

Edith Cowan University welcomes the opportunity to respond to the ITE Review Discussion Paper.

Preamble

ECU is a significant provider of teacher education programs and is committed to continuing to improve the quality of teachers and teaching in schools. An important component of working towards this is to enhance the program structure and content of Initial Teacher Education programs offered.

Whilst the Australian Government has a significant role in defining the quality of education, and may initiate reviews into Initial Teacher Education, all programs are fundamentally operationalised and accredited within the jurisdictional requirements of where the higher education provider is registered. Achieving consistency across Australia is therefore a challenge.

The timeliness of the adoption of previous recommendations has been, and continues to be, variable and the harmonisation of all jurisdictional authorities continues to be problematic. By way of example, within state jurisdictions there are still Initial Teacher Education providers who do not have a Teacher Performance Assessment tool nor utilise one that is approved or endorsed by the Expert Advisory Group of AITSL.

It is also acknowledged that there is no overarching professional body representing the profession of teaching. Even the Australian Professional Teachers Association (APTA) apta.edu.au which claims to be a federation of state and territory joint councils of professional teacher associations does not have representation from Western Australia.

Additionally there are the state and territory regulators that form the association of Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA) where each jurisdiction has representation. It does not operate to provide a unified position regarding Initial Teacher Education, nor explicit positions regarding teaching.

One unified approach was the Education Council, which brought together States and Territories Ministers of Education and the Federal Minister of Education to discuss issues of national relevance. It would seem logical that Initial Teacher Education would be a regular matter for discussion at the Education Council. However, in reviewing Communiqués from the Education Council website covering 2015 to 2020, when it was accessible, there has been very little reference to Initial Teacher Education. The Communiqué in September 2018 did specify the following:

“Ministers endorsed the revised national Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and procedures prepared by AITSL. The Standards were amended by AITSL in recognition of the ongoing national effort required to ensure that all initial teacher education graduates are ready to succeed in the classroom and have a positive impact on student outcomes. AITSL will work with jurisdictions, schooling sectors and teacher regulatory authorities to design and operationalise the changes to the Standards, and to update support and training materials to reflect the new processes. AITSL will report back to Education Council on progress and outcomes of the changes by June 2019”.

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the new processes. AITSL will report back to Education Council on progress and outcomes of the changes by June 2019”.

The only other Initial Teacher Education reference in Education Council communiques related to the meeting of 12/12/2019

Education Council endorsed a number of amendments to the current Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures, including explicit reference to reading instruction, including phonics and an increase in the time component allocated to English and literacy within primary initial teacher education programs. AITSL will develop guidance materials to support high quality teaching of reading instruction in initial teacher education by mid-2020”

Other groups, such as the Australian Council of Deans of Education have tended to be led by those wishing to engage with and follow the direction and suggestions of the Federal Minister of Education, AITSL, and the Federal Education Department, rather than lead teacher education.

The following responds to each item and provides recommendations to the Initial Teacher Education review panel.

Attracting high-quality candidates into ITE matters

1. Attracting high-quality candidates into ITE matters

Any selection of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students should be considered against the availability of Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs). The 2021 commencement of the Job Ready Graduate (JRG) package and the impact of the earlier introduction of the Master of Teaching, have created challenges for universities regarding the allocation and availability of CSPs for ITE.

Given the constraints of the ‘JRG funding envelope’ and available Maximum Basic Grant Amount, the funding of CSPs can only “stretch” to cover a finite number of students. In the case of ECU, the significant under funding of CSPs is requiring ECU to no longer offer the Master of Teaching as a CSP to commencing students in 2022. Consequently, a new student intending to retrain, complete a Master of Teaching to enter teaching as a career will be required to pay approximately **\$34,400** as opposed to **\$7,900** (2021 \$, assuming full CSP funding). While a FEE-HELP loan is accessible, this level of fees can only be considered a major disincentive. The alternative would be for the student to enrol into a CSP Bachelors over **3 years**, which is also a disincentive. This issue is due to the actions of the Commonwealth not considering the funding requirements needed at the time of transitioning from the ITE required Graduate Diplomas to the current Master of Teaching. ECU and other universities requested increases to the MBGAs to support the new Master of Teaching at the time of introduction however this was not supported by Government.

