Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia – Overview of changes

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Background to the revision of the *Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia*

Why were the *Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia* revised?

From 2019 to 2020, the *Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia* (Accreditation Guidelines) were revised in response to a series of recommendations endorsed by Education Council in June 2018. The recommendations were focused on strengthening the national ITE accreditation system and included the following:

a. *All jurisdictions to contribute to and participate in a standard setting process, led by AITSL, to establish sound national agreement on what it means to meet the accreditation standards*
b. *All jurisdictions to collaborate with AITSL in ongoing national quality assurance activities to strengthen consistency and rigour of the national accreditation system and identify priorities for enhancing judgements.*

The role of AITSL under this approach was to work with jurisdictions to collaborate with jurisdictions to strengthen the consistency and rigour of the national accreditation system.

How were the *Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia* revised?

To facilitate a national standard-setting process, AITSL developed a methodology which aimed to:

> achieve sound national consistency of judgements across accreditation panels on what it means to meet the Accreditation Standards (the Accreditation Standards are outlined in the nationally agreed Standards and Procedures).

The methodology was agreed to by AITSL's Standard Setting Advisory Group (SSAG).

To implement the methodology, AITSL held a series of four standard-setting workshops in 2019. At these workshops, trained accreditation panellists, including ITE providers, teachers, employers, and representatives of the jurisdictional teacher regulatory authorities, were brought together to evaluate Program Standards 1 to 6 (with the exception of Program Standards 1.2 and 6.4. Program Standard 6.3 was revised in the review of the *Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Stage two*) against existing, previously assessed accreditation applications. Data was gathered on individual and panel consistency of judgements made against each of the 'elements requiring verification' and the 'elements requiring professional judgement' in the Accreditation Guidelines.

AITSL engaged the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to undertake an independent quality assurance function at the standard-setting workshops. ACER attended and developed separate reports for each of the standard-setting workshops and produced a final report in March 2020, *Consistency of accreditation of initial teacher education programs.*

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Following the standard-setting workshops, an external consultant was appointed to develop a draft version of the Accreditation Guidelines using data from the standard-setting workshops. Revisions to the Accreditation Guidelines were also informed using qualitative data from the following reports:

- *National overview of the implementation of the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* (2019, ITE Executive Officer's Group (ATRA))

- *Challenging Regulatory Burden Without Compromising Rigour, Quality or Oversight in Initial Teacher Education Accreditation* (2019, Queensland College of Teachers)

In March 2020, an additional workshop was held with previous participants to review the draft revised Accreditation Guidelines developed by the consultant. A revised draft version of the Accreditation Guidelines was then circulated to the jurisdictional teacher regulatory authorities for further review and feedback. Final changes were made to the revised Accreditation Guidelines following a series of workshops between AITSL and representatives of the jurisdictional teacher regulatory authorities.

What are the general changes to the Accreditation Guidelines?

The Accreditation Guidelines have undergone substantial review, with revisions made to the following sections:

- The *Guidelines for the Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Stage two* (Stage two Accreditation Guidelines) were incorporated into the Accreditation Guidelines.

- The Introduction section was updated for currency, and to include reference to the *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia Criteria: Focus Areas 1.4 & 2.4*, which was 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.

- The *National accreditation procedures* and *National accreditation process* sections were updated for currency and to ensure these reflect the 2018 and 2019 updates to the Standards and Procedures.

- The wording for many of the elements requiring verification and elements requiring professional judgement were revised to align more closely with the intent of the Program Standards.

- The *Possible additional evidence*, *Related program standards* and *Additional considerations* sections within each Program Standard were updated and refined. *Related Glossary terms* has also been added to this section.

- The Glossary was expanded to include additional terms to support the consistency in the interpretation of the terminology used throughout the document.

What is the status of the *Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Stage two*?

Alongside the revision of the Accreditation Guidelines, AITSL worked with trained accreditation panellists, including ITE providers, teachers, employers, and representatives of the teacher regulatory

authorities, to undertake a review of the *Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Stage two* (Stage two Accreditation Guidelines).

There were substantial revisions to the Stage two Accreditation Guidelines. In Program Standard 6.3, the elements requiring verification and professional judgement were revised and a new *Stage Two report* (Template 5) developed. This replaces the Stage two narrative report, to better promote national consistency, clarity and understanding of the stage two accreditation process.

Revisions to the Accreditation Guidelines

What are the general changes to the elements requiring verification and elements requiring professional judgement?

Following general feedback from the standard-setting workshops, changes were made to the elements requiring verification and professional judgement to ensure the following:

- Greater alignment of the elements requiring verification and professional judgement with the wording of the Program Standards.

