

Teaching in Australia





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Using this guide

As the national body for teachers and school leaders operating across all levels of the education sector in Australia, AITSL knows that quality teaching has the greatest in school impact on student outcomes, and we are here to support all teachers to be the best they can be.

There are plenty of opportunities across the nation for skilled teachers, from our urban centres to beautiful regional and remote Australia. This guide is for prospective migrant teachers seeking employment in the Australian education workforce. It aims to provide a broad overview of key elements in the Australian education system to support an overseas-trained teacher's preparation for successful entry into the Australian teacher workforce.

The guide also includes links¹ to external resources which offer a broad perspective of the resources available across different states, territories, systems, and sectors. Please note that the information provided in this guide is not exhaustive but is intended to provide a useful starting point.

This guide provides links to AITSL resources specific to the area of focus and reflection questions to support your professional discussions with colleagues. You are also encouraged to visit the AITSL website to familiarise yourself with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Teacher Standards) and explore our rich body of resources developed to showcase best practices in Australian classrooms and support teachers to develop and grow their expertise.

¹ All links provided in this document are correct as of June 30, 2023

The Australian education system

Education and training in Australia are a shared responsibility between the federal government and the states and territories.

For example, the federal Minister for Education is responsible for areas such as childcare and university funding, international education, and research. In contrast, state education ministers are responsible for teacher training, school resourcing and curriculum.

The state and territory governments hold primary responsibility for school education in Australia under the Australian Constitution. The state and territory governments regulate government and non-government schools, including faith-based ones, within their respective jurisdiction. Additionally, state and territory governments oversee course accreditation, student assessment, and industrial awards for government and non-government schools and early childhood learning centres.

The Australian school education system comprises three sectors – government, Catholic and independent across three phases of schooling: early childhood, primary and secondary. These Australian education settings and schools are either fully government funded or a mix of government and privately funded.

Australia's system of government

Australia is a democratic country that has a mixed system of government. Australia's system of government is based on the British Westminster system. It is a:

- Representative democracy—Australians vote for members of parliament to make laws on their behalf.
- Constitutional monarchy—The King is Australia's head of state but does not have absolute power and is required to follow the [Australian Constitution](#). The King delegates his powers to the Governor-General.
- Federation of states—A federation is a group of states who have given some of their law-making powers to a national government and kept some law-making powers for local matters.

An important feature of Australia's system of government is how the power to make and manage laws is shared between the parliament, the government and the courts. This is called the [separation of powers](#).

Source: [Parliamentary Education Office](#)

To find out more about government, Catholic and independent schools within each state and territory, use the links in this table to view each of their websites.

Catholic

[Australian Capital Territory](#)

[New South Wales](#)

[Northern Territory](#)

[Queensland](#)

[South Australia](#)

[Tasmania](#)

[Victoria](#)

[Western Australia](#)

Government

[Australian Capital Territory](#)

[New South Wales](#)

[Northern Territory](#)

[Queensland](#)

[South Australia](#)

[Tasmania](#)

[Victoria](#)

[Western Australia](#)

Independent

[Australian Capital Territory](#)

[New South Wales](#)

[Northern Territory](#)

[Queensland](#)

[South Australia](#)

[Tasmania](#)

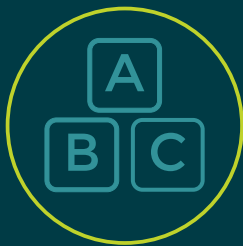
[Victoria](#)

[Western Australia](#)



Phases of schooling in Australia

Australian children and young people in each state and territory follow a similar school pathway and can pursue higher education beyond the non-compulsory school years. The education settings in Australia can be classified into different levels and age groups, as explained below.



Early childhood education

Australia views early childhood education as an essential part of a child's education. Although not compulsory, some states and territories provide free universal pre-schooling for children as young as the age of three. Early childhood education is offered across a broad range of settings, including kindergartens, childcare centres, special education settings, and government and non-government primary schools.



Primary education

The age at which students commence in primary school varies slightly between states and territories, though most Australian primary school students begin in Foundation (also known as Kindergarten, Prep, or Pre-primary) at the age of five or six. Students then progress through Years (sometimes referred to as Grades) 1 to 6, preparing to transition to secondary school at approximately 12 years old.



Secondary education

In Australia, students are required to complete Years 7 to 10 in all states and territories, making school compulsory until usually the age of 17, depending on location and the age at which they started. For those who continue their studies, they move into a phase of schooling known as senior secondary, where they engage in the necessary subjects and develop skills to enter employment, higher education or further studies. At the conclusion of the senior secondary phase, students receive an official Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, with the name of this certificate varying across states and territories.

