

Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia

Frequently asked questions

How much evidence is an initial teacher education provider required to submit within an application for accreditation?

The accreditation process is not intended to be onerous. Generally, reference to one or two examples of relevant evidence would be sufficient to meet each Program Standard and it is not necessary to reference every location where a Program Standard is addressed to meet a Program Standard. Evidence of how the program will address each Graduate Teacher Standard must include: all unit outlines; and assessment information for tasks deemed as critical to the demonstration of a Graduate Teacher Standard Descriptor.

The document, [Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia](#) (*Guidelines*), is intended to support initial teacher education providers to prepare evidence for accreditation, and panels to assess applications. In addition, templates 2, 3 and 4 (Program Standards Matrix, Graduate Teacher Standards Matrix, and plan for demonstrating impact respectively) provide further guidance on evidence requirements. The onus is on the provider to put forward their case by selecting appropriate evidence and organising it in a manner that ensures the panel is able to easily identify evidence relevant to each Program Standard.

What types of evidence are appropriate for meeting the Program Standards?

The onus is on the initial teacher education provider to carefully select evidence that is relevant to each Program Standard. The [Guidelines](#) outline possible evidence that could be used to demonstrate each Program Standard. It should be noted, however, that these are not prescriptive or exhaustive lists, and are provided as a guide only. The exception to this is where a Program Standard explicitly requires a piece of evidence (e.g. completed template 3; plan for demonstrating impact).

What is the difference between an element requiring verification and an element requiring professional judgement?

Elements requiring verification are aspects of a Program Standard that need to be identified as present in the provider's application and evidence. They do not require the accreditation panel to make any further judgement to determine whether those elements have been met.

Elements requiring professional judgement are aspects of a Program Standard that require further consideration in order to determine whether or not the Program Standard has been met. In the [Guidelines](#), these elements are presented as questions, which are intended to assist providers to select evidence, and panels to accurately and consistently make professional judgements.

What is a teaching performance assessment?

A teaching performance assessment (TPA) is a type of assessment of teaching practice. The [Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures](#) (*Standards and Procedures*) requires that a pre-service teacher satisfactorily completes a TPA in their final year in order to graduate (see Program Standard 1.2). For the purpose of accreditation the TPA must be valid, reliable and moderated. This type of assessment generally requires a teacher to plan and teach a sequence of lessons, assess student learning, reflect on those lessons and modify teaching to improve student learning. Teaching performance can be demonstrated through evidence of this teaching and learning process including, but not limited to, planning documentation, student work samples, examples of feedback to students, videos and/or observations of classroom practice and commentaries on practice.

What constitutes a primary specialisation and what guidance will there be around this?

To meet Program Standard 4.4, ITE providers must offer specialisations focused on curriculum area/s that are in areas of employer demand. Unit outlines and assessment tasks for specialisations on offer must address relevant discipline knowledge and discipline-specific pedagogical knowledge.

The [Guidelines](#) provide specific information about primary specialisations (see Program Standard 4.4). AITSL is also undertaking further work to support the requirement for primary specialisations and will provide information as the project progresses.

How do the Standards and Procedures allow for flexibility in program structure and content?

Flexibility, diversity and innovation is a key principle underpinning the accreditation process. ITE providers are encouraged to be innovative in the delivery of programs to meet the diverse needs of students and the profession. The [Standards and Procedures](#) and accompanying [Guidelines](#) are therefore not intended to be prescriptive, constrain the ability of ITE providers to be innovative, or to regulate their provision of higher education. Rather, they are designed to assist ITE providers when developing accreditation documents, and assist accreditation panels to assess whether a program meets the Program Standards, without prescribing how it meets the Standards.

What are the roles and responsibilities of those involved in professional experience placements and how can consistency be assured?

The [Standards and Procedures](#) outline minimum requirements for professional experience (see Program Standard 5) which contribute to increasing the quality and consistency of professional experience across Australia.

The [Professional experience: Participant roles and responsibilities](#) describe the roles and responsibilities of the key groups that share responsibility for the professional experience component of ITE programs, which include: professional experience sites, supervising teachers, pre-service teachers, ITE providers and education systems.

Other resources include the [Supervising Preservice Teachers](#) online program, and the [quality practice case studies](#) of professional experience. Many jurisdictions have also released resources that focus on the provision of quality professional experience.

What evidence is required for the plan for demonstrating impact?

The mandatory evidence and minimum reporting requirements for the plan for demonstrating impact are outlined in the [Guidelines](#) (see Program Standard 6.2). AITSL has published a [template and worked sample for the plan for demonstrating impact](#) to assist ITE providers to meet these requirements.

What is the relationship between the plan, annual reporting and accreditation stage two?

The plan for demonstrating impact, annual reporting and accreditation stage two are different elements of accreditation but are closely connected. ITE providers must develop a plan at the beginning of each accreditation period that outlines the program outcomes, any targeted outcomes of interest to the program and the evidence that will be collected and reported against these outcomes. Some of this data will then be reported annually and also be used when a provider applies for accreditation stage two. The relationship between these three elements helps to support a provider in identifying and then collecting relevant evidence across the accreditation period in preparation for their stage two accreditation. Further [guidance on the plan](#) has been developed (see Template 4, including worked sample). Further guidance on annual reporting and accreditation stage two is currently being developed and will be published on the AITSL website and distributed to stakeholders in 2016.

How should Schedule 1 for Program Standard 4.2 be applied?

Schedule 1 must be applied to all programs as it specifies the mandatory requirements for discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies for programs preparing pre-service teachers in primary or secondary settings. The definition of curriculum in Program Standard 4.2 does not override these requirements in the context of combined programs.

How will additional requirements for different states/territories be taken into account in the accreditation process?

The accreditation process will be managed by teacher regulatory authority in each state and territory. As with the previous national accreditation process, it is the authority that has the responsibility of making panellists and providers aware of any state/territory requirements and ensuring these are taken into account during the accreditation process.

What is the timeframe for implementation of the strengthened accreditation process?

ITE programs will transition to the new accreditation process over 2016 to 2018. All Education Ministers have agreed that:

- programs that are currently accredited under state arrangements will be required to submit full applications against the new accreditation Program Standards by the end of 2016
- programs that have been accredited under the previous national system will be required to submit modified applications (“transition plans”) against the new elements of the Program Standards by the end of 2016
- regulatory authorities will assess applications and transition plans and confirm decisions in 2017.

State and territory regulatory authorities will communicate the specific transition timelines and details to their providers. State and territory regulatory authorities are the first point of contact for information on these timelines.