

High Achieving Teachers program evaluation

Interim report

October 2021

Introduction

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment has commissioned dandolo to evaluate the High Achieving Teachers program.

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) has commissioned dandolo to evaluate the implementation and impact of the High Achieving Teachers (HAT) program.

HAT program

The objective of the HAT program is to support the growth of alternative, employment-based pathways into teaching as a mechanism for improving access to quality teaching and education for all Australian students, regardless of their location.

The program funds two different employment-based pathways that recruit high-achieving university graduates and places them in secondary schools while they complete an initial teacher education course with a view to becoming fully-qualified teachers:

- Teach for Australia (TFA)'s Leadership Development Program (LDP) – three participant intakes over 2020, 2021 and 2022
- La Trobe University's Nexus program – three participant intakes over 2020, 2021 and 2022

Interim report

DESE asked dandolo to provide an early interim report on the HAT program (Wave 1) before commencing the substantive evaluation, which will run from October 2021 to mid-2023 (Wave 2). The purpose of this interim report is to provide an update on the implementation of the program to date and highlight any areas for further analysis.

We engaged with HAT participants and state and territory education departments to inform this interim report. We also analysed data provided by TFA and La Trobe University.

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Access to information for the interim report

We acknowledge that the timing of this interim report has implications for the information that is currently available to us on the LDP and Nexus.

At the time of writing, the 2020 and 2021 LDP and Nexus intakes had not completed their respective programs. This means that we did not have access to comprehensive data for a full cycle of either program (that falls within the HAT funding period).

In some cases, 2021 data is not yet available, which limits our ability to make observations about the 2021 intakes.

Quantitative and qualitative data indicates that COVID-19 responses in participating jurisdictions had – and continue to have – a significant impact on program implementation and participant views (for example, moving intensives online).*

For the LDP, we have used pre-2020 data where possible to contextualise our findings. For Nexus, however, we do not have the benefit of pre-COVID data because the program only commenced in 2020.

We acknowledge that Nexus is a brand-new program that commenced in 2020, whereas the LDP is a well-established program that has run for over 10 years with several iterations.

We did not directly engage with schools due to time constraints for the interim report, although we did have access to some school data such as principal surveys.

We plan to address these factors as part of the broader evaluation

* In addition, one of our data sources for the LDP – the 2020 Principal Survey – does not contain responses from about half of LDP partner schools due to the Victorian education department's decision to suspend research in schools during 2020.

Key findings

The LDP appears to be an effective employment-based teacher pathway. It's too early to make the same conclusion about Nexus, but the early signs are promising.

Section	LDP	Nexus	Page
Targeting schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jurisdictions and schools participate in the LDP and Nexus programs to help boost both the supply and quality of teachers in schools. Participants are placed in the most disadvantaged schools in Australia. Most are placed in regional and remote schools, and a large proportion teach in STEM-related subject areas (but a very small number in languages). 		13-14
Meeting school needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, schools are highly satisfied with LDP and Nexus participants. A large majority of principals would take on LDP and Nexus participants again and recommend them to other schools. 		15
Recruiting participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LDP has a rigorous recruitment process that focuses on skills-based competencies. The program is very competitive and recruits high-performing people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Nexus recruitment process emphasises values and knowledge. The process is somewhat competitive. Early evidence suggests that the process is recruiting high-performing people. 	17-20
Supporting participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants may need more support than graduate teachers in their first 6-12 months due to a lack of teaching experience and high workload. Participants are generally positive about the different types of support they receive as part of their respective programs. However, it appears the usefulness or quality of that support differs depending on the support type and school context. 		21-24
Participant completions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LDP and Nexus completions are tracking consistent with – or higher than – average completions for postgraduate ITE courses. Withdrawals for both programs were likely impacted by COVID. The LDP's intensity and workload is likely to drive some attrition, whereas income constraints and personal circumstances may be driving attrition for Nexus. 		25-26
Participant effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial evidence suggests that the LDP program produces highly effective teachers that perform as well or better than graduate teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's too early to tell the extent to which Nexus produces effective teachers, although initial evidence shows a large majority of participants feel very prepared to start teaching. 	27
Participant impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal views suggest that LDP participants are having a positive impact on student outcomes and broader school culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do not yet have sufficient data on Nexus to make similar observations. 	28

Note: Separate Nexus analysis is contained in pink boxes through this interim report where findings differ significantly from the LDP .

Indicative assessment against program objective

Our initial work suggests that the HAT program is achieving its objective. We plan to explore several areas in more detail in Wave 2 of the evaluation.

The objective of the HAT program is to:



Support the growth of alternative, employment-based pathways into the teaching profession...



...as a mechanism for improving access to quality teaching and education...



...for all Australian students, regardless of location.

However, we still need to explore a number of areas in Wave 2 before making a comprehensive assessment:

Indicative assessment based on current evidence:

- The HAT program is supporting TFA to grow the LDP in several jurisdictions as an employment-based pathway into teaching.
- The program has also enabled the establishment of the Nexus program, which serves as an alternative model that introduces participants to the classroom more incrementally.

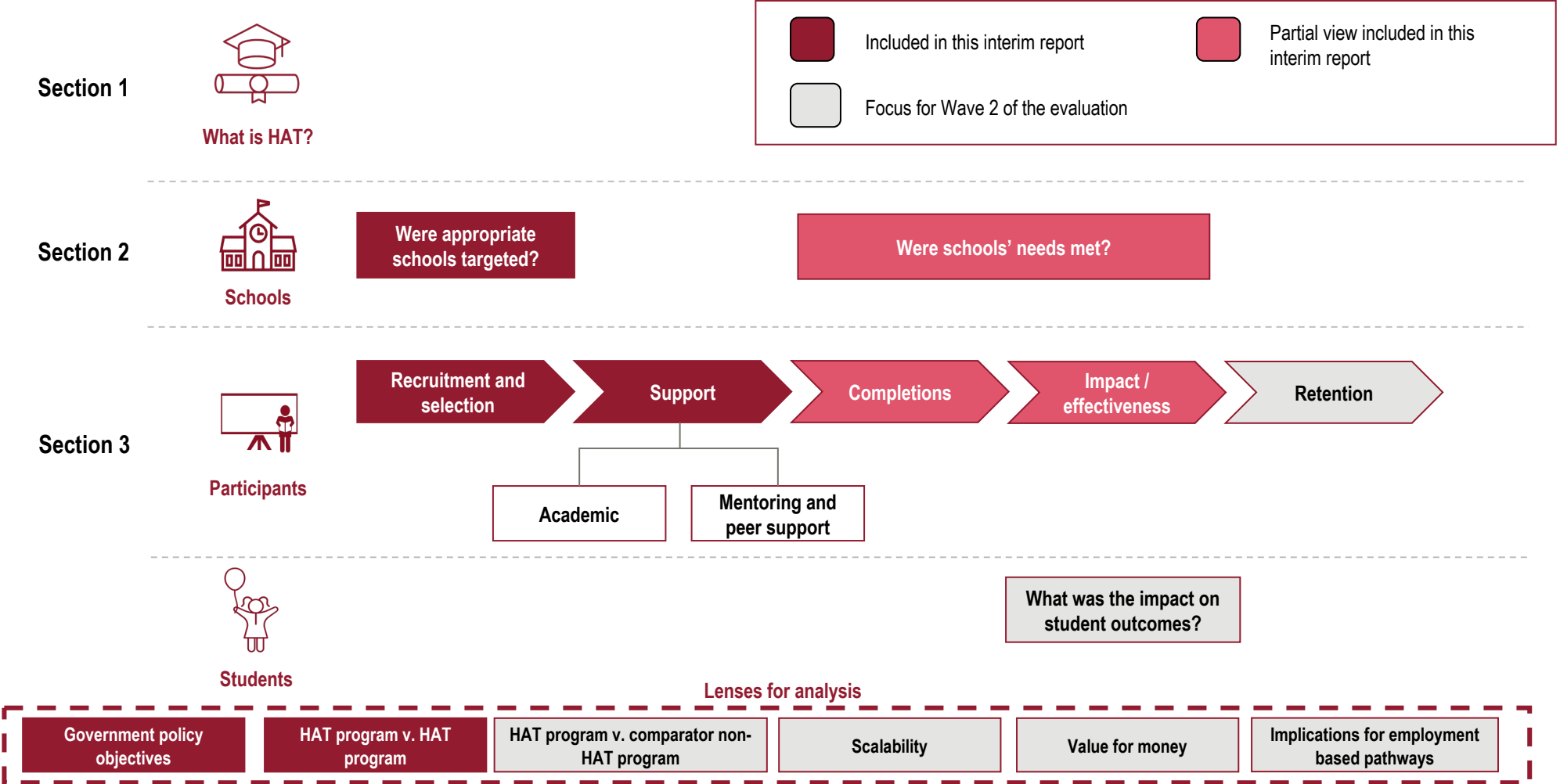
- Initial evidence suggests that LDP and Nexus participants are high-quality teachers in the classroom who start from a lower base compared to graduate teachers but develop rapidly over the course of their respective programs.
- Participants are also likely to have a positive impact on their broader school culture, including their colleagues' quality of teaching

- The HAT program is currently delivering for students in secondary schools across five jurisdictions in Australia.
- Almost all LDP and Nexus participants are placed in disadvantaged schools, and most are placed in regional and remote schools.

