Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia

Standards and Procedures

Acknowledgement of Country

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

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Preamble

These Standards and Procedures set out the requirements that an initial teacher education program must meet to be nationally accredited. They draw on the expertise and vision of teacher educators, employers of teachers, those in the teaching profession, in schools and early childhood settings and the broader education community, and embody the ongoing sector-wide commitment to driving improvement in teacher education.

These Standards and Procedures reflect high expectations of initial teacher education and the interest of all Australian governments in maximising our collective investment in the development of pre-service and graduate teachers. They also represent a collective sense of accountability and acknowledge that evaluation of initial teacher education is a shared responsibility. Quality assurance of teacher education programs is essential to ensure every program is preparing classroom ready teachers with the skills they need to make a positive impact on school student learning.

They are designed to ensure that all graduates of initial teacher education meet the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* at the Graduate career stage. This is the foundation of the accreditation process.

These Standards demonstrate an approach to accrediting initial teacher education programs that is based on an assessment of their impact, drawing on two distinct but related types of evidence: **evidence of pre-service teacher performance**, that is evidence that is collected from within a program in relation to a pre-service teacher's performance; and **evidence of graduate outcomes**, that is evidence that is collected following completion of a program in relation to the achievements of a program's graduates.

These Standards and Procedures include processes and structures that ensure a rigorous and nationally consistent accreditation process. They are supported by supplementary materials that provide clarity both to providers submitting applications and to panel members assessing them on what it means to meet the Program Standards and how evidence of meeting the standards can best be presented.

It is jurisdictional teacher regulatory authorities (Authorities)[1] who actively lead and implement these national Standards and Procedures in their local context. AITSL will collaborate with the Authorities to periodically evaluate the accreditation decision-making process and initiate and lead activity to support nationally consistent assessment of evidence supplied against the Program Standards and the Graduate career stage of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*.

In addition to these national Standards and Procedures, providers will need to ensure that programs comply with current threshold Higher Education Standards as established by the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act 2011) and the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act 2000).[2]

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1 While in most jurisdictions the accreditation functions will be undertaken by the teacher regulatory authorities, jurisdictions may choose to make other arrangements, including cooperative arrangements with other regulatory authorities. In this document, the teacher regulatory authority or other body performing this function in a jurisdiction is referred to as 'the Authority'.

2 As amended or superseded from time to time.

Principles for national accreditation

These Standards and Procedures for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs and their application are informed by eight principles, many of which were articulated in the report *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers*, written in 2014 by the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group to provide advice on how initial teacher education programs could be improved.[3]

1 Impact

The accreditation process relies on evidence about the program's impact. Evidence of impact is drawn from both pre-service teacher performance and graduate outcomes.

2 Evidence-based

Evidence must underpin all elements of initial teacher education, from the design and delivery of programs to the teaching practices taught within programs. Evidence is the basis on which panels make accreditation recommendations.

3 Rigour

A relentless focus on rigour across all elements of the accreditation process is vital in assuring robust and nationally consistent decisions, as well as the quality of programs and their graduates.

4 Continuous improvement

Accreditation contributes to the improvement of the quality of initial teacher education and consequently of teaching and learning in Australia. The ongoing cycle of review and re-accreditation will provide assurance of graduate teacher quality and build public confidence in the profession.

5 Flexibility, diversity and innovation

Accreditation encourages the capacity of providers to be innovative in the delivery of programs to meet the diverse needs of students and the profession, as long as the program can demonstrate a positive impact.

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3   Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (2014), Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers, p.xii.

6 Partnerships

National accreditation is built around partnerships involving shared responsibilities and obligations among initial teacher education providers, education settings, teachers, employers, and Authorities and a shared commitment to improve initial teacher education and work in partnership to positively affect student learning and graduate outcomes.

7 Transparency

The accreditation process requires transparency across all elements of initial teacher education, from entrant selection to program outcomes. This results in publicly available data that is valid and comparable, as well as clarity for pre-service teachers about what to expect from initial teacher education and, in turn, what is expected of them throughout their course.

8 Research

Accreditation generates and relies upon a strong research base that informs program design and delivery, and informs the continual improvement of teacher education programs by providers.

Elements of national accreditation

The national accreditation system for initial teacher education programs has three integrated elements:

- the Graduate Teacher Standards, which are the Graduate career stage of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, and make explicit the knowledge, skills and attributes expected of graduates of nationally accredited programs

- the Program Standards, which make explicit what is required of high-quality initial teacher education programs, that give confidence the Graduate Teacher Standards will be achieved

- the Accreditation Procedures, which set out a nationally consistent process to accredit programs, including the establishment and composition of accreditation panels, assessment of programs by these panels, reporting accreditation decisions, and mechanisms for achieving national consistency.

National accreditation system

The national accreditation system focuses on program development, program delivery and program outcomes and improvement. The accreditation system places importance on the demonstration of impact and continuous improvement throughout and at the end of an accreditation period. It comprises two accreditation stages and incorporates annual reporting.

The Program Standards apply to both accreditation stage one and stage two; however, stage two includes a focus on evidence of outcomes and continuous improvement.[4] Accreditation at stage one and stage two will be granted under the relevant regulatory scheme.

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4   Program Standard 6.3 is the exception to this as it only applies at the end of an accreditation period.

Accreditation stage one

Accreditation stage one applies to new programs[5] entering the accreditation system for the first time and focuses on a provider's plan for demonstrating impact.

Providers submitting programs for this stage provide:

- evidence against the Program Standards
- mapping where in the program the Graduate Teacher Standards are taught, practised and assessed
- a plan for demonstrating impact.

The plan for demonstrating impact is developed by providers and describes the pre-service teacher performance and graduate outcomes measures that will be collected, reported and relied upon to demonstrate the impact of a program during and at the end of an accreditation period. The plan provides an opportunity for a provider to develop and answer questions that are especially relevant to improving that program. The requirements of the plan are described in Program Standards 6.2 and 6.3. Once approved, the plan will guide a provider's collection of evidence.

