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Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia

Standards and Procedures
April 2011



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Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures

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Contents

Preamble	1
National Graduate Teacher Standards	4
National Program Standards	12
National accreditation process	17
Acknowledgements	23

Ensuring high quality teacher education is a first and critical step in delivering high quality teaching in schools, particularly at a time when the role of teachers is becoming increasingly complex and demanding.¹

¹ House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training. (2007). *Top of the class: Report on the inquiry into teacher education*. The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia: Canberra, p.xxi.



Preamble

This document reflects the shared commitment of the teaching profession, teacher educators, employers of teachers, schools and the education community more broadly to ensuring that entrants to teaching are of the highest quality and are recognised as such. This means that graduates have the professional knowledge and skills necessary to build highly productive professional practice and that their developing professional expertise is recognised and fostered.

These Standards and Procedures reflect high expectations of initial teacher education. The stakeholders are united in their belief that the teaching profession and the Australian community deserve nothing less. There is an expectation that those entering teaching will be a diverse group of highly literate and numerate individuals with a professional platform from which to develop as high quality teachers.

This document represents an unconditional commitment to high standards of graduates from initial teacher education programs. It also acknowledges that there are multiple pathways to excellence, and the accreditation process provides for flexibility in how both providers and program participants achieve high standards and demonstrate them.

It is the graduate outcomes of teacher education programs that matter and, ultimately, about which judgements of graduate quality must be made. The quality of graduates of teacher education, however, will depend largely upon the abilities of those entering teacher education programs, the quality of the programs provided, the commitment of schools and school systems to deliver quality professional experience placements, and the level and nature of the engagement by the students throughout their teacher education. The Program Standards therefore address entry criteria and conditions, and program structure and content, as well as graduate outcomes. This will provide greater assurance to all stakeholders, including teacher education students themselves, of successful and accomplished graduates.

These Standards and Procedures are a companion to the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*² and are designed to ensure that the Graduate career stage of the Standards is met and even exceeded by all those seeking to become teachers.

Principles for national accreditation

These Standards and Procedures for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs and their application are informed by six principles:

1. **Continuous improvement:** The accreditation process contributes to the improvement of the quality of initial teacher education and consequently of teaching and learning in Australia, providing a guarantee of graduate teacher quality and building public confidence in the profession. It will lead to change where performance needs improvement, and challenge effective providers and programs to improve further. The Standards and Procedures itself is regularly reviewed and improved.
2. **Outcomes focus:** The accreditation process sets high standards for graduate outcomes, and focuses on ensuring these are met.
3. **Flexibility, diversity and innovation:** National accreditation celebrates and encourages the capacity of providers to be innovative in delivery of programs to meet the diverse needs of students and the profession. Accordingly, teacher education providers may present an evidence-based case that an element or elements of their programs meet the intent of the Program Standards and that their graduates satisfy the Graduate Teacher Standards.

2 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). 2011. *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. Retrieved 21 March 2011, from http://www.aitsl.edu.au/verve/_resources/AITSL_National_Professional_Standards_for_Teachers.pdf



Preamble

4. **Partnerships:** National accreditation is built around partnerships involving shared responsibilities and obligations among teacher education providers, schools³, teachers, employers, and teacher regulatory authorities.
5. **Building on existing expertise:** National accreditation adds value to and builds on the strengths of jurisdictional accreditation experience, and the considerable expertise that exists in Australian teacher education. It acknowledges the professional prerogatives of Australian universities.
6. **Evidence:** The credibility of national accreditation is built on evidence-based practice and contributes to the development of evidence through research about what works in quality teacher education. This evidence in turn informs the development of accreditation, allowing it to focus on those things shown to be related to outcomes.

Objectives of national accreditation

The accreditation of initial teacher education programs is a key element in improving teacher quality. National accreditation has two key objectives:

- improving teacher quality through continuous improvement of initial teacher education, and
- accountability of providers for their delivery of quality teacher education programs based on transparent and rigorous standards and accreditation processes.

By contributing to teacher quality, national accreditation of initial teacher education programs will help to achieve the national goals for schooling expressed in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*⁴ endorsed by Ministers in December 2008.

3 In these *Standards and Procedures*, the term 'school' may include, where appropriate, other educational settings where accredited programs of learning occur for school-aged students. Specific requirements for programs preparing teachers for these settings will be developed as required.

