



Australian Education Union

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5 May 2023

Professor Mark Scott AO
Chair
Teacher Education Expert Panel

via email

Dear Professor Scott

Re: AEU Submission to the Teacher Education Expert Panel Discussion Paper

Please find attached the Australian Education Union's submission to the Teacher Education Expert Panel Discussion Paper.

Please contact me if you have any questions in relation to our response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KBates', written over a white rectangular area.

Kevin Bates
Federal Secretary



Submission
to the
Teacher Education Expert Panel Discussion Paper

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Federal President

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Introduction

The Australian Education Union (AEU) represents more than 195,000 members employed in public primary, secondary and special schools and the early childhood, TAFE and adult provision sectors as teachers, educational leaders, education assistants or support staff across Australia. The AEU has a primary strategic objective to “protect and promote quality teaching and learning” which, among others, includes the following aims:

- To enhance and support the professional and industrial status of AEU members in public education
- To achieve minimum academic standards and entry requirements for teaching degrees
- To achieve minimum entry to teaching of a two year post graduate teaching qualification
- To ensure access to high quality professional development

The explicit purpose of each of these aims is to ensure that teachers are supported at each stage of their careers, including during their Initial Teacher Education (ITE). As such, the AEU welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Teacher Education Expert Panel. The AEU has made multiple submissions to numerous bodies in recent years that are relevant to the current Inquiry, including the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) initial consultation concerning the development of national selection guidelines for admission into Initial Teacher Education (2013), the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools (2017), the National Review of Teacher Registration (2018) and the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training Inquiry into the Status of the Teaching Profession (2018) and the Review of Quality Initial Teacher Education (2021). In compiling this response to the Panel discussion paper, we have drawn from and updated some material of particular relevance to ITE from those previous submissions.

The OECD report *Effective Teacher Policies: Insights from PISA* states unequivocally that the “quality of an education system depends on the quality of its teachers; but the quality of teachers cannot exceed the quality of the policies that shape their work environment in school and that guide their selection, recruitment and development.”¹ The AEU is committed to the pursuit of higher standards in all facets of public education, and has consistently advocated for the application of uniformly high standards for the qualifications, induction and ongoing professional learning for teachers. The maintenance, and where necessary, the introduction of high standards in teacher education and ongoing development is essential to protect and enhance the status of the teaching profession.

This submission will address each of the Panel’s four reform areas and will offer a number of recommendations for actions that are required to improve ITE quality and encourage new educators to the teaching profession.

¹ OECD (2018), *Effective Teacher Policies: Insights from PISA*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264301603-en> .p.20

Reform Area 1: Strengthening ITE programs to deliver confident, effective, classroom ready graduates

Discussion

There is an opportunity to ensure all teachers learn in ITE the evidence-based practices which improve student learning. In addition, there is an opportunity for graduate teachers to be assessed on these practices as part of their final year assessment (known as the Teaching Performance Assessment) so that they develop and practice their skills in these areas.

To what extent would this strengthen ITE to deliver confident, effective, classroom ready graduates?

The AEU supports the notion in the discussion paper that “ITE program content should be evidence based and set graduate teachers up well to handle the classroom environment” and we support equipping graduate teachers with a “strong understanding of what works best to improve student learning based on the best evidence”. However, it is important to ensure that research and evidence is appropriately contextualised, and that the role of teachers’ professional judgement in interpreting research evidence and adapting teaching and learning strategies to local school contexts and diverse student needs is emphasised in ITE programs. A “one-size-fits-all” approach to teaching practices should be avoided.

The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) contains numerous recommendations for teachers’ participation in educational decisions through consultation and negotiation with educational authorities.

In guiding our response, we draw in particular on section 76 of the recommendation, which states:

76. Authorities and teachers should recognize the importance of the participation of teachers, through their organizations and in other ways, in steps designed to improve the quality of the education service, in educational research, and in the development and dissemination of new improved methods

In regard to the specific content areas highlighted in the discussion paper we offer the following:

Brain and learning

Understanding “how students process new information, how they retain that information and how they apply that knowledge to new situations” is crucial foundational pedagogical knowledge and is already aligned with Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) 1 (Know students and how they learn). Content taught to ITE students must be based on the most rigorous and up-to-date scientific and educational research.

