



## **Teach for Australia Pathway: Evaluation Report Phase 2 of 3**

Submitted to  
DEEWR – Pathways into Teaching  
Section, Quality Teaching Branch

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

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## Acronyms

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank
CS	Clinical Specialist (MGSE role)
DEECD	Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
DEEWR	Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DET	ACT Department of Education and Training
Ed A	Educational Adviser (Joint MGSE/TFA role, Cohort 1 only)
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
KLA	Key Learning Area
LOTE	Languages other than English
MGSE	Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne
PD	Professional Development
SFO Index	Student Family Occupation Index (DEECD)
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TFA*	Teach For Australia – the organisation (see note)
TFA Pathway*	The Teach for Australia Pathway (see note)
TLA	Training and Leadership Adviser (TFA role)
TQNP	Teacher Quality National Partnership
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 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 and the University of Melbourne and is (for Cohort 2) supported by the Victorian DEECD and Catholic Education Office, the ACT DET, 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 ACT Department of Education and Training; 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 Clinical Specialists and Training and Leadership Advisers, the Associates, Mentors, principals and other school staff, and students. For the purposes of this report, the term ‘School Personnel’ refers to school staff with the exception of Associates.

## Executive Summary

This report is the second of three reports of the evaluation of the Teach for Australia Pathway, a pilot of an alternative approach to teacher education in Australia.

### Background of the Teach for Australia Pathway

The basic design of the TFA Pathway is as follows:

1. High-achieving university graduates are recruited nationally. Applicants are subject to a rigorous recruitment process and are selected on the basis of qualities and skills suitable to the teaching profession, and the possession of a genuine desire to reduce educational disadvantage.
2. Selected applicants undertake six weeks of initial residential intensive education prior to commencing a two-year placement as an Associate in a disadvantaged secondary school (the Placement School).
3. Associates undertake a two-year employment-based course involving continued study toward a qualification in teaching; a teaching role with a 0.8FTE reduced load, and the support of an in-school teacher Mentor, a Clinical Specialist and a Training and Leadership Advisor.
4. Associates are placed in secondary schools in geographic 'clusters', allowing for multiple Associates within a school and within a school-region to ensure Associates have access to peer-support.
5. The Associate's in-school experienced Mentor also undertakes accredited mentor training, conducted by the University of Melbourne.

Teach For Australia (TFA, the organisation) is part of the Teach for All network that currently extends across 23 countries world-wide. The most significant overseas initiatives represented in this network are *Teach for America* (US) and *Teach First* (UK). While these are similar programs, the Australian model has been modified to ensure the pathway provides an accredited alternative employment-based pathway into teaching.

Associate teacher education is provided by the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) at Melbourne University.

The expected outcomes of the TFA Pathway are:

- achieving measurable benefits for students in socially and educationally disadvantaged schools;
- forging new linkages between business, government and non-government education authorities, universities and schools; and
- creating a community of future innovators and leaders for education and society with high regard for socially and educationally disadvantaged school communities.

As an initiative of the National Partnership, the TFA Pathway is intended to contribute to structural reforms to raise the quality of teaching in Australia. The initiative aims to establish appropriate and high quality teacher education through an accredited clinical, employment-based pathway into teaching.

The first cohort of *Teach for Australia* Associates graduated from the two year program in December 2011. All of the Cohort 1 Associates were employed in Victorian government schools. Of the 42 graduates from the program, 26 were in full-time teaching positions in Australian schools as of February 2012 and 9 were seeking teaching positions or

continuing studies towards their Masters in Teaching or other study in education. The second cohort of TFA Associates commenced in 2011 and, as well as involving Victorian government schools, the program was expanded to include a small number of Associates in ACT government schools and a Victorian Catholic school. The second Cohort of 42 Associates has successfully completed year 1 of the program and will complete the second year in 2012. The 40 Associates making up Cohort 3 commenced their program in 2012. Cohort 3 Associates are teaching in government schools in Victoria, the ACT and the Northern Territory and in two Victorian Catholic schools. (Cohort 3 is outside the scope of this report.)

### **The evaluation**

The evaluation of the *Teach for Australia* Pathway was commissioned by DEEWR and commenced in March 2010. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess whether the delivery of the Pathway can be modified to better achieve intended outputs and outcomes (the ‘formative’ evaluation), and whether the Pathway is achieving expected outcomes (the ‘summative’ evaluation).

### **Evaluation methodology**

ACER is employing a mixed method approach including both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the key critical questions. Data is being collected from a variety of sources, including interviews and focus groups with stakeholders over three years and online surveys of Associates in their first and second years of the program.

During 2011, interviews were conducted with 12 representatives of the program partners, 33 Associates, 20 Mentors, 10 principals, 15 school staff and three Clinical Specialists. Focus groups were held with four Training and Leadership Advisers and a total of 77 students, ranging from Year 7 to Year 12. This added to the data collected in 2010 from 84 interviews and 10 focus groups.

Online surveys of Associates were carried out in November 2010 (Cohort 1) and November 2011 (Cohorts 1 and 2). Comparisons were made between the results from both online surveys: changes in Cohort 1’s views between 2010 and 2011; and differences between the views of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 at similar stages in the program.

### **Phases of the evaluation**

Phase 1 of the evaluation assessed the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of the program for Cohort 1 in their first two terms (2010). The first report (Part 1) was designed to provide a summary of data gathered on the operation of the Pathway in its initial stages.<sup>1</sup> Data for that report 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 from April through July 2010. This information was gathered to provide early feedback on how the Pathway was being implemented – to synthesise emerging themes in the delivery of the program and to inform future development and implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> See Scott, Weldon & Dinham, 2010.



In phase 1, the strengths of the program from the perspectives of stakeholders were:

- The rigorous selection process for Associates;
- The provision of significant support to the Associates;
- The quality of the MGSE course.

This report covers Phase 2 of the evaluation. It builds on the Phase 1 report and captures further information on the effectiveness and efficiency of program delivery, including a consideration of changes made to the program for Cohort 2, the experiences of stakeholders participating in the program for their second year and the recruitment and placement of Cohort 3. This report provides a summary of the main findings emerging from ACER's evaluation of the pathway up to the end of 2011, particularly from interview data collected between April and August 2011, and online surveys of Associates conducted in November 2010 and 2011. It includes a preliminary assessment of the evaluation's key questions.

### **Structure of the report**

This report is set out in three parts. Part 1, *Setting the scene*, provides an overview of the key aspects of the TFA Pathway, program terminology, and changes made between cohorts 1 and 2.

Part 2, *Perceptions and experience of the Pathway*, relates the findings of the evaluation, with particular emphasis on the experiences of Cohort 2 Associates in their first year and Cohort 1 in their second year, and the views of program partners and school personnel in 2011. This section considers elements of the program from the perspective of the various stakeholders involved. It also provides a comparative analysis of the results of the online surveys completed by Cohort 1 Associates in Term 4 of their first (2010) and second (2011) years, and Cohort 2 Associates in Term 4 of their first year (2011). Data from TFA and MGSE are also incorporated.

In Part 3, *Considerations, key questions and conclusions*, some suggestions are made about potential avenues of improvement drawn from issues raised in Part 2, as part of the formative aspect of the evaluation. Key questions are then considered in the light of the findings presented in Part 2 and, where appropriate, comparisons from national and international literature on teacher education. That analysis and discussion will be further developed as the 2012 data collections become available, and incorporated in the final report due in May 2013.

### **Phase 2 findings: perceptions and experience of the TFA Pathway**

Overall, the Pathway continues to show considerable promise, with all participating schools indicating that they would take another TFA Associate if they had an available vacancy: a strong endorsement of the quality of the Associates.

As well as the strengths of the program reported in Phase 1, a fourth strength has become evident as the program has unfolded:

- The development of a community of Associates and their support for each other.

It is becoming apparent that one of the strengths of the TFA Pathway is the bond shared between the Associates. They are all 'in the same boat' and they have found other Associates to be a considerable source of support, both personally and professionally.

### *Recruitment*

As was the case in 2010, the recruitment process was seen to be a major strength of the Pathway by all stakeholders. High quality graduates who would not otherwise have considered teaching have been successfully recruited, including from fields where there is a teacher shortage. Some logistical concerns remain, such as matching Associate subject areas to school needs and ensuring that Associates are willing to be placed in non-metropolitan areas.

The selection process has been successful in recruiting resilient Associates prepared to remain in the program for the two-year period. Of the 45 Associates who started in Cohort 1, only two have left the program, and at the end of Term 4 in 2011, no Cohort 2 Associates had left, leading to an overall retention rate to date of about 98 per cent.

### *Associate preparation and education*

Cohort 2 Associates were somewhat critical of the Initial Intensive provided in December 2010 and January 2011 by MGSE and many felt that there was too much emphasis on theory and not on practical modelling and material. Associates appreciated time spent with experts in their learning areas, and some would have liked more subject-specific input. Several Associates and some Mentors felt it would have been useful to have had more discussion on the kind of issues faced by disadvantaged students and the attitudes the Associates could encounter in the classroom.

The Summer School was introduced in the Cohort 2 Initial Intensive to provide Associates with an opportunity to teach school students from educationally disadvantaged contexts who had volunteered to attend the university during their January 2011 holidays. Associates noted that the Summer School was valuable in helping them develop as teachers. MGSE have made further changes to the course for Cohort 3 as a result of Associate feedback.

Cohort 2 Associates had less to say about their ongoing study than did Cohort 1, which suggests both that expectations were better managed and that the timing of assessments was generally not the issue it had been for Cohort 1. As was noted in 2010, School Personnel tended to express more concern about the demands of the course than the Associates themselves.

### *Associates in schools*

The first one to two terms can be highly stressful for Associates as they lack experience of the classroom environment and have had little opportunity to practise skills such as behaviour management. However, Associates are generally well supported and they thrive on challenge. School personnel favourably compared them to other beginning teachers and some were considered to have outstanding attributes and potential as teachers.

Most Associates were managing their teaching commitment well and were also strongly engaged with the school community and co-curricular activities. Some were introducing new activities. In addition, 61 per cent of Cohort 1 Associates were in leadership positions in their second year (2011), including roles such as Year Level Coordinator.

### *Associate support*

As was the case in 2010, the majority of Associates regarded the support they received in total (from all sources) to be at least adequate and in many cases excellent. Few Associates

felt the need for any additional support. Interactions with school personnel and other Associates were considered as important as the in-school Mentor, MGSE and TFA sources of support.

Mentors provided teaching and pastoral support and were key people in introducing Associates to the school community. For a variety of reasons, some Mentors were not always able to provide adequate support in some areas of need. In these cases, there seemed to be no clear resolution process for the Associate at the school level.

Cohort 1 Associates and school personnel noted some confusion around the change from the Educational Adviser role (MGSE and TFA) in 2010 to the Clinical Specialist (MGSE) and Training and Leadership Adviser (TFA) roles in 2011.

### **Considerations: Ways to improve implementation of the Pathway**

Stakeholders regard the TFA Pathway as a promising initiative that is attracting talented graduates to teaching. Adjustments in response to feedback are ongoing and generally appear to be effective. The Associates particularly commented on the extent to which both TFA and MGSE were willing to accept critical feedback and modify their approaches accordingly.

Evaluation findings to date show that changes and developments have been responsive to the implementation issues raised by stakeholders and the first phase of the evaluation. Issues do remain, particularly in the areas of communication, including between support roles, and the more practical preparation of Associates for entry into schools. Overall, feedback from all parties indicates that the program has major strengths and is well advanced towards delivering effective teachers, albeit in small numbers at this stage, in schools where they are needed.

The formative part of the evaluation has been concerned with how the pathway has been implemented, and the key factors influencing success in terms of achieving its initiatives. Many of the considerations noted in the Phase 1 report have been implemented or resolved and did not emerge as themes in 2011. Issues that still require some attention, or which have emerged during 2011 are summarised below:

- There may be scope for further clarity in material presented to schools about the background and experience level of the Associates.
- Further opportunities to observe and practise teaching are desirable.
- In some cases, PTT (or similar) of Associates with a university degree from one state, teaching in another state, may need to be more carefully considered to ensure an appropriate fit with subject requirements in the state where the Associate is teaching.
- It would be preferable if Associates' early experiences are with student groups that are less demanding, or if they have fewer subjects or repeat classes at the same year level initially.
- There may be a case for ensuring that placement schools have an appropriate formal induction process.
- While there are very few cases of Associates struggling to cope with the expectations and demands of the program, it would be beneficial to ensure that policies and procedures in place to manage these circumstances are clearly communicated and understood by all parties.

- Mentors should be volunteers or willing participants fully aware of the demands of the role.
- It would be preferable for Mentors to be in the same subject area as the Associate they mentor and in geographical proximity (e.g. the same staffroom).
- It may be beneficial to ensure that both the Mentor and the school are able to allocate sufficient time to the mentoring role, particularly in the first two terms.
- Where possible, more flexibility in the time release for the Mentor role could be considered by schools, such as increasing the allowance in Terms 1 and 2 and reducing it thereafter.
- There is a need to clarify the roles of the CS and TLA to each other, to the Associates and to schools.
- At this stage it appears that the role and purpose of the Leadership Coach lacks clarity for some Associates and Coaches.

### **Key Questions**

The key critical research questions comprise a large part of the evaluation analysis. This report includes a preliminary assessment of the key questions. A full assessment will be provided in the final report in mid 2013.

#### ***KQ1: What are the key factors that influence success in terms of achieving initiative objectives (including identifying barriers to national implementation)?***

Marketing campaigns and rigorous graduate recruitment have successfully attracted high-quality applicants nationally. The Pathway was seen by stakeholders to have set rigorous standards for applicants' academic achievement and personal attributes suitable to teaching, such as excellent communication skills. National expansion would require a growth in successful applicants. A greater number of applicants need to be willing to take regional or rural placements.

Associates are placed in schools serving disadvantaged communities in metropolitan and regional areas. Qualitative data suggest that Associates are gaining the skills and attributes necessary to be high-quality teachers. Schools have indicated that they would take another Associate if a vacancy was available: a strong endorsement of the program.

Associates have formed a community of practice and are a powerful source of support and learning for each other. The objective of creating on-going relationships among Associates is embedded in the Pathway to a greater extent than in other forms of teacher preparation. Further research would be required to gauge the impact of this community following completion of the program.

The careful selection of Mentors has proven very successful for the development of the Associates. Less successful Mentor relationships tended to exacerbate Associate stress during the initial stages of the program. In general the Mentors commented favourably on the training they received.

Current legislation in some states remains a barrier to national implementation. The clinical, employment-based model is a significant departure from the traditional teacher training model and as such requires state government investment at a legislative level.

A potential barrier to national implementation is the location of MGSE in Victoria. Meeting the needs of a cohort of Associates due to start teaching in multiple states and

territories may stretch available resources. There may also be state preferences for local universities to provide the teacher education components.

The cost of providing the current level of support to Associates through Clinical Specialists (MGSE) and Training and Leadership Advisers (TFA) may also be problematic if the program grows nationally, and particularly if numbers of schools in more remote areas are to participate: where possible Associates are clustered in schools, however distances between schools in rural and remote areas tend to be considerable, increasing the resources needed to support Associates.

***KQ2: Is the employment-based teacher education approach cost effective?***

The TFA Pathway is a relatively costly teacher education option for government. Any reduction in the quality of the teacher education program is likely to be detrimental to the Pathway, although there may be scope for a reduction in the levels of support provided to Associates. The perception schools have of Associates is very positive and, thus far, every school that has participated in the program would like to continue that association.

It should be noted that costs for Cohort 1 and 2 are likely to include start-up costs that would not be repeated, particularly in the area of recruitment. There were also a limited number of vacancies made available by employers as they piloted the program and as such, potential economies of scale have yet to be realised. These factors are likely to have resulted in higher costs for Cohorts 1 and 2 than would be the case in future cohorts.

The TFA Pathway is estimated to currently cost approximately \$216,500 per Associate, based on figures for Cohorts 1 and 2, from published data and information provided by stakeholders. This includes the cost of recruitment, course delivery, mentor training, travel and accommodation, in-school and TFA support, the salary paid to Associates over two years and the indirect cost of the Associate filling a vacant position for 2 years at 0.8 FTE. It does not include the cost of the Alumni program, nor the administrative and national coordinating roles played by TFA.

Based on published data, a comparative Victorian post-graduate pathway is estimated to cost government around \$140,200 per fully registered teacher. This includes some living expenses such as Youth Allowance over a one year period, a scholarship for teaching in a hard-to-staff area and a graduate teacher salary over the year generally required for a teacher in Victoria to become fully registered (as Associates can be at the end of their two year course). It also includes the indirect cost of the salary of a graduate teacher over one year while a trainee is not available to teach.

Cost-effectiveness of the TFA Pathway is difficult to evaluate, particularly when benefits may not be evident in the short term. To make comparisons it is necessary to identify the differences between the TFA Pathway and other programs with similar outcomes. Therefore the various elements of the Pathway are considered separately in terms of cost and cost effectiveness.

***Recruitment***

Recruitment is undertaken by the TFA organisation and costs are included in the funding for the pathway. In 2011 figures, recruitment activities cost the TFA organisation approximately \$1 million per cohort. A marked difference between the TFA Pathway

graduate recruitment and standard practice is that TFA recruitment takes place before teacher education begins.

A general comparison of the cost of graduate recruitment can be made using surveys of graduate employers in Australia. The Australian Association of Graduate Employers (AAGE) 2012 annual employer survey noted that the median cost per joiner (Applicant accepting an offered place) for organisations with 500 or less staff was \$10,100. The most expensive new joiners tend to be recruited into smaller organisations. Based on 2010 figures, the cost to TFA of recruitment per joiner is about \$15,000.

The rigorous selection process was reported by stakeholders to be a strength of the program because it successfully attracts high achieving graduates with the personal qualities needed to be effective teachers.

#### *Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (MGSE)*

It is possible to compare the cost of the TFA Pathway teacher education program with other teacher education programs although, in doing so, it is necessary to consider significant issues around economies of scale: the TFA Pathway is currently very small.

The total cost to government of the education of Cohort 1 and 2 Associates over two years was about \$47,000 per Associate (not including Associate salary), considerably more than for teachers gaining full registration through a standard pathway, even allowing for the time Associates actually spend teaching. The additional cost comes primarily from two sources: Associate travel and accommodation; and support (Mentor time release and training costs are not included here, the cost of the Clinical Specialist is included).

The TFA diploma is more expensive than other postgraduate teacher education courses due to the clinical model. Some additional cost is due to the salaries paid to Clinical Specialists who visit and observe Associates in school. MGSE funding also covered Associate and Mentor local and interstate travel, accommodation and full catering for four intensives per cohort of Associates, as well as for the 2-day and 3-day residential Mentor training course. Such costs are typically not covered in the funding for other teacher preparation programs. Staff-student ratios are also higher than would usually be the case in other courses.

#### *Retention*

Currently, the TFA Pathway has a retention rate of about 98 per cent across two cohorts. In 2009, about 66 per cent of graduates from standard post-graduate programs in Victoria went into teaching when they graduated. While there are caveats, if retention is viewed from the start of a postgraduate course in teaching rather than from the start of a teaching career (which is a more accurate comparative model), there is little difference in attrition levels between pathways over the first three years.