Accreditation stage two

The focus of accreditation stage two is on the provider's interpretation of the evidence they have collected on program impact. This evidence is specifically in relation to the pre-service and graduate teacher outcome measures described, at the commencement of the accreditation period, in the plan for demonstrating impact. Programs are required to achieve accreditation stage two following a period determined at the time of accreditation stage one, not exceeding five years.

Providers submitting programs for this stage provide:

- an analysis and interpretation of their evidence, as outlined in their plan, for demonstrating impact in relation to pre-service teacher performance and graduate outcomes
- a description of program changes and planned improvements and the evidence base for these
- evidence of adherence to the Program Standards
- findings from participation in nationally agreed cross-Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) benchmarking activities.

Once programs have been accredited at stage two, they are required to continue to report annually and to provide a subsequent application addressing the elements required at stage two. Subsequent applications are required within a time period determined by their Authority, using a risk-based approach, at the time of accreditation stage two. The time period for the subsequent accreditation will not exceed five years.

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5 Transitional arrangements will apply for the period 2016–17 for all existing initial teacher education programs. Providers can seek further advice from their Authority.

Annual reporting

Accredited programs will report annually to their Authority on:

- data as identified in the plan for demonstrating impact

- changes to the program

- nationally required data to contribute to national and/or jurisdictional collections and for compliance and accountability purposes

- additional data/information requested by the Authority.

Accreditation system diagram
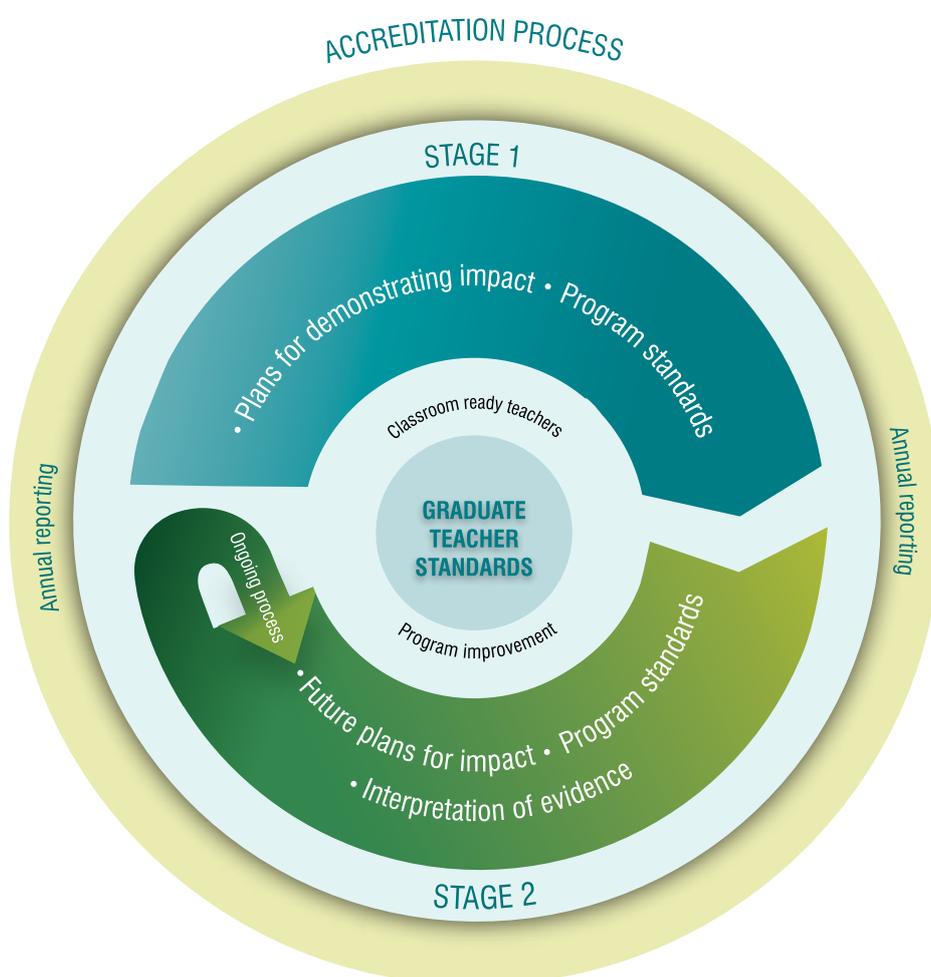
Explanatory information

This explanatory information provides further clarification around the requirement outlined in the following Standards and Procedures for initial teacher education providers to submit and interpret evidence of program impact (Program Standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4).

Scope of evidence of impact

For each program submitted for accreditation, the provider will be expected to present evidence of that program's impact. Specifically, accreditation applications will include evidence in relation to pre-service teacher performance and graduate outcomes (Program Standard 1). Pre-service teacher performance relates to evidence that is collected from within a program while graduate outcomes relates to evidence that is collected following completion of a program about the achievements of that program's graduates.

Evidence of impact in the accreditation system

At the beginning of each accreditation period (both stage one and stage two) providers submit, as part of their accreditation application, their plan for demonstrating impact. The plan is developed by the provider and describes the specific evidence about a program that will be collected, analysed and reported. It is designed to demonstrate the impact of a program, and to answer questions that a provider determines to be especially relevant to improving the program, for example evaluating an innovative element introduced into the program, or the performance of graduates employed in particular types of settings. Evidence presented should be sufficiently robust and relevant to shed light on these questions.

The plan must also articulate how a program's impact will be demonstrated through evidence related to the performance of its pre-service teachers within their program and the outcomes of its graduates and/or graduate cohorts following completion.

