

Guidelines for the Induction of Early Career Teachers in Australia

December 2023



Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands, sea countries and waterways from across Australia. We honour and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future.

AITSL has worked closely with key education stakeholders in the development of the *Guidelines for the Induction of Early Career Teachers (Early Career Teacher Guidelines) in Australia*. The Early Career Teacher Guidelines outlines the critical factors of high-quality and effective induction of early career teachers. Thank you to all those who participated in the development of the Guidelines.

AITSL's responsibility to lead this work is outlined in the Australian Government's National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (NTWAP).

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Introduction

Early career teacher induction is a shared responsibility for all members of the teaching profession. Good induction is essential to support the transition from initial teacher education into the broader teaching profession. Induction should build on the high-quality preparation of pre-service teachers in their initial teacher education.

The *Guidelines for the Induction of Early Career Teachers in Australia* describe why induction matters, the conditions for good induction, the focus of induction, effective strategies for induction, and the respective roles of organisations and individuals in managing the delivery of high-quality induction programs.

These guidelines are written for early career teachers, mentors and supervising teachers, principals and school leaders, systems/sectors, and the broader profession.

The guidelines are based on research and provide practical advice to support high quality induction. They can be used to underpin the development of programs and practices to support early career teachers.

Quality induction is needed for all early career teachers. However, the design of induction programs varies according to a range of factors, including the:

- background and prior experiences of early career teachers
- decisions made by systems, sectors, and schools about the implementation of support for induction
- duration of induction based on the teacher's background and situation
- employment status of early career teachers (including casual and part-time teachers)
- local circumstances such as geographical and demographical differences.

Induction programs are most effective when they are embedded in contexts with a strong culture of collaboration, professional growth and as part of the everyday work of a teacher. Contexts where this culture exists, encourage teachers to give and receive feedback, be challenged, and are supported to learn.

These guidelines are written in the context of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability which notes an estimated 20% of students had a disability in 2022. In relation to inclusive education, the report highlights article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities “that Australia has obligations to recognise the rights of people with disability to education.” (Commonwealth of Australia 2023). The Report notes that teachers with disabilities should be employed and that all teachers and professionals should be appropriately trained to support students with disabilities. In particular, the Report recommends amendments to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to take into account the knowledge and skills required to teach and support students with disability.

Note: In these guidelines, the term ‘early career teacher’ refers to teachers in the first two years of their teaching career. AITSL recognises that many teachers will still identify as early career beyond two-years or until they are fully registered. These teachers are sometimes referred to in other AITSL resources as ‘beginning teachers’.

These guidelines are intended for teachers working in schools, or early childhood settings within a school. AITSL acknowledges the different contexts of standalone early childhood settings, and that these guidelines may require adaptation according to these contexts. Further, where applicable, induction programs should equip early childhood teachers with knowledge of the National Quality Framework, including regulatory requirements and the National Quality Standard.

Why does induction matter?

Teaching is a profession that is highly skilled and requires detailed preparation and support. Teachers have a strong shared identity as professionals and an established professional structure to sustain the quality of the profession. This structure includes robust qualification and entry requirements, and a set of professional standards that form the basis for initial teacher education as well as full and continuing membership of the profession.

The process to enter the teaching profession starts when a person is accepted into a teaching qualification (an initial teacher education program). The content of all initial teacher education programs is underpinned by the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Teacher Standards) at the Graduate career stage. The Teacher Standards define what a teacher needs to know and be able to do to teach effectively. Pre-service teachers must meet all the Graduate Teacher Standards, demonstrate literacy and numeracy standards, and pass a rigorous teaching performance assessment to be employed in the teaching profession.

A teacher's identity as a member of the teaching profession can start to form as a pre-service teacher; this is then embedded during induction and can evolve through time and experience (Rojas et al. 2021). Research suggests that a well-developed professional identity can lead to confidence, autonomy, commitment to teaching, improved teaching effectiveness and student outcomes (Flores 2020; Suarez & McGrath 2022; Yagan et al. 2022.) Membership of a profession brings with it status, standing, responsibility, and accountability.

Early career teachers often enter the profession with the same roles, functions, and responsibilities as experienced teachers. For this reason, sharing expertise with new entrants to the teaching profession is an important role for experienced teachers. Many aspects of being a member of the teaching profession are not covered through a workplace induction or by engaging in the registration process. Expert teachers may cover these aspects as they guide new entrants by modelling professional conduct, including demonstrating exemplary ethical behaviour with students, colleagues, and the community; speaking positively about the teaching profession; and publicly affirming the decisions of new entrants to join the profession.

Quality induction enables a graduate teacher to transition from *becoming* a teacher to *being* a teacher.

An induction provides the foundation for an early career teacher to:

- build their skills and knowledge to become an effective practitioner
- improve their capacity to engage with and teach learners with a diverse range of needs, including students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and students experiencing disadvantage due to factors including learning difficulty and socioeconomic circumstances
- understand their responsibilities and accountabilities as a member of the teaching profession.

