability and Associate development/engagement)? How has business been involved to date?

4.0 Teaching & leadership

- 4.1 What are your views of the TFA model and the development of effective teachers?
- 4.2 What are your views of the TFA model and the development of future leaders?

5.0 General

- 5.1 What is your overall perception (so far) of the TFA initiative?
- 5.2 Is there anything else you can tell me about your experience to date?

APPENDIX I. DEECD Staff

1.0 Background

- 1.1 What were the reasons behind the decision to create a new pathway into teaching and why was the TFA model chosen?

2.0 Victoria, school support and national implementation

- 2.1 What do you consider to be the key factors for success in Victoria and how have these areas developed to date? (e.g. school vacancies, August census and timeline issues, STEM shortage)
- 2.2 What are the potential barriers to national implementation? How can these be overcome and in what time-line?
- 2.3 What feedback have you received from the regions/schools? What is your perception of the program at this point? Is the program sustainable in schools? Are schools receiving appropriate support?

3.0 Finance & business partnership

- 3.1 What does cost effectiveness mean in the context of teacher preparation? What aspects of TFA make it cost effective or otherwise? What could improve its cost effectiveness?
- 3.2 How do you see business involved in TFA (in terms of financial sustainability and Associate development/engagement)? How has business been involved to date?

4.0 Teaching

- 4.1 What are your views of the TFA model and the development of effective teachers?
- 4.2 What are your views of the TFA model and the development of future leaders?
- 4.3 Are associates receiving appropriate support?

5.0 General

- 5.1 What is your overall perception (so far) of the TFA initiative?
- 5.2 Is there anything else you can tell me about your experience to date?

APPENDIX J. VIT Staff

For use with telephone and face-to-face interviews (individual or focus group as appropriate)

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed about your experience so far of the Teach for Australia program. This interview is subject to ethics guidelines – it is confidential and any reporting will be anonymous.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 What was your initial response to the program? Has this changed over time? In what ways? Would other people at VIT agree with your perception?
- 1.2 Does VIT/do you see the TFA as being a credible and effective alternative path to teaching in the future?

2.0 Permission to teach and registration

- 2.1 What processes does the VIT use to determine PTT? How are the details of PTT communicated to the Associates? And to TFA? The DEECD? Schools?
- 2.2 In what ways is TFA different to other teaching pathways in terms of PTT and registration and what are your views on this pathway?
- 2.3 What arrangements do you have with the MGSE to ensure the TFA course is in alignment with VIT requirements?
- 2.4 At what points in the two years do the Associates achieve provisional registration and full registration? How are these decisions made, and by whom? Do the Associates complete the ‘normal’ training program and assessments for teachers to move from provisional to full registration?

3.0 General

- 3.1 What is your overall perception (so far) of the TFA initiative?
- 3.2 Is there anything else you can tell me about your experience to date?

APPENDIX K. Education Advisers

1.0 Background, TFA and MGSE

- 1.1 Why did you get involved? What was attractive about the program, what were the major selling points? What did you see yourself gaining from involvement?
- 1.2 What was your initial reaction to the TFA concept (not the associates personally)?
- 1.3 What is your role? (to what extent is it what you expected/what was included in the job description, and how is it different?)
- 1.4 What support do you get from TFA/MGSE and how does having two employers work in practice? Are you able to provide feedback to TFA/MGSE? How do you provide feedback?

2.0 Support

- 2.1 How many associates are you responsible for at the moment, across how many schools? How is this working for you?
- 2.2 How well prepared did you think the school was to support the associates? What has been/is the reaction of school staff to the program and associates? As teachers?
- 2.3 How do you gauge the Associates' views of the program so far?
- 2.4 How supportive is(are) the school(s) of your role?

