FACULTY OF EDUCATION, MONASH UNIVERSITY RESPONSE TO THE QUALITY ITE REVIEW DISCUSSION PAPER

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Context: Faculty of Education, Monash and Initial Teacher Education

The Faculty of Education at Monash has a rich and long history of providing high quality and innovative initial teacher education. **The faculty currently offers two ITE programs a Bachelor of Education (BEd) and a Masters of Teaching (MTeach)**. Within the four-year BEd students can select one of the following specialisations: Early Childhood and Primary Education, Primary Education, Primary and Secondary Education, Secondary Education, and Health and Physical Education. Within the two-year MTeach, specialisations are available in Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood and Primary Education, Primary Education, Primary and Secondary Education and Secondary Education. **The secondary specialisation is additionally offered as an 18-month accelerated program.** Drawing on student data for the previous 5 years **the Faculty graduates an average of 515 MTeach students and 458 BEd students per year**. The Faculty (drawing on data from 2015-2019) has a **postgraduate completion rate of between 82-87% and 72-75% at undergraduate level.** On **average 70% of our MTeach graduates are employed full-time post-completion with 90% overall employment**. **84% of BEd graduates are employed full-time post-completion with 96% overall employment**. In 2022, in partnership with the Victorian government, the Faculty will be offering an **innovative Master of Teaching on an accelerated, residency model targeted specifically at career-changers** and with paid employment in residents' schools.

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

Essential to attracting both groups is increasing the appeal and profile of the profession; this requires higher salaries to be commensurate with other high achieving careers, introducing a tiered performance-based pay scale and more diverse and supported leadership pathways. It also requires greater recognition and acknowledgement of the intricate and important work teachers undertake to raise the status of the profession. It is necessary to highlight the complexities of the job to shift the perception that it is an 'easy' career choice or a secondary and back up option to other perceived high achieving careers such as medicine and law. **Recent research suggests that the ways in which teachers are positioned in the media and current policy initiatives to improve the quality of teaching, makes high quality teacher candidates feel devalued (Barnes, 2021).** The COVID-19 pandemic facilitated greater awareness of the critical importance of teachers and offers a timely opportunity to raise the profile and status of the profession.

A number of factors could attract more high achievers to the profession. **At undergraduate level, high achieving students need to be targeted earlier in years 9 and 10 to encourage consideration of teaching as a career from an early stage.** It is important to engage current teachers and career counsellors in championing for their own profession and changing the perception that it is not an appropriate career choice for high achieving students. **Scholarships or bursaries would provide further incentive for high achievers**. Rather than offering bursaries on the model used in England, however, **bursaries or scholarships should be offered on the model of the US teacher residency programs where federally funded scholarships or stipends require minimum lengths of post-qualification service in hard-to-staff schools** to avoid repayment of those scholarships or stipends (bonding). As such, programs that match high achieving students to schools and provide clear pathways into teaching and secure employment

would further assist in attracting students. Additional non-academic requirements can be barriers for both international and domestic high achieving students.

Career changers generally are seeking accelerated, cost effective opportunities to become qualified. **Salary level and prospects of a permanent teaching position post-graduation are important factors for career changers**. ITE **programs do need to be offered flexibly so pre-service teachers can continue to work while they study**. Scholarships, bursaries and payment of tuition fees would be valuable incentives for career changers as would be greater recognition and consideration of prior learning, for example teaching experience in other contexts. Similar to high achieving students, programs that can match career changers with schools that provide pre-service teachers with strong connections that pathway into employment opportunities would be valuable. This requires strong partnerships between schools, ITE providers, accreditation bodies and State Government. The opportunity for leadership roles and clear progression and pathway to leadership positions is important for career changers.

Retaining high-achievers and career changers within the teaching profession is an important issue for consideration. Heffernan et al.'s (2019) nationwide study suggests that 42% of current teachers are considering leaving the profession. Attention needs to be focused not only on attracting high quality individuals to the profession but also on how to change teaching conditions to retain them. **In our view, the challenge for the Commonwealth as well as the states is one of teacher retention as well as recruitment.**

What factors influence the higher education course selection of high-performing school students?

A number of factors influences high-performing student selection choices: At an overarching level their interests and passion, job prospects and salary attached to prospective careers and the prestige of the profession. In addition, the choice of institution and course, **location of higher education institution is important**, as is reputation and prestige of the institution, prior knowledge of the institution, recommendations from family and friends, advice from career counsellors, industry experience during study, additional opportunities within courses, e.g. study abroad, double degrees and potential for scholarships. **High achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are seeking institutions they perceive to be culturally safe.** High achieving high-school leavers question the need for LANTITE whilst those from diverse backgrounds and pathways often require additional support and motivation.