- There are several areas we explored for this interim report that we plan to examine in more detail.
- There are also several areas we have earmarked as a focus for Wave 2, particularly the effectiveness, impact and retention of program participants as well as scalability and value for money.

High level evaluation framework and report structure

This interim report assesses the HAT program against government policy objectives based on initial perceptions from schools, program participants and state and territory jurisdictions.



Areas for further analysis

We plan to further analyse several areas as part of Wave 2 fieldwork.

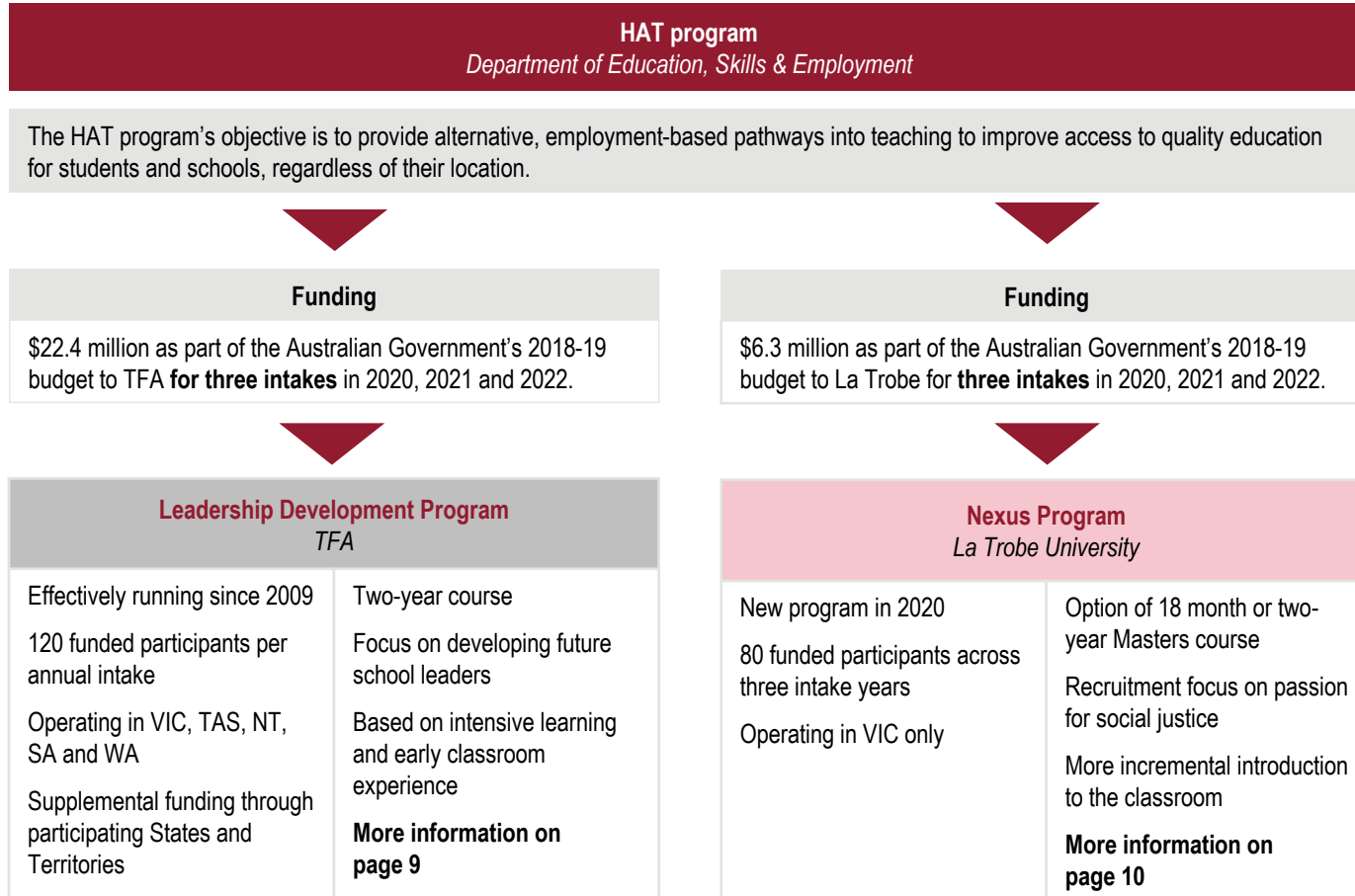
Section	Area for further analysis	Why it's important to analyse further
Meeting school needs	School-level view on whether LDP and Nexus participants are being matched to schools' needs effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No school-level data as part of Wave 1
Meeting school needs	Reasons for some jurisdictions not participating in the LDP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better understanding these reasons could be important in the context of scaling up the HAT program
Targeting schools	How the HAT program can be improved to meet supply challenges within specialist / special needs teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Some jurisdictions do not consider the HAT program to be designed to address supply challenges for special needs teachers
HAT participants	The quality of Nexus participants and diversity of LDP participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We have heard that Nexus recruits high-quality people, but did not have significant access to relevant data in Wave 1One jurisdiction told us that that LDP participants lack some diversity, but we need to explore this issue further
Recruiting participants	Why there were significantly less Nexus offers made and accepted in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The recruitment process may have impacted the size of the placed cohort
Supporting participants	Effectiveness of the ACU master's course for LDP participants and the La Trobe course for Nexus participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The master's course is a key program componentWe did not have significant access to relevant data in Wave 1There was some sentiment in our focus groups that the courses could be improved
Supporting participants	The consistency of support provided to LDP and Nexus participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The level of support given to participants is a key program component
Participant completions	The factors that contribute to program withdrawals and completion, as well as longer-term retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Retention rates are key to determining the sustainability of the programs
Participant impact	Whether LDP and Nexus participants are having a positive impact on student outcomes and broader school culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We did not have significant access to relevant data in Wave 1



Section 1: What is the HAT program?

What is the HAT program?

The HAT program currently provides funding to TFA and La Trobe University to provide alternative employment-based pathways into teaching.



(Total number of participants across the HAT program is 440 over three years)

LDP delivered by TFA

The LDP aims to break the cycle of educational inequity by recruiting, developing, supporting and placing high achievers in remote and disadvantaged areas across Australia. Over two years, participants with at least a Bachelor degree (or graduating that year) become teachers in their respective fields through concurrent study and paid placements.



Participants graduate at the end of the program with a Masters of Teaching (Secondary) from the Australian Catholic University through full-time study and intensives.



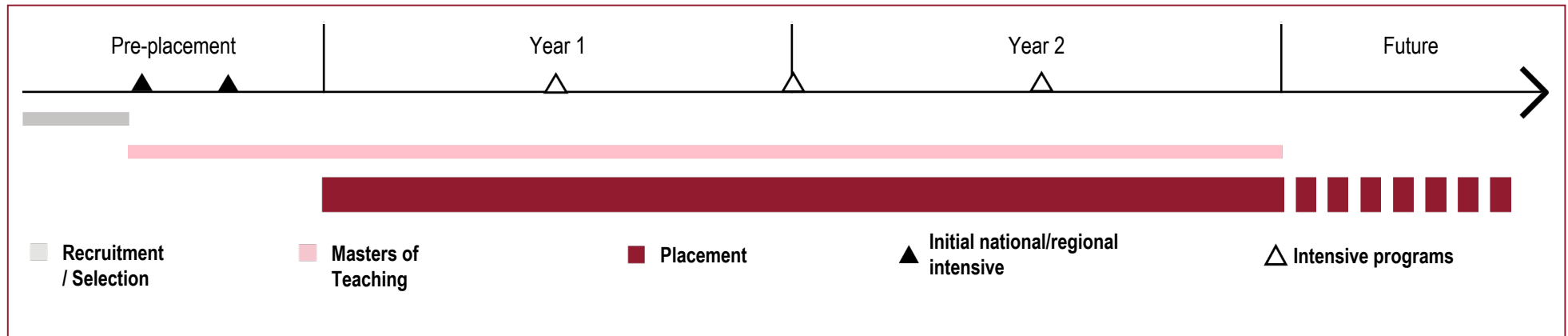
Currently operates in VIC, TAS, NT, SA and WA. Previously operated in the ACT.



Participants undertake concurrent study and 0.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching throughout the program.



Two-year program, with initial study and support beginning the October prior to first teaching year.



Mentoring and peer support

Teaching and Leadership Advisor
Experienced teacher who provides one-on-one coaching and observation.

ACU Academic Mentor
University professor who monitors progress throughout degree.

School Mentor
Teacher at placement schools who provides practical support.

LDP network
Associates and alumni who share experiences and support.

Academic components

Masters of Teaching (Secondary)
Participants graduate with a degree from Australian Catholic University.

National / Regional Initial Intensive
Foundational knowledge, skill development, networking.

Intensive programs
Connect with associates and alumni who share experiences and support.

Nexus program delivered by La Trobe University

Nexus aims to recruit, develop, support and place participants with a passion for social justice in low socioeconomic schools in Victoria. Participants study full-time and gradually increase their teaching load to become full-time paraprofessional teachers by their second year.



Participants graduate at the end of the program with a Masters of Teaching through full-time study and intensives.