Providers will be expected to report annually (Program Standard 6.4) to their Authority against the data elements and processes set out in their plan for demonstrating impact. The annual reporting of data against the plan will contribute to the evidence required at the end of an accreditation period.

At the end of an accreditation period, as part of the subsequent accreditation application, a provider then evaluates and interprets the evidence set out in the plan for demonstrating impact and collected throughout the accreditation period. The interpretation of evidence is used to demonstrate the impact of the program and to support any proposed changes to the program.

Program Standards 6.2 and 6.3 outline the specific evidence requirements that must be addressed both in the plan for demonstrating impact and as part of a provider's interpretation of evidence at the end of the accreditation period. These requirements cover:

• evidence of pre-service teacher performance which requires a provider to collect, analyse and report aggregated data in relation to key assessments from within their program, including assessments that demonstrate graduates have met the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, including demonstrating pre-service teachers' positive impact on student learning

• evidence of graduate outcomes which requires a provider to collect, analyse and report on a range of selected outcomes data that demonstrate their graduates are operating as effective classroom ready teachers.

Teaching performance assessment

A key element of evidence of impact in relation to pre-service teacher performance is the requirement for providers to include within their programs assessment of classroom[6] teaching performance, across a sequence of lessons that reflects the range of teaching practice. All pre-service teachers must undertake and reach the required standard on this assessment to graduate (Program Standard 1.2). These types of assessments typically include pre-service teachers' planning, teaching and assessment across a sequence of lessons. Teaching performance can usually be demonstrated via assessment artefacts, students' work samples, examples of feedback to students, evidence of students' enhanced learning through these artefacts, and commentaries on videos of classroom teaching.

Program Standard 1 requires that a teaching performance assessment be situated in a classroom environment, to demonstrate a range of teaching practices, and that the assessment is valid, reliable and moderated. In other words, the assessment must:

- assess the actual practices of teaching and be aligned to the Graduate Teacher Standards

- be assessed in a reliable and consistent manner against clear and measurable achievement levels to ensure all pre-service teachers are robustly assessed

- include a moderation process to give assurance of the consistency of assessment decisions.

Reliable and consistent assessment of the teaching performance assessment is a critical element of ensuring a robust assessment framework in initial teacher education – a framework that will give confidence in the readiness of graduates. As such, in order to demonstrate achievement of Program Standard 1.2, a provider must show how the teaching performance assessment aligns with the Graduate Teacher Standards and that adequate processes and training are in place to ensure consistent decision-making and inter-rater reliability.

An expert advisory group, comprising experts in: standard setting; initial teacher education delivery and accreditation expertise; and assessment, including monitoring the reliability, validity, and fidelity of assessments, will provide advice to relevant providers and Authorities on whether all teaching performance assessments used in initial teacher education programs meet Program Standard 1.2.

This requirement, which is mandatory for all pre-service teachers to successfully complete, ensures that all graduates from accredited programs have demonstrated that they meet the Graduate Teacher Standards in a classroom setting. Providers may choose to develop their own teaching performance assessment or work with other providers to develop a common assessment. The teaching performance assessment may be one mechanism for demonstrating that a pre-service teacher has shown an impact on student learning. Where the teaching performance assessment is not used for this purpose, providers must indicate where impact on school student learning is assessed, and provide data on the results.

An accreditation application at the commencement of an accreditation period should outline how a provider will demonstrate, by the end of that accreditation period, evidence of the validity and reliability of the teaching performance assessment using methods such as the results of moderation processes, and studies of the reliability and validity of the assessment.

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6   In these Standards and Procedures, the term 'classroom' and 'school' may include, where appropriate, other educational settings where accredited programs of learning occur.

Demonstrating impact on student learning

It is a fundamental expectation that every teacher education graduate will have met the Graduate Teacher Standards, succeeded on the teaching performance assessment and demonstrated a positive impact on student learning. Equally, it is expected that graduates will continue to have a positive impact throughout their teaching career. It is acknowledged there are measurement challenges in assessing teachers' impact on student learning, but it is expected that improved mechanisms will develop over time, given the importance of measuring this impact.

The focus on impact does not imply that pre-service and graduate teachers must show evidence of student growth on national or jurisdictional standardised tests. Rather the focus is on demonstrating the impact that a pre-service/graduate teacher has on student learning.

Where individual level data on impact cannot be aggregated, reporting evidence should include data at the cohort level and/or case studies of a sample of pre-service/graduate teachers. This type of data collection can be included in the plan for demonstrating impact at the beginning of the accreditation period.

National Program Standards

Application of the Program Standards

The following Program Standards apply to both accreditation stage one and stage two, although the evidence that is available will differ between the stages.

Standard 1: Program outcomes

1.1 Program design and assessment processes identify where each Graduate Teacher Standard is taught, practised and assessed and require that pre-service teachers have demonstrated successful performance against all of the Graduate Teacher Standards prior to graduation.

1.2 Program design and assessment processes require pre-service teachers to have successfully completed a final-year teaching performance assessment prior to graduation that is shown to:

a. be a reflection of classroom teaching practice including the elements of planning, teaching, assessing and reflecting

b. be a valid assessment that clearly assesses the content of the Graduate Teacher Standards

c. have clear, measurable and justifiable achievement criteria that discriminate between meeting and not meeting the Graduate Teacher Standards

d. be a reliable assessment in which there are appropriate processes in place for ensuring consistent scoring between assessors

e. include moderation processes that support consistent decision-making against the achievement criteria.

1.3 Providers identify how their pre-service teachers demonstrate a positive impact on student learning in relation to the assessment requirements in Program Standards 1.1 and 1.2.

1.4 Providers describe and evaluate the intended outcomes of their programs, after students have graduated, by using available data and specifically designed research that provide information on the effectiveness of the graduates as teachers, the achievement of specific program objectives and to inform its continuous improvement. Graduate impact on student learning is included in this evidence where available data allow.

