

# Quality Initial Teacher Education Review

AITSL's submission in response to the Discussion Paper

July 2021



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## Purpose of the paper

This paper has been prepared by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and addresses questions raised in the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review Expert Discussion Paper (the Discussion Paper). The paper proposes options to strengthen the consistency and quality of initial teacher education (ITE) programs.

Teaching is a valued profession and teachers are respected and esteemed members of the community. On 27 April 2021, Roy Morgan published an Image of Professions Survey for 2021 (Roy Morgan Image of Professional Surveys of Australians 2021). The survey is understandably dominated by health professionals. Teachers, however, are the fourth most respected profession and the first non-health related profession. The continued respect in the community for teachers provides a strong foundation to build the esteem and expertise of the profession.

Key features of being a 'profession' include quality control over who can enter the profession, and professional oversight of preparation programs. ITE, including the induction period after graduation, is a critical phase of teachers' development as professionals. Over the past ten years, the teaching profession nationally has put in place the infrastructure for a comprehensive approach to improving the quality of teaching including the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (the Teacher Standards) and the [Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures](#) (Standards and Procedures) as well as the reforms from the *Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group* (TEMAG) 2014 report, *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers*.

Close collaboration and a shared commitment to quality outcomes between teacher regulatory authorities (TRA), ITE providers, and AITSL have been vital in the successful implementation of the accreditation system (see **Attachment A** for a visual overview of the current ITE policies, structures and supports).

A key goal of the recent reforms to ITE has been to ensure that graduate teachers start their teaching career with the confidence and necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be successful in any Australian school. The TEMAG 2014 report, *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers* supported this goal with recommendations to establish a rigorous nationally consistent accreditation process.

This paper provides further opportunities to strengthen the consistency and quality of initial teacher education.

In addition, this paper canvasses options to strengthen the critical role of teacher employers in the implementation of strategies to attract and prepare effective teachers. Schools are responsible for managing professional experience placements, supporting the induction of early career teachers, and ensuring that all students are taught by appropriately qualified teachers. Emerging national data collections such as the Australian Teacher Workforce Dataset (ATWD) will provide employers with the required workforce data to work with providers about the supply of appropriately qualified teachers and provide the evidence base for national dialogue as well as national and local responses to workforce challenges.

## Recommendations

This paper proposes that the following recommendations be implemented to achieve the structural changes required to address the questions raised in the Discussion Paper:

### Implementing flexible ITE programs

1. Implement a market-driven model using close cooperation between teacher employers and ITE providers to provide high quality, fast-tracked preparation for teachers in identified priority and specialty demand areas
2. Develop and implement a national labour market model for use by TRA and employers, with the ATWD collection as the foundation for the model
3. Provide supply and demand information to ITE providers, to use in their course handbooks, marketing, procurement negotiations, and other mechanisms to encourage students to apply in priority areas
4. Encourage employers to implement flexible employment models that enable pre-service teachers to teach as they complete their ITE programs while maintaining the length of the ITE program

### Strengthening features of ITE preparation and implementation

5. Develop a stream of “supervising and mentoring descriptors” that integrate with the Teacher Standards
6. Design the supervising and mentoring descriptors to develop the skills and knowledge of teachers to support pre-service teachers in all stages of their placements
7. Request the HALT network, with the support of their employers, to prepare on-line courses, resource material and evaluation models for supervision
8. Use the market-driven model to drive closer partnerships between ITE providers and schools, increasing the quality of professional experience placements
9. Consider options to mandate curriculum content in specified areas
10. Undertake a longitudinal evaluation of the ongoing effect of TEMAG reforms and subsequent ITE reforms

### Cultural competency and inclusive education

11. Programs and TPAs should be underpinned by a strengthened set of standards for teachers
12. Strengthen the accreditation requirements for ITE programs to provide greater accountability for graduate teachers to practice in culturally responsive ways and create culturally safe environments for students, families, and communities in line with the Teacher Standards
13. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content to be embedded within all core subjects in all ITE programs
14. Actively recruit a more diverse schooling workforce to encourage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to select teaching as a career
15. Provide information on the relevance and quality of ITE programs to secondary school students and support alternative entry pathways to attract young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

### **The critical role of leadership in supporting pre-service and newly graduated teachers**

16. Actively recruit a more diverse schooling workforce to encourage and support culturally and linguistically diverse people to select teaching as a career

### **Supporting and strengthening the integral role of the TPA**

17. Strengthen the role of the EAG to include ongoing monitoring to:
  - ensure all TPAs remain rigorous and valid
  - implement a robust system of CIM including benchmarking
  - set conditions on the continuing approval of TPAs
  - require TPAs that have undergone significant change to be re-endorsed
18. Introduce a risk-based approach to the endorsement period of a TPA, such that it does not exceed five years

### **The current authorising environment**

19. Develop a framework of measures of success for ITE programs to be used as the basis for a more risk-based approach to accreditation

### **Establish body to support national ITE quality assurance**

20. Establish a National Quality Assurance Oversight Body with a clear and fit for purpose authorising environment

## Part A: Why attracting high-quality candidates into ITE matters

### Key questions from the Discussion Paper:

- What can be done to attract more high-achievers and career changers to the profession?
- What features of the current ITE system may prevent high-quality mid to late-career professionals transitioning to teaching? Has the move to a two-year masters affected your decision to enter ITE?
- Should something be done to match the supply of teachers from ITE providers with the demands of jurisdictions and sectors? What would this look like?
- Are there examples of incentives that have successfully worked to attract quality teachers to areas of shortage? How could these be rolled out more broadly?

### 1. Implementing flexible ITE programs

AITSL recommends that a market-driven approach be implemented to help in matching the supply and demand for teachers. This approach would enable teacher employers to negotiate with providers to procure models of ITE programs and fast-track teachers into employment.

Matching teacher supply with demand is an ongoing challenge in the education sector, with teacher supply and demand levels varying across stages and subject areas. In November 2020, the National Initial Teacher Education Pipeline Report was published (the Pipeline Report). This report detailed that 73% of undergraduates and 67% of postgraduates were employed in an education-based role in their first year after graduation, indicating that issues of graduate teacher supply may not be critical at the aggregate level. Supply issues, however, are more nuanced than these statistics suggest and do not capture the ongoing supply issues in specific disciplines and regions – such as regional, rural, and remote schools as well as subject areas such as STEM, languages, and Vocational Education and Training (VET).

