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Quality Initial Teacher Education Review Secretariat  
Department of Education, Skills and Employment  
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## **Go8 Submission to the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review**

The Group of Eight (Go8) is pleased to make this submission to the Quality Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Review. The Go8 represents Australia's leading research-intensive universities with seven of its members ranked consistently in the world's top 100 universities. The Go8 carries out 70 per cent of Australia's university research and spends some \$6.5 billion on research each year.

*The Go8 wishes to state at the outset that it totally supports the Federal Minister for Education's views that excellence must occur in teacher training. We are, in effect 'training the trainer', and nothing could be more important than getting that right. Well-educated teachers who not only know their subject matter deeply but also know how to impart that knowledge to tomorrow's generation are as invaluable as they are essential.*

Every point in this submission is derived from that Go8 belief and that Go8 commitment.

The Go8 has remained committed to having high entry standards for its undergraduate aspiring teachers.

While the Go8 only enrolls 10.1 per cent of education undergraduates, we do educate 20.8 per cent of the nation's post-graduate education students.

Go8 education graduates do have access to excellence in both their theory and in their practice skills and our graduates are prized. However, the Go8 accepts readily that it is extremely open to change to improve quality. Conversely the Go8 would be unwilling to make change for change's sake that would be detrimental to the success of our education graduates and their pupils.

*Please note the Go8 is happy for this submission to be published in full.*

**The Go8 has a number of recommendations set out below, and the reasoning behind them follows.**

### **Recommendations:**

#### ITE delivery models

1. Continue to investigate the adoption of compressed postgraduate ITE to reduce the opportunity cost of study and study time for ITE postgraduate candidates; while maintaining the quantity and quality of tuition and content.
2. AITSL should consider whether graduate standards can be streamlined, and whether some could be better taught under mentorship during a first year of employment.
3. Ensure that a percentage of in-class experience is front-loaded in postgraduate ITE study to better assist students determine their teaching suitability when early in their studies.



4. Provide additional flexibility in the recognition of prior study and workplace experience for postgraduate ITE for those students with relevant qualifications and/or industry experience.

#### Financial support and security

5. Investigate financial support or incentives that can overcome financially disadvantaged or financially hesitant postgraduate ITE students. This should include a combination of tuition support and/or guarantees of paid employment and could also be conditional on teaching in locations of need, subjects of need, or both.
6. Consider whether in-class placements and training should attract a professional stipend or compensation for foregone employment income.
7. Commit to a timetable for the future review of Federal financial incentives that promote remote teaching, and which were enacted via the *Education Legislation Amendment (2019 Measures No. 1) Bill 2019*.
8. This review should also look at the benefits of providing financial support to students undertaking student placements or training at a very remote school.
9. To attract a more diverse cohort of candidates into both undergraduate and postgraduate ITE programs, the Go8 recommends a strong and continuing media campaign and financial incentives such as those outlined above. We also support early identification of these potential candidates so that they may be provided with targeted assistance to support their enrolment, retention, and success.

#### Mentoring

10. Implement a national and sustained formal mentoring program for newly qualified teachers to assist their transition to the classroom; with consideration given to reduced teaching workloads during their mentorship
11. Adopt a clear standard for the education and training of teaching mentors, i.e. a graduate certificate in teacher mentoring.
12. Further investigate the benefit of sustained formal mentoring programs for in-need postgraduate ITE students.

#### Strengthening ITE connection with schools

13. Establish a pilot scheme that further strengthens connections between ITE and schools and that specifically:
  - Provides opportunities for experienced teachers to have input into the ongoing process of ITE curriculum development.
  - Provides opportunities for teaching academics to have 'classroom time' to refresh their understanding of shifts in contemporary classroom practice.
  - Facilitates early employment offers, particularly from hard to place schools.

#### Essential research

14. Provide dedicated funding for much-needed longitudinal data collection and research into the impact of the quality of different ITE degrees – including postgraduate ITE degrees – on graduate preparedness, performance, career progression, attrition rates, and student learning outcomes.