Teacher registration is a requirement for all Australian teachers. Most teachers who start teaching have met the requirements for provisional registration. This means they have met the requirements of an accredited program including demonstrating the Graduate Teacher Standards and been assessed for suitability to be a teacher.

The next career stage of the Teacher Standards is Proficient. The Proficient career stage is aligned to the requirements for full registration and is also mandatory for Australian teachers. Induction programs must ensure that early career teachers understand the registration requirements of their relevant teacher regulatory authority.



Image: Teacher registration pipeline

A comprehensive induction process can reflect the complex nature of education, ensuring a greater chance to meet the needs of students by supporting the early career teacher, as well as their engagement with parents and carers, their school, and their employing system or sector.

Induction supports the deployment and retention of teachers, including those in harder-to-staff and complex environments, such as schools in regional and remote areas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, who are underrepresented in the workforce.

What is teacher induction?

The term 'induction' in the context of these guidelines refers to the range of supports early career teachers receive when they enter the teaching profession. Induction is most effective when undertaken over an extended period (approximately two years or more for full-time equivalent teachers).

Starting work as a teacher can be daunting and overwhelming. It is essential that early career teachers feel welcomed, well informed and equipped to do their job. Effective induction practices must situate teachers within their new environment.

The components of a workplace induction program should include an introduction to the school context, a schedule of introductions to key members of staff, an overview of school and workplace policies, the broader school community, information about mandatory training, teacher registration requirements¹ and pay and conditions.

¹ In NSW, teacher registration is called teacher accreditation.

Who are early career teachers?

Early career teachers enter the profession through a range of pathways and are employed under various conditions. People enter initial teacher education programs straight from school or from an undergraduate degree. Alternatively, people enter initial teacher education programs after working in other industries or professions.

Many teachers are trained overseas and start teaching in Australia for the first time. These teachers may not be early career teachers however, they require a structured induction. There are a number of resources on the [AITSL website](#) to support overseas trained teachers who are starting to work in Australia.

Increasing numbers of pre-service teachers enter the teaching workforce before they have graduated and may be employed as paraprofessionals or as teachers. These teachers have specific induction needs. In some cases, a pre-service teacher can have a full-time teaching load and need to complete their course requirements including their Teaching Performance Assessment and/or final professional experience. The success of these employment options depends on good communication between the early career teacher, the initial teacher education (ITE) provider and the school. The early career teacher should consider whether they can balance employment with their ongoing study requirements. They should ensure that their employers understand their remaining course obligations. It is also important for early career teachers to notify their ITE providers about their employment to share and assess the effect of their employment on their course completion.

A reduced teaching workload can provide an early career teacher with more time to complete the obligations of their ITE program is a critical component when developing induction programs.

An early career teacher's background and employment status can affect their induction into the profession and may impact on teacher retention.

Induction for teachers who start their teaching career as day-to-day casual relief teachers (CRTs) is challenging. These teachers still require induction support as they are expected to provide structured learning to their students as well as an understanding of the school context. CRTs can be hired directly or through agencies, and as such every CRT has a different level of understanding of the school and the work of a CRT.

The duration in which a teacher is considered early career will vary based on the person, employment time and registration status.

What are the conditions for effective induction?

Effective teacher induction focuses on maximising a teacher's impact on learners and builds on the knowledge and skills gained through the teacher's initial teacher education.

A well-designed induction addresses the personal and professional demands of the role and can incorporate external agencies and individuals to support the teacher. A quality induction also establishes secure connections between the early career teachers and the school, community, and system or sector.

Induction is most effective when undertaken over an extended period (approximately two years or more for full-time equivalent teachers) in settings with a strong learning culture and professional relationships. The use of high-quality mentors, colleagues and communities of practice should be included in the induction program. Effective induction programs allow early career teachers to share their ideas, develop goals and collaborate with peers to improve their practice. When this reciprocal learning occurs, it strengthens the early career teachers' connection to the profession and workplace by acknowledging their value as teachers.

