

The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders?

The Charter is a document that:

- affirms the importance of learning in improving the professional knowledge, practice and engagement 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 professional 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.

2. What is effective professional learning?

Research shows that effective professional learning is relevant, collaborative and future focused. Professional learning is most effective when it supports teachers to reflect on, question and consciously improve their practice.

3. Why is effective professional learning so important?

There is a growing body of research, from organisations such as the Office for Economic Development (OECD), that emphasises the importance of professional learning in changing teacher and school leader behaviour in order to improve student outcomes, and that provides clear messages about the types of professional learning that are most likely to lead to sustainable change. In an OECD survey, teachers from around the world report that individual and collaborative research, qualification programs and informal dialogue have the greatest impacts on their practice.

OECD, 2009, *Creating effective teaching and learning environments: First results from TALIS*, <www.oecd.org/edu/talis/firstresults>

4. How does the Charter relate to the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework?

The Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework advocates for the creation of a performance and development culture in all Australian schools. With its focus on development, such a culture provides support for professional learning, and creates the conditions where professional learning can be most effective, which therefore will have the greatest impact on student outcomes.

5. Does the Charter provide for flexibility across different teaching contexts?

Professional learning undertaken by teachers and school leaders will vary to suit the context and priorities of teachers, leaders, schools, systems and sectors, but the imperative to engage actively in high quality professional learning remains the same.

6. Does my school have to implement the Charter?

The Charter does not set out requirements that must be met by any single school, system or provider of professional learning for teachers and school leaders. It does however, provide unequivocal expectations regarding the importance of professional learning, the characteristics of effective professional learning and the need for establishing professional learning cultures in all schools.

7. How was the Charter developed?

The Charter was informed by comprehensive research, national and international expert advice and extensive consultation with professional associations and the broader education community. AITSL has consulted with Australian teachers and school leaders through associations including the Australian Primary Principals Association, the Catholic Secondary Principals Association, the History Teachers Association of Australia and the Middle Years of Schooling Association, in addition to the peak school education bodies in each state and territory.

AITSL worked with international and national experts as a source of independent feedback and advice including:

- Professor Dame Patricia Collarbone (Creating Tomorrow Ltd, UK)
- Professor Diane Mayer (Deakin University, Australia)
- Associate Professor Margaret Lloyd (Queensland University of Technology, Australia)
- Mr Frederick Brown (Learning Forward, USA)
- Ms Philippa Cordingley (CURREE, UK)
- Professor John Hattie (Melbourne University, Australia)
- Professor Alma Harris (University of London, UK)
- Mr Al Bertani (Urban Education Institute, USA)
- Professor Ben Levin (University of Toronto, Canada)
- Dr Helen Timperley (University of Auckland, NZ)
- Dr Judy Halbert and Dr Linda Kaiser (University of Victoria, Canada)
- Professor Michael Fullan (University of Toronto, Canada).

8. How will I be supported to improve the quality of my teaching and/or school leadership?

AITSL will provide tools and resources to support the enactment of the Charter including case studies from school and systems willing to share their strategies for establishing professional learning cultures.

AITSL will also support research into determining useful and practical methodologies for teachers and school leaders to apply in order to effectively evaluate the impact of professional learning in their school and as a result on the outcomes of their students.

Research used to inform the development of the Charter can be found on the AITSL website www.aitsl.edu.au.



For more information:

- @ professionallearning@aitsl.edu.au
- aitsl.edu.au
- 03 9944 1200

- facebook.com/aitsl
- twitter.com/aitsl
- youtube.com/aitsleduau