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Australian Institute
for Teaching and
School Leadership
Limited

**Supplementary guidelines
to support the *Accreditation
of initial teacher education
programs in Australia:
Standards and Procedures***

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**Action Now:
Selection of entrants into
initial teacher education
Guidelines**

Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, sea country and waterways from across Australia. We honour and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

Quality teaching is critical to improved student outcomes, and initial teacher education sets the foundation for a high-quality teaching workforce. Rigorous candidate selection procedures that maximise the likelihood those entering the profession will become effective teachers will support the quality of teaching in Australia.

1.2 Objective

In selecting entrants into their programs, it is critical that providers of initial teacher education identify and admit only those candidates who can demonstrate they have the necessary academic as well as non-academic capabilities that will enable them to successfully graduate as classroom ready teachers from a rigorous initial teacher education program.

1.3 Purpose

Selection into initial teacher education in Australia takes place within the context of a national approach to accreditation of initial teacher education programs, the *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* (Standards and Procedures), developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and applied by state and territory teacher regulatory authorities. All initial teacher education providers obtain and maintain accreditation for each program offered at their institution.

To gain and maintain national accreditation, the Standards and Procedures require that providers of initial teacher education must demonstrate as part of their applications for accreditation stage one that their program has an evidence-based selection process and minimum entry requirements in place that are consistent with the Program Standards below. At stage two of accreditation, providers must provide evidence about the impact of the selection mechanisms and minimum entry requirements they have used.

The Standards and Procedures state that:

- providers set both academic and non-academic criteria for the selection of entrants to initial teacher education programs
- providers describe in detail the rationale for their approach, the selection mechanisms utilised, threshold entry applied and any exemptions used
- all information necessary to ensure transparent and justifiable selection processes for entry into initial teacher education programs, including student cohort data, is published.*

*Note this was the proposed wording for the Standards and Procedures based on these guidelines. Please refer to the current Standards and Procedures for the final wording endorsed by the Education Council.

These guidelines provide further information and guidance for providers in meeting these Program Standards, and accreditation panels in assessing applications. The document outlines the key factors for providers of accredited initial teacher education programs in Australia to take into account when developing and implementing selection processes and determining entry requirements for their programs. They also outline reporting requirements.

1.4 Rationale

Success as a teacher stems broadly from success in a teacher education course as well as high quality induction and support in the first two years of teaching. While recognising the significant development of an individual during the program, these guidelines are based on a broad understanding from the research that there is a positive correlation between the presence of particular academic and non-academic capabilities that can be identified at selection, with future success in the teacher education program and subsequently in the teaching profession. Research also suggests a combination of selection mechanisms increases validity and accuracy.

Where selection processes and entry requirements are sophisticated and transparent and their impact measured, a strengthened evidence base identifying which measures are most effective in predicting success both in teacher education and teaching itself can be built. Public confidence that those entering initial teacher education programs are those best suited to the teaching profession will increase as a consequence.

1.5 Audience

These guidelines are for:

- providers of initial teacher education seeking to meet and report on the entry and selection requirements of the Standards and Procedures
- teacher education candidates seeking an understanding of the expectations for entry to initial teacher education programs
- schools and employers seeking assurance that the selection methods used maximise the chance of selecting those most likely to develop into classroom ready graduates
- regulatory authorities and panels assessing accreditation applications from providers of initial teacher education
- members of the general public seeking assurance that those admitted to teacher education programs are transparently and rigorously assessed as having the necessary academic and non-academic capabilities that demonstrate suitability for teaching.

1.6 Application

The entry requirements defined in the Standards and Procedures apply to all entrants to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, including but not limited to entry granted on the basis of:

- completion of secondary education
- tertiary entrance score
- prior achievement in a higher education course or VET award course
- mature age entry
- prior professional qualification or experience.

2. Context

2.1 Diversity of providers and entrants to initial teacher education

Selection takes place in very different contexts across Australia, and while graduates of all initial teacher education programs are required to meet the Graduate career stage of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (the Teacher Standards), institutions may have different priorities and goals in terms of the types of programs they offer and the types of students they want to attract.

Selection is a complex exercise, with no single selection process able to be uniformly applied by every initial teacher education provider in diverse contexts across Australia, nor any one mechanism alone able to accurately predict future success in a teacher education course. These guidelines recognise this complexity by providing flexible but nationally consistent selection guidelines that ensure all candidates are subject to a rigorous selection process which provides an evidence-based determination of their suitability.

2.2 Equity groups

It is expected that for a large majority of initial teacher education students, providers will be able to draw upon mainstream sources of evidence to obtain sufficient information about an applicant's academic capability. However, these guidelines also support selection practices and entry pathways that facilitate entry to initial teacher education for students from equity groups whose academic capability cannot accurately be determined from common or conventional measures of prior academic achievement such as a tertiary entrance score.

This provision is particularly intended to support providers who choose to target equity groups as part of their mission, such as those providers working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In order to support these students to undertake university-level study, providers are able to tailor their selection methods to draw upon alternative evidence-based indicators of demonstrated academic capability to determine suitability for entry to an initial teacher education course. These alternative selection methods are still required to adhere to the Standards and Procedures in relation to selection, including reporting of selection mechanisms, cohort data and entry criteria.

Providers also demonstrate that they have the appropriate pathways and/or support mechanisms in place to facilitate the progress of these students to achieve the required graduate outcomes including the requirement that all graduates' levels of personal literacy and numeracy be broadly equivalent to those of the top 30 per cent of the population.