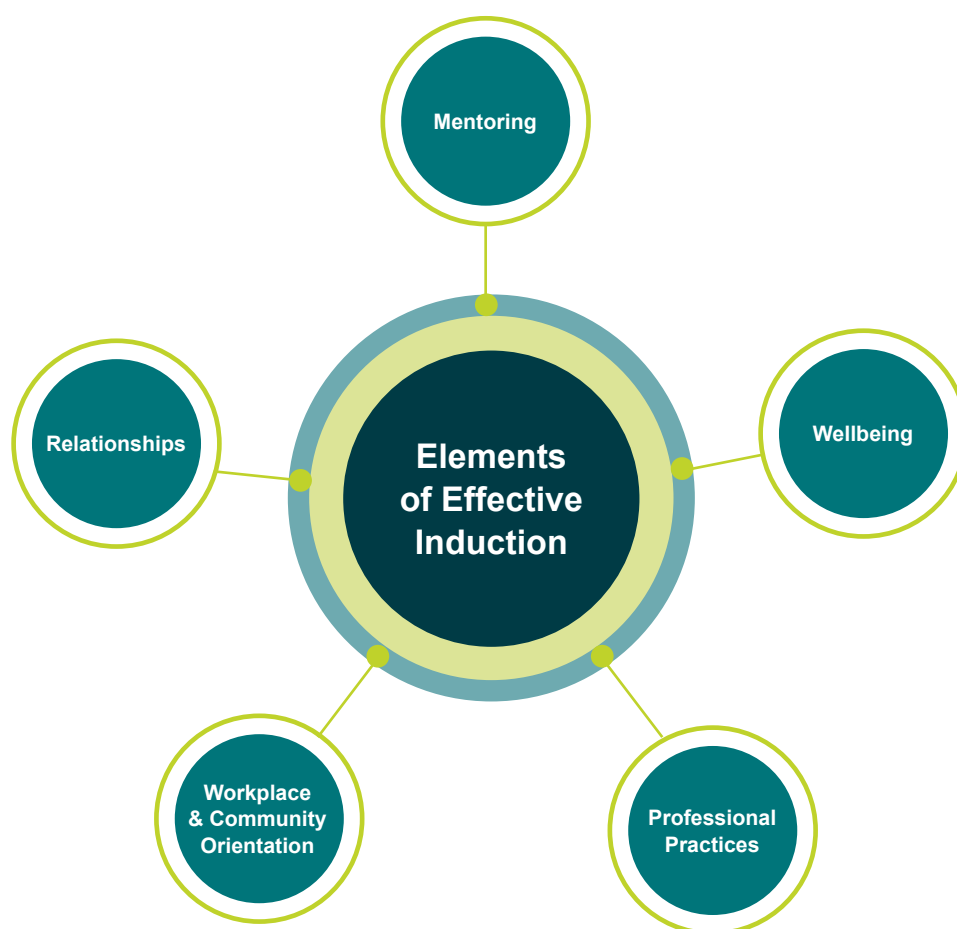
The inclusion of enhanced cultural safety, responsiveness, and support (by mentor teachers and leaders) and community collaboration are key conditions of effective induction practices. This support is particularly helpful for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and should be incorporated into practice-based and generalised school induction.

Formative processes can be built into induction programs from their implementation. Outcomes from the formative processes can inform the structure, implementation, and evaluation of future induction programs. Induction program evaluations can measure characteristics such as satisfaction and retention, practical application, logistics and the appropriateness of the program for the context.

There may also be context-specific conditions for induction. Good habits can be embedded in induction programs that account for school contexts. In regional and remote settings induction begins from recruitment and should include a contextual introduction to the community and school. Induction in regional and remote settings can also extend to supporting teachers to relocate (if applicable) and aiding their establishment in the local community.

Elements of effective induction

Based on the evidence, a combination of elements underpins effective induction programs. Induction should not be an administratively burdensome process. It is essential that the induction process does not become an additional task for early career teachers. Induction should ease the early career teacher's entry into the teaching profession, focus on their needs, and be flexible enough to respond to challenges as they arise.



Mentoring

Mentors are a key pillar of support for early career teachers. A mentor teacher is a knowledgeable, experienced, highly effective teacher, with expertise, who works with or alongside an early career teacher or less experienced colleague (AITSL 2016). Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALT) can be excellent mentor teachers. In addition, being a mentor teacher can support experienced teachers in gaining HALT certification.

Mentors are most effective when there are clear expectations about their role, they are selected based on a set of pre-requisites and qualities, they undergo specific training and there are resources to support the mentoring program including, where possible, structured timetabled release.

All mentors should be trained and have access to ongoing professional development to ensure that expectations are equitable, understood, and able to be met. Mentors should meet nationally agreed standards of practice².

² AITSL is developing standards for mentors for consultation in 2024

Professional practices

Content and pedagogy

Induction programs should ensure that teachers thoroughly understand the curriculum, assessment, and reporting programs. Understanding content encompasses three overarching skills: planning for and implementing effective teaching and learning; creating and maintaining supportive and safe learning environments; and assessing and providing feedback on student learning.

Induction practices relating to teaching content and pedagogy should focus on using and embedding evidence-based practices in the classroom. This will support ongoing teacher development and can lead to improved student outcomes.

Strategies for student engagement

A successful induction should include strategies such as building relationships with students, inclusive technology use, and delivery of the curriculum in an engaging and relevant manner (Harris et al. 2020). This supports teachers to feel prepared for the challenges of the classroom, including behaviour management and student engagement.

Assessment and evaluation

Teacher assessment and evaluation as a formative process supports early career teachers' growth. This type of support should be frequent and less formal (Clinton et al. 2019). Teacher assessment helps improve teaching practice and includes classroom observations, coaching, and reflection activities. Formative evaluations prioritise frequent and timely feedback to inform teachers' growth and development. These evaluations are tailored to learners' needs and can be based on previous observations. Formative assessment and evaluation of teachers' progress should encompass a two-way dialogue without punitive action.