A more flexible approach is required to match supply and demand, speed up entry into the classroom, and improve the quality of school experience within ITE. Under the market driven approach, a school system would procure, for example, a two-year equivalent postgraduate ITE program that incorporates 1-1.5 years of professional studies in education. It could also include a 6-12 month paid internship/residency as a core element of the 2-year program. The model could also be applied in the final year of an undergraduate education qualification. The Standards and Procedures accommodate the implementation of flexible programs such as this procurement model. This model is operating now in some states (with others moving in this direction). In some cases, employers can work with ITE providers to offer places in specific schools and curricula areas thus increasing the probability they will remain in these schools, prepare them for teaching, while giving them maximum support in their courses and teaching.

The model incorporates paid internships/residencies into the program design. This encourages high-quality candidates to complete an ITE qualification reducing the financial disincentives of undertaking study, including a lack of income. At the same time, the model increases the time spent in the classroom prior to full-time employment. Structured time spent in the classroom supports the pre-service teachers' (PST) skill development in curriculum delivery and critical skills including classroom management and student engagement. Under this approach, employer demand for quality teachers in areas of shortage is used to drive supply in teaching priority areas. This can be applied in a range of schools including rural and remote schools.

As examples, the Australian Government (through the High Achieving Teachers program) and the Victorian Department of Education and Training (through the Employment-based pathways funding) have sought procurement from providers, and a further aim is to increase the partnership between schools and ITE in the preparation of classroom ready graduates. The current example of innovative postgraduate ITE programs in

Victoria require prospective entrants to train and work in a content area of workforce shortage to be eligible and will help inform future placement models.

Providers in other states and territories have also implemented 'fast-tracked' programs that include increased professional experience components. This indicates a recognition of the need for a change in the current structure of ITE programs to meet workforce demand and improve the preparedness of PSTs.

Other benefits of the models include merging the boundaries between ITE and induction. Teachers can develop their classroom management strategies and skills in a structured and supportive environment. Employers engaged in these programs can then have greater input into the development of the school-based component of the program and can select the appropriate more experienced teachers to support their PSTs. An ongoing relationship would also strengthen feedback loops, as the performance of graduates would inform the employer's input into the next iteration of the program.

Allowing schools to have more input into program development strengthens the relationship between providers and schools resulting in an improved workplace experience for PSTs. The classroom work placement is more integrated into the life of the school than the usual professional experience placements and provides a more practical and useful experience for the PSTs.

Integrating the ITE program into the workplace, with teachers working full-time in schools earlier, is a preferable option to reducing the length of the ITE program. Ministers' agreement in 2011 to phase out the one-year teaching qualification was not implemented carelessly. It was a response to the need to cover the full range of the Teacher Standards in a program, and to the example of high-performing systems internationally that require Masters degrees for entry to teaching.

The market-driven model outlined above provides a constructive way of covering the required content for a successful entry to the teaching profession by reducing the financial disincentives of completing qualifications in an institutional setting.

## 1.1 A national picture of teacher supply and demand

While some states and territories have developed local models of supply and demand, this is unlikely to be sufficient in an increasingly national labour market. A move to a market-based approach to ITE will require a more accurate understanding of supply and demand. As online programs become increasingly prevalent and sophisticated in their delivery, increasing numbers of students will choose to study in a jurisdiction that is different to the one in which they reside. The Pipeline Report noted that the numbers of ITE students studying through online courses are increasing. In 2016, 19% of enrolled students were undertaking part of their studies online and 25% of students were studying their ITE programs entirely online. The location of where students enrol in their ITE program adds complexity to the work undertaken by employers and ITE providers to prepare students to work in a specific jurisdiction. National consistency in the application of the Standards and Procedures is increasingly critical in preparing students to teach across all jurisdictions while appreciating that states have their local interpretations of the Australian curriculum and other specific requirements.

*Teaching Futures* outlines a proposal for a national labour market model, including a conceptual framework of national teacher supply and demand, which identifies the various elements and critical influences in the teacher labour market.

A national labour market model for the teacher workforce can identify the critical factors affecting supply and demand. Factors such as trends in ITE commencement and completion, career lifecycles and patterns of attrition, online enrolments, demand patterns for specialisations, demographic changes and workforce vacancies can be included in the labour market model.

Additionally, the model will enable more effective predictive modelling of the supply and demand for teachers nationally, locally and by specialisation. It will provide a national view of teacher supply and demand including, the supply of teachers from diverse backgrounds as well as within urban, regional, and remote locations. It will measure the impact of economic, social, demographic and policy changes on the teacher workforce. It could also



be used for scenario modelling to predict the likely effects of potential policy or economic changes on the teacher workforce.

The foundation for this labour market model is the ATWD initiative. The ATWD is designed to deliver accurate, useful, and longitudinal data on and insights into supply in ITE and the teacher workforce. This data supports predictive modelling of supply and workforce trends at national, jurisdictional and sector levels. Currently covering approximately 96% of Australia's teachers, the ATWD has access to a breadth of data that can and is being collected and analysed to provide insights that are critical to understanding current and historical trends in supply, and workforce participation. This allows future trends in teacher supply to be predicted through reporting mechanisms including the Pipeline report and the National Teacher Workforce Characteristics report, and access to supply trend data for all employer sectors.

Through these data collection and reporting mechanisms the ATWD can support ITE providers, employers and schools in understanding current and future workforce needs and to create programs and avenues for employment that meet these needs.

Understanding the mechanisms behind current and future supply and demand trends can support policy and also influence ITE design to match market needs.

The recent announcement of four years' further funding for the ATWD is highly welcome and would provide a strong foundation for developing the national labour market model proposed in *Teaching Futures*.

## 1.2 Providing ITE providers with information about areas of teacher supply

Data collection mechanisms such as the ATWD should also be accessed and utilised by ITE providers to support strategies to align supply with demand needs. In the first instance, providers can use this information to inform and amend course design and tailor handbooks, prospectuses, and other marketing material to guide future students to qualify in areas with high demand. Secondly, providers could prioritise student selection based on areas of demand. Thirdly, the procurement model noted above could be valuably informed by these mechanisms. Students who specialise in areas of high demand will have access to increased job opportunities once they have graduated. Closer ties with teacher employers will make these pathways more attractive to prospective students, by improving their job prospects on graduation.

