

SUBMISSION TO THE QUALITY INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION REVIEW

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

PROFESSOR SUSAN LEDGER AND COLLEAGUES

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University of Newcastle

School of Education



University of Newcastle Response to Quality Initial Teacher Education Review (QITER)

The University of Newcastle (UoN) School of Education presents the following response to the QITE Review by acknowledging that the information is context specific, and evidence based.

First, we would like to acknowledge the expertise of the Expert Panel comprising:

- Lisa Paul AO PSM – former Secretary of the federal Department of Education
- Malcolm Elliott – President of the Australian Primary Principals Association
- Derek Scott – 2019 Australian School Principal of the Year and Principal of Haileybury
- Bill Loudon AM – Emeritus Professor of Education

Second, UoN also acknowledges the significance of the two key questions underpinning the review:

1. how to attract and select high-quality candidates into initial teacher education and
2. how to prepare them to become effective teachers.

Third, our key recommendations address each of these two key questions (policy and practices) with a specific focus on Philosophy that underpins Policy and Practice decisions. The three recommendations below form the basis of the extended response. Current policy and practices are outlined, and responses/solutions offered that address these two core questions.

Recommendation 1: Philosophy

Philosophy underpins decision making in terms of policy and practices. We recommend that the Australian education system is clear in its philosophical approach to education for students, teachers and leaders so as to eliminate contradictions and ensure common messages across the sector

Recommendation 2: Policy

We attract and select high quality candidates into initial teacher education by raising the profile of the profession through bold and integrated policy decisions that drive societal change.

Recommendation 3: Practices

We best prepare effective teachers by empowering the whole workforce (Preservice T & Inservice Teachers) with a common understanding of effective practice.

A.Current Status – ITE in General

The current status of teacher education in Australia is low. Scrutiny from media, government, society is relentless and undermines a profession that over the last 10 years has been united by the implementation of strong systems level change as a result of TEMAG recommendations (Bahr&Mellor, 2016). This constant tension between perceived quality of teachers and realised outcomes of students forms the foundational issue impacting the teaching profession. Never before has the initial teacher education programs and teaching workforce been so qualified, so compliant and so regulated as it is now. The system level recommendations from TEMAG have established whole of profession standards for teachers, principals and ITE providers. These changes have been implemented over the last 10 years with some initiatives such as on-entry screening and teacher performance assessment being relatively new elements that are not fully realised and require time to review impact and outcomes.

The triple helix system is an analytical construct that synthesises the key features of university, industry and government interactions, it is defined according to systems theory as a set of components, relationships and functions. If we use Ranga & Etzkowitz's (2013) configurations for triple helix systems; statist - the government leads industry and academia to achieve its goals; laissez-faire, state intervention is limited; and balanced, universities lead the transition to a knowledge economy. The current government led policy in Australia would be an example of statist system. Interestingly, Singapore and Finland would be considered balanced.

The integration between educational philosophy, policy and practices needs to be made explicit across the three organisations – university, industry and government. Current debates including the literacy wars, PISA results and quality of teachers (Mockler, 2018) are simply distractions and destabilising for the profession, the system and societal values. Respect,collegial learning and a balanced triple helix, will help.

Current Status - University of Newcastle

UoN has currently enrolled 1479 students in the B.Ed Primary program, 588 in the ECE/Primary program and 1,395 secondary programs (Total 3462). UoN graduates approximately 1000 students annually. It has 94.2% employment placing it 1.7% above the national average.

Significant in UoN student numbers is the high number of indigenous students. We are extremely proud of our contribution to the number of **indigenous teachers** in the workforce. Currently 4.5% of our student population identify and graduate as indigenous teachers, this rate has been consistent over the last decade. Our commitment to this area is embedded in our strategic plan and the appointment of a PVC Indigenous who is an experienced teacher, high school principal and advocate for the profession. We have an internal target of reaching 10% indigenous teacher graduates in the next few years.

UoN leads Australia by having the largest philanthropic funds provided to our Priority Research Centre for Teachers and Teaching (TTRC). This is the home of the Quality Teaching Model and Quality Rounds led by Laureate Professor Jennifer Gore and the work of Associate Professor Jim Ladwig. The evidence-based research centre is driven by large numbers of randomised control trials focussing on quality teaching. Research publications are increasing exponentially, and its impact is measurable. The QTM is embedded in our ITE programs, Teacher Performance Assessment and at the heart of changing practice in NSW schools.

UoN Special/Inclusive Education program is one of the longest standing M.Ed programs in Australia. It was adopted by Victoria Department of Education (VDET) and we have trained over 100 teachers from Victoria over the last few years who now specialise in specific Special/Inclusive Ed programs from UoN. This has had major impact on the profession.

