

Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Stage two

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Introduction

This document sets out the requirements and guidelines for accreditation stage two under the [Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures](#) (2015) (Standards and Procedures). It is designed to:

- support initial teacher education providers in the preparation and submission of evidence
- assist accreditation panels and teacher regulatory authorities (Authorities) to make informed professional judgements about the evidence
- support nationally consistent assessment and rigour in the accreditation process.

Programs are required to achieve accreditation stage two following a period determined at the time of accreditation stage one, not exceeding five years. The Standards and Procedures require providers submitting programs for this stage to provide:

- an analysis and interpretation of their evidence as outlined in their plan for demonstrating impact in relation to pre-service teacher performance, student impact, and graduate outcomes
- a description of program changes and planned improvements and the evidence base for these
- evidence of adherence to the Program Standards.

Principle of accreditation stage two

The principle of stage two is the demonstration that continuing program design and delivery is underpinned by evidence of program outcomes and impact from the preceding accreditation period. This evidence is collected from a range of data sources, chosen by the provider. As with stage one, meeting the Program Standards and Graduate Teacher Standards is the basis for this accreditation.

National accreditation system

This document elaborates the stage two accreditation process described by the Standards and Procedures. The national accreditation system focuses on evidence of program impact. It places importance on the demonstration of impact and continuous improvement throughout and at the end of an accreditation period. It comprises two accreditation stages and includes ongoing annual reporting. Stage one focuses on inputs and program design. Stage two considers inputs and program design but focuses more on evidence of program outcomes and continuous improvement. At both stages, accreditation is granted under the relevant regulatory scheme.

Annual reporting

Annual reporting is a requirement of the Standards and Procedures and it applies throughout the stage one and two accreditation cycles. The data reported annually should contribute to the accumulation of evidence for attaining accreditation stage two, including the minimum data requirements outlined in Program Standard 6.3, as well as any program changes that may have occurred since initial accreditation. While some of this annual reporting data will go to AITSL to help identify national trends and best practice, individual Authorities will determine the specific data each provider is required to report.

Accreditation stage two application

A stage two accreditation application must meet the Standards and Procedures requirements. The application must include a narrative report and three appendices (A, B and C). Figure 1 (below) shows the required components of a stage two report:

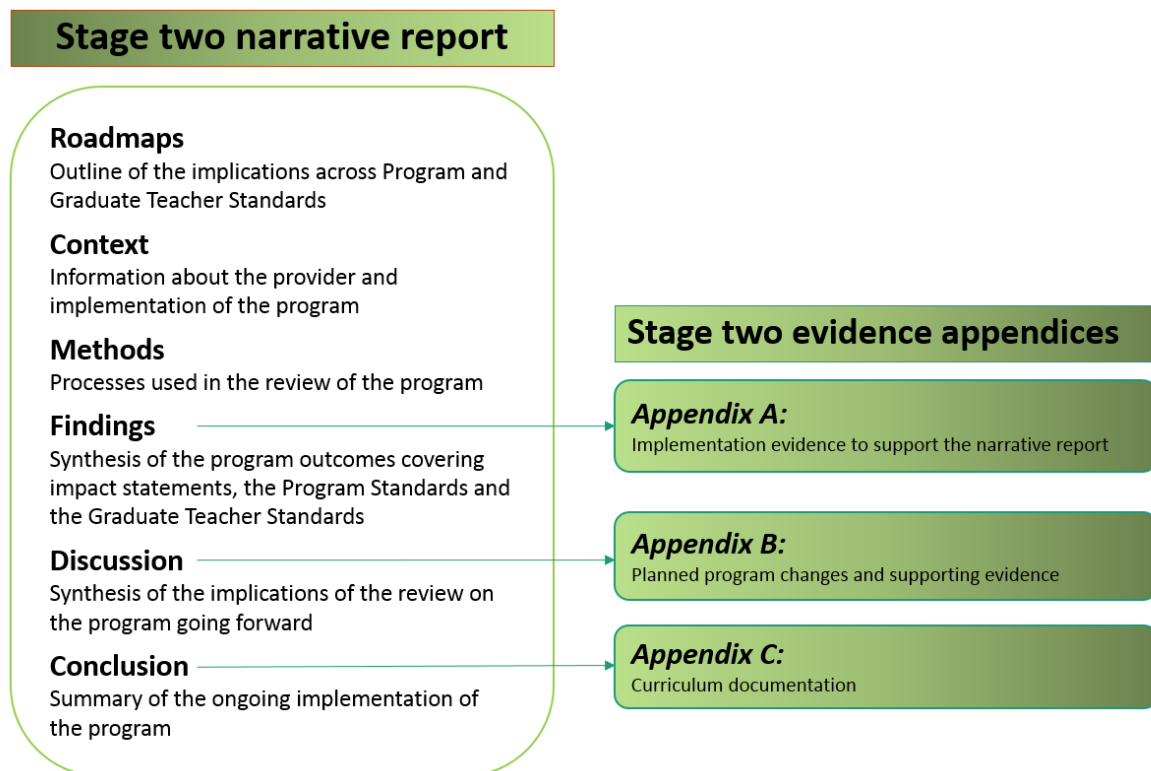


Figure 1: Components of a stage two application. The arrows indicate the main (but not exclusive) links between the narrative report and the appendices.

Narrative report

The narrative report is the core document for a stage two submission. The report is a synthesis of evidence about an individual program that has been analysed and interpreted by an initial teacher education provider. It looks back over the preceding accreditation period and is where providers describe what has worked well in their program, as well as identifying areas for improvement.

The narrative report draws upon evidence provided in appendices A, B and C that demonstrates achievement against Program and Graduate Teacher Standards throughout the accreditation period and outlines elements of change that will flow into program design for the subsequent accreditation period.

Narrative report elements

<p>Roadmaps</p> <p><i>Outline of the implications across Program and Graduate Teacher Standards</i></p>	<p>List each Program and Graduate Teacher Standard and signal whether the approach to the Standard is or is not changing. The roadmaps help guide the flow of information in the application and identify where the evidence against a particular standard is located in the appendices.</p> <p><i>Note: templates for the roadmaps will be available on the AITSL website from early 2018</i></p>
<p>Program context</p> <p><i>Information about the provider and implementation of the program</i></p>	<p>Allows for a description of the program since its previous accreditation. It would make reference to the program rationale and the context in which the program has been delivered and any changes to either that may have occurred during the accreditation period.</p>
<p>Methods</p> <p><i>Processes used in review of the program</i></p>	<p>Includes a succinct summary of the data collection, program review and accreditation processes. The information presented here would be consistent with internal provider quality assurance and governance process as well as methods described in a provider's plan for demonstrating impact, which would have been submitted and approved at the time of previous program accreditation.</p>
<p>Findings</p> <p><i>Outline of program outcomes covering impact statements and the Program Standards</i></p>	<p>Together with the discussion section, this is the main focus of the narrative report. It references each of the Program and Graduate Teacher Standards, including whether the standard was met or not met. The findings should link clearly to the evidence outcomes from the plan for demonstrating impact and be supported by evidence in appendices A and B.</p>
<p>Discussion</p> <p><i>Implications of the review for the program</i></p>	<p>Includes a synthesis of the implications of the review for future program delivery and the proposed improvements designed to remedy areas of concern. It should highlight program strengths, as well as areas for improvement, with a particular focus on pre-service teacher and graduate outcomes.</p>
<p>Conclusion</p> <p><i>Summarises program going forward</i></p>	<p>Provides a summary of changes to be made to the program as a result of the review. This should be supported by documentation provided in appendix C.</p>

Appendices to the narrative report

Appendices A, B and C provide the evidence that supports the narrative report. Each appendix contains different types of evidence.

Appendices	
Appendix A <i>Implementation evidence to support the narrative report</i>	<p>Includes data and evidence that have been collected and used to review the implementation of the program since the previous accreditation. It should only include information that has proven to be most useful for demonstrating whether the program meets the Program and Graduate Teacher Standards, as well as demonstrating the impact of the program on pre-service teachers and graduate impact on student learning.</p> <p>The content should include data sets and/or tables, which have been accumulated and progressively reported throughout the annual reporting process and the other data sources listed in a provider's plan for demonstrating impact. Any other relevant evidence not included in the plan or annual reporting should also be included. Where data have been reported annually, this appendix only needs to include relevant summaries across the whole period since the previous accreditation.</p>
Appendix B <i>Planned program changes and supporting evidence</i>	<p>Appendix B details only those Program Standards and Graduate Teacher Standards that have been identified as changing. It should include relevant sections of Templates 2 and 3 with a statement of intent for the selected Standards and links to attachments required to verify the statement. The information is forward-looking and draws on evidence that has been provided in the narrative report (and in Appendix A). An explanation of how the relevant Program Standards and Graduate Teacher Standards will be met, with supporting evidence, is required for assessment by an accreditation panel. Where there is no change proposed to a Program or Graduate Teacher Standard, there is no requirement to submit further details about meeting that Standard.</p>
Appendix C <i>Curriculum documentation</i>	<p>Appendix C provides evidence of the program that is to be implemented going forward. It includes the revised accreditation documentation, including course maps, unit outlines, and the plan for demonstrating impact. This evidence should be provided for those Standards identified as changing, and will look similar to that provided when the program was first accredited. Evidence provided here must respond to the reasons why a Standard has been identified for improvement. However, for a small subset of Program Standards, assessment of accreditation documentation will always be required, regardless of the proposed action. These are listed at the end of this document.</p>