What features of the current ITE system may prevent high-quality mid- to late-career professionals transitioning to teaching?

There is a perception that teaching is a low paid, high stress career with fewer rewards. This is off-putting to those already within established careers. The time and expense it takes to transition is a further barrier alongside concerns regarding employment prospects and particularly gaining secure ongoing employment opportunities. **Generally, the current system does not recognise the existing and relevant skills late career professionals can bring to the progression; they essentially have to start from scratch as a beginning teacher**. There is a lack of pathways for career changers if they do not meet the direct admission requirements and

specifically for career changers aspiring to be secondary school teachers, there is no fast track way to qualify for subject method areas to enable entry to graduate ITE courses. **Customised support and guidance within a tailored career change pathway would increase the appeal to transition for mid to late career professionals**. ITE courses delivery currently lack the flexibility, particularly with regards to placement to fit around commitments, such as lifestyle and family. We note in the discussion paper that the Now Teach program in England is cited as an example in this regard. Now Teach is predominantly funded by the UK government in England with very little philanthropic investment. It is also one of the most expensive routes into teaching in England with just over 300 teachers produced for a very significant central government investment. **Support for career changers needs to be cost effective and sustainable when offered at scale**.

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

Alternative pathway programs are essential for attracting high quality candidates from diverse backgrounds. Current standardised assessment tools disadvantage minority and culturally diverse students. **A range of culturally inclusive selection tools capable of assessing personal qualities are needed to address the current issues**. Specifically, for international students, it is important to provide tailored orientation sessions that introduce them to Australian classrooms and workplace culture.

Targeted recruitment of students from remote and rural areas and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is necessary. Coupled with this it is important to provide a clear narrative of how people from diverse backgrounds and diverse abilities will be supported in the profession with support for senior and supervising teachers to improve support for diverse pre-service teachers. PSTs from diverse backgrounds need to be assured they will be welcome and supported within the university and school environment. Funding support is important to attract and support diverse students, with further entry requirements for ITE courses likely discourage candidates from diverse backgrounds.

More broadly, there needs to be a clearer narrative on the importance of diversity amongst the teaching profession, with examples of diversity in leadership in education and profiling of the important role culturally diverse teachers have within the profession.

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

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can be drawn to teaching to ensure that their children are safe within the system. High performing Indigenous students are influenced by the reputation of the institution and the reputation of the course as being culturally safe and inclusive of Indigenous perspectives and understandings. **Essential to encouraging more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to choose a career in teaching is ITE provision that has an embedded focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures, ensuring a curriculum that that is culturally sensitive and relatable.** Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander peoples need to see themselves within curriculum content, knowledge and pedagogies within their ITE courses. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher educators are essential for encouraging more Indigenous peoples to choose teaching as a career.

Flexible pathway programs are important. **At Monash, the William Cooper Institute oversees the development of targeted strategies to increase participation of Indigenous students across the country implementing comprehensive engagement programs with secondary schools and Indigenous led community organisations** to build greater awareness of university offerings, pathways, scholarships and support systems. **Scholarships, fee support and clear and ongoing support both within the university and the profession more broadly are important**. Support needs to be provided for senior and mentoring teachers to ensure they are able to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pre-service teachers. Providing options for pre-service teachers to be matched with schools or undertake places in the communities that they live, alongside flexible study options and opportunities to study remotely may assist in making undertaking study more appealing.

It is vitally important that the skills and knowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples bring to the profession are acknowledged during ITE programs and when entering the profession. For example, having the opportunity to undertake leadership roles in the APST space that focus on Indigenous understanding and knowledge. The opportunity for leadership roles would be attractive for Indigenous career changers. Support for the MATSITI 1000 Indigenous teachers' initiative is important but more broadly there needs to be a systemic change to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' expertise into the heart of the school and ITE programs.

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?

Non-academic assessments are inconsistent across states and institutions with some universities asking for personal statement, some use CASPer and other institutions have developed their own test. The lack of consistency is off putting for potential students. Since the introduction of CASPer as an entry requirement at Monash in 2018 there has been a 13% reduction in the number of ITE VTAC 1st preference applications. In relation to enrolment both domestic and international enrolment has reduced since 2018 in both undergraduate and postgraduate ITE programs. Table 1 below illustrates this trend and emphasises the decline in international enrolment in particular since the introduction of CASPer.