Effective practices

The determination of which classroom practices have the “highest impact” for the purposes of ITE must be based on a broad range of valid, reliable and representative educational studies which utilise rigorous research methodologies, including both quantitative and qualitative methods, and which are sensitive to different national, school and individual student contexts. Importantly, research that focuses upon ‘high impact’ classroom practices in school contexts that experience high levels of socio-cultural disadvantage, must be included in the research basis. A focus on “assessing where students are in their learning and providing them with timely feedback” is appropriate and aligned with APST 5 (Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning).

Explicit teaching pedagogies practices can be valuable, however with respect to varying learner contexts ITE students should be familiar with a broad range of approaches. Prescribed pedagogies must be avoided as they not only undermine teachers’ professional judgement but also inhibit teachers’ growth and development as they learn and experiment with different methods of teaching for different contexts and students.

Every ITE student should have a grounding in literacy and numeracy teaching strategies given the importance of these areas to student learning across the curriculum and to lifelong outcomes; however, ITE students should also understand the crucial role of specialist teachers with expertise in these areas.

Classroom management

A focus on this content area is appropriate and aligned with APST 4 (Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments). However, teacher professional judgment must be emphasised and a “one-size-fits-all” approach must be avoided. Further, consideration must be given to ensuring that ITE students understand the complexity of the student cohort, in particular, culturally safe learning environments for First Nations students and the needs of students who experience compound disadvantage.

Enabling factors

A focus on this content area is appropriate; teaching practices are differentiated and responsive to student need and teachers should be equipped to engage effectively with parents/carers/family to support student learning.

ITE should not narrowly focus on only the above content areas. Theory and pedagogical understanding, and specialist knowledge of curriculum and subject specific content and skills remain essential to teaching as a professional endeavour and graduates’ classroom readiness. The risk of a narrow approach to ITE and teaching practice is greater if the identified areas become the focus of the Teacher Performance Assessment.

Research relied upon to determine the evidence base included in ITE must be assessed for bias arising from the influence of commercial interests and edu-businesses. This will require ITE students to be equipped to analyse and assess educational research, and to understand the range of factors which influence student learning and behaviour, including resourcing and access to specialist learning support and services for students with additional needs.

The ITE curriculum should reflect the changed and changing contexts in which teachers and principals now do their work. A broad evidence base is essential, and universities as research-based institutions should be supported to offer a curriculum as part of the course accreditation standards which is evidence-based.

At the same time, it must be imparted to ITE students that constant measurement and data collection is not the meaning of “evidence-based” that would support a high-quality workforce and education system, or improved outcomes. Nor is “evidence based teaching practice” to be used as euphemism for the imposition of direct instruction approaches or programs that limit teachers’ pedagogical autonomy.

ITE should emphasise the value of ongoing teacher Professional Development, which is vital for ensuring that teachers’ professional knowledge and skills continue to develop throughout the course of their career and are adapted to changing social and educational contexts. It is essential that ITE students are instilled with an understanding of the importance of ongoing professional development and are supported to explore a range of evidence applicable to their student contexts. This remains fundamental to the exploration of successful teaching practice. Opportunities for ITE students and teachers to collaborate and learn from one another, share experiences, resources and strategies are inherent in the success of the examination of evidence.

Recommendations for Strengthening ITE programs to deliver confident, effective, classroom ready graduates:

- 1. That the professional autonomy and judgement of teachers and the differentiation of teaching practices in response to student need is recognised and respected in the Panel’s consideration of the inclusion of knowledge of evidence based practices in final year assessments.***
- 2. That the importance of the active participation of teachers in educational research, and in the development and dissemination of evidence used to inform practice is asserted by the Panel.***

Reform Area 2: Strengthening the link between performance and funding of ITE

Discussion

There is an opportunity to strengthen the focus on improving performance in ITE by setting standardised performance measures for higher education providers and reporting publicly against them. There is also an opportunity to strengthen the link between performance and funding through the provision of financial incentives to encourage higher education providers to strive for excellence.

To what extent would these opportunities provide a strengthened focus on improving the performance of ITE programs?

The funding of ITE, and of higher education generally, should recognise and re-prioritise higher education as a public good. The critical role of government funding in supporting and protecting higher education's role in providing public benefits must be recognised and government funding increased to support higher education participation for all capable students. University funding from all sources should cover the total cost of providing each course.