By tailoring programs and engaging ITE students to study specialities in high demand, providers can establish themselves as market leaders and become specialists in areas of need.

### Recommendations:

1. Implement a market-driven model using close cooperation between teacher employers and ITE providers to provide high quality, fast-tracked preparation for teachers in identified priority and specialty demand areas
2. Develop and implement a national labour market model for use by TRA and employers, with the ATWD collection as the foundation of the model
3. Provide supply and demand information to ITE providers, to use in their course handbooks, marketing, procurement negotiations, and other mechanisms to encourage students to apply in priority areas
4. Encourage employers to implement flexible employment models that enable pre-service teachers to teach as they complete their ITE programs while maintaining the length of the ITE program

## Part B: Preparing ITE students to be effective teachers

### Key questions in the Discussion paper:

- Do the current professional experience arrangements support the preparation of ITE students for the classroom and school environment? How could these be improved?
- How can professional experience be delivered in a more efficient way for school systems and higher education providers?
- How could HALT support the development of ITE students and newly graduated teachers? What would this look like? What changes to current arrangements would be required to give effect to this?
- Should ITE providers continue to support the development of newly graduated teachers? What would this look like?
- How could teacher and school leader workloads be made more manageable to allow them to provide more support to preservice and newly graduate teachers?

## 2. Strengthening features of ITE preparation and implementation

### 2.1 Relationship between ITE providers and schools in the first two years of teaching

There is an opportunity to deepen relationships between ITE providers and schools by reconceptualising ITE and the first years of a teacher's career. The time from enrolment leading to Proficient Teacher would be reconceptualised as one stage in a teacher's development. This will require greater involvement by schools in ITE programs, and greater involvement by ITE providers in the induction phase. In implementing this model, new funding and accountability arrangements should be considered to better reflect the joint ownership of beginning teacher development.

The relationship between the school and the ITE provider can be strengthened through the involvement of ITE providers with their graduates over the first two years in the classroom. This would support a better understanding of the specific needs of early career teachers to be "classroom ready" in the first two years of practice. Importantly, it would involve the schools, employers and ITE providers in developing consensus on quality.

To be classroom ready, ITE graduates must demonstrate readiness to understand the context of their students and the broader community in which they teach. This readiness encompasses understanding the students, the community, the physical and political environment in which the school operates. While ITE providers cannot prepare a PST for all contexts, they can provide them with the ability to apply their skills flexibly to meet the context. The role of schools is to provide a contextual induction that is fit-for-purpose and focuses on the whole learning environment, not just the classroom.

These contextual inductions and partnerships between providers and schools in the first two years are particularly important in remote and very remote areas, where success and teaching longevity in a school comes from understanding the context in which you are teaching and working alongside the community.

### 2.2 Selecting teachers to support Professional Experience placements

Providers and schools continue to highlight the difficulties in providing consistent quality placements for all their PSTs across all programs.

Employers and providers express concern regarding the preparedness of some teachers to supervise PSTs. Supporting PSTs is regarded as a professional responsibility for many teachers. There are a variety of professional development programs for teachers within jurisdictions to support quality placements. AITSL offers an online program called [Supervising Pre-service Teachers](#). This program is offered nationally and has been registered as professional learning in two jurisdictions.

The Teacher Standards require Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers (HALTs) to manage and provide quality placements for PSTs. Teachers are required to meet and maintain these Standards as a condition of national certification requirements. There is no requirement however, described in the Proficient Teacher Standards to support PSTs. The overwhelming majority of the teaching workforce are registered at the Proficient Teacher level.

In the first instance, there is an opportunity to leverage the expertise of HALTs to oversee the delivery of professional learning for Proficient teachers in supervising and mentoring PSTs. Evidence of supervision of PSTs may be included in an application for HALT certification by Proficient teachers. This may form an incentive for Proficient Teachers to start their pathway to HALT certification.

It is not possible to have certified HALTs supervising all professional experience placements, and some employers have not adopted the HALT model. The HALT national network, however, is keen to be more involved in support for PSTs. With the support of employers, this network could be asked to prepare online courses, resource material, and evaluation models for supervision to augment the [Supervising Pre-service Teachers](#) on-line program, and develop supportive programs for these early career teachers.

Secondly, to assist teachers at the Proficient career stage to better support PSTs, consideration could be given to the development of a set of descriptors similar to the [National Standards for Mentors](#) developed in the UK. The Australian “supervising and mentor descriptors” could comprise discrete skills and knowledge and build on the Teacher Standards and link directly to Standard 6 of the Teacher Standards, “Engage in Professional Learning”. The aim of the descriptors would be to:

- build greater national coherence and consistency in the practice in the supervision of PSTs
- raise the profile of supervision and mentoring.
- build an evidence base of optimal supervision and mentoring.

In July 2016, all ministers endorsed the [Graduate to Proficient: Australian Guidelines for teacher induction into the profession](#) and the [My Induction App](#) to better support induction of graduate teachers into the workforce. Both resources support new graduates and supervising or mentor teachers in assuring induction is high-quality and that graduate teachers are sufficiently supported in their first two years.

### 2.3 High quality programs with scalable features

There remains a tension between the need for providers to find placements for significant numbers of ITE students versus the goal to have substantive partnerships with schools to provide high level engagements for PSTs. The features of these programs including high-quality mentoring and ongoing feedback to PSTs are challenging to deliver to all students enrolled in ITE programs.

With over 300 ITE programs across Australia, there are opportunities to use current supply data and trends to consolidate some ITE programs into single programs offering specialist expertise such as STEM specialisation. This will enable ITE providers to consolidate their resources to better address the supply needs of employers.

### 2.4 Ongoing evaluation of TEMAG reforms

The timeline to implement the TEMAG reforms has been largely dependent on the five-year accreditation cycle of ITE programs. As such some reforms are only now being incorporated into programs. For example, Stage 2 accreditation is only beginning to gather momentum in most jurisdictions. Stage 2 accreditation was included into

the Standards and Procedures in 2015. It is designed to increase data collection mechanisms for program improvement. Since implementation, it has been reported by TRAs that there has been inconsistency in the Stage 2 applications by providers. As a result, it is too early to assess fully the longitudinal impact of TEMAG. It is recommended that a longitudinal evaluation of the reforms is undertaken to consider the value of the reforms to graduate outcomes.