Documentation

Documents showing evidence of teacher progress should be collected throughout an induction program. These can be used as evidence to support the achievement of the Teacher Standards for the purpose of teacher registration (AITSL 2017). The evidence should be generated through the teacher's daily work rather than through the imposition of additional requirements. Examples of documentation include lesson plans, assessment tools and plans, records of feedback to students, lesson observation notes, and the development of individualised student learning plans.

Workplace and community orientation

Ensuring the safety of children

Teachers have a vital role to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people. A critical component of all induction programs is providing early career teachers with knowledge and understanding of child protection requirements. Schools and teachers have a moral and statutory obligation to protect children from sexual abuse and report instances of child sexual abuse (AITSL 2018). Schools and systems must ensure that early career teachers understand and can comply with their obligations to keep children safe.

Policy compliance and school processes

Teachers need to understand relevant policies to comply with their legal responsibilities. These policies include attendance, student discipline, emergency procedures, curriculum standards, student safety and wellbeing, disability support services, including the National Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) and records management. New teachers also need to learn school-specific systems and processes.

Many teachers start their careers as day-to-day CRTs. Schools have responsibility for the induction of day-to-day CRTs including:

- a duty of care for the wellbeing and workplace safety of CRTs
- the introduction to relevant school policies, processes, and procedures
- providing practical information such as payroll and student administration systems.

Some schools develop a CRT handbook that is given to the CRT before they arrive. However, this should not be considered the entire induction process. CRTs can also engage with other staff to further their induction into the profession and pathway to full registration.

Managing professional boundaries

Teachers must always act appropriately in their relationship with students. Teachers are in a unique position of trust, care, authority, and influence with their students, which means there is an inherent power imbalance between teachers and students. Teachers must take responsibility for establishing and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with all students, use professional judgement, and think carefully about the implications and potential consequences of engaging in certain behaviours with students.

For early career teachers, a blurring of professional boundaries can sometimes be difficult to detect, particularly in their own teaching practice. Induction programs should support early career teachers to understand their obligations, recognise when a professional boundary is at risk of being crossed, and determine how to manage those situations with appropriate strategies and the support of colleagues.

Engagement with parents, carers, and community

Engaging with parents, carers, and the community is an essential element of teacher induction. Early career teachers need to understand how to establish respectful and collaborative relationships with parents and carers.

A school-wide approach towards engaging with parents and carers helps to keep them informed in an appropriate way. A mutual understanding between parents/carers and teachers provides effective support for students.

Induction programs should provide early career teachers with a contextual understanding of the community in which they are working. Information may include understanding community demographics, such as identifying different culturally and linguistically diverse members of the school community, the educational background of parents (via the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage and other similar measures), and other defining features of the community.

Relationships

Relationships build connections between teachers, the school personnel, and learners. Good relationships support a seamless transition from study to employment. Activities which enable people to build skills such as networking, team building, managing others as well as developing individual wellbeing are crucial to the success of the teacher (Hudson 2012; Wertzberger 2022). Since stress levels are a significant driver of teacher resignation, stress management, resilience and empowerment can lead to a fulfilling and stable workforce (ACER 2020). Avoiding excessive workloads is also a key factor in retaining early career teachers as found in the Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) National Trends report (AITSL, 2022a).

Wellbeing

Supporting a teacher's wellbeing is critical to fostering their mental and physical health. Teachers who are provided with structured wellbeing support can better meet the demands of their work, handle stress and focus on the learning needs of their students. Induction needs to include comprehensive information on how teachers can access information and services to support their wellbeing. Schools can support the early career teachers' wellbeing with resources, structured organisational frameworks and a commitment to understanding their wellbeing needs in context.

Delivery of induction programs

Format and delivery of an induction program

Multi-method

This includes online induction activities, team teaching with experienced teachers and online seminars (OECD 2021; Reeves et al. 2022).

There are some areas of induction that are better suited to an online format than others. For example, policy compliance and school processes can be effectively delivered online whereas pedagogical skills are best taught through observation and feedback (OECD 2021).

Group-based induction enables networking opportunities and integration into the new school environment; however, each teacher begins their role with unique experiences and opinions.

Online

Online induction activities have their place within teacher induction. Virtual delivery provides high-quality induction to schools that may not have access to suitable staff. This results in more equal opportunities for teachers in regional and remote schools but should not be used as the sole format for an induction program.

In-person

In-person coaching and mentoring is a highly effective induction strategy. Some induction content is less well suited to an online format; this is particularly true for pedagogical skills and student engagement techniques.

Formal and informal

Formal inductions delivered in a group setting are time-efficient and are effective at providing clear, consistent information on the school's procedures, values, and culture. Group inductions allow for different formats to be used, such as group discussions, projects, presentations, tours, and socialising opportunities.

Informal induction mechanisms, such as an in-class coaching program and conversations with colleagues enable social connections to be formed. These social connections may be broad initially, however, as the teacher learns more about their colleagues, they become more selective about their needs (Marz & Kelchtermans 2020). This typically results in early career teachers contacting each other informally, supporting the formal mentoring system. Other early career teachers who have recently been inducted into the school and have successfully navigated the transition can provide insights that may not be considered by more experienced peers and mentors.

