Australian teaching performance assessment grant program

Frequently asked questions

What did TEMAG recommend in relation to teaching performance assessments?

TEMAG noted that robust assessment of teacher education students is vital to giving schools and families the confidence that graduates are classroom ready. It is essential to ensure every program is preparing classroom ready teachers with the capacity to make a positive impact on school student learning.

The Australian Government's response to the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) report *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers*, tasked AITSL with a number of responsibilities, including ensuring:

- stronger quality assurance of teacher education programs
- robust assessment of graduates to ensure classroom readiness.

What are the requirements of Program Standard 1.2?

Strengthened standards and procedures were agreed by Education Ministers in December 2015, through the revised *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education in Australia: Standards and Procedures.*

Rather than implementing or mandating a specific tool, the Standards and Procedures responded to the requirement for robust assessment by setting out the characteristics of a final year teaching performance assessment.

Program Standard 1.2 in the revised Standards and Procedures requires that a TPA must have the following features:

- be a reflection of classroom teaching practice including the elements of planning, teaching, assessing and reflecting (construct validity)
- be a valid assessment that clearly assesses the content of the Graduate Teacher Standards (construct validity)
- have clear, measurable and justifiable achievement criteria that discriminate between meeting and not meeting the Graduate Teacher Standards
- be a reliable assessment in which there are appropriate processes in place for ensuring consistent scoring between assessors
- include moderation processes that support consistent decision making against the achievement criteria.

What are the objectives of the TPA Grant Program?

During 2017, AITSL will work with consortia partners to realise the overarching policy objectives for the TPA program, which are to:

- contribute funding to the development of teaching performance assessments that are of high quality (rigour, validity)
- make the TPAs available at the conclusion of the project to all providers on reasonable terms.

What is the status of the grant process for Australian teaching performance assessments?

Prior to 30 June 2017 funding agreements were finalised with both consortia. An announcement outlining the details of the consortia was published and circulated. A copy of the announcement is available here.

What happens for those who were unsuccessful in the grant program?

All initial teacher education programs are required to meet Program Standard 1.2 which sets out the requirements for the teaching performance assessment. Under agreed transition arrangements it is expected that programs have a TPA in place for their 2018 graduating cohorts.

If ITE providers would like to discuss the requirements of Program Standard 1.2 they can contact their jurisdictional teacher regulatory authority or AITSL.

What is AITSL's role now the grant agreements have been finalised?

In undertaking the TPA grant program AITSL's role is to:
- ensure funded consortia develop high quality TPAs that are ready for implementation in 2018
- work with consortia partners to ensure TPAs can be made available, on reasonable terms, to all ITE providers at the conclusion of the project

How is AITSL supporting the development of TPA tools outside the funded projects?

Ensuring that high quality teaching performance assessments are developed, implemented and made available for initial teacher education in Australia is important. AITSL will be offering continued support in a number of ways including:
- participating in workshops/information sessions with ITE providers and/or Teacher Regulatory Authorities to discuss the requirements of Program Standard 1.2 and the ongoing considerations of implementing and maintaining TPAs
- through the establishment of the TPA National expert panel, experts will be available to provide advice on the development and implementation of TPAs

- providing ongoing communications and guidance in relation to Program Standard 1.2 including via panel training, support materials and assisting ITE providers to promulgate their tools/research.

Through the TPA National Expert Panel, all ITE providers will be able to access expertise to provide advice on the development and implementation of TPAs. It is envisaged that this service would be free to access for the first two requests from each provider. Subsequent advice is likely to be a fee for service arrangement. Details of these arrangements are still to be finalised.

Does AITSL expect all ITE providers to use the same TPA?

The grant process is intended to stimulate the development of TPAs in line with Program Standard 1.2 that will be used across multiple ITE providers. AITSL does not intend to mandate using a particular assessment(s) and providers can use any assessment that meets the program standard.

Confidence in the preparedness of our graduate teachers will be increased through the wide use of validated, reliable and moderated TPAs. Opportunities for cross-provider moderation will increase the robustness of the tools and contribute to the evidence base in initial teacher education.

Will AITSL have ownership and make available the tools developed through this project?

An objective of this project is to make those TPA tools that will be partially funded through the grant process, widely available.

AITSL is working with the two consortia leads to ensure the tools, partially funded through the grant program, will be made available for use by Australian ITE providers on reasonable terms.

To ensure the appropriate implementation and to maintain the validity and reliability of the tools developed through the grant program it is expected that each tool will have specific conditions in relation to access and use.

How does the grant process relate to the accreditation of initial teacher education programs and the assessment of Program Standard 1.2?

The grant process is intended to stimulate the development of TPAs in line with Program Standard 1.2 that will be used across multiple ITE providers.

Participation in the process does not guarantee that any program using these TPAs will automatically meet Program Standard 1.2 during an accreditation process. All ITE providers must ensure that their programs meet Program Standard 1.2, and any accreditation application will be assessed against all aspects of this standard. This means that using a TPA that has been assessed as meeting the standard in another context is not a guarantee that an individual program will meet the standard.

Rigorous and consistent assessment of TPAs is critical to achieving the intended objectives of Program Standard 1.2. To support this a TPA National Expert Panel (see below for

details) will be established. The TPA Panel will be available to provide advice to Authorities and ITE providers in relation to the development, implementation and maintenance of TPAs.

The ultimate recommendation and decision as to whether an ITE program meets Program Standard 1.2 resides with the accreditation panel and the relevant jurisdictional teacher regulatory authority.