- Consistent use of terminology and wording throughout the document.

Why have additional terms been added to the Glossary?

Feedback from the standard-setting workshops revealed that there was inconsistency in how panels members interpreted terms in the Accreditation Guidelines. As the work of panels in assessing accreditation applications is a judgement-based process, it was decided to expand the Glossary to promote clarity in understanding of terms used in the Accreditation Guidelines. The Glossary was expanded to include around sixty additional terms and panels are encouraged to consult the Glossary as a key supporting tool during their discussions.

What are the specific changes to the elements requiring verification and elements requiring professional judgement?

The wording for most of the elements requiring verification and professional judgement was revised, and the supporting information for each of the Program Standards was updated, including the addition of related glossary terms. The wording of the Program Standards themselves **has not** changed.

Revisions were also made to the templates which are completed for program accreditation.

Program Standard 1 – Program outcomes

Program Standard 1.1

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	Following feedback from the standard-setting workshops, an element requiring verification was added to ensure that panels verify the inclusion of a Graduate Teacher Standards map aligned to the program structure.
Elements requiring professional judgement	The elements requiring professional judgement were revised based on general feedback from the standard-setting workshops. There are now specific questions for each of the 'taught, practised and assessed' requirements to better support panels with the assessment of the *Graduate Teacher Standards Matrix* (Template 3).. The terms *'taught'* and *'assessed'* have been added to the glossary, and the existing definition for *'practised'* has been revised for consistency.

Program Standard 1.3

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	In the elements requiring verification 'and/or' was removed. At the standard setting workshops, feedback was that 'impact on student learning' must be seen in both assessment of the Graduate Teacher Standards and the Teaching Performance Assessment. The revision of this wording will ensure that 'impact on student learning' should be seen throughout the program and not only in the pre-service teachers' final year.
Elements requiring professional judgement	The element requiring professional judgement in this Program Standard was revised to make it clearer to panels where in the evidence they should be looking for examples of pre-service teachers' impact on student learning.

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Program Standard 1.4

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	Reference to Program Standard 6.2 was removed from the element requiring verification.
Elements requiring professional judgement	The element requiring professional judgement was reworded to make it clear to panels what they should be assessing in this standard. Revisions to the element focus panels on assessing the impact of graduates on student learning and alignment with program outcomes.

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Program Standard 2 – Program development, design and delivery

Program Standard 2.1

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	'Rationale' was changed to 'program rationale' in the first and second elements requiring verification to distinguish this from the 'rationale for approach to program entry' required in Program Standard 3.1.
Elements requiring professional judgement	In response to feedback from the standard-setting workshop and jurisdictional regulatory authorities 'authoritative' and 'evidence-base' were added to the glossary. Following discussion between AITSL and the jurisdictional teacher regulatory authorities, the second element requiring professional judgement was revised to make it clear to panellists that the evidence base informs the design of the program. In doing so, the element was brought back to the intent of the Program Standard. The third element requiring professional judgement was reworded to make it clear to panellists that this element is also applicable at stage one of the accreditation process. The rewording brings the element back to the intent of the standard, to focus on program development, design and delivery, and clarifies that data can be gathered from related graduate cohorts. The new element requiring professional judgement *Are all modes of delivery being offered in the program addressed in the program rationale?* was added to ensure that all aspects of the Program Standard are being addressed by the panel.

Program Standard 2.2

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	No significant changes were made to the elements requiring verification in this Program Standard.
Elements requiring professional judgement	The second element requiring professional judgement was revised in response to feedback from the report, *National overview of the implementation of the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures*. The element was revised to require evidence of how stakeholder consultation is used in program development, design and delivery. Panels are required to assess the quality and rigour of consultation with stakeholders, as well as evidence of how the consultation is used.

Program Standard 2.3

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	Discussions at the standard-setting workshop and with jurisdictional regulatory authorities clarified that the intent of this Program Standard is about resourcing of the program and the resourcing of teaching and assessment strategies. The elements requiring verification were revised to ensure this is clear for all panellists and panels. The term 'ongoing or recent' was added to the third element requiring verification. To promote greater consistency in understanding 'ongoing or recent' was added to the glossary.
Elements requiring professional judgement	The elements requiring professional judgement were revised to align with the intent of the Program Standard. They were reworded to ensure that panels focus their judgements on the resourcing of the program in relation to the various aspects of the Program Standard.