4 Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). 2008. *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*. Retrieved 23 February 2011, from http://www.mceecdy.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf



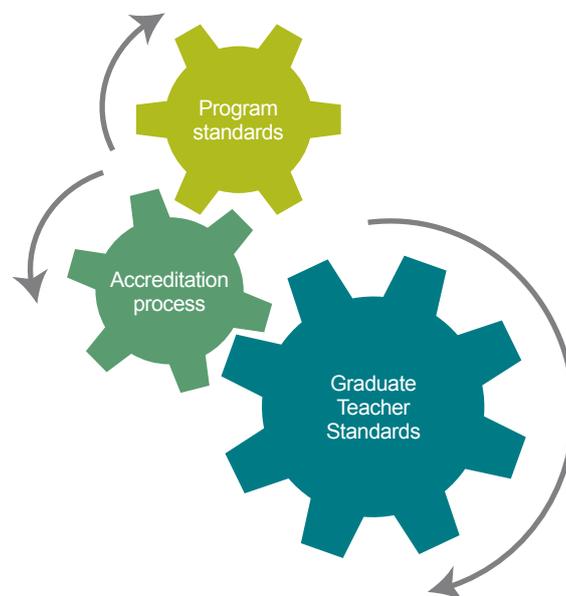
Elements of national accreditation

The national accreditation process for initial teacher education programs has three integrated elements:

- the Graduate Teacher Standards, which are the Graduate career stage of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, and make explicit the knowledge, skills and attributes expected of graduates of nationally accredited programs
- the Program Standards, which describe key features expected of high-quality initial teacher education programs: the characteristics of programs that give confidence the Graduate Teacher Standards will be achieved
- the accreditation process, which sets out a nationally consistent process to accredit programs, including the establishment and composition of accreditation panels, assessment of programs by these panels, and reporting accreditation decisions.

This diagram illustrates the interaction of the three elements of the national process.

These Standards and Procedures are supported by supplementary materials that elaborate the Program Standards, advise providers engaging with the accreditation process, and support panel members in considering evidence and making judgements about programs and the extent to which they meet the standards.



Relationship to the Australian curriculum

These Standards and Procedures will be implemented during a transitional period as the Australian curriculum is introduced. Until the Australian curriculum is fully implemented, specification of minimum discipline requirements for initial teacher education will be as currently described in the Program Standards, unless a jurisdiction has greater specification. In these cases, the minimum requirement will be the same as is currently required in that jurisdiction. As the Australian curriculum is introduced, jurisdictions will move towards common specifications for the curriculum areas.

It is acknowledged that the Australian curriculum will not specifically cover all of the areas of specialisation for which teachers are prepared. In these areas, providers will demonstrate that programs contain studies at equivalent depth to those specified for discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies in the Program Standards.



National Graduate Teacher Standards

The Graduate Teacher Standards make explicit the professional expectations of those graduating from initial teacher education programs. They describe the professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement at the first of the four career stages defined in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. Because they define what graduate teachers should know and be able to do, the Graduate Teacher Standards are the key to the accreditation of programs.

For programs to be accredited, providers need to show how their graduates meet the Graduate Teacher Standards.

The following is an extract from the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* that describes the Graduate Teacher Standards. The Standards have been developed, revised and validated through nationwide consultation and a national validation process involving several thousand teachers across the country.

Graduate teachers

Graduate teachers have completed a qualification that meets the requirements of a nationally accredited program of initial teacher education. The award of this qualification means that they have met the Graduate Teacher Standards.

On successful completion of their initial teacher education, graduate teachers possess the requisite knowledge and skills to plan for and manage learning programs for students. They demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the implications for learning of students' physical, cultural, social, linguistic and intellectual characteristics. They understand principles of inclusion and strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.

Graduate teachers have an understanding of their subject/s, curriculum content and teaching strategies. They are able to design lessons that meet the requirements of curriculum, assessment and reporting. They demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice. They know how to select and apply timely and appropriate types of feedback to improve students' learning.

Graduate teachers demonstrate knowledge of practical strategies for creating rapport with students and managing student behaviour. They know how to support students' well being and safety working within school and system curriculum and legislative requirements.

They understand the importance of working ethically, collaborating with colleagues, external professional and community representatives, and contributing to the life of the school. Teachers understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers and recognise their role in their children's education.



Professional Knowledge

Standard 1 — Know students and how they learn

Focus area	Graduate
1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning.
1.2 Understand how students learn	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.
1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.
1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.
1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.
1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability	Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of legislative requirements and teaching strategies that support participation and learning of students with disability.



