

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework?

The *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* (the Framework) highlights what is required to build a comprehensive approach to teacher performance and development. It outlines the components of a successful approach, including the culture that needs to be in place for real improvements to occur in schools. It describes the characteristics of an effective performance and development cycle, including essential elements that should be implemented in all Australian schools.

2. Why have a national Framework?

All teachers are entitled to receive effective performance and development opportunities underpinned by the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (The Standards). A national approach to teacher performance and development will support Australian teachers in their desire to grow and develop. This Australian Framework requires that every teacher, every year, in every school receives regular, appropriate and constructive feedback on their performance, opportunities to identify areas for development, as well as effective and ongoing support to further improve their practice. The pace and method of implementation of the Framework will be determined by jurisdictions, sectors and schools.

3. What is new about the national approach to performance and development?

For the first time, the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* sets out the essential elements that should occur in all Australian schools for teachers to receive the support they need. Essential elements include each teacher having a set of documented and regularly reviewed goals agreed with a principal or delegate, all teachers being supported in working towards their goals, evidence for reflection and review coming from a range of sources, and teachers receiving regular formal and informal feedback on their performance. Although these elements already exist in many schools, the Framework seeks to ensure that all teachers, and their students, receive the benefit of a comprehensive approach to feedback and improving teaching, and that these elements are embedded in a performance and development culture. While the essential elements are necessary, they will not by

themselves be sufficient to gain the maximum benefit from this process. However, it is important to be clear about common requirements and the minimum level of support that all teachers can expect in Australian schools. The Framework recognises that schools operate in different contexts and will be at different starting points, and therefore that implementation will look different in different contexts.

4. How was the Framework developed?

The Framework was informed by comprehensive research, analysis of existing practices, national and international expert advice and extensive consultation with education bodies, teachers and school leaders.

A mapping and analysis of existing teacher performance and development practices across Australian education systems and sectors was undertaken. This work details existing systems, identifies best practice and advises on implications for the Australian Framework and the support currently in place for implementation. The mapping of existing practices can be found on the AITSL website aitsl.edu.au

Independent reports were developed by Hay Group, Grattan Institute and Boston Consulting Group: three organisations that lead thinking and practice in performance and development to inform the Framework. Each organisation provided an evidence-based paper to inform public debate and understanding of effective approaches to teacher performance and development. The Framework was informed by discussion with experts and stakeholders. The independent reports can be found on the AITSL website aitsl.edu.au

The draft Framework was the subject of extensive national consultation from April to June 2012 and attracted 40 written submissions from education bodies, including employers, teacher unions, principal and professional associations, regulatory authorities, as well as individuals and education experts. The feedback from this informed the final Framework which was endorsed by Ministers at the Standing Council on 3 August 2012.

From May to October 2012, peak bodies undertook consultation activities with their workforce/membership with a focus on how the Framework can best be implemented in Australian schools.

5. How will an Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework benefit the profession?

The Framework places the improvement of teaching at the centre of efforts to improve student outcomes in every Australian school. This will have the following benefits for teachers and school leaders:

Benefits for teachers:

- structure to support teacher and school improvement aimed at improving student outcomes
- flexibility to align with school improvement goals
- increased professional growth through coaching
- enhanced professional satisfaction
- formal recognition of professional achievements
- access to networks through school and system wide collaboration.

Access to and participation in:

- relevant professional learning
- targeted career goal setting
- effective reflection and feedback
- collegial networks.

Benefits for school leaders:

- structure to drive teacher and school improvement aimed at improving student outcomes
- flexibility to align with school improvement goals
- promotes collaboration and collegial endeavour
- encourages leadership at all levels
- promotes a shared commitment to excellence
- shared understanding of effective teaching.

6. How will the effective performance and development processes be implemented at the school level?

The major responsibility for implementation of effective performance and development processes and culture lies at the school level and will require a real and sustained effort by teachers and school leaders as well as support from systems and sectors. All schools are different and need to respond to their unique contexts and histories. Schools' starting points will vary widely dependent on their existing performance and development practices.

7. Will the Government or AITSL be helping schools implement more effective performance and development processes? If so how?

AITSL worked with stakeholders, including government and non-government education sectors and principal associations, to raise awareness of effective performance and development processes and to consult on issues relating to effective implementation. A major focus of this consultation was to identify the support systems, sectors and schools will need to achieve real improvement in teaching. AITSL will develop support materials, including a self-assessment tool based on the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and a classroom observation framework.

The Australian Government's *Rewards for Great Teachers* initiative provides \$60 million to support implementation of the Framework and the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers.