## 2.5 Core curriculum for ITE providers

An important question raised in the discussion paper is whether a more specific 'curriculum' for ITE is desirable. The current accreditation standards are based on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, at the Graduate career stage. ITE providers interpret and integrate the Standards into their programs which are subsequently reviewed and accredited through their TRA. The ITE accreditation standards also specify the amount of time to be spent on particular subject areas for different types of ITE programs, and in 2019 were made more specific about what should be included in primary teacher programs around reading instruction. There is a balance to be struck between being more specific about what graduate teachers should know and be able to do and preserving flexibility to respond to specific contexts and developments in the evidence base on what works best in schools.

Two options may be considered to balance the need for ITE provider autonomy with the need to ensure all preservice teachers cover critical content.

### Option 1 – Develop and promulgate elaborations to guide ITE providers

More guidance could be provided, beginning with high priority areas such as classroom management, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, reading instruction, and special education. This would provide support for ITE providers in designing their programs. These elaborations could also guide accreditation panels in assessing programs, even if not all elements of them were mandatory for inclusion in all programs. They could also inform future changes to the Teacher Standards.

### Option 2 – TRAs use evidence from Stage 2 submissions to mandate core components

TRAs could mandate core components in courses, based on content issues that emerge from a review of Stage 2 evidence. This will ensure graduates have sufficient proficiency and knowledge in core areas that were not evident in the Stage 2 submission. Evidence that candidates are "classroom ready" in these core areas could also be provided as part of the Stage 2 submission. For example, evidence could be provided through the completion of a TPA in a core area.

## Recommendations:

5. Develop a stream of "supervising and mentoring descriptors" that integrate with the Teacher Standards
6. Design the supervising and mentoring descriptors to develop the skills and knowledge of teachers to support pre-service teachers in all stages of their placements
7. Request the HALT network, with the support of their employers, to prepare on-line courses, resource material and evaluation models for supervision
8. Use the market-driven model to drive closer partnerships between ITE providers and schools, increasing the quality of professional experience placements
9. Consider options to mandate curriculum content in specified areas
10. Undertake a longitudinal evaluation of the ongoing effect of TEMAG reforms and subsequent ITE reforms

## Key questions in the Discussion paper:

- Are ITE programs preparing graduates for teaching diverse student cohorts, including through cultural competency and inclusive education?
- How could more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples be encouraged and supported to choose a career in teaching?

### 3. Cultural competency and inclusive education

#### 3.1 Preparation of graduates for teaching diverse student cohorts, including through cultural competency and inclusive education

AITSL is currently undertaking a four-year project to build or enhance the Indigenous cultural competency of the Australian teaching workforce. The proposals below draw heavily on consultations undertaken for this project, where stakeholders agreed that ITE has a critical role in building a culturally competent teacher workforce.

AITSL's consultations demonstrated that teachers need to be culturally competent to navigate a globalised world; this is not a skill reserved just for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, nor is it just for non-Indigenous teachers who work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Teachers and school leaders need to be more than just culturally aware and sensitive — they must also be able to bridge cultural differences in ever shifting demographics and build high quality relationships with the diversity of students in their class and school. In several tertiary institutions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies is not a mandatory area of study in ITE programs. In institutions that do offer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, analysis of feedback from many stakeholders at the recent National Dialogue confirmed they are of a view that these programs rarely adequately meet the students' needs. AITSL's stakeholders voiced serious concerns this undertaking was often not enough to prepare teachers to teach to and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and perspectives across all subject areas, in alignment with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) cross-curriculum priorities. There is a need for some critical work to be done in highlighting those institutions that are achieving success in students graduating with the necessary skills and knowledge as good practice.

A stronger focus on culturally responsive practice and leadership in any future iterations or elaborations of the Teacher Standards and the Australian Professional Standard for Principals (Principal Standard) would also guide the development of these competencies in preparing graduate teachers to teach diverse cohorts. Likewise, TPAs would be improved with explicit reference to the current or future strengthened Standards.

AITSL's research found a need for greater accountability for all teachers to practice in culturally responsive ways and create culturally safe environments for students, families, and communities (Charles Darwin University, cited in AITSL 2020). Strengthened requirements for ITE programs would be a mechanism to enable this accountability and set graduate teachers up for success from the start of their career.

Stakeholders expressed a strong view that mandating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content is fundamental to ensuring all PSTs develop an appropriate level of cultural competency (skills, knowledge and understanding) with which to start their teaching career and ongoing growth.

Rather than being offered as optional electives, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content could be embedded within the core units of ITE programs covering history, inclusive teaching, perspectives, pedagogy, teaching practice, social and cultural perspectives, policy and practice, community engagement and self-reflection and cultural diversity (AITSL, 2012). Critical to this would be the establishment of partnerships between ITE providers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to facilitate professional experience placements in diverse settings.

### **3.2 Encouraging and supporting more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to choose a career in teaching**

Ongoing research and consultation by AITSL indicate that increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers is a key factor in fostering student engagement, improving educational outcomes, and building the cultural competency of the profession (Buckskin 2019, pp. 277). Schools need to be a safe place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and a greater understanding of the historical experiences and how they impact on how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people engage with schools and education, and on career choices are considerable factors.

To encourage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to choose a career in teaching, there must be enhanced access, selection, attraction, and retention of Indigenous PST into education programs, and subsequently into the workforce.

AITSL's national consultations found that greater diversity in the teaching workforce would encourage and support more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to choose a career in teaching. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and school leaders are significantly underrepresented in schools, making up 2.02% of the Australian teaching workforce (ACDE, 2018). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators bring a cultural lens and significant social capital to education settings, which often includes teaching in local languages. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators work with teaching partners, such as classroom teachers, community members and school visitors, to provide culturally responsive educational experiences that enable students to engage with and access the curriculum, participate in learning and achieve positive learning outcomes (AITSL, 2021).