It is the AEU's view that successive Australian governments have progressively abandoned their responsibility to ensure the provision of public goods by the higher education sector. In our view, a key feature of any institution providing ITE must be a specific setting out of this responsibility and the funding obligations that ensue from it. A substantial funding commitment is needed to counter cuts to public funding of ITE, and higher education generally, over many years.

The AEU agrees with the following goals for ITE programs as set out in the discussion paper, to:

“select diverse, high-quality candidates in areas of workforce need; support and retain their ITE students to graduate as a teacher; prepare ITE students to be ready for the classroom; and support graduate teachers to transition effectively into the teaching profession.”²

However, we do not support linking ITE funding to publicly available standardised performance measures, and do not agree with the panel that the provision of financial incentives to ITE providers of additional funding would “encourage continuous improvement in ITE”.³

The AEU contends that the introduction of an “excellence funding pool” for high-performing ITE programs based on the public reporting of performance measures would accelerate market competition mechanisms within ITE which would only serve to reinforce existing inequalities between teacher education students, education systems, schools, and ITE providers. It would also distort and narrow the focus of ITE programs to meet performance targets to secure funding, and thereby undermine the role of teacher professional judgement in ITE and within the teaching profession more broadly.

We note that the Panel proposes to rely upon specific types of data across four domains of selection, retention, classroom readiness and transition, to assess the quality of ITE programs. While this data may be useful for certain narrow purposes, it does not necessarily correlate with graduates' increased effectiveness in the classroom, any impact on student learning, or the quality of ITE.

² Teacher Education Expert Panel Discussion Paper - Executive Summary p.3

³ *Ibid.*

On the contrary, there are many other factors that will influence this data, including:

- the pre-existing disadvantage experienced by ITE students
- marketing focus of ITE providers
- rigour of ITE individual programs
- resources available to ITE providers to attract, retain and support ITE students
- unequal funding between schools and education systems, including unequal capacities to support ITE students, build relationships with ITE providers, and offer attractive salaries and working conditions to graduate teachers to attract and retain them.

