RESPONSE TO QUALITY IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION REVIEW
July 2021

PART A. ATTRACTING HIGH-QUALITY CANDIDATES INTO THE TEACHING PROFESSION

1.   ATTRACTING HIGH QUALITY CANDIDATES INTO ITE

1.1 What can be done to attract high achievers and career changers to the profession?
There are a number of strategies for attracting high-quality candidates into the teaching profession that are already in place, including academic and non-academic admission requirements and LANTITE. The focus should be on the broader issue of improving the standing / status of the profession. This will result in high achievers being more attracted to the profession.

Additional strategies for consideration are:
- Improve the public perception of teaching as a career, so that it is seen as it should be – respectable and desirable.
- Improve the public perception of the profession through visible engagement with, and drawing on the expertise of, teaching professionals in high-level decision-making about the profession.
- Improve public perception through a media campaign highlighting successes for students of good teachers. Showcase the rewards of teaching as a career and shift away from deficit narratives about teaching, about schools and about initial teacher education.
- Improve the perception of the profession through pay and conditions that are concomitant with the status of a profession.
- Value all discipline areas equally, showing the community that while literacy and numeracy are fundamental skills, both the sciences and the social sciences contribute to a strong society.

- Develop an initiative for High Achieving and Lead Teachers (HALTs) to visit secondary schools to showcase to guidance officers, parents and senior students the positive role teachers play and the contributions they make to the world.
- Develop an incentive scheme for high-quality candidates such as scholarships, stipends, reduced fees, etc. This could also include incentives for students studying in high need discipline areas, and in hard to staff rural, regional and remote areas. This could also include recognition of high-quality graduates, for example by professional associations such as the Australian Principals Association.
- Incentives and financial support for career-changers.
- Clear pathways into ITE for career changers and recognition of prior experience to allow for fast-tracking through an ITE program.

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

Key influences on course selection for high-performing school students include:
- personal interests;
- peers;
- parents;
- guidance counsellors in schools;
- perceived prestige and professional status;
- high-earning potential;
- high prospect of employment post-qualification; and
- perceived work conditions.

1.3 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?

Factors that may prevent mid-career professionals transitioning into ITE include:
- Length of time now that the qualification is an 18-24 month Masters. On the flip side, this may not be a disincentive as it may be seen as a prestigious qualification to have, rather than a Graduate Diploma.
- Income and how to survive while studying or entering the profession as a casual teacher. This is challenging if we assume that at mid- to late-career stage, prospective candidates would have a number of commitments and expenses such as family, mortgages, elderly parents or other carer responsibilities, etc. and loss of income and job security would impact on decisions to transition to teaching.
- As above, there is a potential impact on the ability to earn an income through part-time work with requirements to undertake lengthy (4-5 week) placements in schools.
- Negative media reports about conditions in schools, particularly pertaining to student behaviour. This may act as a disincentive to those considering a career as a teacher.

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

In addition to government, non-government and university schemes that currently exist to encourage students from diverse backgrounds to consider a career in teaching, there is a need to:

- Ensure students can see themselves in current classrooms and schools. One strategy could be to showcase the diversity that exists in schools and in the profession through, for example, a media campaign.
- Ensure all prospective students know the diversity of contexts they can elect to work in. Tell the stories of those teachers who have done this.
- Address the employment issue by ensuring employment upon successful completion. Such employment could be linked to efforts to build the diversity of the teaching workforce, or to hard to staff areas, areas with high diversity in the school setting, etc.
- Scholarships to support students from diverse backgrounds with costs associated with undertaking professional experience.
- Incentives could also be offered to staff from diverse backgrounds to remain in areas of high need/difficult to staff areas. This could be done, for example, through home-buying grant schemes so that teachers invest in remaining in these communities.
- Ensure all policies, processes, practices and pedagogies used in schools (and at all levels of decision-making) are not intentionally or unintentionally exclusionary.
- Fundamental cultural change is required to see the accepted norms around knowledge, excellence, merit, worth, and benefit shift to better mirror the diversity in schools and society.
- Universities could also ensure that they have diversity in their staff, policies, processes and pedagogies.
- Government commitment and support for increasing the number of, and ensuring the safety of, staff from diverse backgrounds.