Reduced teaching load

A reduced teaching load is a highly desirable characteristic of an induction program. Reduced schedules allow extra planning time for early career teachers, enable mentors and early career teachers to engage effectively and provide the environment for full engagement in induction activities. Where possible consideration should be given to the types of classes and subjects offered to early career teachers. When allocating the teaching load for early career teachers, schools should consider the higher demands that are associated with different year level cohorts, subjects, and individual classes.

Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities and Country

Early career teachers, or any teacher new to a learning environment, often bring preconceived expectations and ideas of what it means to work and live in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities. These expectations and ideas often result in high attrition rates, lack of meaningful engagement and poor relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities despite best intentions.

All teachers are responsible for meaningfully engaging with communities and understanding the context and Country on which they are teaching. This includes all teachers across metropolitan, regional, and remote settings. Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and identifying and learning about Country should be a core component of induction processes and championed by systems, sectors, school leaders and teachers. Schools and systems must also set clear expectations to create environments that foster responsive two-way relationships between communities, schools, and teachers.

To create good school-community partnerships, we need to know the story of the community, who is in it, how the school fits in and how everyone connects. As individuals, we need to know about ourselves and our connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and community (Your Story 2023).

The following components can be used to support early career teachers to engage with and understand various protocols that exist when engaging with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and identify and learn how to engage with Country.

Whose Country am I on?

Australia comprises many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations and groups with their own customs, cultures and languages. There are many resources that can support this learning to identify the Country teachers are living and working on.

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) has a suite of resources, including the [Map of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia](#), that can help teachers identify whose Country they are on.

Teachers can learn about Country by accessing:

- A schools Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), where applicable
- Local council websites
- State government websites
- Apps, including [Welcome to Country](#).

Teachers can identify Traditional Custodians, investigate specific areas of interest, and connect this information to enrich their teaching practice by exploring the following questions:

- Who are the Traditional Custodians of the land?
- What is the traditional name of the place you are working on?
- What is the history of the people from the local area?
- Are there any places of significance in and around your schooling community?
- Are there any figures of significance who are Custodians of your local area? Who are the Elders and leaders?

Languages

Many community groups are working to preserve and use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. In regional and remote communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities may speak multiple languages and dialects, including local and Traditional Languages, Aboriginal English, Kriol, Creole, and English.

Whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are primary languages in a teacher's community or not, it is important to understand the connection and importance of language and the protocols of using language in the local area.

Depending on the context, the following questions can be used to better understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages:

- Do you know which languages the children in your community speak?
- Do you have strategies to assist you to teach English as an additional language or dialect?
- Does your school have policies and processes to support children and their families whose primary language is not English?
- How does your school engage with community members, many of whom are educational support professionals, to preserve language and support the teaching and learning of students whose primary language is not English? How will you ensure you build an equal relationship with any local educators working at the school?

It is expected that early career teachers acquire this knowledge over the course of their induction. In the first instance, teachers can undertake initial research to ensure their teaching strategies address the language requirements of their students.

Mentors and school leaders are responsible for adequately preparing and informing early career teachers about school policies and practices that align with varied language requirements of students.

What are the community protocols

There are different protocols for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and community members in all contexts. Community protocols and engagement practices vary across different nations. It is important to identify and form relationships with key community members to support community engagement and to understand ways of working.

Understanding these community protocols and building relationships are essential to teaching effectively without creating a burden for community members and groups. Early career teachers should be able to talk to mentor teachers or school leaders to access the basics and encourage further research and relationship building.

Mentor teachers and leaders can embed community protocols and ways of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in recruitment and induction processes.

It is always recommended to speak to Elders and leaders, community members and esteemed locals, including education support staff, to identify best practices and to ask questions. Some examples of community protocols that may require clarification, particularly in remote communities, are:

- the requirement to be welcomed to Country before working in a community
- identifying places that may be inappropriate for people who are not Traditional Custodians to visit
- how community protocols and dynamics may influence how families engage with each other.

Understanding Country

“Country is the term often used by Aboriginal peoples to describe the lands, waterways and seas to which they are connected. The term contains complex ideas about law, place, custom, language, spiritual belief, cultural practice, material sustenance, family, and identity.” (AIATSIS n.d.)³

Early career teachers need to understand the Country and history of the location in which they are teaching. This supports their readiness to work in their school and community.

Mentor teachers and school leaders can share this knowledge by incorporating it into recruitment and induction processes. Understanding Country is a professional responsibility. It is a key component in creating a culturally safe and welcoming teaching and learning environment in conjunction with school policies, processes, and ongoing engagement.

Engaging with the community is a long-term commitment that should play a role in all teaching practices and school policy areas.

Further supports on cultural responsiveness in education can be found on AITSL's [building a culturally responsive Australian teaching workforce](#) webpage.

