National Review of Teacher Registration Consultation

1.   How is the national teacher registration framework working across Australia?

Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) acknowledges the high quality and high level of support offered to schools and provisionally registered teachers (PRT) by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).

Elements of registration

How well are the implementation and content of the eight elements of the Framework working?

Initial period of registration

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne employ up to 100 graduate teachers each year across 332 primary and secondary schools. Each teacher with provisional registration is required to work with a mentor teacher and complete activities, observations and develop a portfolio of evidence as stipulated by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). While the VIT has developed an evidence-based robust process for the professional growth and development of the provisionally registered teachers' capacity to demonstrate attainment of the Teacher Standards at the Proficient level, the application of the process, the support of the mentor teacher and evaluation of the portfolio of evidence could not be confidently judged to be consistent in each school across schools.

System level support is offered to each primary school in the form of a grant of $2000 for each graduate teacher in their first year of teaching to support their induction and provision of a VIT-trained mentor.

Apart from the VIT's quality assurance processes, Catholic Education Melbourne has no monitoring processes in place across Catholic schools.

Challenges include the ongoing support of provisionally registered teachers who take more than one year to complete the VIT portfolio process.

A further challenge involves providing appropriate and adequate support for provisionally registered teachers working on short-term contracts or working across more than one school.

Processes and resources could be developed at a national level to support system-level monitoring of the application of the VIT provisional to full registration process.

Training could be provided for 'recommendation panels' to further develop consistent evaluation and judgements at the local school level.

Supporting beginning teachers:

For a number of years Catholic Education in Melbourne has worked in partnership with the Australian Catholic University (ACU) focusing on placing Pre-Service Teachers in schools for extended periods, recognising the need to link theory and practice, providing more effective opportunities for school practice and to experience and understand the Catholic identity of our schools.

The most recent project which commenced in 2013 with ACU began the Catholic Teachers' Education Consortium project that aimed to recruit and nurture Pre-Service Teachers in regions of rapid growth. Maintaining a Catholic focus, the project assists Pre-Service Teachers to build relationships and engage with school communities, providing a depth of experience that prepares them for employment in schools that value Catholic education.

ACU has also provided opportunities for mentors of provisionally registered teachers to attend workshops to assist in using the standards to differentiate a proficient from a graduate teacher.

At a local level school level:

- attendance at briefings for provisionally registered teachers-principals and PRT;

- mentor training - attendance at VIT PL;

- preparation for the panel;

- Panel process seen as a celebration (rather than an expectation) of PRTs work –recognition from Leadership Team.

Fixed period of Registration

Renewal of registration for teachers in Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne is controlled by the VIT. Validation of some evidence such as hours for professional development activities is required of Principals or designated senior leaders in the school.

System level knowledge of the number or quality of the applications for renewal does not exist and data is currently not shared between VIT and Catholic Education Melbourne.

System level support is provided to teachers and school leaders in the provision of an online professional learning management system that records and maintains a record of professional development activities. This system also provides information on which of the Teacher Standards the professional learning activity addresses.

A limitation of this system is that it only records data on activities that are created and managed within the online system. Records of activities and events sourced from external providers need to be recorded elsewhere by each individual teacher.

VIT does provide a facility for registered members to record professional learning and development activities but each individual teacher still has to manage two sets of records.

A further challenge with this element of the Framework is the portability of the data if they leave the Catholic system or find employment as a teacher in another State.

Currently Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne do not leverage consistently off the requirements for professional growth required for the renewal of registration.

A certification process for teachers in Catholic schools in Victoria may have the potential to both support the maintenance of records of professional learning and development activities and assist school leaders to support teachers in their pursuit of continuous professional growth.

Teacher Quality

How has the embedding of the Teacher Standards in the Framework supported teacher quality?

Embedding the Teacher Standards in the Framework has highlighted the potential and importance of the Standards as both a quality assurance benchmark and guide for professional learning. It also keeps the Standards current and relevant for teachers across their careers so they periodically renew their registration.

A challenge to schools is investing in the time to engage with the Standards in ways that become a 'way of being' and therefore embedded in what staff do daily in their context.

How have the Teacher Standards influenced the way in which teachers move from provisional to full registration and through renewal of registration?