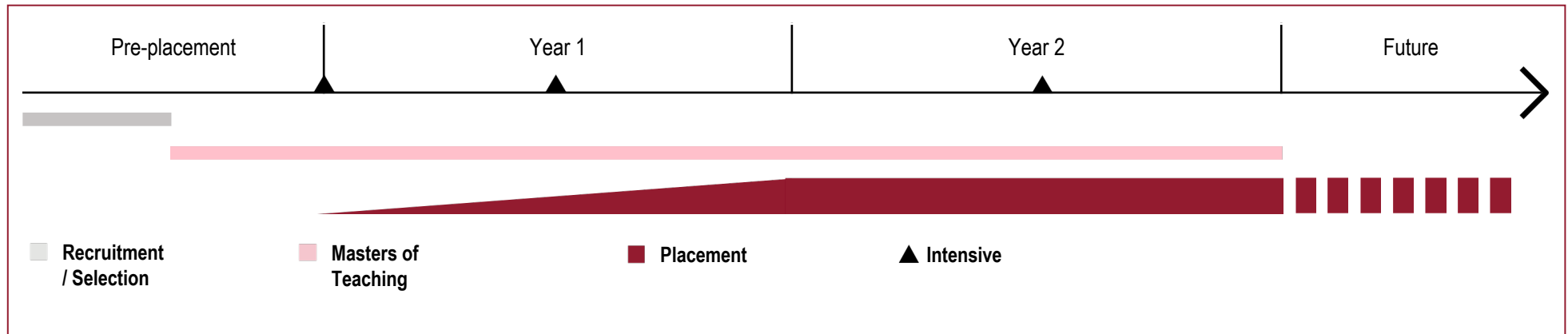
Operates in Victoria only.



- 0.2 FTE teaching support role in Year 1, Term 2
- 0.4 FTE teaching support role in Year 1, Terms 3 and 4
- Full-time paraprofessional teacher in Year 2 (with 0.8 teaching load)



Offers two-year or accelerated 18-month courses.



Mentoring and peer support

Classroom mentor

Experienced teacher at placement school who provides observation and support.

Nexus network

Associates and alumni who share experiences and support.

Academic components

Masters of Teaching (Secondary)

Participants graduate with a degree from La Trobe University.

Intensives

Three one-week intensives to build knowledge, skills and networking.

Choosing to participate in the LDP and Nexus

Jurisdictions consider the LDP to be a “tried and tested” employment-based teacher pathway that plays a relatively small but important role in their teacher workforce strategies, but they also are exploring other models that are more similar to Nexus.



Reasons for participating in the LDP and Nexus:

We heard that jurisdictions choose the LDP as their preferred employment-based teacher pathway because:

- It is already well-established and “tried and tested” compared to similar models
- TFA chooses high-quality participants through a rigorous selection process
- TFA has a particular focus on regional and disadvantaged schools, which is where jurisdictions face the biggest teacher supply challenges



Continued participation in the LDP:

We heard that in jurisdictions where TFA is more established, those jurisdictions are likely to continue supporting the LDP. In jurisdictions where the LDP is less established, however:

- Jurisdictions are aware that there is an increasingly diverse range of employment-based pathway options.
- Jurisdictions are exploring options that provide more “bespoke” models tailored to the context of their own jurisdictions (e.g., working with local universities to develop employment-based pathways for local people in local communities). These models are similar to Nexus, with a more gradual introduction to the classroom.



HAT's broader role

In jurisdictions with the LDP and Nexus, employment-based pathways form one of several policy responses to teacher supply challenges as part of their broader teacher workforce strategies. Other policy responses include:

- Accelerated postgraduate initial teacher education programs
- Employing final-year pre-service teachers
- Encouraging existing teachers to change subject specialisations

There is general sentiment that employment-based pathways play an important role, but can only be scaled to a certain threshold given:

- They target a very specific “type” of person in a limited pool (i.e. motivated, high-achieving people with specialised knowledge in specific subject areas).
- Schools have limited capacity to take on these people, who may require more intensive support compared to graduate teachers (particularly in more disadvantaged schools).



Reasons for non-participation in the LDP:

Jurisdictions who do not have the LDP cited a number of reasons for their decision:

- TFA associates are “expensive” compared to other policy responses to address teacher supply challenges
- Perceived poor retention
- Perceived quality issues, given the intensive and employment-based nature of TFA training
- “Industrial push back” from teacher unions and principal associations
- State and territory legislative / regulatory barriers relating to teacher registration
- One jurisdiction was concerned about a perceived lack of cultural diversity in TFA cohorts

These jurisdictions are actively exploring and / or using several alternative employment-based pathways, including:

- Scholarships and employment-based pathways for mid-career professionals
- Teacher cadetships for Year 12 students
- Teacher aide roles for pre-service teachers



Section 2: HAT schools

Targeting schools

Jurisdictions and schools participate in the HAT program to help boost both the supply and quality of teachers in schools.



Schools participate in the LDP and Nexus programs primarily because they can access **high-performing people** with demonstrated academic success and a high-level of enthusiasm for and dedication to teaching. They are relatively less concerned about filling vacancies and developing their leadership pipeline.

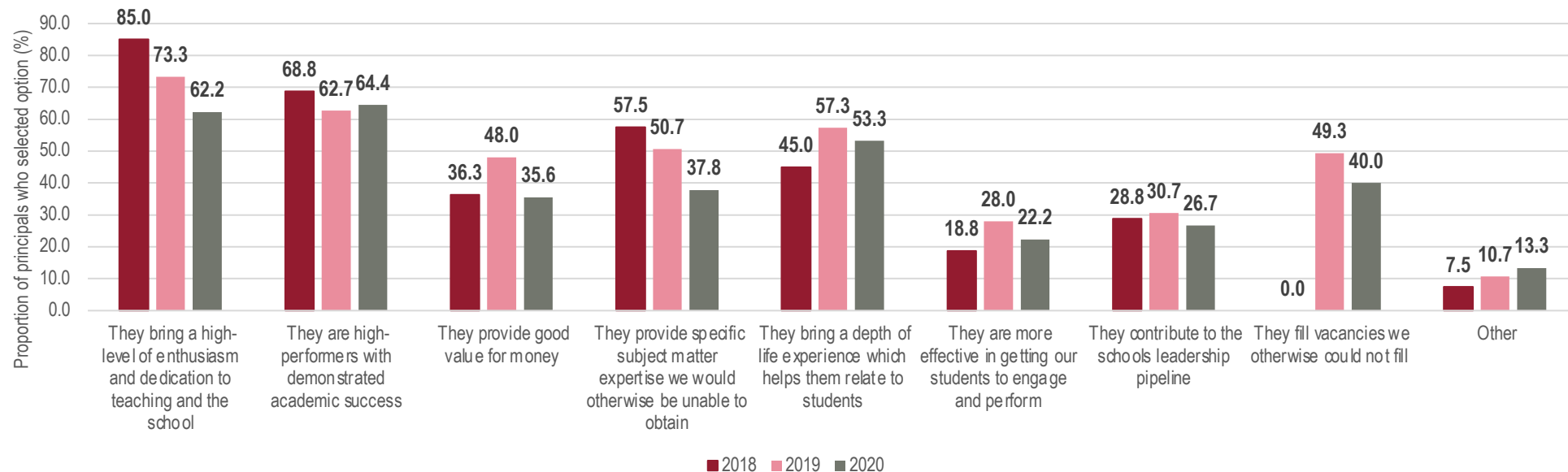


Jurisdictions told us they participate in the LDP and Nexus programs primarily to help address **teacher supply challenges** in two key areas:

- Regional, rural and / or remote areas
- Specific subject areas, particularly STEM and languages other than English.

Jurisdictions also experience supply challenges with specialist / special needs teachers, but they do not consider the HAT program to be designed to address this need. We will explore this further in Wave 2.

Why principals would choose to recruit LDP participants in the future (2018-2020)



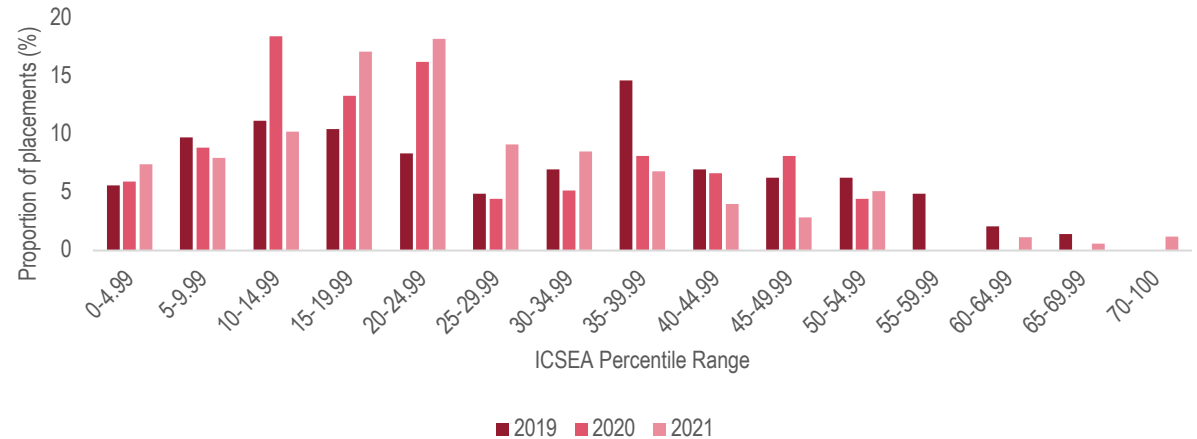
Targeting schools

HAT participants are placed in the most disadvantaged schools across Australia.