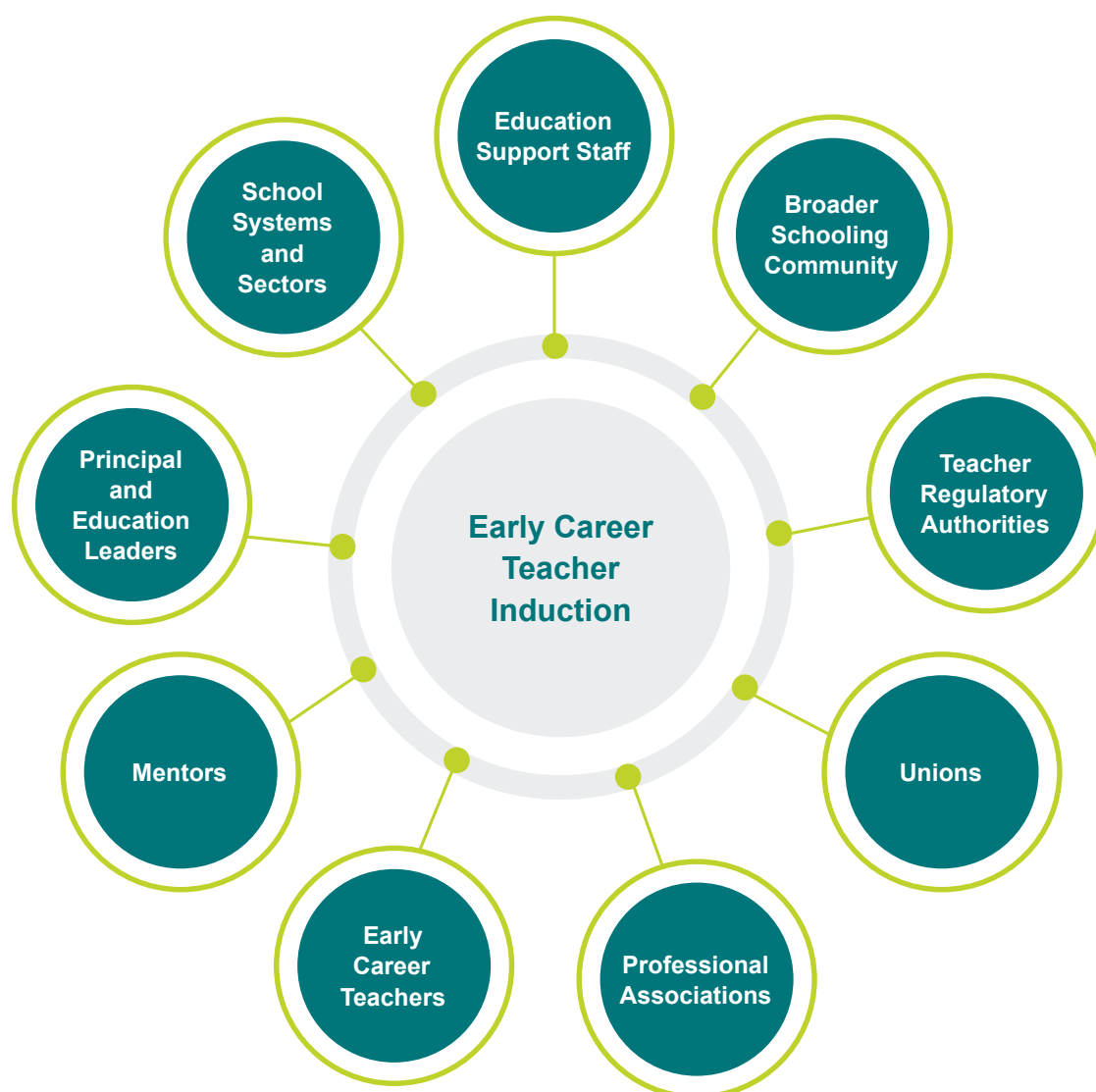
³ <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/welcome-country>

Who plays a role in quality induction?

The Australian education system is a federated model that includes government and non-government schools and agencies that oversee school education and the induction of early career teachers. In addition, teacher registration is an essential part of a teacher's induction. Teacher registration is managed by teacher regulatory authorities in each state and territory.

Induction is a responsibility shared across the profession and includes mentors, leaders and preservice teachers. Each individual and organisation plays a role in supporting and coordinating induction for new members of the teaching profession.

The following groups have a critical role in early career teacher induction:



Early career teachers

Early career teachers should be active participants in their own induction. Early career teachers need to engage in induction programs and activities and meet the expectations of the school or education setting.

Early career teachers may seek additional experiences, engage with professional networks, identify their learning requirements, and take responsibility for ensuring that their induction meets their needs. This requires engaging in self-reflection and analysis, identifying learning needs and setting goals with mentors. It includes actively seeking expertise from colleagues and networks.