#### *Placement*

The specific focus of the program, beyond getting top tier graduates into teaching, is placing them into schools serving disadvantaged communities, across both metropolitan and regional areas. School eligibility for participation in the program is based on the relative disadvantage of students in both socioeconomic and school performance measures. Generally schools are selected from within the bottom 50 per cent of state or national measures of socioeconomic disadvantage. The measures may vary across jurisdictions but are applied consistently within a jurisdiction.

Recruitment and placement are successful, in the sense that high-quality graduates are being recruited and placed in these schools. Associates generally show a marked preference for metropolitan areas. Thirty three per cent of Cohort 1, and 45 per cent of Cohort 2 were placed outside a metropolitan area.

The response from participant schools has been very positive. They have been impressed with the calibre of the Associates assigned to them and every participating school with a vacancy has requested another Associate.

### *Support*

A significant proportion of program resources is spent on support. Stakeholders have indicated that high levels of support, particularly in the initial stages of the Pathway, are necessary and are generally effective in helping Associates manage their new role, survive, and thrive in the classroom. The division of the Educational Adviser into two separate roles has increased the cost of support as a proportion of total program costs. It is not clear at present that the additional resources required in this area are warranted.

### ***KQ3: Does the employment-based teacher education program deliver effective teachers?***

It was clear from the comments of Associates and other school personnel that in the first one to two terms Associates were not highly effective teachers. They were novices, finding their feet and requiring a significant amount of support. However, they were not considered to be a liability and they were favourably compared to other beginning teachers. They were enthusiastic and determined contributing members of staff, and they quickly earned the respect of students and staff.

Evidence provided by school personnel suggests that in their second year the majority of Associates were considered to be the same as other teachers in the school. Associates themselves were considerably more confident than in their first year.

The Pathway in its current form puts high pressure on Associates initially due to their inexperience. The majority of Associates not only cope, but thrive in this kind of environment, and they are generally exceptionally well supported by the school, MGSE and TFA. Nevertheless, it is unclear whether the initial heavy teaching load is an entirely necessary aspect of the Pathway.

Nearly all Associates indicated a preference for more practical elements in the Initial Intensive, a tool kit of resources and behaviour management techniques to help them 'survive' the first few weeks. Schools were able to support Associates in a variety of ways during this time and the rigorous selection of Associates appeared to be a key factor in ensuring success in the early stages. The fact that Associates are still undertaking their qualification in the second year can be viewed as providing the potential to ensure their development as high quality practitioners. They have the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of theory and method, and to put these into practice immediately, ask questions and obtain feedback from both experienced teachers, lecturers and their students.

### ***KQ4: Is the TFA Pathway helping to raise the status of the teaching profession?***

The TFA initiative has not been long enough established, and is not a large enough provider, to have made any discernible impact on the status of the teaching profession in Australia overall. It may be some years before any change in status can be detected, and

even then it may be difficult to ascertain the extent to which the TFA initiative may be said to have any responsibility for that change.

At this stage it is not yet clear to what extent the TFA Pathway is attracting graduates who would not otherwise have gone into teaching, nor to what extent the attraction of these graduates, and their perception of the TFA Pathway as prestigious, may be said to assist in raising the status of teaching per se. About half of surveyed Associates had considered teaching in the future and the TFA Pathway had brought these plans forward. Over 40 per cent of respondents would have considered a traditional teacher education pathway and 20 per cent had already decided to enter teaching. About half of respondents considered participation in the program to be of value for a future career beyond teaching.

Over one-third of successful candidates were high achieving graduates with backgrounds in Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) fields. The marketing of the TFA program seems to encourage graduates in areas of shortage to consider both teaching as a career and teaching in schools that often do not have access to high quality graduates.

***KQ5: What features of the TFA Pathway have a positive impact on the quality of teaching?***

Elements of this question are discussed in the other key questions. The most notable features are:

1. The selection process and rigorous selection criteria;
2. The clinical model of practice integrated with theory over an extended period;
3. High levels of support – supportive schools, the in-school Mentor, CS and TLA.

These features of the pathway are also likely to hold lessons for the provision of teacher education more broadly.

***KQ6: What impact have TFA Associates had on student performance?***

This is a difficult question and has only been possible to address in partial, anecdotal ways. Quantitative evidence has been sought about the impact of Associates, but schools are only able to provide partial and incomplete data. School personnel shared success stories during interviews and many student focus group participants also noted that Associates had had a positive impact on them.

Associates brought with them a depth of knowledge about their field, about ICT and methods, that school personnel noted had challenged and changed aspects of their own practice. A number of principals noted that student scores in specific subject areas in which Associates were working had risen in comparison with previous years.



## **Part 1. Setting the scene**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This report (Part 2) concerns the second of three phases of the evaluation of the TFA Pathway. The first report (Part 1) was designed to provide a summary of data gathered on the operation of the Pathway in its initial stages.<sup>2</sup> Data for that report 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 from April through July 2010. This information was gathered to provide early feedback on how the Pathway was being implemented – to synthesise emerging themes in the delivery of the program and to inform future development and implementation.

This second report builds on the first and is based on interview data collected between April and August 2011, and online surveys of Associates conducted in November 2010 and 2011. It provides a summary of the main findings emerging from ACER's ongoing evaluation of the pathway.

This report captures further information on the effectiveness and efficiency of program delivery, including a consideration of changes made to the program for Cohort 2 and the experiences of stakeholders participating in the program for their second year. This report also provides a preliminary assessment of the evaluation's key critical questions. A final assessment will be provided in the final report in early 2013.

#### **1.1.1. Structure of the report**

This report is set out in three parts. Part 1, *Setting the scene*, provides an overview of the key aspects of the TFA Pathway, program terminology, and changes made between cohorts 1 and 2.

Part 2, *Perceptions and experience of the Pathway*, relates the findings of the evaluation, with particular emphasis on the experiences of Cohort 2 Associates in their first year and Cohort 1 in their second year, and the views of program partners and school personnel in 2011. This section considers elements of the program from the perspective of the various stakeholders involved. It also provides a comparative analysis of the results of the online surveys completed by Cohort 1 Associates in Term 4 of their first (2010) and second (2011) years, and Cohort 2 Associates in Term 4 of their first year (2011). Data from TFA and MGSE are also incorporated.

In Part 3, *Considerations, key questions and conclusions*, some suggestions are made about potential avenues of improvement drawn from issues raised in Part 2, as part of the formative aspect of the evaluation. Key questions are then considered in the light of the findings presented in Part 2 and, where appropriate, comparisons from national and international literature on teacher education. That analysis and discussion will be further developed as the 2012 data collections become available, and incorporated in the final report due in May 2013.

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<sup>2</sup> See Scott, Weldon & Dinham, 2010.

## 1.2 The Teach for Australia Pathway

In Australia, state and territory accreditation is required in order to teach, although standards and registration procedures differ across jurisdictions.<sup>3</sup> Some employers also have their own requirements, particularly in the area of secondary teaching specialisations.

There are currently several broad pathways into teaching in Australia. The three common options are an undergraduate teacher education course, a one to two year postgraduate course or a double (often concurrent) degree (an undergraduate course with a degree in teacher education and a degree in another field). Postgraduate courses traditionally have lead to a Diploma in Education although some universities are now offering a Master of Teaching as an option, often in an accelerated mode which can be attractive to those wishing to enter the workforce as soon as possible.

In traditional pathways, trainee teachers undertake courses in theory prior to spending blocks of time in schools under the supervision of registered teachers. On completion of the course, teachers in Victoria, for example, are considered to be fully qualified and are provisionally registered. Usually within two years of provisional registration, teachers can apply for full registration, for which they must show they have met VIT standards using a portfolio of evidence.

The Melbourne University Master of Teaching (MTeach) program follows a clinical model where trainees spend three days of the week at the university and two days in a school.

The DEECD and Victoria University Career Change Program uses an internship model with many similarities to the *Teach for Australia* initiative:

- An employment-based selection process (written application, interview, referees)
- Targets people with current industry knowledge and expertise, particularly in maths/science
- Participation in a summer school prior to commencing classroom duties
- On-going support from an experienced school-based mentor
- Paid trainee position in a school
- Two year training course with full registration on successful completion.<sup>4</sup>

Teachers who are not fully or provisionally registered must have Permission to Teach (PTT), which is granted for a specific location and period of time. This occurs in both the TFA Pathway and the Career Change Program. In cases where a principal is unable to hire a registered teacher, such as occurs from time to time in rural schools, that principal may hire a person with the requisite content knowledge and no teaching experience. In this case, the VIT has the discretion to grant PTT, on the proviso that a teaching course is undertaken concurrently.

Concerns over teacher quality, shortages of teachers in certain subject disciplines and geographic areas, particularly low SES, rural and remote, coupled with dissatisfaction with

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<sup>3</sup> With the current exception of the ACT which is introducing such procedures at present. See the Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA) <http://www.atra.edu.au/>

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/careers/teaching/incentives/ccpselection.htm> and <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/careers/teaching/incentives/ccpconditions.htm> (accessed 13 May 2010)

some models of teacher preparation<sup>5</sup> have led to an exploration of alternative approaches to attracting and preparing teachers.

In April 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), via the then Productivity Agenda Working Group, identified teacher quality as a priority commitment to be pursued as a National Partnership – the *Smarter Schools - Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership* agreement (National Partnership). In November 2008, COAG announced the objective of the agreement – to create a genuinely national, quality teaching workforce by targeting critical points in the teacher ‘lifecycle’ by:

- attracting the best entrants to teaching;
- training them through a world-class pre-service education system;
- placing and supporting quality teachers and leaders in schools where they are needed most;
- developing their skills and knowledge throughout their careers; and
- retaining quality teachers and leaders in our schools and rewarding them for the value they bring to the classroom and student achievement.

The TFA Pathway is one of several facilitation reforms under the National Partnership agreement. The initiative aims to provide a new pathway into teaching via an accredited qualification. It aims to attract new entrants to education and train them via a teacher education program that combines residential education and a supported two-year school placement.

### **1.2.1. TFA Pathway Objectives**

The expected outcomes of the TFA Pathway are:

- a) attraction of new high-quality entrants from all disciplines to the teaching profession, and working in disadvantaged schools where they can make the greatest difference;
- b) development of a high-quality education and employment based pathway into teaching that results in a teaching qualification for top graduates;
- c) development of a high-quality teacher-mentor workforce, able to support participating graduates;
- d) retention of a percentage of graduates in teaching beyond their two year initial commitment;
- e) development of an alumni association of graduates who will continue to contribute to education;
- f) strengthening of school and business relationships;
- g) strengthening of the connection between higher education teacher educators and schools; and
- h) improved student outcomes with a focus on measurable increases in levels of students’ academic achievement.

As an initiative of the National Partnership, the underlying basis of the TFA Pathway is to contribute to structural reforms to raise the quality of teaching in Australia. The initiative aims to establish appropriate and high quality teacher education through an accredited clinical, employment-based pathway into teaching.

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<sup>5</sup> Dinham, 2006, pp. 3-20.

The employment-based pathway – the *Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (TFA)* – is delivered in the context of other reforms under the National Partnership which aim to achieve national consistency in the accreditation of pre-service teacher education courses and in the registration of teachers.<sup>6</sup>

### **1.2.2. Teach for Australia: Key Features**

Teach For Australia (the organisation) is part of the Teach for All network that currently extends across 23 countries world-wide.<sup>7</sup> The most significant overseas initiatives represented in this network are *Teach for America* (US) and *Teach First* (UK). These programs have been influential in developing the Australian initiative, and the research they have generated is relevant to the current evaluation.

Table 1.1 summarises the main features of the programs in Australia, the US and UK. The Australian initiative is by far the most recent and at this stage is operating on a much smaller scale.

While TFA has a number of similarities with Teach For America and Teach First, the Australian model has been modified to ensure the pathway provides an accredited alternative employment-based pathway into teaching. In Australia, the two-year commitment to teach in disadvantaged secondary schools is a commitment to study for two years in an employment-based course that combines a supported in-school placement and initial and ongoing residential study.

The Pathway provides a greater level of support to Associates, compared with overseas models, through the provision of an in-school Mentor, a Clinical Specialist and a Training and Leadership Adviser, plus the support of staff at the Teach For Australia organisation and the University of Melbourne.

The structure of the TFA Pathway is briefly outlined here. Where necessary, more detail is provided in the appropriate sections of Part 2.

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<sup>6</sup> ACER has contributed to such developments through work for ATRA, DEEWR, AITSL/Teaching Australia, the Business Council of Australia, the VIT, the NSWIT, and other bodies.

<sup>7</sup> See [http://www.teachforall.org/network\\_locations.html](http://www.teachforall.org/network_locations.html) (accessed 17 February 2012).

**Table 1.1: Features of the 'Teach for' programs in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom**

	<b>Teach for Australia</b>	<b>Teach for America</b>	<b>Teach First (UK)<sup>d</sup></b>
First cohort	2010 – 45 participants	1990 – 500 participants <sup>a</sup>	2003 – 186 participants
2011 Cohort	42 participants placed	>9,000 participants placed	772 participants placed
Graduate Recruitment funding	Federal government	Business and charitable sources, schools (fee per recruit)	Business and charitable sources, schools (fee per recruit)
Accredited teacher education provider – Initial 6 weeks	Yes, by MGSE	No – training is provided by the TFA organisation (which is accredited in some states)	Yes, by a university in the local area
Accredited teacher education provider course leading to teacher qualification	Yes, a 2 year post-graduate diploma, by MGSE, partnering with TFA	Varies – participants must usually pass a content knowledge test or have completed a major related to the subject they teach, then while teaching, complete coursework provided by a local college, a school district or a non-profit such as TFA, depending on state legislation <sup>b</sup>	Yes, a 1 year QTS course through a university partnering with Teach First
Sources of funding for Teacher Education	Federal government	US Government via Americorps service programs grants. Some school districts provide assistance. Participants pay any costs not covered <sup>c</sup>	UK government (DCSF via TDA), schools (fee per recruit)
Funding for in-school support	Yes – 5-day mentor training funded by the federal govt. Mentor time release funded by State government or school budget (Catholic sector)	No – formal in-school mentor training and support is not provided	Yes - Training Teach First teachers is partly undertaken by schools who receive some funding from the UK government. Existing teachers are supported by a university
Funding for participant wage	From school budget	From district/school budget	From school budget
Post-program organisation and funding	Yes – Alumni, initial funding from the Federal government	Yes – Alumni, funding from business and charitable sources	Yes – Ambassadors, funding from business and charitable sources

**Notes to Table 1.1**

<sup>a</sup> Teach for America participant numbers sourced 22 February 2012 from <http://www.teachforamerica.org/our-organization> and <http://www.teachforamerica.org/our-organization/history>

<sup>b</sup> Information on teacher certification for Teach for America sourced 22 February 2012 from <http://www.teachforamerica.org/why-teach-for-america/training-and-support/teacher-certification>

<sup>c</sup> Costs of teacher education for Teach for America sourced from <http://www.teachforamerica.org/why-teach-for-america/training-and-support/teacher-certification> and [http://www.americorps.gov/for\\_organizations/apply/state\\_national.asp](http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/apply/state_national.asp)

<sup>d</sup> Teach First information sourced from Ofsted, 2008. QTS – Qualified Teacher Status, TDA – Training and Development Agency for Schools, DCSF – Department for Children, Schools and Families. Participant numbers sourced 22 February 2012 from <http://www.teachfirst.org.uk/OurHistory/>

**Recruitment**

The graduate recruitment program requires graduates to make an initial written application followed by a phone interview and attendance at a selection day. The initial selection criteria (core competencies) were, in no rank order:

- 1 **Achievement:** History of achievement in academics and extra-curricular activities. Demonstrable leadership skills/potential. Sets aspirational goals and consistently reaches them.
- 2 **Resilience:** Ability to increase effort when faced with obstacles and overcome them with tenacity and optimism. Relishes a challenge and doesn't give up. Driven to succeed.
- 3 **Humility and Learning:** Recognises limits of experience and understands own strengths and weaknesses. Open to learning from others and actively seeks opportunities to do so. Respects alternative view points.
- 4 **Communication and Influencing:** Clear and confident communicator with ability to influence and motivate others. Can adapt style to suit varying audiences. Has presence and commands attention. Strong active listener and two-way communicator.
- 5 **Organisation:** Able to plan and prioritise activities and tasks to effectively meet deadlines. Focuses on outcomes and continually tracks progress to ensure success.
- 6 **Problem solving:** Able to think critically, analyse information and generate creative and relevant solutions to problems. Can identify causal relationships.
- 7 **Commitment to TFA mission:** Commitment to improving educational opportunities for those in areas of disadvantage. Believes that ALL children have the ability to learn. Wants to make an impact.

The selection criteria have changed over time and are currently (again in no rank order):

- 1 **Achievement:** Have you gained significant, measurable results in school and university, extracurricular activities, and/or work? Have you demonstrated leadership in your endeavours?
- 2 **Commitment to impact:** Are you eager to bring about change and make a difference in the lives of the students you teach? Do you passionately believe in the power of education?
- 3 **Communication and influencing ability:** Are you a clear and confident communicator, and are you able to influence and motivate others? Are you an active listener? Do you want to build these skills?
- 4 **Problem solving:** Are you able to think critically, analyse information and generate relevant solutions to problems? Do you want to build these skills?
- 5 **Organisational skills:** Are you able to plan and organise your activities to effectively meet deadlines?
- 6 **Resilience:** Are you willing to work hard with resilience and optimism to overcome obstacles? Do you relish a challenge and are you driven to succeed?
- 7 **Humility and Learning:** Do you show respect towards the perspectives and experiences of others, particularly those from different backgrounds? Are you open to learning from others and do you seek out opportunities to do so?

In the first year, only those who had graduated within the last five years were eligible to apply. This restriction was lifted for the following years. The initial phone interview was also added in the second year.

The selection day consists of activities such as individual interviews, group activities, a problem-solving test and a sample teaching lesson. The TFA organisation designs and

implements the recruitment process; however, the selection days also involve relevant departments, school principals, MGSE and corporate partners.

The recruitment process used in the TFA Pathway is unique in that it specifically targets characteristics of applicants that are seen as desirable in teachers – for example, resilience and communication skills. Traditional pathways into teaching in Australia do not have this mechanism for identifying personal attributes in applicants.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Initial Intensive**

Successful applicants, called Associates, attend an initial six-week residential course run by the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) at the University of Melbourne, and the Teach For Australia organisation (TFA). The Initial Intensive included time at a Portal school where Associates observed teaching and school life. This was replaced for Cohort 2 with the Summer School which brought students from years 9 and 10 into the university for up to 9 days over the summer period and enabled Associates to develop and practise their teaching skills.

### **Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching**

Associates undertake a two-year formal education program broadly derived from MGSE's Master of Teaching (MTeach) program, the design and content varied to account for the demands of the Initial Intensive and Associate on-going development while teaching a 0.8 FTE load over two years, and placement into schools serving socially and educationally disadvantaged communities.