Program Standard 3 – Program entry

Program Standard 3.1

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The stem *'The evidence identifies where providers describe and publish'* was added to clarify the requirement of the Program Standard.
Elements requiring professional judgement	Elements requiring professional judgement were revised to remove repetition between the elements in Program Standards 3. The first element requiring professional judgement was reworded to include *'program rationale (as set out in Program Standard 2.1)'* to provide clarity between the two 'rationales' and support consistency of judgements.

Program Standard 3.2

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The wording of the stem for the elements requiring verification was simplified.
Elements requiring professional judgement	Elements requiring professional judgement were revised to remove repetition between the elements in Program Standards. The term 'evidence base' in the first element requiring professional judgement was added to the glossary. In response to workshop feedback to simplify these elements, the element *'Are the academic and non-academic criteria that are assessed by the chosen selection mechanisms relevant to success in the program and subsequent success in professional teaching practice?'* was combined with the element *'Are the criteria consistent with a higher education program, the initial teacher education program, and the teaching profession?'*

Program Standard 3.3

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	Revisions were made to the elements requiring verification to focus panels on selection processes and student cohort data and where relevant evidence can be found.
Elements requiring professional judgement	Revisions were made to the elements requiring professional judgement to focus panels on selection processes and student cohort data and where relevant evidence can be found.

Program Standard 3.4

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	These elements were revised in response to workshop feedback. They were reworded to incorporate all aspects of the Program Standard and to encompass all pre-service teachers, not just those 'requiring support'.
Elements requiring professional judgement	The first element requiring professional judgement was reworded as it was seen by workshop participants to be a duplication of the first element requiring verification. It was reworded to better align to the Program Standard and to ensure that panels focus on the efficacy of the mechanisms identified. The second element requiring professional judgement was removed in response to workshop feedback that panels are not provided with the level of information required to assess whether support programs assist pre-service teachers in achieving the Graduate Teacher Standards. The third element requiring verification was revised to align with the second element requiring verification and to encompass all pre-service teachers, not just those 'requiring support'.

| | The order of the elements requiring professional judgement was changed so that they align with the elements requiring verification. |

Program Standard 3.5

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The element requiring verification of the *'rationale for the test to be applied at this particular point'* was removed in response to workshop feedback that this was not a requirement of the Program Standard. However, the jurisdictional teacher regulatory authorities recognised the importance of retaining information about the rationale for when the National Literacy and Numeracy Test occurs, so this was moved to the *Additional Considerations* section. An additional element requiring verification was added to ensure panels verify that passing the National Literacy and Numeracy Test is a requirement for graduation from the program. This aligns with the Program Standard.
Elements requiring professional judgement	Wording for the element requiring professional judgement was revised following feedback from jurisdictional regulatory authorities, to align this element with the intent of the Program Standard.

Program Standard 3.6

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The element requiring verification was reworded for clarity and to reflect the language of the Program Standard.
Elements requiring professional judgement	The element requiring professional judgement was added in response to feedback from the standard-setting workshop, to ensure that panels are consistent in their judgements of this compliance-based Program Standard.

Program Standard 3.7

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The element requiring verification was reworded to align with the Program Standard.
Elements requiring professional judgement	This element requiring verification was reworded for clarity and to align with the Program Standard.

Program Standard 4 – Program structure and content

Program Standard 4.1

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	No changes were made.
Elements requiring professional judgement	No changes were made.

Program Standard 4.2

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The element was reworded for clarity.
Elements requiring professional judgement	Rewording was made to these elements for clarity and to ensure alignment with the Program Standard. The final element requiring professional judgment was removed following feedback from the standard-setting workshop that this element provided significant overlap with the first element requiring professional judgement.

Program Standard 4.3

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The element was reworded for clarity.
Elements requiring professional judgement	This professional judgement was removed as it repeated the element requiring verification.

Program Standard 4.4

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The order of the elements requiring verification was changed and the elements were reworded for clarity.

Elements requiring professional judgement	The elements requiring professional judgement were reworded to better align with the Program Standard and to ensure consistency in terminology. The final element requiring professional judgement underwent more substantial change to align with the Program Standard and to ensure that it relates to content embedded across units.

Program Standard 5 – Professional experience

Program Standard 5.1

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The elements requiring verification were reworded to align with the Program Standard. The addition of *'planned experiences'* and *'roles and responsibilities of all participants in professional experience'* were added to the elements requiring verification from the elements requiring professional judgement.
Elements requiring professional judgement	The first two elements requiring professional judgement were asking panels to verify, not assess, information and so were moved to the elements requiring verification. Wording for the remaining element requiring professional judgement was simplified following feedback from the standard-setting workshop.