Professional Knowledge

Standard 2 — Know the content and how to teach it

Focus area	Graduate
2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area.
2.2 Content selection and organisation	Organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence.
2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting	Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans.
2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians	Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.
2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies	Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.
2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	Implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning opportunities for students.



Professional Practice

Standard 3 — Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

Focus area	Graduate
3.1 Establish challenging learning goals	Set learning goals that provide achievable challenges for students of varying abilities and characteristics.
3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs	Plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, content and effective teaching strategies.
3.3 Use teaching strategies	Include a range of teaching strategies.
3.4 Select and use resources	Demonstrate knowledge of a range of resources, including ICT, that engage students in their learning.
3.5 Use effective classroom communication	Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement.
3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs	Demonstrate broad knowledge of strategies that can be used to evaluate teaching programs to improve student learning.
3.7 Engage parents/carers in the educative process	Describe a broad range of strategies for involving parents/carers in the educative process.



Professional Practice

Standard 4 — Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Focus area	Graduate
4.1 Support student participation	Identify strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities.
4.2 Manage classroom activities	Demonstrate the capacity to organise classroom activities and provide clear directions.
4.3 Manage challenging behaviour	Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour.
4.4 Maintain student safety	Describe strategies that support students' well-being and safety working within school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.
4.5 Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically	Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant issues and the strategies available to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.



Professional Practice

Standard 5 — Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Focus area	Graduate
5.1 Assess student learning	Demonstrate understanding of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches to assess student learning.
5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning	Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning.
5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements	Demonstrate understanding of assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.
5.4 Interpret student data	Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.
5.5 Report on student achievement	Demonstrate understanding of a range of strategies for reporting to students and parents/carers and the purpose of keeping accurate and reliable records of student achievement.



Professional Engagement

Standard 6 — Engage in professional learning

Focus area	Graduate
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs	Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the National Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs.
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice	Understand the relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning for teachers.
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	Seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and teachers to improve teaching practices.
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning	Demonstrate an understanding of the rationale for continued professional learning and the implications for improved student learning.



Professional Engagement

Standard 7 — Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Focus area	Graduate
7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities	Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession.
7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements	Understand the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage.
7.3 Engage with the parents/carers	Understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers.
7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities	Understand the role of external professionals and community representatives in broadening teachers' professional knowledge and practice.



National Program Standards

This section sets out the Program Standards that an initial teacher education program will meet to be nationally accredited.

Standard 1: Program outcomes

- 1.1. At the time of **initial accreditation**, providers must show that graduates of their programs will meet the Graduate career stage of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* and how this will be demonstrated.
- 1.2. At the time of **re-accreditation**, providers must demonstrate that graduates of their programs meet the Graduate career stage of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.
- 1.3. Programs meet the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) so that, on satisfactory completion, the graduate has a four-year or longer full-time equivalent higher education qualification structured as:
 - a three-year undergraduate degree providing the required discipline knowledge, plus a two-year graduate entry professional qualification⁵, or
 - an integrated qualification of at least four years comprising discipline studies and professional studies, or
 - combined degrees of at least four years covering discipline and professional studies, or
 - other combinations of qualifications identified by the provider and approved by the teacher regulatory authority⁶ ('the Authority') in consultation with AITSL to be equivalent to the above, and that enable alternative or flexible pathways into the teaching profession⁷.

Standard 2: Program development

- 2.1. Programs take account of:
 - contemporary school and system needs
 - current professional expert knowledge
 - authoritative educational research findings, and
 - community expectations.

This occurs through consultation with employing authorities, professional teacher bodies and/or the direct involvement of practising teachers, educational researchers and relevant cultural and community experts (e.g. local Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander groups, parents' organisations).

- 2.2. Programs at self-accrediting higher education institutions have been assessed as meeting internal accreditation processes such that there is coherence and rigour in the intended program outcomes, approaches to teaching and learning, and related student assessment.

5 In this document, references to the duration of academic programs or elements of them should be read in terms of 'equivalent full-time student load' (EFTSL). This defines the amount of study required for completion rather than the calendar duration.

6 While in most jurisdictions the accreditation functions will be undertaken by teacher regulatory authorities, jurisdictions may choose to make other arrangements, including cooperative arrangements with other regulatory authorities. In this document, the teacher regulatory authority or other body performing this function in a jurisdiction is referred to as 'the Authority'.

7 The Authority will make an initial determination about the eligibility of a program for accreditation, based on Program Standard 1.3. Where a program is "(an)other combination of qualifications" as provided for in the standard, the Authority will report its determination to AITSL, who will confer with all of the teacher regulatory authorities and either endorse or recommend reconsideration of the determination before a final decision is reached by the Authority.



