

21 July 2021

Ms Lisa Paul AO PSM
Chair
Quality Initial Teacher Education Review Expert Panel

Dear Ms Paul,

The Graduate School of Education welcomes the Minister for Education and Youth, the Hon Alan Tudge's ambition that Australia should aspire to have 'a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face.'

This submission in response to Quality Initial Teacher Education Review Discussion Paper is intended to complement our contributions to other submissions from Universities Australia, the Group of Eight Universities, the Western Australia Council of Deans, the Assessment for Graduate Teaching Consortium and the Australasian Science Education Research Association (ASERA). We wish to therefore further highlight the key issues from our perspective.

We recognise that the primary intention of the Discussion Paper is to stimulate feedback across the profession. As a provider of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses with expertise and experience in the preparation and support of pre-service teachers (PST) we have excellent rates of retention and success and meeting the current and future workforce needs in the state of Western Australia and elsewhere. We further recognise that to achieve a 'world class education system' is a shared responsibility between ITE providers, schools, the Commonwealth and states and territories. How best to attract and retain high-quality teachers is both a national and international issue.

The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) report of 2015 introduced a number of reforms to ITE and the profession. As yet we have not seen any evaluation of the impact of these reforms and question the timing and overall focus of the Discussion Paper. The TEMAG Report introduced a number of significant and costly reforms and it is not clear as yet as to whether the key indicators have been met, and we would therefore suggest that an evaluation of the impacts of TEMAG might be timely. We draw attention to the 100+ reviews of teacher education that have occurred since the 1970s, rendering it one of the most heavily reviewed areas of public policy. Regrettably, we see reforms of the past two decades in particular as adopting a standardised lens and as strongly federally driven, and believe the diversity of stakeholder voices across schools, PSTs, and ITE providers have not been fully recognised.

We support the intention of the Discussion Paper that quality teachers and quality teaching is central to Australia having a 'world class education system'. Yet it is not clear from the Discussion Paper as to how quality is defined and what makes a quality teacher. We suggest that a focus on 'what makes a successful teacher' might offer a longitudinal perspective of a teacher's career.

It is difficult to examine ITE courses without looking more broadly at issues across the profession. The immediate challenge for attracting high-quality candidates to teaching includes the current status of the profession, workload issues, and insecure employment contracts detract from making this an attractive profession.

More specifically, issues that the Expert Panel might consider are:

1. Look to ways to attract teachers who have left the profession back into teaching as a career.
2. Offer career opportunities for teachers who mentor PSTs and assist these teachers to reach Lead Teacher or Accomplished Teacher status.
3. Offer coaching and mentoring professional development for teachers working with PSTs to increase their effectiveness.
4. Link teacher re-registration with their roles as effective mentors of PSTs.
5. Consider the education of teachers across the profession that covers all stages of their careers.
6. Offer scholarships or stipends for ITE students during the course of their studies.
7. Increase the number of placement days to 80 in a postgraduate course and provide funding to reflect this increase for both schools and universities.
8. Offer more flexible options with regards to professional placement.
9. Strengthen partnerships between universities and schools. This might include, for example, teachers released from schools to teach into ITE courses, and academics to work alongside teachers in schools.
10. LANTITE: in the interests of public accountability and transparency, more than one provider is available to administer and oversee this test.
11. Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA): as yet there is no evidence that this has been an effective policy initiative.

In closing, we appreciate the briefings and consultation sessions that have been conducted and the opportunity to contribute to what is, without doubt, a complex task.

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