Graduate outcomes data are to be drawn from multiple sources that may include:

a. employment data

b. registration data

c. survey data including graduate and principal satisfaction surveys

d. studies designed to assess the impact of graduates on student learning including case studies and surveys

e. any other type of outcomes data that can be tenably linked to information on program improvement, graduate outcomes and/or positive impact on student learning.

Standard 2: Program development, design and delivery

2.1   Program development, design and delivery are based on:

  a. a documented coherent rationale based on authoritative and evidence-based understandings of how the program will develop effective teachers who meet the Graduate Teacher Standards, including having a positive impact on student learning

  b. a coherent and sequenced delivery of program content including professional experience that facilitates achievement of the Graduate Teacher Standards.

2.2   Program development, design and delivery take account of:

  a. contemporary and emerging developments in education, curriculum requirements[7], community expectations and local, employer and national system needs, including workforce demands for teaching specialisations

  b. the perspectives of stakeholders such as employers, professional teacher bodies, practising teachers, educational researchers and relevant cultural and community experts.

2.3   The resourcing for the program and its teaching and assessment strategies is consistent with the program's rationale and expected outcomes and:

  a. prepares pre-service teachers for contemporary school environments and early childhood education environments where relevant

  b. takes into account the learning and professional experience needs of pre-service teachers across all offered modes of delivery

  c. includes staff who have ongoing or recent school-based experience and early childhood experience where relevant.

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7   Curriculum refers to the Foundation to Year 12 Australian Curriculum, alternative curriculum frameworks that have been assessed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) as meeting the requirements of the Australian Curriculum, any curriculum authorised by jurisdictional authorities, and the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.

Standard 3: Program entry

3.1   Providers describe and publish the rationale for their approach to program entry, the selection mechanisms used, threshold entry scores applied and any exemptions used.

3.2   Providers apply selection criteria for all entrants, which incorporate both academic and non-academic components that are consistent with engagement with a rigorous higher education program, the requirements of the particular program and subsequent success in professional teaching practice.

3.3   All information necessary to ensure transparent and justifiable selection processes for entry into initial teacher education programs, including student cohort data, is publicly available.

3.4   The program is designed to address the learning needs of all pre-service teachers admitted, including through provision of additional support to any cohort or individual who may be at risk of not being able to participate fully in the program or achieve its expected outcomes.

3.5   Entrants to initial teacher education will possess levels of personal literacy and numeracy broadly equivalent to the top 30 per cent of the population. Providers who select students who do not meet this requirement must establish satisfactory arrangements to ensure that these students are supported to achieve the required standard before graduation. The National Literacy and Numeracy Test is the means for demonstrating that all students have met the standard.

3.6   Program entrants must meet English language proficiency requirements for teacher registration in Australia[8], either on entry to or on graduation from the program.

3.7   Entrants to graduate entry programs have a discipline-specific bachelor or equivalent qualification relevant to the Australian Curriculum or other recognised areas of schooling provision including:

   a.   for secondary teaching, at least a major study in one teaching area and, preferably, a second teaching area comprising at least a minor study, or

   b.   for primary teaching, at least one year of full-time equivalent study relevant to one or more learning areas of the primary school curriculum.[9]

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8   Teacher registration is the responsibility of jurisdictional Authorities and the specifications for English Language requirements are set out under the relevant regulatory schemes. The nationally agreed requirements for English language proficiency are at <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/start-your-career/registration/nationally-consistent-teacher-registration#engprof>.

9   This entry requirement also applies to combined primary/early childhood programs.

Standard 4: Program structure and content

4.1 Programs comprise at least two years of full-time equivalent professional studies[10] in education and are structured so that a graduate has undertaken a four-year or longer full-time equivalent program(s) that leads to a higher education qualification(s) in one of the following configurations:

   a. a three-year undergraduate degree providing the required discipline knowledge, plus a two-year graduate entry professional qualification

   b. an integrated degree of at least four years comprising discipline studies and professional studies

   c. combined degrees of at least four years comprising discipline studies and professional studies

   d. other combinations of qualifications proposed by the provider and approved by the Authority in consultation with AITSL as equivalent to the above that enable alternative or flexible pathways into the teaching profession.

4.2 Initial teacher education programs prepare pre-service teachers for the school curriculum[11] and learning areas of their chosen discipline and/or stage of schooling in accordance with Schedule 1.[12]

4.3 Combined programs: Some programs prepare graduates for teaching across multiple educational settings, for example early childhood/primary school and primary school/secondary school ('middle school'):

   a. Programs that prepare graduates to teach in both early childhood settings and primary schools prepare teachers for teaching the curriculum across both contexts.

   b. Programs that prepare graduates for primary and secondary school teaching must fully address the requirements for primary teaching and for secondary teaching in at least one major study or two minor studies in secondary teaching areas. However, programs may have a stronger emphasis on teaching particular year levels (e.g. Years 5 to 9).

   c. Programs that prepare graduates for teaching in other specialised teaching roles in schools and other educational settings must address the specific content and pedagogy of the specialisation.

4.4 In addition to study in each of the learning areas of the primary school curriculum sufficient to equip teachers to teach across the years of primary schooling, programs provide all primary graduates with a subject specialisation through:

   a. clearly defined pathways into and/or within a program that lead to specialisations, that are in demand, with a focus on subject/curriculum areas

   b. assessment within the program requiring graduates to demonstrate expert content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge and highly effective classroom teaching in their area of specialisation

   c. publishing the specialisations available, and numbers of graduates per specialisation through their annual reports.

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10 Professional studies in education covers discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies, general education studies and professional experience.

11 Curriculum refers to the Foundation to Year 12 Australian Curriculum or alternative curriculum frameworks that have been assessed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) as meeting the requirements of the Australian Curriculum, any curriculum authorised by jurisdictional authorities, and the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.

