

Quality Initial Teacher Education



REVIEW

Submission from the
School of Education and the Arts
CQUniversity Australia
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The School agrees for our submission to be published on the Review webpage on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's website and acknowledge that it may be referenced in the Review final report.

Overview from the Dean

Professor Bill Blayney, Dean

CQUniversity has long been at the forefront of education offering a variety of different models to meet the needs of our diverse range of students. We provide an undergraduate pathway that involves a Bachelor of Education and a postgraduate pathway which is a Master of Teaching.

In the Bachelor of Education, we offer two unique pathways for trades persons in the areas of Home Economics and Industrial Technology Design. This involves offering advanced standing to students entering with a trade qualification that can be taught in secondary schools, providing them with advanced standing with up to one year credit into a four-year degree. We have an alternative course planner for these students whom fast track to complete full time in three years. The other key component of this pathway is a series of 6 specific discipline-based units of study that require intensive three-day residential schools.



The residential schools are compulsory and provide content and pedagogy which is unique in that it provides students with the skills and knowledge to begin teaching in schools early in their career. The residential schools are offered in the QLD school holidays to maximise attendance are available in regional and metropolitan QLD. These are two areas that have been identified as having enormous shortages in Queensland with the vast majority of students being placed on *permission to teach* through the QCT registering authority before they graduate. Graduates of this pathway are specialist in their discipline areas and can also teach up to Certificate II and III VET in schools. This type of graduate also provides students with a different and diverse role model that is desperately needed to provide the next generation of trades persons to meet the growing need throughout Australia.

Another unique pathway in our Bachelor of Education in the Primary and Early Childhood degree is the embedded *Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care* that all students are eligible for after the successful completion of their first year after completing a short placement in an early childhood setting. Those who enter already possessing this qualification into the course are granted advanced standing, shortening their degree to 3 years.

In a postgraduate pathway the Master of Teaching is unique in the fact that it is offered over three terms utilising CQUniversity's three term system. This means that the Master of Teaching is completed in 1.5 years not the normal two-year period due to the use of trimesters.

To provide students with an insight into whether teaching is the correct pathway for them, all our ITE courses offer a practicum in schools in the first year of their course. However, the first practicum in the Master Teaching is now redesigned to become a *Wider Field Experience*. This means that the experience is contextualised to orient students to the notion of leading learning and opens a range of opportunities for students to experience learning in multiple settings that were previously unavailable to them.

During COVID 19 in 2020 CQUniversity was partner with a number of other universities in Queensland and the Department of Education (Queensland) to deliver the *learning@home* pilot. This involved the Department of Education (Queensland) setting up a television station and our students writing the lessons, resources and scripts for teachers to deliver to students in the home that had to be remote-schooled by their parents/guardians due to school closures. This concept inspired us to review our final internship across all our degrees in ITE as the Graduate Teacher Performance Assessment (GTPA) is now located in professional practice four, meaning that students when they complete this are deemed workplace ready, making the internship redundant. As a result, we have embedded the concept of the *learning@home pilot* into a revised version of our internship, where students are provided with the skill sets to design for online learning should the pandemic continue for years to come or should schools close for any other reason. This equips our students with a skill set not provided in any other university.

Part A. Attracting high-quality candidates into ITE matters.

1. Attracting high-quality candidates into ITE matters

What can be done to attract more high-achievers and career changers to the profession?

- Our School is currently discussing further student scholarships for career changers into teaching through the Master's pathway.
- CQUniversity offer a trade entry pathway to encourage 'tradies' to transition into teaching, for example, in our Industrial Technology and Design discipline. Similarly, chefs and cooks also have a pathway to transition to Home Economics discipline. Within the trade entry pathway, we acknowledge students existing knowledge and skills and offer a 36-credit point reduction in their course.

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?

The move to a two-year masters has most certainly affected career change entrants into teaching. CQUniversity would like to encourage a shorter pathway of 12-18 months. We currently offer our two-year masters over an 18-month period due to our tri-semester model.

How could more high-quality candidates from diverse backgrounds be encouraged to consider a career in teaching?

The demographic attracted to CQUniversity ITE courses include a high proportion of low-SES and first in family. There are several challenges with retaining students from this demographic. However, CQUniversity has a number of support mechanisms in place to help guide progress. One example is their introduction to university preparation, which is highly scaffolded and ensures students are aware of support mechanisms available to them.