UoN is a global leader in Physical Health and Wellbeing. Our Priority Research Centre – Physical Activity and Nutrition is leading globally with ERA ratings of 5. The programs developed, researched and disseminated by the PRC-PAN group have received international funding, awards and recognition including the *Daughters & Dads – Active and Empowered program* being awarded a Highly Commended in the Global Green Gown Awards (GGA) for Benefiting Society' *their program captures the powerful and innovative ways education institutions are realising their purpose in today's society to benefit the lives of individuals, communities and wider society*". Supported by the United Nations (UN) environment programme, the International GGA are open to any university or college across the world.

Current UoN Philosophical Underpinnings: Strengths and Challenges

- **Strength.** The School of Education underpins all policy and practice decisions based on its philosophical commitment to being diagnostic in its approach to teaching, learning and leading with a focus on equity and excellence in teaching and research. Our unique programs, high rankings and recognition are evidence of our strength. We build capacity for Quality teaching in Australian schools through our Teachers and Teaching research centre which employs the QTM and Quality Teaching rounds (see submission from TTRC). This focus on the QTM is embedded in our ITE programs and forms a significant component of our AITSL authorised Newcastle Teacher Performance Assessment (NTPA) (Imig & Ladwig, 2021) with a focus on Planning, Teaching and Assessing. An innovative addition to being diagnostic with a focus on equity and excellence is the use of simulation to prepare pre-service teachers. Simulation is used for on-entry screening of initial teacher education students and employed before each practicum to practice before practicum. We recommend simulation as an effective tool to develop the art and science of teaching (Ersozlu, Ledger, Ersozlu, Mayne, Wildy, 2021; Ledger & Fischetti, 2020; Ledger, 2021).

- **Challenges.** UoN continues to balance the demands placed on ITE from different bodies – AITSL, ACEQA, TEQSA, State jurisdictions and regulatory bodies. A shared and integrated approach would be beneficial.

The current investigation continues to be on ITE rather than a whole of system approach. The link between the two need to be more defined.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia has 296,516 FTE teaching staff in schools of which 83,532 are male and 212,985 female. 152,281 teachers are in primary schools and 142,695 teachers in secondary. Male teachers make up 38.9% of secondary school staff whereas only 18.1% of teachers in primary school. and preservice teachers.

Philosophically, there is concern that we measure and correlate student outcomes on PISA with the quality of ITE programs rather than the whole of system (pre&inservice teachers). First, evidence is not available. Second, Australia does very well in PISA creative problem-solving measure (7th globally) -(DeBortoli & Macaskill, 2014). Other OECD PISA measures include the 2018 and 2020 additional measures:

- **computer familiarity questionnaire**, focusing on the availability and use of information and communications technologies (ICT), and on students’ ability to carry out tasks on computers and their attitudes towards using computers
- **well-being questionnaire**, (new to PISA 2018) on students’ perceptions of their health, life satisfaction, social connections and activities in and outside of school
- **educational career questionnaire**, which collects additional information on interruptions in schooling, preparation for students’ future career, and support with language learning
- **parent questionnaire**, focusing on parents’ perceptions of and involvement in their child’s school, their support for learning at home, school choice, their child’s career expectations, and their background (immigrant/non-immigrant)
- **teacher questionnaire**, which asks about teachers’ initial training and professional development, their beliefs and attitudes, and their teaching practices. Separate questionnaires were developed for teachers of the test language and for other teachers in the school. (OECD, 2020)

Recommendation 1A: Position ITE reform within a whole of system approach.

Recommendation 1B: Actively increase the number of males in primary schools

Recommendation 1C: Newcastle to continue to be recognised for providing Indigenous Teachers for the Australian workforce.

Recommendation 1: Use all PISA measurements to highlight Australian skill attainment

Current UoN Policy – Strengths & Challenges

- **Strength.** AITSL professional standards for teachers, AISTL program standards for ITE and the Australian Curriculum have been a positive addition to our ITE programs. The 3 dimensions of the professional standards (knowledge, practice, engagement), coupled with the three dimensions of the curriculum (learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curricular priorities) and the 6 national professional standards (program outcomes, development/design/delivery, entry, structure/content, professional experience, evaluation/reporting and improvement) provide preservice teachers a clear vision of the profession they are entering with a common shared understanding of what is expected of them as teachers. However, without encouraging PSTs to question assumptions and provide them with tools that are more than simply instrumental (Mills, Goos, 2017).
- **Challenges.** The introduction of the AITSL professional standards, AITSL program standards for ITE and the Australian Curriculum have been a positive addition to ITE programs but the state differences

complicate the process. TEMAG recommendations such as onentry screening, LANTITE, teacher performance assessment have been implemented in universities without funds to support the process.

Recent job ready graduate policy reduced costs of teaching degrees by over \$1K has impacted operational processes in UoN. This equates to the cost of placements in our degrees.