12 This Standard applies equally to those entrants admitted under recognition of prior learning or credit transfer arrangements.

Schedule 1 for Program Standard 4.2

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Primary programs</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">All primary programs must include study in each of the learning areas of the primary school curriculum sufficient to equip teachers to teach across the years of primary schooling.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Undergraduate programs – mandatory content requirements</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies[13] comprise at least one half of the program (i.e. normally two years of full-time-equivalent study), including at least:</td></tr>
<tr><td>a. English/literacy – discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies</td><td>At least one-half of a year EFTSL, including at least one-eighth of a year EFTSL for early reading instruction[14]</td></tr>
<tr><td>b. Mathematics/numeracy – discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies</td><td>At least one-quarter of a year EFTSL</td></tr>
<tr><td>c. Science – discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies</td><td>At least one-eighth of a year EFTSL</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">The remainder of the program may be structured to include extension or specialist studies in priority areas or related curriculum areas.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Graduate entry programs – mandatory content requirements</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Graduate entry programs must include one year of full-time-equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies across the learning areas of the primary school curriculum, including at least:</td></tr>
<tr><td>a. English/literacy – discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies</td><td>At least three-eighths of a year EFTSL, including at least one-eighth of a year EFTSL for early reading instruction[14]</td></tr>
<tr><td>b. Mathematics/numeracy – discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies</td><td>At least one-quarter of a year EFTSL</td></tr>
<tr><td>c. Science – discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies</td><td>At least one-eighth of a year EFTSL</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">These programs may include up to one quarter of a year of full-time-equivalent study of relevant discipline studies as elective units which could be undertaken by applicants who do not fully meet prerequisite discipline study requirements.</td></tr>
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13 Discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies contribute to the requirement for at least two years of equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL) in professional studies outlined in Program Standard 4.1.

14 Early reading instruction should address evidence-based practice across the following elements: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and oral language.

Secondary programs

Discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies must prepare graduates to teach across the years of secondary schooling.

Undergraduate programs – mandatory content requirements

Secondary programs must provide a sound depth and breadth of knowledge appropriate for the teaching area(s) the graduate intends to teach.

These programs must provide discipline studies:

a. of at least a major study in one teaching area, and	Equivalent to three-quarters of a year EFTSL[15]
b. preferably a second teaching area, which must comprise at least a minor study.	Equivalent to half a year EFTSL[16]

In addition, these programs must include:

c. discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies.[17]	At least one-quarter of a year EFTSL for each teaching area

Graduate entry programs – mandatory content requirements

These programs must provide:

a. discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies.[17]	At least one-quarter of a year EFTSL for each teaching area

These programs may include up to one quarter of a year of full-time-equivalent study of relevant discipline studies as elective units that could be undertaken by applicants who do not fully meet prerequisite discipline study requirements.

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15 Study undertaken for a major study will be equivalent to a total of three-quarters of a year of successful EFTSL, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over three years. In most programs, this equates to six units, with no more than two at first-year level and no fewer than two units at third level.

16 Study undertaken for a minor study will be equivalent to a total of half a year of successful EFTSL, usually comprising sequential discipline study taken over two years. In most programs, this equates to four units, with no more than two at first-year level.

17 Discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies contribute to the requirement for at least two years of EFTSL in professional studies outlined in Program Standard 4.1.

Standard 5: Professional experience

5.1   Formal partnerships, agreed in writing, are developed and used by providers and schools/sites/ systems to facilitate the delivery of programs, particularly professional experience for pre-service teachers. Formal partnerships exist for every professional experience school/site and clearly specify components of placements and planned experiences, identified roles and responsibilities for both parties and responsible contacts for day-to-day administration of the arrangement.

5.2   The professional experience components of programs are relevant to a classroom environment, and:

   a.   include no fewer than 80 days in undergraduate and double-degree teacher education programs and no fewer than 60 days in graduate-entry programs

   b.   consist of supervised and assessed teaching practice undertaken over a substantial and sustained period that is mostly in Australia and mostly in a recognised school setting

   c.   are as diverse as practicable

   d.   provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to observe and participate purposefully in a school/site as early as practicable in a program.

5.3   For every professional experience placement, regardless of delivery mode, there are clear mechanisms to communicate between the initial teacher education provider and the school the knowledge, skills and experiences pre-service teachers have already developed in a program and the expected learning outcomes of that placement.

5.4   Providers work with their placement school(s)/systems to achieve a rigorous approach to the assessment of pre-service teachers' achievements against the Graduate Teacher Standards including:

   a.   identification of the Standards to be assessed

   b.   provision of assessment tools, protocols, practices and guidelines

   c.   clarification of expectations and roles in assessment, particularly designated roles for supervising teachers in practical assessment of pre-service teachers

   d.   timely identification of pre-service teachers at risk of not satisfactorily completing the formal teaching practice, ensuring appropriate support for improvement

   e.   mandating a satisfactory formal assessment of pre-service teachers against the Graduate Teacher Standards as a requirement for graduating from the program.

5.5   Providers support the delivery of professional experience in partner schools/sites, including by identification and provision of professional learning opportunities for supervising teachers and communication from, and access to, designated initial teacher education provider staff who, preferably, have current or recent experience in teaching.

Standard 6: Program evaluation, reporting and improvement

6.1 Providers have processes in place for the ongoing collection, analysis and evaluation of data to inform program improvements and periodic formal evaluation of the program, including participation in national and jurisdictional data collections[18] to support local and national teacher workforce supply reporting, program and provider benchmarking, and to build a cumulative database of evidence relating to the quality of teacher education in Australia.

6.2 At the beginning of each accreditation period, providers develop and then implement a plan for demonstrating program outcomes in relation to pre-service teacher performance and graduate outcomes, including program impact. The plan will identify how providers will select, use and analyse evidence that is relevant to assessing the delivery of the program, including the mandatory evidence required by Program Standard 6.3.