Program Standard 5.2

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The second element requiring verification was added to align with the Program Standard and in response to feedback from the standard-setting workshop.
Elements requiring professional judgement	The wording of the elements requiring professional judgement was revised to align with the Program Standard. The final two elements requiring professional judgement were combined.

Program Standard 5.3

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The elements requiring verification were simplified.
Elements requiring professional judgement	The element requiring professional judgement was revised to align more closely with the Program Standard. The additional element requiring professional judgement was moved from the elements requiring verification to ensure that panels are assessing each part of the Program Standard.

Program Standard 5.4

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The elements requiring verification were simplified.
Elements requiring professional judgement	The elements requiring professional judgement were simplified and reworded to align with the Program Standard. The final element requiring professional judgement was separated into two elements in response to feedback from the standard-setting workshop that these were two distinct variables that needed to be assessed.

Program Standard 5.5

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The second element requiring verification was reworded to ensure that panels verify evidence in an application showing that staff from providers will be available to support supervising teachers.

Elements requiring professional judgement	The elements requiring professional judgement were simplified and *'professional learning'*, *'sufficient'* and *'current or recent'* were added to the glossary. The final element requiring professional judgement was revised to focus on the suitability of the teaching experience of the provider staff.

Program Standard 6 – Program evaluation, reporting and improvement

Program Standard 6.1

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	In response to feedback from the standard-setting workshops, the elements requiring verification were revised to ensure that providers and panels address and assess the processes for collection, analysis and evaluation of data.
Elements requiring professional judgement	The elements requiring professional judgement were simplified and the terms *'data', 'evidence', 'fit for purpose'*, and *'program impact'* were added to the glossary. Revisions were made to focus panels and providers on the alignment of collection, analysis and evaluation of data to support program improvements and periodic formal evaluation.

Program Standard 6.2

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The elements requiring verification were revised to align with the *Plan for demonstrating impact* (Template 4) to better support panels in locating relevant . In response to feedback from the standard-setting workshops, the wording of the elements was revised to align with the Program Standard.
Elements requiring professional judgement	The first element requiring professional judgement was reformatted to focus panels on the use and analysis of the selected data. The elements requiring professional judgement were combined to streamline what panels need

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assess and to bring the elements closer to the Program Standard.

Program Standard 6.3

Elements	Changes made
Elements requiring verification	The elements requiring verification underwent substantial changes to reflect the replacement of the stage two narrative report with the new *Stage two report* (Template 5).
Elements requiring professional judgement	The elements requiring professional judgement underwent substantial changes to align with the new *Stage two report* (Template 5). The requirement to provide evidence on Program Standards that have not changed was removed.

Templates

Template	Changes made
Application cover sheet (Template 1)	The wording was updated to ensure consistency in terminology throughout the document.
	A section for additional information including program description and rationale, and quality assurance processes was added. This information will support the teacher regulatory authorities in their development of accreditation summaries for each program.
Program standards matrix (Template 2)	The '*Purpose of the template*' and '*Completion and use of the template*' sections were simplified. Information was added about the use of the template at stage one and stage two, which aligns with the revised 'Template' section in the Accreditation Guidelines.
Graduate teacher standards matrix (Template 3)	The '*Purpose of the template'* and '*Completion and use of the template*' sections were simplified to show how this template should be used by providers and panellists. Information was added about the use of the template at stage one and stage two, which aligns with the revised 'Template' section in the Accreditation Guidelines.
	Detail was added to the '*Evidence required to support completion of the template'* section to clarify expectations around evidencing the Graduate Teacher Standards.
	The elements requiring professional judgement were updated to reflect the revised wording in Program Standard 1.1.
	Within the matrix, each column states. '*Provide the best evidence including*…' with a list of the relevant detail to evidence the Graduate Teacher Standards across taught, practised and assessed.

Plan for demonstrating impact **(Template 4)**	The '*Purpose of the template'* and '*Completion and use of the template*' sections were simplified to show how this template should be used by providers and panellists. Information was added about the use of the template at Stage one and Stage two, which aligns with the revised 'Template' section in the Accreditation Guidelines. Greater detail was provided about how this template aligns with Program Standard 6. The information in the '*Introduction to context'*, *'Impact statements'* and *'Data framework'* sections was revised and developed to better support providers in preparing their plan for demonstrating impact. The data framework table was simplified and includes columns for '*data sources'*, '*data aggregation'*, '*data analysis*', '*quality assurance'* and '*reporting timeline*'.
Stage two report **(Template 5)**	This is a new template that replaces the previous *Stage two narrative report*. The references to roadmaps and the Appendices A, B and C were removed.