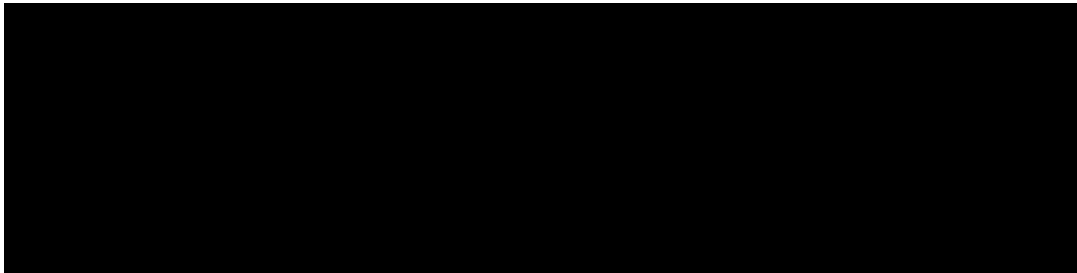


# ***Responses to the 'Quality Initial Teacher Education Review' questions***



## **PART A - Attracting and selecting high-quality candidates into the teaching profession**

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

The following statement from the Discuss Paper seems to suggest that changes to the profession itself, rather than changes to ITE would be key here: 'A 2019 Grattan Institute survey on the career motivations of high achieving young Australians found that they perceived teaching to fall well short of the intellectual challenge and pay offered by their chosen career.' (p. 5)

Reforms to teaching which emphasised teachers' exercise of intellectual freedom, respect for professional judgment, ongoing professional learning, and opportunities for career progression (e.g. higher salaries for those achieving HA or LT certification) would be recommended.

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

This is an important question. Until the proportion of quality ITE students who do not complete their course becomes as high as the proportion of quality beginning teachers who do not continue in the profession, there are, however, more relevant areas of focus for improving the quality of the teaching workforce. These areas of focus might include a review of beginning teachers' induction, roles and responsibilities, teaching contact time, mentoring, and access to professional learning.

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

One viable approach would be to encourage practicing teachers to undergraduate postgraduate studies in specialist areas. For example, the University of Tasmania offers the [Graduate Certificate in Education \(Mathematics Education\)](#) with this in mind. Greater uptake of courses like this could take the form of time release and fee support for eligible

teachers. Also, partnerships between universities and the school sector to create short-courses and micro-credentialling could further assist.

Stronger incentives to work in rural, remote, or low SES schools should be explored to attract quality graduates and experienced teachers.

## **PART B – Preparing ITE students to be effective teachers**

### **6. 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?**

An object of the [Australian Education Act 2013](#) is to invest in ‘evidence-based reforms.’ The term ‘evidence-based’ does not appear in a search of the [Australian Curriculum](#), neither does it appear in the [Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Education Declaration](#). Critically, there is no reference to the need for evidence-based practices in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at any level, although there is some reference to using data and evidence of student learning.

ITE providers already meet rigorous, comprehensive accreditation requirements that are informed by these key sources. Partnering with educational researchers to develop and communicate information about practices that are ‘evidence-based’ and updating key sources (particularly the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers) would assist. Such changes would also, importantly, influence the extent to which teaching practices in schools are evidence-based. This is important because much of what ITE students learn to value and carry into their practice as registered teachers is informed by practices modelled and cultivated during professional experience placements. We regularly hear from ITE students that, while they are on placement, supervising teachers advise them to ignore or forget the theory/research informed practices explored during their university studies.

### **7. 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?**

ITE providers are already providing ITE students with practical experience (60 and 80 days for postgraduate and undergraduate, respectively) as part of our accreditation requirements. There are, however, no such binding responsibilities on schools or teachers to be involved in the preparation of our future teachers. The word ‘supervisor’ appears only once in the Australian Professional Standards for Teaching, as part of the responsibility for ITE students at Graduate Level (ASPT 6.3). The word ‘placements’ occurs only twice across all levels of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher levels in APST 6.2). With less than 1000 teachers with HALT certification in Australia and 87,000 enrolled ITE students, that ratio is 1:87. Clearly, a reliance on HALT certified teachers is no solution in the short term.