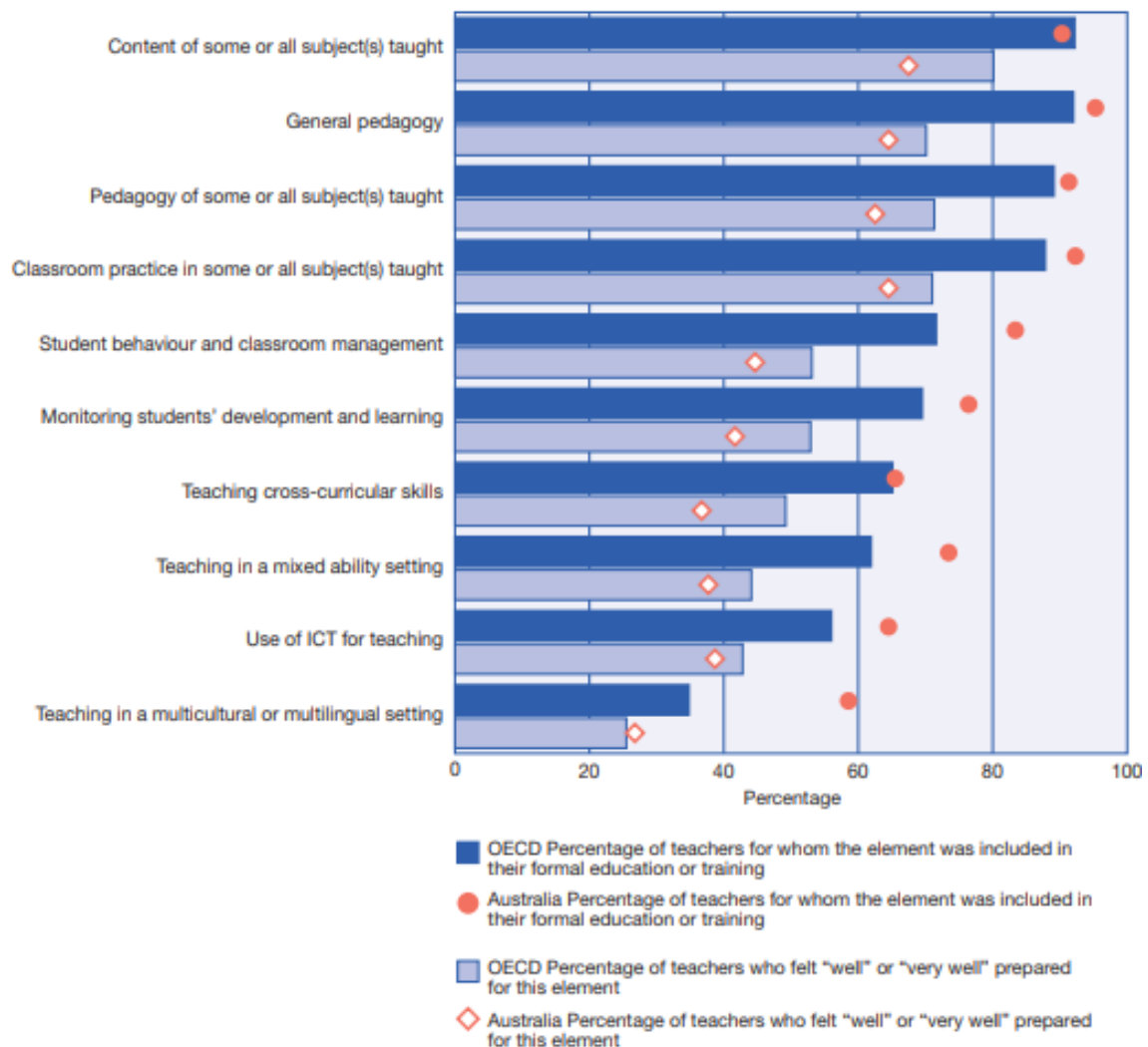
The proposal to assess classroom readiness via QILT and Graduate Outcomes Survey data⁴ without context or adequate consideration of the many influencing factors listed above is concerning. It is already well established that many ITE graduates feel that they are not sufficiently prepared by their ITE. AEU surveys of new educators (those with three or less years' experience) show that that 30% do not believe their ITE sufficiently prepared them for the complex realities of the classroom. Among those who felt underprepared were teaching students whose first language is not English (62%), dealing with difficult behaviour (55%), teaching students with disability (47%) and teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (43%). 26% of new educators said that their ITE was not helpful in preparing them to deliver strategies for teaching numeracy and 35% of new educators said that their ITE was not helpful in preparing them to manage classroom activities and in under resourced schools, this increased to 41%.⁵

This survey data is confirmed by the TALIS 2018 results which show that across nearly all elements new educators in Australia feel less prepared to teach than their peers in other OECD countries, despite a higher percentage having covered each element during their ITE.

⁴ Teacher Education Expert Panel Discussion Paper p. 33

⁵ AEU internal analysis of survey data

Figure 1: Content of teacher education and sense of preparedness for teaching⁶



It is resoundingly clear that many new educators are entering the classroom under prepared. For many years the AEU has advocated for the consistent and rigorous high level undergraduate ITE, and we again reiterate our commitment to ensure that ITE providers uphold the qualification benchmarks that reinforce the higher level of knowledge, skills and expertise required to be a proficient teacher in contemporary public education. The process to register ITE programs must be rigorous and uphold the high standards expected by the teaching profession.

Rather than the approach of encouraging public comparison through the “naming and shaming” of ITE providers as proposed by the Panel, or the encouragement of narrow KPI based competition between providers for funding, governments should focus on robust workforce planning, including by delivering appropriate resourcing to all ITE providers based on need and student characteristics to ensure quality of ITE is improved across the board. This must include improved and properly supported practical placements and routes to permanent employment after graduation.

⁶ The Teaching and Learning International Survey 2018. *Australian Report Volume 1: Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners* by Sue Thomson and Kylie Hillman (Australian Council for Educational Research). p.80.