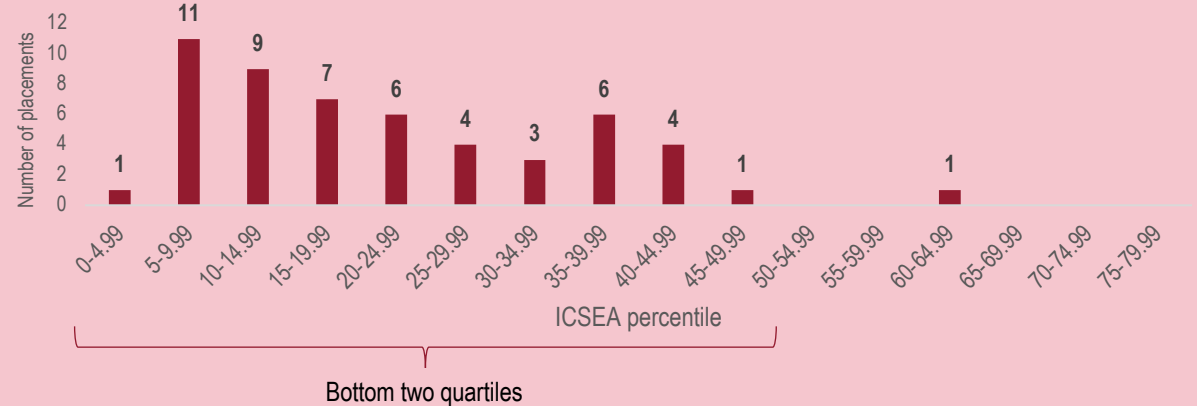
Almost all LDP placements are in the bottom two ICSEA quartiles (below the national ICSEA median score of 1000). About half of placements are in the bottom quartile, which represents the most disadvantaged schools in Australia.

ICSEA percentile of schools hosting LDP participants (2019-2021)



Almost all Nexus placements are also in the bottom two ICSEA quartiles. Nearly three quarters of Nexus placements are in the bottom quartile, including some of the most disadvantaged schools in Victoria.*

ICSEA percentile of schools hosting Nexus participants (2020-2021)



* Note – ICSEA scores were unavailable for three schools (Greater Shepparton College, Rubicon Outdoor College and the Pavilion).

Meeting school needs

Overall, schools are highly satisfied with LDP and Nexus participants.

LDP:

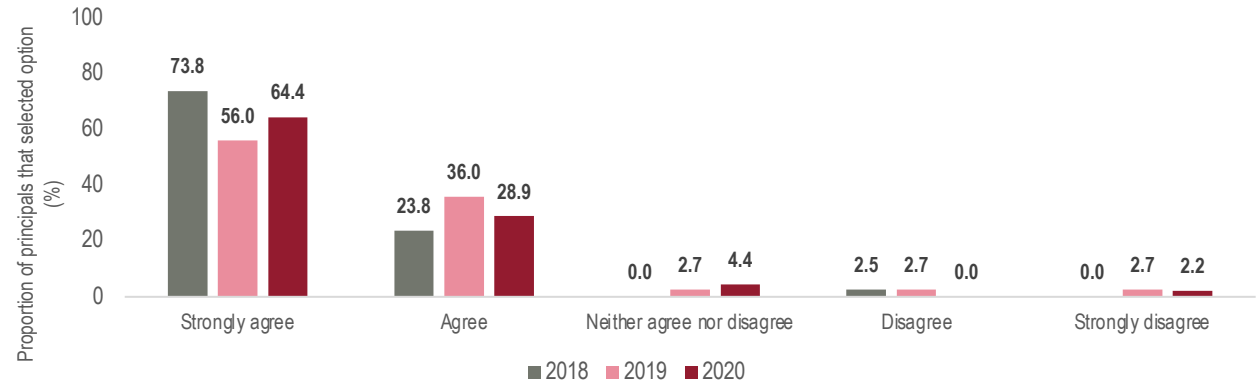


Schools are very satisfied with the LDP participants in their schools.



88% of schools would hire LDP participants again and most are highly likely to recommend hiring participants to a friend or colleague.

Principal satisfaction with LDP participants (2018-2020)



Nexus:

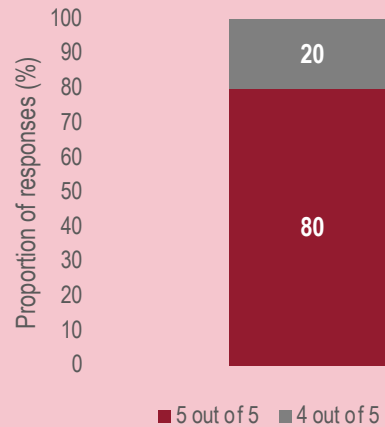


Schools appear very satisfied with Nexus participants, although we do not have comprehensive data.

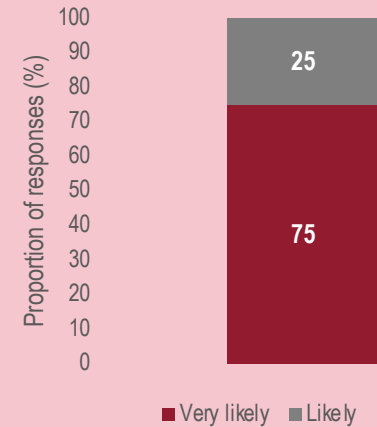


Three quarters of schools have indicated they would be very likely to take on Nexus participants in the future.

Principal satisfaction with Nexus participants overall (2020)



Principal likelihood of taking Nexus participants in the future (2020)*



* The sample size for this data set is small. We plan to undertake further fieldwork on school satisfaction as part of Wave 2.

Sources:

Annual principal and school mentor surveys (2018-2020)

Nexus School Satisfaction Survey Data (Dec 2020)

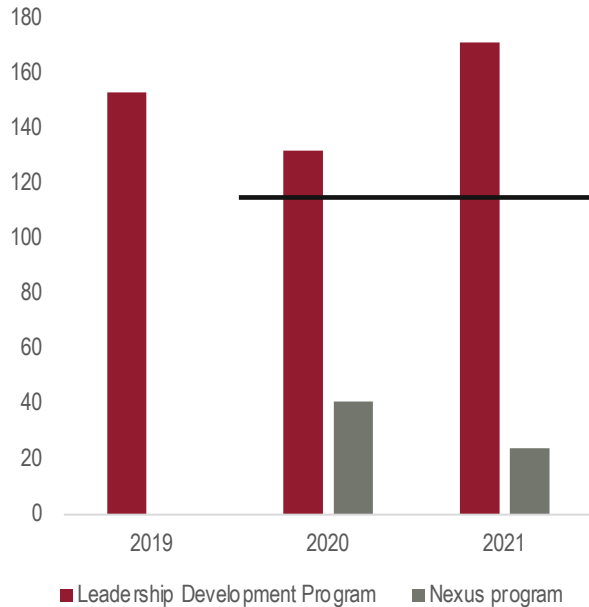


Section 3: HAT participants

Number of LDP and Nexus participants

LDP and Nexus currently operate in five jurisdictions, but most current placements are in WA and VIC.

LDP and Nexus participants who commenced placement (2019-2021)