1.5 How could more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples be encouraged and supported to choose a career in teaching?
In addition to currently existing schemes, and the suggestion made above regarding how to encourage people from diverse backgrounds, consideration could be given to:
- Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to return to work in their communities or other communities.
- Provide cultural support for students while studying, preferably from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in schools. Universities already provide some form of support but this could enhanced.
- Develop a media campaign that shows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in schools and speaks to the impact they have in all schools, including on building the cultural literacy, capacities and competencies of all school students and non-Indigenous teachers.
- Incentives to support formal partnerships between ITE and schools with high proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- ITE programs to embed Aboriginal knowledges and epistemologies in programs.

1.6 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?
There is no comprehensive evidence as this TEMAG reform has not been in place long enough for its effectiveness or otherwise to be assessed. Issues for consideration include:
- There is no way to ascertain who is completing the non-academic assessment, be it candidates, parents or an online 'cheat' site.

- A fulsome review of the efficacy of the non-academic assessments, along with a cost-benefit analysis, needs to be undertaken.
- A psychometric assessment could be undertaken but again there is not strong evidence to suggest that this is an effective measure of the characteristics required to be a successful teacher (resilience, adaptability, conscientiousness, self-efficacy, etc.) – or any agreement in the literature about precisely what these characteristics are.
- A positive of the test may be that students who are not suitable for the profession self-select themselves out of the profession by choosing not to undertake the assessment and not to apply for an ITE program.
- Some universities undertake face-to-face interviews, however, the time and cost of doing this in larger institutions or regional universities ▮▮▮▮▮▮ would prove prohibitive.

2. ITE PROGRAM COMPLETIONS AND ENTRY INTO A TEACHING CAREER

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

Low completion rates are a complex issue and the reasons are many and varied. This, along with the potential cost to students, universities and the profession is what should be understood, rather than simply focussing on the single issue of completions.
- Some students choose to leave their ITE course as they realise they will not make a good teacher. This is not necessarily problematic. Teaching is a profession that requires a strong personal commitment to the profession. Some students find after a year or two of the courses that the profession is not for them. This is better realised before they finish their degree rather than once they are in the classroom.
- Students also transition from ITE programs to other degrees/professions to which they are more suited.
- One way to support students in finding out early if they wish to be in the classroom as teachers is to have early experiences in schools, as most ITE programs do.
- Anecdotal evidence we have from our students indicates that in addition to sensing a lack-of-fit with teaching, students leave ITE programs primarily due to financial, family or for other personal reasons.

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

Variability in completion rates may relate to student cohorts. As noted above, some of the non-completion by students could be viewed as a positive for the profession, as students who are not suitable have self-identified this and have transitioned to other degrees/professions to which they are more suited.

2.3 Should more be done to identify suitability for a career in teaching earlier in the degree or before entry to ITE? What might this look like?

Initiatives such as non-academic assessments and LANTITE already exist to identify suitability for teaching.
- One shift that could occur is for LANTITE to become an entry rather than a graduation requirement. If students fail the LANTITE on entry, rather than it preventing

enrolment in the degree, it could side step them into a supportive course to develop literacy and numeracy skills with a second opportunity to sit and pass the LANTITE in year 1 of the degree.

- Early professional experience placements are also in place in most universities, and these also assist students and ITE programs to identify any professional 'fit' issues.

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

The reasons ITE students do not complete are varied, as noted above. These include:

- The financial impact of studying and undertaking full-time placements.
- Realisation that the profession of teaching is not for them.
- Realisation that now is not the right time for them to be studying as they cannot devote the time and/or the financial resources to studying.

3. DOES THE SUPPLY OF TEACHERS ENTERING THE WORKFORCE MATCH AREAS OF NEED?

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

The Australian Teacher Workforce Data unites and links data on initial teacher education and the teacher workforce, and provides a national picture of Australia's teaching profession, including in relation to teacher shortages. State Education departments can also provide this data.