It is expected that each provider will use the same measures of non-academic capability for all applicants to their particular programs.

2.3 Legislation

All higher education providers must be registered by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) which evaluates provider performance against the Provider Course Accreditation Standards set out in the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015¹.

¹ This was initially the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011, however this was repealed and replaced by the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015.

Most providers of initial teacher education are self-accrediting institutions under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TESQA Act), with the autonomy to accredit their own courses as higher education awards.

Section 3 of the Provider Course Accreditation Standard requires that an institution's admissions criteria are appropriate. Specifically, Section 3.1 requires that the admission criteria:

- ✓ are appropriate for the Qualification Standards level of the course of study and required learning outcomes
- ✓ take account of external benchmarks
- ✓ ensure that students have adequate prior knowledge and skills to undertake the course of study successfully.

Higher education providers are also subject to jurisdictional legislative requirements governing the operation of their institutions and programs, which may encompass the accreditation of initial teacher education programs.

The TEQSA Act also states that providers are not exempt from complying with jurisdictional legislation that regulates who may undertake a particular occupation, such as teaching.

3. Selection process

3.1 Guiding principles

In order for providers to select the candidates most likely to succeed in an initial teacher education program, the following principles guide the development and implementation of selection processes:

- 1 Selection processes assess both the academic and non-academic capabilities of candidates.
- 2 Providers use evidence-based selection methods relevant to their context to gather information and assess the academic and non-academic capabilities of candidates.
- 3 Providers are transparent in the selection methods and minimum entry requirements chosen, including the evidence base supporting the choice.

4. Admission standards

Entrant selection criteria

Entrants demonstrate that they have the academic as well as the non-academic capabilities to develop the skills required to meet the Graduate career stage of the Teacher Standards at program completion.

States and territories may also have additional or specific entrant selection criteria or requirements that providers need to consider as part of their entry and selection processes.

4.1 Academic capability

Research indicates that a teacher's academic capability, particularly cognitive ability and verbal reasoning skills, correlates positively with student achievement. Providers use evidence-based selection methods and set minimum program entry requirements to determine whether entrants possess suitable academic capability.

Entrants have the academic capability to undertake and be successful in a rigorous course of study, evidenced by prior academic achievement and/or other valid indicators that demonstrate relevant academic capability.

Indicators of academic capability could include:

- demonstrated academic ability at year 12 (e.g. tertiary entrance score, academic achievement in required subject disciplines)
- successful prior studies at university, a vocational education provider or other tertiary education provider that demonstrates relevant academic ability (e.g. prior study scores, average grade results in partially or fully completed qualifications)
- successful completion of appropriate prior professional qualifications
- performance in a range of tasks or activities that demonstrate academic capability to meet the intellectual requirements of the course of study (e.g. assessment centre, writing tasks, literacy and numeracy tests)
- performance on validated measures of cognitive and verbal ability undertaken as part of the selection process.

The accreditation process will consider not only the indicators chosen, but also the entry requirements set by the provider.

4.2 Non-academic capability

Research indicates a range of attributes and motivations are common to effective teachers. Providers use evidence-based selection methods and set minimum program entry requirements to determine whether candidates possess these attributes and motivations.

The key capabilities associated with successful teaching identified in the research are:

✓	motivation to teach ²
✓	strong interpersonal and communication skills ³
✓	willingness to learn ⁴
✓	resilience ⁵
✓	self-efficacy ⁶
✓	conscientiousness ⁷
✓	organisational and planning skills ⁸

Providers consider a combination of these capabilities in selecting entrants, and provide evidence to justify the focus on particular capabilities, and the approach taken to assessing them.

Indicators of non-academic capability could include:

- performance on a specifically designed and validated assessment of teaching aptitude and/or other capabilities utilised as part of the selection process
- work and life experiences that have required demonstrations of the capabilities listed above
- expression of applicants' understanding and motivations about the program to which they are applying.

The accreditation process will consider not only the indicators chosen, but also the entry requirements set by the provider.

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- 2 Barber, M. & Mourshed, M. 2007, *How the World's Best Performing School Systems Come Out on Top*, McKinsey and Company, United States;
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Thomson, M., Turner, J. & Nietfeld, J. 2012, A typological approach to investigate the teaching career decision: Motivations and beliefs about teaching of prospective teacher candidates, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, vol 28 no 3, pp. 324-335;
Panesar, S. 2010, Voices from the field: Perspectives of first-year teachers on the disconnect between teacher preparation programs and the realities of the classroom, *Research in Higher Education Journal*, vol. 8, pp. 1-1
- 3 Barber & Mourshed 2007
- 4 Barber & Mourshed 2007
- 5 Howard, S. and Johnson, B. 2004, Resilient teachers: Resisting stress and burnout, *Social Psychology of Education*, volume 7 no 4, pp. 399-420;
Parkinson, M. 2009, *TDA QTS Interview Diagnostic Tool: Research Report*, UK Department of Education
- 6 Rockoff, J., Jacob, B., Kane, T. & Staiger, D. 2011, Can You Recognize an Effective Teacher When You Recruit One?, *Education Finance and Policy*, vol 6 no 1, pp. 43-74
- 7 Rockoff et al. 2011;
Bastian, K. 2013, Do Teachers' Non-Cognitive Skills and Traits Predict Effectiveness and Evaluation Ratings?, *38th Annual Conference*, Association for Education, Finance and Policy conference, New Orleans, United States
- 8 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) 2015, *Selection into initial teacher education: Annotated Bibliography*, AITSL, Melbourne, Australia.