120 LDP participants per intake funded through HAT

All Nexus participants are funded through HAT

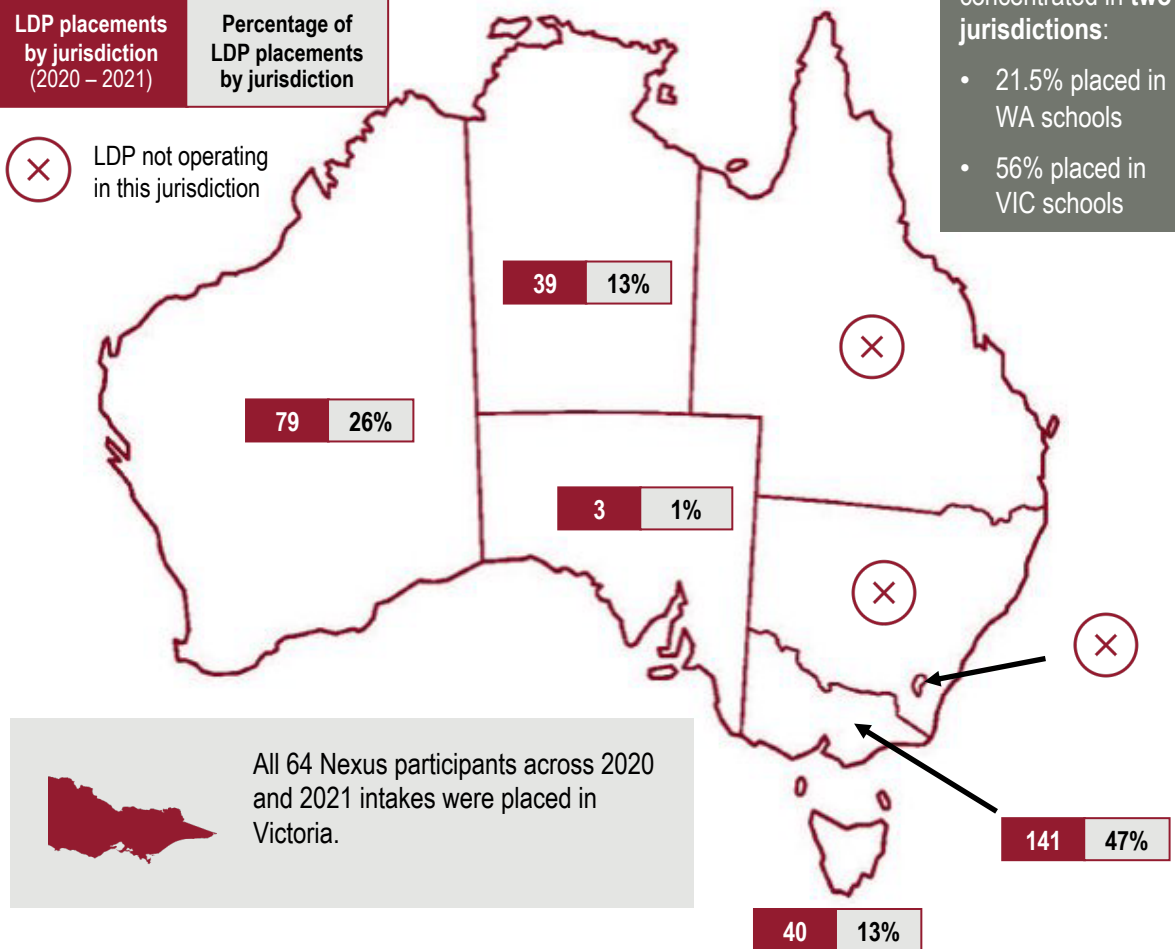
Placement distribution of LDP*

LDP placements by jurisdiction (2020 – 2021)

Percentage of LDP placements by jurisdiction



LDP not operating in this jurisdiction



HAT participation is concentrated in two jurisdictions:

- 21.5% placed in WA schools
- 56% placed in VIC schools

All 64 Nexus participants across 2020 and 2021 intakes were placed in Victoria.

Demographics of HAT participants

Both TFA and Nexus participants typically come from STEM backgrounds, have a prior interest in teaching, and were drawn to the 'hands-on' approach of the program. Nexus participants also mentioned the focus on social justice as an attractive feature.

LDP participants (2020-2021)



43% female, 37% male, 10% undisclosed or prefer not to say



22% career professionals (graduated 6+ years ago), 49% early career (graduated 1-5 years ago) and 29% graduates (graduating in the year of application)



Highest proportion of applicants from Victoria (29%)



1 participant identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

"I identify as a female Australian and I'm from Victoria. I graduated 2 years ago with a degree in Maths, and since graduating, I've worked in the Engineering industry.

My placement with TFA was in the Melbourne metropolitan area for a school with an ICSEA score of 946.

I teach STEM – Maths and Physics and I've enjoyed my experience so much that I would now like to pursue a career in teaching. I didn't think that I would before my TFA experience."

"I identify as a male Australian and I'm from Northern Territory. I will be completing university this year with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

I've always wanted to pursue a career in teaching, even before I'd heard of the TFA program.

I am from the city but my placement is in remote NT at a school with an ICSEA score of 829. I am teaching English and my experience has confirmed my desire to pursue a career in the profession."

Nexus participants (2020-2021)



59% female, 39% male (1 non-binary)



29% recent graduates and 71% 'career changers'



Almost all applicants from Victoria (97%)



Average age 31 years old*



1 participant identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

"I am originally from regional Victoria, raised near Wodonga. I have previously gained experience teaching through a variety of experiences, including tutoring for La Trobe.

I took part in Nexus because I wanted a meaningful way to contribute to our collective future, and I believe teaching is an excellent way to do this. I also wanted the chance to return to teach in the area I grew up, so I took a placement based on the Albury-Wodonga Campus.

I teach Humanities and English."

"I started my Nexus Placement in my final year at La Trobe. I am studying for Bachelor of Science.

Originally from Gippsland, I passionately believe that high-quality teachers are needed in rural areas. The COVID-19 pandemic had a huge effect on the way we teach, transitioning from face-to-face to online learning. The experience gave me insight into what aspects of online teaching work, and do not work, and create lesson plans accordingly.

I am teaching Biology and Chemistry at a school near Mildura."

Recruiting participants – LDP

The LDP has a rigorous recruitment process that focuses on skills-based competencies and recruits very high-performing people. The program is very appealing and highly competitive.

The LDP...



Has a rigorous recruitment process that assesses a range of skills-based competencies* across three key stages:

1. Online application: Candidates are scored against answers and overall, for written communication.
2. Virtual interview: Candidates are scored based on a 45-minute online interview.
3. Selection day: Candidates are scored during a five-hour virtual selection day including a sample teaching lesson, group activity and parent-teacher interview.



Recruits very high-performing people:

- Jurisdictions told us that the quality of candidates recruited through a rigorous process was one of the LDP's greatest strengths.
- Data shows that candidates who are eventually placed through the program score about 10% higher against the competencies compared to the average candidate, particularly on communication and influencing ability.**



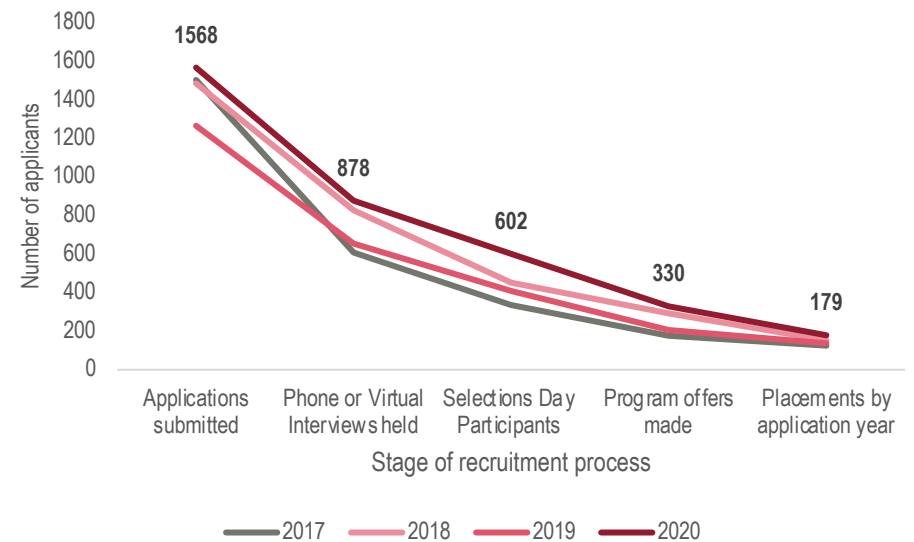
Has applicant numbers that reduce evenly during the recruitment process, but we plan to undertake more fieldwork to determine whether there are any meaningful barriers to participation (e.g., reasons for applicant withdrawals). Initial data suggest that the LDP recruitment process is better than or at least equivalent to similar recruitment processes for other programs.



Is very appealing and highly competitive for prospective participants (see graph below). Only about 10% of applicants ended up commencing the program in 2021. HAT participants in focus groups told us that they were attracted by:

- The program's "hands on" approach and support networks
- The ability to "hit the ground running"
- The ability to earn an income in the early stages of the program

LDP applicant stages (2017-2020)*



* Commitment to TFA's mission and values (including educational equity); communication and influencing ability; humility, respect and empathy; leadership; learning and self-evaluation; planning and organisation; problem-solving; and resilience.

** Applicant Data (Pipeline 2017-2020).

** Example figures represent 2020 application data for the 2021 intake.

Recruiting participants – Nexus

The Nexus program has a standard recruitment process that emphasises values and knowledge. The process is somewhat competitive and initial evidence suggests that it is reasonably successful at recruiting high-performing people into the program.

The Nexus program...



Has a recruitment process that:

- Comprises standard written statement and interview stages.
- Assesses a range of values and knowledge-based criteria, including a demonstrated passion for social justice and demonstrated understanding of cultural diversity.*



Is somewhat competitive for prospective participants (see graph to right):

- Nexus has received around 150 applications in each of its first two years. About 22% of applicants end up commencing the program on average.
- In addition to the factors on the previous page, Nexus participants told us they were attracted to the program by the more gradual introduction to the classroom and “focus on social justice”.



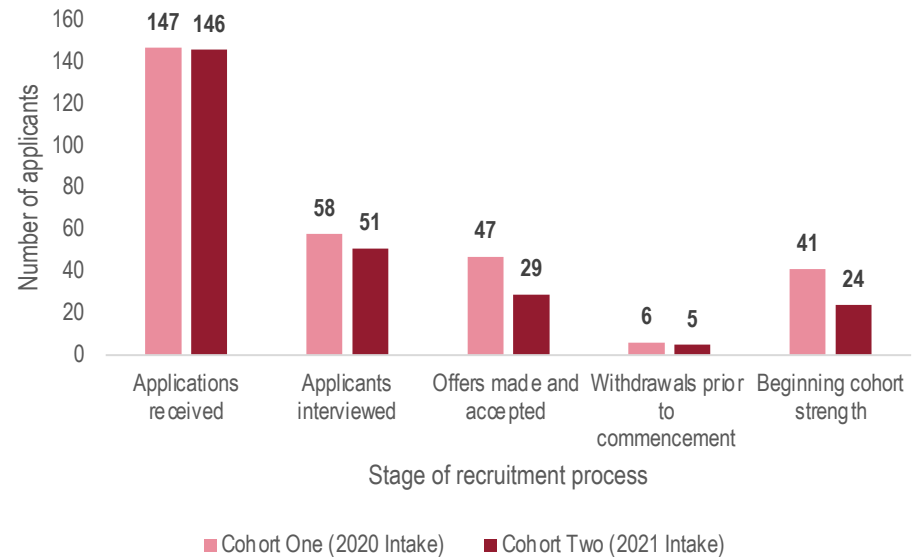
Had different recruitment patterns in its first year compared to the second. In 2020, a large majority of candidates interviewed were eventually placed. In 2021, significantly fewer offers were made and accepted, which impacted the size of the placed cohort. We plan to undertake more fieldwork in Wave 2 to determine the factors that caused this (e.g. quality of applicants).