National Program Standards

- 2.3. Programs of non self-accrediting institutions meet both the relevant accreditation requirements for such institutions and the requirements for national accreditation of initial teacher education programs.

Wherever practicable, the two accreditation processes will be undertaken concurrently, ensuring there is coherence and rigour in the intended program outcomes, approaches to teaching and learning and related student assessment, as well as economy of effort.

Standard 3: Program entrants

- 3.1 All entrants to initial teacher education will successfully demonstrate their capacity to engage effectively with a rigorous higher education program and to carry out the intellectual demands of teaching itself. To achieve this, it is expected that applicants' levels of personal literacy and numeracy should be broadly equivalent to those of the top 30 per cent of the population.
- 3.2 Providers who select students who do not meet the requirements in 3.1 above must establish satisfactory additional arrangements to ensure that all students are supported to achieve the required standard before graduation.
- 3.3 Graduate entry initial teacher education programs have clear selection criteria and equitable entry procedures that require students to have achieved a discipline-specific qualification, relevant to the Australian curriculum or other recognised areas of schooling provision.

For secondary teaching this is at least a *major study*⁸ in one teaching area and preferably a second teaching area comprising at least a *minor study*⁹.

For primary teaching this is at least one year of full-time equivalent study relevant to one or more learning areas of the primary school curriculum.

- 3.4 Students admitted to programs on the basis of an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) assessment, or an equivalent English language proficiency assessment, have attained an overall IELTS (or equivalent) score of 7.5 (with no score below 7 in any of the four skills areas, and a score of no less than 8 in speaking and listening), either on entry to or on graduation from the program.
- 3.5 Recognition of prior learning or credit transfer arrangements are determined by providers in accordance with the AQF *National Principles and Operational Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning and Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and Articulation from Vocational Education and Training to Higher Education*.

Standard 4: Program structure and content

- 4.1 Program structures must be sequenced coherently to reflect effective connections between theory and practice.
- 4.2 Professional studies in education include discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies, general education studies and professional experience. The professional studies in education will comprise at least two years of full-time equivalent study¹⁰.

8 Study undertaken for a major study will be equivalent to a total of three-quarters of a year of successful full-time higher education study, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over three years. In most programs, this equates to six units, with no more than two at first-year level and no fewer than two units at third-year level.

9 Study undertaken for a minor study will be equivalent to a total of half a year of successful full-time higher education study, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over two years. In most programs, this equates to four units, with no more than two at first-year level.

10 These standards refer to the amount of study to be undertaken in particular areas in terms of years of full-time equivalent study. This is compatible with the measurement of student load in terms of equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL). In a traditional structure of eight units per year, one unit would be equivalent to one-eighth of a year of full-time equivalent study.



4.3 Discipline studies will normally be completed either in a separate discipline degree completed prior to a graduate entry initial teacher education program, or as part of an integrated undergraduate teaching degree or combined teaching/discipline degree program.

4.4 Primary programs

Teacher education programs that prepare primary teachers must include study in each of the learning areas of the primary school curriculum sufficient to equip teachers to teach across the years of primary schooling.

In undergraduate primary programs, at least one half of the program (i.e. normally two years of full-time equivalent study) must be dedicated to the study of the discipline of each primary learning area and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies. This must include at least one-quarter of a year of full-time equivalent study of discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies in each of English/literacy, mathematics/numeracy, and at least one-eighth of a year of full-time equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies in science.

The remainder of the program may be structured to include extension or specialist studies in priority areas or related curriculum areas.

Graduate entry primary programs must comprise at least two years of full-time equivalent professional studies in education.

These programs must include at least one year of full-time equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies across the learning areas of the primary school curriculum. Programs must include at least one-quarter of a year of full-time equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies in each of English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, and at least one-eighth of a year of full-time equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies in science.

These programs may include up to one-quarter of a year of full-time equivalent study of relevant discipline studies as elective units which could be undertaken by applicants who do not fully meet prerequisite discipline study requirements.

4.5 Secondary programs

Undergraduate secondary programs must provide a sound depth and breadth of knowledge appropriate for the teaching area/s the graduate intends to teach.

These programs should provide at least a *major study*¹¹ in one teaching area and preferably a second teaching area comprising at least a *minor study*¹².

In addition, these programs must include a minimum of one-quarter of a year of full-time equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies for each teaching area the graduate intends to teach. Discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies will prepare graduates to teach across the years of secondary schooling.