6.3 Evidence of outcomes, including impact, is provided[19], evaluated and interpreted for the program at the end of each accreditation period. The interpretation of evidence encompasses identified strengths, program changes and planned improvements. The evidence requirements include at a minimum:

a. aggregated assessment data from the teaching performance assessment for all pre-service teachers (Program Standards 1.2 and 1.3)

b. aggregated assessment data from any other assessments identified in a plan for impact as contributing to evidence in relation to pre-service teacher performance and impact (Program Standards 1.1 and 1.3)

c. aggregated assessment and outcomes data linked to individuals and/or cohorts of interest, including selection cohorts (Program Standard 3.3)

d. data and evidence from participation in national and jurisdictional data collections (Program Standard 6.1)

e. evidence of the outcomes of graduates and/or graduate cohorts (Program Standard 1.4).

6.4 Providers report annually to the Authority including reporting on:

a. data as identified in the plan for impact (Program Standard 6.2)

b. changes to the program

c. nationally required data to contribute to national and/or jurisdictional collections and for compliance and accountability purposes

d. additional data/information requested by the Authority.

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18 Such as the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching survey (QILT).
19 Evidence will be reported annually as part of the annual reporting requirements in Program Standard 6.4.

Graduate Teacher Standards

The Graduate Teacher Standards make explicit the professional expectations of those graduating from initial teacher education programs. They describe the professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement at the first of the four career stages defined in the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*. Because they define what graduate teachers should know and be able to do, the Graduate Teacher Standards are the key to the accreditation of programs.

For programs to be accredited, providers need to show how their graduates meet the Graduate Teacher Standards. The following is an extract from the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* that describes these Standards. The Standards have been developed, revised and validated through nationwide consultation and a national validation process involving several thousand teachers across the country.

Graduate teachers

Graduate teachers have completed a qualification that meets the requirements of a nationally accredited program of initial teacher education. The award of this qualification means that they have met the Graduate Teacher Standards.

On successful completion of their initial teacher education, graduate teachers possess the requisite knowledge and skills to plan for and manage learning programs for students. They demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the implications for learning of students' physical, cultural, social, linguistic and intellectual characteristics. They understand principles of inclusion and strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.

Graduate teachers have an understanding of their subject/s, curriculum content and teaching strategies. They are able to design lessons that meet the requirements of curriculum, assessment and reporting. They demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice. They know how to select and apply timely and appropriate types of feedback to improve students' learning.

Graduate teachers demonstrate knowledge of practical strategies for creating rapport with students and managing student behaviour. They know how to support students' wellbeing and safety working within school and system curriculum and legislative requirements.

They understand the importance of working ethically, collaborating with colleagues, external professional and community representatives, and contributing to the life of the school. Graduate teachers understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers and recognise their role in their children's education.

Professional Knowledge

Standard 1 – Know students and how they learn	
Focus Area	**Graduate**
1.1 **Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students**	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning.
1.2 **Understand how students learn**	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.
1.3 **Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds**	Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.
1.4 **Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students**	Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.
1.5 **Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities**	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.
1.6 **Strategies to support full participation of students with disability**	Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of legislative requirements and teaching strategies that support participation and learning of students with disability.

Standard 2 – Know the content and how to teach it

Focus Area		Graduate
2.1	**Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area**	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area.
2.2	**Content selection and organisation**	Organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence.
2.3	**Curriculum, assessment and reporting**	Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans.
2.4	**Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians**	Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.
2.5	**Literacy and numeracy strategies**	Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.
2.6	**Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**	Implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning opportunities for students.

Professional Practice

Standard 3 – Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning		
Focus Area		**Graduate**
3.1	**Establish challenging learning goals**	Set learning goals that provide achievable challenges for students of varying abilities and characteristics.
3.2	**Plan, structure and sequence learning programs**	Plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, content and effective teaching strategies.
3.3	**Use teaching strategies**	Include a range of teaching strategies.
3.4	**Select and use resources**	Demonstrate knowledge of a range of resources, including ICT, that engage students in their learning.
3.5	**Use effective classroom communication**	Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement.
3.6	**Evaluate and improve teaching programs**	Demonstrate broad knowledge of strategies that can be used to evaluate teaching programs to improve student learning.
3.7	**Engage parents/carers in the educative process**	Describe a broad range of strategies for involving parents/carers in the educative process.

Standard 4 – Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Focus Area		Graduate
4.1	**Support student participation**	Identify strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities.
4.2	**Manage classroom activities**	Demonstrate the capacity to organise classroom activities and provide clear directions.
4.3	**Manage challenging behaviour**	Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour.
4.4	**Maintain student safety**	Describe strategies that support students' wellbeing and safety working within school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.
4.5	**Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically**	Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant issues and the strategies available to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.

Standard 5 – Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Focus Area		Graduate
5.1	**Assess student learning**	Demonstrate an understanding of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches to assess student learning.
5.2	**Provide feedback to students on their learning**	Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning.
5.3	**Make consistent and comparable judgements**	Demonstrate understanding of assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.
5.4	**Interpret student data**	Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.
5.5	**Report on student achievement**	Demonstrate an understanding of a range of strategies for reporting to students and parents/carers and the purpose of keeping accurate and reliable records of student achievement.

Professional Engagement

Standard 6 – Engage in professional learning	
Focus Area	**Graduate**
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs	Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* in identifying professional learning needs.
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice	Understand the relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning for teachers.
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	Seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and teachers to improve teaching practices.
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning	Demonstrate an understanding of the rationale for continued professional learning and the implications for improved student learning.

Standard 7 – Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community	
Focus Area	**Graduate**
7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities	Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession.
7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements	Understand the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage.
7.3 Engage with parents/carers	Understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers.
7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities	Understand the role of external professionals and community representatives in broadening teachers' professional knowledge and practice.