Social justice is something that I have always really cared about. I liked that the program focused on addressing those specific needs in students and schools. - Nexus participant



According to our interview with Victoria, Nexus **recruits high-performing people into the program.** We plan to undertake further fieldwork in Wave 2 to better understand cohort profiles.

Nexus recruitment (2020-2021)



* Other criteria includes: Previous university degree with good results; knowledge in high-needs areas, such as STEM and Special Education; strong interpersonal skills, resilience and the drive to become a high-quality secondary teacher in Victoria; undergraduate degree in a discipline other than teaching; permanent resident or citizen of Australia.

Supporting participants – LDP

LDP participants may have high support needs initially, but jurisdictions and schools are generally satisfied with the level and diversity of support provided.



Jurisdictions and schools were **generally satisfied** with the level and diversity of support provided to LDP participants by TFA, although some jurisdictions suggested that TFA should provide more support in the first six months of the program. We plan to explore this issue further in Wave 2.

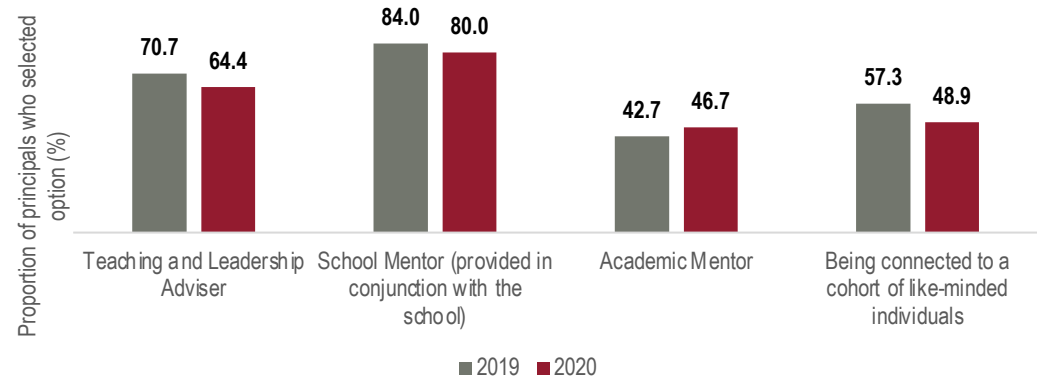
See page 9 for a summary of LDP support



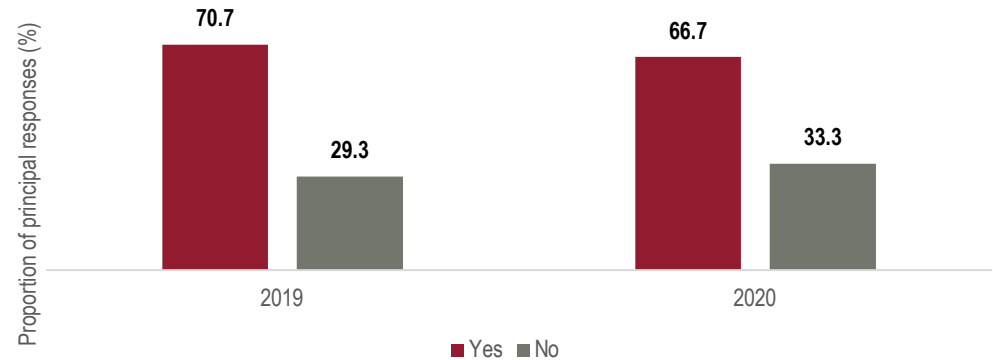
Jurisdiction interviews, focus groups and survey data suggest that LDP participants may **need more support** than graduate teachers in their first 6-12 months due to their lack of teaching/work experience and their high work/study load (see graph to right) but also the nature of the schools in which they teach.

Participants and jurisdictions told us that associates need the most support with behaviour management, special needs and cultural responsiveness, as well as instruction and curriculum development.

Support for LDP participants that schools find most valuable (2019-2020)



Schools views on whether LDP participants need extra support (2019-2020)*



* Note: In this survey it appears principals interpreted 'extra support' variously as support provided in addition to that usually provided to graduate teachers / teachers generally and that provided by TFA.

Source: Annual principal and school mentor surveys (2018-2020)

Supporting participants – LDP

Overall, LDP participants are positive about the support they received from peers and mentors; however, views tend to differ by support type and school context.



LDP participants in our focus groups considered their **peer network** was the most effective and reliable source of support, despite being more ad hoc and informal.

“The National Initial Intensive is possibly the most important part of my TFA experience, because it set me up with the cohort relationships and peer support that have ultimately gotten me through this program.” – LDP participant

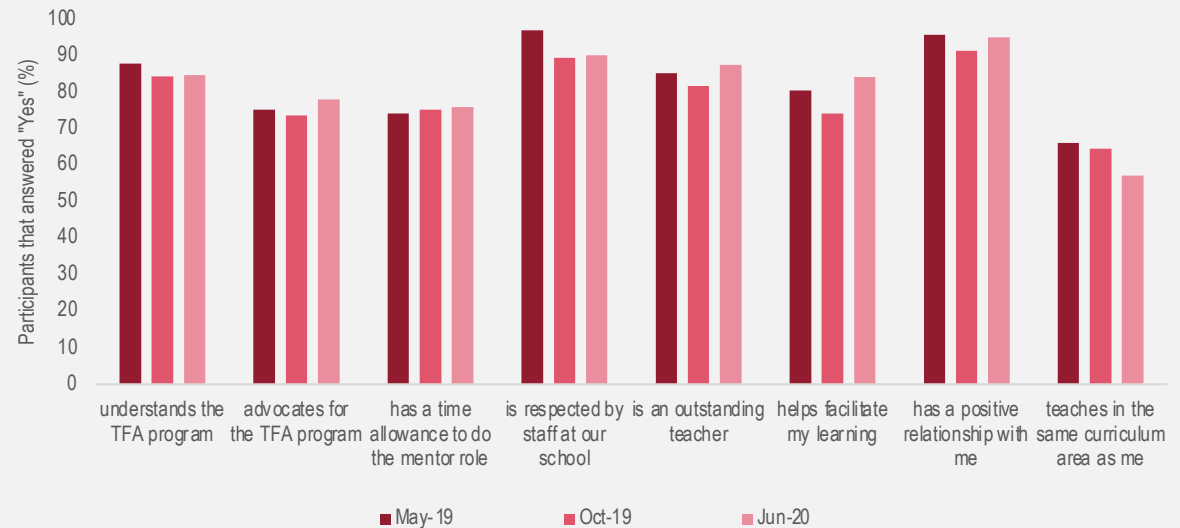


LDP participants generally rated **school mentor support** highly (see graph to right). However, participant views in our focus groups about all three types of mentor varied significantly depending on the participant and school.

Some participants considered their mentors very supportive whereas others thought their mentors could be more helpful or present (in some cases there was regular “switching” or roles being left vacant). School mentors appear to be the most inconsistent support offered to participants, but we also acknowledge they were the support most likely to have been significantly impacted by COVID responses (e.g., closed schools, higher workload).

“Everyone’s experiences of each kind of mentor offered in the LDP are extremely variable and not consistently positive.” – LDP participant

Participant views on whether “My school mentor...”*



Support from TLAs was also rated highly.

See page 9 for a summary of LDP support

* Note: These results are largely consistent with results from November 2020 and August 2021, which were reported differently.

Source: Associate Support Survey Data (2018-2020)

Supporting participants – LDP and Nexus

Overall, LDP participants were positive about the support they received during TFA and regular intensives.

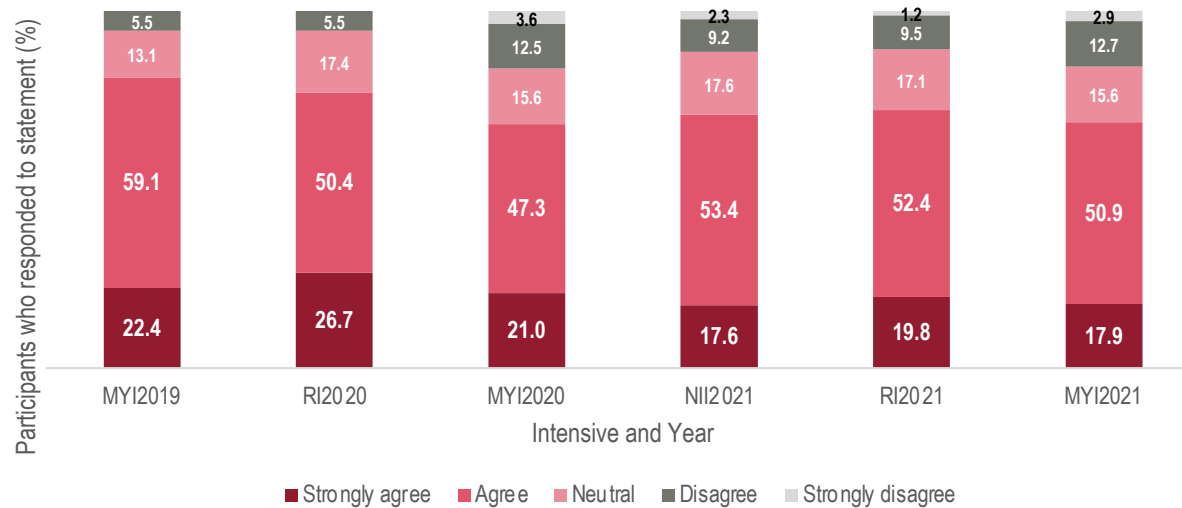


LDP participants were generally positive about the learning **intensives** run throughout the program (see graph below). Participants were particularly positive about practical classroom content such as the Berry St Education Model.

