

Edith Cowan University**School of Education response to the National Review of Teacher Registration**

This response addresses: Question 2. Should early childhood teachers be part of a national approach to teacher registration?

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In Western Australia early childhood teachers are registered teachers in prior to school settings and school settings. It is our strong belief that all teachers who hold an early childhood teaching degree and have passed the national Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education (LANTITE) in Australia should be registered as teachers. There should not be a delineation of early childhood teacher but only registered teacher as is the case in Western Australia. Therefore, the School of Education at Edith Cowan University supports the expansion of teacher registration to include early childhood teachers working in prior-to-school contexts and school contexts in all jurisdictions. This would ensure a national approach to teacher registration that has the potential to support teacher quality and professional status.

Should nationally consistent approaches to the registration of early childhood teachers be considered?

Essentially – Yes, the system should be nationally consistent yet state contextualized. Western Australia should not lose what it already has and is working well. In Western Australia, early childhood teaching graduates apply for teacher registration upon graduating from their degree. Regardless of whether teachers choose to teach in a prior-to-school or school setting, they must be registered with the Teacher Registration Board Western Australia (TRBWA). Once provisionally registered, early childhood teachers in prior-to-school settings are able to progress to *proficient*, *highly accomplished* and *lead* as their colleagues do in school settings. Currently, progression from being provisionally registered through to *lead* occurs through a mentoring process with a registered teacher. This mentor can be in the same setting as the graduate teacher (that is, prior-to school) or they can be a mentor from another centre or school. For all early childhood teachers, regardless of the context, the same criteria for progression through to *lead* is required.

How could a nationally consistent approach to teacher registration support and improve the quality of early childhood teaching in schools and non-school settings?

A nationally consistent approach to teacher registration will support and improve the quality of early childhood teaching in schools and non-school settings in the same ways it does for teachers in school settings. However, there are challenges specific to the prior-to-school sector, such as supervision and mentoring of graduate teachers and equitable access to quality professional development. These have the attention of the Teacher Registration Board of WA who assist with mentor teachers, however, more resourcing will be needed if the aims of national teacher registration are to be met. National consistency affirms respect for existing state/territory registration provisions and inclusion of a range of age groups to be covered in four year preservice early childhood teacher education programs.

Regardless of education setting, teachers should meet the same pre-service requirements for the purposes of teacher registration. It is crucial that early childhood teachers working in prior-to-school education settings undergo teacher registration on equal standing with their primary and high school counterparts. There is a likely need to address some existing differences in jurisdictional requirements. For example, prior to registration, it would be reasonable for all teachers to be required to have successfully completed LANTITE.

How could the Teacher Standards be applied for early childhood teacher registration?

The link between the Teacher Standards and teacher registration is important. The APST need to be inclusive of diverse education contexts and speak clearly to the work of teachers in those contexts. This includes early childhood teachers working in approved prior-to-school early childhood education services. Currently, the Teacher Standards are limited in their recognition of the scope of professional roles and responsibilities required of early childhood teachers. In pursuit of a rigorous and nationally consistent approach to teacher registration, we support a revised set of Generic Teacher Standards with descriptions that are inclusive of early childhood teachers' practice in both prior-to-school and school settings.

The alignment with Australia's National Quality Framework (NQF) for Early Childhood Education and Care and, in particular, the National Quality Standard (NQS), has potential to strengthen the current Teacher Standards¹ for all teachers regardless of year level taught. We strongly oppose any move to create a dual system of teacher registration, based on a separate set of standards for teachers in school settings and another for teachers in prior-to-school settings, but we welcome the opportunity to comment further on a revised and more inclusive suite of APST in the forthcoming review of the Teacher Standards. At Edith Cowan University the Standards are utilised for assessment in initial early childhood teacher education programs and inform program quality assurance.

¹ The NQS is mandated to be used in Western Australian schools from K to Year 2 and because of its success in assisting with continuous improvement, some schools use it for all teachers K to Year 6