



SUBMISSION

**QUALITY INITIAL
TEACHER EDUCATION
REVIEW**

**TEACH FOR AUSTRALIA
JULY 2021**



ABOUT TEACH FOR AUSTRALIA

In Australia, lower socioeconomic status (SES) communities face barriers to the type of education that their high SES peers are able to access. The lower the level of education a child obtains, the further their opportunities in life diminish.

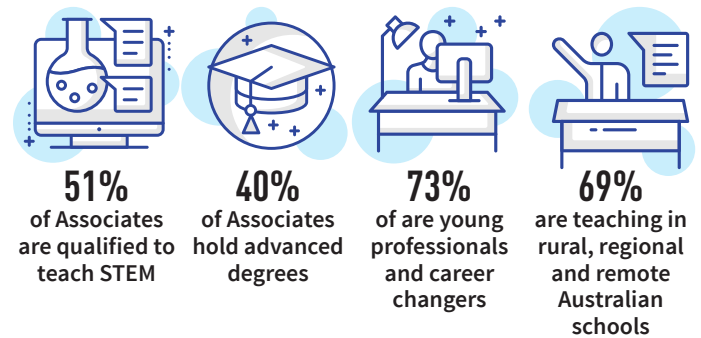
Teach For Australia (TFA) is a not-for-profit organisation that confronts educational disadvantage and strives for an Australia where education gives all children, regardless of background, greater choice for their future. TFA rigorously recruits and supports talented people to become outstanding educators and leaders in schools that most need them.

TFA's Leadership Development Program (LDP) (referred to as "the TFA program" hereon in) is Australia's leading employment-based pathway into teaching. TFA recruits, challenges and energises high-calibre people from all walks of life to become 'Associates' - exceptional teachers and inspiring leaders who work with students from low SES communities. Associates scaffold their students to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to realise potential and live a life of choice and contribution.

TFA partners with Australian Catholic University to deliver a bespoke Masters of Teaching (Secondary) (Leading Learning) (MTSLL) as part of the TFA program. Vital to the successful delivery of the program is the support provided by Federal and State/Territory Governments and their respective Departments of Education. Important too are the partner schools, staff and communities that work with our Associates and support their continual development as teachers and leaders.

TFA's extensive recruitment network attracts high achieving graduates and professionals and encourages them to consider teaching as a way to create meaningful change in the lives of their students. Our rigorous competency-based selection process ensures that individuals who enter the program have the skills and potential to make an impact in the classroom.

To date TFA has placed 1120 Associates across twelve cohorts, in 202 partner schools in six states and territories.¹ The twelfth cohort of 171 Associates marks TFA's largest cohort yet, more than three times the size of the inaugural 2010 cohort. In this largest national cohort to date:



The most recent independent program evaluation of TFA (2017) found that Associates deliver the skills that schools need. Most principals are appointing Associates because they prefer them to alternative options. By the end of their two-year placement, principals report that Associates demonstrate behaviours at both the 'proficient' and 'highly accomplished' level of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) more often than other teachers with the same years of experience. The evaluation found Associates appear to have an accelerated path into formalised leadership roles, indicating that the program is developing a pipeline of leaders in schools.

TFA Alumni continue to have an impact on the education system well beyond the program. TFA firmly believes that achieving educational equity requires classroom, school and systems-level leadership. As ambassadors of TFA's vision, Alumni are working across various sectors, working for educational equity in myriad ways. Eighty eight per cent of Alumni remain working in the education sector, contributing to TFA's vision through teaching, school leadership, social enterprise, policy, government and non-profit roles.

¹ TFA currently places Associates in Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, the Northern Territory and Tasmania, working in partnership with each State and Territory government to deliver the Program.

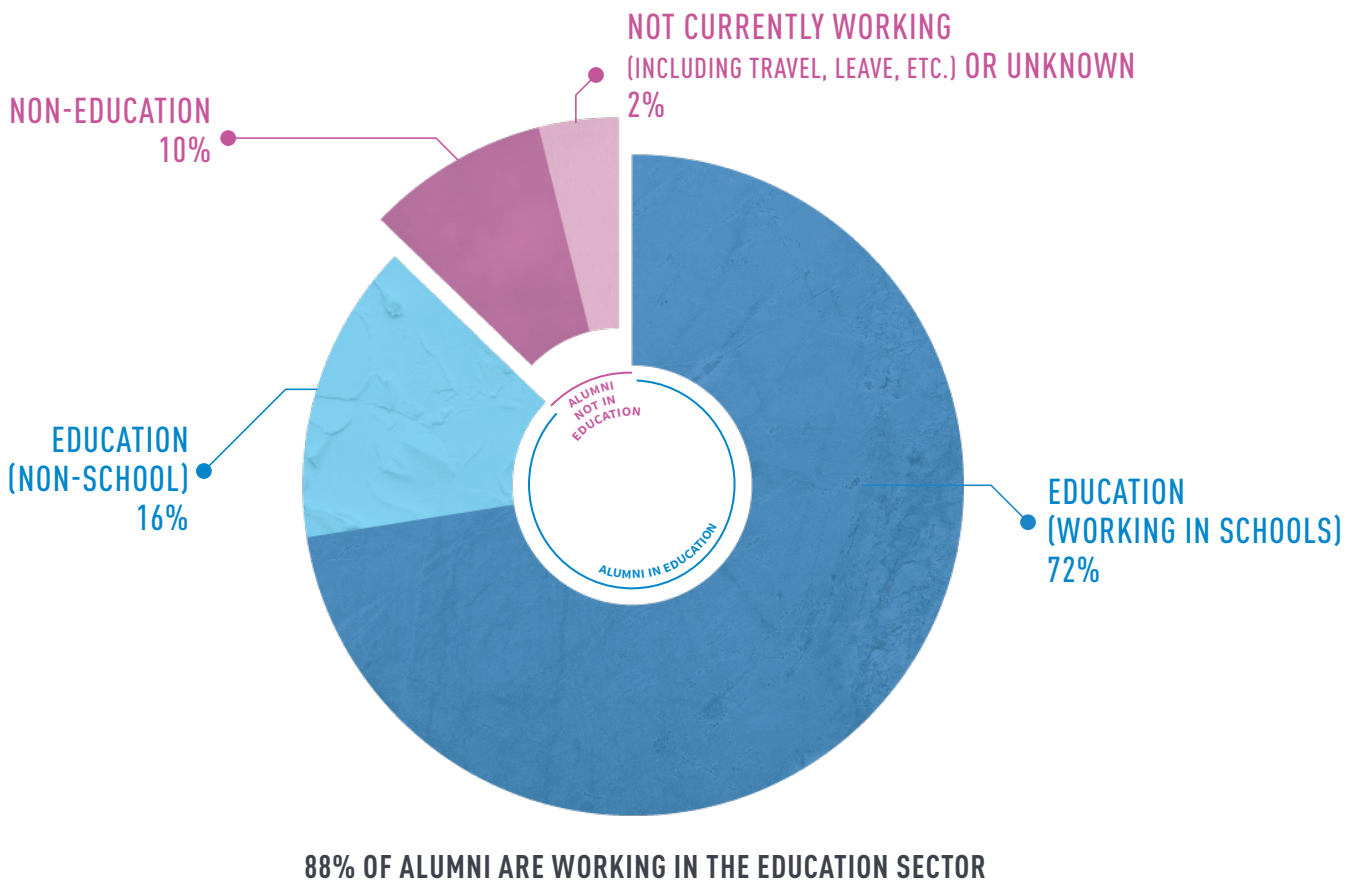


Figure 1: TFA LDP Alumni Career Pathways, March 2021.

Source: Alumni Survey data, March 2021.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Teach For Australia (TFA) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to a national discussion about Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and its impact on students. Improvement to ITE is one of the levers by which we can ensure that education gives all children, regardless of their background, greater choice for their future.

TFA is at the forefront of ITE in Australia, leading with the effective design and delivery of our flagship program, the Leadership Development Program (“the program”). For more than a decade, TFA has recruited high-achieving qualified people who are passionate about teaching and developed them to be effective teachers and leaders.

Having ushered 1120 new teachers into classrooms – and placed them in locations as remote as Elcho Island (Galiwinku) off the coast of Arnhem Land or closer to home in our capital cities, such as at Mill Park Secondary in north-east Melbourne – TFA has developed a proven model for recruiting and developing teachers to make an impact on the lives of their students and communities. With a demonstrated record of recruiting in subject areas of greatest need and placing in hard-to-staff roles, TFA has learnt hard-won lessons on how to prepare teachers for the diversity and complexity of current day classrooms.

The recommendations in this submission reflect insights generated from 13 years of operation in which TFA has placed teachers in schools across six states and territories. The recommendations consider how TFA’s successful approach can inform a multi-level, multi-stakeholder strategy to advance the teaching profession in Australia.

Core to combating educational inequity and achieving our goals as a society is the need to:

- **Raise the public perception of teaching and use a rigorous selection process.** Together, these changes will communicate the value of the profession and ensure the best candidates are chosen to teach in our classrooms.
- **Invest in the attraction and recruitment of subject experts and teachers from diverse backgrounds to enhance the workforce.** A targeted approach, which

seeks to educate candidates and understand their career motivations, can support the system in finding the teachers they need for the schools that need them the most.

- **Reduce barriers to entry by expanding employment-based pathways and removing unnecessary regulatory obstacles.** These barriers unevenly weigh on career-changers, many of whom cannot make the move into teaching without employment-based pathways.
- **Foster partnerships between ITE and schools to enhance the quality of ITE.** These partnerships should be underpinned by a willingness to support ITE students to become effective teachers in classrooms.
- **Bridge the divide between theory and practice, by providing instructional coaches to pre-service and early career teachers.** In recognising expert practitioners already in classrooms and providing them with avenues to train our newest teachers, we can amplify effective practice.
- **Carefully select the contexts that our newest teachers learn in.** First impressions count and early experiences of schools can have a significant impact on the development and retention of new teachers.
- **Make teaching a career worth having.** If we want to our teachers to thrive, we need to give them the right balance of challenge, support and recognition.