Assessment of accreditation stage two

In the application, the provider is responsible for demonstrating through their evidence of outcomes that all of the Program Standards and Graduate Teacher Standards have been addressed. The accreditation panel needs to be satisfied with the provider's decision to either change or to keep the same approach to meeting the Program Standards and Graduate Teacher Standards and determine whether there is sufficient evidence to support the provider's conclusions. The roadmaps are the source document for panellists to work through the application.

For the purposes of assessing stage two applications, the following elements should be considered. Assessment of Standards identified for change and as evidenced in Appendices B and C uses the professional judgements outlined in the [Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education in Australia](#).

After assessing an application, a panel may request additional information to confirm that a Standard should be considered met, or to ensure that an approach to improvement is adequate.

Elements requiring verification

Application	<p>Mandatory evidence and minimum reporting requirements for pre-service teacher performance and graduate outcomes per Program Standard 6.3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> aggregated assessment data from the teaching performance assessment for all pre-service teachers (Program Standards 1.2 and 1.3) <input type="checkbox"/> aggregated assessment data from any other assessments identified in a plan for impact as contributing to evidence in relation to pre-service teacher performance and impact (Program Standards 1.1 and 1.3) <input type="checkbox"/> aggregated assessment and outcomes data linked to individuals and/or cohorts of interest, including selection cohorts (Program Standard 3.3) <input type="checkbox"/> data and evidence from participation in national and jurisdictional data collections (Program Standard 6.1) <input type="checkbox"/> evidence of the outcomes of graduates and/or graduate cohorts (Program Standard 1.4).
Narrative report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Roadmaps <input type="checkbox"/> Program context <input type="checkbox"/> Methods <input type="checkbox"/> Findings <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Conclusion
Appendices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Summaries of data and evidence collected and analysed, including data sources from the plan for demonstrating impact and summaries of annual reporting data <input type="checkbox"/> Descriptions of the proposed future program linked to the Program Standards and Graduate Teacher Standards <input type="checkbox"/> For those Standards where the provider's approach is changing, evidence that demonstrates the requirements of the Standard will be met <input type="checkbox"/> Revised accreditation documentation.

Elements requiring professional judgement

To determine the appropriateness of the conclusions reached by the provider

- Is there a clear and appropriate narrative that summarises the provider's evaluation and interpretation of the data collected and reported throughout the accreditation period?
- Within the narrative do the data and evidence support the provider's interpretation?

When no change is proposed

- Is there sufficient and credible evidence to be satisfied that the approach does not need to be changed and that the Program Standard or Graduate Teacher Standard has been met?

Note: If the panel agrees with the proposed continued approach to a Program or Graduate Teacher Standard, this part of the assessment process is concluded as that Standard is considered met.

When a change is proposed

- Is the proposed approach to the Program Standard or Graduate Teacher Standard reasonable and appropriate?
- Will it meet the Standard?
- Will the proposed approach deal sufficiently with any issues raised in the evidence provided?

Procedures

The national accreditation procedures as described in the Standards and Procedures are applicable at this stage of the accreditation cycle. A number of additional elements are outlined below.

Role of an accreditation panel

An accreditation stage two application is submitted to an Authority for assessment by an accreditation panel.

The role of an accreditation panel when assessing the application is similar to the role performed at stage one, with the panel assessing the application against the Program Standards and Graduate Teacher Standards. The difference relates to the focus by the panel on program evidence and how this informs future program design.

An accreditation panel should always use the stage two elements requiring verification and professional judgement, as well as those outlined in the [Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia](#) to assess the application.

Although the accreditation stage two application, in particular the narrative, draws on the analysis of program data, it is not the role of the panel to undertake a statistical analysis of these data.

Role of the Authority

Further to the responsibilities outlined in the Standards and Procedures, it is anticipated that prior to assessment by a panel, an Authority will verify that the key data included in the narrative report correspond with the annual reporting data that have been provided to them, and will ask the provider to correct any inconsistencies as part of the application completeness check. Authorities may also choose to provide panels with additional documentation, such as confirmation of changes, strengths, and concerns identified throughout the accreditation period.