The Standards provide a benchmark and as such a level of consistency and expectation around quality teaching practice. Exemplars and vignettes assist in creating consistency along with other resources such as High Impact Learning & Teaching Strategies developed by the Department of Education in Victoria.

Induction is an important consideration moving from provisional to full registration. Access and quality of induction processes for PRTs varies and this can potentially compromise meaningful and practical engagement with the Standards. The role of induction and registration is an area for further consideration.

Improvements

How could current teacher registration arrangements be improved to strengthen both teacher registration and implementation and teacher quality?

Currently an emphasis on hours of professional learning is a requirement for registration. At a **school level** some guidelines for stronger and more direct alignment of the professional learning to the Standards could positively impact teacher quality.

2.   What role does teacher registration play for VET teachers in school settings?

Preamble:

It is vital that our senior secondary schools are able to provide:

- A diverse range of VET options to assist with student pathways and transition;
- Access to VET which is a mandated curriculum component to meet eligibility requirements for Intermediate and Senior levels of the VCAL;
- Appropriate industry standard facilities and equipment to deliver quality VET.

What are the specific challenges to deliver VET in schools for:

Registered Teachers:

- Replacing industry specialist registered teachers whilst on leave (short term or extended leave).
- The need for the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE)
    - Maintaining upgrades and the associated cost of ongoing training needs.
- The need for industry currency:
    - Teacher may have been out of formal industry settings for some time due to their teaching/professional duties.
    - Providing teacher release to enable participation to engage in industry placement to maintain current industry knowledge and skills.
    - Access to options for maintaining industry currency, especially in rural and regional settings and with industry benchmarks.
- The need for vocational competencies at least at the level being delivered and assessed:
    - Gaining formal qualifications (e.g. through coursework or a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process, e.g. time, effort, paperwork – not an easy process).
    - Changes in Training Packages may require the upskilling or retraining of trainers, (e.g. Certificate II in Building and Construction where trainers now need Certificate III in relevant trade stream to deliver the course).
    - Schools' cooperation and support in committing to any additional and ongoing training and assessment needs that are imposed by the VET Regulator and by industry bodies.
- The need to address the additional layers of complexity due to having to meet both educational and industry compliance.

VET Trainers and Assessors

The above points for a registered teacher apply equally to the context of 'Permission to Teach' (PTT) holders. In addition trainers and assessors face the following challenges:

- Working in a school environment potentially without any prior experience working in a senior secondary setting.
- Teacher 'nous' (e.g. experience in writing reports; student behaviour management; working with parents; appropriate personal demeanour, etc).
- Those involved in sessional work:
    - may be a cause for disconnection from the school community (e.g. may not be included naturally in school Professional Learning, or may not be available for inclusion – not paid for non-teaching time or for staff development activities);
    - may be a cause for unsustainable employment pathways (e.g. because of specialist nature of the work, may not necessarily lead to full time employment in a school setting);
    - working in a school environment and understanding legal obligations (Child Safe Standards, Mandatory Reporting etc) and having access to upskilling in, e.g. First Aid etc – whose responsibility is it to pay for any required upskilling to be ready to teach e.g. First Aid?
    - May not naturally be included in background information provided for the benefit of teaching staff (e.g. matters of pastoral care; students with special needs).

- Competing demands due to potentially training/working in a number of contexts (possibly in other school and non-school settings); possible conflicts due to different demands and 'rules'.
    - Familiarity with different processes and regulations, paperwork, etc (such as Structured Workplace Learning).
- Registered Training Organisation (RTO) Standards cover industry needs but do not specifically address teaching within a school context.
- Status of PTT VET trainers - may be seen by registered teachers as a para-professional.
- Teacher union members (and teaching staff in general) may view VET Trainers as a risk to their ongoing employment (e.g. VCE Business Management teacher may lose enrolments to VCE VET Business/Small Business classes).

How could these be overcome?

- Where there are potentially competing curriculum options in the VCE and VET, schools need to address the viability of offerings within the overall school curriculum framework.
- Understanding of competency-based training could be included in pre-service training.
- Consider including Certificate IV in TAE as part of pre-service secondary teacher training.
- Develop specific teaching pathway options for applied learning and training and assessment.
- Re-introduce a program like the Teacher Release to Industry (TRIP) to enable teachers to gain specific industry knowledge and skills.
- More interaction between industry and education to develop shared vision and understanding around student pathways and transition.
- Teacher Training (education) courses supported for industry specialists should include a process for induction and shadowing/mentoring.
- Develop an emergency VET register of available trainers (in various industry groups) available to cover school-based trainers on leave (e.g. recently retired trainers or part-time trainers who are looking for more hours).