National accreditation procedures

Accreditation process

Submission of an application

It is expected that a provider will discuss the introduction of a new program informally with the Authority prior to commencing an application for accreditation stage one.

All providers seeking accreditation for a program are responsible for submitting their programs to the Authority for accreditation.[20]

All programs of a provider that are of the same type or have common components (e.g. programs preparing teachers for Australian secondary school settings, early childhood programs etc.) could, where practicable, be accredited concurrently. Where providers have a small number of programs, it may be preferable to undertake the accreditation for all programs concurrently.

Providers are required to submit applications for accreditation to the Authority generally no later than eight months before the commencement of planned delivery or accreditation expiry of a program.

The provider will submit applications for accreditation to the Authority using the templates from, and in accordance with, the evidence requirements set out in the guidance material. This includes evidence of, or plans to participate in, national TPA benchmarking activities in support of Program Standard 1.2.

The Authority will formally advise AITSL that an application has been received, to allow for organisation of an interstate panel member.

Accreditation of programs delivered across jurisdictions

If a provider delivers or intends to deliver an initial teacher education program across jurisdictions, the application for accreditation will be lodged with the Authority in the jurisdiction under whose legislation the institution is formally established or governed.

The provider will also notify each individual Authority of their intention to submit an application for accreditation for a program that will be delivered on campus within that Authority's jurisdiction.

The Authority in the jurisdiction under whose legislation the institution is formally established or governed will then take responsibility for accrediting the program. AITSL will ensure that membership of the accreditation panel is representative of all jurisdictions where the program is to be delivered. The lead Authority will share the application with the applicable Authorities.

If a program is delivered across multiple jurisdictions, then those jurisdictional Authorities can participate in the ongoing monitoring, moderation and reporting processes.

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20 Providers seeking to prepare teachers for employment in 0–8 settings will also need to consider the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority's (ACECQA) approval requirements.

Eligibility and compliance check

The Authority will make an initial determination about the eligibility of a program for accreditation, based on a completeness check of the documentation in the application ensuring that the provider has appropriately responded to all Program Standards.

Where a program is an 'other combination of qualifications', the Authority will report its determination to AITSL, which will confer with all of the Authorities and either endorse or recommend reconsideration of the determination before a final decision is reached by the Authority (based on Program Standard 4.1d).

Convening of panel

The Authority will convene a panel to assess the application for accreditation.

Each accreditation panel will be supported by an officer from the Authority who has undertaken national panel training, and who will be the executive officer for the panel.

Assessment of application

Once the Authority finalises membership of an accreditation panel, each panellist will be provided with a copy of the application and supporting documentation to assist in making the accreditation decision. Prior to the panel convening, each panellist will individually review all the provided materials and make an initial determination against the Program Standards.

The accreditation panel will convene to formally consult and assess the program against the Program Standards. Each standard must be met to gain accreditation.

Panellists will be provided with guidance material to assist with the assessment of a program submitted for accreditation.

The guidance material underpins panel assessment of the program against each Program Standard and the Graduate Teacher Standards. Panel members will use their expert judgement in applying the evidence requirements which will be supported by the information and tools found in the guidance material.

As part of the accreditation process at both stages, the Authorities will receive advice from the expert advisory group on all teaching performance assessments relevant to their initial teacher education providers in relation to Program Standard 1.2 and the Guidelines.

To guide ongoing implementation of teaching performance assessments and to drive continuous improvement, the expert advisory group advice will be provided to AITSL for analysis, and a summary of the analysis will be made available in an appropriate format to relevant stakeholders, including Education Council and Authorities.

At the discretion of the Authority, the panel may undertake a site visit, hold a teleconference/ videoconference or meet face-to-face with key provider personnel to seek further information in support of an application.

The executive officer will develop a draft accreditation report on behalf of the panel, outlining performance against each Program Standard and identifying areas where the panel requires further information.

The Authority provides the draft accreditation report to the provider.

The Authority will set, in consultation with the provider, a time frame for a response from the provider which will typically be six weeks. This provides an opportunity to address any evidence gaps, clarify any identified issues or institute changes in response to the panel's findings.

When a panel identifies that further evidence is required to support an application, the number of requests to the provider for further information will generally be limited to two occasions, with the provider generally having two opportunities to respond to each request.

Panel reports to authority

The panel will formally consider and assess the provider's response (if any) and agree on its final accreditation report which will outline the accreditation recommendation and identify any areas of risk/focus that the provider will be required to report against to the Authority. A panel may recommend that:

- accreditation be granted as the program has met the Program Standards

- accreditation be granted subject to particular conditions and specify time frames under which such conditions should be met (where applicable to jurisdictional legislation)

- accreditation not be granted, specifying the Program Standards that the program has not been able to meet.

On behalf of the panel, the executive officer will prepare a final accreditation report and once approved by the panel submit it to the Authority.

Accreditation decision and notification of outcome

The Authority will make an accreditation decision based on the panel's final accreditation report and will formally advise the provider in writing of the decision in accordance with the relevant jurisdictional legislation.

The Authority will notify AITSL where a provider withdraws an application previously notified to AITSL and will provide a reason for the withdrawal if known and agreed to by the provider.

The Authority will forward to AITSL a summary of the accreditation report, so that the national program database can be updated accordingly, and other program details, including program duration and any conditions which may apply to the accreditation, which will contribute to the national accreditation process quality framework.

Accreditation duration

The Authority will set, at the point of accreditation, the period for which accreditation is granted for an individual program not exceeding five years.

The Authority will notify AITSL of any extensions to the accreditation period and the reasons for the extension.