Recommendations for Strengthening the link between performance and funding of ITE

3. *That a comprehensive workforce strategy is developed across all states and territories, using metrics of Teacher Supply and Demand to determine where greater ITE capacity is required, to provide more focussed and better resourced delivery of ITE to maximise the retention of ITE entrants and graduates in the teacher workforce.*
4. *That increased funding for ITE is allocated on the basis of the needs of student cohorts rather than through de-contextualised competition between ITE providers.*

Reform Area 3: Improving the quality of practical experience in teaching

Discussion

There is an opportunity to improve the quality of practical experience in teaching through:

- *developing more comprehensive system level agreements between school systems and higher education providers to improve the coordination and quality of placements*
- *developing national guidelines for high-quality practical experience*
- *supporting particular schools to specialise in delivering high quality placements who can share their expertise, and*
- *providing targeted support for ITE students with competing commitments, additional needs or studying in areas of workforce need to complete their placements.*

To what extent would these opportunities improve the quality of practical experience?

There is a clear need for better professional experience (practicums) for student teachers and for better assessments of their readiness to teach, and to ensure they meet the APST. Increased support for ITE students is sorely needed, and this must include ongoing observation of, interaction with, and advice from experienced teachers during practicums as well as a substantial increase in support from ITE providers. The AEU agrees that there is significant work to be done to improve the quality and length of practical experience for pre-service teachers, and we agree with the Panel that a core part of that work would benefit a “more comprehensive system level agreements between school systems and higher education providers to improve the coordination and quality of placements.”⁷

Discussions on the development of national guidelines for high-quality practical experience should be tripartite with equal involvement of ITE providers, Education Departments, and teacher unions as the representative voice of the profession. Tripartite discussions should cover integration of theory taught in ITE with practical experience, the nature of ITE provider and school partnerships, the structure, timing and length of practical experience, the nature of

⁷ Teacher Education Expert Panel Discussion Paper - Executive Summary, p.5

collaboration (including the appropriate remit of schools, ITE providers and individual teachers), and selection and support of teacher mentors. Guidelines must centre the needs of ITE students and those of their supervisors/coordinators and must involve deep consultation with the union and profession.

Particular “centre of excellence” schools as suggested in the discussion paper could be supported to specialise in high quality placements and to share their expertise, but any such program should be limited in form to a short pilot in advance of a potential wider rollout to all schools. It is important that opportunities to participate in high quality placements are not accessible to only a small number of ITE students. All pre-service teachers should have access to high quality placements and teachers across all schools should have an opportunity to supervise ITE students as a valuable form of professional development.

Guidelines for high-quality practical experience already exist in NSW, within the NESA Professional Experience Framework, and these could be refined and adopted nationally, but must centre the needs of ITE students, their supervisors/coordinators, and involve deep consultation with the union and profession.

The most significant lever for improving the quality of practical experience components of ITE programs is appropriate resourcing. Paid practical placements are essential, as many ITE students struggle to balance the competing demands of the practical placement, completing assessment tasks for their ITE units, and supporting themselves financially while studying. Increasingly, ITE students are undertaking employment as conditionally accredited teachers, impacting meaningful engagement with their ITE programs and placements. To avoid this there needs to be financial assistance for ITE students to undertake further or additional practicum during their studies, including support with living expenses and the maintenance of student lodgings.

Payment for practical placements must be set at an appropriate and fair level. This could be slightly lower than that of an accredited teacher at Graduate level as students on placements must always be supervised in the classroom and the supervisor would have full duty of care and responsibility for the teaching program. Remuneration for supervisors/coordinators *must* be significantly increased, as the current rates are completely inadequate/nominal. These steps would go towards ensuring paid practical placements do not become a means by which employers attempt to fill teaching vacancies at reduced cost.

Increasing the availability of scholarships and bursaries and providing guarantees of employment after graduation would further reduce the financial burden of practicums on ITE students and improve their ability to balance competing commitments. It would be appropriate to provide targeted and increased support to ITE students who have additional needs, competing commitments, cost of living pressures, the inability of preservice Teachers to work during practicums, and those who are studying in areas of workforce need.

Extended practicums must include an adequate level of in class supervision by a mentor. However, this must be done without creating additional workload burdens for teacher mentors. Supervising teachers require significant increases in release time to effectively

supervise practicums. According to AITSL, experienced teachers are already working up to 57 hours per week⁸

An extension to the current Reduction of Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debts for teachers in very remote areas program must form part of the incentives to support graduate teachers. This should be extended to those who are working in diverse and complex, ‘hard-to-staff’ *rural and regional* communities. Providing reimbursement of Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) debts to those who undertake this service would provide further support to new graduates and should be part of a suite of initiatives to attract and retain entrants to the profession.