TFA stands ready to support where needed. We have a proven model for bringing new talent and expertise into the teaching profession and are positioned to multiply our impact.

The rise of increasingly diversified pathways into teaching in some Australian states and territories shows the time is ripe for greater change. In fact, the nature of the contemporary workforce demands it – career trajectories no longer fall along straight lines. We should not unnecessarily shut out those who have worked in other professional spheres. On the contrary, we should welcome them in, for they too can have a life-changing impact on the lives of their students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

		RECOMMENDATIONS		
		For Federal Government, universities and national bodies <small>(Federal Department of Education, Skills and Education; Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership)</small>	For employers and Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRAs) <small>(Including State/Territory Department of Education and Training and other employing bodies)</small>	For schools
OUTCOMES	Attract top talent into teaching	Federal government to deliver a strategic marketing and recruitment campaigns to increase prestige of teaching profession.	Invest in public campaigns to shift the narrative of the teaching profession to be more valued by society.	Publicly celebrate and recognise teachers within the community.
	Select the best future teachers	ITE providers embed a rigorous multi-stage selection process for ITE course entry.	Continuously engage with ITE providers to ensure teacher training is linked to the evolving skill requirements of teachers.	Continuously engage with state/territory departments to share evolving skill requirements of teachers.
	Attract the right teachers to the places where they are needed most	Develop targeted recruitment campaign and dedicated team of recruiters to attract applicants with subject matter expertise into ITE.	Develop a dedicated team of recruiters to attract and match ITE students with placements in areas that need them most.	Offer opportunities for potential ITE candidates to experience what teaching is like day-to-day.
	Create diverse pathways for people to enter teaching	Expand employment-based pathways and diversify pathways into teaching to encourage and enable more career-changers to make the shift. Revise regulatory standards to allow more flexible interpretation of the discipline-specific requirements.	Provide greater flexibility in recognising professional experience and existing skills when employing teachers.	Continue to recognise the professional experience career-changers bring to their work in schools and, alongside all staff, support their career ambitions in teaching.
	Ensure that beginning teachers are ready to make a positive impact in their classroom	Invest in more comprehensive data collection on the outcomes and overall quality of ITE programs.	Invest in mechanisms to collect data on the effectiveness of ITE programs, particularly as beginning teachers enter schools.	Provide ongoing feedback on the effectiveness of the training and support provided by ITE providers.
	Ensure that beginning teachers are supported to implement evidence-based strategies in their classrooms	Expansion of practical, classroom-based employment pathway models of teacher training; delivered, at least in part, by teaching practitioners with relevant experience. Make instructional coaching a pillar of pre-service teachers' experience of school placement, and ensure coaches are trained and have appropriate time release to undertake their role.	Fund professional learning programs to develop the instructional coaching skills of expert teachers and provide time release so these teachers can regularly coach early career teachers.	Select appropriately experienced teachers to be instructional coaches for early career teachers.
	Ensure that pre-service teachers' early experiences of teaching supports their development and retention in the profession	Invest in developing schools' capacity and capabilities to support the development of beginning teachers. Consider selection criteria for the schools that are best placed to support beginning teachers, and ensure these schools are resourced appropriately.	Promote schools as learning organisations that are ready, supported and willing to support beginning teachers. Identify schools that are best placed to support and develop beginning teachers.	Provide early career teachers with opportunities for collaboration with colleagues and stable teaching loads that match their subject training.
	Make teaching a career worth having	Lead states and territories in recognising high-performing teachers and ensuring they can support the development of other teachers.	Ensure industrial arrangements recognise high-achievement and create the conditions required to provide instructional support to beginning teachers.	Understand the strengths and passions of teaching staff and their future career aspirations. Identify emerging leadership talent to partake in leadership training.

PART A: ATTRACTING HIGH QUALITY CANDIDATES INTO ITE

RECOMMENDATION #1

The recommendations in this submission draw on both TFA’s 13 years of operation and the established research base. This discussion is structured as follows:

- First system recommendations are summarised at three levels:
 - National: Federal government, university (ITE provider) and national bodies
 - State/Territory: including Departments of Education, other employing bodies and Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRAs)
 - Schools
- Then TFA’s approach and the evidence base is discussed, as it relates to the recommendations provided
- Considerations are given for how the system could leverage these insights to improve ITE.

Australia needs to	Attract top talent into teaching		
TFA’s approach to achieve this	Raise the public perception of teaching		
System recommendations informed by TFA’s approach	For Federal Government, universities and national bodies (Federal Department of Education, Skills and Education; Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership)	For employers and Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRAs) (Including State/Territory Department of Education and Training and other employing bodies)	For schools
	Federal government to deliver a strategic marketing and recruitment campaigns to increase prestige of teaching profession.	Invest in public campaigns to shift the narrative of the teaching profession to be more valued by society.	Publicly celebrate and recognise teachers within the community.

The following discussion describes TFA’s approach as a model of how to raise the public perception of teaching.

TFA’S APPROACH: Raise the public perception of teaching

Despite the strengths of the existing workforce, Australia’s most capable individuals are not currently choosing a career in teaching (Masters, 2016). Only 40 per cent of Australian teachers believe teaching is valued by society (ACER, 2014b). A recent survey of young high-achieving Australians found that, when choosing a career, what matters most to them is the chance to make a difference (Goss et al., 2019).²

There is an opportunity now to deliberately communicate the value of the profession and the significant positive impact teaching can have on the lives of students and the broader community. Recent examples of this kind



“I have desired to be a music teacher ever since I picked up a bass guitar when I was 14. I was fortunate enough to have had some inspiring music teachers that shared a wealth of knowledge with me and I feel driven to further share this knowledge.

“I have 17 years’ experience in the music industry as a musician, band manager, sound engineer and educator. I believe that music education is important, not to create virtuosos, but rather to develop well rounded, confident humans that can think creatively and express themselves in a healthy manner.”

DAVE DRUMMOND
 Bachelor of Music, former career musician and TFA Associate, Cohort 2021

²High-achieving young Australians are defined in this analysis as people aged between 18 and 25 who obtained an ATAR or 80 or higher.

include the Get Into Teaching campaign run in the United Kingdom, which used the stories of real teachers to demonstrate the importance of teaching, where ‘every lesson shapes a life’, a message that saw increased interest in applications to teach (Battiston et al., 2019).

The selective, high-quality nature of the TFA program is one of the reasons why high-achievers are attracted to become Associates. TFA’s recruitment model deploys a range of integrated assets and actions to educate Australia’s top talent on the skills and qualities needed to be a high-performing teacher in a school serving a disadvantaged community.

Applicants indicate that they are attracted to the TFA program because of:

- The mission to address educational disadvantage;
- The opportunity to make an immediate impact;
- The selective, high-quality nature of the program (the average ATAR of Associates is above 92³);
- The ability to develop strong leadership skills; and
- The ability to earn a wage as they contribute in the classroom while concurrently earning a Master of Teaching degree.

TFA’s targeted attraction efforts focus on identifying potential applicants with:

- High demand learning area qualifications;
- Academic and/or professional achievements (e.g. scholarship programs, professional accomplishments);
- Leadership skills (e.g. student leaders, start-up founders);
- Diverse backgrounds (e.g. university graduates, young professionals and career-changers); and
- Alignment with TFA’s vision to break the cycle of disadvantage (e.g. volunteer or community service experience).



“I attended Kaniva College before moving to St Brigid’s College Horsham to finish my VCE. From there I attended Monash University where I completed my Bachelor of Science with a major in Pharmacology and minors in both Immunology and Business Management. During my time at Monash, I also completed a full stream of environmental and atmospheric sciences.

Throughout my time at Monash, I learnt so many awesome things about science that I really wanted to share these with as many people as possible. Originally, I was planning to enter the pharmaceuticals field, but upon completion of my degree I felt that I didn’t have that platform to share knowledge or be creative.

That’s when I found TFA. I realised that TFA’s mission to achieve educational equity is what I had been wanting to do the whole time. I wanted to return to a country school and teach specialist VCE subjects, to students who would otherwise be doing so via distance education. I think it’s really important that quality STEM programs are delivered in schools.”

LOUISE HOBBS

Bachelor of Science (major in Pharmacology, minor in Immunology and Business Management) and TFA Associate, Cohort 2021

³ Average ATAR is calculated using self-reported data, participants without an ATAR or who gained university entrance scores through a different system are not included.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Australia needs to	Select the best future teachers		
TFA's approach to achieve this	Rigorous multi-step selection process with academic and non-academic benchmarks		
System recommendations informed by TFA's approach	For Federal Government, universities and national bodies (Federal Department of Education, Skills and Education; Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership)	For employers and Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRA's) (Including State/Territory Department of Education and Training and other employing bodies)	For schools
	ITE providers embed a rigorous multi-stage selection process for ITE course entry.	Continuously engage with ITE providers to ensure teacher training is linked to the evolving skill requirements of teachers.	Continuously engage with state/territory departments to share evolving skill requirements of teachers.

The following section discusses the need for rigorous selection requirements for teaching and then considers TFA's approach as a model for how to design and implement such a process.

TFA'S APPROACH: Rigorous multi-step selection process with academic and non-academic benchmarks

Australia needs to increase the rigour of entry into ITE courses (McGaw, 2016). High-performing education systems recruit teachers from the top third of the academic cohort (McKinsey & Company, 2010) and empirical research clearly shows that academic ability is an essential attribute of effective teachers (Hanushek et al., 2019). In high-performing systems, entry to ITE is now as competitive as entry to degrees such as law, science, engineering and medicine in these nations. Conversely, in Australia less than half of school entrants into teaching were in the top thirty per cent of school-leavers in 2015 (Masters, 2015). On top of this, the rates of high achievers choosing teaching have been decreasing for the last three decades (the proportion of students entering who scored in the top quintile in reading assessments has fallen from 29 to 19 percent) (Goss et al., 2019).