In total, there are four residential intensives:

- Six-week pre-placement intensive in December/January, pre Year 1 (Initial Intensive)
- Four-day mid-year intensive in July of Year 1 (Mid-Year 1 Intensive)
- Four-day third intensive in December at the end of Year 1 (End-Year 1 Intensive)
- Four-day mid-second-year intensive in July of Year 2 (Mid-Year 2 Intensive)

Following successful completion of the course, worth 150 points, Associates are able to complete a further 50 points in specific courses within five years of the Diploma to obtain a Master of Teaching qualification from the University of Melbourne.

### **The TFA Leadership Framework**

The Teach for Australia Pathway experience, including teacher education and support, is set within a leadership framework with the initial goal of improving student outcomes and the long term goal of building inspirational leaders to contribute to education from all sectors. Under the leadership framework Associates:

1. Set high aspirations
2. Engage others
3. Prepare purposefully
4. Implement effectively
5. Reflect and improve
6. Are resourceful and resilient

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<sup>8</sup> The TFA recruitment process remains the Intellectual Property (IP) of Teach For All.

Within these areas, appropriate Associate attributes and skills have been developed, providing a rubric by which Associates may be assessed, and Associates, Mentors, schools and other stakeholders may be made aware of the expectations applied to Associates. This rubric is used extensively by the Training and Leadership Advisers with the aim of improving teaching practice.

The TFA Program Framework also underpins a leadership development program created by TFA. It is an individualised program that supports Associates’ leadership development in both education and outside of education. The aim is to develop inspirational leaders who can effect change for educational equality from all sectors of society. Leadership subjects have been incorporated into both the Postgraduate Diploma (for Associates) and Professional Certificate (for Mentors) programs.

**Support**

Associates have an in-school Mentor who is given time release of 0.1 FTE in the first year and 0.05 in the second year. The Mentor receives five days of training from MGSE and the role involves mentoring both professionally and personally.

Cohort 1 Associates in their first year also had the support of an Educational Adviser, a role jointly managed by TFA and MGSE. For Cohort 2 (and Cohort 1 second year), this role was split into the MGSE Clinical Specialist role and the TFA Training and Leadership Adviser role.

**1.3 Evaluation methodology**

ACER is employing a mixed method approach constituted by both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the key critical questions. ACER is collecting data from a variety of sources. These are outlined below.

<b>2010/2011/2012 Data collection</b>	
April-August	<p><b>Qualitative phase:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation stakeholder interviews</li> <li>• Associate interviews</li> <li>• Focus groups with Educational Advisers (2010), Clinical Specialists, Training and Leadership Advisers (from 2011)</li> <li>• Telephone interviews with principals of Placement Schools, Mentors, staff from: ACT DET, MGSE, VIT, DEECD, DEEWR TFA</li> </ul>
July-August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case Studies of 5 Placement Schools</li> </ul>
October	<p><b>Quantitative Phase:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Census of Associate Teachers</li> </ul>
<i>Ongoing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review on employment-based teacher training and other comparative programs</li> <li>• Administrative records of Teach For Australia and the University of Melbourne, including data analysis and other relevant sources</li> <li>• Media coverage mapping</li> </ul>



Interviews and case study visits will recommence in 2012 for Cohort 2 in their second year and Cohort 1 in their first year beyond the program.

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.

Interview subjects such as Associates, Mentor Teachers, 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. Program partner interviews were selected in consultation with the relevant organisation.

**Case study visitations** to five Placement Schools, three metropolitan, two regional, were conducted in 2010. In 2011, six Placement schools were visited, two in Canberra, one Catholic and two government schools in metropolitan Victoria and two regional Victorian schools. These involved interviews/focus groups with Associates, Mentors, Principals, other staff, and students. Questions used in interviews were the same as those utilised in telephone interviews.

Table 1.2 shows the tally of stakeholders interviewed to date and Table 1.3 shows the number of focus groups conducted. In total, 93 interviews were conducted in 2011: 43 telephone interviews and 50 face to face interviews. Sixteen student focus groups took place in 2011, with a total of 77 students ranging from Year 7 to Year 12.

**Table 1.2: Stakeholders interviewed by phone or face to face in 2010 and 2011**

<b>Telephone and face to face interviews</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
DEECD	1	1
DEEWR	1	1
MGSE	4	4
TFA	3	4
VIT	1	1
ACT DET	-	1
Cohort 1 Associates	30	14
Cohort 2 Associates	-	19
Cohort 1 Mentors	22	6
Cohort 2 Mentors	-	14
Cohort 1 Principals	9	3
Cohort 2 Principals	-	7
School staff	13	15
Clinical Specialists (Year 2)	-	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>93</b>

**Table 1.3: Focus groups in 2010 and 2011**

<b>Focus groups</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Parents	1	0
Students	9	16
Training and Leadership Advisers	-	1

No parent focus groups were available in 2011. In 2010, some principals expressed concern about informing parent groups primarily because media commentary on the Teach for Australia pathway had described schools to which Associates would be assigned as

‘disadvantaged’. Principals were reluctant to have their school associated with such a term in the minds of the school community. That concern was not expressed in 2011. Principals who commented felt that it did not seem appropriate to place the TFA Associate in the spotlight in terms of parents (or students for that matter) by highlighting the pathway by which they had entered the school as the school community were not told about the background of any other new teacher to the school.

**Associate surveys** were carried out in Term 4 in 2010 and 2011. Comparisons have been made between the results from both online surveys. The comparisons are of two kinds: changes in Cohort 1’s views between 2010 and 2011; and differences between the views of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 at similar stages in the program. The response rate fell slightly for Cohort 1 in their second year (77 per cent), however all three response rates are very high for an online survey (Table 1.4).

**Table 1.4: Number of respondents 2010 and 2011**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Response rate</b>	<b>Mean age</b>
Cohort 1 Year 1 2010	13	15	8	36	44	82%	25.6
Cohort 1 Year 2 2011	13	20	0	33	43	77%	26.3
Cohort 2 Year 1 2011	15	20	0	35	42	83%	26.2

After all interview 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.

Online surveys were conducted using ACER’s secure online server. Once finalised, data were downloaded as standard CSV (comma delimited) files, cleaned and reformatted for use with PASW Statistics (formerly SPSS).

In the final year 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 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.

It should be noted that there are limitations to the extent to which the key critical questions can be answered via any one evaluation. In particular, it has proven 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 a number of Australian initiatives designed to attract talented people to teaching and to increase its status. As such, it would be very difficult reliably to attribute, for example, any increase in the status of teaching to any one program.



## **Part 2. Perceptions and experience of the TFA Pathway**

### **2.1 Participating in the new pathway**

#### **2.1.1. Shaping the program and working together**

The 2010 report noted that processes, procedures, roles and expectations took some time to be established, refined and accepted by all program partners. Many of the issues raised during the initial implementation phase were specific to that phase and stakeholders either did not raise them again or were largely satisfied with current progress or resolutions that had been found.

The ACT DET noted that legislated requirements for registration and PTT were not an issue for them as they were in the process of setting up a Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) as their registration authority so they were able to ensure the necessary requirements were written in from the start.

Occasional issues did arise in Victoria such as a few Associates not receiving PTT prior to the start of the school year due to administrative delays, some concern over the appropriateness of PTT areas and Associates not able to be placed. One apparent cause of these difficulties seems to be the differing requirements of the timeline of the recruitment process run by TFA and the timeline in which schools are able to identify vacancies for the following year. In the case of Associates not able to be placed, a further cause is the ‘fit’ between the Associates’ PTT areas and school vacancies. This concern was reported more commonly in relatively small schools where there were generally fewer teaching opportunities available for Associates.

#### **2.1.2. Reasons for getting involved**

##### ***Associates***

Associates fell into three groups: those who had always intended to be teachers; those who had considered teaching; and those who had not considered teaching before learning of the TFA program. For those who were intending to be teachers, the opportunity to go straight into the classroom, to earn a living while studying, and have their study paid for, were major and pragmatic influences on their decision to apply to the program. For those who had considered teaching, many had not intended to teach until later in their career or were not in a position to afford to undertake further study at that time. For these Associates, the opportunity to teach immediately and be paid while they trained was a strong attraction of the program.

*I applied because I liked the idea of teaching and teaching young people, and because I wanted to help fight disadvantage. [...] I would have considered a Dip Ed, but not yet, as I have a [family], circumstances meant that I couldn't afford to take a year out of work to train. So the fast track and salary through TFA was a big incentive.*

*I had considered teaching in the past. [...] If not for the TFA program, I may have pursued my interest in education through a related field, e.g. social work.*

*I was in a corporate [...] firm. I'd been thinking about what to do [...]. One thing that came up was education. I didn't want to go back [to uni] full time. I did look at some other teaching courses in case I didn't get into this one. I may have applied to them but probably not. I wanted study and practical work. I like the idea of being trained for working in a disadvantaged school, that was an attraction.*

A further attraction of the TFA Pathway for the majority of Associates was the social justice element and the opportunity to help make a difference to students in disadvantaged circumstances. This was also a primary attraction for those who had not previously considered teaching.

Survey results corroborated the interview findings for both cohorts. Associates were asked to indicate which of six reasons for applying for admission to the TFA Pathway was true of them. In addition, they were asked if they would have applied to a 'traditional' teaching program if they had not been selected. Results are presented in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1: What did you find attractive about the *Teach for Australia* Pathway?**

	<b>Percentage agreeing</b>	
	<b>Cohort 1 2010 %</b>	<b>Cohort 2 2011 %</b>
Contribute to reducing educational disadvantage	72	88
Opportunity to earn a salary while training	64	71
Go straight into teaching without further fulltime study	61	68
Wanted to teach later but <i>TFA</i> made me want to teach now	47	59
Participation of value for future career, beyond teaching	47	56
Consider traditional program?	42	49
Had decided to enter teaching	19	21

*Note:* Respondents could indicate more than one factor so the percentages sum to >100%.

The most strongly endorsed reason for applying was 'to contribute to reducing educational disadvantage' selected by 72 per cent of Cohort 1 respondents and 88 per cent of Cohort 2 respondents. The greater number of Cohort 2 respondents indicating this reason may indicate a greater clarity in program goals and marketing than was the case for Cohort 1.

The opportunity to earn a salary while teaching and to go straight into teaching without further full-time study were the second and third most common reasons for choosing the TFA Pathway in both cohorts. About half of all respondents indicated that they would have considered teaching at some stage in the future but that the TFA Pathway opportunity 'made me want to teach now'. Just under half of the respondents from both cohorts indicated that they would have applied to a traditional teacher training program had they not been selected for the TFA Pathway. Only 20 per cent of respondents from both cohorts had made a definite decision to teach, so the TFA Pathway does appear to be attracting a group that may not otherwise have entered the classroom.

An evaluation of the Teach First program in the UK surveyed participants and found a dual appeal for successful applicants. On the one hand, Teach First offered the opportunity to make a difference in challenging and disadvantaged environments. On the other, the two-year commitment was seen as a means of keeping career options open rather than training

for a single profession.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, the attraction of keeping career options open did not feature greatly in the responses provided in interviews with TFA Pathway Associates in their first year. This may have been partly sensitivity to any thoughts of moving on from teaching while they were in their first year.<sup>10</sup> However, about half of survey respondents from both cohorts did indicate that they considered participation in the TFA Pathway to be of value for a future career other than teaching.

### ***School Personnel***

The key attraction of the TFA Pathway for the majority of principals interviewed was the recruitment of new teachers with a strong academic background who were enthusiastic, resilient, and determined. For some, it was also primarily another avenue of recruitment as attracting teachers was an issue at their school. The fact that awareness about the program and its potential benefits had become more widespread was also a factor in some new schools joining the program.

School personnel also appreciated the opportunity to take on new teachers with life and industry experience, with many interviewees believing that the average Associate had spent some time post-degree working in their field. While this was sometimes the case, more than half of all applicants and about 40 per cent of Associates are recruited in the year they complete their degree, so their industry experience is minimal. As such, there may be some scope for further clarity in material presented to schools about the recruitment process.

In the first year of operation 39 out of 45 Associates were supernumerary; that is, wages were funded centrally rather than from school budgets and the majority of Associates were additional staff for the schools involved. This was not the case in 2011, and all schools met salary costs from their own budgets. All Cohort 2 Associates filled school vacancies and in many cases, schools which had taken part in 2010 requested Cohort 2 Associates, which is a strong endorsement of the success of Cohort 1. Many Cohort 1 schools did not take additional Associates in 2011 only because they did not have vacancies, not because they were dissatisfied with their Cohort 1 Associates or their experience of the TFA Pathway.

Some school staff and Mentors in Cohort 2 schools indicated that they had expressed immediate enthusiasm for the program; however, the more common initial response was one of cautious scepticism, although there did not seem to be the within-school opposition and wider media controversy that was noted in 2010. Any initial wariness tended to have dissipated by the time of the interviews in Term 3: this was clearly related to the perceived qualities of the individual Associates with whom staff had contact. This indicates that, for many school staff at this stage, opinions of the TFA Pathway were a reflection of how successful individual Associates were seen to be. This was the case even where a school had several Associates, and school staff often clearly stated that they were only able to comment on their perceptions of one Associate at their school.

While over time it is likely that school staff will come to view the TFA Pathway as distinct from its embodiment in a given individual, at this point the weight of the success or failure

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<sup>9</sup> Hutchings *et al.*, 2005

<sup>10</sup> Many Associates interviewed stated that they had no clear idea what they wanted to do at the end of the two years – it was too early to say. Some were also very aware that their principal and colleagues were putting a lot of time and effort into them and wanted them to remain beyond the two year program.

of the Pathway in the eyes of many School Personnel is based largely on the perceived quality of individual Associates.

### **2.1.3. Becoming a Placement School: The schools' experience**

Over cohorts 1 and 2, 30 schools have been involved. Thirteen Victorian government schools took Cohort 1 Associates in 2010. A further 17 schools participated in 2011 and 5 Cohort 1 schools also took Cohort 2 Associates. Of the 17 additional schools participating in 2011, one was a Victorian Catholic school and four were ACT government schools.

DEECD noted that things had become clearer for them in terms of implementation for the second year of the TFA Pathway. As more time had been available to discuss alternatives, the criteria for selecting schools became more consistent and more schools were approached to participate, resulting in increased requests for Associates. Some vacancies could not be filled due to difficulties in matching Associates' teaching areas to the schools' needs.

In Victoria, Cohort 2 schools that had agreed to participate in the pathway received a visit from DEECD:

*The individual visits were important – we visited every Cohort 2 school new to the program. We wanted to make sure mentors were high quality so we spoke to principals.*

On the whole, principals and program partners felt that schools had been provided with a good understanding of the pathway prior to commencement. Most other school personnel agreed, although there were a few cases where staff felt that they had not been included in either the decision-making or information-dissemination processes:

*[Cohort 2 Mentor] Expectations? No, if there were any expectations on the school, I wasn't made aware of them. We were instructed we were doing the program. No information was given to staff.*

*[Cohort 2 Mentor] We knew very little about the program initially. It was introduced very quickly, there was no consultation, so that put some staff out – they were suspicious.*

Such comments, though, tended to be infrequent for Cohort 2, and were certainly less commonly made than in 2010. As was the case in 2010, 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.

## **2.2 Recruitment of Associates**

Table 2.2 shows that the number of applications has remained much the same since the inception of the program, increasing slightly in the second year and dropping slightly, to its lowest level, in the third year. While data from three years is not enough to enable an accurate consideration of likely trends, it is somewhat surprising that applications to the Pathway have not risen, given TFA's ongoing presence on university campuses and in

social media, and its networks and partnerships with other organisations that undertake graduate recruitment, as well as its movement interstate.

Two potential issues are worth noting. Firstly, program expansion would be necessary in order to benefit from the economies of scale that would accrue in many aspects of the program as a result. Secondly, the quality and fit of candidates to the Pathway is of considerable importance.

The percentage of applicants considered to be eligible for offer has increased over the three years from 8 per cent to 13 per cent. TFA note that the quality of their marketing and ‘messaging’ has improved, highlighting the requirements of the Pathway, as has the recruitment process, leading to a greater quality of application and more applicants that ‘meet the bar’. Nevertheless, considerable growth in applicant numbers would be a requirement if the Pathway is to maintain the quality of its Associates through an expansion period.

**Table 2.2: Demographics of applicants to the TFA Pathway**

	2009 for 2010 Cohort 1	2010 for 2011 Cohort 2	2011 for 2012 Cohort 3
Applications	751	788	729
	%	%	%
Male	43	45	42
Graduate in year of application	46	43	50
Based in Victoria	58	58	56
Arts (inc English)	38	39	34
Business and commerce	20	15	19
Law	10	6	10
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)	33	40	37

Just under half of all applicants and successful applicants (Table 2.3) are male. In comparison, about one quarter of teacher graduates nationally is male.<sup>11</sup> However graduation figures include courses for primary teachers. The results from the Staff in Australia’s Schools survey carried out in 2010 show that 43 per cent of the current national population of secondary teachers is male.<sup>12</sup> Additional analysis of SiAS data shows that only 36 per cent of teachers who have been teaching for five years or less are male.<sup>13</sup> This suggests that the TFA Pathway is attracting about the same proportion of male applicants as are working as secondary teachers, but somewhat more than are currently entering the profession.

TFA has also focussed on encouraging applications from graduates in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields. The Pathway is not specifically intended to be a means of meeting teacher shortages; however, it does seem that TFA’s marketing and recruitment strategies is appealing to graduates in these fields. Currently,

<sup>11</sup> Data sourced from DEEWR Table 21: Award Course Completions for All Students Enrolled in Courses for Initial Teacher Training by State, Higher Education Provider, Mode of Attendance, Type of Attendance and Gender, 2001-2008. Available from (for example, 2008): <http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Publications/HEStatistics/Publications/Pages/2008FullYear.aspx> (accessed 9 February 2010)

<sup>12</sup> McKenzie, Rowley, Weldon & Murphy, 2011, p. 27.

<sup>13</sup> Source: Unpublished data from the *Staff in Australia’s Schools 2010* survey conducted by ACER on behalf of DEEWR.



over a third of all applicants to the Pathway have at least a bachelor degree in a STEM field. In the 2011 recruitment year (for Cohort 3), 9 per cent of all applications had a LOTE degree. Table 2.3 also shows that of successful applicants to the TFA Pathway for 2011, the largest group (43 per cent) were from STEM fields and for 2012, 32 per cent were also from STEM fields.

**Table 2.3: Demographics of successful applicants to the TFA Pathway**

	2009 for 2010 Cohort 1	2010 for 2011 Cohort 2	2011 for 2012 Cohort 3
Applications	751	788	729
Eligible for offer	63 (8%)	75 (10%)	98 (13%)
Accepted	52 (7%)	65 (8%)	61 (8%)
Deferrals <sup>1</sup>	7	--	--
No suitable vacancy	--	22	20
Placed <sup>2</sup>	45	42	41
Of those placed (C1) or eligible for offer (C2, C3):	%	%	%
Average ENTER (or equivalent) score	95.4	95.8	96.6
Male	40	42	48
Placed outside a metropolitan area <sup>3</sup>	33	45	33
Graduate in year of application	--	60	57
Based in Victoria	71	67	56
Arts (inc English)	35	38	37
Business and commerce	20	10	10
Law	17	9	18
STEM	28	43	32

**Notes to Table 2.3**

<sup>1</sup> Two of the 7 deferrals from Cohort 1 recruitment were placed in Cohort 2. The remaining five chose not to participate in the program. Deferrals were not offered from Cohort 2 recruitment.