Changes designed to improve the quality of placements must be accompanied by increased resources to schools. Current supervision payments to support teacher mentoring of pre-service teachers have not kept pace with the cost of living and AEU members report that providers often try to avoid making payments to teachers and/or schools. These payments must be increased and paid on time, so that schools can release experienced staff for supervision without detrimental workload impacts.

Improving the quality of pre-service practical experience will require significant increases in funding by governments.

In addition, the AEU suggests that the Panel consider increasing flexibility in practicum scheduling across the academic year so that pre-service teachers have an opportunity to engage in longer periods of paid practicums to encourage supportive school mentoring relationships (with increased resource for mentors) and community bonds.

Recommendations for Improving the quality of practical experience in teaching

- 5. That an ambitious Commonwealth program is instigated that funds pre-service teachers to undertake additional extended practicum and provides schools with the resources to enable experienced teachers to mentor effectively.***
- 6. That flexibility in practicum scheduling across the academic year be increased so that pre-service teachers have an opportunity to engage in longer periods of paid practicums to encourage supportive school mentoring relationships (with increased resource for mentors) and community bonds.***
- 7. That a consortia of universities, state and territory education departments, unions, and professional subject associations could develop and implement a national professional development program with Commonwealth funding to deliver professional development to teachers at all stages of their careers, based on the successful program that was deployed throughout the 1990s.***

⁸ Australian Teacher Workforce Data: National Teacher Workforce Characteristics Report December 2021 (the ATWD Teacher Workforce Report), p.22

Reform Area 4: Improving postgraduate ITE for mid-career entrants

Discussion

There is an opportunity to attracting mid-career entrants into ITE by:

- enabling mid-career entrants to enter the classroom sooner as part of their degree*
- developing evidence and provide guidance on the features of effective programs to attract mid-career entrants, and*
- improving the flexibility of available postgraduate ITE programs to support mid-career entrants in managing competing commitments.*

To what extent would these opportunities improve postgraduate programs to attract mid-career entrants?

The AEU supports the entry of mid and late career professionals into teaching and agrees that increasing the number of mid-career entrants improves diversity in the profession and brings considerable professional and life experience to teaching and student learning. However, this must not be accompanied by any lowering of qualification standards that could undermine the pedagogical knowledge and skills base required to teach effectively. Academic rigour must be preserved to ensure teacher education students have a strong foundation across all areas of teachers' work. As stated by the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) it is essential that graduate teachers display "achievement and persistence at tertiary studies and bring maturity and knowledge and skills that provide a solid platform from which to develop specific pedagogical understandings".⁹

Teaching, like other respected professions, must have a process for entry that includes rigorous preparation centred on academic study and professional experience, an in-depth test of subject and pedagogical knowledge, and a comprehensive teacher-readiness assessment.

There must be no lowering of standards through the reduction of the duration of study or of academic rigour required to gain teaching qualifications in Australia, regardless of prior experience. A suitable program of study and teacher professional experience is a fundamental prerequisite for equipping future teachers with the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need to successfully teach in the increasingly complex 21st century school environments in which they will find themselves.

Whilst entry to teaching at the mid or late career stage does allow entrants to draw upon substantial knowledge and experience gained through extensive prior participation in the workforce, the science and pedagogy of teaching requires extended immersion and rigorous consideration of theories of learning and understandings of student complexity and their needs.

For this reason, the AEU strongly supports the requirement for post graduate ITE courses to consist of a two year master's degree and is committed to a minimum five year full time equivalent qualification for teaching qualifications, as was agreed by all Commonwealth,

⁹ MGSE (2014). A response to the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Board's Issues Paper on behalf of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. Retrieved from https://submissions.education.gov.au/Forms/TEMAG/_layouts/SP.Submissions/ViewDoc.aspx?id=%7B0b89f457-18a0-48bd-832b-e837ad42cc1e%7D, p.1

state and territory education ministers in 2013, and will oppose any lowering of qualification benchmarks from ITE providers, governments or registration authorities.

Rather than seeking to truncate the qualification requirements for postgraduate ITE, we urge the Panel to consider ways in which mid-career professionals can be encouraged to complete their master's in education. Financial incentives such as scholarships and bursaries, additional mentoring support and providing guarantees of employment after graduation would assist mid-career professionals to make the transition to teaching and alleviate the financial pressures experienced by many professionals undertaking postgraduate ITE.