In addition to being unapologetic about the academic performance required to be an effective teacher, high-

performing education systems employ multi-step mechanisms to select teachers (Masters, 2015) and screen for additional, non-academic qualities considered important for a teacher to be highly effective (McKinsey & Company, 2010).

In line with the strategies of high-performing systems, TFA employs a rigorous three-stage selection process aligned to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's (AITSL) ITE selection requirements. In addition to an achievement benchmark, applicants are assessed against an additional seven non-academic competencies that evidence shows are critical to effective teaching. Included in the selection stages are several opportunities to take on the role of a teacher such as by teaching a sample lesson and conducting a mock parent-teacher interview.

Each step of the selection process has a grading rubric that outlines entrance criteria and minimum acceptable requirements for program acceptance. Across the stages, candidates are provided with multiple opportunities to demonstrate each of the eight evidence-based competencies. Overall, applicants cite that they find the selection process professional, challenging and enjoyable.⁴

Assessors are crucial to ensuring the integrity of this selection process and TFA invests in training for all

⁴ Of 509 candidates surveyed in 2020, ninety-nine per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the recruitment process was professional, eighty-five per cent of applicants thought the selection process was equally or more challenging than other selection experiences they had experienced, and ninety-nine per cent enjoyed the selection process.

assessors as well as ensuring that all applications undergo a robust moderation process whereby a number of assessors grade applications and determine scores.

TFA also continues to review and refine this selection process by drawing on feedback from schools, to ensure that the most appropriate candidates are selected to teach in schools. For instance, consultation with TFA partner schools in remote areas has resulted in TFA further refining its selection process for candidates wishing to teach in remote school settings. Given the challenges faced by teachers in remote settings, resilience and problem solving are even more vital to teaching success and so these competencies are an increased focus for selection of candidates who wish to be placed in these areas.

The following table is TFA's admission criteria mapped to

AITSL's ITE selection requirements. TFA's overall recruitment approach has resulted in:

- More than 12,000 applications received to date;
- An applied-to-placed conversation rate of eight per cent, demonstrating the highly selective nature of the program;
- Consistent recognition as one of the 'Top 100 Graduate Employer' by GradAustralia and Australian Association of Graduate Employers (AAGE).
- Strong evidence of additionality for the teaching profession. That is, attracting high achievers who would not have otherwise taught or pursued teaching immediately (ACER, 2013).

	AITSL SELECTION REQUIREMENTS	TFA COMPETENCY
ACADEMIC	Prior academic achievement and/or other valid indicators that demonstrate relevant academic capability	Leadership and achievement: academic and other achievements that indicate an applicant is likely to set, pursue and achieve transformational results for their students.
NON-ACADEMIC	Motivation to teach Strong interpersonal and communication skills Willingness to learn Resilience Self-efficacy Conscientiousness Organisational and planning skills	Commitment to mission: evidence of commitment to teaching and a motivation to address educational inequity Communication and influencing ability: clear and confident communication and the ability to influence and motivate others Learning and self-evaluation: openness to learning from others and to seeking out opportunities to do so Resilience: drive to work hard and overcome obstacles Problem solving: the ability to understand context, collect and analyse relevant information and make decisions based on evidence Humility, respect and empathy: evidence of understanding the perspective of others and finding the best in those around them Organisational and planning ability: the ability to plan, organise and prioritise tasks effectively to meet goals



“As a kid from a low socio-economic background from the southern part of India, I longed for an education and was always curious about mathematics and its real-life applications.

This passion and curiosity eventually convinced me to complete my doctorate in Engineering. When I was looking for a meaningful career to make an impact in the community, I came across TFA and learning about TFA’s vision galvanised my understanding of educational disadvantage in Australia.

I applied for the Leadership Development Program (LDP) to join Cohort 2020 after learning more about TFA with QLD/ACT recruitment manager, Carolina. Since my first contact, she has been extremely helpful with her support and advice throughout the recruitment process.

Although I was unsuccessful during my first application round, the feedback that I received from Carolina and the admissions team was extremely helpful to self-reflect. In early February [2020], when I saw an email popped up in my inbox from Carolina encouraging me to re-apply, she helped me to understand my potential in a

larger context. Moreover, the communication that I received from the overall TFA admissions and recruitment team was clear and prompt.

Finally, the most satisfying thing about this recruitment journey was when I came to know that I was accepted into the TFA LDP. I envision myself becoming a great mathematics teacher and would like to make two important contributions.

The real-life applications of mathematics are endless. We are surrounded by numbers, equations, and algorithms. In saying that, I would like to make sure every student embraces the value, complexity, and beauty of mathematics. Secondly, I would like to nurture uniqueness and thereby developing the self-esteem of students.”

DR. VIVEKANANTHAN BALAKRISHNAN
Bachelor of Engineering, Master of Engineering,
Doctor of Philosophy - PhD in Instrumentation
Engineering, TFA Associate, Cohort 2021

RECOMMENDATION #3

Australia needs to	Attract the right teachers to the places where they are needed most		
TFA's approach to achieve this	Recruit for the skill needs of disadvantaged schools		
System recommendations informed by TFA's approach	For Federal Government, universities and national bodies (Federal Department of Education, Skills and Education; Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership)	For employers and Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRAs) (Including State/Territory Department of Education and Training and other employing bodies)	For schools
	Develop targeted recruitment campaign and dedicated team of recruiters to attract applicants with subject matter expertise into ITE.	Develop a dedicated team of recruiters to attract and match ITE students with placements in areas that need them most.	Offer opportunities for potential ITE candidates to experience what teaching is like day-to-day.

The following section describes the need to recruit subject specialists into ITE, train them well and ensure they are placed in the areas that need them most. TFA's model for doing so is then considered as an example.

TFA'S APPROACH: RECRUIT FOR THE SKILL NEEDS OF DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS

A key challenge of the schooling system is the requirement to have the right teachers, in the right places, at the right time. While the numbers of teachers may not be an issue in the aggregate, there are longstanding teacher shortages in regional, rural and remote schools, disadvantaged schools and in certain subject areas (namely, STEM, languages and VET-in-schools). Often these staffing issues compound in disadvantaged schools, where shortages in key subjects are even more acute and appropriately trained staff are unavailable.

In the last Federal review process, Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) (2014) reported that teacher subject expertise, and its interaction with pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, is positively linked to teacher performance. The subject expertise of those that enter the profession and the way that we train them to use this expertise in a classroom matters. TEMAG found, however, that ITE does not necessarily build the subject expertise required for teachers to confidently teach in these subject areas.

TFA focuses on ensuring that those with demonstrated subject expertise enter the classrooms that need them.



“It is really hard to get content specialists to this area, and with TFA we get young people who are not just enthusiastic about teaching, but are content specialists and who are really committed to becoming competent practitioners when they get here. They also bring with them a wealth of experiences from outside an education sphere. That's important.

For Hedland and other remote regional areas, it is a way we can get hold of some really crackerjack young people in a profession that needs young people to make it alive and dynamic.”

BILL MANN

Former Principal Hedland Senior High School, TFA Partner School, a partner school of TFA since 2018.

TFA has proven success in attracting talent from diverse backgrounds over our thirteen year history including:

- **Students from a breadth of subject specialities and academic backgrounds:** in the 2021 Cohort, more than 50 per cent are STEM-qualified teachers (a steady increase from 25 per cent in the inaugural 2010 Cohort) and 40 per cent hold advanced degrees.
- **Students from diverse careers stages and work**

experiences: in the 2021 Cohort, more than 73 per cent are career changers or young professionals.

- **Students from regional, rural and remote backgrounds:** more than a third of our Associates each year are from a regional, rural or remote background. In our 2021 Cohort, 69 per cent are teaching in regional, rural or remote locations.
- **Students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds:** TFA has increasingly focused on recruiting candidates from the communities where our Associates work. Reflective of this focus, in the last three cohorts more than half of the Associates have a lived experience of educational disadvantage.
- **Students from culturally diverse backgrounds:** TFA has increased its focus on attracting more applicants who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Whilst this still remains a challenge, work has been done to embed a First Nations perspective into TFA's recruitment strategy and build relationships with First Nations communities.

TFA uses a range of methods to attract high-potential, diverse candidates to take up teaching. This multi-faceted approach is unique compared with other teaching pathways, and includes:

- A dedicated regionally-based team of recruiters to attract, engage and select applicants with a focus on understanding every candidate's motivations for entering the classroom as well as their broader career aspirations;
- Integrated market campaigns and strategies to raise awareness about and understanding of educational disadvantage and the TFA program;
- Educating prospective applicants on the skills and qualities needed to be a high performing teacher, the opportunities for personal and professional growth this presents, and the contribution they could make to ensuring socioeconomic disadvantage is no barrier to high quality learning;
- Offering candidates in-person and virtual experiences, which give participants insights into a 'day in the life' of

a teacher;

- Building relationships with university, community and industry stakeholders nationally; and
- Delivering targeted recruitment campaigns and hosting events aimed at appealing to diverse candidates and their motivations including STEM qualified candidates, career changers, and prospective candidates in regional and remote locations.

Communicating the realities of educational inequity is an important part of the recruitment strategy. A part of this is the encouragement for candidates to consider going to a regional, rural or remote location, given this is where the need is highest and where candidates stand to have the greatest impact.

In all of these engagements with potential candidates, TFA focuses on retaining applicants by ensuring its recruitment methods are transparent, authentic and provide a realistic preview of both the benefits and challenges of teaching. Furthermore, TFA's Alumni community of teachers is used throughout the process to build connections across the TFA network, and provide honest advice about navigating the program.

Once candidates are selected, TFA partners with schools to match school context and staffing need with the Associate's learning areas, strengths and location preferences. As an employment-based pathway, TFA only offers placements for true vacancies, which means supply of teachers is aligned to demand. The most recent evaluation of TFA (2017) found that Associates are delivering the skill sets that schools need, and that 30 per cent of partner schools would not have access to the skills they need if not for the TFA program.