The implementation of the Victorian Institute of Teaching's (VIT) new PTT Policy in October 2017, provided some positive responses to these concerns and these include:

- A special category for PTT VET has been developed, which is highly supportive of VET delivery and assessment in schools.
- PTT VET holders are able to teach in any school across the state, providing a greater degree of flexibility (under the previous policy PTT was limited to a specific site).
- PTT VET trainers no longer need to be progressing towards teacher registration (must meet requirements of the VET Regulator).
- Schools do not need to advertise for trainers and are exempt from demonstrating workforce shortage.
- PTT application to the VIT can be endorsed by the Principal of the school or by an RTO Manager.

3. How does teacher registration support entry into the teaching profession?

How does teacher registration support entry into the teaching profession?

How do current teacher registration processes support graduates:
- *Seeking provisional registration*
- *Employed in different circumstances*

Teacher registration establishes the practice of ongoing learning and by its nature establishes the need for teachers to comply with a policy. The concept of pre-registration will assist students to transfer to provisional and full registration, as it promotes a continuous growth mindset. This can support the teacher accreditation process in the Catholic system in Victoria. This process likewise requires teachers to develop content knowledge and skills, but specific to working in Catholic schools. This professional learning can also be counted towards the professional learning hours expected of teachers, to maintain registration and progress through the different levels. There is an opportunity here to align both processes as they require similar engagement in professional learning or postgraduate study, to build the teacher's competency. In addition pre-registration could speed up the process of accreditation, as it could establish that a person has experience in a classroom, as part of a pre- service education course, which is expected of teachers seeking accreditation. It is expected that teachers achieve accreditation in the first 5 years of joining the Catholic sector in Victoria and this could be promoted as another milestone in the same way as moving from provisional to full teacher registration.

Many Teachers in Catholic schools are currently provided with support through regional networks. From this perspective it can be seen that the teacher registration process in Victoria provides an opportunity to focus the induction support in the following ways:

- Effective Mentoring Programs – Supporting Mentors with skills and knowledge to mentor Graduates.
- Guidelines to support Graduates in the VIT Process.
- Guidelines around how to achieve Teacher Registration.
- Outlines as to how to gather and document evidence of practice through their Inquiry.
- Guidelines on applying for full registration.
- Professional ethics around the foundation of quality teaching.
- Links to Exploring Professional Practice.
- Provides teacher support programs around teacher competence.
- CEM provides schools with small grant to provide PRTs with a mentor.

Are there barriers / challenges presented by teacher registration for those entering the teaching profession? How could these be overcome?

It was recently reported that up to half of all Australian teachers are leaving the profession in the first five years (McKinnon (ANU), 2016). Attrition rates of early career teachers aren't necessarily higher than rates in other professions. However, the risk is this rate may lead to teacher shortages with the student population projected to grow and the loss of expertise in schools has consequences for teaching and learning. Furthermore, the cost of training teachers who do not stay within is a poor government investment.

One of the simplest ways is to support teachers in schools through mentoring and more flexible working conditions to allow time for innovation and reflective practice. The OECD acknowledges the provision of support to teachers as a policy direction for school systems internationally.

Quality and quantity of mentoring support (how can this be more of a collaborative approach for all stakeholders?)

- In our schools the mentoring is a collaborative effort/approach - including teacher teams and nominated mentors (often in a leadership role). This shared and collaborative / community approach supports PRT in developing their sense of belonging to the school community and profession.

- Misty Adoniou (2014) talks about teacher knowledge being a complex tapestry and that beginning teachers must orchestrate a wide range of professional knowledge. She describes three ways of knowing for teachers: 'knowing how,' 'knowing why,' and 'knowing what'. How are mentors supported to model and express their own knowing as well as engage in dialogue that enable PRTs to discover their own?

- (Misty Adoniou 2014) This research describes that 'vision' was key to PRTs self-efficacy and ultimately their sense of self as teacher and desire to remain in the classroom. When graduate teachers could be the teacher they wanted to be, they were happy. When they were not able to be the teacher they wanted to be, they were frustrated. These frustrations came from their own knowledge gaps, as well as deficiencies in the support they were provided.