An important aspect of the Australian education system is that students can access vocational education and training (VET) in their senior secondary years of schooling. VET provides students with an additional pathway to the traditional senior secondary learning environment and opens up a range of opportunities after students leave school.



Tertiary education

After completing secondary school, students can choose to attend tertiary education in Australia. There are two types of tertiary study: higher education and VET. Individuals choose which type of study to pursue depending on their career goals. Higher education programs typically involve more academic learning and can take longer to complete while VET courses usually involve more practical, hands-on learning and can be shorter in duration.

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

Teachers share a significant responsibility in preparing children and young people to lead successful and productive lives. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Teacher Standards) are a public statement of what constitutes quality teaching and set out what Australia's teachers are expected to know and be to do across four career stages; Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead.

Great teachers inspire and motivate students as they progress through their schooling and make decisions about their education, career, and life. In Australia, all teachers are required to meet the [Teacher Standards](#) at each stage of their career, to ensure that every student has an effective teacher.

The Teacher Standards were founded on extensive research, expert knowledge, and a review of pre-existing standards used by teacher regulatory authorities, employers and professional associations across Australia.

The Teacher Standards consist of seven Standards that advance through different career stages, from Graduate to Lead. They provide a framework for regulation of teachers across Australia and enable teachers to steer their own professional growth. The Teacher Standards are grouped into [three domains of teaching](#): professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional engagement.

Teacher regulation

In every state and territory, teachers need to be registered (or accredited) to be employed to teach in schools and many early childhood settings. While there is a nationally consistent approach to the registration of teachers in Australia, each state and territory has an established authority or agency (a teacher regulatory authority) responsible for the registration (licensing) of teachers.

The Teacher Standards underpin the accreditation of initial teacher education programs and teacher registration across the four career stages.

Australian teachers commence at the Graduate career stage and apply for provisional teacher registration with the teacher regulatory authority in the state or territory in which they wish to be employed. To be eligible for full registration as a teacher, you must be able to demonstrate that you have met the Teacher Standards at the Proficient career stage.

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE		PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT			PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Know students and how they learn	Know the content and how to teach it	Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning	Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments	Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning	Engage in professional learning	Engage professionally with colleagues, parent/carers and the community

The Teacher Standards also provide a framework for teachers to demonstrate and share classroom expertise through the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages. Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher (HALT) certification demonstrates leadership and commitment to excellence in teaching. It can help you progress professionally and gain valuable recognition for your skills while allowing you to continue teaching.

The [AITSL website](#) provides professional learning tools and resources aligned with the Teacher Standards to help you grow in your teaching practice.

Professional growth

All schools and sectors in Australia use the Teacher Standards to assess, provide feedback and improve teaching, including teachers who have trained overseas and have migrated from other countries.

Teachers can use the Teacher Standards to identify their strengths and areas for development to improve their performance, enabling them to maintain a high level of professionalism and strive for excellence in their teaching practice. The Teacher Standards are an essential tool in achieving this goal.

Teachers can use the Teacher Standards to reflect with their supervisor or mentor on their readiness for promotion or their suitability for a different role. The Teacher Standards provide a shared language for providing and receiving professional feedback to increase teacher effectiveness. The Teacher Standards have a transparent framework of career stages to guide teacher improvement in expertise and effectiveness.

Resource

[Module One: Quality teaching modules: Understand the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#)

To further understand the Teacher Standards, AITSL has created a quality teaching module that provides an overview. It provides information regarding the structure and purpose of the Teacher Standards and describes how they support the development of teaching practice to maximise impact on outcomes for learners.

Curriculum, assessment, and reporting

Standards 2 and 5 of the Teacher Standards require teachers in Australia to possess a deep knowledge of what they are teaching and best practice ways of assessing and reporting.

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

2

Know the content and how to teach it

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

5

Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Curriculum: Know the content and how to teach it

The [Australian Curriculum](#) is presented as a progression of learning from Foundation to Year 10. It clearly articulates to teachers, parents, students, and the wider community what is to be taught, as well as the quality of learning expected of young people as they progress through school.

The Australian Curriculum can be used flexibly by schools, according to jurisdictional and system policies, to develop programs that meet the educational needs of their students and that extend and challenge them. Schools implement the Australian Curriculum in ways that value teachers' professional knowledge, reflect local contexts and consider individual students' family, cultural and community backgrounds.

The Teacher Standards expect that teachers demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance, and structure of the curriculum content. This is in addition to teaching strategies appropriate to the subject area to enable engaging learning activities and programs.

Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Linked to [Standard 2](#), *'Know the content and how to teach it'*, teachers are expected to use curriculum, assessment, and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans. Australian teachers actively use student data and evidence of their learning to develop lessons that are tailored to individual student learning needs.

Australian teachers must demonstrate an understanding of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative, and summative approaches to assess student learning. These different types of assessments are crucial to providing appropriate feedback to students.

Providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning is a critical component of the role of the teacher to improve student outcomes. Frequent, targeted feedback to students based on their work is one of the important types of feedback. As part of providing feedback, more formal reporting is undertaken by teachers and shared with parents and carers.

Proficient teachers establish a range of strategies for reporting and ensure the keeping of accurate and reliable records of student achievement.

In line with [Standard 5](#), Australian teachers must understand assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning. Rich collaboration with your teaching team colleagues and discussion around data will lead to the modification of lesson plans and reviews to enhance student learning and the development of your practice. As part of those professional discussions, teachers must demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practices.

Reflection questions

The reflection questions below can be used as a guide to support you in knowing about curriculum, assessment, and reporting at your school:

- Will you use the Australian Curriculum or your state or territory curriculum to create lessons?
- Will you refer solely to the relevant curriculum website in your state or territory for lesson planning, or use school-adapted curriculum documentation?
- How many hours per school week are devoted to the study of each area of the curriculum (for example, mathematics, reading and writing)?
- What resources does your school have to deliver the curriculum and create lesson plans?
- How do you provide students with feedback at your school? Does your school have a feedback policy or reporting guidelines?
- What is your school's assessment calendar or schedule?
- What online assessment platforms does your school have access to?
- What major school or department tests do you need to be aware of? Note: The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy ([NAPLAN](#)) is mandatory for all schools to participate in, which occurs for Years 3, 5, 7, and 9.
- How are tests delivered in your school? Is there anyone to support with testing or train you in delivering them?
- Who are your team members, and when will you meet to discuss student data and moderate assessments?
- How do you work with team members to create lessons based on student data effectively?
- Does your school have a required way of storing student data?
- When will parents and carers receive formal reports on student progress?
- Will there be an allocated time, such as a conference, to meet with parents and carers and discuss their child's progress?

Resource list: Curriculum, assessment, and reporting

[AITSL – Illustrations of Practice](#)

AITSL's instructional videos, or Illustrations of Practice, showcase teaching practice from across Australia at the four career stages of the Teacher Standards. The following Illustrations of Practice show teachers implementing curriculum, assessment and reporting models.

Illustration of Practice:

[Assessment design criteria and moderation](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Using success criteria](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Backward design](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Using data to improve learning programs](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Learning through feedback](#)

[AITSL – In the Classroom: Albanvale Primary School](#)

Watch an expert teacher's complete lesson with commentary, where she demonstrates gauging student understanding through the use of formative assessment and providing feedback.

[AITSL – Feedback resources](#)

Use these evidence-based, practical tools to introduce or enhance feedback in your setting.

[ACARA – Implementation of the Australian Curriculum](#)

Further information on how the Australian Curriculum is utilised by the Australian states, territories, systems and sectors, with links to each.

Classroom management

In Australia, classroom teachers must create and maintain a supportive and safe learning environment for students. To support student participation and prevent classroom behavioural issues, specific proactive student engagement approaches are utilised, including building relationships of mutual respect and understanding individual identity and culture.

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

4

Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

[Standard 4](#), 'Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments', of the Teacher Standards, outlines how teachers must demonstrate effective classroom management and student engagement. Regardless of which career stage teachers are in, Australian teachers must demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement. Part of successfully engaging students in their learning is effectively organising classroom activities and providing clear directions.

Information and communications technology (ICT) capability is an important component of the Australian Curriculum. ICT is regularly used in Australian classrooms and requires active supervision by teachers to ensure student safety and active participation in their learning. It is a requirement of Australian teachers to incorporate ICT into lesson plans not only to teach students skills by using them, but also to build engagement in their learning. However, with the increased use of technology comes the need to teach students about online safety and the risks that may come with its use. Australian teachers must establish an understanding of the relevant issues and the strategies available to support the safe, responsible, and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.

It is necessary in Australia for teachers, alongside school leadership and student wellbeing staff, to build supports in school that assist students who exhibit unacceptable behaviours and teach them more appropriate ones. Despite a teacher's best efforts, challenging behaviours may still arise in the classroom. When this occurs, it is expected that teachers demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour. It is therefore essential to ensure that you are aware of effective strategies and relevant policies that support students' wellbeing and safety working within school and/or system, curriculum, and legislative requirements.