While it is relatively early, scenarios are also emerging where the MBGA is inadequate to support the CSP demand for undergraduate coursework courses. With the Maximum Student Contribution Amount (MSCA) for students undertaking ITE of \$3,950 (2021\$) being below cost, there is little incentive for universities to enrol students in ITE when other disciplines have significantly higher MSCAs.

Consistent with the intent of the review recognising the critical importance of ITE to Australia, ECU recommends

Recommendation 1: ITE be included as a Designated Higher Education Course under the meaning HESA 30-12 and be specifically funded with its own MBGA in 2022 and beyond via funding agreements with universities.

This would give certainty and control in the ongoing allocation of ITE CSPs for both undergraduate and postgraduate ITE courses. As part of this implementation, it is critical for the Government to establish the requirements of each university as opposed to an overall allocation.

2. How can we further encourage high performing and highly motivated school leavers to enter ITE and choose teaching as a career?

Encouraging high performing and highly motivated school leavers to enter ITE and choose teaching as a career requires a combined Australian Government and state/territory jurisdiction approach. Ongoing factors such as consistent negative reporting regarding the minority of students not meeting arbitrarily set benchmarks for personal numeracy and personal literacy and the requirement the benchmark to be met as an eligibility requirement of graduation as an additional program/course requirement are disincentives.

Additionally, requiring all students to undertake and pass an approved or endorsed Teacher Performance Assessment in addition to the multiple professional experience assessments undertaken throughout the duration of an ITE course is another disincentive.

Over a number of years there have been nationally identified areas of concern including early childhood trained language teachers, special education teachers and trained teachers to work in rural and remote locations. However, there are no specific Federally funded incentives provided to higher education providers to support the provisions of specialisations within approved ITE courses.

Within each jurisdiction there may be specific initiatives deployed by state and territory education departments. An example from the Queensland State Education Department includes the following

- Beyond the Range—Professional Experience Grants
- Rural and Remote Graduate Teaching Scholarships
- Aspiring Teacher Grants
- Remote Area Incentive Scheme
- TJ Ryan Memorial Medal and Scholarships
- Pearl Duncan Teaching Scholarships

After the conclusion of initial teacher education training the Victorian Department of Education and Training provides incentives of between \$9,000 and \$50,000 that are available for early childhood teachers to take up positions in regional areas.

Incentives are neither consistent nor universal and as such are reliant upon individual higher education providers to fund opportunities for ITE students.

Recommendation 2: Provide Federally funded ITE scholarships in identified areas of national need.

Provide targeted scholarships for school leavers to undertake an Initial Teacher Education course in undergraduate and postgraduate courses in identified areas of need including early childhood

educators, trained language teachers, special education teachers, rural and remote locations and secondary workforce specialist subject areas.

Other disciplines, specifically health and health related disciplines have managed to attract a growing number of applicants including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

3. What changes to admissions and degree requirements, including recognition of prior experience, would better attract and support suitable mid- and late-career professionals from other fields transition into the profession and become quality teachers?

Recommendation 3: *All applicants will need to have completed a minimum of three Band 5 and/or E3 HSC results, including English, Mathematics and Science (Primary and Early Childhood Studies or the equivalent as confirmed by standardised test for mid-career professionals or mature aged entrants.*

In relation to admissions requirements, a consistent national approach would ensure that every state regulatory authority requires school leavers to have undertaken at least 4 semesters of study in Year 11 and Year 12 of English, mathematics and science subjects or the equivalent.

Whilst some jurisdictions did not require the equivalent of Year 11 and Year 12 science for all Initial Teacher Education degrees, teacher registration is not specific to Early childhood, Primary or Secondary, but rather being a registered teacher.

The New South Wales Education Standards Authority specifies the following

To undertake an undergraduate teaching degree requires a minimum standard of three Band 5 HSC results, including one in English, or an approved comparable measure. If you do not have at least three Band 5 HSC results, including one in English, you need to either:

- pass bridging units benchmarked to a Band 5 HSC result, or
- enrol in an accredited double degree and pass a full year of academic studies in the subjects you will teach before studying teaching, or
- complete a NESA approved alternative entry pathway as advised by your prospective university.