5 Selection protocol

5.1 Design of a rigorous selection process

This protocol describes the parameters within which accredited initial teacher education programs develop and report on their selection process, standards, methods and outcomes.

5.2 Phase one

Design and justify a rigorous selection process

Objective: Develop, define and justify entry criteria and minimum program entry requirements with reference to the **Admission Standards** (refer Section 4).

Recommended steps



Define the characteristics of the target candidate group for the initial teacher education program being offered.



Develop entry criteria and minimum acceptable requirements for program entry accordingly, taking into account the requirements of the Accreditation Standards, including the requirement that graduates have personal literacy and numeracy skills broadly equivalent to the top 30 per cent of the population.



Select and/or develop appropriate mechanisms and methods to measure and assess entry criteria and requirements.



Ensure chosen mechanisms have had their validity established through research and evidence.

5.3 Phase two

Assess applicants

Objective: Gather information and assess applicants' academic and non-academic capabilities using the selection process and minimum entry requirements identified in phase one.

Recommended steps



Use evidence-based methods and mechanisms to gather information to assess applicants' academic and non-academic capabilities.

5.4 Phase three

Select applicants

Objective: Rate candidate suitability based on program entry requirements identified in phase one and suitability information gathered through phase two and select applicants accordingly.

Recommended steps



Make offers only to applicants assessed as suitable for the program against the entry requirements identified in phase one, using the evidence about candidates collected in phase two.

5.5 Phase four

Evaluate efficacy and report on mechanisms and outcomes

Objective: Collect data to validate the effectiveness of the selection process and inform improvements to selection mechanisms and entry requirements, as well as to enable public and transparent reporting of selection practices.

Recommended steps



Collect ongoing data to track, validate and link the use of selected entry requirements and selection process to entrants' performance in the initial teacher education program, retention/attrition rates, employment outcomes and employer satisfaction.



Analyse data to inform continuous improvement in selection practices.



Report on data as detailed in Section 6, and within accreditation processes.

6 Transparency

6.1 Rationale

Greater transparency in the selection processes and basis of admission used by initial teacher education providers to select those entering teacher education programs can lift the calibre of entrants attracted to these programs, the quality of those entering the teaching profession, and public confidence in initial teacher education. It also contributes to building a strengthened evidence base linking the identification of academic and non-academic capabilities at selection with future success in initial teacher education.

Aspiring teachers and the broader community will benefit from greater transparency of selection information, enabling them to clearly understand program requirements and what is needed to successfully enter the teaching profession.

6.2 Reporting requirements

All information necessary to ensure transparent and justifiable selection processes and basis of admission for entry into initial teacher education programs is published, including:

Academic capabilities of all entrants	Non-academic capabilities of all entrants
Selection method(s) used For each method:	Selection method(s) used For each method:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Criteria applied• Threshold entry scores• Any exemptions used• Data per student cohort against these criteria, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Number of applicants admitted through this selection mechanism- Range of results for students admitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Criteria applied• Minimum entry requirements• Data per student cohort against these criteria, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Number of applicants admitted through this selection mechanism- Range of results for students admitted

Effectiveness

Once selection mechanisms are in place, providers will report on their effectiveness, using measures such as student retention and student success data in relation to each entry cohort within each program.

The data identified above will be published and updated annually for each program intake†. This data collection will be consistent with the principles of necessity, risk and proportionality outlined in the TEQSA Act.

† Upon the adoption of the guidelines, AITSL will develop a guide to different types of data sets to illustrate the level of specificity and detail that is appropriate⁹

9 This has been undertaken through AITSL's annual reporting guidelines which have been developed in collaboration with teacher regulatory authorities.



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Primary specialisation (Program Standard 4.4): Guidelines

*Supporting the Accreditation of initial teacher education
programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures*

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1. Policy intent

The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) noted the declining engagement and participation of students in maths and science, as well as the lack of confidence that teachers have in these areas. Poor engagement with maths and science in the early years of formal education was

identified as a critical link in the chain of students completing school with skills and knowledge in these areas and graduates being qualified to teach maths and science.

TEMAG recommended that:

Higher education providers equip all primary pre-service teachers with at least one subject specialisation, prioritising science, mathematics or a language. Providers publish specialisations available and numbers of graduates from these programs (Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers 2014, p. 22).

The Australian Government response to TEMAG stated that:

Primary teachers with a subject specialisation will complement the teachers they work with by sharing their expertise and skills. This does not mean primary teachers will teach only in their area of specialisation, but rather that their area of expertise will be available within the school to assist other teachers with the knowledge and expertise to teach the subject effectively (Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers, Australian Government Response 2015, p. 8).

The approach to primary specialisation reflected in the *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* (Standards and Procedures) that has been agreed by Education Council is that primary graduates will be prepared to teach in each of the learning areas of the primary school curriculum, and in addition, will undertake a specialisation in one learning area of the primary school curriculum¹. Thus, primary graduates of initial teacher education (ITE) programs will be generalist primary teachers, with a deep focus in a particular learning area.

Program Standard 4.4

In addition to study in each of the learning areas of the primary school curriculum sufficient to equip teachers to teach across the years of primary schooling, programs provide all primary graduates with a subject specialisation through:

- a) clearly defined pathways into and/or within a program that lead to specialisations, that are in demand, with a focus on subject/curriculum areas
- b) assessment within the program requiring graduates to demonstrate expert content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge and highly effective classroom teaching in their area of specialisation
- c) publishing the specialisations available and numbers of graduates per specialisation through their annual reports.