8. How will teachers and school leaders become familiar with the Framework?

The profession were extensively involved in activities to enhance understanding of the national reform initiative and to determine the support required for implementation to effect real change. AITSL worked with stakeholders to undertake consultation on the implementation of effective performance and development in Australian schools. These consultation activities included provision of resources, stimulus materials, research, examples of effective existing practices provided in video and case study format, and the development of a web presence and online communities of practice.

9. What are the roles of teachers and school leaders in implementing effective performance and development?

An effective approach to teacher performance and development cannot be achieved by selected individuals within a school. Rather, it is characterised by a shared commitment to improvement and an acceptance that teachers have a powerful role to play in each others' development, as well as their own. Teachers, school leaders, principals, systems and sectors have a shared responsibility to implement effective performance and development.

Changing the culture within and across schools is difficult work, and will take time. It is not realistic to expect that all change is generated at the school level, or that all teachers and school leaders will begin with the skills required to make this shift. Materials to support implementation are available on the AITSL website, at aitsl.edu.au, to assist all teachers, school leaders, systems and sectors.

10. Will teachers undergo a formal review? Will this include yearly exams? Will it involve external assessors?

An essential element of the Framework is all teachers receive regular formal and informal feedback on their performance. This includes a formal review against their performance and development goals at least annually, with verbal and written feedback being provided to the teacher.

Yearly exams/tests are not a component of the Framework.

The Framework does not require the use of external assessors. External assessors are a component of the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher process.

11. Who will do the classroom observation and is there external assessment?

The Framework does not prescribe who does the classroom observations. Observation and feedback are important tools for improving teaching, and there are a range of ways of conducting observations of practice. Research shows observation of classroom teaching, linked to timely and useful feedback that focuses on improvement, is a particularly useful tool for teacher development, and is the most commonly used form of evidence across OECD countries. Teachers can get great benefit from observing and being observed by their peers. Principals and other school leaders also have an important role to play in observation.

There is also scope for observation by educators external to a school. For example, teachers applying for certification as Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers will be observed by trained external

assessors, who will be teachers, school leaders and others with the necessary expertise.

12. Will all states and territories use the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework? Will states/school systems who already have performance assessments have to change the way they currently do them?

The Framework was endorsed by Education Ministers in August 2012. The pace and method of implementation will be determined by jurisdictions and school sectors. This will include implementation of the Framework's essential elements in all Australian schools. The *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* is based on the best of what already exists. Where existing systems or schools already practise the essential elements outlined in the Framework their focus will be on improvement. Other systems or schools will need to change to incorporate the essential elements, but will still have flexibility to meet local needs as long as these elements are present.

13. Does the Framework provide for flexibility across differing teaching contexts?

The aim of the Framework is to strengthen and build upon existing effective practices within schools and systems. It specifies essential elements that must be present in all schools, but is also designed to cater for different school contexts and priorities, and to build on the best of existing practices.

All schools are different, and need to respond to their unique contexts and histories. Schools vary widely in their existing approaches to teacher performance and development. It is clear that effective implementation takes into account starting points, and that the sequencing of change will be different in different situations. This Framework describes the elements of an effective approach to teacher performance and development, but acknowledges that these elements will look different in each school.

It is important that performance and development processes in a school fit with other arrangements in which schools, teachers and school leaders are involved. Performance and development processes and teacher goals should reflect the overall approach to teaching and learning within a school, and should be consistent with the school's plan. It is important that teachers and school leaders experience performance and development as something that ties together the various activities they are engaged in, rather than a separate and additional process. Alignment to school plans and school-wide approaches to professional learning are particularly important.

14. Are the essential elements described in the performance and development cycle mandatory?

It is intended that the four essential elements outlined in the Framework are common requirements and present in all Australian schools. While these are necessary, they will not by themselves be sufficient to gain the maximum benefit from this process. The Framework recognises that schools operate in different contexts and will be at different starting points, and the implementation of these essential elements will look different in different contexts.

15. How do I gather evidence for my performance review?

Judgements about the effectiveness of teaching, whether they arise from self-reflection, are used as a basis for improvement or result from formal assessment of performance, have greatest validity when based on multiple sources of evidence. Evidence used to reflect on and evaluate teacher performance, including for the full review, should include as a minimum: data showing impact on student outcomes; information based on direct observation of teaching; and evidence of collaboration with colleagues.

There are a wide range of sources of evidence that can be used in evaluating teacher performance, including:

- evidence of the impact of teaching on student outcomes
- direct observation of teaching
- evidence of the teacher's impact on colleagues and the school as a whole
- student feedback
- peer/supervisor feedback
- parent feedback
- teacher self-assessment
- evidence of participation in professional learning and teacher reflection on its impact.

This is far from being an exhaustive list. However, it does represent the breadth of evidence most often cited in the international research on teacher effectiveness. Note that the specifics will vary by school/system.