In addition, by 2022 to undertake an undergraduate primary teaching degree, you will need to:

- have at least a Band 4 HSC result in Mathematics, or
- meet an approved comparable measure

<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/teacher-accreditation/teaching-qualifications/studying-teaching>

The Queensland College of Teachers specify the following academic eligibility requirements (school leavers) from 2020.

These entry requirements apply to initial teacher education applicants completing Year 12 studies from 2020.

Students intending to enter an undergraduate teacher education program are required to:

Achieve a grade of C or higher in a QCAA General Subject in each category		
<p>English *for early childhood, primary and secondary programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • English as an Additional Language (EAL) • Literature • English & Literature Extension 	<p>Maths *for early childhood, primary and secondary programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Mathematics • Mathematical Methods • Specialist Mathematics 	<p>Science *for early childhood and primary programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Science • Biology • Chemistry • Earth & Environmental Science • Marine Science • Physics • Psychology

<https://www.qct.edu.au/teaching-in-queensland/teacher-education-programs>

Recommendation 4: Working within Education Council, commit to a consistent approach to admissions requirements including all higher education providers having recognised non-academic requirements assessment approved by the regulatory authority in each jurisdiction.

The requirement for each higher education provider to utilise a recognised non-academic assessment instrument to provide a consistent approach to assessing non-academic requirements should be continued.

4. How can we increase ITE completion rates so that quality ITE students graduate and pursue careers as quality teachers?

Completion rates of Initial Teacher Education students are driven by many factors. Reducing the length of ITE courses or adopting the flawed English approach of “apprenticeship models” will be a contributing factor to reduced quality of teachers teaching in schools. Typically, balancing family, work, financial and study commitments can impact attrition. Whilst younger ITE students may not have family commitments they certainly balance work, financial and study commitments.

A detailed analysis of the attrition of students is being conducted at ECU and although in its preliminary stages, highlights that there are a multitude of factors that contribute to the attrition of students in ITE courses. These include personal health and location reasons, family circumstances including being a single parent, employment.

Providing scholarships to students to undertake study with specified requirements would ease the burden of work and study.

Funding ITE students to undertake Service Learning opportunities in schools in addition to Professional Experience would assist in ensuring paid work that is related to the study being undertaken.

Recommendation 5: Provide a range of incentives for ITE students that could include

- ***biannual scholarships that are based on academic and professional experience performance for students undertaking Initial Teacher Education courses.***
- ***Rural and remote professional experience scholarships for university faculties, Schools of Education that are similar to those provided in Rural Clinical Training***

5. What more can be done to address issues with workforce supply in some subject areas (particularly mathematics) and schools?

There needs to be reliable data collection undertaken that is at a minimum, 4 years out from the date collected. For example, data collected in 2021 needs to have a degree of reliability out to 2026. State Education Systems (State Education and Catholic Education) as well as Sector providers, (Independent schools, other religious schools) need to examine in-field out of field secondary teachers, teachers intending to retire, retirements of teachers, growth areas requiring teachers.

As a collective the schooling sector bodies need to work with higher education providers to ensure ITE enrolments are in subject areas of demand and locality.

Providing incentives to students to undertake an ITE course in areas of need and provide incentives to higher education providers to offer quality specialisations in subject discipline areas of need would assist.

Additionally providing funding to retrain current registered teachers to undertake postgraduate courses in curriculum, pedagogy and content areas of need would assist in any subject area shortfall of qualified teachers.

Recommendation 6: Provide incentives for Higher Education Providers to work with peak employer groups to ensure robust workforce data is obtained and to facilitate more reliable modelling of workforce requirements beyond a 4 year timeframe.

Recommendation 7: Provide incentives for students to undertake an ITE course in a projected area of need and provide incentives to higher education providers to offer quality specialisations in subject discipline areas of need.

Recommendation 8: Ensure accreditation of ITE programs/course have considered workforce demands in program accreditation as per Program Standard 2.2 a).

Recommendation 9: Provide funding for higher education providers and to potential students to offer post-graduate courses for teachers to gain expertise on subject areas of need.

6. How can we attract a more diverse cohort into ITE so that teachers better mirror the diversity in school students and society?