Professional Experience placements represent a significant cost for ITE providers (employment of professional staff, payments for supervising teachers, payments for placement coordinators, payment for mentors, time involved for academic staff, insurance, etc), for which they/we are not adequately funded to deliver.

Most placements are hosted by committed schools/educators out of goodwill and we have great difficulty sourcing placements for ITE students. Some schools see it as their professional responsibility, going above and beyond in their support for ITE students, while others see it as an optional extra and either decline to host placements or do not host the number of placements that should be expected of schools their size.

ITE students also struggle financially when the 12 or 16 weeks of placement represent missed opportunity for employment during their studies.

As outlined by [Le Cornu \(2015\)](#), professional experience placements work well when there are strong partnerships between universities and schools. The quality of supervision and support during placement, not just the time spent on placement, is critical. Ensuring that supervision of ITE students is clearly embedded in the professional responsibility of teachers (and schools), with adequate time/funding to select suitable supervising teachers and enable (or expect/require) them to engage in professional learning for this important role would be beneficial.

As an example, the [Tasmanian Department of Education's Teacher Intern Placement Program \(TIPP\)](#) provides funding of 0.1FTE for each host school to support the role of the 'practice-focused mentor' (supervising teacher). These practice-focused mentors participate in two-days of professional learning for their work with ITE students. The Interns are paid a scholarship of \$20,000 to make a year-long immersion approach more manageable as part of their final year of the ITE program. The University of Tasmania provides in-kind support through involvement on selection panels, liaison with the Department of Education to manage the interface between employer (DoE) and ITE provider (University of Tasmania), contribution to professional learning, as well as providing support to the ITE students ('University Mentor') and to the supervising teachers, in addition to all our supports/services for all students and stakeholders. The TIPP has received positive feedback over several years as a proof of concept. The challenge will be to re-imagine this model to make it scalable, as it currently accommodates less than 10% of our ITE students.

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

Our ITE students have, on the whole, been very successful with their completion of the Graduate Teacher Performance Assessment (GTPA). This is a testament to the rigour and value of the courses which culminate in this demonstration of practice. Delivering the GTPA (and other TPAs) does, however, come at significant cost to ITE providers, particularly in terms of staff time. Ensuring that there is adequate funding for the delivery of the TPA would enable more teacher educators to participate in professional learning and benchmarking/moderation activities. It would also enable us to devote resources to supporting our partnering schools who host (final) placements in which the GTPA is undertaken.

There has been some positive feedback from schools and the sector (e.g. Teacher Registration Board, staff from the Department of Education's Quality Teaching team) about the impact of the GTPA on the quality of our graduates, particularly in relation to the use of data and evidence to inform practice and in the appraisal of their impact on student learning. There has also, however, been some reluctance from schools to host placements in which ITE students are undertaking the GTPA. Some schools/educators have expressed

concerns that the GTPA takes the ITE students' focus away from the 'real world' of teaching during their placement. ITE students have also often reported that schools are reluctant to give them access to student/school data and other experiences/opportunities associated with the expectations of the GTPA. Many supervising teachers have not undertaken a TPA or had to evidence their practice in this way, which means they struggle to advise/support ITE students with this requirement.

The introduction of the TPA (in our case, the GTPA) is still relatively new. Given time and with a focus on strengthening our partnerships with schools through clear communication and mutual responsibility, I am confident that these initial difficulties will be resolved. Disruption or major change to the GTPA could undo the good work that has begun.

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

In line with the response to Question 6, some revision of the [Principal Standard](#) would be beneficial. Currently, the words 'placement,' 'mentor,' 'supervise,' 'supervision,' or 'university' do not appear in the Principal Standard, so it is little wonder that many school principals view partnership with ITE providers and a role with hosting ITE students as an option, rather than an integral aspect of their role.

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

Yes, but as per the response to Question 4, barriers exist for schools and teachers in engaging in the many professional learning and postgraduate study options which currently offer, many of which are undersubscribed to the point of being unfeasible and unsustainable. There is currently a systemic lack of time release, financial support, recognition (pay and promotion) associated with professional learning and formal study for teachers and school leaders.