Table 1: Commencing ITE Student Enrolments by Year of Commencement and Citizenship at commencement

Count of PERSON_ID	Column Labels								
Row Labels	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
GPG	**801**	**688**	**578**	**634**	**702**	**559**	**510**	**381**	**325**
Domestic	733	572	453	461	436	312	320	298	277
International	68	116	125	173	266	247	190	83	48
UG	**622**	**732**	**634**	**693**	**738**	**631**	**518**	**516**	**519**
Domestic	589	677	578	580	571	466	434	469	457
International	33	55	56	113	167	165	84	47	62
Grand Total	**1423**	**1420**	**1212**	**1327**	**1440**	**1190**	**1028**	**897**	**844**

During this period progression rates (based upon a ratio of the total passed load against the total certified load, for a given reference year) has remained consistent for undergraduate and postgraduate level and domestic and international studies, with a yearly progression rate of between 91% and 94%. **This rate has remained unchanged since the introduction of CASPer**.

Despite particular (pre-COVID-19) declines in international enrolments, internally collected data examining student progression within professional experience suggest that in the two years since the introduction of CASPer, there was a 12% reduction in notices of concern (a formal process where the mentor teacher or university staff member identifies that students require further intervention to improve their performance or are at risk of not meeting placement requirements). This suggests that non-academic entry requirements may impact on the performance of PST in the classroom, with more evidence needed to substantiate this claim.

Are low completion rates an issue?

Monash ITE programs over the previous 5 years have a completion rate of between 82-87% completion rate within the MTeach and 72-75% for the BEd. **This is amongst the highest across providers**. Addressing low completion rates requires appropriate entry standards, pathway programs that provide appropriate levels of support to transition into ITE programs successfully and a structured approach to pre-service teacher support throughout programs. **Every Monash pre-service teacher has a Student Success Advisor who remains their first point of contact for any issues throughout their degree program**. This ensures students are supported and issues with progression are identified and addressed at the earliest possible point and tailored support provided. This support enhances the likelihood of student completion. Additionally, **a team of dedicated professional practice consultants, who are former teachers support pre-service teachers on during professional experience placements and work closely with schools and mentor teachers** to ensure a supportive environment for pre-service teachers.

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

Exit data collected from ITE students who do not complete suggest a variety of reasons for exiting the course. Discontinuation data collected at Monash over the previous 8 years suggest **the most common reason at undergraduate level for discontinuation is student transfer to another course**, followed by repeated failure of units leading to exclusion. New employment opportunity/relocation, health reasons and no longer interested in the course were also commonly cited reasons at undergraduate level for discontinuing an ITE course. At the graduate level the most common reasons were **the failure of units leading to exclusion, unable to balance study and family commitments** and students stating they were no longer interested in the course.

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?

Matching the supply of graduate teachers with the demands of jurisdictions and sectors is important. **Targeted recruitment by ITE providers of students from remote and regional areas and for high demand subjects accompanied by incentives such as scholarships and fee assistance would potentially increase supply in high demand sectors and areas**. ITE providers facilitating strong connections and partnerships between pre-service teachers and rural and remote schools or schools with shortages in particular subject areas, with clear pathways for employment, would also support clear progression for pre-service teachers to areas of demand.

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

Teachers are teaching out of field for several reasons. **There is an undersupply of appropriately specialized teachers**. Australian data suggests that in lower socio-economic and rural schools there are higher incidences of out-of-field teachers (e.g. McConney and Price, 2009). Without out-of-field teaching, schools can be forced to offer fewer subject choices, increase class sizes, or rely on distance education for their students. Therefore, **while out-of-field teaching is not the preferred choice, it can be seen as a solution to a current problem** (Hobbs and Törner, 2019) – retention of specialists in these schools as well as recruitment.

Teachers are not teaching STEM for several reasons; Teachers report barriers to STEM education including pedagogical, curriculum and structural challenge along with a lack of teacher support (Margot and Kettler, 2019). Key factors affecting teachers include subject-specific content knowledge, ability and confidence to teach across subjects; capacity to help students recognize connections between subjects; develop students' proficiencies in individual subjects (Honey et al, 2014). Many teachers find it challenging to understand and integrate aspects of engineering (Lesseig et al., 2016). Finally, there is no STEM curriculum.

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?