Reflection questions

Use this as a checklist to ensure you are well-informed about teaching, pedagogy and classroom management in Australian classrooms:

- What information or resources can you utilise to learn about your cohort of students? For example, personalised learning plans (PLPs), student files or discussions with coordinators.
- Are the majority of interactions between yourself and your students positive?
- Do you have orderly routines and rules for students?
- Do you hold your students to high standards?
- Does the school have a proactive approach to student behaviour and wellbeing? Will there be training on this?
- What are the school's ICT, mobile phone, and personal technology policies? What should you be looking out for? For example, what websites are they allowed to access while at school?
- Who can assist you with managing challenging student behaviour?
- What do you do if there is an emergency? What constitutes behaviour which requires immediate support? Who can you contact for immediate support?
- What documentation is required to monitor positive student behaviour, and how is it reported to parents?
- What is the process to alert parents of negative behaviour in the classroom, and can these be successful conversations? Is there anyone at school who can support you with this?

Resource list: Classroom management

AITSL – Illustrations of Practice

The following Illustrations of Practice show teachers at different career stages using classroom management strategies.

Illustration of Practice:

[Creating routines](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Establishing classroom expectations](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Responding to challenging behaviours](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Workable routines](#)

[AITSL – In the Classroom:
St Anthony’s Catholic Primary School](#)

See an expert teacher’s lesson, as well as their commentary, on how to successfully communicate both verbally and non-verbally with students to enable full participation and manage classroom activities.

[AITSL – Classroom management:
Contemporary approaches and
international comparisons](#)

This Spotlight provides an evidence summary on research-based classroom management, with links to resources.

[AERO – Classroom management:
Managing the classroom to maximise
learning](#)

The Australian Education Research Organisation’s compilation of research and strategies into effective classroom management, with videos demonstrating practice.

[e Safety Commissioner](#)

Online safety resources and training for teachers, schools and communities.



Teaching and pedagogy

Australian teachers must have a deep understanding of how students best learn and use current research to inform their teaching practices. Standard 3, 'Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning', outlines the requirements for Australian teachers.

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

3

Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

As a migrant teacher, it is important to note that each education setting in Australia can hold different views on pedagogy. Make sure you are aware of your school or setting's instructional model and its pedagogical practices. There is a wide range of evidence-based teaching strategies to access in Australia. It is expected that teachers select the appropriate approach for individual students, at the right time, for each lesson to be its most effective.

Teachers also need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance, and structure of the content in the subject area they are employed in. Regardless of year level or subject, the Australian Curriculum is integrated to include cross-curriculum areas in all subjects. This means that as a teacher, you are expected to know strategies for teaching literacy, numeracy and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in all subject areas, including science, physical education, and the arts.

Teachers use the most up-to-date national, state or territory curriculum to organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence, both independently and as part of a team. Diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment data will be used, along with knowledge of student learning, to adapt lesson content and plan for effective teaching. Ongoing evaluation of teaching programs and teaching strategies implemented in the classroom is crucial to improving student learning, and discussions with teaching teams will help highlight adjustments to be made in future lesson creation.

Reflection questions

Use this as a checklist for staying across teaching and pedagogy in Australian classrooms:

- What pedagogies and instructional models does the school use to deliver the curriculum?
- What should your weekly class timetable look like? Who makes decisions regarding the timetable?
- Who can you ask for support with lesson planning? What is the process for lesson planning? What is the expected level of detail? How should it be recorded or evidenced?
- Are you part of a [professional learning community](#)?
- How will you know if you are meeting school and student expectations?
- Will you have a teaching mentor? Could you be assigned one?

Resource list: Teaching and pedagogy

AITSL – Illustrations of Practice

These videos include a range of different pedagogical approaches, so teachers can take away real learnings to apply to their own teaching.

Illustration of Practice:

[Guided reading](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Achieving explicit learning goals](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Senior secondary maths – Cardijn College](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Unpacking teaching strategies](#)

AITSL – In the Classroom:

[St. Augustine's Primary School:](#)

Watch a complete lesson with teacher commentary from an experienced teacher and see how the teacher uses research-backed pedagogy to teach a literacy lesson effectively.

AERO – Practice Hub

The Australian Education Research Organisation has compiled resources and key practices for teachers to rapidly improve learning outcomes for students.

Student wellbeing

Student wellbeing is considered a cornerstone element of teaching Australian students. Schools and communities value strong relationships and prioritise connections between teachers and students as a foundation for academic success.

The [Australian Curriculum's General Capabilities, Personal and Social Capability](#) strand sets out skills in four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management and relationship skills.