Graduate entry secondary programs must comprise at least two years of full-time equivalent professional studies in education.

Programs must include a minimum of one-quarter of a year of full-time equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies for each teaching area that the graduate

11 Study undertaken for a major study will be equivalent to a total of three-quarters of a year of successful full-time higher education study, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over three years. In most programs, this equates to six units, with no more than two at first-year level and no fewer than two units at third-year level.

12 Study undertaken for a minor study will be equivalent to a total of half a year of successful full-time higher education study, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over two years. In most programs, this equates to four units, with no more than two at first-year level.



intends to teach. The discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies should prepare graduates to teach across the years of secondary schooling.

These programs may include up to one-quarter of a year of full-time equivalent study of relevant discipline studies as elective units which could be undertaken by applicants who do not fully meet prerequisite discipline study requirements.

4.6 Specialist programs

Where initial teacher education programs include specialist area studies (e.g. primary physical education, secondary special education, secondary teacher librarianship, etc.), these studies must comprise one year of full-time equivalent study relevant to that specialist area.

4.7 Non-traditional and other settings

Some teacher education programs prepare graduates for teaching across traditional boundaries.

Programs that prepare graduates to teach in both early childhood settings and primary schools are expected to prepare graduates for teaching the curriculum in both contexts.

Programs that prepare graduates for middle school teaching may have a stronger emphasis on teaching particular year levels (e.g. Years 5 to 9) but must fully address the requirements for primary teaching and for secondary teaching in at least one *major study* or two *minor studies* in secondary teaching areas.

Programs that prepare graduates for teaching across P/F/R/K-Year 12 must address the requirements for both primary and secondary teaching.

Programs that prepare graduates for teaching in other specialised teaching roles in schools and other educational settings must address the specific content and pedagogy of the specialisation¹³.

Standard 5: School partnerships

- 5.1 Providers have established enduring school partnerships to deliver their programs, particularly the professional experience component.
- 5.2 The professional experience component of each program must include no fewer than 80 days of well-structured, supervised and assessed teaching practice in schools in undergraduate and double-degree teacher education programs and no fewer than 60 days in graduate entry programs.
- 5.3 Providers describe in detail the elements of the relationship between the provider and the schools, the nature and length of professional experience placements, the components of the placement including the planned experiences and related assessment criteria and methods, and the supervisory and professional support arrangements.
- 5.4 Providers and their school partners ensure the professional experience component of their program provides their program's students with professional experience that enables:
 - working with learners in a variety of school year levels
 - appreciation of the diversity of students and communities which schools serve (e.g. rural and metropolitan settings, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Indigenous communities, etc.).
- 5.5 Providers and their school partners ensure that teachers supervising professional experience (in particular the supervised teaching practice) are suitably qualified and registered. They should have expertise and be supported in coaching and mentoring, and in making judgements about

¹³ Specific requirements will be developed for programs preparing teachers for settings other than traditional schools where required.



whether students have achieved the Graduate Teacher Standards.

5.6 Providers require that the supervised teaching practice:

- mandates at least a satisfactory formal assessment of the program's students against the professional practice elements of the Graduate Teacher Standards as a requirement for graduating from the program
- is undertaken mostly in a recognised Australian school setting over a substantial and sustained period that is relevant to an authentic classroom environment, and
- includes a designated role for supervising teachers in the assessment of the program's students.

5.7 School partnership arrangements provide for the timely identification of program students at risk of not satisfactorily completing the formal teaching practice, and of ensuring appropriate support for improvement or program counselling.

Standard 6: Program delivery and resourcing

- 6.1 Programs must use effective teaching and assessment strategies (linked to intended learning outcomes) and resources, including embedded information and communication technologies.
- 6.2 Programs are delivered by appropriately qualified staff, consistent with the staffing requirements in the relevant *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes*, including an appropriate proportion who also have contemporary school teaching experience.
- 6.3 Providers ensure that programs use contemporary facilities and resources, including information and communication technologies, which students can expect to be available in schools.
- 6.4 Providers ensure that their facilities conform to the general expectation for a contemporary higher education learning environment appropriate to the mode of delivery, including such matters as access to:
- education-related library resources
 - information and communication technologies.

Standard 7: Program information and evaluation

- 7.1 Providers use a range of data, such as student assessment information, destination surveys, employer and other stakeholder feedback to drive program improvement and periodic formal evaluation.
- 7.2 Providers report annually to the Authority outlining challenges encountered or any changes in programs.
- 7.3 Providers supply data as required to support local and national teacher workforce supply reporting, to support program and provider benchmarking, and to build a cumulative database of evidence relating to the quality of teacher education in Australia. Data collected is held in a centrally managed database and, under agreed protocols, will be available to all jurisdictions and teacher education providers for research, evaluation and program improvement.



