

18 July 2021

Dear ITE Review Panel,

Please find a response to the Discussion Paper about Quality Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Review from [REDACTED]. Several points are discussed in detail or dot point, including:

- Attracting high-quality candidates in ITE
- How best to prepare them to become effective teachers
- Fast tracking graduates
- Teacher shortages
- Innovative Professional Experience
- Other considerations

We are delighted that many of the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) initiatives have had outstanding success. For example, the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA), has been welcomed by universities, ITE students and schools. However, we believe this success would be further enhanced through implementation of a standardised approach to TPA implementation, with thought given to the resourcing required for implementation to achieve uniformly high standards within each jurisdiction. We also applaud the move to offer LANTITE earlier in the ITE student's candidature, which will provide them with options to leave the profession early if they find that ITE is not an appropriate career choice. The introduction of non-academic selection criteria for ITE candidates has also enabled prospective ITE students to reflect on their desires to becoming a teacher prior to embarking on their studies.

Attracting high-quality candidates

TEMAG made some tentative steps towards recommendation for attracting high-quality candidates. However, strong leadership is required to ensure high quality candidates are attracted to the teaching profession. TEMAG's personal statement directive had strong potential but implementing it for the most part as a purely administrative requirement immediately reduced its potential impact.

This committee should grasp this nettle more strongly. ITE systems in other parts of the world have prospective ITE students' application statements viewed and assessed by course coordinators, where aspects of engagement in the professional are closely assessed. For example, the personal statement should provide a clear reflection on a time in school or alternative (e.g., scouts, swimming school, etc). This allows a genuine candidate voice, rather than the essay factory approach which has emerged as a result of the TEMAG initiatives. Undergraduate entry to ITE is a strong way of attracting high quality and dedicated teachers – references and support in personal statement from the ITE student's high school teachers could enhance the trustworthiness of their commitment to the expected intellectual and ethical standards of the profession.

Attracting more high-quality career changers into ITE is an attainable goal given the right support systems and incentives. There is an inherent moral purpose in moving into teaching from people who have worked hard to secure employment but find that it does not provide the career satisfaction they are seeking. For example, when the unemployment associated with the GFC hit Canary Wharf, London's financial district, the TDA (Teaching Development Authority) set up a booth and recruited financial professionals into teaching in huge numbers. This was a turning point and a call for action for ITE providers to lift their game and offer interesting engaging provision to support their movement into the classroom.

This resulted in the emergence of SCITT – School Centred Initial Teacher Training. These SCITTs were genuine partnerships where groups of schools and ITE providers developed a context where teachers were in schools on salary but supported by the ITE provider. This is not a Teach for Australia model but a longer-term relationship with ITE providers created through strong links with ITE academics who supported candidates in shaping their program of originally offered ITE subjects, intensives and school-based experiences. This is a crucial point of difference from Teach for Australia – it is practice-based but theory-led.

Review members could consider a SCITT model linked to current successful ITE providers where training places are awarded on quality of provision and local employment needs. For example, regional/rural ITE providers where teachers are difficult to attract might be awarded more places than metropolitan ITE providers, where there are many teachers available.

How best to prepare them to become effective teachers

TEMAG has left a strong legacy of classroom ready initiatives in ITE. The TPA is now well embedded in the structures of ITE programs and well understood by others in the teaching and ITE communities. It would seem important that the TPA is held steadily in place and that the current review further embeds this process.

It is essential in preparation of ITE students that they are not only classroom ready, but are also familiar with school professional practice and administrative processes – this is something more than being classroom ready; they need to be profession ready. This includes commitment to on-going professional development and a deep commitment to their ethical responsibilities as educators. We believe that ITE students should be connected with a whole school community early in their candidature, including connections to the wider community of parents and other crucial stakeholders in the education of children, through spending time as a neophyte member of a school community. Where actions and ideas from classes at university are readily available to take into schools in small ways – in the role of teacher aide, support person – the ITE lecturers and school teachers can share responsibility for building a working understanding of teaching and learning in tandem with the ITE student.

Adopting this approach might involve recruiting lower numbers of candidates into ITE, but this would fulfil an important aspiration to recruit high-quality ITE students who are committed to building genuine partnerships between schools and ITE providers through their professional practice. This would be particularly fruitful in regional areas where there are many schools actively building relationships with ITE students who may join their schools upon graduation. Models for these forms of joint teacher education exist in England and a version of bringing ITE students into a semi-employment status occurs in Singapore.