As part of ensuring student wellbeing, Australian schools encourage student and parent voice, student leadership, and participation. Student voice acknowledges that students have unique perspectives on learning, teaching, and schooling and should have the opportunity to actively shape their own education. Student voice involves students actively participating in their schools, communities, and the education system, contributing to decision-making processes and collectively influencing outcomes by putting forward their views, concerns and ideas.

Parents and carers also actively communicate aspirations and desires for their child's education, including their child's wellbeing, and expect teachers to be mindful of their child as an individual. This may or may not be parallel to the understanding of the dynamic between teachers, students and parents or carers in other countries.

Teachers will need to utilise strategies that support students' wellbeing and safety working within school and/or system, curriculum, and legislative requirements. In addition to this, all teachers in Australia are what is called a '[mandatory reporter](#)', meaning under law, they are required to report known or suspected cases of abuse and neglect. All employers will hold annual compulsory training on child safety and mandatory reporting, including the policies and procedures teachers must comply with as part of working with children.

Reflection questions

Use this as a checklist to ensure you know everything about student wellbeing and how to meet their needs:

- Who is available to support you with meeting the needs of all students in your classroom?
- How do you support students emotionally and socially within your classroom?
- Do you encourage student voice and allow opportunities within lessons for students to collaborate and discuss?
- Have you completed all required annual child safety modules and training?
- Who should you report to if you are concerned about one of your students' wellbeing or safety?
- Do you have any specific wellbeing concerns about individual students or cohorts?
- Who is available within your school to address student and parent or carer concerns?
- Does your school or system use a 'trauma-informed' practice or program?

Resource list: Student wellbeing

[AITSL – Illustrations of Practice](#)

The following Illustrations of Practice highlight teachers actively involved in promoting the wellbeing of their students.

Illustration of Practice:

[Peer Mediation](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Circle Time](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Developing Positive Behaviours](#)

[AITSL – Spotlight:](#)

[Wellbeing in Australian schools](#)

This Spotlight addresses learner wellbeing and examines how it is defined, why it is important, and how it can be measured. It also provides resources on supporting the wellbeing of children and young people.

[AITSL – In the Classroom: Cardijn College](#)

Watch an example of a positive and supportive classroom that fully engages all students, with commentary from the teacher.

[Student Wellbeing Hub](#)

Resources to build safe, inclusive and connected school communities. Includes professional learning, live webinars and information.

Differentiation, disability, and diversity

All students in the classroom will possess varying strengths and experience different challenges. In Australia, teachers are required to teach students at their individual level of need.

Differentiation

The Teacher Standards [Focus Area 1.5](#) outlines that teachers are required to use evidence-based strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities. This includes students classified as gifted and talented, and those working below the standard expected at their year level. Effective differentiation takes place when teachers adjust aspects of content, process and product in direct response to a student's readiness, interests and learning profile. Teachers may also modify the learning environment in direct response to a student's learning profile.

Teachers must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social, and intellectual development alongside the individual characteristics of students to understand how learning may be affected. No matter where a student's achievements are in the range of capabilities within the classroom, teachers are required to set learning goals that provide attainable challenges.

Disability

In order for students with disability to participate and thrive in their learning environment, it is essential that they feel safe and that their education setting is inclusive and welcoming. Inclusive learning values prioritise respect, empathy, openness, curiosity, trust, fairness, and accountability. Alongside teaching strategies to support participation, Australian teachers must have knowledge of the legislative requirements surrounding students with disability and, in accordance with the Teacher Standards [Focus Area 1.6](#) utilise strategies to support the full participation of students with disability.

The [Australian Disability Standards for Education](#) clarify the obligations of education and training providers under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The Disability Standards for Education require that all Australian schools ensure that students with disability are able to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disabilities. Schools and teachers are required to make or provide '[reasonable adjustments](#)' for students where necessary to enable their access and participation. Furthermore, schools must provide reasonable adjustments in consultation with the student and/or their parents, carers and associates¹; for most students, this means their parents, guardians, or carers.

¹ An associate of the student includes a relative; carer; spouse; another person who is living with the person on a genuine domestic basis; and another person who is in a business, sporting, or recreational relationship with the person (DSE 1.4).

Diversity

Australia is a diverse and multicultural country; therefore, there will be students with different learning strengths and needs which arise from the range of linguistic, cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. It is common for students who are recent arrivals to Australia to have limited English language or have never experienced Australian schooling. Furthermore, there may be planned activities and lessons that not all students can attend for financial or religious reasons, such as sports days or excursions. As a teacher in Australia, you will need to identify strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in all activities, regardless of students' diverse characteristics and set learning goals that provide achievable challenges.

