

# Assessment criteria for Graduate Teacher Standards 1.4 & 2.4

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



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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# Assessment criteria for Graduate Teacher Standards 1.4 & 2.4

## 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.

## Criterion 2: 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](http://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.

## Criterion 3: 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).

## Criterion 4: 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

**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 [\*Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures\*](#).

**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.

**Torres Strait Islander person** – a Torres Strait Islander person is someone of Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as being Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by a Torres Strait Islander community. A Torres Strait Islander person may or may not live on an Island in the Torres Strait, but has Torres Strait Islander heritage.

# Acknowledgements

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### Criteria Reference Group:

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**Geraldine Atkinson (Chair)** – Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, Member of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Group

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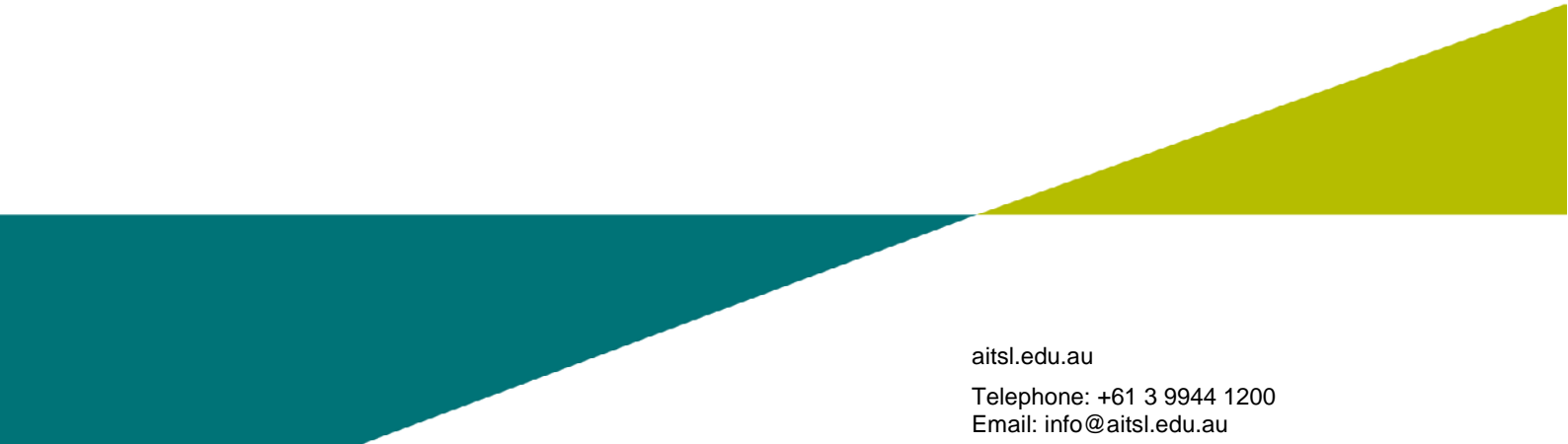
**Dr Graeme Hall**

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The logo for the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) features the lowercase letters 'aitssl' in a sans-serif font. The letters are filled with a vertical gradient that transitions from a light yellow-green at the top to a darker teal at the bottom.

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Limited

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