16. How will the less tangible aspects of teaching be assessed?

An important part of effective professional practice is collecting evidence that provides the basis for ongoing feedback, reflection and further development. The complex work of teaching generates a rich and varied range of evidence that can inform meaningful evaluations of practice for both formative and summative purposes. Potential sources of evidence include those listed in question 15. To capture the less tangible aspects of teaching it is important that multiple and varied sources of evidence are provided.

17. How will student achievement be measured?

There are some forms of evidence that are particularly important in reviewing teacher performance. Evidence of student learning directly captures the outcomes of teaching, and must have a central role. This is not an argument for simplistic approaches that tie evaluation of teaching directly to single outcome measures. It is, however, a call for everything that teachers do, and that is done to support them, to be linked to increasing the positive impact of teaching on students. The Framework defines student outcomes broadly to include student learning, engagement in learning and wellbeing, and acknowledges that these can be measured in a variety of ways.

Making student outcomes central to performance and development will allow individual schools to focus on the things likely to have greatest impact.

18. How will underperformance be managed?

Feedback and formal review processes may identify teachers who are underperforming against the requirements of their position, or against the requirements for continued registration. Underperformance will then be managed through separate processes which are negotiated industrially.

19. What is the link between the Standards, certification and professional learning?

To focus on improving teaching, it is necessary to have a clear vision of what effective teaching looks like. Australia now has *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, which outline what teachers should know and be able to do at four career stages. These Standards present a comprehensive picture of the elements of effective teaching organised around the domains of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement, across four career stages.

The *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* provide a broad picture of the work of teachers. Schools, and individual teachers within them, are unlikely to be focusing on all areas of the Standards at once. Rather, the Standards should be seen as providing the basis and a common language for coming to a shared understanding of what effective teaching looks like in a particular school at a particular time. This understanding of effective teaching will be shaped by the school's context and priorities.

See teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au for more details.

The *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* makes clear the role of the principal in leading teaching and learning, developing him or herself and others, and leading improvement in a school. All these elements are central to a performance and development culture.

See aitsl.edu.au/school-leaders/national-professional-standard-for-principals/national-professional-standard-for-principals.html for more details.

Voluntary certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers is an important element in a broader teacher quality strategy that develops, recognises and supports excellent practitioners. A national approach to certification based on the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* will provide a valuable opportunity for professional learning and development.

See certification.aitsl.edu.au/certification.html for more details.

Engaging in high quality professional learning is a major strategy for improving teacher practice. An effective approach to professional learning is described in the *Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders* (the Charter).

The Charter:

- affirms the importance of learning in improving the professional knowledge, practice and understanding of all teachers and school leaders to achieve improvement in student outcomes
- articulates the expectation that all teachers and school leaders actively engage in professional learning throughout their careers
- describes the characteristics of a high quality learning culture and of effective professional learning, to assist teachers, school leaders and those who support them to get the most from their professional learning.

Based on research, the Charter identifies effective professional learning as being relevant, collaborative and future focused. It identifies the importance of a learning culture within a school, and emphasises that professional learning should be based on changing teacher practice to meet student needs. Consistent with this focus, access to professional learning opportunities should be negotiated to take into account the priorities and resources of schools.

See aitsl.edu.au/professional-learning/professional-learning.html for more details.

20. How will the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework be linked to performance pay?

The Framework is not directly linked to pay. It is not intended to address issues around industrial relations or existing awards. The way in which teachers may be recognised or rewarded is an employment matter.

21. Is the Rewards for Great Teachers initiative linked to the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework?

The Framework is not directly linked to pay. The Australian Government announced its intention to reward teachers certified as Highly Accomplished or Lead through a one-off payment. The first reward payments are planned to be provided in 2014 based on teacher performance in 2013. Highly Accomplished teachers will be rewarded with \$7,500 and Lead teachers with \$10,000.

The Framework – Frequently asked questions

22. What is the timeframe for implementation of the Framework?

- 2012**
- endorsement by Education Ministers – August
 - wide consultation at the national and local levels on how the Framework can best be implemented
 - development of support materials
- 2013**
- implementation of effective performance and development processes in all schools
 - roll out of support materials

23. Will there be support to implement effective performance and development processes?

A major focus of consultation during 2012 was to allow stakeholders to share effective resources and discuss the support required for effective implementation of the Framework across all Australian school contexts.

Support for implementation of effective performance and development processes includes:

- advice
- resources, tools and templates
- stimulus materials
- examples of effective practices
- professional learning materials
- online communities of practice
- research.

These resources are available on the AITSL website at aitsl.edu.au

24. What next?

Materials will be progressively rolled out to support effective performance and development processes and culture in all Australian schools. The pace and method of implementation will be determined by jurisdictions and school sectors.



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