### ITE: The Go8 context

Go8 universities educate 12.5 per cent of Australia’s ITE enrolments.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the Australian National University (ANU) which does not offer ITE at any level, all Go8 universities offer ITE courses at the postgraduate level, and most also at the undergraduate level:

**ITE enrolments at Go8 universities, 2019<sup>2</sup>**

Go8 University	Postgraduate	Undergraduate	Total
Monash University	1,151	2,284	<b>3,435</b>
The University of Adelaide	156	699	<b>855</b>
The University of Melbourne	1,468	<i>n/a</i>	<b>1,468</b>
The University of Queensland	143	1,399	<b>1,542</b>
The University of Sydney	414	1,547	<b>1,961</b>
The University of Western Australia	352	<i>n/a</i>	<b>352</b>
University of New South Wales	244	957	<b>1,201</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3,928</b>	<b>6,886</b>	<b>10,814</b>

Accordingly, the Go8 accounts for one fifth of all ITE postgraduate students, which is twice the percentage of its undergraduate students.

**Go8 share of ITE enrolments, 2019<sup>3</sup>**

Level of study	Go8 share
Postgraduate	20.8%
Undergraduate	10.1%
Overall average	12.5%

With the Go8’s strong reputation and track record in educating at postgraduate level, **this submission focuses on recommendations to enhance and increase the attraction of Australia’s best teaching talent to Go8 postgraduate ITE courses.** The Go8 has always stated that it has an ethos of enrolling quality students (with evidence such as a high ATAR level) and delivering Australia quality graduates.

Two important areas which the Go8 is determined to advance, is national and regional demand for teaching excellence, and also how postgraduate ITE can be utilised as an option to upskill or reskill career-changers who are subject matter experts and who are the right fit to expertly impart that knowledge to school students.

<sup>1</sup> 10,814 of a total of 86,813 in 2019; Higher Education Data Cube (uCube), July 2021; see:

<http://highereducationstatistics.education.gov.au/>

<sup>2</sup> Higher Education Data Cube (uCube), as of July 2021; see: <http://highereducationstatistics.education.gov.au/>

<sup>3</sup> Higher Education Data Cube (uCube), July 2021; see: <http://highereducationstatistics.education.gov.au/>

### **Quality *and* quantity**

Go8 universities attract the best national and international students, and academics, and are proud of maintaining their provision of excellent higher education. The case for ITE quality and its impact on the teaching quality are both well-known and persuasive<sup>4</sup>.

As it relates to teacher supply and demand – and potential shortages – the most recent Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) *National ITE Pipeline* report<sup>5</sup> of 2020 notes that:

*“...the combination of plateauing growth in the numbers of new ITE graduates overall, together with the mismatch between growth in fields of education and growth in the population of children aged between three and 18 years, deserves further longitudinal analysis for impact as there may be implications for the ability of ITE to meet the demand for teachers, some types of teachers, or teacher demand in some regions both in the short and long term.”*

These national concerns dovetail with increasing shortages that are of varying concern in States and Territories.

Expanding and enhancing Go8 postgraduate ITE courses does offer Australia an opportunity to address both teacher quality *and* quantity by providing the highest quality teacher education to a cohort beyond the annual undergraduate ITE student pool.

As demonstrated in postgraduate ITE study, there does not have to be a trade-off in quality *and* quantity and enhancing postgraduate ITE study offers an approach to improve both ITE quality *and* quantity.

### **ITE delivery models**

The change from one-year postgraduate ITE study, to the two-year Masters model has seen an accompanying reduction in student demand for postgraduate ITE study. This is anecdotally due to the effect from foregone income; although declining demand for ITE has been underway for some time.

However, compressed postgraduate ITE models – such as the Master of Teaching (Secondary) at UNSW, where two years of traditional semester-format study is compressed into 1.3 years of study, the University of Sydney’s Master of Teaching, which is compressed into 1.67 years (20 months) of study, or the University of Adelaide’s Master of Teaching which is compressed into 1.25 years of study and students do a prolonged placement of 9 weeks (one school term) in their final year – offer an alternative approach that, for capable students, does not compromise quality.