There is a strong view from stakeholders that over time, greater diversity would support an increasing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to experience schools as culturally safe workplaces and consider teaching as an attractive profession. As such, workforce development strategies that increase diversity through attraction and retention of Indigenous peoples will have a reinforcing impact on the selection of ITE programs and provide additional supply to support the effective delivery of relevant workforce strategies.

AITSL's research revealed a targeted approach is required to engage more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in ITE, including through recognition of non-traditional qualifications and experiences. ITE providers can build understanding of the relevance of their programs and subsequently increase the enrolment of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to their programs through the provision of relevant information, advice and career development support to Indigenous secondary school students. They can also support alternate pathways to entry, recognising a wider range of skills, experiences, and qualifications that young Indigenous peoples may bring and apply to ITE.

Note that Section 4 of this submission discusses the role of school leaders to support a more diverse school workforce including recruiting teachers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to better reflect the demographic mix of the student population.



## Recommendations

11. Programs and TPAs should be underpinned by a strengthened set of standards for teachers.
12. Strengthen the accreditation requirements for ITE programs to provide greater accountability for graduate teachers to practice in culturally responsive ways and create culturally safe environments for students, families, and communities in line with the Teacher Standards
13. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content to be embedded within all core subjects in all ITE programs
14. Actively recruit a more diverse schooling workforce to encourage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to select teaching as a career
15. Provide information on the relevance and quality of ITE programs to secondary school students and support alternative entry pathways to attract young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

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### Key questions in the Discussion paper:

- How could teacher and school leader workloads be made more manageable to allow them to provide more support to pre-service and newly graduated teachers?

## 4. The critical role of leadership in supporting pre-service and newly graduated teachers

The role of school leaders to support, develop and inspire the next generation of teachers is critical. While this has always been the role of school leaders, the environment in which school leaders operate has become increasingly complex. School leaders must balance increasing pressures and workloads with the need to support and encourage teachers who are at the start of their career. AITSL's report [\*Shifting the Balance: a review to reduce red tape for teachers and school leaders\*](#) (2020) noted that "school leaders and teachers are spending increasing amounts of time on administrative tasks" along with ongoing reporting requirements.

*Shifting the Balance* outlines priority actions designed to create positive student outcomes as well as supporting PSTs and new graduates. For workloads to be manageable and for supports to be effective, there needs to be a set of frameworks and supports available for teachers and leaders to prioritise teaching, administration and supporting beginning teachers.

Additionally, school leaders must create opportunities for experienced teachers to engage with PSTs and graduates. They should also encourage and attract a diverse workforce to meet the needs of their school community and provide an environment that nurtures diversity amongst PSTs, graduates and school students.

[\*Leading for Impact: Australian guidelines for school leadership development\*](#) (AITSL 2018) notes that effective leadership focuses on increasing the "quantity, quality and diversity of future leaders for all school leadership roles". This means attracting a diversity of staff to rural, remote and metropolitan areas as well as increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## Recommendations

16. Actively recruit a more diverse schooling workforce to encourage and support culturally and linguistically diverse people to select teaching as a career

### Key questions in the Discussion paper:

- What are the benefits and costs of the number of TPAs in operation?
- How could the TPA endorsement process be improved? Are the current arrangements leading to quality outcomes?

## 5. Supporting and strengthening the integral role of the TPA

The implementation of a rigorous teaching performance assessment (TPA) has become one of the hallmarks of quality for the teaching profession. This section explores the current authorising environment and the structural flaws that affect the success of the current and ongoing implementation of the TPA.

### 5.1 Issues with the operation of the Expert Advisory Group

The Expert Advisory Group (EAG) was established in 2017 with agreement from all jurisdictions. The EAG provides advice to TRAs on TPAs in relation to meeting all the requirements of Program Standard 1.2 of the Standards and Procedures.

The members of the EAG have expertise in assessment including expert knowledge in monitoring the reliability, validity, and fidelity of assessments; standard-setting; and ITE delivery and accreditation.

The EAG ensures that the TPA:

- is a reflection of classroom teaching practice including the elements of planning, teaching, assessing, and reflecting
- validly assesses the content of the Graduate Teacher Standards
- has clear, measurable, and justifiable achievement criteria that discriminate between meeting and not meeting the Graduate Teacher Standards
- is a reliable assessment in which there are appropriate processes in place for ensuring consistent scoring between assessors
- includes moderation processes that support consistent decision making against the achievement criteria.

The EAG and its associated functions provide a structure to assure the quality of TPAs. However, the assessment advice provided by the EAG does not constitute an accreditation decision or guarantee an accreditation outcome. The EAG does not have the legislative or policy authority required to mandate accreditation decisions. This authority is held in the legislative framework of each TRA. This can be problematic because the endorsement and monitoring of TPAs requires high-level technical assessment advice. In addition, there is no provision for ongoing monitoring of TPAs especially if the design of a TPA changes.

The [\*Teaching performance assessment services: Principles of Operation\*](#) (Operational Principles) allows the EAG to make a 'request for a tool to be resubmitted for an additional review within the accreditation cycle' and outlines cross-institutional moderation requirements. However, these are not mandated requirements for endorsement by the EAG.



## 5.2 Mandating the role of cross-institutional moderation

Program Standard 1.2 of the Standards and Procedures outlines that a robust process for ongoing moderation is a requirement for the endorsement of a TPA.

While the Standards and Procedures do not explicitly require cross-institutional moderation (CIM) the EAG has established a minimal set of CIM requirements for a TPA to meet the Program Standard, as outlined in the Operational Principles. For this set of requirements to be strengthened and mandated, there would need to be an amendment to Program Standard 1.2 in the Standards and Procedures.

In addition, national agreement has not been reached on the essential elements that comprise effective CIM. Consequently, this lack of shared understanding or mandate has resulted in the varied interpretation of moderation and a lack of authority by the EAG to refuse endorsement of a TPA based on the quality of cross-institutional requirements.

The EAG and AITSL have no mandate to monitor the ongoing implementation of TPAs (nor whether any changes are made to the TPA post-endorsement), and there is no requirement to reassess a TPA at any time in the future. As such, the EAG cannot confirm the ongoing fidelity of TPAs in areas such as CIM.

This highlights a gap in the authorising environment in relation to the role of the EAG and how their advice is used to support program accreditation. This gap also results in a disconnect between the TRAs and the EAG.