Our focus groups indicated some concerns about session structuring, the lack of reflection time and general information overload.

Overall, the delivery of intensives over 2020 and 2021 appears to have been impacted to some extent by COVID responses (e.g., the need to move intensives online). Respondents most often considered introduction to peers and networking as the most beneficial aspect of intensives, and that the transition to online has made those connection difficult.

Participant views on whether intensives met their needs (2019-2021)*



We plan to undertake more fieldwork on the effectiveness of the LDP and Nexus masters programs in Wave 2.



We did not have access to significant quantitative or qualitative data on the respective masters courses for this interim report.



There was some sentiment in our focus groups that courses could be better integrated into the overall program and focus more on practical content that prepares participants for the classroom immediately.



Some participants indicated that course content could be more challenging, to better justify the heavy workload outside of teaching hours.



Participants were positive about the support provided through faculty. For the LDP, we do not yet have direct quantitative data on the effectiveness of ACU mentors. We plan to collect more data in Wave 2.

Source: Associate Surveys – Intensives (2018-2021)

See page 10 for a summary of LDP support

Supporting participants – Nexus

Nexus participants appear positive about the support they received during the program.

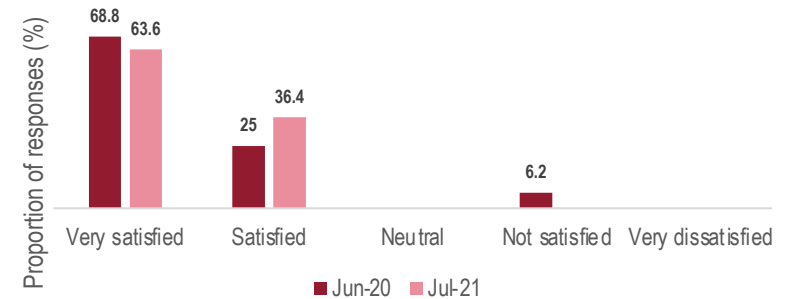


Nexus participants were generally positive about the learning **intensives** run throughout the program. They said the intensives were well structured and well run – giving participants the opportunity to connect and network with each other. Some participants said the intensives could have been more challenging.

Similar to the LDP, we did not have access to significant quantitative or qualitative data on the La Trobe course in Wave 1. We plan to undertake more fieldwork on this in Wave 2.

“I have enjoyed the opportunities to tell, listen to, and discuss specific events and incidents with other Nexus teachers, particularly early in the program. This is incredibly useful for building confidence and unpacking the very complex interactions that occur in the school environment.” – Nexus participant

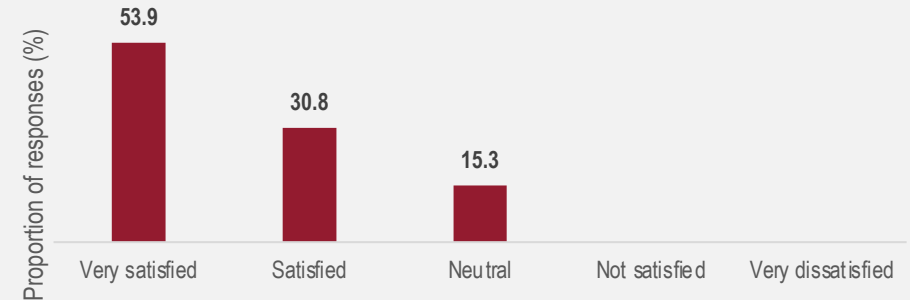
Nexus participant satisfaction with intensive (2020-2021)



A large majority of Nexus participants were satisfied or very satisfied with their **mentors** (see graph to right).

A large majority of Nexus participants were satisfied or very satisfied that the Nexus program had supported their learning generally. Most felt well prepared to start teaching after the first year of the program.

Nexus participant satisfaction with mentor (2020)



Nexus participants found the incremental nature of teaching to be positive in terms of preparation for the role, but some found it difficult to feel integrated with the school community in their first year with only 1-2 days per week on campus.

“Having been at the school for the year prior (to starting full-time teaching) I knew the staff and I knew who I should approach if I have questions. I also had a general idea of the student cohort and what to expect. This made my transition to paraprofessional and eventually graduate teacher much smoother... I feel that this system would really benefit long term teacher retention.” – Nexus participant

Participant completions

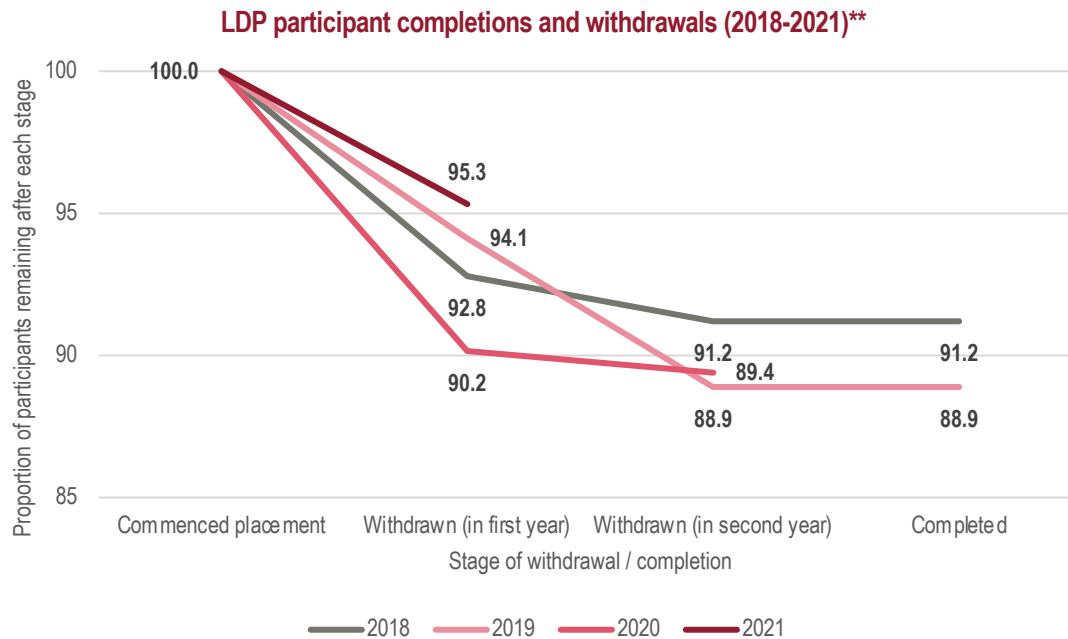
LDP and Nexus completions are tracking consistent with – or higher than – average completions for postgraduate initial teacher education courses in Australia.



LDP completion rates are generally high, however the 2020 intake has been somewhat impacted by COVID responses (see graph below). Completions are on track to recover.



Overall, however, LDP completions in 2020 and 2021 are tracking higher than the average completion rates for undergraduate (51%) and postgraduate (78%) initial teacher education courses in Australia.*

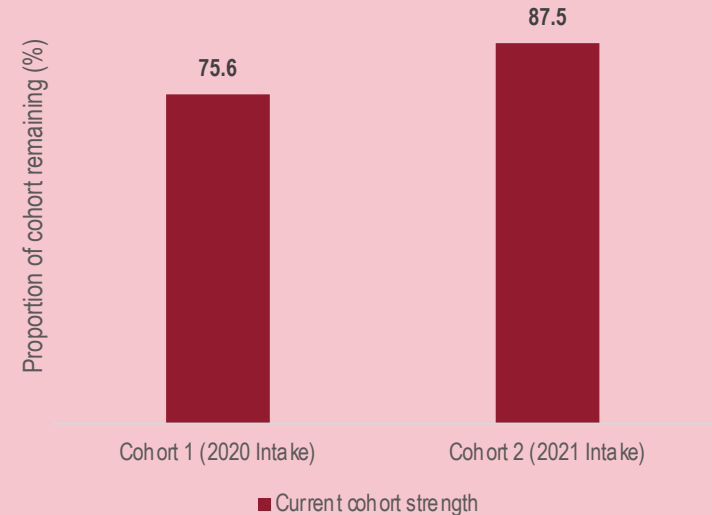


The first and second intakes of **Nexus** participants are yet to complete the program, but there have been some withdrawals to date.



These withdrawals have increased over the duration of the program (see graph below) but are still broadly consistent with average completion rates for postgraduate initial teacher education courses.