As noted in the Introduction to these Guidelines, the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse Neglect and Exploitation of People with a Disability estimates that 20% of school students require educational adjustments due to disability. By keeping the diverse needs of all learners at the centre of their practice, early career teachers can adjust their own professional learning to build on and grow effective teaching practices. AITSL has developed a suite of [resources](#) to ensure teachers implement teaching practices that enable full participation of students with a disability.

To support their own professional learning and progression as a teacher, early career teachers should regularly engage with their peers to create or join communities of practice. Peer-to-peer relationships are an important element of early career teacher development and retention.

Individuals who have pursued a mid-career change to teaching typically enter the profession with different expertise, expectations and experience. Despite existing expertise and experiences, this is the first time that they are employed as teachers and need to meet the same induction stages as other early career teachers.

Teachers entering the profession mid-career may need to adjust the expectations of their professional identity. These teachers may also deal with the complexity of juggling additional responsibilities such as caring for ageing parents and family responsibilities.

Mentors

Mentors are central to the success of a teacher's induction. The role of the mentor teacher will vary depending on context and the early career teacher's needs.

In regional and remote areas, the roles and responsibilities of mentors are varied and include early career teacher mentoring as well as community mentoring. Mentors from across the community can provide a support network for the early career teacher. This also has the benefit of reducing the workload of a school-based mentor. In addition, schools, school clusters and regions can share mentors.

Mentors can work across geographical regions, ensuring that all early career teachers have access to a mentor. This allows schools in regional and remote areas to have mentors who support early career teachers and pre-service teachers across the area. This can be viewed as a community building initiative and an opportunity to establish and reinforce a sense of belonging and connectedness.

Mentoring is most effective when there is structured timetabled release available for mentors and the early career teacher.

Mentoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early career teachers

Mentor teachers can support a working environment that is culturally responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, allowing for quality induction and teaching practices.

The following considerations can support mentors of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early career teachers.

Workplace safety

Mentors should create a safe environment that allows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers to confide in their mentor if unsafe situations arise, including racially biased interactions with staff, parents and carers, and community members.

Additional responsibilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers

The professional identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early career teachers' is more than their heritage. Mentor teachers must be aware of the impact of expectations that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers represent all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly in communities with few or any other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

Relationships and power dynamics

Mentor teachers can create relationships that address the power dynamics between mentors and early career teachers, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers. Mentors need to establish space and channels for sensitive communication and two-way feedback.

Principals and education leaders

Good induction can be fostered by principals and education leaders who promote a strong learning culture in their schools and education settings. A strong culture includes building and supporting relationships for the induction and support of early career teachers.

Principals and leaders play a key role in establishing professional relationships with early career teachers to support their wellbeing. They also help them to understand the culture, practices, workplace health and safety, and expectations of their local context. This requires taking a personal interest in the early career teacher's welfare and development, to model and foster trust and collegial relationships. It also requires enabling collaborative opportunities for early career teachers and ensuring the provision of training and support for mentors.

School leaders have responsibilities to ensure school policies and procedures are clearly shared with and reflect the needs of early career teachers. This will ensure early career teachers understand what is required of them, but also what they can expect of the school to support them.

Specific Commonwealth laws and policies that protect students must be followed, including:

- [Disability Standards for Education](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act](#)

Each state and territory government is responsible for the administration and operation of child protection legislation, policies and services.

In regional and remote school settings, teachers may have additional responsibilities. A small staff size often means supervising teachers work across multiple year levels and subject areas. Principals and leaders need to carefully manage the workload of early career teachers so that they can focus on their core responsibilities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers may require access to specific arrangements including cultural leave provisions. Principals and employees should understand the policies and agreements that exist to support such arrangements. Employers will have different cultural leave provisions; these may be unpaid leave days in some cases.

[AITSL's Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Toolkit](#) are an excellent set of resources that can be used in conjunction with broader school policies to create culturally safe and welcoming workplaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members.

School systems and sectors

Systems and sectors deliver the policy, program, resourcing, evaluation, and accountability frameworks that underpin structured and effective induction programs.

They take account of varying employment arrangements and local circumstances that affect the implementation of induction programs. The role of the system, sector and school will vary and intersect in diverse ways depending on the jurisdiction. There are general elements that should be considered in the development of induction policies and programs. These include providing early career teachers with:

- high-quality induction practices that are subject to ongoing evaluation
- career-specific learning and development resources and experiences
- opportunities to build early career teacher expertise
- specific advice around the services and procedures in place to support the needs of students with disability, learning difficulties, disadvantage, and diverse socioeconomic contexts
- networking events, including professional networks for teachers in regional and remote settings or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers should be supported through jurisdictional policies and arrangements such as cultural leave or targeted recruitment policies. Systems and sectors must be aware of such policies and arrangements and ensure they are shared with schools and staff to create an inclusive and safe working environment. Additionally, to be effective, systems and sectors must employ whole school/system approach to the induction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early career teachers.

Further requirements for school leaders and their obligations can be found under [Principals and education leaders](#).