The APSTs provide a valuable guide covering key principles and practice for pre-service teachers to achieve. They serve well as directives for more individualised responses by schools and teachers and illustrate the breadth of skills required to be a teacher. **A review of the standards to assess their continued relevance to contemporary issues and perspectives would be valuable**. For example, **standard 1.4 can be interpreted as a deficit perspective when considering the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Standards such as 1.3 that encourage teachers to consider student diversity should also acknowledge diverse genders and sexualities**.

Addressing and assessing all APTS fully within a two year MTeach program remains problematic, particularly within dual sector degree programs where a substantial number of units are required to meet curriculum requirements. Pre-service teachers can struggle to engage with the volume of focus areas across the 7 standards and it is challenging to demonstrate and evidence meeting standards within a four week placement block. Consolidation of standards would be valuable in alleviating this issue, retaining the 7 standards but combining and reducing the focus areas to develop a more manageable framework for pre-service teachers to engage with.

While the standards are clear in their expectation of teachers using research alongside other knowledge and experience, they are not clear as to what this means in terms of the extent or quality of teachers' research use, or the expected research-related skill level or demonstration of relevant behaviours. If new teachers are to use research well in practice, then the standards firstly need to be more specific about the skills, behaviours and competencies expected of them. **The Q Project's [Quality Use of Research Evidence (QURE) Framework](Rickinson et al., 2020), which defines and elaborates on the core and enabling components of using research evidence effectively in schools, could be a helpful starting point for this work**. Furthermore, the standards need to emphasise the use of research more widely than they currently do. At present, for graduate teachers, the use of research in practice is referenced only in Focus Area 1.2. There is also no articulation for how teachers are expected to progress from graduate levels in this focus area to more proficient levels. Having research use articulated in only one focus area does not reinforce the importance of research use and seems misaligned with the standards' intention for teachers to use research to develop their professional knowledge and improve their teaching.

Do the Teacher Standards adequately reflect the role of teachers in supporting pre-service and graduate teachers?

Currently, the standards do not effectively reflect the role of teachers in supporting pre-service teachers and graduate teachers. **Greater attention needs to be placed on developing the knowledge of existing teachers to support pre-service teachers beyond a box-ticking approach to assessing whether standards have been met** (Bradbury, Fitzgerald and O' Connor, 2020). Monash Faculty of Education is part of the Teaching Academies of Professional Practice initiative (TAPP) working with a cluster of schools to enhance ITE and particularly professional experience. A key focus of the TAPP is to develop common understanding of APST practical application at graduate and proficient level. The faculty's professional practice consultants support this process through delivery of professional learning to mentors and pre-service teachers. Specifically in

relation to APSTs 1.4 and 2.4 more work is needed with current employed teachers to ensure they are at a proficient level and can more adequately guide pre-service teachers.

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

Through a combination of diversity, inclusion and cultural competency-focused units and professional experience, **Monash ITE programs are preparing graduates for teaching diverse student cohorts, even while we recognise that there will always be more to do**. Inclusion and diversity units alongside Indigenous Education units are core units within our MTeach and BEd programs combining lectures with practical workshops and frequently drawing on community partnerships (for example with disability organisations) to support opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop their skills and knowledge. **Co-teachers, who are practising teachers with specialist knowledge in areas of diversity, are also employed** and provide expert skills and knowledge in inclusive education, diverse students and challenging behaviour.

ITE programs successfully provide students with knowledge and understanding of introductory and foundational concepts that they can apply within the specific content knowledge, **it is however important to tailor this with targeted experiences of diverse cohorts within professional experience in schools** to build pre-service teachers competence, confidence and knowledge.

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

Considerable financial and human resources have been necessary to develop a TPA**. The benefits to developing a single institution TPA have been the capacity to tailor and develop to the specific aspects of Monash ITE programs** to this assessment task with strong staff commitment and professional investment in the process. It has also been an extremely valuable learning experience for Faculty staff. However, this process does require extensive financial investment for program development and endorsement.

How could the TPA endorsement process be improved? Are the current arrangements leading to quality outcomes?

The endorsement process would benefit from clear and coherent explanations of process and expectations on providers that remain constant and consistent over time. This has not always been the case in our experience, a claim we can document. The same panel should also be retained throughout the process to assess the TPA and with each meeting be provided with the full range of information submitted by providers. Timely feedback on submissions is important. With regard to quality outcomes, it is potentially too early to determine at this stage. **It is necessary for graduates to progress through ITE courses, complete their TPAs and undertake two to three years of teaching before quality outcomes can be appropriately assessed and attributed to the TPA.**

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

Monash ITE programs support students to undertake 80 days of professional experience within the BEd specialisations and 60 days within the MTeach program. **There is detailed integration between university taught content and professional experience within ITE programs which supports ongoing connections between theory and practice and cyclical opportunities for reflection**. Professional practice consultants (PPCs), former teachers, employed within the faculty provide a critical interface between ITE programs, pre-service teachers, schools and mentor teachers. These system are effective in supporting the preparation of ITE students for classroom and school environment but there is potential for improvement.