- This career stage for a teacher is complex and how might mentors be supported to understand the learning for graduate teachers through the eyes of the graduate?

- How do we as a sector and nationally strengthen the mentoring culture in our schools? Supporting mentors to lead in some ways the learning for graduate teachers they are working with/contribute to and nurture a learning culture.

- How do we support mentors at different stages to build the capacity of graduate teachers to engage in sustained and intentional processes for critical reflection? (Brookfield 2017)

- P.62 Brookfield (2017) - to make good decisions we need to know what is in students' heads - knowing how your students experience learning so you can build bridges that take them from where they are now to a new destination.

- The Catholic sector report from the Victorian Initial Teacher Education feedback survey (2017) suggests that there are some divergent views on effective school support for graduate teachers (induction practices). Where school leaders rated the practice of allocating a mentor as the highest level of support provided, PRTs didn't rate this in the same way. Some anecdotal feedback has been that there is significant variation in mentoring practices in schools. One criticism was that mentors do not have sufficient time to engage in mentoring and offer graduate teachers the level of support they need.

Quality and quantity of graduate induction

- A report into best practices in education relating to induction of beginning teachers commissioned by AITSL recommends school sectors and leaders invest in induction. What might this look like? How will this include the voice of all stakeholders?

- Our commitment to lifting teacher quality needs to consider the role of induction in helping to bring in new teachers so they can continue to develop their capabilities and confidence. Although there is broad agreement in the education sector around the value of induction as a support for beginning teachers, there is less clarity about how to best implement it in practice (AITSL). So do we need to gather some data? Surely through the implementation there would be points in time where we would implement some evaluation so there is ongoing reflection and learning as a system about effective induction.

- A national approach also opens up opportunities to collaborate across sectors to collect national data on ITE - during the registration period and ongoing workforce data, perceptions around confidence across all the APSTs - that can be shared with sectors.

- A Victorian Initial Teacher Education feedback survey was sent out to all Victorian schools in late 2017. The Catholic school sector report presents Catholic sector information on Provisionally Registered Teachers' (PRTs) views on school-based induction. The highest areas of support provided by schools to PRTs include:
  - Observation of experienced teachers;
  - School-provided professional development opportunities;
  - Structured opportunities to discuss experiences with other new teachers;
  - A designated mentor;
  - Guidance from senior staff on curriculum and classroom planning.
- Gathering data at one point in time isn't sufficient - how can this be ongoing so that as a system we are continually reflecting on the effectiveness of this type of support? What other data might we want to consider collecting?
- The Catholic sector report suggests that there are some divergent views on effective school support for graduate teachers (induction practices). Is this the same for other sectors? If so, then how do we respond to the needs/views?

  - PRTs found the following types of practices MOST supportive:

    - Observation of experienced teacher teaching their classes (94.1%)
    - School-provided professional development opportunities (91.3%)
    - Structured opportunities to discuss experiences with other new teachers (88.2%)
    - A designated mentor (86.7%)
    - Guidance from senior staff on curriculum and planning (86.4%).

  - School Leaders found the following types of practices MOST supportive:
    - Designated mentor (96.8%)
    - Regular debriefing opportunities with senior colleagues (96.4%)
    - School-provided professional learning opportunities (95.8%)
    - Guidance from senior staff on curriculum and classroom planning (94.6%)
    - Observation of experienced teachers teaching in their classes (92.2%).

  - It is not expected that all induction programs will be identical because diversity across all contexts should be desirable. For our Catholic sector, diversity enables us to focus on Catholic identity.
  - There is an opportunity for all stakeholders to respond to this induction agenda by mapping out our current support for PRTs, school leaders and mentors. Mapping out current work will enable a more intentional, collaborative and systematic approach. The Victorian ITE 2017 survey is a beginning of such a mapping.
  - A willingness and commitment to a more systematic approach to respond to the evidence on effective induction may include the following key priorities:

    - Making effective induction available to all beginning teachers.

- Providing support and training for experienced teachers who are mentors to ensure practice is aligned with the features of 'practice-focused mentoring' as outlined in the AITSL Guidelines.
- Critical assessment of current induction practice to ensure that induction amounts to more than just orientation to the school.