Stakeholder consultation

An Authority may arrange for an accreditation panel to speak to a range of stakeholders to verify and supplement any information submitted as part of the accreditation stage two application. This could be useful to help clarify and confirm the evidence or any gaps presented in the application. The process would be discussed and negotiated between the Authority and the provider and could involve a discussion with a range of stakeholders, including, for example, executive staff, current and/or past students and possibly school-based staff. The stakeholder consultation could take the form of a site visit or a discussion held by teleconference/videoconference.

Quality assurance

To support nationally consistent decision-making in the assessment of evidence supplied against the Program Standards and the Graduate Teacher Standards, the stage two accreditation process will be included in the national quality evaluation activities (Standards and Procedures 2015, p.30). These activities will be undertaken in collaboration with Authorities and focus on the accreditation process in general. Due to the evolving nature of the stage two process throughout the transition period, some targeted quality assurance activities may need to be undertaken at particular points in time.

Program Standards always requiring documentation

Due to the nature of some Program Standards, they will always require updated documentation, even where past performance does not indicate the need for change. These are listed below. Evidence should be provided in Appendix C of a stage two application.

Note: For Standards 2.2, 2.3 and 5.5, it is only the highlighted element of the Standard that requires updated documentation.

Program Standards	
2.2	Program development, design and delivery take account of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) contemporary and emerging developments in education, curriculum requirements, community expectations and local, employer and national system needs including workforce demands for teaching specialisationsb) the perspectives of stakeholders such as employers, professional teacher bodies, practising teachers, educational researchers and relevant cultural and community experts.
2.3	The resourcing for the program and its teaching and assessment strategies is consistent with the program's rationale and expected outcomes and: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) prepares pre-service teachers for contemporary school environments and early childhood education environments where relevantb) takes into account the learning and professional experience needs of pre-service teachers across all offered modes of deliveryc) includes staff who have ongoing or recent school-based experience and early childhood experience where relevant.
5.5	Providers support the delivery of professional experience in partner schools/sites, including by identification and provision of professional learning opportunities for supervising teachers and communication from, and access to, designated initial teacher education provider staff who, preferably, have current or recent experience in teaching.
6.2	At the beginning of each accreditation period, providers develop and then implement a plan for demonstrating program outcomes in relation to pre-service teacher performance and graduate outcomes, including program impact. The plan will identify how providers will select, use and analyse evidence that is relevant to assessing the delivery of the program including the mandatory evidence required by Program Standard 6.3.

Transition to accreditation stage two

With the shift to the Standards and Procedures (2015), a number of existing nationally accredited programs (2011) will expire over the coming years and thus be eligible to move to accreditation stage two. It is recognised that there will be variations in what is achievable in terms of stage two evidence as providers will be progressively introducing some of the new national accreditation elements over the transition period.

The evolving availability of program evidence against the revised Standards and Procedures and the time needed to implement data collection processes means that those programs moving to stage two over the next few years may have slightly different accreditation requirements. During this period of change, irrespective of these immediate challenges, it is important to note that the key principle of stage two will always be maintained.

The content and structure of a transitional stage two submission should be negotiated between the provider and the Authority prior to submission to ensure that all expectations and requirements are understood.

The following modifications to a stage two submission may be necessary:

1. *Transition plans*
Any transitional standards, included in *N2 Transition Plans*, which have not yet been transitioned for the program should be included in Appendix B as a transition plan.
2. *Template 3 – Graduate Teacher Standards Matrix*
Where *Template 3 Graduate Teacher Standards Matrix* has not previously been provided, a completed Template 3 should be included in Appendix B. This is relevant where the stage one submission for the program included the old *Template B Graduate Teacher Standards Matrix*. This may be included within other improvement plans or as a separate transition plan.
3. *Appendix A*
The evidence available for appendix A will be limited by the commencement of the data collection linked to the plan for demonstrating impact. Providers are expected to commence the collection of data against their plan no later than January 2018. This means that for some data sources, data across the full period of stage one accreditation will not be available. However, providers will have been collecting some relevant data prior to 2018. Providers may supplement data collected since the commencement of their plan for demonstrating impact with other data and evidence collected in relation to the earlier Program Standards. The following should be noted:
 - Providers should provide data and evidence for the full stage one accreditation cycle where it is available. There may be a number of data sources listed in the plan for demonstrating impact where this is applicable.
 - Providers should provide all data and evidence for all years since the commencement of their plan in January 2018.
 - Providers should review data and evidence requirements across the Program Standards, particularly the minimum requirements in Program Standard 1.4 and 6.3, to determine what other data and evidence is available to support judgements about the program.