How could more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples be encouraged and supported to choose a career in teaching?

More scholarships that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would assist. Further, mentors in schools who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to provide additional support during professional experience, as well as during their coursework components.

What evidence is there that the introduction of assessments of non-academic characteristics has had an impact on admission, progress, completion, and retention of ITE students?

In Queensland, there is a two-stage administrative admission process that does deter some prospective student entry. That is, students must meet the academic entry requirements, however, do not follow through with the second non-academic component, i.e. (non-academic requirements for teacher entry, NARTE).

2. ITE program completions and entry into a teaching career

Are low completion rates an issue? What is the impact? Can low completion rates be addressed?

There has been a trend over the past six years of low completion rates. The impact across the profession is around supply and demand. CQUniversity have experienced a high proportion of 'Permission to Teach' applications through the Queensland College of Teachers. On one hand it is a positive for our students because they receive employment prior to completion. However, this has a potential downside because it means there are teachers who have not fully completed their degree. There is a growing trend of students being offered 'Permission to Teach' earlier in their course, e.g.: first year students. At CQUniversity, we provide students with a professional experience within the first year of their study to ensure they are aware of the contemporary role of a teacher and the nature of schools today. The impact is that at CQU, we tend to see a higher student attrition in first year. The positive impact of this strategy is that we have higher retention of those students that remain after first year.

Is the degree of variability in completion rates between providers ideal? What could be done to address this?

CQUniversity as a regional provider of ITE acknowledge that there are differences in completion rates compared to metropolitan based institutions. We also have a high proportion of students studying online, part time, which contributes to completion rates. Federal and State based scholarships that offer substantial financial support could see pre-service teachers, particularly those who study in a part-time load, progress through their program at a faster pace and graduate earlier.

What are the main reasons ITE students leave an ITE course before completion?

At CQUniversity, a high proportion of attrition occurs after the first professional experience in schools. This is a direct result of the realisation of a student that teaching is not suited to them.

3. Does the supply of teachers entering the workforce match areas of need?

Have you experienced teacher shortages? Has it been in a particular subject area or region?

CQUniversity has been aware of teacher shortages for the past number of years. This is evidenced through the increase in 'Permission to Teach', as well as direct enquiries from schools looking for graduates and non-graduates. This is spread across all subject areas in secondary and includes primary.

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?

Currently, CQUniversity is unable to supply enough teachers for the demands of schools. We have a near 100% employment rate, as evidenced through the GOS.

Are there examples of incentives that have successfully worked to attract quality teachers in areas of shortage? How could these be rolled out more broadly?

As noted previously, the trade entrance pathway is an incentive that attracts prospective teachers.

Why are STEM teachers not teaching STEM subjects? Is this an issue for other subject areas?

Teaching out-of-subject is not an uncommon practice. CQUniversity are aware of a number of students on 'Permission to Teach' who are employed to teach out-of-subject. Graduates report that they often receive employment in subjects they were not trained to teach into. This relates back to the supply and demand issues.

Part B. Preparing ITE students to be effective teachers.

4. Are graduate teachers ready for the classroom?

Are the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Teacher Standards) fit for purpose in identifying the key skills and knowledge pre-service teachers need to be ready for the classroom? Do the Teacher Standards adequately reflect the role of teachers in supporting pre-service and graduate teachers? See: <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/standards> for more information.

CQUniversity graduates are highly sought after and are prepared for the classroom. This is evidenced through our Graduate Destination Survey, where employers report high satisfaction rates for graduate teacher preparedness. While CQUniversity believe overall the current standards are fit for purpose, the Standards do not encompass some of the key skills a graduate should demonstrate and could be expanded. For example, although Standard 6 focuses on *Engage in professional learning*, the ability to critical reflect on your own practice is not identified as a key skill. Likewise in Standard 7, having effective communication skills in multiple modes is a missing aspect of what it means to be a graduate in the 21st century.

Are ITE programs preparing graduates for teaching diverse student cohorts, including through cultural competency and inclusive education?