How will consistency of assessment of Program Standard 1.2 be ensured?

A TPA National Expert Panel (TPA Panel) will be established to ensure consistent and rigorous assessment of evidence in relation to teaching performance assessments (Program Standard 1.2).

AITSL will establish and manage the operation of the TPA Panel and will draw on specifically selected panellists with a range of expertise including; technical expertise such as standard setting methodologies, establishing valid and reliable assessments and expert knowledge in the design and delivery of initial teacher education.

AITSL will shortly release a Request for Tender to seek participants for the TPA Panel.

The TPA Panel's role will be to:
- Assess those TPAs developed through the TPA grant program against program Standard 1.2
- Provide advice to AITSL and Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRAs) on the assessment of TPAs developed through the TPA grant program
- Provide advice to TRAs and accreditation panels on:
  - TPAs as part of the accreditation process
  - How to assess/monitor whether TPAs are implemented appropriately (ongoing fidelity)
- Provide advice to ITE providers in developing, implementing and maintaining TPAs

In assessing TPAs it is expected that the TPA Panel will provide advice to accreditation panels and TRAs on the implementation considerations. An accreditation panel will always need to assess evidence against Program Standard 1.2 to ensure a provider has implemented and will continue to implement the TPA with fidelity, that is, in the way it was designed to be used.

In a combined early childhood and primary program, can the teaching performance assessment be undertaken in an early childhood context?

A core feature of Program Standard 1.2 is that the teaching performance assessment is valid and clearly assesses the content of the Graduate Teacher Standards. Where a TPA has been shown to be valid and reliable in assessing the Graduate Teacher Standards in an early childhood context it is AITSL's view that pre-service teachers completing a combined early childhood and primary program could undertake the assessment in either an early childhood context or primary context.
In relation to a combined early childhood and primary program the requirements of Program Standard 4.3 and 4.4 must be considered. An accreditation panel will need to have assurance that these standards are also being met.

Program Standard 4.3 relates specifically to combined programs, and in the context of an early childhood/primary program requires that 'Programs that prepare graduates to teach in both early childhood settings and primary schools, prepare teachers for teaching the curriculum across both contexts'.

Program Standard 4.4 relates to the requirements for primary programs to 'provide all primary graduates with a subject specialisation'. This applies equally to combined programs.

As identified above one of the key criteria the Expert Panel used to assess full grant applications for the TPA Grant Program was the 'size and diversity of the consortium.' The two consortia of ITE providers that AITSL is currently in funding agreement negotiations with have both demonstrated a commitment to ensuring their respective teaching performance assessments will have application across different contexts, geographic locations and demographically diverse student populations. However, in either consortium, this may not cover all possible contexts, including early childhood. Further advice regarding the outcomes of the trial and validation activities will be available in late 2017/early 2018.

What is the relationship between the TPA and assessment of professional experience?

The Standards and Procedures, through the professional experience requirements of Standard 5 mandates the formal assessment of the Graduate Teacher Standards as a requirement for graduating from an initial teacher education program (PS 5.4). This assessment is undertaken throughout the duration of a program as part of professional experience placements.

The Teaching Performance Assessment is also a requirement of the Standards and Procedures (PS 1.2). It requires a final year assessment that is a reflection of classroom teaching practice and a valid assessment aligned to the content of the Graduate Teacher Standards.

While the teaching performance assessment can be included in professional experience, it does not replace the professional experience requirements.

As such, it is expected that through both the TPA and professional experience (PS 5.4) all pre-service teachers will have been successfully assessed against the Graduate Teacher Standards. Where the TPA and an assessment under 5.4 are both used to assess the Graduate Teacher Standards in the final year of a program it is expected that pre-service teachers would successfully meet all assessment tasks. For example, where there is a TPA and a final year professional experience report it is expected that pre-service teachers would demonstrate successful performance against both tasks.

What were the expressions of interest assessed against?

The expressions of interest were assessed against the following criteria:

(a) Capability and capacity of the consortium to develop a TPA that meets Program Standard 1.2

(b) Quality of proposal for development of a TPA, as outlined in a high level project overview

(c) Relationship of proposal to existing projects and/or work already undertaken

(d) The professional qualifications and length and range of experience in teacher education, assessment and measurement, of the individuals who will undertake the work.

Should an unsuccessful applicant be concerned that their strategy for developing a TPA does not meet Program Standard 1.2?

The criteria for assessing the expressions of interest were broader than the capability to develop a TPA in line with the requirements of Program Standard 1.2. As such, it may have been a range of factors that resulted in non-progression to the next stage of the project.

Unsuccessful applicants were offered an opportunity to receive feedback from AITSL on their expression of interest along with further opportunities to discuss development of their TPA.

On what basis were successful consortia selected?

- A credible plan and development timeline to develop an assessment that meets Program Standard 1.2.
- A defensible process for setting an achievement standard and ensuring assessment of candidates' performance against that standard is accurate.
- The assessment will include evidence of impact on school student learning.
- The quality of activities proposed to establish (or disprove) the reliability and validity of the assessment.
- Size and diversity of the consortium, and members' commitment to use the assessment as part of their evidence of program impact if development is successful.
- Availability for implementation in 2018 (although reliability and validity may still be being tested at this stage).
- Demonstrated expertise of the personnel involved in initial teacher education, assessment and measurement.
- A plan for research about the effectiveness of the assessment, including its impact on pre-service teacher learning, and impact on school student learning.