<sup>2</sup> The number of Associates placed refer to those who were accepted into the program and placed at a school, and who started the Initial Intensive. In Cohort 1, 2 of the 45 Associates left the program during their first year at the school. In Cohort 3, 1 of the 41 Associates left the program before completing the Initial Intensive.

<sup>3</sup> Willingness to be placed anywhere/in a non-metropolitan area is captured in the TFA application form; however, TFA have noted that candidates are often not as flexible as they initially stated. The figures provided here are the percentages of Associates actually placed in a non-metropolitan area. These figures are partly due to school demand and vacancies; however, there were more non-metropolitan vacancies available than were filled in Cohort 2.

As was the case in 2010, the recruitment process was seen to be a major strength of the program by all stakeholders. The program was seen to be attracting high quality applicants and to have set rigorous standards for applicants' academic achievement and personal attributes. All stakeholders who commented were positive about the quality of Associates recruited through the selection process.

One concern expressed in the area of recruitment was that of matching Associate subject areas to school needs. TFA noted that some Associates could not be placed as vacancies could not be found for them, while DEECD noted that there were more interested schools that had identified vacancies, (particularly in STEM areas) than there were Associates with appropriate subject areas available for placement. This is reflected in the data shown in Table 2.3. Each year, the number of offers to eligible applicants has risen, while at the same time, the number of Associates placed in schools has fallen.

Another concern expressed with matching Associates to vacancies was the willingness of Associates to be placed outside metropolitan areas. TFA noted that considerably more emphasis had been placed on recruiting individuals in Cohort 2 who were more flexible in their placement preferences; however, DEECD also noted that difficulties appeared to remain in placing Associates in regional areas of Victoria.

Given the current size of the TFA Pathway and the fairly small base of interested schools with limited vacancies, it is evident that the recruitment and selection process needs to be tailored to ensure best fit to likely school vacancies. This has been one reason for the focus on STEM subjects. The TFA Pathway is also constrained by its commitment that Associates be placed in schools serving socially and educationally disadvantaged areas, which comprises only a portion of the total number of schools and vacancies available. An additional constraint is the preference to cluster Associates together in schools, particularly in regional areas, to ensure that Associates have access to peer support.

The selection process has been successful in recruiting resilient Associates prepared to remain in the program for the two-year period. Of the 45 Associates who started in Cohort 1, only two have left the program, and at the end of Term 4 in 2011, no Cohort 2 Associates had left, leading to an overall retention rate to date of about 98 per cent.

With very few exceptions, within schools the recruitment process was considered to be very successful. On the whole, principals who had observed the recruitment process were very impressed and Cohort 2 principals had echoed the comment of a Cohort 1 principal that he would happily have taken almost all of the shortlisted candidates he had met, who he felt were outstanding. Principals highly praised candidates' communication and interpersonal skills, their positive attitude and their enthusiasm.

### **2.3 Associate preparation and education**

The clinical practice model adopted by the TFA Pathway features a teacher education component whose delivery is quite different to that of traditional pathways. Associates attend an Initial Intensive prior to the start of the school year. As employer vacancies are identified late in the year, the Initial Intensive is held in December and January. The Initial Intensive is run by MGSE and TFA at the University of Melbourne. Accommodation and food are provided during this time and the Associates spend much of the day and evening together studying.

Due to the timing of the Initial Intensive, visits to schools to observe regular classes are generally not possible.<sup>14</sup> To provide Associates with an opportunity to plan and to teach students, and receive feedback from MGSE staff, a Summer School takes place at the university and is attended by students in years 9 and 10 over a nine-day period in January.

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<sup>14</sup> About 90 per cent of Associates visited their placement schools prior to the Initial Intensive. All Associates received course information from MGSE which included a recommendation that they visit their placement schools for a minimum of 3 days, together with lesson observation templates for use during their classroom observations. Some Associates were also given time release from the Intensive to undertake placement school visits. Due to the timing of these visits at the end of Term 4, it can be difficult for Associates to observe regular classes.

Following the Initial Intensive, which introduces academic courses, Associates continue their degree through an online learning platform, with support from MGSE lecturing staff and Clinical Specialists who regularly observe them in the classroom. Associates also participate in a further three residential intensives at the University of Melbourne: the first Mid-Year Intensive which takes place during the school holidays in July; the End-Year Intensive which takes place in December of their first year; and the second Mid-Year Intensive which takes place in July of the second year.

### 2.3.1. The Initial Intensive

The Initial Intensive received more variable evaluations in the second year of the program than was the case in the first year. MGSE noted that the attitude of Cohort 2 Associates at the start of the Initial Intensive was different; that they did not seem to be as excited and enthusiastic as had been the case with Cohort 1, and that their expectations seemed to be different and in some cases, somewhat negative. A less positive view of the Initial Intensive was evident in some interviews with Cohort 2 Associates:

*We didn't have a lot of communication from MGSE prior to the Initial Intensive so in some ways we didn't know what to expect and I think we were a bit negative going in - we were expecting to be pushed really hard academically.*

MGSE responded to this feedback and introduced an information evening and a teleconference for Cohort 3, in order to set expectations and answer questions.

**Table 2.4: MGSE evaluation questionnaire completed at end of Initial Intensive**

MGSE end of Initial Intensive evaluation questionnaire	Agree/Strongly agree	
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
	2010	2011
Overall, the sessions in the PostGrad Dip (TFA) in the II were well taught	100	77
The lecture and workshop sessions were intellectually stimulating	100	69
Teaching staff showed an interest in the academic needs of Associates	98	85
Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of the learning experience in this intensive	100	69
The academic and program management team showed an interest in the welfare and support needs of Associates	100	67

Table 2.4 shows the results of some of the questions asked in the Initial Intensive evaluation questionnaire conducted by MGSE at the end of the Intensive.<sup>15</sup> It is clear that, on average, satisfaction levels were lower in Cohort 2; however, it should also be noted that Cohort 1 satisfaction was particularly high and it would be unwise to view these figures without some understanding of the context and Associates' perceptions at the time of their response. Cohort 1 Associates were aware that they were the first to undertake the TFA Pathway and they generally responded very favourably to MGSE's efforts in both academic and personal support. They also tended to be less responsive to some of the

<sup>15</sup> The wording of some questions was different for the evaluations of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 and thus some questions were not directly comparable.

sessions provided by TFA (as indicated in the Phase 1 evaluation report). As such, Cohort 1 Associates generally assessed the experience provided by MGSE very positively.

Cohort 2 may well have expected first year teething problems to have been ironed out and they were not placed in the position of being the pioneers of the Pathway. The University of Melbourne instituted a new admissions process, independent of MGSE, and its teething problems affected many Associates, including delays in confirming enrolments, library borrowing rights and access to the Learning Management System (LMS). These issues caused some frustration and anxiety among Associates, which were expressed in comments made in the MGSE evaluation material, and may have affected perceptions of other areas of the Intensive.

Many of the Cohort 2 Associates interviewed felt that there had been too much emphasis on theory and too little on practical modelling and material.<sup>16</sup> The areas in which most Cohort 2 Associates reported that they would have liked more practical support were student behaviour management and lesson planning. Some Associates noted that they were already well versed academically and that they could have learned the same amount of theory in a shorter space of time and through guided reading rather than through lengthy lectures. In contrast, other Associates found that the theory was very useful:

*I learnt a lot about learning theories – I hadn't really known they existed, and I gained from that. Teaching generally – constructivist teaching theories made me rethink how I'd be able to teach. That was useful. The social context subjects were quite relevant.*

Associates appreciated time spent with experts in their learning areas, and some would have liked more subject-specific input. Some Associates in the sciences felt that the general lectures and pedagogy were humanities-focussed and that they did not get as much out of them as those teaching humanities subjects:

*I don't think the Initial Intensive prepared me enough for teaching science. It's different from the humanities – there are demonstrations and practical classes, and preparation for those kinds of lessons was lacking.*

There was general appreciation of the sessions on behaviour management, although some Associates would have preferred more time on this issue, and a more practical, 'real school' focus. Several Associates and some Mentors felt it would have been useful to have had more discussion on the kind of issues faced by disadvantaged students and the attitudes the Associates could encounter in the classroom. Unlike other trainee teachers, Associates did not get to spend time observing regular classes in placement schools before commencing their teaching assignment.

### **2.3.2. New to the Initial Intensive for Cohort 2: the Summer School**

The Summer School was introduced in the Cohort 2 Initial Intensive. It replaced the Portal School arrangement provided for Cohort 1 Associates which gave them three days in a school to observe teaching and school life. The aim of the Summer School was to provide Associates with more of an opportunity to teach and interact with students than had been

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<sup>16</sup> See also Carter, Amrein-Beardsley & Cooper Hansen, 2011

provided by the Portal School arrangement. It also gave Associates the opportunity to plan and deliver lessons in groups, and receive feedback about their performance from lecturers. About 120 volunteer students from years 9 and 10 attended the program for either 4, 5 or the maximum 9 days. The program was run from the university and many of the students were from schools participating in the TFA Pathway in 2010.

Feedback given to MGSE by all Cohort 2 Associates at the end of the Initial Intensive was very positive, with all Associates agreeing or strongly agreeing that the experience of teaching students at the Summer School was valuable in helping them develop as teachers. Those Cohort 2 Associates who mentioned the Summer School component of the Initial Intensive in interviews were largely appreciative of the opportunity to engage with students under supervision, to get some experience of being in front of a group of students, and to receive practical feedback on their lesson planning and delivery. Several Associates indicated that it was the best part of the Initial Intensive experience.

### **2.3.3. Preparation for the classroom**

The main issue regarding the preparation for teaching of Cohort 2 Associates appeared to be a perceived lack of practical advice and how to relate theory to the classroom. As one Associate explained:

*You couldn't immediately apply theory to the classroom context. We would walk out of a theory lecture saying 'but what do we DO in the classroom?'*

This perception was related to a common issue raised by Associates and school personnel in both cohorts: the lack of in-school experience prior to Associates starting their teaching role in the school:

*I'd have liked to do observations at the school. I learn a lot by observing. I do one class observation every week now. It would have been nice to do observations before the Initial Intensive to get some context – even better if it was in the school we were placed in.*

Some Mentors made similar observations:

*I did think the summer school, from what I've heard of it, was good and necessary – that or equivalent should absolutely continue – it's imperative that Associates have some experience of a classroom environment before they enter the school as the responsible teacher.*

*I'm not keen on the lack of classroom experience prior to coming into the school and the Associates' mental picture of the classroom as a result.*

One Associate noted that:

*I can now (after being in the classroom for 2/3 terms) see the relevance of many components of the intensive that I thought were excessive at the time.*

The lack of in-school experience appeared to be a challenge in terms of crafting a balanced Initial Intensive. As one principal noted when comparing Associates with other beginning teachers:

*There's a big difference initially, of course. Not having been in the classroom, they don't have any practice, they don't have the tools of the trade – they've had no dry run in a class with support. So it will always be different for Associates in the first semester. They have to be helped a lot more.*

Associates found it difficult to relate much of the theory to a practical context because they had no classroom experience: the practical context which would have made the theory more understandable was largely absent for them until they were faced with teaching their own classes. This led to a common refrain:

*It [the Initial Intensive] could have done more, but I think it probably prepared us as much as was possible.*

*I didn't feel prepared when I got into the school, but I'm not sure it's possible to prepare you for that.*

That said, one feature of the TFA Pathway that was commonly highlighted by school personnel was the clinical practice model, variously termed an 'apprenticeship' model, an 'internship' or learning 'on-the-job' by interview respondents. Once Associates were established in their school and classrooms, the opportunity to blend both university coursework with extensive in-school experience over a two-year period was generally seen to be highly beneficial.

#### **2.3.4. The Mid-Year Intensive**

The Mid-Year Intensive is a four-day residential course that takes place in July of the first and second years, as part of the two-year graduate diploma program. It includes face-to-face instruction by MGSE staff and a variety of speakers provided by TFA.

Cohort 2 Associates were far more positive about the Mid-Year Intensive than the Initial Intensive. They were very appreciative of the opportunity to provide feedback on the Initial Intensive; they felt that their concerns had really been addressed, and that this was demonstrated by the quality of the Mid-Year Intensive. Cohort 1 also commented on the high quality of the Mid-Year Intensive in 2011.

#### **2.3.5. The TFA components of the Intensives**

During the Initial Intensive, TFA provides activities designed to bond the cohort and build Associate awareness of and commitment to addressing educational disadvantage by striving for significant outcomes with their students. TFA also introduces their leadership model and the Leadership Development Framework used by the Training and Leadership Advisors (TLAs) to identify strengths and weaknesses in classroom practice. TFA staff, the TLAs and guest speakers run these sessions. In the Mid-Year Intensives, TFA provide sessions with guest speakers covering a variety of educational issues.

In 2010, Cohort 1 Associates had mixed and often negative reactions to the sessions provided by TFA in the Initial Intensive. The interview question did not differentiate between the MGSE and TFA components and so these comments were a product of the Associates' experiences and perceptions of both components. In 2011, Cohort 2 Associates made very little mention of the TFA component and where they did it was largely positive:

*I love the TFA side of things, they were constantly geeing us up and telling us we could make a difference, it helped in the transition to classrooms and because of the TFA connections they brought in a lot of specialists to bounce ideas off, people who have started up independent schools, policy makers etc.*

Some Associates felt the evening sessions provided by TFA were 'too much' because of the intense nature of the Intensive, while others wanted more time to concentrate on the assessed parts of the course.

### **2.3.6. Ongoing study while teaching – Cohort 2**

Structured distance learning continues throughout the two-year program. Cohort 2 Associates had less to say about their ongoing study than did Cohort 1, which suggests both that expectations were better managed by MGSE and that the timing of assessments was generally not the issue it had been for Cohort 1 (at least during Terms 1 and 2 of the first year). There was very little comment about the 0.2 FTE time allocation, which also suggests that there were no significant issues with this time and that schools had been able to provide either one day or two half days where Associates were not required at school.

A number of Associates did comment that the workload was heavy, particularly as they tended to spend much of their available time in the first two terms planning and preparing lessons. As was noted in the 2010 report, School Personnel tended express more concern about the demands of the course than the Associates:

*I think the requirements of the program are too high in terms of study. They have a 0.8 teaching load which is significant especially as they are beginning and spend a lot of time on planning and resources. The course requirements are very rigorous – in discussion at the mentor training we came up with a 1.2 effective FTE load.*

### **2.3.7. Ongoing study while teaching – Cohort 1**

Cohort 1 Associates were much more comfortable with their study in their second year and it was well regarded. Some Associates who did not intend to continue teaching after the two years felt that some of the assessment requirements were 'pointless' while those who intended to continue teaching were considerably more engaged. Of the Associates who completed the online survey, about 70 per cent in both cohorts expressed an interest in going on to further post-graduate study in education.

### **2.3.8. Perceived effectiveness of support prior to commencing teaching**

In the online surveys conducted in November 2010 and 2011, Associates in their first year were asked to rate the effectiveness of various sources of support for professional learning received before they commenced teaching on a four point scale where 1 = *very ineffective*

and 4 = *very effective*. Cohort 1 Associates in their second year were also asked to rate the effectiveness of the same sources of support during their second year (see Table 2.5).

As already indicated, there are a number of notable differences between Cohorts 1 and 2 in their view of support prior to commencement. The Summer School provided by MGSE in January 2011 was considered to be effective by 76% of Cohort 2 respondents and was more highly rated than the Portal School experience provided to Associates in Cohort 1 in January 2010.

With the exception of ‘Discipline-Specific Pedagogy’, Cohort 2 was considerably less positive about the perceived effectiveness of MGSE subjects, with at least one-quarter and up to one-half of all respondents considering them to be ineffective. The Placement School visit was also considered less effective by Cohort 2 than by Cohort 1.

**Table 2.5: Perceived effectiveness of support for professional learning prior to commencing teaching, and for Cohort 1 in their second year**

	Effective/very effective %		
	Cohort 1 2010 %	Cohort 2 2011 %	Cohort 1 2011 %
Teaching in placement school	-	-	100
Professional development provided by school	-	-	85
Information and support provided by <i>Teach for Australia</i>	86	88	81
The <i>TFA</i> ‘Leadership Framework’	46	53	33
Portal school placement	68	-	-
Placement school visit	80	62	-
Practical skills sessions provided by <i>TFA</i>	63	73	73
ISO support	51	-	-
The Summer School	-	76	-
University of Melbourne subjects			
<i>Discipline-Specific Pedagogy</i>	77	75	85
<i>Linking Curriculum and Pedagogy</i>	-	47	-
<i>Individualising Learning and Teaching</i>	86	50	85
<i>Language and Teaching</i>	91	76	-
<i>Leadership</i>	46	-	36
<i>Professional Practice and Portfolio</i>	-	74	85
<i>Social and Professional Contexts</i>	86	65	51
<i>Non-subject-specific sessions</i>	-	65	-

Cohort 1 Associates in their second year were more positive about the practical sessions provided in intensives by TFA and the majority felt that MGSE subjects were effective. Slightly fewer than half of Cohort 1 Associates felt that the TFA Leadership framework and the MGSE Leadership subject<sup>17</sup> were effective, and this dropped to about one-third of Cohort 1 Associates in their second year. It should be noted that for Cohort 2 the TFA Leadership Framework has significantly changed and has been increasingly utilised by TFA and the TLAs as a tool for ongoing teacher development during the two years. The MGSE subject ‘Social and Professional Contexts’ was considered less effective by Cohort 1 Associates in their second year.

<sup>17</sup> In response to feedback, the leadership subject is no longer being offered for Cohort 3 onwards.



### 2.3.9. Balancing ongoing teaching, ongoing study and personal life

Associates were asked about balancing the ongoing demands of work, study and personal life, which they rated on a four point scale where 1 = *very difficult* and 4 = *not at all difficult*. Table 2.6 shows that about one-quarter of Associates in both cohorts found this balance difficult or very difficult. However, while almost all Cohort 1 respondents found achieving this balance at least a little difficult, 21 per cent of Cohort 2 respondents indicated that it was not at all difficult to achieve a balance.

**Table 2.6: Balancing demands**

	<b>Cohort 1</b>	<b>Cohort 2</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Very difficult	24	27
Difficult	30	27
A little difficult	42	24
Not all difficult	3	21
	100	100

Note: Figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100.

Associates were asked to rate whether the 0.2 FTE time release from school activities was sufficient to allow them to complete all requirements of their study and employment. They were also asked whether the school timetabling of their 0.2 release had been done in a way that assisted them to use the time effectively to meet their study obligations. Table 2.7 shows that 25 per cent more Cohort 2 respondents felt that their time release was sufficient compared to Cohort 1. Similar numbers of respondents from both cohorts indicated that their school had timetabled their 0.2 release effectively.