In addition, a broad knowledge and understanding of the culture, cultural identity, and linguistic background of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are needed by Australian teachers regardless of their school or setting. Support inclusive participation by interweaving elements of the culture and history where appropriate and respect the local language or [Aboriginal English](#) which may be spoken by your students.

Reflection questions

Use this as a checklist to ensure you know everything about meeting the range of abilities and rich diversity of students within Australian classrooms:

- What are your go-to strategies for differentiating each lesson to meet your students' abilities? How do you challenge students or assist students who need something extra?
- What is your school's approach to documenting student adjustments and individual learning plans?
- Who is available to support you with meeting the needs of all students in your classroom?
- Are you aware of all the language backgrounds and cultures within your classroom?
- How do you form meaningful relationships with students and their families in order to provide consultation and collaboration within adjustments?

Resource list: Differentiation, disability, and diversity

[AITSL – Illustrations of Practice](#)

The following Illustrations of Practice highlight teachers practising inclusive teaching practices for students of diverse language backgrounds and those with a disability.

Illustration of Practice:

[Literacy teaching strategies for diverse language backgrounds](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Supporting participation for students with disability](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Student engagement](#)

[AITSL – In the Classroom: Seymour College](#)

Watch a complete lesson and commentary from an experienced teacher and see how he differentiates to meet students at their level of need.

[AITSL – Creating an inclusive classroom culture](#)

A fact sheet of the values which underpin an inclusive and comfortable learning setting where all students can thrive.

[AITSL – Spotlight: Inclusive education](#)

This Spotlight provides a synthesis of the current research into inclusive education, with links to resources for teachers to assess students and grow their own professional knowledge.

[Australian Curriculum – Student diversity](#)

Information on how the Australian Curriculum can be adapted to suit the needs of gifted and talented students, multicultural students, and students with disabilities.

[NCCD – Resources and tools](#)

Tools and resources to help implement the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) model and illustrations of practice to see experienced Australian educators in action.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

All Australian teachers, whether they are teaching in a city, regional or rural setting, must demonstrate a broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and languages.

The Teacher Standards require all teachers in Australia to understand the influence of culture, cultural identity, and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. As a teacher in Australia, it is important to understand the contributing factors that impact engagement and achievement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Gaining knowledge of culture and language, embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and ways of learning into curriculum and pedagogy, and promoting anti-racism in schools is crucial to teaching students with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

As a newly arrived teacher to Australia, you may wish to make Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 of the Teacher Standards a first point of professional growth, as they are related to the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages. The resources listed below provide a starting point, but you can also seek support from your school leaders to find out and understand what connections the school already has with local Elders and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Engaging in professional learning will further benefit your teaching practice and Indigenous cultural responsiveness.

Reflection questions

Use this as a checklist to ensure you know everything about meeting the range of abilities and rich diversity of students within Australian classrooms:

- What is your knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and languages?
- How do culture, cultural identity, and linguistic background influence students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds?
- How can you show respect within your classroom and in your words for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, regardless of whether you have students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds in your classroom?
- Who is available to support you with meeting the needs of all students in your classroom?
- What do I know about the history of the area where I work?
- Who are the Traditional Owners of the land where I work?
- Are there existing relationships between the school and local Elders or community groups? How might I forge these relationships?
- What are the cultural identity and linguistic backgrounds of my students?
- How can I learn more about and recognise what my students already know?
- Are there cultural differences that influence the way my students act or relate to others?

Resource list: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

[AITSL – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education resources](#)

AITSL has a range of resources providing advice and support in teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, languages, and cultures, including various Illustrations of Practice. AITSL also provides an intercultural development self-reflection tool to identify areas of professional growth and provides advice for teachers in remote settings.

[AITSL – How can I successfully communicate and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and carers?](#)

The article describes how working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators is an effective way to engage with the community, build relationships with the families of students, and engage parents and carers in their children's education.

[AITSL – Respect, Relationships, Reconciliation](#)

Developed in close collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the 3Rs (Respect, Relationships, Reconciliation) provide a collection of study resources for pre-service teachers, which may be helpful for overseas trained teachers.

[AIATSIS – Indigenous Language Map of Australia](#)

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) has compiled a map that represents the language, social or nation groups of Aboriginal Australia. It is a useful starting point in identifying whose country you are on and the language, culture, and history of the Traditional Owners.

[Reconciliation Australia – Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education](#)

Narragunnawali supports schools and early learning services in Australia to develop environments that foster a high level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. The site provides curriculum resources as well as professional learning.