We note that through the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, all governments have committed to the creation of up to 5,000 bursaries of up to \$40,000 each (\$20,000 for postgraduate ITE) “to attract high quality candidates to teaching.”¹⁰

The Action Plan also proposes the creation of an additional 1,500 places within the Highly Achieving Teachers (HAT) program at a cost of \$68 million. This is despite evidence for the effectiveness of HAT being patchy at best. The 2021 evaluation of the HAT program found that its two components - Teach for Australia (TFA) LDP and the Nexus program, found concerns about the classroom readiness of Teach for Australia LDP participants and found it was too early to effectively review the Nexus program.¹¹ Further, longer term evidence from the implementation of programs such as TFA and its predecessor Teach Next,¹² demonstrate that such ‘fast track’ programs are wasteful and inefficient and undermine both quality and retention. Where they have been implemented, such programs have been clearly demonstrated not to have a sustainable impact on teaching quality. Recruiting under qualified and inexperienced TFA associates to teach in the most disadvantaged communities is not just counterintuitive, it is damaging for all concerned; the model has not succeeded in its stated goals anywhere it has been implemented.

We propose to the Panel that a better use of the \$68 million additional funding for 1,500 HAT places in the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan would be to increase the postgraduate bursary by \$22,500 per year for 1,500 students undertaking a two year master's in teaching, making them eligible for a total bursary of \$32,500 each year. This would improve school readiness and alleviate financial disincentives to undertake a master's in teaching and increase the ability of mid-career entrants to ITE to manage competing financial and personal commitments.

We agree with the Panel that there is limited evidence for the effectiveness of mid-career pathways into teaching in Australia, and also agree that many existing programs are costly to deliver.¹³ In recognition of these challenges as identified by the Panel, the AEU recommends that current and planned future funding for fast track or condensed pathways for mid-career entry into teaching is instead diverted to increasing the financial support available to students undertaking a two year masters ITE program.

¹⁰ National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, p.9

¹¹ <https://www.education.gov.au/teaching-and-school-leadership/resources/high-achieving-teachers-program-evaluation-interim-report>

¹² Topsfield, J, *Gillard's school plan costly failure*, The Sydney Morning Herald, 14/02/2013, retrieved from <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/gillards-school-plan-a-costly-failure-20130213-2edbi.html>

¹³ Teacher Education Expert Panel Discussion Paper p.63

Recommendations for Improving postgraduate ITE for mid-career entrants

8. *That the Panel recommits to the two-year master's degree as the appropriate postgraduate teaching qualification and that a strategy and timeline is developed to transition all postgraduate initial teacher education courses to two-year master's qualifications.*
9. *That current and planned funding for fast track or condensed pathways for mid-career entry into teaching is instead diverted to increasing the financial support available to students undertaking a two year masters ITE program.*

Conclusion

The AEU reiterates its commitment to ensure that ITE providers uphold the qualification benchmarks that reinforce the higher level of knowledge, skills and expertise required to be a proficient teacher in contemporary public education. We recognise the importance of school based professional experience as a vital tool in preparing ITE students to enter the classroom as graduate teachers

Standards among ITE graduates should be safeguarded through the use of minimum entry requirements to ITE and the national implementation of the Australian Professional Teaching Standards for Graduates which provide a strong foundation for improvement and the maintenance of quality in ITE.

There must be a universal application of standards for graduate teachers and rigorous preparation for pre-service teachers centred on academic study and professional experience, pedagogical knowledge, and a comprehensive teacher-readiness assessment. The graduate teaching standards provide a robust and clear expectation of what is required in this regard.

In order to this improve Teacher Education in Australia it is necessary to invest in appropriate supports and practical experience for students and for the experienced teachers and school leaders who mentor them.

ITE providers and governments must work with teachers, via their unions, to build a sustainable pipeline of enthusiastic and confident new educators in our classrooms. Fast tracking mid-career professionals into truncated teaching courses on condensed timeframes is not a solution to the teacher shortage crisis.

An ambitious plan to introduce national ITE standards on course quality and student support that maintains current qualification requirements, alongside meaningful financial assistance during study and practicums for students, and increased resources for schools to release experienced teachers as mentors must be the priority.