**Table 2.7: Sufficient time release and effective timetabling**

	<b>Cohort 1</b>	<b>Cohort 2</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Time release		
Not at all sufficient	6	6
Not really sufficient	49	24
Sufficient	46	68
More than sufficient	0	3
	100	100
Effective timetabling	64	61

Note: Figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100.

## 2.4 Associate support

As was the case in 2010, the majority of Associates regarded the support they received in total (from all sources) to be at least adequate and in many cases excellent. Many Associates were very impressed by the level of support provided both within and external to the school and felt little need for additional support. In fact, a few expressed mild concern that too much support could be overwhelming and that it took time to negotiate an appropriate balance of support among all parties involved.

Associates were asked about their experience of support in the Term 4 online surveys. Table 2.8 shows the percentage of Associates reporting a source of support for professional learning as ‘important/very important’.

‘Interactions with other staff at my placement school’ was considered important or very important by all respondents from both cohorts in their first year and, along with ‘interactions with other Associates’, was rated as important by more Associates than interactions with Mentors, Clinical Specialists and Training and Leadership Advisers. The importance of interactions with other Associates aligns with interview data indicating that the Associates as a group have formed a strong community.

**Table 2.8: Support to develop as a teacher**

	Important/very important		
	Cohort 1 2010 %	Cohort 2 2011 %	Cohort 1 2011 %
Interactions with other staff at my placement school	100	100	91
Interactions with other <i>Teach for Australia</i> Associates	94	79	91
Interactions with my Educational Adviser	79	-	-
Interactions with my Training and Leadership Adviser	-	73	64
Online communication/support from Associates	-	-	64
Interactions with my Mentor teacher	64	82	58
Professional learning (outside school)	62	70	58
Professional learning in school	62	58	58
Interactions with my Clinical Specialist	-	61	52
Ongoing formal training, e.g. at MGSE	62	49	49
Interactions with my Learning Area Tutor	-	-	43
Interactions with <i>TFA</i> staff (and events, C1)	44	30	27
Interactions with University of Melbourne staff	50	18	27
Online communication/support from <i>TFA</i>	-	36	15
Online communication/support from MGSE	-	18	24
Online communication/support	35	-	-

The importance of interactions with other staff at placement schools indicates the importance of the community environment in schools over the efficacy of any one individual and the fact that relationships develop outside the formal support mandated by the program. It is evident that, whatever level of support Associates are receiving through formal program channels, they are all also receiving support to develop as a teacher from other school sources, and they consider this support to be valuable.

Of Cohort 2 respondents, only 6 per cent (i.e. two Associates) rated interactions with their Mentor teacher as not important to their development as a teacher, compared to 18% of Cohort 1 Associates. Twelve per cent of Cohort 2 respondents also rated their interactions with their CS, and 9 per cent interactions with their TLA as ‘not important’. No Cohort 2 Associates considered more than one of these three relationships (Mentor, CS, TLA) to be unimportant. Online communication from MGSE and *TFA* is not rated as important by the majority of Associates, however this is not a central feature of the program.

Associates were also asked to rate how satisfied they were with the level of feedback they were receiving from designated support staff. Table 2.9 contains the percentages of Associates who indicated they were satisfied or highly satisfied with feedback received. The results show that Educational Advisors provided the most useful/satisfactory support to Cohort 1 Associates in their first year.

**Table 2.9: Percentage of Associates satisfied and dissatisfied with feedback received**

	Satisfied/highly satisfied %		
	Cohort 1 2010 %	Cohort 2 2011 %	Cohort 1 2011 %
Mentors	67	58	64
Educational Advisors	91	-	-
Clinical Specialists	-	70	64
Training and Leadership Advisers	-	67	67
Learning Area Tutors	-	-	42
Other school staff	76	61	88

It is not appropriate to compare Cohort 1 satisfaction with their Educational Advisors to Cohort 2 satisfaction with their CSs and TLAs separately as there are now two external support persons where previously there was only one. Some Cohort 2 Associates are more satisfied with the CS while others are more satisfied with the TLA. If the CS and TLA are combined and the *higher satisfaction rate* is taken in the case of each Associate, the combined satisfaction rate is 96 per cent, with 38 per cent ‘highly satisfied’ and none dissatisfied.

#### **2.4.1. Educational Adviser, Clinical Specialist and Training and Leadership Adviser**

In the original program design, two separate support roles were envisaged: a University Clinical Specialist; and a TFA Professional Development Coach. In 2010, the role of Educational Adviser embodied these two support roles. The Educational Adviser was employed by TFA but co-recruited and co-managed with MGSE. The Educational Adviser (Ed A) played a critical role in providing the link between the MGSE academic subjects and the practical experiences of the Associates in school. Educational Advisers were also responsible for fostering relationships and developing the partnership between the schools and the program.

For 2011, the Ed A role was split along the lines originally envisaged, with MGSE employing a Clinical Specialist (CS) and TFA employing a Training and Leadership Adviser (TLA). The majority of the role previously performed by the Ed A is now undertaken by the MGSE CS. The TFA TLA has primarily a personal development and pastoral care role. The TLA also works with Associates through the Leadership Framework, building their capacity, and developing their vision and goals and their commitment to the Teach for Australia movement, with the aim of improving teaching practice.

Reactions among Cohort 1 Associates to changes in these support personnel were variable and largely based on their relationships with individual Ed As, CSs and TLAs. In some cases, strong relationships with Ed As were able to continue as they moved into either the CS or the TLA role. Some Cohort 1 Associates were frustrated by the change to their support and some expressed a feeling that it was onerous having to deal with yet another person.

Both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 Associates and School Personnel were somewhat confused initially about the role to be played by the TLA. TFA acknowledged that the change took place very quickly and they were required to create a new role, and so the role of TLA was

still evolving.<sup>18</sup> As such, at least in part, how the TLA is seen is dependent on the individual filling that role. To a lesser extent, the same can be said of CSs, although there is more clarity among Associates and School Personnel around the expectations of their role.

There were clearly some instances where the CS was more valued by the Associates than their TLA, and the reverse was also the case. This variation is due as much to previous relationships and the personalities of individuals as to the roles each is meant to play, and there is considerable overlap in roles as a result. This is sometimes seen to be a positive in that it provides greater support to the Associates.

Due to the success of the Ed As in many schools last year, a number of Cohort 1 Associates commented that the split had resulted in them being asked to do the same things twice, resulting in an inefficient use of their time and effort for little additional benefit. In all schools, either the CS or the TLA tends to be considered the primary source of external support, with the other support generally seen to be less central or useful.

There does seem to be a need to clarify the roles of the CS and TLA to each other, to the Associates and to schools. This would include improved communication between individuals performing these roles and to the schools regarding how often and on what days CSs and TLAs enter schools. It should also include appropriate avenues of addressing any Associate concerns and a process to ensure complaints are heard and resolutions are communicated back to complainants, with a clear process for taking a complaint further if no satisfactory resolution is reached.

The CS and TLA were regularly mentioned by Cohort 2 Associates as a source of support and in some cases there was a definite, positive divide in the roles, with the CS primarily providing feedback on teaching methods and assisting with university assignments, and the TLA providing pastoral care. Many Associates also appreciated the different angles from which their classroom practice was viewed by the CS and TLA, with the use of the Leadership Framework by the TLA as a reflective and personal development tool generally viewed very positively by Cohort 2 Associates.

#### **2.4.2. In-school Mentor**

Mentors provided support both with the Associates' teaching and pastorally. Mentors tended to be the key people in introducing Associates to the school community and, particularly in regional areas, to the wider community. In regional areas, Mentors have assisted in areas such as finding accommodation, establishing friendships and providing emotional support.

Mentors also provided advice and assistance with curriculum, resources and materials, student management issues and techniques, they observed classes and provided constructive feedback. In many cases, Mentors were based in the same key learning area (KLA) and the same subject department and for many Associates they were the primary, ongoing source of support.

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<sup>18</sup> Results from surveys conducted by TFA show that the majority of Associates now have a clear understanding of the TLA's role.

For some Cohort 2 Associates, the mentoring relationship had not been particularly satisfactory or useful, although the survey results in Table 2.8 above suggest that, on the whole, interactions with Mentors were more important to Cohort 2 (82 per cent) than was the case for Cohort 1 (64 per cent). Mentors who taught in different areas, were themselves new to the school, or were mentoring more than one Associate, were not always able to provide adequate support in some areas of need. There were cases where Mentors were 'too busy' due to other senior roles in the school and while relationships were cordial, no structured mentoring occurred. In these cases, there seemed to be no clear resolution process at the school level.

Understandably, Associates did not want to 'rock the boat' in the early days of relationship building with other staff. There was also uncertainty about the extent to which it was the Associates' responsibility to request and organise time with their Mentor, and this tended to be exacerbated where the Mentor was a more senior staff member with additional responsibilities. Given the need for Associates to learn school policies, practices and the norms of daily interaction with other staff, in the few cases where there were difficulties with the mentoring relationship this had the potential to place undue additional stress on Associates.

Associates in this kind of situation were able to talk to their CS and TLA, as these roles are generally (but not always) taken by people external to the school; however, these individuals may have limited influence on the school executive in terms of finding workable solutions.

In a few cases, Mentors reported that they were not given the time allocation specified as part of the program, or that the time they were given had replaced time they should have received for other roles, making it difficult for them to provide adequate opportunities for their Associate to discuss issues with them. In the same way, timetabling in some cases prevented the Mentor, the Associate or both from observing each other's classes. Some Mentors also expressed concern that their other responsibilities in the school did not enable them to allocate the allotted time to the Associates.

By the end of their second year, many Cohort 1 Associates no longer felt the need for a formal Mentor. They were considerably more confident as teachers; they were well established in the school community and had access to formal school-based support and informal community support in much the same way as other teachers at the school. Over half of Cohort 1 survey respondents in their second year still considered interactions with (58 per cent), and feedback from (64 per cent), their Mentor to be important; however, interviews suggested that this relationship had changed.

By the time Associates were in their second year of teaching, the Mentor relationship had become largely collegial in a more normal day-to-day sense. Discussion tended to centre on curriculum rather than classroom issues or student management and the discussion of issues was often reciprocal. Some mentors commented that "[the Associate] is mentoring me!". In some cases, discussion had moved to leadership and student welfare rather than classroom teaching and some Associates were very appreciative of the encouragement and support they had received in their decisions to take on leadership roles in the school.

### **2.4.3. Other school staff**

In almost all cases, Cohort 2 Associates were very positive about the school community. They found staff to be friendly, helpful and collegial; an important resource for support and advice, personally and professionally. Generally, where Mentors were not able to provide some aspect of support, Associates were able to turn to other school staff, hence most felt well supported even where the Mentor relationship had not worked as first planned. Indeed, survey results show that, of all interactions canvassed, 'interactions with other staff at my placement school' was important or very important to all respondents in their first year (see Table 2.8).

Other teachers in the same subject department or KLA were happy to assist with resources, department heads and year level coordinators assisted with behaviour management. Many Associates had the opportunity to observe other classes, and had also been observed by teachers other than their Mentor, and all had found these learning opportunities stimulating and beneficial.

### **2.4.4. Other Associates**

It is becoming apparent that one of the strengths of the TFA Pathway is the bond shared between the Associates. They are all 'in the same boat' and they have found other Associates to be a considerable source of support, both personally and professionally:

*Having support of 41 Associates you can ring after a bad day – helps keep you motivated – you get great ideas – from C2 and C1 sometimes. It's been sensational.*

As well as the formal online networking opportunities provided by TFA, Associates have created their own informal network:

*There's a TFA site where we can share resources, but we also have a [...] site we've set up and a lot of Associates post there – stories about students, venting about bad days, requests for resources and help with teaching, etc. There is a real sense of community and we support each other.*

Such relationships are embedded in the TFA Pathway model, and this is one of its distinctive features. The residential intensives, the deliberate cohort building by TFA, marketing strategies that highlight social conscience issues, and TFA's sense of mission in their specific targeting of educational disadvantage, are all likely to play a role in developing Associates' strong sense of community. Although other forms of teacher preparation may lead to on-going bonds existing among graduates, they probably would not eventuate to the extent evident so far in the TFA Pathway.

## **2.5 Mentor selection and training**

Stakeholders commented that schools had been provided with greater clarity over the selection and role of Cohort 2 mentors, yet the process of selection varied considerably between schools, as did the extent to which Mentors were supported in their role.

The majority of Mentors interviewed were asked to take on the role:

*I was asked to get involved as my subject area is the same so it seemed like a good idea. We're in the same faculty - he teaches [...] and I teach [...]. And I was happy to do it. I was also appreciative of the opportunity to undertake PD - the 5 day course was attractive.*

*I was tapped on the shoulder. [...] I'd done mentoring before. I had no hesitation once I met the people involved (which happened before the Initial Intensive).*

Most of those asked saw it as an opportunity and were comfortable with the request. Many were experienced teachers who had mentored in some capacity previously. Several also expressed an interest in being involved with new programs and in trying new things. Some indicated that they enjoyed a challenge and some also felt that it was important to support the next generation of teachers.

Some Mentors had an understanding of the role, but many others were not made fully aware of their role or the nature of the program until they attended a course at MGSE during the Initial Intensive. A few Mentors had no knowledge of the program at all until they undertook the MGSE course.

Cohort 2 Mentors' views of the MGSE training were much the same as those of Cohort 1: generally positive, with some dissenting opinions and a few caveats.

As was the case in 2010, no Mentors interviewed were taking the more involved assessed option. The majority cited time as the primary disincentive, and some Mentors gave their age or existing qualifications as a reason not to undertake the assessed version of the course.

Almost all of the Mentors indicated that they had developed professionally through the role and that they would recommend involvement with the program to other suitable mentors.

## **2.6 Associates and their placement schools**

### **2.6.1. Induction**

Cohort 2 Associates' introduction to their schools and their experience of orientation and school inductions varied considerably:

*The school has 8 or 9 new teachers this year, 5 are new grads. So the induction program has been very good – 1 day before school started, then a few Mondays throughout Term 1. We covered things like writing reports, yard duty, discipline policy. It was well structured.*

*We came in 3 days before term started, and I got my desk. We didn't have an induction process. It wasn't very organised. I felt I didn't know much about the school.*

Table 2.10 shows that the majority of Associates in 2010 and 2011 received a formal induction to the school and for about a third of those who did, the induction was tailored for them. Most Associates who received an induction found it helpful or very helpful. However, a greater number of Cohort 2 respondents (26 per cent compared to 11 per cent of Cohort 1) did not receive a formal induction (whether tailored or general). It is also the case that those Associates who did not receive a formal induction were less likely to have received assistance and support prior to Term 1 in the year concerned. In total, 77 per cent of Cohort 2 respondents who had received a formal induction also received some or plenty of support prior to the start of term, compared to just 13% of respondents who had not received a formal induction.

**Table 2.10: Induction and assistance for Associates prior to Term 1**

	Cohort 1 2010 %	Cohort 2 2011 %
Received formal induction	89	74
Received modified induction	34	35
Induction helpful/very helpful	88	85
Received some/plenty assistance prior to Term 1	70	63
Assistance was fairly/very helpful	61	61

About 90 per cent of Cohort 2 Associates had the opportunity to visit their school prior to the Initial Intensive, and meet the principal and some of the staff. Some were also able to observe classes.<sup>19</sup> Such initial orientations were highly valued. For others, their first view of the school and contact with school personnel (other than a phone conversation with the principal) was the day or two before term started. Some schools had comprehensive inductions for new staff, in which Associates participated, while others had Professional Development days prior to the start of term but little or no formal induction to the school for new staff. In some schools, the majority of staff were aware of the TFA Pathway from the outset whereas in other schools most staff appeared quite unaware of the nature of the pathway:

*Community response has been fair. Who we are could have been better communicated to staff. Staff didn't really understand the program, it wasn't clearly known. All the Associates were anxious about how we would be received by our schools – in this school it hasn't really been an issue.*

On the whole, Associates were very positive about the welcome they received at their placement school. The majority of Associates interviewed had not experienced any negativity from school personnel about the TFA Pathway:

*The school community responded to us quite well, the younger teachers are quite engaged. Hasn't been too much negativity though a lot of staff are union. Union reps will ask questions, but not too much.*

*Yes definitely, I felt welcome and there was no negativity about TFA at all.*

<sup>19</sup> Due to the timing of placement school visits near the end of Term 4, many schools were running alternative activity programs for students, limiting Associates' opportunities to observe regular classes.



## 2.6.2. Current Teaching Context

Associates were asked to rate aspects of the climate of their current school on a five point scale where 1 = *very poor* and 5 = *very good*. Results were summarised for reporting and are presented in Table 2.11. A higher percentage of Cohort 2 Associates (75 per cent) rated the level of support they had received as good or very good. Cohort 2 Associates were also more likely to rate the level of resources available to them as good or very good (50 per cent) in comparison with Cohort 1 Associates (32 per cent in first year, 29 per cent in second year). Level of collegiality and staff relations, level of support, and opportunities to acquire new skills and knowledge were most highly rated by Cohort 1. Over half of respondents from both cohorts also rated staff relationships with students and emphasis on teaching and learning as good or very good.

**Table 2.11: Associate perceptions of school climate**

	Good/very good %		
	Cohort 1 2010 %	Cohort 2 2011 %	Cohort 1 2011 %
Level of collegiality and staff relations	61	66	71
Staff relationships with students	57	56	57
Level of support given to teachers	36	50	32
Level of support you have received	61	75	65
Level of support given to students	59	50	61
Emphasis on teaching and learning	54	56	53
Level of resources	32	50	29
Facilities, grounds and buildings	36	38	36
Communication, formal and informal	25	41	32
Leadership in the school	36	38	42
Opportunities to acquire new skills and knowledge	61	50	58
Opportunities for decision-making, leadership	32	31	45
Relationships with parents and the community	32	47	13

## 2.7 First year Associates in schools

As was the case with Cohort 1 Associates, Cohort 2 Associates have (with few exceptions) become well respected and valued members of staff in their Placement Schools.

### 2.7.1. Student perceptions

When asked how students have responded to the Associates (and vice versa), many school personnel prefaced their comments with the caveat that the students had not been told about the TFA Pathway:

*To the students, they're just first year teachers. Students take any teacher on face value – whether they're good at their job and respect students. Students have reacted very well to them because they're professional in what they do.*

Based on the perceptions of Mentors and other school personnel, student responses to the Associates were generally positive while at the same time as variable as they would be with any teacher. Students have responded to some Associates very well, although nearly

all school personnel commented on issues the Associates have faced with behaviour management:

*They love him. He rattled some of their cages early. He was astounded when they didn't do their homework. He had a difficult time earlier on. [He] is not all that assertive, he was letting kids get away with things. He's better now. The penny has dropped.*

*At the start there was a lot of teacher-centred learning - kids weren't able to give feedback, and initially the Associates had no relations with the students, no background knowledge about students and the issues they face - and they come from a different kind of school, so there were some students who would say they didn't like their teacher. But over time the Associates have built up confidence, they've trialled new things in the classroom, and students are responding positively.*

In a few cases Associates struggled because they were initially perceived by students as 'student teachers' (due to delays in the granting of PTT). Some, as noted in the quote above, had difficulty establishing relations with students, and many found their experiences were mixed depending on the year level or particular class they were teaching. By Term 3, student behaviour issues had become much more manageable and relationships between students and Associates were generally very positive.