From the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures (2019)

These guidelines provide further details regarding Program Standard 4.4 and should be considered binding for accreditation panels.

¹ ACARA 2012, The Shape of the Australian Curriculum, Version 3, viewed 19 May 2020, http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/The_Shape_of_the_Australian_Curriculum_V3.pdf

A note regarding nomenclature

The model required by Program Standard 4.4 will result in graduates who are **generalist primary teachers with a specialisation**.

It is important that these graduates are identified as distinct from **specialist teachers** who fulfil specialist roles in schools such as librarian or health/physical education teacher. Program Standard 4.3 covers specialist teachers.

2. Fields of specialisation

The Program Standard requires a specialisation ‘with a focus on subject/curriculum areas’. For the purpose of primary specialisation, a subject/curriculum area is defined as a learning area within the primary curriculum. Primary curriculum refers to:

- ✓ the primary elements of the Foundation to Year 12 Australian Curriculum
- ✓ alternative curriculum frameworks that have been assessed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) as meeting the requirements of the Australian Curriculum
- ✓ curriculum delivered in registered schools in Australian jurisdictions.

ACARA suggests that the “Australian Curriculum is written so that it should not take up more than 80 percent of the total teaching time available in schools”. In addition, ACARA has established a process for recognising whether alternative curricula deliver educational outcomes that are comparable to the Australian Curriculum. However, it is the school registration processes in each state/territory that determine the curriculum frameworks, subjects or syllabuses that can be taught in schools in that jurisdiction. In some cases, one jurisdiction may have several ways of authorising these depending on the sector.

A provider therefore may argue the case to an accreditation panel and regulatory authority for a specialisation in an area outside of the Australian Curriculum. In this instance, the evidence put forward by the provider must demonstrate how the specialisation satisfies the criteria outlined above, including that it is a subject/curriculum area that is authorised to be taught in schools in that jurisdiction.

A provider may also argue the case for a specialisation that focuses on the needs of a particular cohort of students in the context of a learning area. For example, a program designed to prepare teachers for remote Indigenous communities that has an English/literacy specialisation, or a program preparing teachers to teach in low SES communities that has a mathematics specialisation.

Regardless of the chosen specialisation, the rationale for the approach should be clearly linked to the overall program rationale (which should be articulated in relation to Program Standard 2).

3. Employer demand

The Program Standard requires a provider to consider employer demand when selecting learning areas to offer as primary specialisations. Employers at the jurisdiction, sector or local level may advise priority learning areas for primary specialisation.

For example, English/literacy and maths/numeracy have been identified by the Australian Government as national priority learning areas for primary specialisation. It is likely that other national, jurisdictional and/or sectoral priorities will emerge over time in response to demand and/or supply issues that require teachers in that jurisdiction and/or sector to have expertise in a particular area.

Regardless of the chosen specialisation, evidence of how a provider has consulted with employers and any other relevant authorities, and how these priorities have been taken into account in the suite of primary specialisations offered, should form part of the application for accreditation considered by an accreditation panel. It should be clear from this evidence, that there is employer demand for the primary specialisation in that area.

4. Capabilities of a graduate teacher with a specialisation

As required by Program Standard 4.2 all primary graduates are required to study each of the learning areas of the primary school curriculum. In terms of the appropriate level of skills and knowledge expected of graduates, all pre-service teachers must attain the Graduate career stage of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (the Teacher Standards) in order to graduate and qualify for provisional teacher registration.

Primary specialisation requires that graduates have developed additional depth of understanding in one primary learning area, in terms of the three different domains of skills and knowledge that comprise a primary specialisation:

- 1 Expert content knowledge
- 2 Pedagogical content knowledge
- 3 Highly effective classroom teaching in their area of specialisation

5. Assessment of primary specialisation

The program should be structured so that assessment against all three domains identified in the Program Standard occurs for each student in their learning area of primary specialisation.

6. Program requirements

Primary specialisation is a program requirement. Accreditation applications must provide evidence of the program's approach to specialisation. Once accredited, providers are responsible for implementing a primary specialisation for each graduate. Program Standard 4.4 applies to any ITE program that prepares graduates to be primary teachers, including Early Childhood/ Primary programs, Middle Years programs and Primary/ Secondary programs.

The Standards and Procedures are outcomes focussed wherever possible. Flexibility, diversity and innovation are key principles that underpin the accreditation of ITE programs.

As such, the primary specialisation Program Standard deliberately does not specify the model that programs use to deliver primary specialisations. The requirements specified by the Program Standard are for evidence of:

✓	pathways into or within the program that lead to specialisation
✓	assessment of the specialisation within the program, requiring pre-service teachers to demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– expert content knowledge or pedagogical content knowledge– highly effective classroom teaching of the specialisation

These requirements recognise the diversity of ways that initial teacher education programs are structured across Australia. The onus is on the provider to demonstrate how their chosen primary specialisation pathway meets the Program Standard.

7. Implementation and timing

Primary specialisation represents a significant reform to the way that primary teachers are prepared. If the reform is to be fully realised, change to the structure and/or content of many ITE programs may be required.

To ensure robust and meaningful implementation of the reform, implementation of the Program Standard was required for commencing students no later than 2019.

Providers were required to submit an initial strategy for primary specialisation in their transition plans, with further confirmation of their strategy submitted to regulatory authorities by the end of 2017.

