



Australian Government

STRONG BEGINNINGS

Report of the Teacher
Education Expert Panel

2023



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The document must be attributed as *Strong Beginnings: Report of the Teacher Education Expert Panel*.

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FOREWORD

The Hon Jason Clare MP
Minister for Education
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
30 June 2023

Dear Minister

I provide to you the final report of the Teacher Education Expert Panel (the Panel), *Strong Beginnings: Report of the Teacher Education Expert Panel*.

You appointed the Panel in September 2022 to provide advice on key issues raised at the Teacher Workforce Shortage Roundtable and in the report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education (QITE) Review.

Teachers are central to improving student outcomes but too many prospective teachers do not finish their initial teacher education (ITE) degrees, while many beginning teachers leave the profession early in their careers.

The Panel was asked to provide advice on four reform areas. Correspondingly, the report contains key findings and recommendations designed to strengthen ITE programs to deliver well-prepared beginning teachers; enhance the link between performance and funding of ITE; improve the quality of practical experience in teaching; and improve postgraduate ITE programs for mid-career entrants.

We heard from a range of stakeholders and thank the organisations and individuals who took part in consultation processes or provided written submissions. We also extend our appreciation to the Secretariat from the Department of Education in supporting the Panel.

We believe that the recommendations outlined in this report, once implemented, will improve the national consistency and quality of ITE programs and lay strong foundations to support beginning teachers to successfully transition into and remain in the profession.

Yours sincerely



Professor Mark Scott AO

Chair

On behalf of Panel members

Emeritus Professor Bill Loudon AM

Professor Michele Simons

Dr Jenny Donovan

Mr Andrew Peach

Ms Rebecca West

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Accreditation Standards and Procedures	Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures
AERO	Australian Education Research Organisation
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
ATRA	Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities
ATWD	Australian Teacher Workforce Data
CSP	Commonwealth Supported Place
EAL/D	English as an additional language/dialect
ITE	Initial teacher education
NTWAP	National Teacher Workforce Action Plan
QITE Review	Quality Initial Teacher Education Review
Teacher Standards	Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
TEMAG	Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group
TPA	Teaching Performance Assessment
TRA	Teacher Regulatory Authority

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The importance of great teachers cannot be overstated. When we are young, we can explore and master new talents and skills, discover new passions, test our potential and build our independence. These are all things we start to learn at school with our teachers.

In a complex, fast-changing, multicultural society, we must listen to and understand each other. We must learn to value different contributions, work together, resolve problems, and constructively find solutions. And as a nation, our competitiveness, economic strength and prosperity will depend on our people's ability to imagine and create, to discover and design new futures, and to seize new opportunities. The foundation for all this starts with teachers in our schools.

Nationwide, teachers testify that at its best, teaching is a job that delivers rich, intrinsic rewards, but teachers are operating in an environment that is more difficult than at any other time. Schools are at the forefront of managing the impacts of constant changes shaping our society, such as mobile technology, social media, artificial intelligence and vaping. There are greater expectations placed on teachers than ever before.

Our teachers are critical to delivering on the ambition for the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration for excellence and equity in education. Children from less affluent backgrounds are more likely to be a year or two behind in their reading and maths than children from wealthier backgrounds. By the time they reach Year 9, they can be four or five years behind their peers,¹ and only 74 per cent achieve their Year 12 certificate, compared to 85 per cent of children from more affluent backgrounds.²

The challenges for teachers can be immense. During the disruption caused by the pandemic, many parents were deeply impressed with the extraordinary professionalism and perseverance of those who teach. However, for many teachers, these demanding times were a tipping point to walk away, bringing forward long-projected endemic teaching shortages.

We need to attract, train and retain teachers in the profession. The National Teacher Workforce Action Plan outlines five priority areas, including initial teacher education (ITE), to increase the number of people choosing to become teachers and to retain more teachers in the profession.

One of the best ways to help beginning teachers be successful from day one is to improve ITE. There has been significant action to promote and improve ITE over many years, including a suite of major reforms progressed under the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG 2014), but there is still more to do. This is part of a broad reform effort by governments to improve schooling and ITE.

This report of the Teacher Education Expert Panel (the Panel) addresses two questions: how to attract high-quality candidates into ITE and how to best prepare them for long, successful and rewarding careers.