A provider will notify the Authority of any program changes they wish to make to an accredited program. The Authority will determine if this can be addressed through annual reporting or whether it needs to be notified formally in writing to the Authority. The Authority will then determine whether the changes may be made to the program under its current accreditation or whether the changes are significant and require an application for accreditation stage one or two to be submitted.

Appeals

The provider may appeal the accreditation decision in accordance with the legislative, policy and administrative requirements of the relevant Authority.

The Authority will immediately advise AITSL when it becomes aware of an appeal and the outcome of any appeals made.

Accreditation panels

Panel members and training

The Authority nominates individuals representing a range of expertise and experience to be panel members.

Each nominee is required to have undertaken national training for the role of accreditation panel member before being appointed to a panel. AITSL will develop and deliver panel training designed to equip panellists to make assessments against the Program Standards, including evidence in relation to demonstration of program impact and the Graduate Teacher Standards.

Prior to being appointed to the role as panel chair or interstate panel member, panellists will also be required to undertake additional national training specific to these roles.

Accreditation panel members will be required to undertake national refresher training every two years.

Composition of accreditation panels

Accreditation panels will comprise a minimum of four members and generally up to six members, including a chair, and one member from a different jurisdiction to support consistency in assessments across jurisdictions.

The Authority will nominate the chair of the panel, who will be a panel member with relevant experience.

AITSL will nominate to the accreditation panel at least one panellist from a different jurisdiction.

Each panel must comprise a range of both relevant expertise and experience relevant to the type of program being assessed, such as:

- teacher educator
- jurisdictional education authority/teacher employer
- principal/school leader
- currently registered teacher
- specialist or expert in relevant area of education.

Panels may also co-opt people with specific expertise to provide advice where required.

Program reporting to the Authority

All accredited programs will be required to report annually to the Authority to allow any issues to be identified, investigated and addressed by the Authority and/or provider prior to (re)applying for accreditation stage two. This will include:

- data as identified in the plan for impact (Program Standard 6.2)
- changes to the program
- nationally required data to contribute to national and/or jurisdictional collections and for compliance and accountability purposes
- additional data/information requested by the Authority.

If an area of risk is identified through annual reporting, the Authority may request additional information or in the case of high risk, may bring forward, where legislatively possible, the request for a program to undertake the process for accreditation.

Where a risk is identified, the Authority will notify AITSL and will advise AITSL on any action taken or to be taken by the Authority and/or provider to manage the risk and any changes to the accreditation status, including accreditation expiry date or conditions.

Program data to AITSL for national analysis

Authorities will provide the data and information collected on the impact of initial teacher education programs (as per Program Standard 6.3 and 6.4) to AITSL for national analysis.

National accreditation process quality framework

National standard setting and quality assurance activities

In collaboration with jurisdictions and the Authorities, AITSL will facilitate national standard setting and quality assurance activities to support consistency and continuous improvement of the accreditation decision-making process. The findings from these activities will be used by Authorities and accreditation panels to guide accreditation decision-making in the assessment of evidence supplied against the Program Standards and the Graduate Teacher Standards.

AITSL will identify a representative sample of applications for accreditation and the types of applications across jurisdictions to be considered.

The standard setting and quality assurance activities will provide agreed statements or exemplars to support effective panel training, and to assist in decision-making and the submission of accreditation applications.

Findings from the standard setting and quality assurance activities will be shared with jurisdictions (including Authorities and jurisdictional departments of education) and other relevant stakeholders, where appropriate, and in an agreed format taking into account confidentiality requirements. If any issues are identified with the accreditation decision-making process and/or consistency of decisions, AITSL, in partnership with the Authorities, jurisdictions and providers may review:

- the supporting documentation and tools for panels to make sound accreditation decisions
- supporting documents and tools for providers to submit quality applications
- the national panel training package to ensure panellists have the skills and knowledge required to make these assessments.

National teaching performance assessment benchmarking

In collaboration with jurisdictions, Authorities and other key experts, AITSL will establish and quality assure a nationally agreed benchmarking framework to confirm the passing standard between different teaching performance assessments to give confidence these assessments are assessing pre-service teachers' competence against the Graduate Teacher Standards consistently. Providers will be required to participate in this national benchmarking activity, or in a cross-institutional activity that aligns with the framework and is approved and assured through AITSL's expert advisory group.

Review of the national accreditation process

AITSL, in partnership with the Authorities, teacher employers, providers and key stakeholders, will undertake a range of activities to determine if the national accreditation process is having the desired impact on program quality and the preparation of graduates over time. This includes:

- evaluation of the training and operation of accreditation panels
- evaluation of evidence of impact data
- coordination and collation of authoritative research on the quality assurance of initial teacher education
- management of data collected through the accreditation process
- periodic review of the Standards and Procedures informed by international evidence and research.

In collaboration with the Authorities, AITSL will periodically seek feedback from providers and panel members on their experiences of participating in the accreditation process. This information will be collated annually and will be shared with the Authorities in each jurisdiction.

Continuous improvement

To increase transparency and develop public understanding of initial teacher education and also to drive continuous improvement, AITSL will publish:

- accredited program details

- key program data which will be consistent with the principles of necessity, risk and proportionality, including outcomes data and program demographic data such as commencements, enrolments and completions, at both the individual program and aggregate levels

- other key information as part of its monitoring activities.

Authorities will publish a summary of each accreditation decision, using an agreed national template.

To increase transparency of, and public confidence in, the accreditation system, AITSL will report to Education Council annually on:

- findings from standard setting, quality assurance and teaching performance assessment expert advisory group activities

- outcomes of teaching performance assessment benchmarking activities

- analysis of data and information collected on program impact

- areas where further work is needed to ensure consistency

- implementation progress on accreditation requirements related to reading instruction, including phonics

- additional information as requested by Education Council.

To support TEQSA's role in monitoring the higher education sector, the accreditation decision summaries along with relevant information from the report to Education Council will be provided to TEQSA by Authorities and AITSL respectively.

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