While recruiting subject experts to teach in schools is important, so too is the method used to train and develop these teachers to ensure have impact in their classrooms. Key to this is the need to build their pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. TFA's model for doing this, which involves support from expert practitioners who provide instructional coaching in classrooms and schools, is discussed in detail under Recommendation 6.

RECOMMENDATION #4

Australia needs to	Create diverse pathways for people to enter teaching		
TFA's approach to achieve this	Reduce barriers to entry to enable career-changers to move into teaching		
System recommendations informed by TFA's approach	For Federal Government, universities and national bodies (Federal Department of Education, Skills and Education; Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership)	For employers and Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRAs) (Including State/Territory Department of Education and Training and other employing bodies)	For schools
	Expand employment-based pathways and diversify pathways into teaching to encourage and enable more career-changers to make the shift. Revise regulatory standards to allow more flexible interpretation of the discipline-specific requirements.	Provide greater flexibility in recognising professional experience and existing skills when employing teachers.	Continue to recognise the professional experience career-changers bring to their work in schools and, alongside all staff, support their career ambitions in teaching.

The following discussion considers:

- The need to reduce barriers to entering teaching, particularly for career-changers
- The success of employment-based pathways, like TFA's program, in reducing many of the barriers to entering teaching
- The need to reduce regulatory barriers that narrowly define prior experience and unnecessarily limit the pool of candidates who can enter teaching.

TFA'S APPROACH: Reduce barriers for entry for career-changers

The future of work will be less linear in the future, with some studies estimating that young Australians entering the workforce will make 17 changes in employers across five different careers (McCrinkle, 2014). The nature of the contemporary workforce means that it is no longer plausible to assume that teachers will remain in the profession for life. TFA acknowledges this, and supports Associates to understand how they can personally and professionally contribute to addressing educational disadvantage in Australia through a lifetime of action within and outside of the classroom.

Many jobs will have some transferrable skill sets, which can be built upon in a new role, and teaching is one of

these. For example, an engineer, who has spent years conducting high-level technical analysis, will be able to draw upon this knowledge when teaching students applied calculus.

For the teaching profession to benefit from this shift in career trajectories, teaching needs to be responsive to the changing nature of work. This means barriers for entry to teaching need to be reduced, while maintaining the profession's high standards.

Since 2010, TFA has supported hundreds of mid-career professionals to make the change into teaching and recruitment from this group has steadily increased over time. In the 2021 cohort 73 per cent of Associates have come from another professional environment (see Chart 2 below) and the range of industries is diverse (Chart 3). For those with prior professional experience, the top reasons for applying to the program include their belief in TFA's vision to address educational disadvantage (26%); because the program provides an entry point into a career in teaching (24%); and the opportunity to be challenged and have genuine responsibility from day one (14%) (Alumni Survey data, 2020).

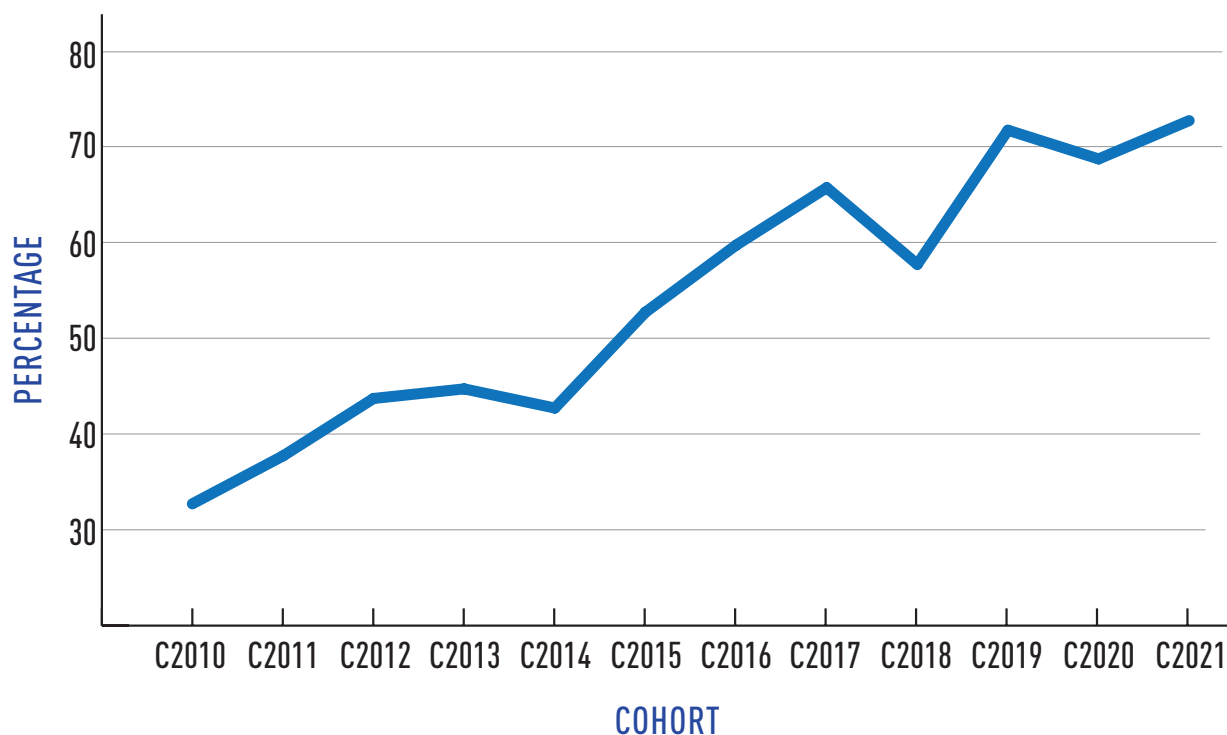


Chart 2: The proportion of TFA Associates with prior professional experience, Cohorts 2010-2021.

Source: TFA internal data, (2010-2021).

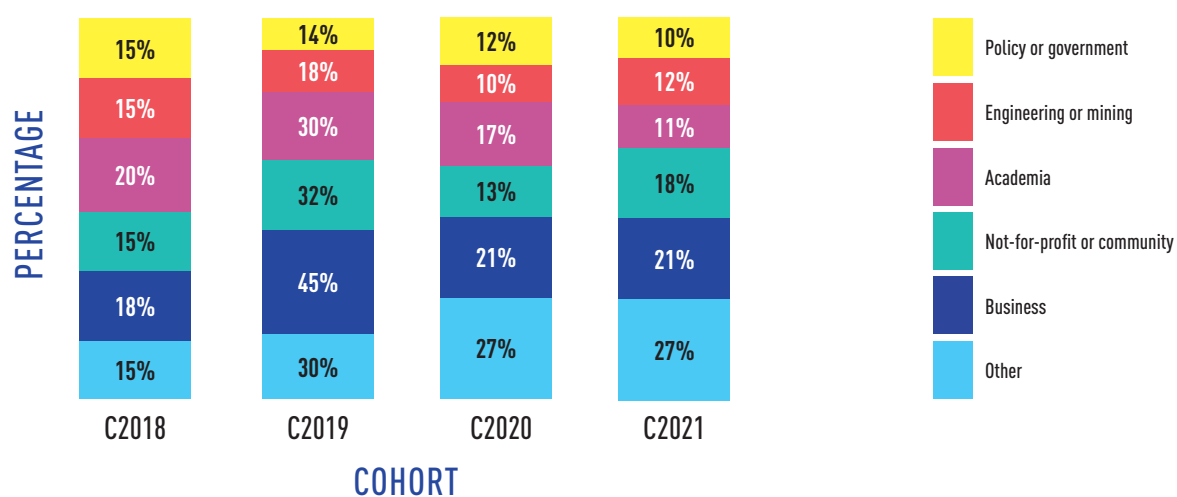






Chart 3: Previous industries of TFA Associates with prior professional experience, 2018 - 2021.

Source: TFA internal data, (2018-2021).

Note: Associate prior experience can include work across several industries. For this reason percentage totals may be greater than 100%.

Reduce barriers for entry for career-changers

From TFA's experience walking alongside career-changers, it is clear that there are significant barriers to choosing to enter teaching given the costs which come with their decision. These barriers are described in the table below.

BARRIER TO ENTRY	IMPACT	OPPORTUNITIES TO REDUCE THIS BARRIER
<p>Cost of completing a two-year full-time Master of Teaching degree</p> 	<p>Significant and often prohibitive costs associated with re-training as a teacher, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forgone wages while studying • Incurring university debt while completing ITE study 	<p>Employment-based pathways, like TFA, enable teachers to earn while they learn.</p> <p>Provide a stipend/payment to career-changers while they are re-training as a teacher.</p> <p>Provide flexible study and work options, such as internships. This could enable pre-service teachers to be employed in school support roles and be engaged in complementary work that reinforces their teacher training.</p>
<p>Subject-eligibility requirements for ITE</p> 	<p>ITE accreditation regulation and policy creates a series of compounding barriers that restrict many from entering ITE programs.</p> <p>These barriers impact most on career changers, candidates with international undergraduate degrees (whose degrees do not easily match to learning area requirements); and candidates who have completed applied undergraduate degrees (such as nursing).</p>	<p>Review the subject-eligibility process and regulatory barriers that are inhibiting high-potential candidates (including career changers) from entering ITE courses, with the aim to create greater flexibility.</p>
<p>Recognition of professional experience once teaching</p> 	<p>Career-changers are likely to have a reduced salary when they enter the classroom, having moved from a mid-career salaried position to restart on entry-level wages.</p> <p>The tenure-based salary structure may discourage career-changers, especially those who are also weighing up taking time out of the workforce and taking on more university debt during ITE.</p>	<p>Provide advice to schools on how to best recognise prior professional experience of career-changers.</p> <p>Alongside all staff, support the career ambitions and progress of career-changers.</p>
<p>Personal circumstances and responsibilities</p> 	<p>Career-changers tend to have more commitments than new graduates, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant family and caring responsibilities; • Mortgages or rent obligations; and • Decreased flexibility to move locations for a new teaching role. 	<p>Provide individualised recruitment support to candidates to overcome personal barriers (such as finding appropriate care arrangements for children or work opportunities for partners). This is particularly important for regional, rural and remote locations.</p>

The main costs outlined on the previous page are driven by the requirement to undertake ITE before entering a classroom – this is a minimum of two years full-time study for those who already have an undergraduate degree, and more for those who do not have a degree that gives them subject eligibility to teach.

