

Update for initial teacher education accreditation panellists: Reading instruction

Background

In December 2019, Education Ministers in Australia endorsed changes to the accreditation requirements for primary initial teacher education (ITE) programs, to strengthen the capacity of graduate teachers to teach reading.

These changes focused on increasing the time allocation for English/literacy within primary and birth-8 ITE programs and include the requirement to address evidence-based practice in early reading instruction across the following elements: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and oral language. Since the endorsement by Education Ministers in 2019, AITSL has updated the *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* (Standards and Procedures) to reflect the new requirements.

Evidence of these new requirements must be provided by ITE providers to the relevant Teacher Regulatory Authority (TRA) when their program is next due for re-accreditation or, for new programs commencing 1 January 2021, when seeking accreditation. ITE providers also have the option to provide this evidence to their TRA for endorsement prior to their scheduled re-accreditation date.

So, what are the changes?

All changes have occurred in Program Standard 4.2 – Schedule 1. The following table compares the 2018 Standards and Procedures to the updated 2020 Standards and Procedures.

Program level	Mandatory content requirements	2018 Standards and Procedures	2020 Standards and Procedures
Undergraduate	English/literacy – discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies	At least one-quarter of a year Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFTSL)	At least one-half of a year EFTSL, including at least one-eighth of a year EFTSL for early reading instruction
Postgraduate	English/literacy – discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies	At least one-quarter of a year EFTSL	At least three-eighths of a year EFTSL, including at least one-eighth of a year EFTSL for early reading instruction
All programs			Early reading instruction should address evidence-based practice across the following elements: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and oral language

What does this mean for an accreditation panel?

When making judgements against the updated Standards and Procedures, panellists will need to be aware of the new requirements for:

- the time allocated within programs for reading instruction
- evidence-based practice across the above listed elements that must be incorporated in the program.

This update only applies to panels involved in the accreditation of primary and birth-8 ITE programs.

Additional information and resources

AITSL has published guidance materials on its website to assist ITE providers in implementing these changes. These include sample program outlines, an evidence guide, and templates to assist with the verification of the evidence that will be used within the ITE program. These guidance materials are available at <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/deliver-ite-programs/ite-accreditation-guidance-and-research>. **It should be noted that these materials are not mandatory, and do not prescribe a particular approach to meeting the new requirements.**