Diversity of student cohorts are influenced by many factors not the least being the status of teaching and how various elements of the Australian Government, supported by the media, may choose to present teachers and teaching in a manner that undermines public confidence in teaching and or teachers.

It has been a common practice to openly criticise the quality of Initial Teacher Education, usually based on subjective commentary and at time citing personal literacy and or numeracy performance of Pre-Service Teachers. Additionally, there have been repeated claims by experts supporting various Australian Government views about the importance of ATAR scores in relation to selection, performance and outcomes of Initial Teacher Education students. The research does not support these claims.

The work of Heffernan, Longmuir, Bright and Kim (2019) highlighted key factors in regard to teachers' perception of teaching in Australia. More than one-third of teachers were dissatisfied with their job. One major source of that dissatisfaction was that they felt under-appreciated and disrespected in community, public and media as well as by the Government.

Heffernan et al (2019) specifically state "individuals who choose teaching see the profession as socially worthwhile and important through being able to make a difference to the lives of children and young people (Fray & Gore, 2018; Heinz, 2015). Watt, Richardson and Smith (2017) support the notion that teachers often go into the profession to follow a calling, but they find that the status and pay do not reflect the demands of the work. (p18)".

Mokloa, N (2018) Discourses of teacher quality in the Australian print media 2014–2017: a corpus-assisted analysis. [Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education](#), Volume 41, 2020 - [Issue 6](#)

Shine, K. (2017). Everything is negative': Schoolteachers' perceptions of news coverage of education. *Journalism* <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917743827>

Shine, K., & O'Donoghue, T. (2013). Teacher representation in news reporting on standardised testing: A case study from Western Australia

Heffernan, A., Longmuir, F., Bright, D., & Kim, M. (2019). Perceptions of teachers and teaching in Australia. Monash University

Fray, L., & Gore, J. (2018). Why people choose teaching: A scoping review of empirical studies, 2007–2016. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 75, 153-163. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2018.06.009

Heinz, M. (2015). Why choose teaching? An international review of empirical studies exploring student teachers' career motivations and levels of commitment to teaching. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 21(3), pp. 258-297. doi:10.1080/13803611.2015.1018278

Watt, H., Richardson, P & Smith, K (2017) Why teach? In H. Watt, P. Richardson, & K. Smith (Eds.), *Global Perspectives of teacher Motivation: Current Perspectives in Social and Behavioural Sciences* (pp Xv-Xvi). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Doi:10.1017/9781316225202.001.

Recommendation 10: Develop discrete funding to states and territories specifically targeting school education that enhances teachers' well-being, positive perceptions regarding the value of teaching and teachers, workload and remuneration.

PART B – Preparing ITE students to be effective teachers

7. What more can we do to ensure that ITE curriculum is evidence based and all future teachers are equipped to implement evidence-based teaching practices?

All ITE curriculum is approved by the local jurisdiction where the university is registered. Concerns that an ITE curriculum is sufficiently evidenced based would be tested as part of the accreditation of the course.

What is evident is the role that individual groups may have in influencing a Federal Minister of Education that certain pedagogical practices are evidenced based and by direct link, due to ownership, that Federal Minister influencing AITSL to consider that some approaches have more impact on students than others.

The counter intuitive approach whereby a specific pedagogical practice, or indeed content, can deliver better outcomes for school children negates the fact that the school environment is composed of a diverse student population. It is important to differentiate the curriculum to suit a heterogenous group of students that have diverse abilities and experiences.

The AITSL Program Standard 4.4 clearly states the requirements of programs and Standard 6 currently details the program evaluation, reporting and improvement and the Graduate Teacher Standards specifically state in Standards 1,2 and 3 the Graduate Teacher Standards.

Recommendation 11: Continue to work the jurisdictional regulators to ensure greater national harmonisation of ITE requirements in curriculum.

Recommendation 12: Ensure all 37 elements of Graduate Teacher Standards are reflected and evidenced in accredited Initial Teacher Education courses

8. What more can ITE providers and employers do to ensure ITE students are getting the practical experience they need before they start their teaching careers?

Professional experience is a critical component of all Initial Teacher Education programs/course. Higher education providers ensure the minimum requirements for professional experience are incorporated into each accredited program/course. Many Initial Teacher Education providers exceed the minimum number of days for professional experience for accredited courses.