Nexus participant withdrawals (2020-2021)



* <https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/research-evidence/ite-data-report/2019/aitsl-ite-data-report-2019.pdf>

** Based on the number of participants that commenced their placement in a school.

Sources:

Participant Data (Cohorts 2018-2021)

Nexus Participant Database

Participant completions

We need to better understand the factors that contribute to program withdrawals and completion, as well as longer-term retention, which we will explore in Wave 2.

More work is needed on factors that contribute most to completion and non-completion.



About three quarters of LDP participants are consistently satisfied with their LDP experience overall (see graph below).

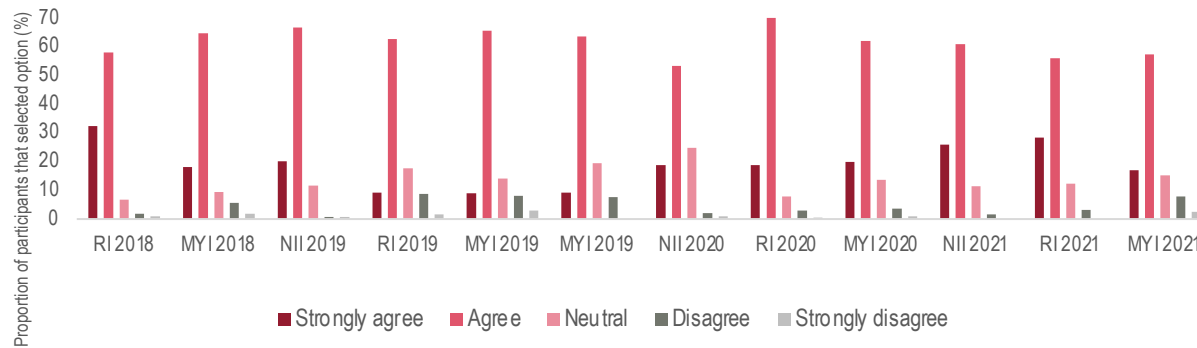


Early evidence suggests that LDP attrition at times results from TFA's "all or nothing" approach, which effectively requires associates to manage full time study and work from the early stages of the program. Some LDP participants also cited a lack of integration into their school community and culture, which was exacerbated by COVID responses (e.g., school closures).



Some stakeholders have suggested that Nexus withdrawals are largely due to COVID responses and Nexus's more diverse participant cohort ("They are not always young people who can drop everything and move on short notice" – stakeholder interview). Nexus participants also indicated that their income was too low and that specific details of reimbursement were not always made clear to participants.

LDP participant views on whether they were satisfied overall with the entirety of their program experience*



* As measured at each intensive.

Source: Associate Surveys – Intensives (2018-2021)

We plan to explore longer-term retention in Wave 2.



We heard that many LDP participants remain at their schools after the program or move to other disadvantaged schools. Some participants also progress to school leadership roles (e.g., head of subject area, assistance principal) and roles in local education departments.



We also heard some concerns about the retention of HAT participants, particularly in jurisdictions that receive a lot of LDP participants from other locations. Some jurisdictions, however, noted low retention across first-year teachers more broadly. Some jurisdictions are addressing low retention by offering longer contracts, permanent contracts, High Achieving and Lead Teacher (HALT) certification and other incentives.



HAT participants in focus groups indicated that their intentions to continue teaching at their current school are closely linked to the level of support they receive in their specific context.

"In five years' time, I see myself in a leading teacher role at school in a low socioeconomic or rural area. I hope to work at my current school for a couple of years after the program before moving to another school where I can further develop my career." – Nexus participant

Participant effectiveness

Evidence suggests that the LDP program produces highly effective teachers. It is too early to tell the extent to which the Nexus program produces effective teachers, but the early evidence is reasonably positive.

LDP



Jurisdictions highlighted the quality of LDP participants as one of the program's greatest strengths, despite some understandable inconsistency between LDP participants.

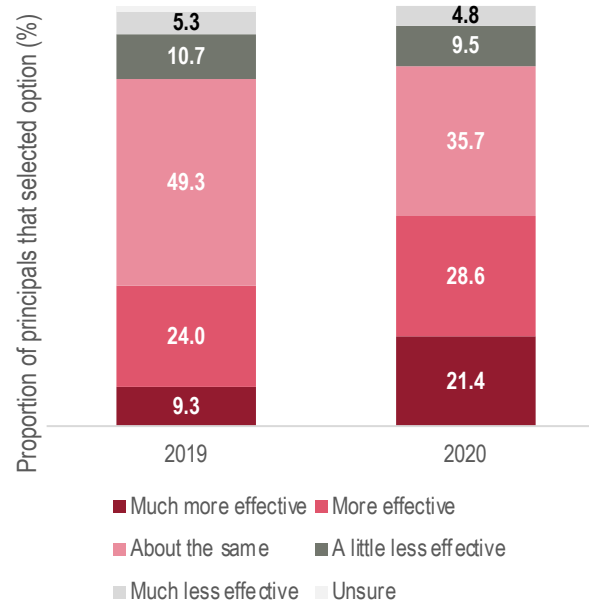


Jurisdictions told us that LDP participants generally start at a lower base compared to graduate teachers, but progress more rapidly over the medium term (particularly from the 6-12 month point).



In 2020, half of principals surveyed said that LDP participants towards the end of their first year were more or much more effective than graduate teachers against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (see graph to right).

Effectiveness of first year LDP participants against APST compared to graduate teachers (2019-2020)

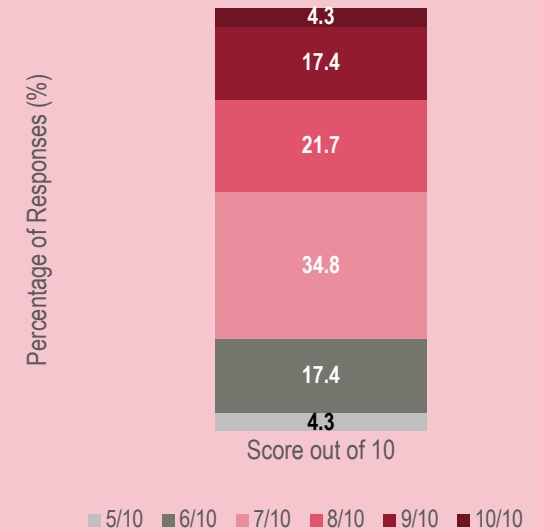


Nexus

It's too early to tell the extent to which the Nexus program produces effective teachers.

However, initial evidence for the first intake suggests that a large majority of participants feel very prepared to start teaching in the second year of the program (see graph below).

Extent to which Nexus participants feel prepared to start teaching (2020)



Source:

Annual principal and school mentor surveys (2018-2020)
School Preparedness Survey Data Cohort 1

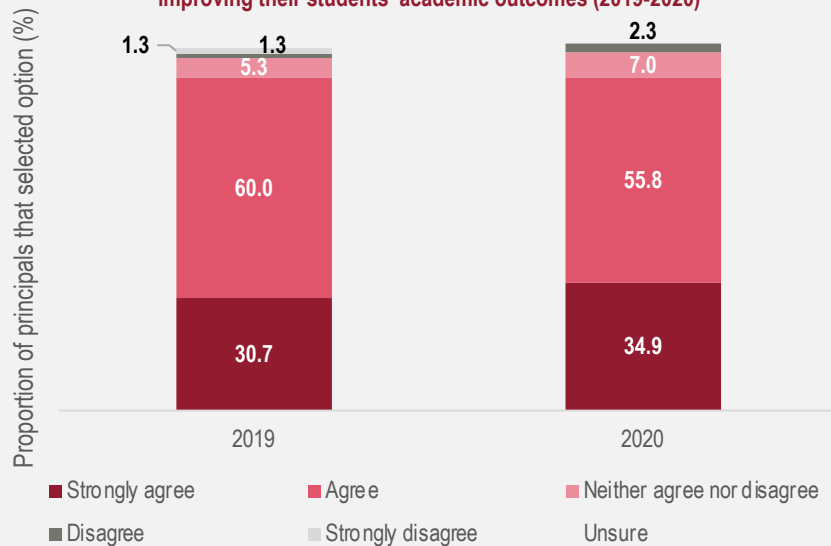
Participant impact

There is early evidence to suggest that LDP participants are having a positive impact on student outcomes and broader school culture, but we will explore this more in Wave 2.

Student outcomes

In 2020, an overwhelming number of principals agreed that LDP participants had been successful in improving their students' academic, non-academic and socio-emotional outcomes.

Principal views on whether LDP participants have been successful in improving their students' academic outcomes (2019-2020)



We do not yet have sufficient data on the **Nexus program** to make observations on whether participants are having a positive impact on student outcomes and broader school culture.

School culture outcomes



In 2020, half of principals surveyed said that LDP participants were more or much more effective than graduate teachers “as involved and participating members” of school staff. Over a third said they were more or much more effective in building school capacity.*



Further, principals overwhelmingly agreed that participants had been successful in:*

- Demonstrating leadership among school staff
- Improving the teaching practice of other teachers
- Contributing to the professional culture of the school



About a third of principals generally agreed that partnering with TFA led to the following being more frequent in their school*, however these had been impacted by COVID:

- Classroom observation and feedback
- Mentoring of early career teachers
- Induction of new teachers
- Professional development in mentoring and coaching

“The experiences they’ve had often are able to be capitalised on in other areas within school life and improvement, other than just in the classroom” – Principal

“TFA associates bring values that they are courageous in demonstrating and hold others to account in a positive way” – Principal