[UNSW Sydney – Indigenous Terminology](#)

This guide clarifies appropriate language use for the history, society, naming, and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Teachers use language to communicate ideas and need to be mindful of expressing discrimination and prejudice within their language.

[Welcome to Country app](#)

An app supported by the Australian Government, which teaches its users the stories and cultures of the land in which they are currently on and sends notifications to the users when crossing into a new Aboriginal country.



Engaging in professional learning

Australian teachers engage in professional learning to increase their positive impact on student learning outcomes.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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Engage in professional learning

Teacher professional learning is an ongoing cycle that begins with schools identifying the educational outcomes they value for their students. Effective professional learning leads to improved teacher knowledge, skills, and practice.

[Standard 6](#) of the Teacher Standards, '*Engage in professional learning*', details the importance of attending and applying knowledge gained from professional learning into teaching.

Teachers need to demonstrate an understanding of the rationale for continued professional learning to target their own professional needs and also to meet their individual school's priorities. To assist with this, Australian schools often have built-in structures such as:

- Coaching cycles implemented by experienced teachers, mentors, or outside professionals. Coaching can take on a few different formats, from observation and modelling to co-teaching. See the [AITSL website](#) or the resource list below for more information.
- Leadership observations or learning walks, where school leaders are focused on whole-school alignment or best practice techniques.

- Whole-school (staff) meetings or professional learning. Many schools have this time built into their weekly operating hours, and teachers are required to attend. These meetings are an opportunity for leadership to share whole-school goals, initiatives to be implemented in every classroom, or professional learning as a whole school (staff).
- Teaching teams or professional learning communities. Depending on the size of the school, leadership may have carefully formed teaching teams with a range of experience. There may be a team leader or experienced teacher who helps guide the team in performing school functions, creating lesson plans, and assisting new teachers with everyday questions.

Professional learning is closely related to teacher performance and development processes within each school. Performance and development processes provide teachers with meaningful feedback, so they can reflect and improve their practice and obtain support to improve and develop their skills. All Australian teachers must demonstrate initiative to grow in their teaching craft and develop their skills to increase student outcomes regardless of career stage.

Reflection questions

Use this as a checklist to ensure you have everything you need to know about engaging in professional learning:

- Are you receptive and open to feedback to improve your teaching?
- Which areas of the Teacher Standards could you improve in or seek professional development for?
- Who is available at your school to assist with professional learning?
- Where can you find external professional learning opportunities, and has your school made you aware of how to attend these?
- Where will you log your yearly hours of professional learning, and what are the time and recording requirements of your state or territory teacher regulatory authority or employer?
- What is your school's process for evaluating the performance and development of teachers?

Resource list: Professional learning

[AITSL – Quality Teaching Modules](#)

These professional learning modules are interactive and self-directed to guide users through the Teacher Standards. They explain effective approaches to identifying areas of professional development using the Teacher Standards and ways to demonstrate proficiency in each domain.

[AITSL – Improving Teacher Professional Learning](#)

The High-Quality Professional Learning Cycle supports teachers and school leaders in tracking their professional learning journey. The webpages provide information on the Learning Cycle, professional networks, building collaborative professional associations, and links to resources such as professional learning guides and video case studies.

[AITSL – Teacher Self-Assessment Tool](#)

The Teacher Self-Assessment Tool (Teacher SAT) assists teachers in reflecting on their practice against the Teacher Standards in order to identify areas of growth to address with professional learning.

[AITSL – Illustrations of Practice](#)

The following Illustrations of Practice show teachers at different career stages implementing engaging with and implementing their professional learning.

Illustration of Practice:

[Implementing professional learning](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Learning Walks](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Improving professional practice](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Seeking professional learning](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Modelling numeracy lessons](#)

[AITSL – Classroom Observation Strategies](#)

Videos and information on different coaching and observation approaches, including learning walks, instructional coaching and rounds, leadership and peer observation and lesson study.

[AITSL – The Essential Guide to Professional Learning: Collaboration](#)

This Essential Guide explores the importance of collaborative professional learning and a school culture of collaboration.



Engaging with colleagues, parents and carers, and the community

Teachers are highly esteemed professionals in Australia. The Teacher Standards outline the professional requirements in [Standard 7](#), '*Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers, and the community*'.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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Engage in professional learning

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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Engage professionally with colleagues, parent/carers and the community

Colleagues

All schools will vary in how they encourage collaboration between colleagues to support teachers to improve their practice. In line with [Standard 6](#), '*Engage in professional learning*', it is a requirement that all teachers seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and other teachers to improve teaching practices. This requires daily collaboration and a culture of growth and teamwork. As a teacher in Australia, you will be working alongside a variety of other professionals and teachers in varying roles.

