

Response from School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University

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

Focus questions

Elements of registration

- How well are the implementation and content of the eight elements of the Framework working? Please consider consistency, best practice and challenges and barriers in your response. You may wish to share examples.

Teacher quality

- How has the embedding of the Teacher Standards in the Framework supported teacher quality? In particular, how have the Teacher Standards influenced the way in which teachers move from provisional to full registration and through renewal of registration?

Improvements

- How could current teacher registration arrangements be improved to strengthen both teacher registration implementation and teacher quality? Are the eight elements of the 2011 Framework relevant and appropriate?
- How could improvements be implemented, acknowledging different legislative, regulatory, administrative and resourcing contexts? What are some expected benefits and success measures?

As a university we continue to have concerns regarding registration that is dependent upon local additional requirements to program accreditation, which in turn impacts on eligibility for graduates of programs to be registered interstate. Given the concerted shift to a national set of program accreditation standards, teacher professional standards and leader standards, the localising of registration based on anomalous factors seems to be inconsistent with the principles and will of the sector to operate in a context of nationally consistent practices. This is an area for improvement and action.

Providing individuals with a nationally recognised registration would be highly effective in dealing with interstate challenges where someone has relocated or perhaps been issued with some form of warning or penalty that does not automatically transfer with the person.

2. Should early childhood teachers be part of a national approach to teacher registration?

Focus Questions

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

The School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University explicitly supports the principle of including early childhood teachers in a framework for National Teacher Registration and Teacher Standards. We believe that making teacher registration for early childhood teachers mandatory makes a strong public statement about the quality of teachers and the expectations of personal and professional conduct for teachers working in the early childhood education sector. Including early childhood teachers in the National Registration process will facilitate movement of teaching personnel across the early childhood sector and the schooling sector. Many early childhood teachers are duly qualified and experienced in both sectors, but with current arrangements and conditions, prefer to work in the schooling sector. The current arrangements deplete the number of early childhood teachers seeking employment in early childhood education and care services. By default, a significant proportion of early childhood teachers who commence their careers in early childhood settings seek to transition into employment in schools before too long. This practice means that early childhood settings have to continually provide the investment in early career teachers, and comparatively speaking, reap little of the rewards when these teachers leave the sector.

We are especially keen to see the early childhood sector resourced with highly qualified and highly committed teachers. The economic benefits of doing so are strongly supported by a raft of literature that also takes into account multiple population demographics and other forms of early childhood education such as home care (see, for example, Elango, Gracia, Heckman & Hojman, 2015, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w21766>). Studies undertaken recently by researchers at the University of Melbourne (see <http://fbe.unimelb.edu.au/research/streams/health-and-wellbeing/Changing-lives>) point to the same conclusions.

From a Higher Education Provider (HEP) point of view, the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University believes the reform will boost the number of quality candidates enrolling in undergraduate and graduate entry initial teacher education programs and post graduate course work and higher degree research programs that specifically focus on early childhood education. In the current climate, all of these programs are high-risk programs for many HEPs because prospective students are opting to study the Primary Major.

In terms of the AITSL's Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, we foresee the need for some changes to nomenclature to be more inclusive of quality practices in early childhood contexts. For example:

- the use of the term 'student' (current AITSL term) vis-à-vis 'child' (the term preferred in early childhood contexts) (refers to multiple standards).
- a more overt appreciation of the facilitation role of early childhood teacher vis-à-vis 'strategies for teaching' (e.g. Standard 1.4)
- wording around 'assessment' and 'reporting' (e.g. Standard 2.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5) would need to account for the role of 'documentation' and 'communication' in early childhood contexts
- shift the focus from parents/carers to being 'involved' (e.g. Standard 3.7, 7.3) to being 'instrumental' and/or 'engaged' in curriculum planning

We see ACECQA's (2018) revised National Quality Standard for services (see https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/acecqa/files/NQF/RevisedNQSHandoutA4_2.pdf) as working hand-in-hand with the proposed National Teacher Registration and Teacher Standards. There's a compelling need for both standards, with one focusing on services and one focusing on the teacher.

A number of implicating factors will need to be worked through, including matters concerning a

commensurate salary, conditions of employment, access to professional development and career opportunities that are commonplace for registered teachers in the schooling sector. We don't expect that any of these matters will be easily resolved, but also do not want to lose sight of the benefits of following through with this reform.

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

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

Focus Questions

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

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

Focus Questions

- How do current teacher registration processes support graduates:
 - a) seeking provisional registration

Permission-to-teach is utilized when there is a lack of suitable registered teachers available. This is an important feature in QLD where there are remote school locations and this capability should be retained. However, recently the addition of the LANTITE as a hurdle for graduation has added another dimension that is of concern as students cannot graduate but may receive a permission-to-teach without graduation because they have not successfully completed the LANTITE. For example we currently have enrolled an initial teacher education (ITE) student who has been unsuccessful 3 times and is teaching, highly successfully, in this situation. This highlights of course that the LANTITE does little to add value but in this scenario the person is working full-time and the university is supporting them to try to meet the benchmark of the LANTITE test, while they are located remotely and have a fear of the test. The situation for all stakeholders is of concern, and the demands on the university are high.

- b) employed in different circumstances (e.g. casual, full-time or permanent)?

In QLD when the 200 days of experience are achieved the report is requested of the supervisor at that point. It may be that the supervisor has no long term knowledge of the person, especially when they are employed casually. This is not an infrequent occurrence, with more than 50% of teachers in

their first few years of teaching on a contract of some kind. Conversations with principal has revealed that they feel uncomfortable and unsupported to complete the report – so there is a need for some additional processes here.

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

We strongly support the notion of pre-registration for students undertaking ITE programs. This aligns with the work of ITE programs to commence the continuum of developing a professional identity that begins from day 1 of the ITE programs and extends well into the induction years of teaching. The opportunity for ITE students to be immersed in the culture of the profession through pre-registration is potentially a game changer.

The transactional issues are all able to be overcome. The major issue would be membership cost – who would bear this cost? According to university policy it is not acceptable to add layers of costs to ITE student expenses, hence some way of making the registration a free arrangement would be ideal. Universities are already wilting under the costs of delivery ITE that continue to escalate with unpredictability – including LANTITE fees (\$180 per student), accreditation costs (estimated between \$200 000 and \$1 000 000 per program), payment to mentors for supervision in the professional experience courses, development and implementation of the NARTE, developing and maintaining TPA tools, measuring impact for 2 years post-graduation. This cost issue has the potential to form a barrier to pre-registration as it may dictate how many ITE students universities can afford to support, if it is funded by the university. This is a problem, especially in parts of Australia that have a dire workforce shortage.

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

Focus Questions

- How do regulatory authorities (within legislated responsibility) ensure the fit and proper person requirement of registered teachers?
- How can teacher registration processes support a nationally consistent approach to satisfying the fit and proper person requirement of registered teachers, at the point of registration and throughout their teaching career?

Issuing a national registration number to both ITE, provisional and fully registered teachers would be an important strategy for adding accountability and transparency.

There are challenges in ITE in universities providing information to the registering authorities so ITE students would have to provide these directly.

It would appear that a clearing house or a national system of registration is ideal to meet these needs.