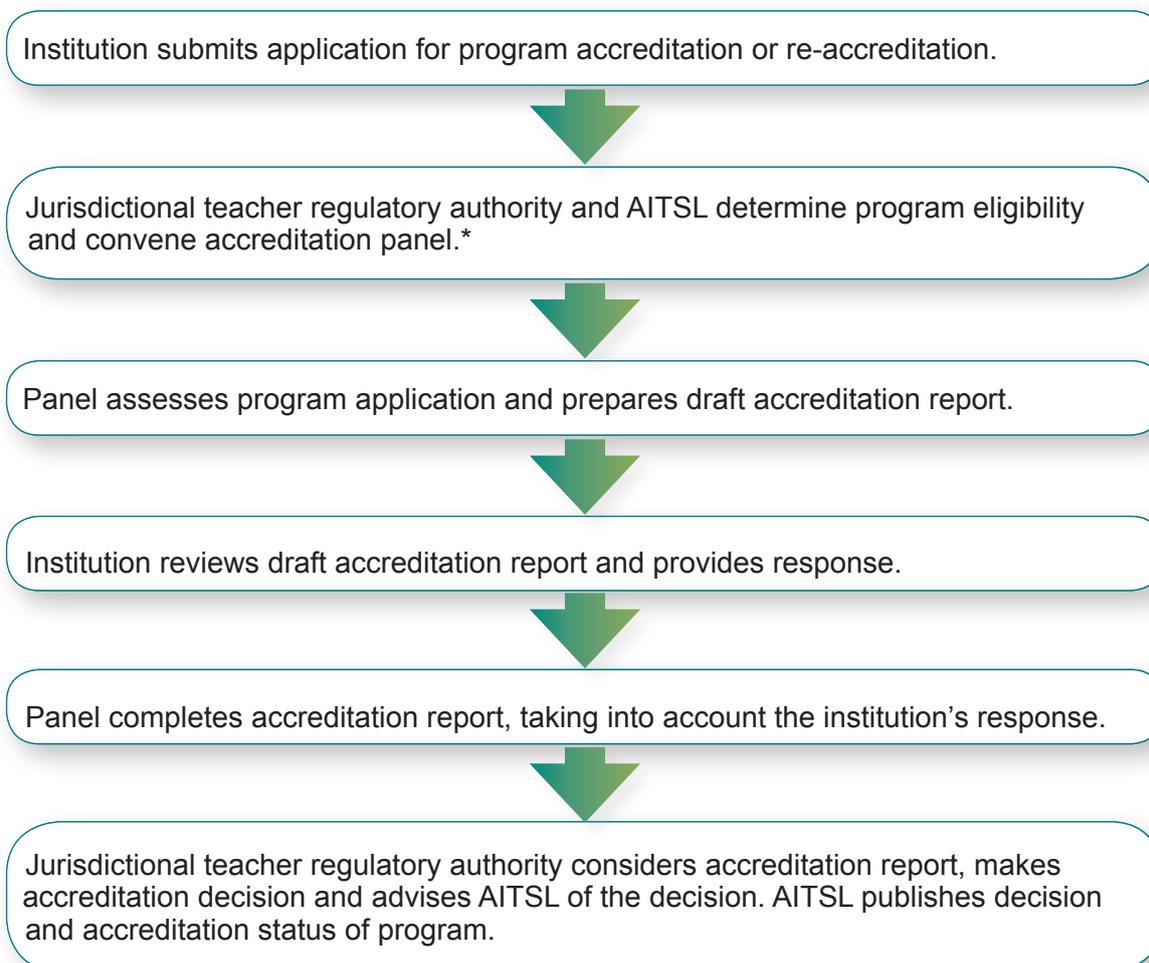
National accreditation process

This section outlines the national accreditation process, in particular:

- the key stages in the national accreditation process
- mechanisms and processes to ensure national consistency and quality of judgement
- a summary of the roles and responsibilities of the agencies involved in the national accreditation process.

Accreditation process – key stages

The key stages in the accreditation process are:



These stages are explained further below. The supplementary materials developed to enhance nationally consistent accreditation will provide further elaboration.