Providers were encouraged to implement primary specialisation as early as possible.

8. Reporting and accountability

Providers are required to publish specialisations available on their websites and to report numbers of commencing, enrolled and completing graduates per specialisation through annual reporting.

Developing formal partnerships (Program Standard 5.1): Guidelines

Supporting the *Accreditation of initial teacher education
programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures*

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1. Developing formal partnerships (Program Standard 5.1): Guidelines

The *Developing formal partnerships (Program Standard 5.1): Guidelines* have been developed in consultation with a range of participants as a resource for initial teacher education (ITE) providers and their partners in documenting professional experience partnerships in accordance with Program Standard 5.1 of the *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* (Standards and Procedures). Providers and their partners may, of course, develop partnerships in an alternative format. The accompanying template is to enable partners to formalise partnerships to facilitate the delivery of programs, particularly professional experience for pre-service teachers.

Program Standard 5.1

Formal partnerships, agreed in writing, are developed and used by providers and schools/sites/systems to facilitate the delivery of programs, particularly professional experience for pre-service teachers. Formal partnerships exist for every professional experience school/site and clearly specify components of placements and planned experiences, identified roles and responsibilities for both parties and responsible contacts for day-to-day administration of the arrangement.

From the Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures

The development of a formal partnership is an opportunity for prospective partner institutions and sites to explore the purpose and scope of their joint activity and the ways in which they intend to work together. In jurisdictions where systemic approaches to agreements have been developed, providers and their partners are able to enhance these. They may do this by exploring with individual or clusters of schools the ways they can work together to improve the learning of:



- pre-service teachers
- school teachers
- institution staff
- school students.

Many providers and their partners already have partnerships in place that meet Program Standard 5.1, and in some jurisdictions these partnerships have been developed at the system level. These

guidelines have drawn on those existing arrangements, and the generosity of those involved in sharing time and resources is acknowledged by AITSL.

Although these are the elements required by Program Standard 5.1, partners may wish to extend the range of their activities beyond these requirements. This extension may include arrangements for such activities as joint research opportunities, professional learning development of teachers and university staff, and opportunities for school/site staff to work through the partnership activities towards credit for higher degree studies.

Some existing partnerships have also found that the sharing of data relating to professional experience is a useful component of their formal partnerships. This is particularly the case with some system-level agreements, where the data exchanged contributes to workforce planning. The data may include:

- numbers of pre-service teachers enrolled in specific subject areas or sector of schooling preparation
- numbers and locations of professional experience placements.

The partners with whom providers develop formal partnerships may be entire education systems, districts, clusters or hubs, or individual schools/early childhood sites. Program Standard 5.1 requires that every professional experience site must be included within the ambit of a formal partnership which is agreed in writing. It follows that providers should not place pre-service teachers in settings that do not fall within the ambit of a properly concluded arrangement.

Partnership is collaborative work through which parties agree to undertake significant activity together. It is a logical expectation that the actual planning and development of formal partnerships be undertaken collaboratively among all parties involved in the partnership.

Role of the accreditation panel in the assessment of formal partnership agreements

The requirements of a formal partnership agreement may vary between jurisdictions and may be influenced by the legislative requirements of each jurisdiction. It is expected that any specific requirements and/or formats are communicated to providers by the relevant teacher regulatory authority prior to the establishment of formal partnership agreements. As such, it is not the role of the accreditation panel to assess the format of a formal partnership agreement within an accreditation application, but to apply the elements requiring verification and professional judgement to the evidence provided.

Partnership template

The following *Partnership template* outlines the sections of a partnership arrangement and provides advice about the intended content of each section.

Note: These guidelines and the template provided are not intended to be, nor do they constitute, legal advice. Partnership arrangements may be developed in a range of ways and not all partnerships need to be legally constituted partnerships. Providers wanting to take a legal approach to their partnership arrangements should seek legal or other professional advice before acting or relying on this guidance or the partnership template.

Schedules

It is suggested that the preceding, main body of each partnership be generic to all partnerships to which a provider is party. It is then suggested that those features that individualise and differentiate a particular partnership with a partner(s) be attached as schedules, annexes or attachments to the template.

There is a range of topics for possible inclusion in annexes, such as numbers of placements agreed to in a year, names of a school's team of supervising teachers, arrangements for training and development of supervising teachers and supervising lecturers, financial arrangements and commitments (if any).

Please include schedules, annexes or attachments as required.

2. Partnership template

This partnership is agreed in writing on [date] between:

1. [Name of provider] and
2. [Name(s) of other partners]

A. Background

This section provides information about the role and importance of professional experience in the initial preparation of teachers and the place of partnership in its delivery. It may also provide a summary of the philosophical and theoretical bases on which the provider's programs have been developed.

[Insert background information here]

B. Definitions

The language of professional experience, and of school/site-provider partnerships more generally, is used differently across institutions and contexts. In this section, key terminology is defined in the context of each particular partnership for the purpose of clarity and conciseness as well as to provide emphasis. These terms are likely to refer to specific personnel such as pre-service teachers, school coordinators, provider professional experience coordinators, supervising lecturers, and so on. They may also refer to activities, such as observation lessons, practicum, internships, extended experience and demonstration lessons.

[Insert definitions here]

C. Purposes

In this section, the purposes of the formal partnership will be identified and spelt out. It is not intended that this section describe the purpose of professional experience itself.

[Insert purposes here]

D. Scope

Here the partners should clearly state in a comprehensive manner all of the aspects of their partnership that are covered by the formal partnership.

