



Submission from the Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group to the National Review of Teacher Registration Consultation Paper, March 2018

May 7, 2018

Introduction

This submission has been prepared by the Vocational Education Group of the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDEVEG). The Vocational Education Group (ACDEVEG) advises the ACDE Board and represents ACDE on Vocational Education and Training (VET) matters. The working group helps to build and strengthen high-quality educational practices in VET teacher-education programs for VET practitioners. In universities, such programs are normally undertaken part-time by VET teachers and trainers while already working in the field.

ACDEVEG also provides advice to a range of external stakeholders on VET teacher quality and development. ACDEVEG's terms of reference can be seen on its web site at <https://www.acde.edu.au/networks-and-partnerships/acde-vocational-group/>

ACDEVEG works closely with many organisations working in the area of VET teacher qualifications and professional development. For example it has a close relationship with PwC's Skills for Australia, the Skills Service organisation which manages the Training and Education (TAE) training package, and with its predecessor organisation, Innovation and Business Skills Australia. ACDEVEG members also maintain relationships with overseas policy-makers, universities and other relevant bodies working in the field of VET teacher-education providing a wider perspective on the field of study.

Seven universities provide teacher-training qualifications for vocational education and training (VET) practitioners - only half of the number who offered such courses in 2011. Up until the year 2000, most full-time TAFE teachers undertook degree-level courses in VET teaching, typically part-time after recruitment. On the advent of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment as a minimum qualification, States and Territories progressively abandoned this requirement. Thus today's VET teacher-education student cohort consists of people undertaking further study voluntarily to improve their practice; in some jurisdictions they are rewarded with a pay increment. Some TAFE Institutes fund their teachers to undertake such courses. Many of our students (who are all mature and studying part-time while working in the VET sector) teach on VET in schools programs through their employing TAFE Institutes and Registered Training Organisations.

At two of these seven universities, courses also qualify to teach VET in schools within schools. One such program is the Bachelor of Education (Applied Learning) at the University of Tasmania. These programs need to meet regulatory requirements of the school-education sector, the VET sector TEQSA requirements for university courses.

It should be noted that other universities offer courses specifically for VET in schools teachers. One example is Latrobe University's Graduate Diploma in Technology Education¹.

VET in schools is of great importance in assisting school students' understanding of the working world, in a wide range of occupational areas, and of equipping them with specific skills, making them more employable. Over time the proportion of young people who have undertaken VET as part of their schooling is helping to break down the academic/vocational divide. The presence of differing levels of qualification regimes for VET in schools teachers compared with other teachers in schools would be detrimental to this. The nation is better served by students who have a broader perspective of "education" and a common regard for "teachers" regardless of their discipline.

We now move on to address the specific questions posed in the consultation paper.

- **Under current teacher registration processes, what are the specific challenges to delivery VET in schools for:**
 - a) **registered teachers**
 - b) **VET trainers and assessors**
- How could these be overcome?**

As ACDEVEG's terms of reference are about teacher-education for the VET sector itself, it does not hold a specific body of knowledge on VET in schools teacher qualifications, although some members have expertise in this area. As noted in the Consultation Paper, there are different arrangements and provisions for VET in schools teachers in different jurisdictions. ACDEVEG members often receive enquiries from would-be students, who have generally had careers in industry and are seeking to become VET in schools teachers, struggling to find a way through the provisions in their particular jurisdictions.

A national approach to registration could certainly assist such would-be teachers, many of whom are mature people with careers in industry. In the absence of a national approach, a national web site would assist. A co-ordinated approach could also lead potentially to the development of a national 'bridging program' for those with degrees in VET teaching to become qualified to teach in schools. ACDEVEG would be well placed to advise on this process as it has undertaken a detailed mapping of its members' VET teaching programs including their relationship with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and Diploma of VET, the relevant qualifications within the TAE training package.

- **Is greater flexibility needed to support schools to utilise skilled VET trainers and assessors? How can this be achieved without compromising teacher quality standards and national consistency in teacher registration?**

In our view, greater flexibility may sound attractive, but is actually fraught with danger. The quality problems which have beset the VET sector since the lowering of the qualification levels of the VET teaching workforce should act as a warning.

While it may be tempting to allow some people to teach VET in schools without requiring them to undertake full teaching qualifications, evidence from the VET sector suggests that

¹ See Paper 7 by Mike Brown at the ACDEVEG 2015 conference <https://www.acde.edu.au/acdeveg-conference-2015/>

teachers with only low levels of pedagogical qualification are less effective than those who are better qualified; they also have less understanding of regulatory requirements, and are less able to contribute to the organisation within which they work². VET teachers who have studied VET teaching at university are readily able to identify the benefits of such study³. There is no reason to suppose the results would be any different in a school setting.

Teaching is teaching, whatever the discipline area, and any suggestion that a VET subject requires less expert teachers than an 'academic' subject does not recognise this fact. Indeed it could be seen as an implicit devaluing of VET subjects. Industry experience and industry qualifications are a necessary prerequisite to teaching VET, whether in the VET sector or in schools, but are not a sufficient qualification. Pedagogical qualifications are also necessary to ensure students' learning and well-being; and teachers' inclusion in, and contribution to, school culture and life.

We also refer you to ACDE's submission⁴, prepared by the ACDEVEG group, to the 2011 Productivity Commission Inquiry into the VET Workforce, for a great deal of detailed information about the benefit of more highly-qualified VET teachers. This provides additional evidence against lowering standards for people to teach VET in schools.

ACDEVEG members would be pleased to provide more information, or to meet with members of the Review Panel. [REDACTED]



Professor Erica Smith

Federation University Australia

On behalf of members of the Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group (ACDEVEG)

² Australian Research Council-funded project on *VET teacher qualifications & their contribution to VET quality* <http://federation.edu.au/research-vet-quality>

³ Smith, E., Hodge, S. & Yasukawa, K. (2015) Australian VET teacher education in Australian universities: Who are the students and what are their views about their courses? *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 20:4, 419-433; Redmond, P. (2017). VET practitioners' perspectives of VET higher-education qualifications.

⁴ Submission DR107 at <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/education-workforce-vocational/submissions#post-draft>