The students interviewed during Term 3 were largely enthusiastic about the subjects Cohort 2 Associates were teaching. They felt they were known as individuals, that their teacher cared about them, knew what level they were at, gave them opportunities to participate in lessons and, generally, was able to keep order in the classroom. These students often commented that they were more engaged in Associates' classes than classes with other teachers and that class (and non-class) activities tended to be more varied than many of their other classes. Some students also commented positively on the relative youth of the Associates compared to many of their other teachers.

### **2.7.2. Perceptions of Cohort 2 Associates as teachers**

As was the case in 2010, school personnel tended to compare Cohort 2 Associates to teachers in their first year of teaching. Only in rare cases did school personnel consider their Associate to be comparable to a more experienced teacher, although a few Associates were considered to be exceptional:

*We have had an experience of the TFA initiative at the highly positive end – our Associate is really good – in some ways better than me. She doesn't have my years of experience/professional knowledge but she is exceptional. She's significantly beyond the level of a recent graduate. I'm cynical about the Dip Ed – mine got me to the stage where I could begin to learn how to teach in my first year out. MGSE has given her a good theoretical framework and she has the ability to be flexible when elements of the theory don't work in practice. She's capable of modifying what she gets in her course to suit her classroom. Her pedagogy and interaction with the kids is well developed – I assume the selection process may partly account for that – they do seem to choose people who thrive in the classroom.*

In the majority of cases, Associate performance was being judged positively by Term 3, although there was recognition that lack of classroom and teaching experience made the first few weeks or the first one to two terms quite difficult (depending upon the Associate and their school context):

*There's been an enormous change in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. My Associate is repeating the same classes she did in first semester so there is less pressure on her in terms of preparation. She was very content driven initially. Now she has the content under control she's concentrating more on student learning rather than her teaching.*

*There was a difference between Associates and grads at the start, but it's not so noticeable now. Initially they were very much teacher focussed – delivery based. That's how my Associate kept things under control. She was very regimented, that gave her security and confidence, that she knew what was going to happen for the next hour. She has now moved on from that and is becoming more student focussed.*

*Not when they first arrived. Particularly in science and the use of equipment in the classroom – they had no mental picture of what a secondary class looked like – no picture of what it should look like, no experience in a class. Behaviour management was top of the list of skills that weren't really there, also pacing of content, adaptation of content to the class context, differentiation in class/across year levels. These things have improved now.*

In a small number of cases, Associates really struggled to cope with the expectations of their new role and this has impacted on them emotionally to a significant degree. While these cases are few in number, it would seem that the recruitment program's focus on resilience may even be viewed as possibly detrimental in these instances. Remaining in a highly stressful situation even with high levels of support may negatively impact not only the Associates' wellbeing but also working relationships with staff and student learning outcomes. Such instances are best dealt with on an individual basis, taking into account the local context. It may however be appropriate to clarify the policy in this area, particularly around the responsibilities of TFA, MGSE, the TLA, the CS, the Mentor, the principal and the employing organisation, to ensure a well thought-out and timely response to those situations where an Associate may be experiencing considerable difficulties.

Key policy issues in this area include: Who has ultimate responsibility for action when an Associate is clearly having difficulty meeting the demands of the program? Are there expected processes and timeline guidelines for performance management? Who can decide to terminate an Associate's involvement in the program? What is the policy for providing support or follow-up for Associates who drop out or have their contract terminated?

### **2.7.3. Extracurricular involvement**

There was wide variation in the extent to which Cohort 2 Associates had become involved in their Placement Schools, outside of the classroom. Many school personnel noted that they did not expect too much of Associates as yet, as they were still growing their confidence in the classroom:

*The Associates have a real passion in them, and I think there is also a real pressure on them - there are assignments where they have to do things, and an expectation that they will make things happen. I don't want to sound negative - I'd like to see things happen, but it's not always as easy as having the idea.*

*The Associates certainly seem more pressured to get involved than other graduate teachers. As a Mentor I feel some responsibility toward her. She's still learning dynamics in the classroom - I don't want her to burn out.*

*Slow to start with. Initially they were consumed with the notion of what it meant to be a teacher, so nothing in the first semester – and I also told them I didn't expect anything outside the classroom for the first 2 terms. They and I didn't want anything extra – wanted them to get comfortable in class, confident as a teacher.*

In general, though, School Personnel reported that the Associates' qualities had resulted in them taking up, or being offered, roles in schools more quickly than many beginning teachers. Quite a number of Associates had already become extensively involved in their schools and, in the case of Associates in regional areas, in the broader community. Associates were coaching sports teams at the school and in the community, and some were also playing in teams in the community. They were involved on various committees, organising and participating in excursions, school camps, school productions, and staff functions.

Associates from both cohorts were asked to indicate their involvement in a variety of school activities outside the classroom, and whether they were involved as a participant or a leader. Overall, 90 per cent of first year respondents in both cohorts had participated in a co-curricular activity and over a third had led an activity. Table 2.12 shows that Associates had been involved in a many activities during their first year, and Cohort 1 in their second year had increased their leadership involvement in these areas. Eighteen per cent of Cohort 1 respondents had also started an activity in their first year, as had 9 per cent of Cohort 2 respondents.

**Table 2.12: Associate co-curricular involvement**

	Cohort 1, 2010		Cohort 2, 2011		Cohort 1, 2011	
	Participate %	Lead %	Participate %	Lead %	Participate %	Lead %
Clubs e.g. chess, science, public speaking	21	25	27	10	39	35
Sports	46	13	31	6	43	21
Art, performing art, school productions	26	0	26	3	39	11
Coaching/tutoring	58	4	50	15	48	30
Camps and excursions	74	19	48	19	61	40
School-wide committees	46	8	26	0	66	14
Student Representative Council or similar	8	15	16	3	11	25

## 2.8 The experience of second year Associates

Cohort 1 Associates had become confident teachers and were valued members of staff at their schools. In many cases, Associates had taken on leadership roles within the school, some of which were competitive and attracted additional remuneration (e.g. Year Level Coordinator).

### 2.8.1. Perceptions of Cohort 1 Associates as teachers

School personnel who worked closely with the Associates had noted their development and had recognised and accepted them as fellow teachers:

*She's definitely changed and developed. She's at a point where she's comfortable – understands her teaching style and classroom role. I don't think she has any PD requirements beyond those we all have – keeping up with curriculum advancements. She has no special requirements or issues.*

*Connects theory and practice. I can see a different level of confidence and capacity in dealing with staff/students/parents. Huge development from last year. A lot of self awareness – knows what he needs to change when things don't work. There really don't seem to be gaps in what they need re PD at present. They have good relationships with staff/students.*

In some cases, Associates were seen to be outstanding members of staff:

*Really developed – she's amazing – she's differentiating, etc. Best PD for her was to be given more challenging roles – she's already more competent than our leading teachers. She could do a leading teacher role at this point. I should say that I'm talking specifically about this Associate – I'm not suggesting all Associates are this good – she is one of a kind. I'd compare [another Associate at the school] to other beginning teachers – she's had more issues.*

### 2.8.2. Cohort 1 in leadership positions

Cohort 1 Associates in their second year were asked whether they had held a leadership position during the year, and whether they would be in a leadership position in 2012. Sixty one per cent of respondents indicated that they had held a leadership position during the year and of those, 65 per cent were in a position that attracted additional pay. As a comparison, a 2010 survey of Victorian Provisionally Registered Teachers (PRTs) for the VIT indicated that 17 per cent of the sample were holding a position of responsibility (of these, 29 per cent held positions of co-curricular responsibility involving areas such as debating or sports teams, 17 per cent were coordinators of the school production, 16 per cent were faculty/domain leaders and 16 per cent were single subject leaders).<sup>20</sup> Associate leadership positions ranged across a breadth of school roles and responsibilities.

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<sup>20</sup> Richardson, 2011, p. 21. All Victorian PRTs who were granted full registration in 2010 and early 2011 (1456) were invited to participate in the survey. Not including those who could not be contacted, the final response was 536, or 40% of the available sample (p. 12). Responses were not weighted so can only be considered relevant to the sample group and not the wider population of PRTs in Victoria.

Thirty six per cent of respondents also indicated that they would be in leadership positions in 2012, with two-thirds of these roles attracting additional pay. These roles included:

- Humanities KLA and Leading Teacher: E-Learning and Ultranet
- VCAL Co-ordinator
- House leader and Environmental Co-ordinator
- Teaching & Learning Leader; SRC Co-ordinator
- Year 8 Program and Learning Outcomes Manager
- Program and Learning Outcomes Co-ordinator
- Key Learning Area Head (Science)
- Year 7 Program and Learning Outcomes Manager
- Careers, VET & MIPs Co-ordinator
- Year Level Manager/VCE Co-ordinator

## 2.9 Professional efficacy and knowledge

Associates are academically talented and reflective individuals. They are used to success and tend to be highly self-critical. Whatever pressure other stakeholders perceive them to be under, Associates also hold *themselves* to high standards. As such, many of them were quite critical of their own performance in their roles.

All of the Cohort 1 Associates interviewed noted that their confidence as teachers had increased and that they were much more comfortable in class. Most noted that their relationships with students and other staff had also improved. They felt more relaxed and flexible, and increasingly able to ‘think on their feet’ in the classroom when things did not go to plan. They knew their students better and were better able to deal with student behaviour and engagement. They were better at preparing lessons and at targeting them to students at different levels. They tended to be more organised and better at assessment:

*I'm a lot more confident – I don't spend as much time planning and I can improvise more. I think I'm stricter – not so flexible this year with things like homework – I know the students better, I have higher expectations and I can pull them up when they're slack. I have more authority. It's a lot easier – no longer scary to walk into a class of 25 kids for 75 minutes. I think I'm planning and assessing better. Last year there was a lot of working day to day. This year I'm planning ahead. My student management has improved a lot.*

*I don't have to worry about developing my teaching persona – who I am as a teacher, which all teachers go through in their first year. So it's much more about practice – how quickly I can engage the students, how far I can push them. It's less about who I am, how I manage students, more playing with how I engage students and make use of content.*

*What am I not doing differently/better? I'm more attuned to how to build positive relationships. My planning has improved immeasurably – and my knowledge of what does/doesn't work in class. I know most lessons now will be okay – I have greater confidence. Relationships with students and staff are better. I can still get better at planning, and differentiation.*

Several Associates noted that they were focussing their professional development opportunities on areas of interest such as developing cross-curricular links to address student literacy, formative assessment, understanding generational poverty, quality questioning and leadership development.

### **2.9.1. Associates' perceptions of their efficacy as teachers**

A published instrument, the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES-short form)<sup>21</sup> was employed to measure Associates' estimates of their efficacy as teachers. Associates were asked to rate their efficacy when they commenced teaching (defined as the first full week of teaching in their first year) and at the time of completing the survey (mid Term 4). Cohort 1 in their second year were asked to rate their efficacy from the beginning of their second year and at the time of completing the survey (mid Term 4).

Perception scales such as this need to be treated with some caution because the scales are subjective.<sup>22</sup> For example, research has shown that respondents to such scales who are not very knowledgeable of the subject tend to assume that, on average, they are better than average. It is not uncommon for scores on such a scale to fall as respondents in the early stages of a course realise how much they do not know.<sup>23</sup> As such, asking respondents to consider their knowledge (or in this case, efficacy) 'now' and at an earlier point in time allows the respondent to indicate to what extent they feel they have improved. Hence, 'growth' scores may be more accurate indicators of development than are the actual positions indicated on the scale.<sup>24</sup>

It is also important to note the context of the schools where Associates are teaching, as they are placed in schools serving disadvantaged communities. This may affect efficacy and perceptions of self-efficacy, and comparative data (see Table 2.15) does not take school context into account.

'Now' ratings and growth scores are reported in Table 2.13 for each item of the Efficacy scale, in order from highest to lowest based on the average of both cohorts' 'now' score at the end of their first year.

There were only minor differences between the cohorts, and no statistically significant differences were found. First year Associates from both cohorts rated themselves as comparatively more effective in areas such as providing alternative explanations and controlling disruptive behaviour. They felt they were less effective in areas such as helping families to assist their children to value education and motivating students.

The highest growth area for both cohorts in their first year was in behaviour management, and that continued to be an area of strong growth for Cohort 1 in their second year. Cohort 2 also indicated a high level of growth in the use of assessment strategies. Both cohorts felt that their ability help students to value learning and to assist families to help their children do well had not greatly improved, in comparison with other areas.

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<sup>21</sup> Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001a, and see Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001b.

<sup>22</sup> Scott, Burns & Cooney, 1994

<sup>23</sup> Kruger, 1999, Kruger & Dunning, 1999

<sup>24</sup> See also Wilson & Ross, 2000 on temporal-past comparisons.

**Table 2.13: Aspects of Efficacy, now and change scores**

	Cohort 1, 2010		Cohort 2, 2011		Cohort 1, 2011	
	'Now' mean	'Growth' mean	'Now' mean	'Growth' mean	'Now' mean	'Growth' mean
To what extent can you:						
Provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused	7.0	2.2	7.6	2.1	7.9	2.3
Control disruptive behaviour in the classroom	7.0	3.0	6.7	3.1	8.0	2.9
Craft good questions for your students	6.7	2.0	6.8	2.8	7.8	2.9
Get students to follow class rules	6.7	2.6	6.6	2.9	7.7	2.5
Establish a classroom management system with each group/year level of students	6.7	2.7	6.5	2.9	7.9	2.9
Use a variety of assessment strategies	6.4	2.1	6.8	3.0	7.6	2.6
Calm a student who is disruptive or noisy	6.6	2.8	6.5	2.5	7.8	2.9
Get students to believe they can do well in school work	6.5	1.9	6.6	2.4	7.4	1.9
Implement alternative strategies in your classroom	6.5	2.4	5.7	2.2	7.3	3.0
Motivate students who show low interest in school work	5.8	2.0	5.8	2.2	7.0	2.0
Help your students to value learning	5.9	1.7	5.5	1.6	6.9	1.9
Assist families in helping their children do well at school	4.8	1.5	4.6	1.7	6.2	2.2

In addition, respondents were asked to rate their overall effectiveness as teachers now and for teachers generally. Once again, a nine-point scale was employed for both items and results are also shown in Table 2.14.

**Table 2.14: Overall self-efficacy and perceptions of general teacher efficacy**

	Cohort 1, 2010 'Now' mean	Cohort 2, 2011 'Now' mean	Cohort 1, 2011 'Now' mean
Overall self-efficacy	5.9	6.2	7.4
Teachers efficacy generally	6.1	5.9	6.4

Cohort 1 Associates towards the end of their second year were considerably more confident about their efficacy as teachers than they were at the end of their first year. In comparison to other items on the scale, however, assisting families and students to value learning were again scored noticeably lower. This may be a reflection on some of the issues prevalent in the communities in which their schools are situated.

Based on the 12 indicators in Table 2.13, subscales were created following Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001, 2006), in the areas of student engagement, instructional strategies and classroom management. Results are shown in Table 2.15. Cohorts 1 and 2 had much the same results at the end of their first year, notably below the averages provided by Tschannen et al. (2001, 2006) for teachers with up to three years of experience in the subscale of Student Engagement and slightly below in the other two subscales. Towards the end of their second year, however, Cohort 1 results were higher than the means reported by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2006) for teachers with at least four years of experience in all areas.



**Table 2.15: Efficacy subscale scores**

<b>Efficacy subscales</b>	<b>Cohort 1 2010 'now' mean</b>	<b>Cohort 2 2011 'now' mean</b>	<b>Cohort 1 2011 'now' mean</b>	<b>Tschannen- Moran 2006 'Novice' <sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Tschannen- Moran 2006 'Career' <sup>b</sup></b>
Efficacy in Student Engagement	5.7	5.6	6.9	6.57	6.69
Efficacy in Instructional Strategies	6.6	6.7	7.6	6.99	7.58
Efficacy in Classroom Management	6.8	6.6	7.8	7.03	7.61

**Notes to Table 2.16**

<sup>a</sup> Tschannen Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006, See Table 2. Means are based on a sample of 74 novice teachers, where 'novice' is defined as current teachers with three or fewer years of experience.

<sup>b</sup> Tschannen Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006, See Table 2. Means are based on a sample of 181 career teachers, where 'career' is defined as current teachers with four or more years of experience.

**2.9.2. Associates' professional knowledge**

Associates were also asked to rate their effective knowledge of 16 aspects of professional practice that were selected to reflect the content of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) graduate teacher attributes. Associates were asked to rate themselves at the commencement of their first teaching assignment following completion of the Initial Intensive and currently. A four-point rating scale was used where 1 = *very ineffective* and 4 = *very effective*. Difference scores, reflecting respondents' estimates of their growth since commencing teaching, were calculated. Mean 'now' scores and growth scores are reported in Table 2.16.

Cohort 1 Associates in their first year rated their ability to give good feedback, monitor student progress and make adjustments to teaching, and establish relations with parents and the community as the areas in which they needed to improve their professional knowledge. Cohort 2 Associates rated classroom management, assessing prior learning, understanding student diversity, and how children develop as the areas in which they needed to improve their professional knowledge.

**Table 2.16: Professional knowledge now and change scores**

	<b>Cohort 1, 2010</b>		<b>Cohort 2, 2011</b>	
	<b>'Now' mean</b>	<b>Growth Mean</b>	<b>'Now' mean</b>	<b>Growth Mean</b>
Student relations	3.5	0.8	3.6	1.0
Establish relations with colleagues	3.4	0.4	3.6	0.7
Content knowledge	3.3	1.0	3.4	0.7
Resources and ICT	3.3	1.0	3.3	1.0
Legal and ethical obligations	3.2	0.5	3.4	0.4
Engaging learning tasks	3.3	1.1	3.2	1.1
Pedagogical content knowledge	3.2	1.2	3.3	1.1
Treating students equitably	3.1	0.3	3.3	0.4
How students learn	3.2	1.0	3.1	0.8
Designing assessment	3.0	0.8	3.2	1.3
Classroom management	3.1	1.0	2.9	1.1
Feedback	2.9	0.7	3.0	1.0
Monitor progress and make adjustments	2.8	0.8	3.2	1.1
Assessing prior learning	3.0	0.8	2.9	0.9
Student diversity	3.1	0.7	2.8	0.5
Establish relations with parents and the community	2.8	0.6	3.0	0.8
How children develop	3.0	0.7	2.8	0.5

Relationships with colleagues, understanding legal and ethical obligations and treating students equitably were areas where Associates (on average) felt they were effective from day one. Designing assessment and classroom management were among the areas Associates felt they were least effective at the start of their time in school, particularly Cohort 2, although by Term 4, on average, Associates in both cohorts considered themselves effective. Cohort 1 Associates in their second year were more confident about their knowledge in all areas.