Partners should also make specific reference to aspects of their partnership that are not within its scope as deemed relevant, including aspects covered by other arrangements/agreements.

[Insert scope here]

E. Implementation / conditions

There is a wide range of activities undertaken in effecting professional experience partnerships, and these are guided by key agreed protocols, processes and procedures. This section of the document should list these and provide some detail of their significance and execution. Note that the later “Roles and responsibilities” section will include many of these with details about responsibility for them.

Headings within this section should include, but are not limited to:

- Overview of the components of placements and planned experiences.

(Note: The specific details of each individual placement are likely to be outlined in any schedules developed as part of the formal partnership).

[Insert implementation / conditions here]

F. Roles and responsibilities

Provides details of the individuals and/or sections of organisations with responsibility for the enactment of the range of actions that together contribute to the successful execution of partnership activities and the achievement of objectives. It is expected that this section will draw heavily on the AITSL document available at: <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/tools-resources/resource/participant-roles-and-responsibilities-in-professional-experience>

Headings within this section should include, but are not limited to:

- Initial teacher education provider roles
- Responsible contacts from provider for day-to-day administration of the professional experience arrangements
- School/early childhood site-based roles
- Responsible contacts from the school/site for day-to-day administration of the professional experience arrangements
- System roles

[Insert roles and responsibilities here]

G. Term of the formal partnership

The anticipated timeframe of the formal partnership is included here, with starting and finishing dates and any special milestone events.

[Insert term here]

H. Review

In this section, the parties agree to arrangements for the evaluation, review and revision of the partnership, including such components as frequency, initiation and responsibilities. Many partners will wish to conduct annual reviews of their partnerships in light of institutional developments, placements required or changes in personnel. Others may prefer to link review arrangements with the timeframe specified in Section G.

[Insert review here]

I. Signatures of representatives

There needs to be evidence that the formal partnership is agreed by the parties to it, and this is usually indicated by the signing of the partnership arrangement by representatives of each partner.

[Provider] signature: _____

[Partner/s] signature: _____

aitsl

Australian Institute
for Teaching and
School Leadership
Limited

Assessment criteria for Graduate Teacher Standards 1.4 & 2.4

Supporting the *Accreditation of initial teacher education
programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures*

Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, sea country and waterways from across Australia. We honour and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) was tasked with leading the development of the Assessment criteria for Graduate Teacher Standards 1.4 & 2.4 through the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015 and worked closely with the Criteria Reference Group in the development of the criteria. Thank you to all those who participated in the development of the criteria document.

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Preamble

The [Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#) (MCEETYA, 2008) establishes two major goals. These are that “Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence”, and that “All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, [and] active and informed citizens” (p. 7).

Accordingly, the Australian Curriculum sets consistent national standards to improve learning outcomes for all young Australians. In addition, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) acknowledges the gap in learning outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their non-Indigenous peers. Nationally, state and territory education systems’ goals aim to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas and can fully participate in the curriculum.

To support all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in achieving these goals, education ministers have agreed to the [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015](#) (Education Council, 2015). This strategy prioritises seven interdependent priority areas. The first of these requires that “action is taken to ensure children and young people are taught by skilled educators who are culturally competent in the local context”, and that “providers, including principals, set high expectations for learning that incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives” (p. 5).

It is therefore a key strategy for the achievement of the goals of the Melbourne Declaration for all Australian children and young people that initial teacher education (ITE) programs prepare all teachers to be competent in the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) (the Teacher Standards) at the Graduate career stage (Graduate Teacher Standards). The Teacher Standards, and the Focus Areas they comprise, reflect the characteristics of quality teaching, and achieving the Teacher Standards helps to ensure the quality of the profession and the learning outcomes for all young Australians.

In addressing the appropriate pedagogical content knowledge that teachers require to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and to teach all students about Indigenous histories, cultures, and languages, the Teacher Standards have incorporated specific reference to these knowledges and skills. Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 aim to provide the best possible educational opportunities for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, and to provide all Australians with knowledge and understandings about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages that are accurate, culturally correct, and current.

Standard 1

Know students and how they learn

Focus Area 1.4: Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

On successful completion of their initial teacher education, Graduate teachers are required to “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”.

Standard 2

Know the content and how to teach it

Focus Area 2.4: Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

On successful completion of their initial teacher education, Graduate teachers are required to “Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages”.

Rationale and use

These criteria have been developed for accreditation panels to use in determining whether ITE programs meet the requirements of the [Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures](#) (Standards and Procedures) in respect to Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 of the Graduate Teacher Standards.

All accreditation panels must take into account the criteria when assessing ITE programs to determine whether appropriate and sufficient evidence is provided.

These criteria will also be valuable to ITE providers; through their familiarity with these criteria, providers will be more likely to develop and provide appropriate program content, professional experience and assessment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

The criteria, rather than being prescriptive, both encourage and provide opportunities for providers to be flexible and innovative in supporting pre-service teachers' achievement of the Focus Areas.

The broad objective is to assure the education community as a whole that graduates of ITE programs meet the requirements of Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 at the Graduate career stage of the Teacher Standards.

CRITERION 1

Program design

Program structure

The relevant content may be incorporated into specific units/courses, as well as being taught across all years of the ITE program and embedded within all curriculum areas. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, perspectives, histories, and experiences are also incorporated into areas of the curriculum which are not explicitly historical or sociological, including, for example:

- environmental education
- arts education
- literacy
- numeracy
- science.