The scope and scale of programs and courses offered impacts on the availability of placements. There is no requirement for schools to take Pre-Service Teachers. There is however a requirement for all Initial Teacher Education courses to have professional experience agreements in place. This does occur with a Head of Agreement typically in place within jurisdictions.

It is only local jurisdictions that set up these Head of Agreement and individual agreements need to be put in place with every school.

More can be done within local jurisdictions including incorporating the requirement for all schools to be required to provide placements, mentoring and supervision of Initial Teacher

Education students as part of agreements/partnerships. This rests with the state and or territory Minister of Education to enshrine this rather than the current arrangements that have been in place for decades where schools may or may not decide to accept an ITE student for a placement.

The Australian Government has failed to provide financial support to Initial Teacher Education providers to undertake meaningful and enduring placements in rural and remote locations. Unlike medical programs and allied health programs there is no financial support provided to Initial Teacher Education providers to establish enduring placements in rural and remote locations whereby students can be supported for accommodation, travel to and from these locations and allowances for daily living.

Recommendation 13: The Federal Government set up a scheme similar to the rural clinical placement scheme to enable ITE providers to encourage and support rural and remote placements for ITE students.

9. How can Teaching Performance Assessment arrangements be strengthened to ensure graduate teachers are well-prepared for the classroom?

The current QTPA, as operationalised at Edith Cowan University and in the partner universities, is a reliable and valid assessment tool. All the assessment panels include a current or a recently retired principal or deputy who has been responsible for the assessment of graduate teachers to move from provisional to full registration and graduate to proficient level.

There is a financial burden on Edith Cowan University to implement any TPA and specifically the QTPA of which there is no fee paid to member universities.

There is no additional Federal funding provided for the following which incur a cost which has been calculated in real dollar terms:

- a) the training of academic staff to understand why a TPA is required
- b) the training of academic staff to use the QTPA
- c) the refresher training of academic staff to implement the QTPA
- d) the moderation process of the QTPA
- e) the recruitment of current or a recently retired principals or deputy principals to ensure they are suitable panel members
- f) the training of current or a recently retired principals or deputy principals of the QTPA process
- g) the financial cost of payment principals and or deputy principals to sit on panels
- h) the administration and financial burden to operationalise a TPA twice a year
- i) the documentation required in recording the assessments
- j) modifications of facilities to provide discrete TPA assessment rooms that enable students to undertake a TPA assessment.

- ***Recommendation 14: The Federal Government provide discrete additional funding to higher education providers with an approved or endorsed TPA to ensure consistent minimum standards in training of assessors, quality assurance of the assessment tool and modifications to facilities to enable TPAs to be undertaken in face to face or virtual mode.***

10. How can leading teachers, principals and schools play a greater role in supporting the development of ITE students?

Principals, deputies and lead teachers currently do play an active role in the support of ITE students.

There is evidence of the roles that principals and deputies have within higher education as being members of consultative committees or advisory boards of Education faculties.

Additionally, principals, active and recently retired as well as deputies are trained and are members of QTPA assessment panels.

Primary Principal Associations and Secondary Principal Associations have representation on or chair various consultative committees within Education faculties of higher education providers.

It is not unusual for principals and or deputies to be employed within higher education, Education Faculties or Schools of Education as casual staff providing lectures, tutorials and or workshops to ITE students in early childhood, primary and secondary courses.

- ***Recommendation 15: The Federal Government provide discrete additional funding to higher education providers to support the sessional employment and training of principals, deputy principals and lead teacher sin Initial Teacher Education courses.***

11. Can ITE providers play a stronger role in ongoing professional development and support of teachers?

Mentoring qualifications for principals, deputies and supervising mentors should be considered and that these qualifications count towards teachers being recognised as Lead teachers or Highly Accomplished Teachers.

ITE providers can work with regulators, or where not possible, peak employers within jurisdictions to fund higher education providers to provide Professional Development for teachers to become accredited Pre-Service Teacher mentors/supervisors.

Recommendation 16: Provide funding for registered teachers within schools to undertake accredited courses offered by higher education providers to become accredited Pre-Service Teacher mentors.



Professor Stephen Winn
Executive Dean, School of Education, Edith Cowan University