## 2.10 Leadership coaches

In their second year, interested Associates were paired with a Leadership Coach: an experienced person in a leadership position from a sector aligned with an Associate's interests (business, government, education, etc.) who was willing to provide additional mentoring. TFA noted that:

*The Coaches will work with the Associates to accelerate their personal development and transition beyond the program into their career pathways of choice. They will assist an Associate to reflect upon their experience, enrich their self-awareness, and articulate their self direction in order to grow into an influential leader.*

Those Associates who had established a relationship with a Leadership Coach felt they had benefited from it, particularly in allowing them the opportunity to consider their future plans:

*It's really good, I get along well with my coach and we meet up once a month. He's in the [] sector. It doesn't relate to my teaching, except to the extent that I can debrief about things that are happening occasionally – sometimes good to get a completely external perspective. He has assisted me in thinking about my future plans.*

*I was really pleased with that setup – excited at the prospect. My coach runs [] – he's great – similar philosophy to me. He was even a teacher himself at one stage. We've had some stimulating conversations and I've been to a seminar he ran []. It's not really relevant to my teaching – more incidental. It has shaped my approach to my career decisions.*

For a number of the Associates, the pairing was not particularly successful. The voluntary aspect of the coaching and a lack of clear structure meant that some Associates felt fully responsible for maintaining the relationship. In some cases, only one meeting had taken place. Though for some it had been useful, many Associates did not consider it a large part of the program and had gained little from participating.

The Leadership Coach did not appear to impact upon Associates' classroom practice, even in cases where Associates had asked for a Coach from the education sector. None of the Associates interviewed made mention of the role of the Coaches in developing their leadership skills.

There appeared to be some difficulty in appropriately matching Associates and Leadership Coaches based on aspirations, experience and interest and this may in part explain the absence of the intended monthly meetings in many cases. However, at this stage it does appear that the role and purpose of the Leadership Coach lacks clarity for some Associates and Coaches. For the Associates particularly, there seemed to be a sense that they were already very busy in their schools and completing their course, and the Coach was yet another demand on their time.

## **2.11 The future**

### **2.11.1. Associates' plans for the future**

Cohort 2 Associates were generally very positive about the pathway and greatly respected the dedication and goals of Teach For Australia. Most also praised the support they received and the ongoing education from MGSE. The attitudes of Cohort 1 Associates had also evolved, with some who were initially somewhat sceptical of the TFA 'mission' and who did not anticipate any ongoing involvement with the organisation after the two years, now intending to be active alumni.

It was interesting to note that several Associates in both cohorts felt that the intent of the pathway (or their perceptions of that intent) had changed somewhat from its origins:

*[Cohort 2] I started out thinking that the program was looking for career-focused people or "bright sparks" and now I feel that it is more about building a commitment to teaching and educational change.*

*[Cohort 2] The program is moving more towards a pathway into teaching program when it was initially sold as a 2 year program which you then leave. The focus now is more on keeping us in teaching.*

*[Cohort 1] Some of us at the last intensive talked about these issues till 4 in the morning. Two people found the program wasn't working for them as a corporate stepping stone. They expected it to get them a high flying job, but it didn't look like that was going to happen. [] I don't want people to see it that way and I think more Associates now agree with me. They have got into teaching and a lot of Associates missed their kids during the holidays. Probably about half now feel the way I do.*

A small number of Cohort 1 Associates interviewed noted their disappointment with the lack of options for furthering their career, although they acknowledged that the initiative was in its infancy and did not yet have widespread recognition in the government, business and not-for-profit sectors. As one Associate put it:

*When we were recruited there was a lot of rhetoric around opportunities after with people like Boston Consulting etc. This hasn't happened. The TFA brand is not (yet) what it was made out to be. E.g., someone who got through to the final round of interviews prior to TFA is now not even getting to the first round – because TFA isn't known to the HR people at big firms. So their top people come and talk to us,*

*like us and tell us they want us, but the HR staff who do the recruitment don't know the TFA brand at all so don't see the point of it when they see it on the CV.*

Of the 19 Cohort 2 Associates interviewed, nine intended to remain in teaching for at least a year after the initial two years, seven were undecided and three intended to move out of teaching. One of the latter did intend to continue a link with education in the policy domain.

Of the 14 Cohort 1 Associates interviewed in 2011, eight intended to remain in teaching, two were still unsure and four were not going to remain in schools. Two of the latter intended to retain links with education and possibly return to teaching at a later time.

In the November 2011 online survey, Associates were asked a series of questions about their current plans and the results are shown in Table 2.17 and Table 2.18. The first two questions asked how likely Associates were to complete the two year program and how likely they were to continue teaching beyond the two initial years. All respondents from both cohorts indicated that they were likely or very likely to complete the program (with the exception of one respondent from Cohort 1, who participated in the survey having already left the program).

Three-quarters of Cohort 1 and 87 per cent of Cohort 2 respondents, in Term 4 of their first year, intended to continue teaching once they completed the program. Of the Associates who responded to this question (20 from Cohort 1, 27 from Cohort 2) the great majority indicated that if they did not continue teaching, they would likely work to address educational disadvantage through another career path.

**Table 2.17: Associates' plans to complete the program, continue teaching and address educational disadvantage through other careers**

	Likely/Very likely	
	Cohort 1, 2010 %	Cohort 2, 2011 %
Complete the program	96	100
Continue teaching beyond the two years	75	87
If not teaching, address educational disadvantage through a different career path	90	96

Associates in their first year were asked if they planned to continue teaching beyond the program, whether they would like to continue to teach at their current school, and whether they would seek promotion in teaching (Table 2.18). Of those who intended to continue, nearly half of Cohort 2 respondents and a third of Cohort 1 would like to stay at their current school beyond the life of the program. About half of Cohort 1 respondents and a third of Cohort 2 respondents were unsure, while about one-fifth (20 per cent) of both cohorts would not remain at their current school.

**Table 2.18: Associates' plans to stay at their current school, to seek promotion and to undertake further study**

	Cohort 1, 2010			Cohort 2, 2011		
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
If continuing, would like to stay at current school	33	48	19	47	31	20
If continuing, plan to seek promotion	74	26	0	63	34	3
Further study in teaching/education	68	25	7	72	25	3

Cohort 1 Associates in their second year were also asked about their plans for the future, in a series of questions that asked them to indicate whether they intended to stay at their current school, whether they had positions for 2012 (ongoing or contract) and whether they intended to continue teaching. Results are presented in Table 2.19.

**Table 2.19: Second year Associate plans for the future**

	Cohort 1 2011 %
Staying on at current school	29
Have applied to teach elsewhere	29
Are likely to continue teaching	26
<i>Total likely to continue teaching</i>	84
Are not likely to continue teaching	16
	100

Twenty nine per cent indicated that they were staying at their current school, most in full-time ongoing positions. Twenty nine per cent had applied to other schools, while 26 per cent were likely to continue teaching but did not yet have definite plans. Of Cohort 1 survey respondents, 84 per cent were likely to continue teaching in the immediate future and 16 per cent were not.

It should be noted that the majority of Cohort 1 Associates were supernumerary and for some, no positions were available in their school in the year following their completion of the program (as suitable vacancies are dependent on student enrolment and staff movement). It is likely that a higher percentage of Cohort 2 Associates who intend to teach following their two years will seek to remain at their current school.

Table 2.20 is sourced from TFA data and details what all Cohort 1 Associates who completed the program (43) reported they were doing as at February 2012. In total, 60 per cent were classroom teachers in Australian schools and a further 21 per cent were teaching part time or overseas, and most of these were continuing their study either at MGSE or overseas. Of those not teaching, 12 per cent were working outside teaching and 7 per cent were travelling. It was not known whether those travelling intended to look for teaching positions on their return.

**Table 2.20: Cohort 1 Associate activities as at February 2012**

	<b>Cohort 1, 2012</b>
	<b>%</b>
Teaching at current school	37
Teaching at another school	23
Applying for teaching positions, continuing MTeach or other study in education, teaching overseas	21
<i>Total teaching or intending to teach</i>	<i>81</i>
Are not teaching	19
	100

Source: TFA.

Associates were also asked if they would recommend the TFA Pathway to others who are considering teaching and others with similar interests and competencies to their own. Table 2.21 shows the results, disregarding ‘No’ as only 3 per cent or fewer answered negatively in all cohorts. Cohort 2 were considerably more likely to recommend TFA to others with over 90 per cent saying they would, while up to one-third of Cohort 1 were uncertain. In their second year a higher number of Cohort 1 respondents indicated they would recommend TFA, both to those considering teaching and those with similar interests and competencies.

**Table 2.21: Recommending the TFA Pathway to others**

	<b>Cohort 1, 2010</b>		<b>Cohort 2, 2011</b>		<b>Cohort 1, 2011</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
Would you recommend TFA to	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Others considering teaching	64	33	94	7	77	23
Others with similar interests/competencies	75	22	91	6	87	13

### 2.11.2. Program Partners’ views of the future

Program Partners tended to view the future in terms of potential structural and ideological barriers to the continuation of the Pathway rather than in terms of measures of success such as Associate retention in the workforce, greater interest in the Pathway at school-level or the creation of alumni who may become leaders and innovators. They indicated a variety of potential barriers to the long term viability of the TFA Pathway. The Pathway was conceived as a national program and TFA recruit from all states and territories; however, Associate placement is currently only occurring in government schools in three jurisdictions and in Catholic schools in one jurisdiction. Implementation of the Pathway in several other states would require legislative changes in teacher registration requirements. DEEWR noted that current legislation in most states and territories does not allow an employment-based model of teacher education.

The Teach For Australia organisation has been refused Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) endorsement by the Australian Tax Office (ATO). The DGR endorsement is a tax status held by charities that allows businesses and individuals to receive tax concessions when they donate. This has constrained the level of financial support TFA has been able to access from business, although in-kind support and partnerships with business in some aspects of the program (such as recruitment and leadership development) have shown growth.

TFA and DEEWR noted that business investment and philanthropic support are not commonly part of education programs in Australia. Organisations in Australia see education and workforce issues as the business of government, and these kinds of initiatives tend to be funded by government. This is particularly the case in the area of redressing educational disadvantage, which is seen as an essential responsibility of governments.

Most stakeholders also noted an active union resistance to the Pathway. This was commented on at school level in some cases in the first year in Victoria though it was not noted as an issue by School Personnel in the second year. Some Program Partners noted that union resistance was a considerable ongoing barrier to participation in some states. Teachers unions support the registration and teacher education course accreditation requirements of regulatory bodies at state and national levels. In schools, initial local union branch resistance appears to have softened, largely because of the high calibre of the Associates and the desire of most teachers to offer them support.

## **2.12 The TFA Pathway in the ACT**

The TFA Pathway was extended to the ACT in Cohort 2, with five Associates placed in four schools in Canberra. Ethical considerations and the possibility of identification make it problematic to present an ACT-specific commentary on most aspects of the program.

In general, the ACT experience appeared to be a reflection of the varied experiences in Victoria and comments by Associates and school personnel in the ACT have been included in the discussions about all aspects of the program presented above. Two points are worth noting here. Firstly, the school structure in the ACT does differ in that senior schools (years 11 and 12) are separate entities. Associates placed in senior schools in the ACT had no opportunity to teach in years 7 to 10 and as such were not able to gain any experience teaching younger age groups, or gain understanding of the different curriculum and behavioural management issues to be found in these classrooms.

Secondly, the MGSE course currently appears to be somewhat Victoria-centric in terms of the school curricula and school structures that it covers. This is understandable given the university's location, its other courses, the inception of the TFA Pathway in Victoria and the current location of most Associates. It is also the case that the ACT is in a transition period with the introduction of the TQI and therefore the course and registration requirements in the ACT may not yet be fully incorporated by MGSE. This is a potential source of uncertainty for current and future Associates in the ACT. MGSE are responding to this feedback through contact with colleagues based in other jurisdictions.

Finalising such details is likely to take some time, however it would seem appropriate to keep ACT Associates apprised of the situation and to clarify for them as soon as practicable how their course requirements relate to the requirements for registration as a teacher in the ACT, and how ACT registration may affect them should they wish to teach interstate in the future.

It is notable that 5 schools in the ACT have accepted Cohort 3 Associates, including 3 new schools.

### **Part 3. Key questions and conclusions**

This section summarises the main findings that have emerged to date. The final report, due in early 2013, will further consider the key questions in the light of additional evidence to be gathered throughout 2012. As such, the discussions below are preliminary.

#### **3.1 Ways to Improve Implementation of the Pathway**

A number of the considerations presented in the Phase 1 report have been implemented or resolved and have not emerged as themes in interviews in the second year. The approach of MGSE and TFA in the intensives appears to be more consistent and more tailored and very little overlap or confusion was reported by Associates in Cohort 2. The MGSE course on leadership was moved to the second year of the course and not included in the Initial Intensive, and has been removed entirely for Cohort 3. Behaviour management sessions were included, which was appreciated by Cohort 2 Associates. There were no reported issues with publicity in 2011.

##### **Pre-program**

- Where early recruitment allows, Associates may benefit if they are encouraged to seek opportunities to observe classes at one or more secondary schools and given a list of areas to consider during observations, prior to the Initial Intensive. Associates who visited their placement schools prior to the Initial Intensive reported that this was of great benefit to them. Where Associates are unable to visit their placement school, one option may be for them to visit second-year Associates and gain a first-hand insight into the Associate experience as well as observing classes.
- There may be scope for further clarity in material presented to schools about the recruitment process, particularly the background and experience level of the Associates.

##### **Initial Intensive**

- The Summer School appeared to be quite successful, however more opportunities to observe and practise teaching is desirable.
- PTT (or similar) of Associates with a university degree from one state, teaching in another state, may need to be more carefully considered to ensure an appropriate fit with subject requirements in the state where the Associate is teaching.

##### **Associate Placement and Teaching Load**

- Consideration should be given to the classes the Associates are asked to teach. As noted in 2010, while it may be difficult in the context of juggling school timetables, it would be preferable if Associates' early experiences (terms 1 and 2 or semester 1) are with student groups that are less demanding. Also where possible, it would be preferable if Associates were given fewer subjects or had repeat classes at the same year level, to reduce the extent of lesson planning required in the initial terms.



- There may be a case for ensuring that placement schools have an appropriate formal induction process for Associates (and other new and beginning teachers) to ensure new staff have sufficient opportunity to understand school policies and procedures, and other areas of significance to the school.

### **Performance Management**

- There are very few cases of Associates struggling to cope with the expectations and demands of the program, however policies and procedures addressing this issue should be clearly communicated to participants and stakeholders, in particular identifying which party has ultimate responsibility for performance management and who should make the decision to end an Associate's involvement in the program if it should come to that. Expectations should be made clear to Associates, and performance management guidelines should be readily available to employers and stakeholders.

### **The Mentor Role**

- Mentors should be volunteers or willing participants fully aware of the demands of the role. Consideration should be given to the information provided to potential Mentors about the role prior to their acceptance of it. A number of Cohort 2 Mentors agreed to the role without an understanding of the requirements or of the nature of the TFA Pathway.
- With due consideration of the point above, it would be preferable where possible to have a Mentor in the same subject area as the Associate they are mentoring and in geographical proximity (e.g., the same staffroom).
- It may be beneficial to ensure that both the Mentor and the school are able and willing to allocate sufficient time to the mentoring role, most particularly in the first two terms. Some method of accountability regarding the provision and use of the allocated time might be considered.
- Schools could consider increasing the Mentor time allowance in the first two terms and reducing it from Term 3 (where all parties feel it is appropriate) and reducing or removing time allowance in the second year, with the exception of the requirements for formal assessment by the Mentor.

### **Other Support roles – the Clinical Specialist, the Training and Leadership Adviser and the Leadership Coach**

- There is a need to clarify the roles of the CS and TLA to each other, to the Associates and to schools. Improved communication between individuals in these roles is needed, as well as identification of avenues for resolving any Associate concerns.
- At this stage it appears that the role and purpose of the Leadership Coach lacks clarity for some Associates and Coaches.

### **3.1.1. Key factors influencing the achievement of objectives**

It is clear that the extensive marketing, brand awareness campaigns and the graduate recruitment method has been successful in attracting high-quality applicants nationally, and from diverse backgrounds. Stakeholders also agree that the recruitment process itself is rigorous and has been successful in recruiting high-quality graduates from the applicant pool.

In this, the TFA Pathway had the clear precedents of the US and UK models, both of which are among the top ten graduate recruitment organisations, alongside companies such as Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Deloitte and KPMG.<sup>25</sup> Data from TFA also show that on-campus presence and targeting of specific groups (such as STEM graduates) has also met with success.

The qualitative data gained to date does suggest that the high quality graduates selected for the TFA Pathway are gaining the skills and attributes necessary to be high quality teachers.

Experience gained in recruitment to date has allowed for greater clarity in promoting program expectations such as a willingness to be placed outside metropolitan areas, and currently about a third of Associates are placed in schools serving disadvantaged communities in regional areas. Application numbers to the program have remained stable over three years of recruitment. For the program to expand nationally a growing number of successful applications would be required. It is also likely that a greater number of applicants would need to be willing to take a regional or rural placement.

Associates are being placed in schools serving disadvantaged communities in both metropolitan and regional areas. Principals in some cases have noted that they generally have a small applicant pool of new teachers and the TFA Pathway has provided them with high quality new staff. In all cases, schools have indicated that they would take another Associate if a vacancy was available, which is a strong endorsement of the program.

The internship model of teacher education does require the school and university to work closely to support and monitor Associates and Clinical Specialists are visiting schools regularly. In addition, Mentor teachers undertake a mentoring course at the university and they have some responsibility for the evaluation of Associates as part of the post-graduate diploma.

The Alumni program is in its infancy, the first cohort of Associates having only completed the course at the end of 2011, so there is no current data on this community. The Alumni program is also not a direct focus of this evaluation.

What can be said at this stage is that Associates do appear to have formed a community of practice and have been a powerful source of support and learning for each other. This may in part be due to the shared practice of being an Associate during the two year program. It is also due in part to the shared experience during the Initial Intensive and the facilitation provided by TFA and MGSE in this regard. It is also fair to say that the objective of

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<sup>25</sup> In 2011-12, the Times Top 100 Graduate Employers listed Teach First at 7 and in 2012 Teach First were looking to recruit 1,040 graduates. Sourced 25 January from <http://www.top100graduateemployers.com>

creating on-going relationships among graduates is embedded in the Pathway to a greater extent than other forms of teacher preparation.

In-school Mentors have previously been identified as both a strength and a potential weakness of the program. The careful selection of experienced, enthusiastic Mentors has proven very successful for the development of the Associates and their enjoyment of the school environment and their position as a teacher. Mentors were able to augment any induction with personal introductions to the school, other staff, school policies and so on. In the most successful cases, Mentors also spent time in the classroom observing Associates, and ensured that Associates had the opportunity to observe them and other staff in the classroom.

By contrast, the minority of Mentors who felt that the position was something of an impost, or where relations with Associates were strained, tended to exacerbate the high levels of stress under which Associates operated in the initial stages of the program.

### **3.1.2. Barriers to national implementation**

The clinical, employment based program model is a significant departure from the traditional teacher training model and as such requires state government investment at a legislative level. State legislation controls who is allowed to teach in schools in all sectors (government and non-government schools) and generally, only those who have completed a qualification and are provisionally registered with the state-based governing body are eligible to teach. Teachers yet to gain their qualification are generally only able to teach in the presence of a qualified, fully registered teacher employed within the school, who retains responsibility for the students. Current legislation in some states therefore remains a barrier to national implementation of the TFA Pathway.