The program documentation submitted by the ITE provider must make it clear that learning in and assessment against Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 are not optional components of program/s being accredited. Whether there are specific units/courses or content is embedded across courses, the documentation validates how every pre-service teacher undertakes learning in and assessment of these Focus Areas.

Program resources

Staff members and external personnel responsible for the delivery of content have appropriate qualifications and knowledge in this area.

Program documentation includes reference to the teaching and learning materials, knowledge and information sources, and the human and information resources provided to pre-service teachers to support their learning in Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4.

Resources are appropriately acknowledged, developed and endorsed by respected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, (e.g. those provided by AITSL such as the Respect, Relationships, Reconciliation resource ([3Rs](#)), the [AITSL Illustrations of Practice](#) and [ACARA resources](#)).

CRITERION 2

Program content

The content of the ITE program is designed to allow pre-service teachers to achieve the broad knowledge and understanding required by Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4.

Program content embeds intercultural understanding and the development and deepening of pre-service teachers' understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, societies, cultures, histories and contemporary experiences.

Program content supports pre-service teachers investigate policies, programs and practices of direct concern to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Program content ensures that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pre-service teachers can see their cultures, histories and world views positioned in the curriculum of the program, and that all pre-service teachers engage with this curriculum.

Content of the program is such that pre-service teachers are able to demonstrate understanding of:

✓	the similarities and diversities of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and knowledge sources, beliefs and values, concept of kinship and sensitive issues
✓	past and present government policies and their impact on Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as the broader Australian society/history
✓	how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students connect to their families and communities, and the marked effect that historical and current political policies and practices have had on shaping their lives and circumstances
✓	how media representations and personal histories and experiences shape and influence perceptions of and assumptions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their community life
✓	what constitutes racism and anti-racism strategies, policies, and legislation
✓	what it means to act in culturally appropriate/inclusive ways
✓	what cultural safety and inclusivity are, and gaining the skills and knowledge to engage with Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people.

Program content

Examples of program content might be learning activities that:

- require pre-service teachers to investigate a range of 'published' integrated curriculum, which are inclusive and embed significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material across all learning areas
- make linkages between local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and the learning areas of the Australian curriculum, e.g. ACSSU048 - Earth's rotation on its axis causes regular changes, including night and day. Indigenous Australians use their knowledge of astronomy for time-keeping through observing patterns in celestial bodies, the use of rising and setting stars and constellations as indicators of special events, the solar cycle, and lunar phases and their relationships to ocean tides and eclipses as well as astronomical measurements of the equinox, solstice and cardinal points
- highlight positive representations of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures, i.e. as well as representations such as art, sport and NAIDOC, include, for example, people filling key roles in their own and the broader community, e.g. the Yarning Strong set of chapter books and graphic novels introduces a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and academics
- require an appreciation of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, languages and local histories, and the diversity within each jurisdiction and across Australia, e.g. creating a cultural calendar (see www.vaeai.org.au for an example). The AFL Players' Association acknowledges and recognises the diversity of Indigenous cultures with more than 250 distinct language groups across Australia. The 2016 Indigenous AFL Players represented 48 of these language or cultural groups. A map on the AFL website demonstrates the diversity of these Indigenous players. The many Indigenous players in the AFL Women's League could also be investigated
- are addressed in an affirmative manner, that demonstrates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pre-service teachers that their cultures are valued and acknowledged, e.g. the inclusion of informed, accurate content in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- include the impact of government policies, programs and practices, both past and current, with emphasis placed on having an understanding and appreciation of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian societies, e.g. investigate a local community context – the history and contemporary issues and their impact on education
- include knowledge of what constitutes racism and anti-racism strategies, policies and legislation, e.g. discussion in relation to how educational processes/practices are linked to structural power relations along axes of socioeconomic, gender, racial and ethnic differences
- address the need to understand the roles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support personnel at system and school levels and the contribution of Indigenous educational and community organisations in improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, e.g. guest lecture given by an Indigenous Education Worker (IEW) in relation to their role/s, and how an IEW's advice can be used in planning and decision-making.

CRITERION 3

Professional experience

Professional experience is a key component in all Australian ITE programs. Program Standard 5 of the 2018 Standards and Procedures establishes the common and fundamental requirements for this program component. In particular, it is expected that the 'professional experience components of programs are relevant to a classroom environment, and...are as diverse as practicable' (AITSL 2018, p. 16).

It is not possible to guarantee that every pre-service teacher will undertake professional experience in every school context and experience all possible students and communities. In relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families and communities, it is therefore imperative that pre-service teachers have opportunities to both undertake and demonstrate their learning in respect to Focus Area 1.4 throughout their program.

Learning how the professional experience site interacts with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities is a key component of professional experience, as is practising and demonstrating Focus Area 1.4 where there are Indigenous students.

Pre-service teachers have opportunities to both undertake and demonstrate their learning in respect to Focus Area 2.4 in both course work and professional experience components, regardless of the contexts of their professional experience placements.

The professional experience component of programs provides pre-service teachers with opportunities to:

✓	build effective relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners
✓	create a positive learning environment that engages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students effectively
✓	demonstrate knowledge of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
✓	make evident commitment to and devise strategies for implementing and nurturing the cultural safety, identity and diversity of students
✓	apply culturally inclusive practices in relation to curriculum, classroom teaching and assessment
✓	identify communication strategies to develop genuine inclusive educational partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities
✓	demonstrate their ability to provide learning opportunities that are culturally appropriate and responsive to all students' needs

✓	record their reflections on how they recognise and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their classes, and respond appropriately and knowingly to the learning needs of these students
✓	apply EALD (English as an additional language or dialect) methodologies and strategies into literacy programs
✓	reflect on relevant international, national and local jurisdictional educational priorities and policies that impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education
✓	include local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in their lessons across the curriculum
✓	look at the classroom and school environment and reflect on whether the curriculum is relevant, inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can see themselves reflected in their schooling.