## 5.3 Placing conditions on the ongoing endorsement of a TPA

The current Standards and Procedures allow providers to develop individual TPAs as long as they can meet the requirements of Program Standard 1.2. This has led to a situation where there may ultimately be up to 13 TPAs in use across Australia. There are currently 10 endorsed TPAs covering 44 out of the 47 ITE providers. Of these providers, 39 are in a consortium, while six have a standalone TPA.

The variety of assessment instruments increases costs to the school sector. Schools may limit their relationships to specific ITE providers rather than grapple with multiple assessment instruments. It is important that all TPAs are held to the same standards of rigour, including CIM to ensure comparability of preservice teacher outcomes. A major advantage of cross-institutional moderation is the shared understanding across ITE of classroom-ready standards, and thus the profession has a major stake in upholding appropriately rigorous standards.

Concerns about the number of TPAs may be addressed by developing specific criteria and conditions for the continuing endorsement of a TPA. Implementing these criteria may lead to a rationalisation in the number and type of TPAs operating in Australia. Conditions may include setting a minimum number of providers to be involved in CIM.

### Example of effective CIM conditions

**Example one:** A large consortium with five or more providers using the same TPA undertake CIM activities

**Example two:** A small consortium with three members using the same TPA, plus two individually endorsed TPAs undertake CIM activities

**Example three:** Five individually endorsed TPAs work in partnership to undertake CIM activities across Australia

\*If 'example three' cannot be met, providers using those TPAs would need to join one of the consortia that are currently in place. For the smaller consortia with less than five providers using that TPA, if additional providers do not join their consortium and cannot meet 'example two', they would need to join existing larger consortia.

The retrospective implementation of conditions on a TPA may cause concern among providers who have an EAG endorsed TPA. Each TRA has various authority to mandate conditions on a TPA. As such, the Australian Government could explore funding levers to ensure ITE provider participation and compliance. Alternatively,

consideration could be given to providing financial incentives to encourage ITE providers to terminate their own TPA and join an existing consortium.

The development of a TPA is resource intensive and comes at a considerable cost to ITE providers. There is also a cost to the ongoing moderation and continuous improvement activities. To address these concerns, the federal government could provide financial incentives for providers for continuing to implement effective TPAs.

## 5.4 TPA comparability

There must be confidence that all TPAs assess ITE graduates at a comparable level. For TPAs to demonstrate comparability, there needs to be a shared understanding of effective CIM along with a benchmarking activity. The benchmarking activity will confirm that all TPAs assess PST competence against the Graduate Teacher Standards consistently.

AITSL has commissioned four papers from three TPA consortia and one solo TPA to identify the key components of TPA CIM activities. The research will be used to build capacity with providers involved in TPA development and implementation. The key components of benchmarking identified through the research will support implementing consistent and rigorous CIM processes across all TPAs. It may also inform the rationale for implementing conditions on the ongoing endorsement of a TPA.

Using outcomes from the commissioned papers, AITSL plans to lead a benchmarking activity in cooperation with TRAs to explore the comparability of TPAs.

Currently, the EAG has no authority to seek evidence from the various TPAs to evaluate the consistency of passing standards across the many TPAs.

Any changes to the functions of the EAG to evaluate the consistency of TPAs will not change its role in making recommendations about the quality of TPAs to ITE providers and the TRAs. The responsibility for accrediting a program will continue to reside with the TRA.

## Recommendations

17. Strengthen the role of the EAG to include ongoing monitoring to:
  - ensure all TPAs remain rigorous and valid
  - implement a robust system of CIM including benchmarking
  - set conditions on the continuing approval of TPAs
  - require TPAs that have undergone significant change to be re-endorsed
18. Introduce a risk-based approach to the endorsement period of a TPA, such that it does not exceed five years

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## 6. Establishing a system to enable risk-based assessment

Data on program quality and outcomes is not readily available as jurisdictions are at different phases for the Stage 2 accreditation process. This inconsistency and lack of available data reduces the capacity to use quality indicators and outputs to reduce regulatory burden and introduce a risk-based assessment.

Once success measures can be identified and demonstrated, there is scope for the accreditation process to take an outcome or risk-based assessment of ITE, allowing quality to be rewarded and regulatory burden to be minimised.

## 6.1 Constituting measures of quality for ITE programs

It may be possible to define a framework of measures of success for ITE programs. The measures could be constructed using a range of data sources including the ATWD and other data from ITE providers. The success measures would include ITE student data and graduate data such as:

- Preparedness of graduates for teaching
- Views of school leaders on preparedness of graduates
- Capacity of providers to match the supply of specific teachers to employment demand at learning level, subject level, and state/regional level
- Diversity of graduates to meet the needs of the school population
- Comparative analysis of the preparation of graduates in other professions
- Comparative analysis of completion and employment rates with similar professions and other providers
- Implementation of changes to the accreditation standards and procedures such as reading instruction
- Pass rates and strengths and weaknesses of students on an endorsed and benchmarked TPA.

The success profile would enable other policy levers to be applied. A profile of a successful program would enable the application of a risk-based accreditation process for identified programs as discussed previously. A draft proposal to establish these measures is at **Attachment B**. This proposal is at a conceptual stage and requires more consultation and modelling as well as clear guidelines about the application of the proposal.

## Recommendation

19. Develop a framework of measures of success for ITE programs to be used as the basis for a more risk-based approach to accreditation

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## 7. The current authorising environment

Responsibility for the accreditation of ITE programs is set out in the legislative framework of each TRA. The legislation describes the responsibility for accreditation of programs as well as mechanisms to appeal decisions not to accredit.

The goal of national consistency relies on each jurisdiction applying the Standards and Procedures with fidelity. The Standards and Procedures are operationalised through the application of the [Guidelines for the accreditation of ITE programs in Australia](#) (Accreditation Guidelines). These Guidelines were substantially revised in consultation with all TRAs in 2020.

The inputs supporting national consistency of ITE programs are well understood and implemented. The lack of structure however, to assess the quality of program outputs may leave programs vulnerable to criticism. It also results in an inflexible regulatory framework where excellence cannot be recognised and rewarded.

### 7.1 Options for strengthening the authorising environment

The issues associated with the implementation and ongoing fidelity of TPAs are a symptom of broader concerns about the national consistency of ITE programs.