Fast tracking Graduates

We provide these suggestions following consideration of the NSW Minister for Education and Treasurer's Media Release on 15 June 2021, *"removing barriers to entry to the profession, bringing people into the classroom faster, supporting transition from an old career into teaching, and incentivising the transition to teaching"*:

- Universities to provide a wider range of alternate entry pathways.
- Universities to offer more intensive learning by providing another trimester in which to study during an academic year (i.e., three trimesters enabling ITE students to fast track, or an intensive period for learning through a shortened trimester).
- Consider one (1) year full time study, which includes professional experience for six months (internship) and the last six months back at university to complete studies, with graduates then deemed to be Proficient Teachers (not Provisional Teachers).
- Consider better coordination of systems required for course accreditation, LANTITE administration, GTPA quality assurance, Professional Experience requirements, and ITE student supervision.

Teacher Shortages

- Regional rural and remote schools face shortages of qualified teachers, especially in areas of STEM education, literacies and school leadership. Currently, many school staff often have to teach out of their area of subject expertise, putting real stress on them with consequences for ITE students' learning outcomes. Therefore, we recommend the following:
 - Provide incentives to ensure high quality ITE students tailor their studies towards areas of greater need. ITE students can be incentivised to choose a regional, rural or remote school as their number one

preference for school placement through scholarships, paid internships, and allowances for working remotely.

- We believe it is essential to provide increased professional development opportunities for Professional Learning for upskilling teachers in other curriculum areas. [REDACTED]

- We enthusiastically support use of positive media campaigns to attract more diverse ITE students into courses.

- We are firmly of the belief that ITE students should be selected based on attributes derived from prior professional experience, not only on the basis of qualifications.
- Strategies are required to deal with the Early Childhood shortages, including scholarship.

Innovative Professional Experience (Prac)

- [REDACTED] has achieved excellent outcomes through its development of a first year observational Professional Experience through an online practicum [REDACTED] Undertaken across a trimester, this online practicum ensures that ITE students experience all the AITSL standards, which they are unlikely to see in a classroom during 'live' observation.
- Following on from the above point, we should develop systems to use technology for ITE students to practice their teaching in a virtual environment prior to going into a classroom. This provides students with time to perfect their lessons, try something new, experiment with innovative pedagogy, trial different ways of teaching, practice teaching various concepts, without also having to overcome anxiety or shyness about being in the classroom, especially when learning to teach a classroom of students who may not wish to learn. This evidence-based teaching will create more prepared and confident ITE students when teaching in a real classroom. This outcome is achieved because:
 - Issues can be resolved easily if the ITE student has already experienced them through their practise in a virtual classroom, which has a major impact on attrition rates and lack of schools available for placements during the Summer vacation period.
 - ITE students will actively assess innovative pedagogy in their own learning, thus making their own future classrooms exciting places in which to learn.
 - The virtual classroom would provide a space in which to make mistakes, learning in a more sophisticated and safer environment without detriment to a real school student or the ITE Students' careers.

Other Considerations

- Given the need to attract ITE students from a diverse range of backgrounds into our profession, it is essential that we provide scholarships to students interested in teaching whilst at school and during their studies.
- Similarly, paying for internships, can reduce barriers to entry into teaching and increase retention.
- We recommend that consideration be given to ways of enabling universities to work more closely with their Hub/Partnership Schools [REDACTED]
- ITE program differentiation is important to encourage active consideration of teaching in regional, rural and remote schools by graduates. For example, we observe that diverse programs for our ITE students via pathway programs in Indigenous, rural, remote, regional, and refugee students' education enhance employability of graduates but prove increasingly difficult to resource given the large number of other commitments we must make in our curricula to maintain course accreditation.
- Recognise that ITE students from the regional, rural and remote locations tend to return to these locations on completion of their studies – therefore, provide incentives to these students to undertake ITE studies and a career in teaching.
- In line with comments already made, we feel it is essential to fully embrace hybrid models of teaching. This is not only to respond to the on-going needs of schools and students due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but to acknowledge that hybrid forms of learning that combine in class and online modes of learning will undoubtedly be a major feature of education for the foreseeable future under any conditions.
- Finally, [REDACTED], we believe it is essential that consideration is given to nationally accredited ITE programs. Many of the issues outlined above, especially chronic shortages of teachers in some areas are exacerbated by difficulties in transferring

qualifications and registration across jurisdictional boundaries. We believe that universities [REDACTED] which operate across these boundaries, have considerable experience to offer in solving this problem.

Above are a variety of considerations for ITE courses and we welcome your feedback. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]