3.0 Associate teaching and assessment

- 3.1 Associates are already in the classroom. At this point, how do they rate against other beginning teachers (both those on practicum and those in first year out?) How well prepared were the Associates?
- 3.2 From what you have seen so far, do you think the TFA 'employment-based teacher training' model will produce quality teachers at the end of 2 years? (in comparison to other pathways?) Why/not?
- 3.3 Your role includes Associate assessment for practice and portfolio. How well do you understand this requirement? How comfortable are you with it? How comfortable are the Associates with your role as both adviser and assessor?
- 3.4 What is your understanding of the TFA 'leadership framework'? How does this involve/affect your role?

4.0 General

- 4.1 What is your overall perception (so far) of the TFA initiative?
- 4.2 Is there anything else you can tell me about your experience to date?

APPENDIX L. MGSE Staff

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 How did you become involved with TFA? What was your initial response to the program? Has this changed over time? In what ways?
- 1.2 How does the TFA teacher education program compare with other teacher education programs at the university?
- 1.3 What are the assessment and reporting arrangements? How do these dovetail with the school and with reports from the Advisers?
- 1.4 What is the TFA 'leadership framework'? How does this framework relate to the diploma course? In what way is the TFA course different from other MGSE courses as a result?

2.0 Intensive and teaching

- 2.1 What specific outcomes was the 6 week intensive intended to achieve? How are judgements made about whether the Associates have met these outcomes? Who is involved in making the judgements?
- 2.2 Have you noticed any differences between the TFA Associates in your classes and students in other programs (e.g. the Dip. Ed. or Master of Teaching)? If so, to what do you attribute these differences?
- 2.3 What evidence do you have that TFA associates are having an impact on student achievement in the schools in which they teach?

3.0 Mentors, Advisers and support

- 3.1 What is the role of the Mentors and Advisers in relation to monitoring/ reporting progress? How is feedback from formative evaluation used to support Associates?
- 3.2 What procedures are in place for helping Associates who experience difficulties?

4.0 VIT and national requirements

- 4.1 How is the course structured in terms of PTT, provisional and full registration? What are the key factors to ensure ongoing success and sustainability? **What arrangements do you have with the VIT to ensure the TFA course is in alignment with VIT requirements?**
- 4.2 What are likely to be barriers to national implementation and how may these be overcome?

5.0 Finance

- 5.1 What does cost effectiveness mean in the context of teacher preparation? What aspects of the TFA program make it cost effective or otherwise? How could this be improved?

6.0 General

- 6.1 What is your overall perception (so far) of the TFA initiative?
- 6.2 Is there anything else you can tell me about your experience to date?

APPENDIX M. TFA Staff

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 Why do you think the TFA model was chosen as a new pathway into teaching?

2.0 Finance & business partnership

- 2.1 What does cost effectiveness mean in the context of the program? What aspects of TFA make it cost effective or otherwise? What could improve its cost effectiveness?
- 2.2 How is business involved financially in TFA? What are the key points for successful and sustainable business participation?

3.0 Associate recruitment

- 3.1 What are the key factors for successful recruitment? How successful has recruitment been? What changes, if any, might be made as a result of the first cohort? Is the model sustainable in the long-term?

4.0 School recruitment

- 4.1 What are the key factors for school recruitment success? How successful has school recruitment been, and is the model sustainable long-term?
- 4.2 How well are schools prepared for their role supporting associates? What changes, if any, might be made based on experience to date?
- 4.3 What is the TFA 'Leadership framework'? How is this aspect of the program understood by schools, mentors and associates?

5.0 Associate support/mentoring

- 5.1 How is TFA involved in the support and mentoring of Associates? (e.g., during intensive, while in-school, what channels – phone, email, internet etc.)
- 5.2 How is business involved in Associate support/mentoring/leadership development?
- 5.3 What is in place to support an associate in difficulties? (what possible areas of difficulty have been recognised?)

6.0 General

- 6.1 What is your overall perception (so far) of the TFA initiative?
- 6.2 Is there anything else you can tell me about your experience to date?