Mid-career professionals have more commitments than likely younger university undergraduates. Career-changers are usually weighing up leaving a mid-career salaried position to incur further university debt and restart on entry level wages. At the same time they need to consider other responsibilities and expenses, such as partners, children, mortgages or rent. For some, a work-and-study pathway like TFA's program is the only way they could make the change.

As well as providing a lower cost pathway for individuals, the TFA program is more broadly proven to be a cost-effective model for attracting teachers into teaching. Analysis undertaken by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (2016) has shown that the TFA pathway has a total cost of \$118,000 per student, compared to \$150,000 cost of the standard Master of Teaching route. This cost-effectiveness has led the NSW Productivity Commission to endorse the TFA Program in their recently released White Paper.

While the TFA employment-based pathway reduces barriers for some, other teaching candidates may prefer a different style of learning. For this reason, TFA recommends not only the expansion of employment-based pathways like the TFA program, but also the diversification of entries into teaching. This could include internship models; opportunities for ITE students to enter the teaching workforce after a certain period of study or once a demonstrated capability level has been met; or a gradual release of responsibility model where ITE students may first have a support role in a classroom while they study.

While employment-based pathways can reduce barriers to entry for those with recognised prior learning, current regulation narrowly defines prior experience and unnecessarily limits the pool of candidates who can enter teaching.

There is a complex regulatory environment that determines subject-eligibility for hopeful ITE students.

Universities are the entity that determine eligibility for ITE candidates and they do so with reference to:

- AITSL's ITE Accreditation Standard 3.7;
- The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF); and
- Teacher Regulatory Authority's (TRA) jurisdictional policies.

Each of these regulatory frameworks are considered in further detail on the following page.



“This was one of the most terrifying aspects of the career change ... do I really have to throw away 25 years of learning? Will anything be relevant? While it has been humbling and challenging, I am now starting to be able to see how to best contribute.

I couldn't have become a teacher pursuing the standard pathways — I have kids and, for me, I couldn't see it working.

I know it's a cliché but it's true: I felt a need to be connected directly to people at the coalface, where the task was immediate, and there were interactions that were meaningful all the time. Some other sectors involve great work, but it is removed from the consumer. With teaching the consumer is right there in front of you.”

MATTHEW WILLIAMSON

Bachelor of Arts, former marketing and social research executive and current Learning Specialist and Teacher, TFA Alumni, Cohort 2018

ENTITY	ROLE IN DETERMINING SUBJECT ELIGIBILITY FOR ITE COURSES
The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)	<p>National leadership body that works with states and territories to ensure all accredited ITE programs align with nationally agreed Guidelines, Standards and Procedures.</p> <p>AITSL's Accreditation Standards and Procedures (2019) includes Standard 3.7, which requires entrants to post-graduate ITE courses to have a discipline-specific bachelor or equivalent qualification relevant to the Australian Curriculum.⁵</p>
Universities as ITE providers	<p>Universities deliver ITE courses and are responsible for determining the eligibility of ITE candidates prior to entry. A part of this assessment includes the determination of an ITE candidate's subject-eligibility.</p> <p>Universities are guided in this assessment by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), which is national policy that regulates Australian qualifications. A key restriction in the AQF is the need for ITE candidates who completed their undergraduate degree over 10 years ago to show the continued relevancy and experience in their learning area.</p> <p>ITE providers also adhere to subject-eligibility policies as set out by the relevant Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRAs).</p>
Jurisdictional Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRAs)	<p>TRAs actively lead and implement AITSL's Standards and Procedures in their jurisdiction and they define how AITSL's standards should be applied in their jurisdiction.</p> <p>TRAs develop and refine jurisdictional-specific policies in relation to subject eligibility for ITE, in line with state/territory-based legislation and policies.</p>

TFA has had 13 years experience navigating this complex regulatory system, with the aim to actively bring new entrants into teaching. Our view is that while subject matter expertise is vital to ensuring the effectiveness of incoming teachers, the prescriptiveness of these regulatory standards and their implementation in determining ITE eligibility keeps too many suitably qualified people from entering ITE and making an impact in Australian classrooms. This unintended consequence has also been noted in previous analysis by the Productivity Commission (2012) which recommended revising Accreditation Standard 3.7 to allow for more flexible interpretation of prior experience.

In TFA's experience, each year there are a number of candidates who meet the rigorous competency-based selection requirements for our program, but who are considered ineligible to participate because they do not meet the subject-specific requirements for entry into ITE.

For instance, in order to be eligible to teach secondary school English, candidates need to have undertaken a specified number of English Literature units within each year of their undergraduate degree. Candidates with undergraduate degrees in media, architecture, or the clinical sciences (such as nursing, physiotherapy or pathology) are routinely difficult to place, and even engineers (who have studied applied mathematics) have difficulty gaining eligibility to teach maths. Some of these people persevere and undertake additional units of undergraduate study to gain eligibility, but this is at their own cost and many do not take up this option.

For career-changers it is even more difficult. One recent applicant for the TFA program had an undergraduate degree in media and a Masters in Environmental Studies, and since studying had published three non-fiction books. This applicant did not meet the subject-eligibility requirements to teach English because she graduated from her media degree more than 10 years prior and her

⁵For secondary ITE courses, this requires at least a major study in one teaching area and, preferably, a second teaching area comprising at least a minor study. For primary ITE courses, this requires at least one year of full-time equivalent study relevant to one or more learning areas of the primary school curriculum.

experience since was not deemed to show continued subject relevancy to teach English. At the same time, this candidate did not meet requirements to teach science because their environmental science studies were completed via research rather than coursework. Examples such as this point to the need to carefully consider the regulations at play, and how they are a barrier for well-qualified people who are motivated to enter the teaching profession.

At the same time, this regulatory environment also disadvantages candidates with international undergraduate degrees (which do not easily match to learning areas) and those who have completed applied undergraduate degrees (such as nursing) and who may be more likely to be from a disadvantaged background. At the same time, there are others who do not hold an undergraduate degree, but who do possess strong leadership skills and a motivation to teach. For example, candidates from a military background or those from a trade background who may be great assets to teach technology subjects.

Revising these regulatory standards could allow a more flexible interpretation of the discipline-specific requirements and enable more people to enter teaching. Testing subject eligibility should go beyond analysis of university transcripts and enable the consideration of relevant skills learnt in highly related degrees and professions as evidence of sufficient content knowledge.



“Our partnership with TFA has allowed us to continue to facilitate VCE [Victorian Curriculum of Education] physics. We were struggling to find teachers to fill the position, and TFA was able to match us with Associates who could.

We are seeing a lot of innovation in the science department – the subjects we offer haven’t expanded, however we have shifted to more practical classes with hands-on elements. Our Associates who teach sciences are actively looking at ways to link the broader community with the school within their classes.”

GLENN KANE

Principal of Heywood District Secondary College in Victoria, a partner school of TFA since 2017.

RECOMMENDATION #5

Australia needs to	Ensure that beginning teachers are ready to make a positive impact in their classroom		
TFA's approach to achieve this	Build partnerships and feedback mechanisms between ITE providers and schools to enable continuous improvement of courses		
System recommendations informed by TFA's approach	For Federal Government, universities and national bodies (Federal Department of Education, Skills and Education; Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership)	For employers and Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRAs) (Including State/Territory Department of Education and Training and other employing bodies)	For schools
	Invest in more comprehensive data collection on the outcomes and overall quality of ITE programs.	Invest in mechanisms to collect data on the effectiveness of ITE programs, particularly as beginning teachers enter schools.	Provide ongoing feedback on the effectiveness of the training and support provided by ITE providers.

The following section discusses:

- The unique accountability model created in an integrated employment-based pathway model like TFA's program
- The comprehensive monitoring and evaluation processes that support TFA's understanding of its success and continual improvement
- The need for a more comprehensive data collection and monitoring system within the ITE system, which would allow for comparisons of course quality.

TFA'S APPROACH: Partnerships and feedback loops with ITE providers

The success of TFA's employment-based pathway program is supported by our partnerships with our university partner, the Australian Catholic University (ACU), as well as partnerships with individual schools and their communities.

The qualification that Associates complete over the two year program – the Masters of Teaching (Secondary) (Leading Learning) (MTSLL) – is unique within the Australian ITE system. The course is co-developed and co-delivered by both TFA and ACU and is customised to leverage the practical classroom experience of Associates. In practice, this means Associates can implement the strategies and practices they learn as part of the MTSLL in real time in their day-to-day classes. This aligns

with research that teachers are most likely to learn by undergoing deliberate practice in realistic contexts (Allen & Sims, 2018).

On top of the opportunity to practise while learning, this co-delivery model provides meaningful and ongoing feedback between schools, TFA and our university partner about the strengths of the MTSLL and the success Associates have in implementing this in their own teaching practice. TFA receives feedback from many different perspectives (including school principals, in-school mentors and Associates themselves) and across various formats (such as annual surveys of principals and school mentors, biannual surveys of Associates, focus groups and continued one to one engagement with TFA staff).

This feedback is vital for appropriately supporting Associates and schools and ensuring the continual improvement of the MTSLL. Across our 13 years, this feedback has helped us deliver an increasingly bespoke qualification that meets Associates at their point of need. Most recently, this feedback has enabled TFA to improve its practice working inclusively with diverse communities, and in developing Associate ability to implement trauma-informed practices and secondary literacy strategies.