Below is a list of professional roles within schools. Please note, role titles may differ across different systems, sectors and schools.

- **Principal:** The head or director of a school, sometimes referred to as the Headmaster or Dean.
- **Assistant Principal:** Reports directly to the principal and assists them in their responsibilities in their absence. Sometimes referred to as the Vice Principal, Deputy Principal, or Associate Principal.
- **Phase Leader:** A highly-skilled classroom practitioner who assists in improving the school's delivery of the curriculum and teaching of a certain learning area within the school. Sometimes referred to as a Curriculum Area Leader.

- **Learning Specialists or Instructional Coaches:** Highly-skilled teachers who deliver demonstration lessons and coach other teachers in curriculum delivery, assessment, and lesson creation.
- **Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers (HALTs):** Recognised in some systems and sectors as performing at the Highly Accomplished or Lead career stage of the Teacher Standards and having completed a process to gain national certification as a HALT. These teachers may or may not take on extra responsibilities within the school. Systems or sectors which do not offer HALT certification may have alternative recognition processes for expert teachers, with an alternate role title.
- **Classroom Teacher:** The person who holds primary responsibility for the learning of every student in their class.
- **Learning Support Teacher:** A fully qualified teacher that focuses on teaching small groups of students in pull-out lessons to catch them up to grade level. Sometimes referred to as an Interventionist or Intervention Teacher. They may also have responsibility for monitoring the school's compliance with the NCCD and inclusive practices for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.
- **Learning Support Officer:** A diverse range of roles depending on the school, which range from administrative support to direct student and teaching support. May also be referred to as a Teacher's Aide, Teaching Assistant, or Mentor.
- **External staff:** Depending on the school setting and the makeup of the students in your classroom, external providers may deliver services in the school. External staff may include Occupational Therapists, Speech or Language Pathologists, or other allied health professionals. In addition, some schools employ consultants for school improvement or allow private tutors or external music teachers on campus during school hours if requested by parents.

Parents and carers

Australian parents and carers have a high level of involvement in their child's education, and as a teacher, you will be expected to engage with parents and carers using a broad range of strategies to involve them in the educative process.

Families play an essential role as the first educators of children; therefore, ongoing, active engagement of parents, carers, families and communities has a significant impact on a child's success at school. Teachers and schools can support parent and carer engagement in learning by building partnerships to connect learning at home and school. While working with parents and carers, it is crucial to understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively, and confidentially. Resources to support with this can be found below.

Community

The role of community will vary depending on the location of your school, as well as the sector, and school leaders will encourage ties to the local area. Community plays an important role within regional and remote settings, particularly for active engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of a local community. Senior members, such as Elders, may collaborate with teachers and leaders in learning projects and community events. Within the Catholic sector or in other religious schools, the connection to the local diocese or parish and surrounding schools and neighbourhoods is often part of a school's ethos.

Reflection questions

Use this as a checklist to ensure you know about successfully engaging with colleagues, parents and carers, and the community:

- Who are the other adults in your classroom? How do you work alongside and collaborate effectively with these professionals?
- How do you engage parents and carers in their child's learning?
- How easy do you find talking to parents or carers? How could you build this skill?
- Have you been involved with all families in your classroom? Is there any student whose parents or carers you haven't contacted this year?
- How do you communicate sensitive matters to parents and carers, such as challenging student behaviour or learning challenges?
- Who can help you engage parents and carers at your school?
- Who are the other relevant individuals or groups in your school community?

Resource list: Colleagues and the school community

[AITSL – Illustrations of Practice](#)

The following Illustrations of Practice show teachers at different career stages effectively engaging with their colleagues, parents, and the community.

Illustration of Practice:

[Engaging a parental community](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Two-way communication](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Engaging parents in student learning](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Collaborative meetings](#)

Illustration of Practice:

[Yarn Meeting](#)

[AITSL – The Essential Guide to Professional Learning: Collaboration](#)

This Essential Guide explores the importance of collaborative professional learning as well as a school culture of collaboration.

[ACSSO – Family engagement in school](#)

This section of the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) website provides tools and links which support family engagement practices in schools and how families encourage learning at home and in the community.

[Catholic School Parents Australia – Gearing Up for Parent Engagement in Student Learning](#)

A toolkit of 22 modules was developed for families and schools to make the transition into primary and secondary school a great experience for children and young people.

[Australian Government Department of Education – Parent Engagement Research and Resources](#)

A compilation of links to key resources and research material to support parent engagement.

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