Professional experience

Examples of what pre-service teachers might practise include:

- identifying and reporting on relevant issues and considerations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and community members in relation to schooling, including an understanding that English may not be their first language
- locating, selecting and using accurate, relevant and appropriate resources and syllabuses in terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
- reflecting on their own and other teachers' and pre-service teachers' lessons and units incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives such as historical events, health, land and sea management
- exploring case studies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds and cultures to build understanding using a range of community-based resources, texts and research papers
- sharing and applying their learning, beliefs and practice using verbal and non-verbal communication and presentations in class
- participating in discussions with supervising teachers in relation to system and/or state and territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education directions and priorities.

CRITERION 4

Assessment

Assessment determines a pre-service teacher's achievement of expected learning outcomes appropriate to the Australian Qualification Framework level of the ITE program, and includes a range of written and oral methods, practice and demonstration.

Pre-service teachers are assessed against Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 to confirm their broad knowledge and understanding.

All assessment should be referenced to the Focus Areas and Teacher Standards.

Pre-service teachers are assessed through tasks in which they:

✓	demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and commitment in relation to the importance of histories, cultures, contributions, perspectives, and reconciliation/ recognition to contemporary Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities
✓	demonstrate a sound knowledge of the many and varied Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and Language Groups
✓	demonstrate their understanding about the impact of the above on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds
✓	demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages
✓	discuss the ways in which social justice, anti-racism and multicultural education have been conceptualised
✓	have the opportunity to consider the extent to which their gender, social class or cultural background has played a part in shaping them in specific ways to be a unique individual
✓	reflect on what it means to be culturally competent, e.g. 'educators who are culturally competent respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences' (rrr.edu.au).

Assessment

Examples of assessment items for pre-service teachers might include:

- developing a portfolio of digital and web Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources related to the subject areas and ages they plan to teach
- reflecting and reporting on activities where they meet with community members and Elders, hear First Peoples' voices, and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and partake (where appropriate) in cultural experiences
- developing and reporting case studies of lived experiences regarding the use of traditional knowledge and practices, such as healing and approaches to address the effects of trans-generational trauma
- delivering, individually or as part of a group, presentations on inclusive teaching and learning strategies
- researching and writing a paper about how the concepts of oppression and privilege assist in our understanding of diverse student experiences
- preparing and delivering a presentation to peers explaining a suite of anti-racism strategies, emphasising which ones work and why
- drawing on their reading, as well as personal experiences, to describe the extent to which one of the following attributes contributes to their individuality: gender, social class or cultural background
- preparing a unit of work, for one or more of the Australian curriculum areas, which demonstrates better understanding, through actual or virtual interaction with community members, of lived experiences of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people.

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Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Aboriginal	(adjective) an Aboriginal person is someone who is of Aboriginal descent, identifies as being Aboriginal and is accepted as such by the Aboriginal community with which they originally identified.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	The Australian Indigenous population includes Aboriginal people, Torres Strait Islander people, and people who have both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. The term Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander encompasses all three.
Accreditation	A process through which state and territory teacher regulatory authorities endorse initial teacher education programs as meeting the requirements of the national accreditation system outlined in <i>Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures</i> .
Assessment	A process to determine a student's achievement of expected learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration (Australian Qualifications Framework, p. 92).
Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Teacher Standards)	The national framework, comprising seven Standards which outline what teachers should know and be able to do at each stage of their career. The Teacher Standards are interconnected, interdependent and overlapping.
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	Specifies the standards for educational qualifications in Australia. The AQF levels define the relative complexity and depth of achievement and the autonomy required of graduates to demonstrate that achievement (Australian Qualification Framework, p. 11).
Cultural competence	Cultural competence is about knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is being aware of one's own world view and developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences as well as gaining knowledge of cultural practices and world views that differ from our own while developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures.
Cultural inclusivity	'A learning philosophy through which stakeholders recognise, appreciate, and capitalise on cultural diversity in order to promote students' equal participation in teaching and learning' (Dreamson et. al., 2017).
Cultural safety	An environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together' (Williams, 1999).
Culturally appropriate	Recognition and respect of cultural differences; applying cultural competence (Hyun 1998).

indigenous	the first people of any country.
Indigenous	'Indigenous' Australians, both Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people; using an upper case "I" denotes Australian.
National Aboriginal and [Torres Strait] Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC)	NAIDOC Day is usually observed during the second week of July.
NAIDOC Week	The acronym NAIDOC has come to represent activities celebrated throughout Australia, usually in the second week of July.
Non-verbal	Graduate Teacher Standards Focus Area 3.5: 'Demonstrate a range of verbal and non- verbal communication strategies to support student engagement'. For example, factors such as maintaining eye contact, and other paralinguistic features to show affirmation like nodding, smiling, and appropriate facial expressions.
Professional experience	Any component of an accredited initial teacher education program that comprises workplace learning in a school or other education site relevant to the program. To contribute to meeting Program Standard 5.2, professional experience must include the minimum requirements outlined in the standard.

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Criteria Reference Group:

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