- Anecdotally, there are shortages in a range of areas (Languages, Guidance, Special Needs, Manual Arts, Science, Technology) but these do not present as uniform shortages across the country or even across States. Sometimes the shortage is not in discipline areas but in attracting teachers to work and live in remote, rural and smaller regional areas.

3.2 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?

Jurisdictions are already seeking to address this and ITE providers would like to be able to do this. However, there needs to be flexibility built into the system, particularly accreditation, to allow universities to be agile and responsive to the demands of jurisdictions, which are not static and will continually shift as areas of demand are filled, with new areas of demand emerging. Additionally:

- Incentives could be provided to ITE students to study in areas of shortage; and to work in hard-to-staff schools. These could include scholarships and a guarantee of employment in these areas of need (discipline and location needs).
- Consideration needs to be given to the length of time taken to complete an ITE program to ensure that there isn't in the end a glut in certain areas.
- Relocation allowances could be provided to encourage graduates to take up positions in hard-to-staff areas and schools.
- ITE students could be employed part-time in schools as teacher aides to support them to complete their studies in the shortest time possible. However, any such initiatives need to ensure that students are well-prepared for the profession. Short-cuts into teaching do not seem to enhance teacher quality or impact positively on teacher retention.

3.3 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?

Many initiatives attract teachers in but do not result in the retention of these teachers. Ideas to address this include:

- Scholarships to study in areas of shortage, with a requirement to work in the area for x number of years; or in particular locations.
- Ensure good pathways into the profession and career progression pathways (HALT, leadership, etc.).

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

- Most STEM teachers are teaching STEM subjects, the issue is around non-STEM teachers teaching STEM subjects, that is, teaching out of field.
- As teachers are not registering as discipline or even primary or secondary teachers, in theory any teacher could be required to teach into any discipline area at any level. Consideration needs to be given to this issue which may go some way to minimising out of field teaching.

Part B. Preparing ITE students to be effective teachers

4. ARE GRADUATE TEACHERS READY FOR THE CLASSROOM?

4.1 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.

- Yes, these are by and large fit for purpose. Of course, as times and needs change, the professional standards should be reviewed for fit.
- The standards do not, nor should they necessarily, capture all the emotional, social, personal and cognitive skills required to be a successful teacher.
- Careful consideration needs to be given to the process for making these changes (wide sectoral consultation, including with professional associations, many of whom have developed discipline-specific standards) and the time frames for implementation (as implementation comes with costs for HEIs and HEIs need to work within a range of regulatory frameworks).

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

The Standards do address this, so one could assume that yes, ITE programs are preparing graduates in this way. However,

- It is not possible to address every experience that students will have when they become teachers in schools. Preparation should, therefore, focus on the development of teachers who have skills, competencies and dispositions that have been built up

across the course of their ITE program. This includes competencies in teaching diverse cohorts, cultural competencies and strategies for inclusive education.

- This issue needs to be given the same priority as is given to understanding how to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills.

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

Developing and sustaining TPAs is expensive, both in direct financial costs and in human resourcing. This is not related to the number of TPAs but rather to the application of the TPAs in practice.

- Given the recency of implementation, a longitudinal study should be undertaken to ascertain the benefit or otherwise of the TPA to improving teacher quality. At this stage there is only anecdotal evidence about whether or not graduates with a TPA have improved quality outcomes compared to graduates without a TPA.
- There could be one nationally accredited TPA but this may not allow for the inter-university engagements that are occurring in TPAs such as the GTPA (cross-institutional moderation, collaborative research on TPAs, etc.)

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

The issue is not with the endorsement process but with benchmarking between the TPAs to ensure quality of TPAs and provide confidence to the profession and to the community about the value of the TPA.