There is an assumption teachers know how to provide quality mentorship to pre-service teachers which may not always be the case. ITE providers need to be able to support and provide guidance to mentor teachers but encouraging existing teachers to invest time in mentoring requires systemic acknowledge of the value and importance of this work. Often mentor teachers are given little or no time allocation to undertake the mentoring role impacting their ability to provide in-depth support and reflection opportunities for pre-service teachers (Bradbury, Fitzgerald and O' Connor, 2020). **Rewarding and supporting current teachers who provide quality mentorship through increased pay and workload accommodations should be a central part of the professional experience system**. The Monash TAPP programs provides an illustration of a successful initiative where support is provided by Monash staff to support mentors and enhance their understanding of quality mentoring.

Ongoing work is needed to widen offerings for professional opportunities but this requires time and resources. **Monash has developed a program over several years working with schools to provide professional experience opportunities in remote and rural areas**. Pre-service teachers need opportunities to engage in placements where they are well supported and have opportunities to experience student diversity and diverse teaching contexts.

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

At a broad level, stronger partnerships between ITE providers and schools are necessary whereby schools are recognised and supported as integral partners in developing pre-service teachers. **A considerable amount of time, energy and resources are invested in sourcing professional experience opportunities for students which would ideally be re-deployed in supporting and enhancing the placement experience and supporting mentor teachers.** This could occur if it was guaranteed schools would accommodate pre-service teachers on an ongoing basis.

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

ITE providers are well placed to provide high quality professional development opportunities both through award and non-award programs. **Monash currently offers a suite of professional and continuing education opportunities across key areas including STEM, language and literacy, wellbeing and inclusive education in addition to a suite of Masters of Education programs designed to support current teachers to develop specialist expertise and knowledge**. Last year, more than 3000 people chose one or more of our suite of short-course (non award-bearing) offerings.

ITE providers are further well placed to support informal opportunities for professional learning through facilitating communities of practice and networking opportunities across their alumni. For example, **the Faculty hosts Early Career workshop events, drawing together graduates from the previous 3 years and offering a series of topical professional development workshops, alongside opportunity to share experiences and challenges**.

ITE providers further have the capacity to support teachers' ongoing professional learning through supporting their engage with relevant and contemporary research. ITE providers could support newly qualified teachers' ongoing research use in several ways. For example, experienced educator-new educator mentor relationships could be established in schools with ITE providers supporting both the experienced educators to mentor (e.g., through the provision/delivery of research-related leadership modules or courses) and new educators in their skill development (e.g., through the provision/delivery of research-related skill-based modules or courses). Such support might be in the forms of short courses, master classes, or ongoing award-being programs such as Graduate Diploma qualifications (e.g., Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Further, **ITE providers could provide/deliver annual 'refresher' modules or short courses to new educators about how to find and use research well in practice that build on the research-related skills and knowledge they may have gained during their pre-service qualifications**. ITE providers may also provide/deliver modules or courses that help new educators with their research-related influencing and communication skills that can be used in their school environments to encourage others to use research in practice. **Universities as ITE providers provide essential infrastructure, capacity and expertise to deliver high-quality support to teachers**.

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?

Resources to support teachers, including funding for time release to enable dedicated time and commitment from current teaching to supporting pre-service teachers and recognition of the work they are undertaking in this role. ITE providers can support by facilitating mentor professional development and opportunities for mentors to network with each other and with university staff.

Concluding comments

As a Faculty, we support the Minister's intention to develop the ITE system in Australia and to consider further the relationship between the university and school contributions to teachers' professional learning. We also support the focus on teaching quality and the need to think creatively about new routes into the profession, especially for those with experience in other sectors. Given the impending shortages of teachers in some jurisdictions, however, we believe the issues are both of quality and quantity, especially in terms of hard-to-staff, regional, rural and remote schools. A sole focus on selecting the academic elite will not deliver the change at scale that is necessary. Additionally, it is also critically important to recognise that the challenge faced by Australia is one of teacher retention and ongoing professional development as well as recruitment and initial training. Keeping more teachers in the profession and supporting them to keep getting better for longer is the central challenge for any education system.

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