* The Authority will make an initial determination about the eligibility of a program for accreditation, based on Program Standard 1.3. Where a program is "(an)other combination of qualifications" as provided for in the standard, the Authority will report its determination to AITSL, who will confer with all of the teacher regulatory authorities and either endorse or recommend reconsideration of the determination before a final decision is reached by the Authority.



National accreditation process

Application for accreditation or re-accreditation

All institutions seeking to prepare teachers for registration and subsequent employment in Australian school settings are responsible for submitting their programs to the Authority for formal national accreditation or re-accreditation at least every five years.

Where practicable, all programs of a provider that are of the same type (e.g. programs preparing teachers for Australian secondary school settings) should be accredited or re-accredited concurrently. Where providers have a small number of programs, it may be preferable to undertake the accreditation for all programs concurrently.

Providers will generally submit applications for accreditation of new programs to the Authority no later than eight months before the planned delivery of the program, or at least eight months before the expiry of existing accreditation.

Applications for accreditation or re-accreditation are submitted to the Authority in the agreed format. The Authority will liaise with the provider to ensure that the application includes all required documentation and will formally advise AITSL that an application has been received.

Documentation includes:

- course outlines as approved in institutional course accreditation processes, whether internal or external
- further information as required that demonstrates how the program/s meets the Program Standards and how graduates will be assessed as achieving the Graduate Teacher Standards.

Applications for re-accreditation must also include evidence that graduates of the program have achieved the Graduate career stage of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

The Authority will make an initial determination about the eligibility of a program for accreditation, based on Program Standard 1.3. Where a program is “(an)other combination of qualifications” as provided for in the standard, the Authority will report its determination to AITSL, which will confer with all teacher regulatory authorities and either endorse or recommend reconsideration of the determination before a final decision is reached by the Authority.

Accreditation of programs delivered across jurisdictions

If a provider delivers or intends to deliver an initial teacher education program across jurisdictions, the application for accreditation will be lodged with the Authority in the jurisdiction under whose legislation the institution is formally established or governed.

That Authority will then take lead responsibility for the accreditation process. AITSL will ensure that membership of the accreditation panel is representative of all jurisdictions where the program is to be delivered.

Accreditation panels

Jurisdictional teacher regulatory authorities nominate individuals representing a range of experience and expertise (e.g. registered teachers and school principals, teacher educators, community members, specialist personnel, teacher employers) to a national pool of accreditation panel members. Each of them will undertake a national training program before being appointed to an accreditation panel.

Upon receipt of a complete application for accreditation, the Authority selects local individuals from the national pool of panel members to comprise the accreditation panel for the submitted program/s. It is the Authority’s responsibility to ensure that panel members are drawn from the trained national pool and that the required experience and expertise are covered across the selected panel members. Panels may co-opt people with specific expertise to provide advice where required.



National accreditation process

AITSL will nominate to the accreditation panel at least one national pool member from a different state or territory. The nomination will be discussed with the Authority before being finalised.

Accreditation panels will generally comprise between four and six members, ensuring at least the following experience and expertise is represented:

- currently registered teacher
- teacher educator
- employer of teachers
- other community or specialist personnel as relevant.

The Authority will nominate the chair of the panel, who will be a teacher educator of standing or a panel member with relevant experience.

Each accreditation panel will be supported by an officer from the Authority who has undertaken national panel training and who will be the executive officer for the accreditation panel.

Accreditation panel assessment

Once the Authority finalises membership of an accreditation panel, each panel member will be provided with all documentation and will review all the provided materials. The accreditation panel will convene to consult and assess the program against the national Program Standards and the Graduate Teacher Standards.

In the assessment of the submitted program/s, the accreditation panel will be supported by evidence guides and other supplementary materials developed under AITSL's auspices. Consideration by the panel may include iterative work involving, for example, the provision of further information and amendments to a program.

For initial national accreditation, the panel may undertake a site visit if necessary, at the discretion of the Authority. Generally, for re-accreditation of programs, the panel will undertake a site visit to inform its assessment and to clarify any questions or issues it may have.

Having made its assessment, the panel will draft an accreditation report for presentation to the provider.

Institution response

The draft accreditation report will be made available to the provider for consideration. The provider will respond to the draft report and submit any requested revised documentation as appropriate.

Final accreditation report

The panel will formally consider and assess feedback from the provider and any revised materials before finalising its accreditation report. Further consultation with the provider may be undertaken before this report is finalised and submitted to the Authority.

In submitting its final accreditation report, a panel may recommend that accreditation or re-accreditation be granted subject to particular conditions and specify timeframes under which such conditions should be met.