This partnership model creates an accountability mechanism that is unique for ITE courses. ACU and TFA, as co-deliverers of the MTSLL, are accountable for the performance and progress of Associates and so need to provide a course that gives Associates the tools to be successful in classrooms. This is a key ingredient to

the success of the model, which Associates and schools routinely praise for its ability to prepare them for the classroom. When surveyed, 92 per cent of TFA partner principals say that TFA Associates are improving students' academic outcomes and that they would hire another Associate (TFA, 2020).⁶

Other instances of ITE provider and school partnerships point to the interest in building stronger relationships across the schooling system. Victoria's Department of Education and Training has invested in Teaching Academies of Professional Practice (TAPPs), which are partnerships between geographical clusters of schools and ITE providers with the purpose of improving the experience of ITE students.

Funding procedures and TFA's willingness to understand and improve the effectiveness of our program mean that data monitoring, analysis and reporting are a part of the TFA program. On top of this, as a recipient of Commonwealth funding, the TFA program has been evaluated externally three times in 13 years and is about to be evaluated again for a fourth time.

These evaluations are welcome as sources of accountability and feedback to ensure the program we deliver is of the highest quality as measured by the outcomes of our program. These processes, both internal and external, allow TFA to report that:

- **ITE program retention is significantly better than for other ITE programs:** 92 per cent of Associates complete the two-year ITE program, in comparison to 47 per cent of undergraduates and 76 per cent of postgraduate students that complete ITE (AITSL, 2020).⁷
- **Associates deliver the skills that schools need most:** The most recent independent program evaluation of TFA (2017) found that Associates deliver the skills that schools need. Most principals are appointing Associates because they prefer them to alternative options.

- **Associates become high quality teachers:** By the end of their two-year placement, principals report that Associates demonstrate behaviours at both the 'proficient' and 'highly accomplished' level of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers more often than other teachers with similar experience (dandolopartners, 2017).

- **Alumni continue to have an impact on the education system:** Current Alumni survey data shows:

- 88% of Alumni remain working in education
- 72% of Alumni remain teaching and/or leading in schools
- 53% of Alumni are in positions of responsibility of leadership within their school

While TFA comprehensively monitors data, there are few reliable points of comparison that can help gauge TFA's relative success against other ITE programs. ITE completion rates, as published by AITSL, only tell a part of the story. While national surveys do measure the quality and outcomes of higher education courses, there are limitations to the information they provide.⁸ This issue is compounded by a lack of robust evidence on the rate of teacher attrition (Weldon, 2018) and an inconsistent view of how to define teacher attrition (AITSL, 2016).⁹

This means that we do not know the health of our broader system of ITE provision and so cannot identify and share best practice across the system or plan adequately for the future workforce needs. A more comprehensive data collection and monitoring system would allow for comparison of ITE quality and employment outcomes. While careful consideration is warranted for how to then use this data, several have argued for a system that provides more information about which ITE programs produce the most employable graduates, which would enable ITE students to make decisions based on course quality (Roberts-Hull et al., 2015; Daley et al., 2019).

⁶ Principal data from Principal surveys in ACT, NT, VIC, TAS, WA, conducted by Teach For Australia in September 2019 with Departmental approval. More recent survey data is unavailable with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on school operations in 2020.

⁷ AITSL report these completion rates as within six years for undergraduate ITE students and within four years for postgraduate students.

⁸ For instance, the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) suite of surveys measures student experience, graduate outcomes and employer satisfaction of higher education providers nationally.

⁹ The Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD), a joint initiative between State/Territory and Commonwealth Government, aims to link and report on state and territory based registration data, ITE data and teacher survey data. Currently only national ITE pipeline data has been published (AITSL, 2020).

PART B: PREPARING ITE STUDENTS TO BECOME EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

RECOMMENDATION #6

Australia needs to	Ensure that beginning teachers are supported to implement evidence-based strategies in their classrooms		
TFA's approach to achieve this	Bridge the divide between theory and practice by providing instructional coaches to early-career teachers		
System recommendations informed by TFA's approach	<p>For Federal Government, universities and national bodies</p> <p>(Federal Department of Education, Skills and Education; Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership)</p>	<p>For employers and Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRAs)</p> <p>(Including State/Territory Department of Education and Training and other employing bodies)</p>	<p>For schools</p>
	<p>Expansion of practical, classroom-based employment pathway models of teacher training; delivered, at least in part, by teaching practitioners with relevant experience.</p> <p>Make instructional coaching a pillar of pre-service teachers' experience of school placement, and ensure coaches are trained and have appropriate time release to undertake their role.</p>	<p>Fund professional learning programs to develop the instructional coaching skills of expert teachers and provide time release so these teachers can regularly coach early career teachers.</p>	<p>Select appropriately experienced teachers to be instructional coaches for early career teachers.</p>

The following section discusses:

- The challenges inherent in the design of traditional ITE courses, which do not give pre-service teachers the chance to practice evidence-based instructional techniques in realistic classroom environments, with the guidance and support of an instructional coach
- TFA's employment-based pathway model, which bridges the divide between theory and practice by providing intensive coaching in Associate's classrooms and schools.

TFA'S APPROACH: Bridge the divide between theory and practice by providing instructional coaches to early-career teachers

One of the most significant challenges for an early career teacher is to take what they have learned over their ITE course and contextualise it for their classroom. Australia's dominant model of ITE provision is heavily front-loaded, with little interaction between the academic and training

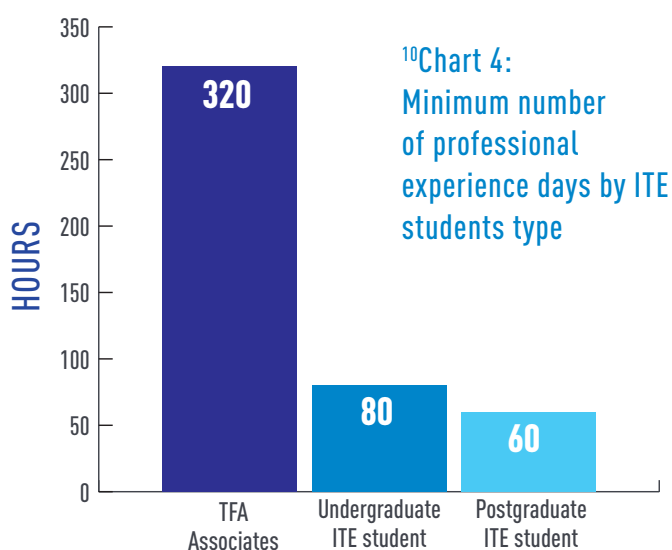
aspects of courses (Allen and Sims, 2018). Consequently, ITE students do not get the opportunities they need to develop as beginning teachers: that is, the chance to practice evidenced-based instructional techniques in realistic environments with the guidance and support of an expert coach who provides them with sufficient feedback. Instead, the structure of ITE courses requires ITE students to learn all of the content in the course before they begin teaching their own classes (Allen and Sims, 2018).

This structure does not set teachers up for success as they need to be able to deliberately practise and master basic skills first (such as structuring a class, communicating instructions, behaviour management techniques) and make these automatic before then can then move onto higher order skills (such as, embedding literacy instruction into content lessons or differentiating for individual needs). By the time teachers are at the stage that they could implement higher-level skills, they may be several years out of their ITE course and have difficulty remembering and applying this content (Allen & Sims,

2018). This contributes to the perception that graduate teachers learn most of what they know in the classroom rather than through their ITE degree.

The TFA employment-based pathway, however, sees Associates enter classrooms sooner and begin implementing strategies from their ITE course earlier than in other ITE pathways. The TFA MTSSL is deliberately designed and sequenced for this type of on-the-ground learning in classrooms. Key features include:

- **Associates build on their established subject-specialist knowledge:** all Associates have already completed at least an undergraduate degree aligned to the learning area they will teach at their school.
- **Before entering the classroom, Associates complete 25 per cent of the MTSSL:** As Associates will soon be entering classrooms, content is prioritised based on what Associates will need to be Day 1 ready for their classroom. This includes front-loading core subjects related to building positive behaviours; high impact pedagogical strategies; and, lesson planning, curriculum and assessment. The course then builds upon this foundational knowledge and gradually introduces increasingly sophisticated teaching strategies. This means that learning is ongoing, relevant to their needs, and can be applied to their classroom.
- **Associates have more opportunities to practice than other ITE students:** As part of their Masters of Teaching, TFA Associates spend approximately 320 days in the classroom, whereas ITE graduates are required to complete a minimum of 60-80 days of placement (as shown below).¹⁰



Time spent in a class does not necessarily equate to development as a teacher. This is why the role of high quality instructional coaching still remains a signature feature of the TFA Program. TFA provides Associates with three levers of coaching support – a Teaching and Leadership Adviser, a School Mentor and an Academic Mentor.

TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP ADVISER (TLA)

The Teaching and Leadership Adviser (TLA) is an experienced teacher who provides rigorous one-on-one coaching, regular classroom observations and pastoral care to guide Associate development as a teacher and leader throughout the program.

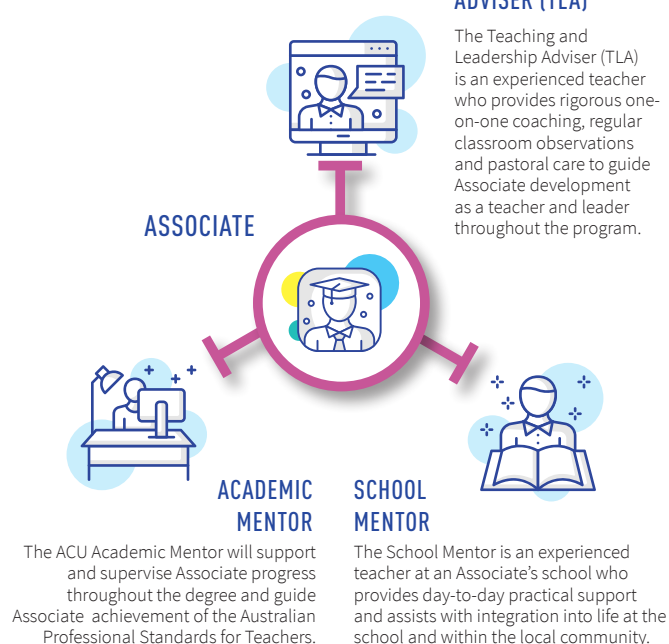


Chart 5: Tri-partite support model

TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP ADVISER (TLA)

After over a decade implementing and evolving the TLA role, TFA has developed an astute understanding of early-career teacher's needs in instructional coaching.