A potential barrier to national implementation related to state-based legislation and standards for teacher training is the location of MGSE in Victoria. ACT-based Associates reported some concerns with the extent to which their need to understand the ACT context was met in the Initial Intensive. It is fair to note that the ACT system is currently undergoing changes; however, it is likely that MGSE staff would be more knowledgeable about Victorian curriculum requirements such as VELS and VCAL, and meeting the needs of a cohort of Associates due to start teaching in multiple states and territories may stretch available resources.<sup>26</sup> There may also be state preferences for local universities to provide teacher education.

As the MGSE course is accredited in Victoria, Associates are restricted in the learning areas they are able to enrol in the University of Melbourne by Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) guidelines or the level of previous study completed. This may be an issue in some cases where teacher registration boards or Principals in other states recognise an Associate's capacity to teach a broader array of subject areas.

The cost of providing the current level of support to Associates through Clinical Specialists (MGSE) and Training and Leadership Advisers (TFA) may also be problematic if the program grows nationally, and particularly if numbers of schools in more remote areas are

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<sup>26</sup> The introduction of a national curriculum and national teacher standards may ease the extent of these differences but is unlikely to remove them, at least in the medium term.

to participate: where possible, Associates are clustered in schools, however distances between schools in rural and remote areas tend to be considerable, increasing resources needed to support Associates.

## **3.2 The Impact and Outcomes of the Pathway**

### ***Is the employment-based teacher education approach cost effective?***

Cost-effectiveness is a difficult area to evaluate in a complex program like the TFA Pathway, particularly when benefits are hard to measure and may not be evident in the short term. To make comparisons it is necessary to identify the differences between the TFA Pathway and other programs with similar outcomes. To do that, the various elements of the Pathway are considered separately.

#### *Recruitment*

Recruitment is the responsibility of the TFA organisation and incurs costs of approximately \$1m per cohort in 2011 figures. The cost-effectiveness of recruitment is a difficult area in which to provide meaningful comparisons. A marked difference between the TFA Pathway graduate recruitment and standard practice is that TFA recruitment takes place before teacher education begins.

A general comparison of the cost of graduate recruitment can be made using surveys of graduate employers in Australia. The Australian Association of Graduate Employers (AAGE) 2012 annual employer survey noted that the median cost per joiner (Applicant accepting an offered place) for organisations with 500 or less staff was \$10,100. The most expensive new joiners tend to be recruited into smaller organisations. Based on 2010 figures, the cost to TFA of recruitment per joiner is about \$15,000.

#### *Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (MGSE)*

The diploma is more expensive than other courses due to the clinical model, for which MGSE charge full fee paying domestic graduates about \$30,000 for the Postgraduate Diploma. Some additional cost is due to the salaries paid to Clinical Specialists who visit and observe Associates in school. MGSE funding for the TFA Graduate Diploma also covered Associate and Mentor local and interstate travel, accommodation and full catering for four intensives per cohort of Associates, as well as for the 2-day and 3-day residential Mentor training course. Such costs are typically not covered in the funding for other teacher preparation programs.

The total cost to government of the education of Cohort 1 and 2 Associates over two years was about \$47,000 per Associate (not including Associate salary), considerably more than for teachers gaining full registration through a standard pathway, even allowing for the time Associates actually spend teaching. The additional cost comes primarily from two sources: travel and accommodation; and support (Mentor time release and training costs are not included here, the cost of the Clinical Specialist is included). It should be noted that some of this cost is due to significant issues around economies of scale: the TFA Pathway is currently very small (clearly, if a learning area expert holds a two-hour session for 15 students, this would be cheaper than the same expert holding the same session for 5 students).

### *The TFA Organisation*

As well as recruitment and the national coordinating role, TFA expends considerable resources during the Associates' two-year employment through the program. Costs include cohort-building activities and accommodation for staff and guest speakers during the intensives, IT and internet, and TLA salary and travel expenses.

The support provided to Associates by the TLAs is the most significant cost, and salaries and employment costs account for about 74 per cent of the yearly cost of this element of the program, which is about \$0.9m per year in 2010, or about \$11,000 per Associate per year.

### *The cost of delivering a teacher through the TFA program*

The total cost to government of the education of an Associate over two years is considerably more than for teachers gaining full registration through a standard pathway, even allowing for the time Associates actually spend teaching. Based on published data and information provided by stakeholders (see Table 3.1), it is estimated that the TFA Pathway currently costs approximately \$216,500 per Associate. This includes the cost of recruitment, course delivery, mentor training, travel and accommodation, in-school support, the salary paid to Associates over 2 years and the indirect cost of the Associate filling a vacant position for 2 years at 0.8 FTE. It does not include the cost of the Alumni program, nor the administrative and national coordinating roles played by TFA.

Figures are likely to include start-up costs that would not be repeated, particularly in the area of recruitment. There were also a limited number of vacancies made available by employers as they piloted the program and as such, potential economies of scale have yet to be realised. These factors are likely to have resulted in higher costs for Cohorts 1 and 2 than would be the case in future cohorts.

Based on published data, a comparative post-graduate pathway is estimated to cost government around \$140,200 per fully registered teacher (including the cost of salary for one year). This includes some living expenses such as Youth Allowance over a one year period, a scholarship for teaching in a hard-to-staff area and a graduate teacher salary over the year generally required for a teacher in Victoria to become fully registered (as Associates can be at the end of their two year course). It also includes the indirect cost of the salary of a graduate teacher over one year while a trainee is not available to teach. It does not include any costs related to graduate teacher recruitment or the allocation of a mentor in a teacher's first year, or mentor training. Recruitment and mentoring practices vary widely and reasonable indicative costs are currently unclear.

The potential outcomes and benefits of the TFA Pathway are difficult to gauge, partly because there are many variables that cannot be controlled for, partly because it is difficult to find an appropriate comparison or control group, and partly because the program has not been running long enough for some outcomes to be visible or certain.

**Table 3.1: Indicative cost to government of teacher education and the TFA Pathway**

<b>Indicative cost per 100 student/graduate teachers over two years</b>	<b>\$</b>
Commonwealth Supported Place, 1.5 EFTSL Postgrad Dip 100 <sup>a</sup> @ \$14,268	1,426,800
Assume 60% receive maximum YA/rent <sup>b</sup> for 1 year @ \$13,574	814,440
Assume 30% receive scholarship <sup>c</sup> @ \$7,000	210,000
First year graduate teacher salary <sup>d</sup> @ \$56,985	5,698,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,149,940</b>
<i>Add Commonwealth Supported Place, 1.5 EFTSL Postgrad Dip 12 @ \$14,268<sup>e</sup></i>	<i>171,216</i>
<i>Add graduate teacher salaries 100 @ 1.0 FTE over 1 year<sup>f</sup></i>	<i>5,698,700</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,019,856</b>
<b>Approximate cost of 100 Teach for Australia Associates over two years</b>	
Recruitment @ \$15,000 per Associate	1,500,000
Accommodation and Teacher Education over 2 years <sup>g</sup> @ \$38,200	3,820,000
Assume 80 Mentors undertake Mentor Course <sup>h</sup> @ \$4,900	392,000
TFA Associate salary 2 years <sup>i</sup> @ \$95,242	9,524,200
Mentor at 0.1FTE 1 <sup>st</sup> year, 0.05FTE 2 <sup>nd</sup> year <sup>j</sup> @ \$10,500	1,050,000
Clinical Specialist at approx 1:15 Associates <sup>k</sup> = 7 @ \$126,000	882,000
TFA Leadership program and Training and Leadership Adviser @ \$22,000	2,200,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,368,200</b>
<i>Add graduate teacher salaries 100 @ 0.2 FTE over 2 years<sup>l</sup></i>	<i>2,279,480</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,647,680</b>

**Notes to Table 3.1:**

<sup>a</sup> The postgrad dip figure is based on the Grad Dip at 1.5 EFTSL over 1 year and is indicative only.

<sup>b</sup> Indicative figure only, based on maximum Youth Allowance (YA) and rent allowance for a single person over 18 with no dependents and living away from home. Additional benefits may include Fares Allowance, Low Income Health Care Card, Telephone Allowance, Relocation Scholarship and others. Sourced 19 January 2012 from:

[http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/ya\\_benefits.htm](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/ya_benefits.htm)

<sup>c</sup> Graduates in subject shortage areas who secure a position in a priority school receive a scholarship of up to \$11,000 (includes an additional bonus for teachers who stay in a school for three years, not included in this table). Sourced 20 January from

[http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/hr/recruit/Teach/Scholarship\\_Categories\\_-\\_Teaching\\_Scholarship.pdf](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/hr/recruit/Teach/Scholarship_Categories_-_Teaching_Scholarship.pdf) and

[http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/hr/recruit/Teach/Selection\\_Process\\_and\\_Conditions-Teaching\\_Scholarships.pdf](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/hr/recruit/Teach/Selection_Process_and_Conditions-Teaching_Scholarships.pdf)

<sup>d</sup> Graduate teacher salary is 2012 award figure for Victoria and may differ in other states. Superannuation and on-costs are not included.

<sup>e</sup> DEECD 2010 figures suggest that over 30% of all teacher graduates do not enter teaching on graduating. The figure of 12 is based on a conservative estimate of 10% of secondary graduates choosing not to enter teaching, requiring 112 graduates to ensure 100 do enter teaching.

<sup>f</sup> The TFA pathway includes Associates filling a school vacancy while they complete their teacher education course. For the year a traditional candidate is completing their course, a school must find another teacher to cover the vacancy. For comparative purposes it is assumed that the replacement would be a beginning teacher at 1.0 FTE of the Victorian graduate teacher salary.

<sup>g</sup> Cost of MGSE Dip Ed (TFA) is indicative and averaged based on disaggregated figures provided by MGSE.

<sup>h</sup> Indicative figure. Currently the Mentor to Associate ratio is 1:1. As the program is repeated in schools over time, it can be assumed that some Mentors will already have been trained.

<sup>i</sup> Associate salary is based on current salary for Associates in Victorian government schools, which is paraprofessional rate 1.3 (\$46,607) to 1 May in the second year and 1.4 (\$50,084) for the remainder of the second year. The school pays 0.8FTE of this salary out of their budget while the remainder is funded centrally. To retain simplicity in the above table and given the overall sums involved, the benefits or disadvantages accruing to the school and the state department from this arrangement are not considered. Superannuation and on-costs are not included.

<sup>j</sup> Mentor salary cost is based on a teacher earning \$70-\$80,000. Indicative cost only.

<sup>k</sup> Clinical Specialist costs are based on 1.0 FTE salary equivalent and travel costs provided by MGSE.

<sup>l</sup> Associates teach in a vacant position at a school, at 0.8 FTE. Hence the school must cover the 0.2 FTE of that vacancy. For comparative purposes it assumed that the cover will be provided by a graduate teacher.

Table 3.1 estimates the approximate current costs of the TFA Pathway to all levels of government based on the recruitment and course completion of 100 TFA Associates. This is compared with the cost to government of 100 teachers undertaking a one-year postgraduate diploma and teaching for one year. The latter costs are necessarily indicative due to the considerable variation in course structure and the provision of assistance such as Youth Allowance and scholarships. Additionally, the TFA Pathway includes elements that are difficult to compare directly to other pathways, such as graduate recruitment and mentor training. The table is therefore a tool to enable cost disaggregation and to present clearly the method by which the cost-per-Associate and cost-per-fully-registered-teacher have been estimated. The figures should be read in conjunction with the explanatory notes provided below the table.

#### *Recruitment and retention*

Currently, the TFA Pathway has a retention rate of about 98 per cent across two cohorts. About 60 per cent of Cohort 1 are remaining in teaching for a third year. In total, about 66 per cent of graduates from post-graduate programs in Victoria teach when they graduate. While there are caveats, comparatively, there appears to be little difference in attrition levels between pathways over the first three years.

#### *Placement*

The specific focus of the program, beyond getting top tier graduates into teaching, is placing them into schools serving disadvantaged communities. Recruitment and placement are successful, in the sense that high-quality graduates are being recruited and placed in these schools. That said, many Associates continue to show a marked preference for metropolitan areas.

The response from participant schools has been very positive. They have been impressed with the calibre of the Associates assigned to them and every participating school with a vacancy has requested another Associate.

#### *Support*

A significant proportion of program resources is spent on support. High levels of support, particularly in the initial stages of the Pathway, are necessary and are generally effective in helping Associates manage their new role, survive, and thrive in the classroom. The division of the Educational Adviser into two separate roles has increased the proportion of funds spent on support. It is not clear at present that the additional resources utilised in this area are warranted.

#### *Cost and effectiveness*

The TFA Pathway is a relatively costly teacher education option for government. Any reduction in the quality of the teacher education program is likely to be detrimental to the Pathway, although there may be scope for a reduction in the levels of support provided to Associates.

The question of effectiveness is difficult to answer with certainty. What can be said is that the perception schools have of Associates is very positive and, thus far, every school that has participated in the program would like to continue that association.

***Does the employment-based teacher education program deliver effective teachers?***

The Pathway in its current form puts high pressure on Associates initially due to their inexperience. The majority of Associates not only cope, but thrive in this kind of environment, and they are generally exceptionally well supported by the school, MGSE and TFA. Nevertheless, it is unclear whether the initial heavy teaching load is an entirely necessary aspect of the Pathway.

Nearly all Associates indicated a preference for more practical elements in the Initial Intensive, a tool kit of resources and behaviour management techniques to help them 'survive' the first few weeks. Schools were able to support Associates in a variety of ways during this time and the rigorous selection of Associates appeared to be a key factor in ensuring success in the early stages.

It was clear from the comments of Associates and other school personnel that in the first one to two terms Associates were not highly effective teachers. They were novices, finding their feet and requiring a significant amount of support. However, they were not considered to be a liability and they were favourably compared to other beginning teachers. They were enthusiastic and determined contributing members of staff, and they quickly earned the respect of students and staff.

Evidence provided by school personnel suggests that in their second year the majority of Associates were considered to be the same as other teachers in the school. Associates themselves were considerably more confident than in their first year.

The fact that Associates are still undertaking their qualification in the second year can be viewed as providing the potential to ensure their development as high quality practitioners. They have the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of theory and method, and to put these into practice immediately, ask questions and obtain feedback from both experienced teachers, lecturers and their students. The fact that the intertwining of theory and practice takes place over a relatively extended period of two years, and the ways that this is organised, could provide useful lessons for teacher education more broadly.

***Is the TFA Pathway helping to raise the status of the teaching profession?***

The TFA initiative has not been long enough established, and is not a large enough provider, to have made any discernible impact on the status of the teaching profession in Australia overall. It may be some years before any change in status can be detected, and even then it may be difficult to ascertain the extent to which the TFA initiative may be said to have any responsibility for that change.

At this stage it is not yet clear to what extent the TFA Pathway is attracting graduates who would not otherwise have gone into teaching. About half of surveyed Associates had considered teaching in the future and the TFA Pathway had brought these plans forward. Over 40 per cent of respondents would have considered a traditional teacher education pathway and 20 per cent had already decided to enter teaching. About half of respondents considered participation in the program to be of value for a future career beyond teaching.

Over one-third of successful candidates were high achievers in STEM fields. The marketing of the TFA program seems to encourage graduates in areas of shortage to consider both teaching as a career and teaching in schools that often do not have access to high quality graduates.



***What features of the Teach for Australia approach have a positive impact on the quality of teaching?***

Elements of this question have already been discussed in previous key questions. The most notable features are:

1. The selection process and rigorous selection criteria;
2. The clinical model of practice integrated with theory over an extended period;
3. High levels of support – supportive schools, the in-school Mentor, CS and TLA.

These features of the pathway are also likely to hold lessons for the provision of teacher education more broadly.

While it does not follow that highly academically able people necessarily make good teachers, it does appear to be the case that high quality teachers are always, among other things, highly academically capable (or at least highly literate and numerate<sup>27</sup>). They have a strong in-depth grasp of their own subject and an investment in their own lifelong learning. The TFA Pathway selection process recruits graduates with academic achievement substantially above that required by many secondary teacher education courses. In addition, the selection criteria include demonstrable ability to communicate confidently, to show resilience, tenacity and optimism, effective organisation, problem solving and openness to learning.

The need for a selection process that assesses a broad range of competencies required for teaching rather than relying solely on previous academic performance has been recognised by previous reports into teacher education.<sup>28</sup> Further, the TFA Pathway requires Associates to teach in potentially difficult classrooms with virtually no supervised experience. The first few weeks are extremely challenging and highly stressful. As such, the Pathway necessarily requires resilient, tenacious people. It is not for everyone who wants to teach.

The selection process on its own is not enough, however. Teaching is a profession requiring skills and knowledge that must be acquired to attain proficiency.<sup>29</sup> There are state<sup>30</sup> and, more recently, national<sup>31</sup> standards a teacher needs to meet that make explicit the elements of high quality, effective teaching and the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required across teachers' careers. The TFA Pathway is an employment-based pathway into teaching that requires Associates to complete a two-year course and there has been considerable effort to integrate theory and practice.

Alongside the two years of continuous study, Associates are supported directly and formally by the school, with a dedicated mentor (0.1 FTE in the first year, 0.05 in the second year). Within the school there is usually considerable additional support from other subject area teachers and senior staff. Associates are also supported by MGSE, both by lecturers and subject area specialists available by email and the Clinical Specialists who regularly visit, observe classes, provide advice and assist Associates to integrate their classroom practice with the theory they receive through the university course. In addition,

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<sup>27</sup> Louden, Rohl, Gore, Greaves, McIntosh, et al., 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Education and Training Committee, 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Berliner, 2004

<sup>30</sup> E.g. VIT standards for graduating teachers, sourced 24 January from <http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/PDF/Standards-for-Graduating-Teachers-jan-09.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> See the AITSL website on national professional standards for teachers, sourced 24 January from <http://www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au/>

they are supported by TFA Training and Leadership Advisers who also observe classes and provide feedback using a leadership framework. Associates also support each other and have grown a community of practice allowing them to share practical and personal advice.

***What impact have TFA Associates had on student performance?***

This is a difficult question and it has only been possible to address it in partial, anecdotal ways. Quantitative evidence has been sought about the impact of Associates, but schools are only able to provide partial and incomplete data. School personnel shared success stories during interviews and many student focus group participants also noted that Associates had had a positive impact on them.

Associates brought with them a depth of knowledge about their field, about ICT and methods, that school personnel noted had challenged and changed aspects of their own practice. A number of principals noted that student scores in specific subject areas in which Associates were working had risen in comparison with previous years.

In summary, evaluation findings to date show that changes and developments have been responsive to the issues raised by stakeholders and the first phase of the evaluation. Issues do remain, particularly in the areas of communication, including between support roles, and the more practical preparation of Associates for entry into schools. Overall, feedback from all parties indicates that the program has major strengths and is well advanced towards delivering effective teachers, albeit in small numbers at this stage, in schools where they are needed.

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