Teacher regulatory authority accreditation decision

The Authority will make the decision to accredit or re-accredit the submitted program/s based on its accreditation panel report. The Authority will then formally advise the provider in writing of the decision and comply with any relevant legislation.



National accreditation process

The Authority will concurrently advise AITSL in writing of its decision and AITSL will update the national database accordingly.

In general, programs will be accredited or re-accredited for a period of up to five years.

Providers will seek approval from the Authority for proposed significant changes to an accredited program before making the proposed changes.

The Authority will assess these program changes. Where changes are considered to substantially affect an accredited program, the Authority will convene an accreditation panel to review the changes and make a recommendation as to whether it is necessary for the program to be submitted for re-accreditation.

Appeals

Where an application for accreditation or re-accreditation of a program is unsuccessful, the provider may apply for a review of the decision or appeal against it.

Providers applying for review or appealing against a decision not to accredit an initial teacher education program will do so in accordance with the legislative, policy and administrative requirements of the relevant jurisdictional teacher regulatory authority.

The Authority will immediately advise AITSL when it becomes aware of an appeal or request for review.

Accreditation process - quality assurance and continuous improvement

AITSL will develop and implement processes and mechanisms to assure the quality and consistency of accreditation processes and judgements, in partnership with the jurisdictional teacher regulatory authorities, teacher educators and other stakeholders.

AITSL will coordinate and collate authoritative research on the accreditation and quality assurance of initial teacher education, and manage the national aggregation of program accreditation data. In addition, AITSL will seek to actively participate in international benchmarking studies on initial teacher education and will monitor and evaluate the training and operation of panels to continuously improve the national accreditation process.

AITSL will report annually to MCEECDYA on the operation of the national accreditation of initial teacher education programs. AITSL will undertake periodic review of the national standards and accreditation processes at least every four years, ensuring that relevant research and outcomes of international benchmarking studies are incorporated.

National advisory committee

To help it fulfil its obligations, the AITSL Board of Directors will establish a national advisory committee to advise the Board in its role of overseeing the implementation, maintenance and further development of national accreditation. Matters on which the committee will advise are:

- receiving and publishing accreditation reports and data
- receiving and reviewing reports and summaries on the accreditation process from regulatory authorities
- overseeing national responsibilities such as panel training
- other matters relating to national accreditation requiring the attention of the AITSL Board of Directors.

The committee will include experts from teacher regulatory authorities, employers of teachers, teacher educators and teacher unions.



National accreditation process

Accreditation process - roles and responsibilities

Table 1 outlines the broad roles and responsibilities for AITSL and jurisdictional teacher regulatory authorities.

Table 1: Broad roles and responsibilities

Item	AITSL	Jurisdictional teacher regulatory authority
National standards and accreditation process	Establish, review and maintain the <i>National Professional Standards for Teachers</i> , the national Program Standards, the national accreditation process, and supplementary materials (evidence guides and advice to panels).	Advise and collaborate on establishment, review and maintenance of national accreditation.
National training of panel members and officers	Provide nationally consistent training to panel members and to jurisdictional officers providing support to accreditation panels.	Nominate panel members to AITSL for national training. Nominate jurisdictional officers to AITSL for national training.
National accreditation timetable	Establish and maintain a timetable for national accreditation and re-accreditation of programs over time.	Negotiate with providers to ensure that, where possible, programs are accredited or re-accredited concurrently.
National accreditation panels	Provide interstate panel members.	Convene accreditation panels, including the panel member nominated by AITSL from another jurisdiction. Provide support to accreditation panels. Make accreditation decisions according to legislation and based on recommendations of accreditation panels. Advise AITSL of accreditation decisions.
Appeals	Participate in jurisdiction based appeals processes as required.	Run or participate in appeals processes, depending on jurisdictional requirements. Where an appeal is upheld, convene a new accreditation panel to undertake the accreditation process.
National database	Maintain a national database of accredited programs. Include in this database other information relating to programs as required.	Advise AITSL of accreditation decisions. Provide information to AITSL about programs and providers as required.



National accreditation process

Item	AITSL	Jurisdictional teacher regulatory authority
Quality assurance	Nominate interstate panel members. Review national accreditation and implement improvements at least once every four years.	Implement the national Program Standards and the national accreditation process. Participate in quality assurance processes to support national consistency.
Reporting	Report annually to MCEECDYA on the implementation of national accreditation. Establish links with relevant bodies for provision of data and information relating to the implementation of national accreditation.	Report to AITSL on implementation of national accreditation.



Acknowledgements

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