Students in this UNSW degree are eligible to obtain provisional registration and engage in paid teaching from the start of the second year while completing the program, which is *“...uniquely designed to provide a nationally accredited pre-service teaching qualification and, at the same time, support students in their transition to their first year of teaching.”*<sup>6</sup>

A related opportunity exists for the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to consider whether the number of graduate standards can be streamlined, including what may be better taught under mentorship in the first year of employment.

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<sup>4</sup> See: p3, Quality Initial Teacher Education Review Discussion Paper, June 2021

<sup>5</sup> *National Initial Teacher Education Pipeline: Australian Teacher Workforce Data Report 1;*

[https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/atwd/reports/new-pipeline-report/2020\\_aitsl-atwd\\_pipeline-report.pdf](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/atwd/reports/new-pipeline-report/2020_aitsl-atwd_pipeline-report.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> See: Masters of Teaching (Secondary) degree description, <https://degrees.unsw.edu.au/master-of-teaching-secondary/>





In-class experiences – especially being required to take charge of a classroom – provides would-be teachers practical insights into whether they want to complete their ITE study.

Front-loading more – or at least some – of these experiences in postgraduate ITE study can help crystallise study intentions earlier, ensuring that students who will discontinue their study when confronted with the reality of the classroom choose to make the decision to discontinue early, rather than finish their degrees and pursue a career that they are ultimately not committed to, whilst taking the study place of someone more committed.

Another way of reducing study costs and income foregone of two-year Masters students, without compromising quality (which the Go8 would never agree to let occur) is to provide greater flexibility that recognises prior learning and experience, in particular how prior workplace learning will be treated for an experienced graduate on commencement as a teacher. For example, what does 20 years at a major bank mean for where a newly graduated Maths teacher is placed on the scale? Clarity around this – and generosity around this – is a key to getting quality candidates into ITE graduate programs, particularly at the point of career transition and would enable postgraduate ITE degrees to admit students with a wider range of skills.

### **Income support and security**

The potential for attaining a certain pay level and the financial security that postgraduate ITE study is gauged to deliver is important in attracting career changers into teaching.

Long-term job security – and its financial security – are beyond the ability of ITE education providers to control. However, delivery models that can provide short to medium-term job security (paid training placements or job guarantees) can be twinned with financial study support (such as scholarships or bursaries). These would target cohorts that otherwise would be hesitant to consider postgraduate ITE study.

One example of this is ‘bonded teacher training scholarships’, such as those in Australia during the early 1970s and 1980s. Such enrolments should still be subject to the same stringent entry requirements to safeguard quality.

Such arrangements can also be made conditional upon teaching in particular locations of need (most apparently rural and remote schools), and in particular subjects of need, or both, and with sliding clawback arrangements if the arrangement is not completely fulfilled.

Another option is to consider providing professional stipends or compensation for foregone employment income for in-class placements and training which would help to ‘bridge the gap’ for career changers who, being more established, often have greater financial responsibilities and liabilities than undergraduate students.

Whilst financial support schemes need not necessarily extend to job security – Go8 universities are confident that their graduating students are attractive to employ – any measure that reduces uncertainty or frictional unemployment between study and work will be attractive to would-be students.

### **Financial incentives for very remote teaching**

Existing financial incentives for very remote area teachers provided by the Federal Government – the waiving of indexation on accumulated HELP debt, and the reduction of accumulated HELP debt, as established via the *Education Legislation Amendment (2019 Measures No. 1) Bill 2019* – should be scheduled for future review (noting that they were only recently introduced) and be evaluated for efficacy.





The Parliamentary Library's analysis of the provisions concluded that they do not "...offer any particular incentive to teaching students to do specialised placements or training in remote education, or encourage people from remote communities to become teachers."<sup>7</sup> The 2017 Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (IRRRE) argued that Government should "provide funding and opportunities for initial teacher education students to undertake high quality extended professional experience placements in RRR schools and communities."<sup>8</sup> Other financial incentives may include provision of decent housing or other resources.