GTPA and evidence of practice for moving to full registration (stronger alignment)

- The teacher registration framework sets out broad parameters for a national approach to quality assurance and evidence requirements in the transition from provisional registration to full - how can this be scaffolded overtime rather than as a one off task required for completing an ITE course or for VIT full teacher registration?

- Brookfield (2017, p.62) - to make good decisions we need to know what is in students' heads - knowing how your students experience learning so you can build bridges that take them from where they are now to a new destination. It would be our hope that this understanding would be a key learning for Pre-Service Teachers completing their GTPA.

- It is also our hope that they would take this understanding with them as they enter classrooms as beginning teachers. This understanding should continue to develop as graduate teachers work with mentor teachers when using an inquiry approach for collecting evidence to move to full registration. These stages should be seen as stages of transition/learning rather than ITE or teacher registration requirements.

- How might the emphasis on the inquiry task required for moving to full registration be more about their induction into a school community and the profession than on completing a complex task for registration?

- Our focus should be supporting graduate teachers in becoming critically reflective teachers.

How could the pre-registration of initial teacher education students support entry to the profession? What would be the benefits and implications of such an approach?

Pre-registration - what might this mean for PSTs?

- Opportunity to work in schools - together with Working With Children Check they can more easily work as LSOs, work as helpers in classrooms and take responsibility for the teaching rather than the school practice only being recognised as placement.

- ITE reform is reflecting on the role of placement, learning in context and placement as part of the ITE course. We have a number of partnerships effectively exploring this space. Learning from such projects should provide some learning for the system.

- Access to professional learning associations.

4.   How can we ensure that registered teachers satisfy the fit and proper person requirement?

Suitability Beyond Screening

Catholic Education Melbourne has a universal expectation for the protection of children. We are resolutely committed to ensuring that all those engaged in Catholic education in Victoria promote the inherent dignity of children and young people and their fundamental right to be respected and nurtured in a safe school environment.

We recognise that effective regulation contributes to the safety outcomes and protection of children by ensuring that processes are rigorous and only suitable persons are registered as teachers. Given the mobility of the teaching workforce, we need to be confident that this is the case for every graduate and for every teacher in Australia seeking ongoing registration at periodic points throughout their teaching career.

In line with the spirit of the final recommendations in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, screening processes such as Working with Children Checks and Police Checks are only one of a range of responses required to effectively manage child safety risks.

Through the re-registration process, the regulator is in a position to play a key role in promoting higher aspirations across the education community, by making clear that people working with children are expected to demonstrate child safety and wellbeing values in practice in the educational contexts in which they are employed.

This may be achieved by introducing further verification processes. For example consideration could be given to:

- introducing school principal/leader statements verifying that teachers demonstrate 'fit and proper person' expectations;
- teacher audit checks inclusive of suitability verification;
- self-attestation statements.

'Fit and Proper'

Victoria has recently introduced a 'Fit and Proper' declaration which applies to principals, proprietors and governing bodies so it may be confusing if the same description is used for teachers as the requirements are different. Consideration could be given to:

- establishing national best practice principles to describe a fit and proper person as it applies to teachers and describe their application.

Beyond State Boundaries

Teachers cross state borders and jurisdictions.

The Royal Commission's final report makes clear that lack of information sharing between employers, or between employers and teacher registration authorities, can enable perpetrators of abuse to continue to pose a risk to children by moving between schools, states or jurisdictions.

At state level, the Victorian Institute of Teaching publishes a Register of Disciplinary Action on its website. This is a useful reference tool for school leaders as part of local recruitment processes.

Given the mobility of teachers, nationally consideration should be given to the development of a national searchable register, rather than state-based, that provides a single source of information about the good standing of teachers irrespective of state or territory – an important assurance about teachers' suitability.

Teacher Registration and Child Safety Training

The Royal Commission's final report (Volume 13) notes that limited awareness of child sexual abuse among staff and inadequate training on policies and procedures may contribute to a failure to keep children safe in schools.

While ongoing teacher professional learning is the responsibility of employers, registration authorities could play a key supporting role. Supporting strategies could include:

- At Graduate Entry level, to be registered as a teacher, the applicant should have completed a mandatory reporting training course relating to child abuse and neglect.

- At re-registration, include an expectation that teachers have completed additional hours of child safety training beyond 'a mandatory reporting module'.