CQUniversity ensures that our students are placed in schools where they experience a diversity of placements. Due to our regional context, many of our students experience low-SES schools where they teach diverse student cohorts. Further, we have been mindful of the need to indigenise our curriculum to ensure our graduates understand cultural competencies. This means there is continual curriculum renewal to ensure we meet this need.

What are the benefits and costs of the number of TPAs in operation?

CQUniversity are very satisfied with our participation in the GTPA collective. We were one of the first ITE providers to partner with this collective, we feel we are supported through the implementation process and the rigorous national cross-institutional moderation process that we undertake. The benefits that are offered through our membership in the Collective are numerous. The opportunities afforded to us to work with other HEIs in the delivery of the GTPA is a key benefit, as is the cross institutional research opportunities the collective has provided.

Do the current professional experience arrangements support the preparation of ITE students for the classroom and school environment? How could these be improved?

As noted previously, we provide students with a first-year professional experience that allows them to understand the contemporary nature of schools. CQUniversity prides themselves on the

extension preparation of ITE students for their professional experience's placements, particularly those students who are studying in the online mode. We have developed a supervision model where a physical visit is not able to occur to ensure every pre-service teacher receives support whilst on placement by the university, regardless of location.

At times, sourcing quality placements with classroom teachers who have the skills to mentor pre-service teachers is difficult. Although a classroom teacher may be effective in practice, knowing how to mentor, support and guide a pre-service teacher to develop their knowledge and skills is not an inherent skill. Some professional experience placements are not successful due to this. We would recommend that training is required for all classroom teachers who supervise/mentor pre-service teachers. This could be a national or a State/Territory approach.

How can professional experience be delivered in a more efficient way for school systems and higher education providers?

Consistency in approach by higher education institutions to decrease the burden on schools. For example, the professional experience booklets provided by HEI's, that describe the expectations for both student, school and mentor teacher, are all very different. This is a concern with the growing number of online providers along with a consistent approach to reporting forms, particularly for universities that deliver across Australia.

Do the current course accreditation arrangements support ITE students being taught evidence-based high-impact teaching strategies? How could this be improved?

The current course accreditation arrangements ensure students are being taught evidence-based high-impact teaching strategies through rigorous auditing at the re-accreditation process (Stage 2).

5. The role of teachers and school leaders in supporting the next generation of teachers

How can ITE providers best support teachers in their ongoing professional learning?

CQUniversity offer a range of professional development opportunities to support the professional learning of current practising teachers. For example, in Home Economics, we offer face-to-face workshops designed to both upskill current teachers in the subject area as well as to support those who may wish to transition to a new teaching area. These are at a small cost. We also have a number of graduate certificates programs and short courses that are topical e.g. Neuroscience in education

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?

The approach taken by CQUniversity does not rely primarily on HALT supervisors during professional experience. Rather, the in-school mentor teacher takes a lead role in the supervision of ITE students. The university relies on the school coordinator to determine which teachers are the best fit in which to supervise our ITE students. However, in regional locations, teachers who have achieved HALT status are often outnumbered by pre-service teachers and graduates.

Other comments:

- Mentor teacher payments. Currently CQUniversity spend \$1.5million annually on these payments. We would like to explore other approaches to lessen this financial burden.
- A reduction in HECS may increase the attractiveness of prospective students into ITE.
- A different model of teacher preparation, for example, a paid internship model. Studying for 4 years without a full income is a deterrent to many mature age entrants. There are several possibilities here that need to be explored.
- There is a change fatigue culture emerging in ITE due to the number of changes, initiatives, accreditation requirements, government policy updates etc.
- Increasing the number of high-achieving entrants, is no guarantee of increasing quality graduates for the ITE profession. Our philosophy at CQUniversity is around inclusion and diversity, and the preparedness of graduates for a range of contexts. Our focus is on developing students who have 21st Century contemporary competencies.
- A national consistent approach to pre-service teacher selection would be a positive outcome (TCAT).
- At CQUniversity, we have an embedded approach to the support of LANTITE, which includes support from first year, of a structured tutorial program comprised of content and psychological tutoring (test anxiety and preparation strategies), with a particular focus on those needing to prepare for LANTITE completed via remote proctoring. The focus of our approach is to embed LANTITE preparation to ensure students achieve success. This approach has proven to be successful based on our 96% first attempt pass rate for literacy and 95% first attempt pass rate for numeracy in 2020.