School systems and sectors need to communicate positive narratives about teaching including teaching in regional and remote contexts. Systems and sectors may also provide incentives to support schools and early career teachers in regional and remote locations.

Education support staff

The induction process should include advice about the relationship between early career teachers and education support staff.

The definition of education support staff varies across jurisdictions. Generally, education support staff (ESS) comprise roles that involve duties and responsibilities across student or teacher support, administrative or operational support and/or health and wellbeing services (Department of Education Victoria 2022).

Although ESS responsibilities differ across jurisdictions, educational context, systems, schools, and communities, there are some common elements. The relationship between early career teachers and ESS can be fostered through strategies implemented by school leaders, early career teachers and ESS.

School leaders should:

- ensure that early career teachers and ESS are introduced
- provide clear expectations of the early career teacher and ESS relationship
- provide regular opportunities for the early career teacher and ESS to collaborate
- outline how the ESS support students with disability or experiencing disadvantage.

Early career teachers should understand:

- their role in relation to ESS
- the resources to share and collaborate with ESS
- who to go for further advice.

Education support staff should understand:

- their role in supporting the early career teacher
- the information to be shared with the early career teacher
- who to go to for further advice.

Community and allied health professionals

Education professionals are often required to work with community groups and allied health professionals to support families and meet the needs of their learners. This is particularly relevant when addressing the needs of students with disability, learning difficulties and/or disadvantage, and culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

It is important that induction processes support early career teachers to develop the skills needed to leverage relationships with community members and groups, and allied health professionals. Partnerships such as these can assist learners to grow and develop with the support of a team that is able to share knowledge and work towards common goals.

To foster these relationships, leaders, schools, and systems can:

- acknowledge local service providers by introducing them to early career teachers and supporting awareness of their role in the community
- provide relevant information to early career teachers prior to meetings with community stakeholders and allied health professionals
- highlight the role of collaborative relationships in supporting the needs of learners
- facilitate strong relationships within the community by modelling collaborative and inclusive leadership.

Initial teacher education providers

Teacher educators and ITE providers play a key role in the induction process for early career teachers into the profession. They support the development of the knowledge, skills and personal capabilities that provide the basis for entry to teaching.

Workplace-based models of ITE provide opportunities for providers to take an active role in teacher induction. Traditional and extended internship-style professional experience placements require strong partnerships between providers, employers, and schools. There is a responsibility for ITE providers to ensure pre-service teachers are equipped to enter the classroom on graduation as well as being prepared for their placements, particularly for teachers who are placed or employed in regional and remote settings.

ITE providers can set clear expectations and reduce any potential stress and feelings of uncertainty in the first days, weeks and months of placement and employment by communicating with pre-service teachers and schools.

Programs with a focus on supporting the diverse learning needs of all students, or regional and remote education, may further establish expertise and encourage employment in harder-to-staff schools.

ITE providers can also embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and curriculum into their programs and create environments that value the diverse skillsets and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pre-service teachers. Providers can employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts to deliver units of study that focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural capability training. These practices prepare early career teachers to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and create safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues.

Teacher regulatory authorities

Teacher registration is a critical part of induction. Applying for teacher registration is the first step in a teacher's formal entry into the teaching profession. Teacher registration assures the safety, competency, and quality of the profession (AITSL 2018).

Teacher regulatory authorities establish the policy, program and accountability frameworks that enable early career teachers to move from provisional to full registration. Their policies take account of varying employment arrangements and local circumstances that affect the implementation of the movement from provisional to full registration.

Unions

Teacher unions represent the industrial interests of teachers as well as providing professional support to their members. Unions provide current information about working conditions including teacher awards and industrial agreements. Early career teachers can attend conferences and undertake professional learning opportunities organised by their union to support their knowledge and understanding of induction and registration requirements.

Professional and subject associations

Professional associations provide valuable information and professional support for early career teachers. They provide current information about curriculum and policy developments and offer useful and practical professional development programs. Importantly, they provide early career teachers with access to networks of experienced and expert teachers as well as other early career teachers. Professional associations provide early career teachers with support and collegiality outside of their employment environment.

Induction is a critical foundation to shape the teaching performance of early career teachers. It is a time when early career teachers form their professional identity and reflect on their decision enter the teaching profession.

Employers, principals, school leaders, and senior teachers are responsible for providing early career teachers with an induction that meets their needs across all educational contexts and provides a structure for them to become proficient practitioners. Encouraging and providing structured guidance to early career teachers affirms the decisions of senior teachers to be members of the teaching profession. Early career teachers who complete an effective induction are better prepared for their prime responsibility of teaching and improving student learning.

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Legislation

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

The logo for the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) features the lowercase letters 'aitsl' in a sans-serif font. The letters are colored with a gradient: 'a' is light green, 'i' is teal, 't' is dark teal, 's' is dark teal, 'l' is dark teal, and the final 'l' is a lighter green.

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A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consists of two overlapping triangles. The left triangle is dark teal and points to the right. The right triangle is light green and points to the left. They meet at a central point, creating a white diamond shape in the middle.

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