Coaching for early-career teachers is most effective when it combines strong pastoral care with targeted instructional improvement. Strong relationships and rapport are essential prerequisites for coaching, but have the added benefit of ensuring teachers' personal needs and challenges are acknowledged and supported. Coupled with a common language or framework for

¹⁰ TFA minimum hours is calculated based on class time for a 0.8 FTE load across two years of an average school year with 40 weeks. Placement minimum benchmarks are set by AITSL for undergraduate ITE courses (80 days) and postgraduate courses (60 days).

quality teaching, TLAs are able to guide participants to set and achieve ambitious goals for their students and themselves by tailoring coaching to raise the quality of planning, engagement, classroom management, and instructional delivery.

Coaching must take a student-centred and evidence-driven approach. TLAs draw on a range of data points as they co-analyse student and teacher evidence with Associates to determine strengths and growth areas for teaching and learning. The importance of utilising multiple points of data to drive teacher improvement is well established and endorsed by experts in Australia and internationally (Jensen, 2011; Cantrell & Kane, 2013). Data provides both a baseline to identify goals for improvement and reflect on growth in teaching and learning.

Effective coaching for early career teachers needs to be authentic, recurring, and cyclical. The TLA will meet with their Associates on average three to four times per term, though this occurs more intensively in Associates first year of teaching. These interactions involve observations, feedback and coaching meetings. By engaging the participants inside and outside their day-to-day classroom activities, coaching is grounded in authentic classroom and school context. The coaching process creates a cycle of reflection and action, whereby prior goals and progress provide the starting point for new coaching cycles. This creates a sense of continuity and positive accountability for Associates, who can create a thread of progress over extended periods of time.

SCHOOL MENTOR

As part of the TFA Program, TFA partner schools commit to providing a School Mentor as on-the-ground contextual support, complementing the support Associates receive from their TLA.

Mentoring helps to nurture early-career teachers in the beginning stages of their professional growth. Research has consistently found that new teachers experience a range of benefits from quality mentoring relationships, including emotional support, increased confidence, improved self-reflection, problem-solving capabilities and the development of classroom management practices and norms (Hobson et al., 2009).

School Mentors benefit from a comprehensive two-year



“The coaching throughout the program gave me constant feedback on my teaching, allowing me to improve much more, and at a faster rate, than if I had not had it. Both the Teaching and Learning Advisors from the program and my mentor at school were experienced teachers. Their guidance and feedback were invaluable throughout as a new teacher. It is very easy to self-criticise, especially if you are someone who is used to performing to a high standard. To be new in a profession and to make so many mistakes is difficult. Having the support of so many meant that I got through this, accepted myself and developed my teacher identity and new personal identity, with their help.”

YING QIN – Bachelor of Commerce (Honours), TFA Alumni, Cohort 2016

training program provided by TFA. Effective mentoring practices are developed through an evidence-based professional learning curriculum called the Mentor Development Program. Designed to build best-practice skills and knowledge for effective mentoring, the Mentor Development Program supports mentor teachers’ professional growth through in-person training, online learning modules, regional professional learning communities and collaborative practice. School Mentors regularly communicate with their Associate’s TLA to provide the necessary wrap-around support early-career teachers need.

The mentor/mentee relationship is mutually beneficial, with mentors reporting benefits to their own development and learning (Lopez-Real & Kwan, 2006).

Key to the efficacy of this role is the expertise of the in-school mentors and the time they are given to undertake their role. In order to ensure this, TFA ensures:

- **Careful selection of appropriate mentors in partnership with schools:** In-school mentors are experienced teachers and are selected in partnership

with schools to provide support for Associates.

- **Funded training for in-school mentors:** in-school mentors undertake the Mentor Development Program (MDP), which provides training in instructional coaching and is aligned to the frameworks that TLAs use when working with Associates.
- **Regular time release for in-school mentors:** Funded time release is provided for in-school mentors to attend the MDP, as well as to meet weekly with their Associate mentee.

ACADEMIC MENTOR

ACU Academic Mentors have first-hand teaching experience in each region and work alongside TFA's TLAs and school mentors, to provide the necessary support to placed teachers. Academic Mentors focus on ensuring that Associates complete their necessary ITE learning units and assess Associates progress in achieving the APST.

The bespoke design of the TFA's program enables the course to fully integrate three key components – Associate's classroom teaching, Teach For Australia's leadership development activities, and the Master of Teaching studies – and ensure that all three domains are recognised, and contribute towards Associate's qualification.

The Academic Mentor role is key to the integrated employment-based pathway model of learning for Associates, as they also work with Associates across

the two years of their studies and continue to monitor and assess their development. Academic Mentors are responsible for undertaking both formative and summative assessment of Associate's teaching practice, as evidenced against the APST.

Paired with an Associate for a longer period of time, Academic Mentors assessments of practice draw on a strong and diversified evidence-base including classroom observations, analysis of classroom artefacts (such as planning, instructional and assessment materials), student work and feedback. As Associates are teaching in schools already, this assessment is inherently authentic as it captures Associate's ability to use their knowledge and skills in a real-life context. This evaluation process, where trained practitioners assess Associates in authentic environments and draw on a diverse range of evidence provides accurate judgements and meaningful feedback which can enhance teacher development (TNTP, 2010; Little et al., 2009; Syavedra, 2014).

Instructional coaching should be available to all early career teachers to ensure they have appropriate support to develop into effective teachers. With the implementation of certification arrangements for Highly Accomplished or Lead Teachers (HALTs), the schooling system is identifying a cohort of teachers who have the demonstrated skills to take on the role of instructional coach for early career teachers. While there are challenges related ensuring appropriate scale of the workforce and equitable access across the system, this recently created role has strong potential for supporting the growth of the newest members of the teaching workforce.



“Being a TFA Associate has been the most gruelling, challenging and mentally exhausting experience. When reflecting on the last two years, all I can say is ‘How did I do that?’. It has felt like an endless ‘to-do’ list that you have no choice but to meet the requirements, otherwise, your students or ACU will be right on your tail!

“It’s hard to explain how extremely lucky I am to have Veronica as my mentor. I had expected our mentoring time to be more of a ‘tick the box’ checklist, but Veronica has gone above and beyond with the support she has given me. Our one-on-one mentoring time has been a significant consistent and structured part of this

program over these two years, which really highlights how important having a mentor is.

Teachers are extremely time poor, so to have dedicated time with someone on staff who is there to support you with everything including school-based requirements like report comments, behaviour support, teaching and policy, as well as ACU assessments, was incredibly helpful.”

MILLY BAWSKI

Bachelor of Performing Arts, TFA Alumni,
Cohort 2019



“I have also worked with a TFA Associate in my own learning since 2016 and had previously done some mentoring with him in my role as Acting HOLA. Being a mentor has been a very positive experience and has also been challenging at times. I understand a lot more now about how important positive mentoring is; [about] some of the principles underpinning good mentoring practice, adult learning principles, as well building greater understanding and knowledge of my own strengths and areas for growth.

[My mentee] is a fantastic beginning teacher and an exemplary classroom practitioner, as well as being hardworking and professional. Our school is so lucky to have her on our staff. Milly has always been respectful of my experience. She has been open to advice,

and willing to act on the advice I’ve offered her. It’s also important to say that our working relationship – as mentor and mentee – has worked both ways: Milly has learnt things from me, but I too have also learnt so much from her about current teaching and learning practice and methodologies. I have enormous respect and admiration for Milly and other TFA Associates who leave what they know and what they are familiar with to start a new career and juggle learning being a beginning teacher with completing their Master of Teaching – and finding a balance between the two.”

VERONICA BURKE

In-school mentor for TFA Associates since 2019
(including for Milly)

RECOMMENDATION #7

Australia needs to	Ensure that pre-service teachers' early experiences of teaching supports their development and retention in the profession		
TFA's approach to achieve this	Ensure partner schools are equipped to support beginning teachers		
System recommendations informed by TFA's approach	<p>For Federal Government, universities and national bodies</p> <p>(Federal Department of Education, Skills and Education; Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership)</p>	<p>For employers and Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRAs)</p> <p>(Including State/Territory Department of Education and Training and other employing bodies)</p>	<p>For schools</p>
	<p>Invest in developing schools' capacity and capabilities to support the development of beginning teachers.</p> <p>Consider selection criteria for the schools that are best placed to support beginning teachers, and ensure these schools are resourced appropriately.</p>	<p>Promote schools as learning organisations that are ready, supported and willing to support beginning teachers.</p> <p>Identify schools that are best placed to support and develop beginning teachers.</p>	<p>Provide early career teachers with opportunities for collaboration with colleagues and stable teaching loads that match their subject training.</p>

The following section considers the conditions that enable early-career teacher development and how TFA partners with schools to ensure that Associates receive the supports they need.

TFA'S APPROACH: Ensure partner schools are equipped to support beginning teachers

First and early experiences in schools are important for putting beginning teachers on the path to success. A key part of this is the conditions that determine the experiences of pre-service teachers in placements and beginning teachers in their first teaching role. It is these conditions that set beginning teachers up for their future development and have an impact on their retention in the profession.

TFA's partnership model is built on this understanding. We work with schools to understand their needs and to ensure that Associates are appropriately supported to develop as beginning teachers. This includes determining appropriate teaching loads and support mechanisms.

Early-career teachers are more likely to teach out-of-field compared to their more experienced colleagues. A third of teachers in their first two years of teaching teach out-of-field for at least part of the time, compared to a

quarter of teachers with more than five years' experience (Weldon, 2016).