The current authorising environment focusses primarily on program inputs. There are two nationally consistent output measures for ITE graduates: successful completion of the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Students (LANTITE) and successful completion of a TPA. As discussed previously, this paper proposes additional strategies to assure the ongoing fidelity of TPAs across Australia.

A series of output measures to build a profile of a successful ITE program has been proposed in section 6.1. The measures comprise data that is currently available or can be gathered by modifying survey tools that are currently available. The establishment of a profile of a successful ITE program provides a mechanism to evaluate and report on the quality of ITE programs. Critically, it provides opportunities to implement further strategies to support national consistency.

## **8. Establish body to support national ITE quality assurance**

### **8.1 Current variations in the accreditation system**

The Standards and Procedures aim to ensure a rigorous and nationally consistent accreditation process. Despite the implementation and revision of the Standards and Procedures as well as the Accreditation Guidelines, there is inconsistency in program accreditation across jurisdictions. This variation is attributed to a range of factors including:

- different authorising environments and operating under different legislative frameworks
- each TRA having different perspectives on their roles and obligations including jurisdictional requirements that are additional to the national accreditation standards.

Over six years from implementation of the 2015 Standards and Procedures, jurisdictions are at different points in implementing the reforms.

The revision or amendment of the Standards and Procedures cannot overcome the structural differences that result from eight different interpretations of the accreditation standards. In 2020, the concept of a national regulator was proposed to resolve ongoing issues in achieving national consistency. Although the concept of a national regulator was welcomed by many and was raised by TEMAG, it is a major change from current practice. Program accreditation is a function in the legislation of all TRAs. Some jurisdictions such as South Australia and Victoria have only recently amended their legislation to include this function. A more practical solution would be to strengthen quality assurance in the current federated system, with levers to achieve consistent application of the Standards and Procedures.

### **8.2 Proposal for a National Quality Assurance of ITE Oversight Body**

This paper proposes the establishment of a national body to oversee the quality of ITE programs. The national oversight body will develop and promulgate information about the quality and consistency of ITE programs.

It is recommended that the EAG is located in this body. The responsibilities of the EAG would be expanded to include placing conditions on the continuing endorsement of TPAs and making recommendations to ITE providers and TRAs about the quality of their programs.

It is proposed that the body is established as a joint initiative between state and territory governments and the Australian Government, and membership would be decided by Education Ministers based on a skills matrix and may include TRAs, teacher educators and principals.

#### **8.2.1 Supporting the oversight body**

It is not intended that the oversight body would establish an office to manage its functions. The Secretariat function would be managed by an existing body, such as AITSL or the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and it would report periodically to Education Ministers. As a comparative example, the ATWD Oversight Board is established by the Education Ministers Meeting (then Education Council) and chaired by an Australian Education Senior Officials Committee member, with AITSL serving as the Secretariat.

## 8.2.2 Purpose and functions of the oversight body

The purpose of the oversight body would be to evaluate the quality of all programs of ITE. It would not have any regulatory or legislative power but could make recommendations to TRAs and Education Ministers and publish information that supports quality assurance. The body would have the following functions:

### Quality Assurance

Supporting risk-based accreditation decision programs by assessing the outcomes of programs against a profile of characteristics of successful ITE programs and publishing the results.

Evaluating the implementation of entry requirements into ITE.

Undertaking an evaluation of reform activities to determine their effectiveness in strengthening ITE.

### Using data to inform quality outcomes

Using available data to assess program outcomes and building a profile of a successful ITE program.

Working with ATWD, and publishing reports on the supply and demand for teachers across Australia, based on the labour market model proposed earlier.

### Reporting

Working in collaboration with ATWD to publish reports on the quality of programs and disseminating them to TRAs and ITE providers. Developing specific reports on aspects of good practice as directed by Ministers such as the integration of reading instruction requirements.

### Strengthening the EAG

Establishing an ongoing role for the EAG to ensure that all TPAs remain rigorous and valid.

The strengthened EAG would be responsible for:

- monitoring each TPA to ensure all TPAs remain rigorous and valid
- implementing a robust system of CIM including benchmarking
- setting conditions on the continuing approval of TPAs
- evaluating the national consistency across TPAs.

### Assessing programs where requested

Accepting requests from jurisdictions to undertake program evaluation in specific instances and making recommendations to the relevant TRA. In small jurisdictions, TRAs may request the oversight body to manage the accreditation of a program owing to internal resource constraints or the desire to provide national insights into the application of the program standards. Larger TRAs may request support from the oversight body in periods of high demand during the accreditation cycles. The relationship between the body and the TRA would be managed via a memorandum of understanding. Under this arrangement, the TRA would retain responsibility for the accreditation decision.

### Reducing the regulatory burden for successful providers

It is noted that the cost and time of regulation burden for accreditation and reaccreditation remains high. One of the principles discussed in TEMAG was to find ways to reduce this burden. If the above proposals to strengthen the cross-institutional moderation of TPAs and evaluate the entry requirements are introduced it could be that the

oversight group (on the advice of the EAG) recommend to the TRAs that a provider's program be allowed a longer time before reaccreditation, and/or that specific requirements within the accreditation process be reduced. The TRAs then may decide to request a 1, 3 or 5 year time before aspects of reaccreditation are required.