**Go8 universities have historically spent a far greater proportion of their Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program funding (HEPPP) on outreach to regional and remote communities than any other university grouping. This includes attracting postgraduate ITE students who may be more willing to return home after graduating.**

### **Mentoring**

The most difficult time for teachers, including postgraduate teachers, is during their initial transition into the classroom. Whilst informal and formal mentoring of recently graduated students can often occur within schools, a fully funded national mentoring scheme for at least the first two years of teaching would help ensure that newly qualified teachers are well supported with trained by higher quality mentors.

This could assist overcome initial workplace challenges. Consideration should be given to reduced teaching workloads during any formal mentorship period. These mentoring models can be based on connections to their ITE study providers (for example, lecturers and other ITE staff) and/or school-based practitioners.

Similarly, ITE completion rates can be improved through individual support and mentoring for prospective teachers experiencing difficulties and can also help in retention of under-represented groups and/or first-generation university students<sup>9</sup>.

### **Strengthening ITE connections with schools**

By necessity, ITE degrees have a strong practical, in-school component, and ITE programs of study engage regularly and habitually with schools and school systems. However, more can always be done to strengthen the cross-pollination of best practice and in both directions, but especially the practical lessons from schools that can be applied to improve ITE program structure and curriculum.

ITE studies have much to gain from more closely resembling the model of engagement used in the study of medicine, specifically: closer engagement with the medical system on course content; a detailed examination of the value and purpose of placements; and a shared commitment to readiness and transition to work. In addition, we should look to facilitate closer relationships, particularly with public education systems, to facilitate opportunities for early employment offers, particularly in hard-to-place schools. A continuing problem in some jurisdictions is that many

<sup>7</sup> Dr Hazel Ferguson, Dr Shannon Clark and Dr James Haughton, 'Education Legislation Amendment (2019 Measures No.1) Bill 2019', Bills Digest No.51 2019-20, 14 November 2019; see:

[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Bills\\_Legislation/bd/bd1920a/20bd051](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/bd/bd1920a/20bd051)

<sup>8</sup> p45, Dr John Halsey, *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education*, 2017; see:

<https://www.dese.gov.au/quality-schools-package/resources/independent-review-regional-rural-and-remote-education-final-report>

<sup>9</sup> M. Aruguete & A. Katrevich, 'Recognizing challenges and predicting success in first-generation university students', *Journal of STEM Education: Innovations and Research*, 18(2), 40-44, 2017





of the best students get very early offers from non-government schools, when the best students are much needed in government schools. We need to commit to work closely with systems to assist with early employment offers.

To that end, a pilot scheme should be established to trial the value of supporting experienced teachers to actively contribute to university ITE curriculum development, and to provide teaching academics greater access to classrooms. This would refresh their own teaching experience, but more importantly allow them to observe shifts in teaching practice and their effects on teaching quality and learning outcomes. Facilitating early employment offers from Government schools should also be a priority.

A key metric in determining such a pilot scheme's success should relate to its effect upon ITE graduate preparedness.

### **Essential research**

Australia does not have sufficient longitudinal data and analysis on the relative importance of an ITE graduate's original program of study to their preparedness, performance, career progression and attrition rates. Nor is there research establishing the strength of the causative effect between improvements in quality of ITE programs of study (or their model and approach) and student learning outcomes.

These important gaps in our knowledge require dedicated research funded by the Federal and/or State Governments, with relevant and appropriately de-identified data made available to researchers. The Go8 is not only willing to participate in this essential research, but to engage proactively with its findings. We are open to change our ITE offering in the light of what the research will tell us.


### **In summation**

As stated throughout this submission, the Go8 is committed to excellence in its graduates and excellence in the teaching that these graduates can deliver for the future of Australia. It is so critical that excellence should be a given for the betterment of the next generation.

The Go8 hopes its recommendations are seen through that lens.

An additional lens – and a critical one – is that the profession of teaching be yet again returned to a profession that is admired and respected and rewarded by our community. There are too many reports of how badly teachers are stressed or how badly they are treated by parents for that stress and lack of respect not to be dealt with by fundamental change.

The Go8 looks forward to an ongoing engagement with Government to improve the opportunities and outcomes for Australian pupils and for the future of excellence in teaching in Australia.

If you have questions regarding the submission, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 

Yours sincerely

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**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