By contrast, 100 per cent of TFA Associates teach within their subject specialisation for their first two years in the classroom. Providing teachers with stability in year groups and the subject matter they teach, particularly if it is in their area of expertise, improves teacher development (Ost & Schiman, 2015). There are additional benefits from allocating classes in this way, Weldon (2016) suggests this strategy has links to teacher retention, stating that "one way of improving the retention of early career teachers in secondary schools would be to ensure that they are not required to teach outside their subject areas for at least the first two years of their teaching career".

Opportunities to work closely with an experienced instructional coach have already been discussed under Recommendation 7, but the broader group of colleagues that a teacher works with can also enhance performance. Quantitative research shows that the most important factors for development are leadership, quality of teaching assignment and opportunities for collaboration with colleagues and appropriate teaching assignments (Allen & Sims, 2018).

These factors are also important for retention. Empirical

analysis conducted in the United Kingdom by Allen and Sims (2018) has identified schools that employ unusually high numbers of beginning teachers who then shortly afterwards leave the profession. Without appropriate support in the early years, these teachers are lost to the

profession (this analysis estimated that between 2010 and 2015, 538 teachers left the profession who would otherwise have stayed). TFA works closely with partner schools to determine if appropriate conditions are present, to determine whether a placement can be made.

RECOMMENDATION #8

Australia needs to	Make teaching a career worth having		
TFA's approach to achieve this	Recognise and build the skills of emerging leaders within the education system		
System recommendations informed by TFA's approach	For Federal Government, universities and national bodies (Federal Department of Education, Skills and Education; Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership)	For employers and Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRAs) (Including State/Territory Department of Education and Training and other employing bodies)	For schools
	Lead states and territories in recognising high-performing teachers and ensuring they can support the development of other teachers.	Ensure industrial arrangements recognise high-achievement and create the conditions required to provide instructional support to beginning teachers.	Understand the strengths and passions of teaching staff and their future career aspirations. Identify emerging leadership talent to partake in leadership training.

The following section discusses:

- TFA's approach to recognising and building the skills of emerging leaders, through the Future Leaders Program.
- The teaching workforce structure broadly and the need to ensure high-performing teachers are recognised and able to provide support for the development of other teachers.

TFA'S APPROACH: Recognise and build skills of emerging leaders

Leading schools has always been a complex undertaking, but with increasing decentralisation of decision-making across all systems in Australia, the responsibilities of principals and their leadership teams are becoming even more demanding.

Leaders need to be identified early in their career, as recognised by high performing education systems. Doing so enables future leaders to enhance their leadership capabilities by gaining experience in leadership roles and undertaking meaningful professional development (McKinsey & Company, 2010). As it currently stands, more than 35 per cent of Australian principals report they received no preparation for the role. When considering those who did, only 50 per cent said the leadership training received was adequate in relevance and quality (OECD, 2014).

Developing the pipeline of school leaders creates vital

leverage points for education reform. Without targeted efforts to accelerate talented individuals into positions of formal leadership and influence, many will exit the education system in search of challenge and opportunity elsewhere - true of any workplace where exceptional talent remains undiscovered, underdeveloped or under-encouraged.

The Future Leaders Program (FLP) is an additional program offered by TFA, beyond our flagship Leadership Development Program. Specifically designed for teachers working in regional and remote schools facing educational disadvantage, this year-long program prepares participants with leadership potential to take the next step in their career. FLP seeks to build emerging leaders' skillsets, mindsets and self-efficacy and support their ambitions to lead the long-term improvement of schools in challenging contexts.

An evolution of the Teach To Lead (TTL) program, FLP has been implemented in its current form for the first time in 2021, working with more than 40 emerging leaders across Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Early indications suggest participants are finding the FLP valuable and relevant to their teaching context (TFA, 2021).

In addition to the FLP providing a pathway for emerging leadership talent to realise their ambitions within school systems, the benefits of school leadership on student outcomes should not be ignored. School leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to student learning

(Leithwood et al., 2004). Experts in school leadership have concluded that “as far as we are aware, there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership (Leithwood et al., 2006).”

While investing in school leaders is of significant importance, it is not only school management that makes a significant impact on educational outcomes. High performing education systems, such as Shanghai and Singapore, recognise and reward the different expertise and skills required for system improvement (Jensen et al., 2012). In Singapore, for instance, teachers can follow three different specialised career tracks related to school/network leadership, expert teaching, and specialisation in specific areas of learning and teaching (such as subject-specific pedagogy).

The Grattan Institute have called for a similar system to be implemented in Australia, with the development of new roles for Instructional Specialists (who lead teaching instruction in their own school, actively coaching others) and Master Teachers (who are pedagogical leaders that oversee teaching within their subject area) (Goss & Sonneman, 2016).

The benefits of a workforce structure like this include:

- **It recognises expertise and offers opportunities:** a diversified structure allows the system to recognise the expertise of teachers on-the-ground working in classrooms and allows teachers to follow their interests with a career that continues to evolve.
- **It makes teaching a more attractive career:** High-achievers want intellectually challenging career paths and this structure creates opportunities for mastery and growing expertise of teaching practitioners. This is attractive for people who may consider moving in to teaching, as well as for retaining excellent teachers within the system.
- **It amplifies excellent teaching practice:** instructional and master leader positions are focused on leveraging excellent practitioners and enabling them to support the pedagogy of others. As already discussed, the opportunity for new teachers to work with instructional coaches is key to improving practice.

The conditions that the Grattan Institute identify as being necessary for successful implementation include:

- Significant salary increases which are incorporated into career ladders and industrial arrangements (to better align Australia’s salary structures with other OECD countries)
- Time release so that teachers time-tables reflect their extra responsibilities in developing the practice of others
- Training to ensure that they continue to develop as expert practitioners.

Teacher career structures are already being enhanced, with the implementation of the HALT accreditation system and incorporation of these classifications into industrial agreements. Pace of uptake, however, is slow – implemented from late 2013, at 2020 there are only 840 certified HALTs nationally, less than one percent of the teaching workforce (DESE, 2021).

As an almost nation-wide system, there is an opportunity to further expand the number of HALTs and to continue to track the distribution of HALTs, the nature of their work and the scale of their impact.¹¹ The latest HALT Census data collected by AITSL (2018) showed:

- The largest proportion of HALTs work in government schools compared with the overall teaching population;
- HALTs work across different SES schools, though they are more likely to be working in schools with a higher SES;
- Industrial relations arrangements are likely to impact on the rate of uptake of HALT accreditation as some jurisdictions offer financial incentives.

HALTs have the demonstrated skills to support the development of pre-service and beginning teachers. Key to ensuring that HALTs can have their full impact, will be examining the nature of their work and the conditions that allow them to succeed.

These will be important questions to ask at a time when the nature of teacher’s work is of increasing interest. The NSW Teacher’s Federation’s recent Independent Inquiry into the Value of Teachers, led by former WA Premier

¹¹ HALT certification is offered in ACT, NSW, NT, SA, Qld and to some degree in WA, with pilots occurring in 2021 in Tasmania and some Archdiocese in Catholic Schools in Victoria.

Geoff Gallop, examined critical issues including teacher pay, workloads and the status of the profession.

Among the findings, it noted both primary and secondary teachers in NSW public schools work more face-to-face teaching hours than many of their peers across the OECD (NSW Teachers Federation, 2021). And, across all levels, weekly time spent working has increased. The Inquiry argued that teachers in both primary and secondary schools require an additional two hours to ensure necessary collaboration can occur.

The same argument should be made for the role of HALTs.

In order to have impact, HALTs will need time to observe other teachers, provide feedback and conduct coaching meetings. These high-value coaching strategies are time intensive and structures will be needed to support HALTs undertaking this role.

To the same end, there needs to be sufficient incentives and reward for teachers to undertake this additional level of accreditation and lead the development of other staff. We should ensure that we appropriately recognise and reward teachers who demonstrate exceptional practise and commit to developing others.

CONCLUSION

As a nation, Australians aspire to a fair society in which every student can realise their potential. As it stands, students from low socioeconomic communities are not receiving the educational opportunities that they need to reach this goal.

The ITE sector is multi-faceted and complex system to improve, but the reward would be worth the challenge.

As a leading employment-based pathway to teaching, TFA is acutely aware of the opportunity reforms to the ITE system hold for positively impacting the practice of teachers and, in turn, the educational outcomes and lives of students.

TFA is driven by an urgency to address educational disadvantage so that every child, regardless of background, can access an education that gives them greater choice for their future.

This urgency, however, is coupled with a strong sense of possibility: with the political will and clarity of purpose, it is possible to leverage the strengths of the Federal government, universities who are ITE providers, regulators and authorising bodies, employers of teachers (including state and territory governments and other employing bodies), and schools to ensure a strong pipeline of effective teachers are chosen for and developed within the system.

Based on over a decade of experience, we recommend the following changes to ITE:

- Implement a nation-wide recruitment strategy that **elevates the status of teaching.**

- Use **rigorous and evidence-based selection methods** that are aligned with quality teaching.
- **Expand employment-based pathways into teaching** by supporting the scale of programs like the TFA's Leadership Development Program.
- **Provide greater flexibility in the regulatory frameworks** to allow for recognition of the existing skills and professional experience that career changers can bring to the profession.
- **Foster collaborative and cooperative partnerships** between ITE providers and schools and recognise the important role that current teachers play in supporting the delivery of ITE.
- **Comprehensively monitor and report** data on ITE pathways, to enhance performance.
- **Bridge the divide between theory and practice** by ensuring that pre-service and early career teachers are supported by instructional coaches.
- **Make teaching a career worth having** by offering diversified pathways, including the opportunity for effective teachers to support others.

TFA looks forward to the findings of this review panel, and is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to a national discussion on supporting teachers and school leaders as key players in pursuit of an Australia where education gives every child, regardless of background, greater choice for their future.

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