## Recommendation

20. Establish a National Quality Assurance Oversight Body with a clear and fit for purpose authorising environment

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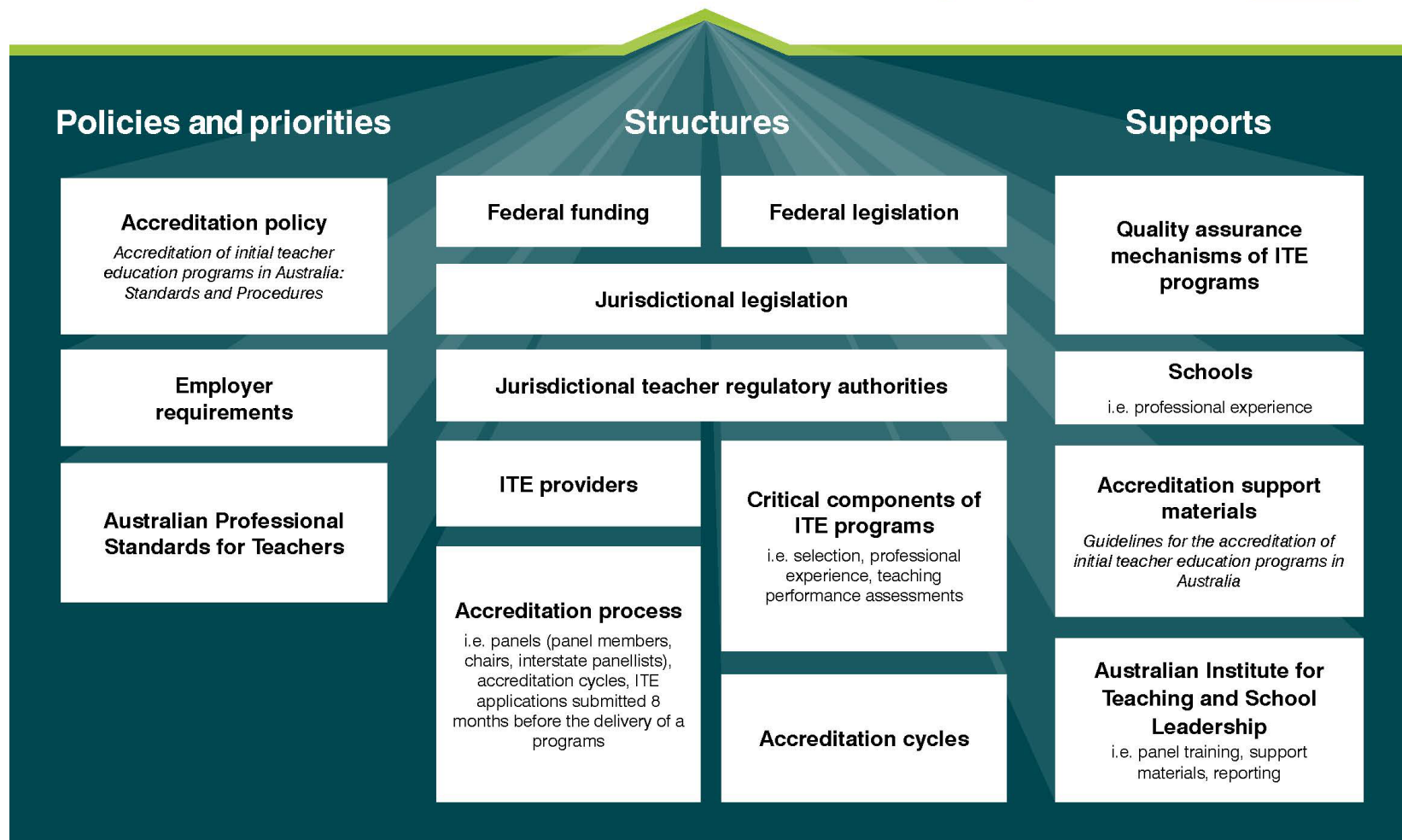
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## Attachment A: Diagram of supports, structures and levers which influence the quality of ITE programs

# Foundations of quality Initial Teacher Education (ITE)



## Attachment B: Measures of success for Initial Teacher Education

### Draft project proposal

1. Establish rationale for gathering the data
2. Define (with stakeholders) an overall framework of measures of success for “ITE” at a system level.
  - Preparedness of graduates to be classroom ready
  - Views of school leaders on preparedness of graduates
  - Capacity of providers to match the supply of specific teachers to employment demand at learning level, subject level, and state/regional level
  - Diversity of graduates to meet the needs of the school population
  - Comparative analysis of the preparation of graduates in other professions
  - Comparative analysis of completion and employment rates with similar professions
3. Create an overall profile of a successful ITE program
4. Data sources

Data	Source	Availability
<b>4.1 ITE Student data</b>		
Student perceptions of ITE Course for ITE students in varying program types (Teaching Quality, and Overall Quality)	Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT - survey) for ITE graduates linked to ITE (HEDSC) data in ATWD	Yes
Graduate Employment Outcomes (% of those working full time or part time in schools),	QILT survey data for ITE graduates linked to ITE (HEDSC) in ATWD	Yes
Basis of admission and percentage of those with ATAR > 70 (from those admitted with ATARs)	HEDSC – in ATWD	Yes
UG Completions after 6 years – completion numbers and rates	ATWD	Yes
Post graduate completions	ATWD	Yes
TPA completions by provider	Annual reporting	Yes
LANTITE pass/fail	TBC	TBC
Graduate program satisfaction	QILT survey data for ITE graduates linked to ITE (HEDSC) in ATWD	Yes
Percentage of graduates who graduate and gain provisional registration	ATWD – ITE data linked to registration data	Yes

<b>Data</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Availability</b>
Percentage of graduates who are registered or gain approval to teach before completion	ATWD - ITE data linked to registration data, e.g., conditional accreditation or permission to teach.	Yes
Percentage of graduates who become employed as teachers	ATWD – ITE data linked to registration data	Yes
<b>4.2 Post Graduation data</b>		
Percentage of provisional teachers who move to full registration within 2 years	ATWD	Yes
Employment outcomes and status of graduates in first 5 years of teaching	ATWD Survey linked to ITE data	Yes
Geographical spread of graduate employment	ATWD Survey linked to ITE data	Based on survey data
Subject and stage spread of graduate employment	ATWD Survey linked to ITE data	Available shortly
Percentage of graduates who remain registered teachers and in teaching for 5 or more years	ATWD survey	Yes
Induction experience for prov registered teachers – early career teachers in first five years	ATWD Survey	Yes
Employer satisfaction data	QILT survey data	May not be available just for ITE
School leader's views on prov registered teachers' preparedness for teaching	ATWD	No Additional question required in survey
Graduate quality and preparedness for teaching	ATWD	No
Teaching out of area	ATWD	No
Further education pathways for teachers plus rationale	Higher Education Student Data Collection ATWD	No

## Attachment C: Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation/Acronym	Title
<b>ACARA</b>	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
<b>ATWD</b>	Australian Teacher Workforce Data
<b>CIM</b>	Cross-institutional Moderation
<b>EAG</b>	Expert Advisory Group
<b>ITE</b>	Initial teacher education
<b>PST</b>	Pre-service Teacher
<b>TPA</b>	Teaching Performance Assessment