Whilst universities, schools, department and regulators work together it tends to focus on ITE and Inservice teachers separately.

Under the Education Act, current policy does not recognise the role of teachers or schools in the development of future teachers. The only reference to the need to work with pre-service teachers is in the AITSL Professional Standards Lead Teacher and Highly Accomplished Role. This disconnect, lies at the heart of policy tensions and practicum issues. Schools core business is not linked to preparing future teachers (Ure, Hay, Ledger, Morrison, Sweeney, Szadura, 2017).

Recommendation 2A: Review the Job Ready Graduate policy and its impact on ITE programs

Recommendation 2B: Policy changes to limit state changes to Australian Curriculum. A common curriculum that supports the common teacher standards would eliminate inconsistencies.

Recommendation 2C: Recruit high quality teachers from other countries for 2 year secondments or more from Singapore, Finland, Asia Pacific and South Africa.

Current UoN Practices – Strengths & Challenges

- **Strengths.** UoN has continued to have a strong partnership program with schools for both teaching and research purposes.
Professional Practice and Partnerships with schools continue to be refined and strengthened particularly in regional and indigenous schools.
UoN have a 10 week final internship delivered across 82 ECE Centres; 190 Primary Schools and 90 Secondary Schools. UoN sees schools as sites of- practicum, observations, project based learning or research. It has strong links with the NSW Hub school initiative and has a range of curriculum specific school-based delivery programs.
- **Challenge.** UoN would like to embed a wider range of WIL in schools particularly in region but the expenses related to placements in terms of accommodation and support continues to hinder application.

Recommendation 3A: Policy changes to the Education Act and AITSL standards to strengthen the links between schools role in supporting preservice teachers for placements, transition and support.

Recommendation 3B: Increase time in schools supporting teachers in the first year of degree (not teaching specific but rather support and team-teaching). [B.Ed 1 day a week year 1; 2 days year 2; blocks year 3 and 4 or alternatively M.Teach 2 days per week.]

Recommendation 3C: Utilise simulation in the onentry screening of ITE graduates and the preparation of students for placement

Recommendation 3D: Improve the teaching of mathematics in schools by focussing on the concept of thinking mathematically. More teachers need to be more confident in their ability to teach math and mentor math teachers.

Recommendation 3E: Employ the Quality Teaching Model/Quality Teaching rounds or similar within schools.

Recommendation 3F: Identify High Quality Rural, Regional and Remote Schools as Hub schools for PST placements including accommodation.

B. RESPONSES to KEY QUESTIONS

The above responses offer a context specific and philosophical response to the questions linked to policy and practices. The following are short responses cross linked to the above responses and associated recommendations.

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

1. How can we further encourage high performing and highly motivated school leavers to enter ITE and choose teaching as a career? [Raise the profile of the teaching profession \(Recommendation 2\)](#)
2. What changes to admissions and degree requirements, including recognition of prior experience, would better attract and support suitable mid- and late-career professionals from other fields transition into the profession and become quality teachers? [On-entry screening using simulation \(Recommendation 3C\)](#)
3. How can we increase ITE completion rates so that quality ITE students graduate and pursue careers as quality teachers? [Allow ITE students in-schools one day a week for the first year of their degree and thereafter increase it to 2 days with block placement in their final year \(Recommendation 3B\)](#)
4. What more can be done to address issues with workforce supply in some subject areas (particularly mathematics) and schools? [Improve the teaching of mathematics in schools so that students and teachers are taught how to think mathematically \(Recommendation 3D\)](#)
5. How can we attract a more diverse cohort into ITE so that teachers better mirror the diversity in school students and society? [Recruit high quality teachers from other countries – Singapore, Finland, Asia Pacific and South Africa \(Recommendation 2C\)](#)

PART B – _Preparing ITE students to be effective teachers

6. What more can we do to ensure that ITE curriculum is evidence based and all future teachers are equipped to implement evidence-based teaching practices? [Employ the quality teaching model/quality teaching rounds within our schools \(Recommendation 3E\).](#)
7. What more can ITE providers and employers do to ensure ITE students are getting the practical experience they need before they start their teaching careers? [Change education act so that schools are seen as sites of supporting and transitioning PSTs and practical experiences are within high performing schools \(Recommendations 2F\)](#)
8. How can Teaching Performance Assessment arrangements be strengthened to ensure graduate teachers are well-prepared for the classroom? [Include simulation as a controlled trial with all graduates across the country \(Recommendation 3C\)](#)
9. How can leading teachers, principals and schools play a greater role in supporting the development of ITE students? [Teachers, principals and schools need to be acknowledged as instructional leaders and a promotional pathway built into the whole of system/sector. Recommendation 2D\)](#)
10. Can ITE providers play a stronger role in ongoing professional development and support of teachers? [Absolutely, see recommendation 2 and 3.](#)

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