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

For the most part, yes, they do. Students are exposed to a range of settings and experiences throughout their professional experience placements. However, there are areas for improvement, including:

- Ensuring consistency of experience in terms of the supervising teachers in schools. Training for supervising teachers in schools should be freely provided to ensure the best possible support is provided in school to ITE students. This should be made available to site coordinators and school leaders as well, so that high-quality supervisor can be assured for all students, regardless of the school or class they are undertaking their placement in.
- There could be an increase in required professional experience days, however, the additional cost of paying supervisory teachers, and the additional impost on students due to longer periods of unpaid professional experience placements, needs to be taken into account. Could a paid apprenticeship system be explored that would cover students costs during placements?
- If the TPAs are doing what they were intended to do, then is additional professional experience required? Research is needed to answer this question.
- Early placements in schools should be encouraged, as should placements that provide students with experiences of the whole school year so they better understand all the requirements and activities that teachers in schools need to be engaging in.

- While there is merit in full-time, long placements, there may also be merit in shorter but ongoing placements, for example, 1 day a week across a whole year. Such regular time in the classroom, in the same school, would allow student teachers to see the real workings of the school before finding their permanent positions. Could students be employed as Teaching Assistants in schools for a day a week, with a different school attended each year of studies?

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

There are a range of factors impacting efficient delivery of professional experience, including calendar differences, availability within schools, matching student and school locations, matching subject needs with available places, etc. Strategies to remedy some of these ills include:

- Central placement mechanisms such as the QPEx Portal being piloted in Queensland.
- Ensure all schools take ITE students.
- Ensure all teachers are required to supervise ITE students and/or provide incentives such as time, or counting towards becoming a HALT.
- Rethinking payments for supervising teachers. Should supervising the next generation of teachers be part of what one does as a professional – paying forward?
- Allowing HALTs to act as mentors for supervising staff in their schools.
- Assigning students a teacher mentor for the duration of their programs (or a mentor each year). Clearly professional learning in mentoring would need to be provided and ITEs could do this.
- Paid internships at the end of students degree to transition students from graduating student to beginning teacher.

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

- Yes, this is required to be undertaken and evidenced through the Program Standards and is monitored through our accreditation requirements.
- The current accreditation requirements seem to be working well, with rigour built into the process.
- Course accreditation is laborious and expensive so any improvements to the accreditation arrangements need to take into account the impact on HEIs.

5 THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS IN SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF TEACHERS

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

HEIs are already exploring options here, including through micro-credentials and stackable subjects. However, requirements and incentives for teachers to engage in such learning needs to be strengthened.

- HEIs could be partnered with clusters of schools in their regions and work to develop bespoke professional learning for individual schools.

- Cross-pollination of knowledge and ideas through closer involvement and experiences in each of the contexts (HEIs and schools).

5.2 Do the current HALT arrangements support the education ecosystem, particularly in relation to ensuring quality mentoring and supervision of ITE students?

There does not seem to be any direct link between the two (HALT ensuring quality mentoring and supervision occurs in all schools), however, this should be occurring. ITE students should only be mentored by HALTs so that we have some assurance that students will be experiencing quality teaching on all of their professional experience placements. Ideas to facilitate this include:

- A cheaper and more time-efficient HALT application process
- Promotion incentives
- Financial and/or time incentives

5.3 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?

This could be an effective strategy if HALTs are trained as mentors. The role would need to be clearly defined and funded.

5.4 Should ITE providers continue to support the development of newly graduated teachers? What would this look like?

This would be fantastic but funding would need to be provided to HEIs to facilitate this as graduated students would not be paying fees any longer. Alumni networks could be used but it would also be useful if employing authorities and HEIs worked together to ensure that HEIs had an accurate picture of where their graduating teachers have been employed.

Something akin to professional experience Liaison officers who continue to support new graduates may also help. However, strong support from the school in which graduates are located is likely to be the most effective approach.

5.5 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?

It should be a requirement of the position – to give back to the profession in this way and to share one's expertise. Less paperwork and regulation would allow more time for teachers and school leaders to undertake worthwhile mentoring and support for new graduates.