Appointed by Australia's Education Ministers, the Panel was tasked with examining ITE across four specific areas, exploring how to strengthen ITE programs to deliver well-prepared beginner teachers; enhance the link between performance and funding of ITE; improve the quality of practical experience in teaching; and improve postgraduate ITE programs for mid-career entrants.

There are great teacher education programs nationwide. Thousands of dedicated and confident teachers have graduated from these programs and made fine starts to their careers in Australian schools.

But too many beginning teachers have reported that they felt they needed to be better equipped for the challenges they faced in the classroom on starting their teaching careers. Sadly, too many fail to complete their studies or stay in the profession long enough to flourish. Nearly four in 10 ITE students leave their course within six years of commencing their degree and around one in five beginning teachers leaves within the first three years of entering the teaching profession.³

¹ Based on Australian Government Department of Education analysis of NAPLAN data for Year 3 and Year 9 students

² National Report on Schooling data portal, Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

³ Based on Australian Government Department of Education analysis of 2021 Selected Higher Education Student Statistics (cohort analysis of 2016 ITE commencements) and the 2022 Graduate Outcomes Survey – Longitudinal (estimated attrition of graduates employed as teachers four months after graduation who were no longer working as a teacher three years after graduation)

The Panel's recommendations focus on ITE students learning and applying the teaching practices that work best, delivering high-quality practical experience for all ITE students, attracting more mid-career teachers, and strengthening the accreditation and monitoring the quality of ITE programs. In developing its recommendations, the Panel consulted widely with key stakeholders, listening to feedback on its Discussion Paper and considering 115 submissions from across the country.

By ensuring all ITE students learn and can apply the teaching practices that work best, beginning teachers will be better prepared for the classroom and more likely to stay in teaching.⁴ Access to high-quality practical experience will mean ITE students are more likely to complete ITE; make a successful transition to teaching; and stay in teaching for the long term.⁵ Improving ITE to attract new teachers with considerable professional and life experience will also contribute to the quality of our teacher workforce. Strengthening accreditation will mean there is greater consistency in ITE programs and will put in place a systematic approach to assessing and improving the quality, consistency and outcomes of ITE programs.

The Panel's recommendations will support more ITE students to successfully graduate and will support a smoother transition into the profession. This will be a crucial contributor to addressing the ongoing challenges in staffing the nation's classrooms. A one percentage point uplift in ITE retention rates would result in nearly three hundred more teaching graduates a year, while a 10 percentage point uplift would result in nearly three thousand additional graduates. Similarly, a one percentage point reduction in early career attrition would result in over one hundred more beginning teachers a year, while a 10 percentage point reduction would result in over one thousand additional beginning teachers.⁶

The Panel recognises that the ITE landscape is complex and there are currently limited incentives to improve the quality and consistency of ITE. There is no single body or government with sole responsibility or accountability for ITE. Various players are responsible for different aspects of funding and delivery, including governments, regulatory authorities, higher education providers, schools and school systems and teachers themselves.

Increasing the ability of, and incentive for, higher education providers to further invest in ITE to increase the number of ITE students and improve the quality of their ITE programs is challenging. Higher education providers are struggling to deal with declining interest in ITE programs, limited research funding, few international students and reduced overall funding resulting from the Job Ready Graduates package. Key sector stakeholders have also highlighted through the review of the Australian Universities Accord the importance and value of high-quality practical experience and the limited capacity of providers to invest more in this area.

Collaborative partnerships between ITE providers, schools and school systems are critical, particularly in the delivery of practical experience to establish strong foundations and retain great teachers in the profession. Once students graduate and start work as teachers, schools and education systems have a significant and increasing role in providing the support and guidance necessary to build confidence and resilience.

The Panel has been mindful of the complex ITE landscape in developing recommendations for action. To maximise impact across the four identified areas for reform, the Panel considered existing arrangements for delivering and reporting on ITE, in the context of the development of the next National School Reform Agreement and Universities Accord.

The Panel is confident these reforms can support ITE programs in delivering more highly effective and confident teachers who can provide transformational learning opportunities for students over the decades ahead. However, the reforms will need a united and determined approach across the sector to deliver on this goal of national significance. Figure 1 captures the current ITE landscape and sector-wide collaboration required to implement the Panel's recommendations. Improving ITE further will require ongoing collaboration, cooperation and collective effort across all levels and layers of the ITE and school systems.

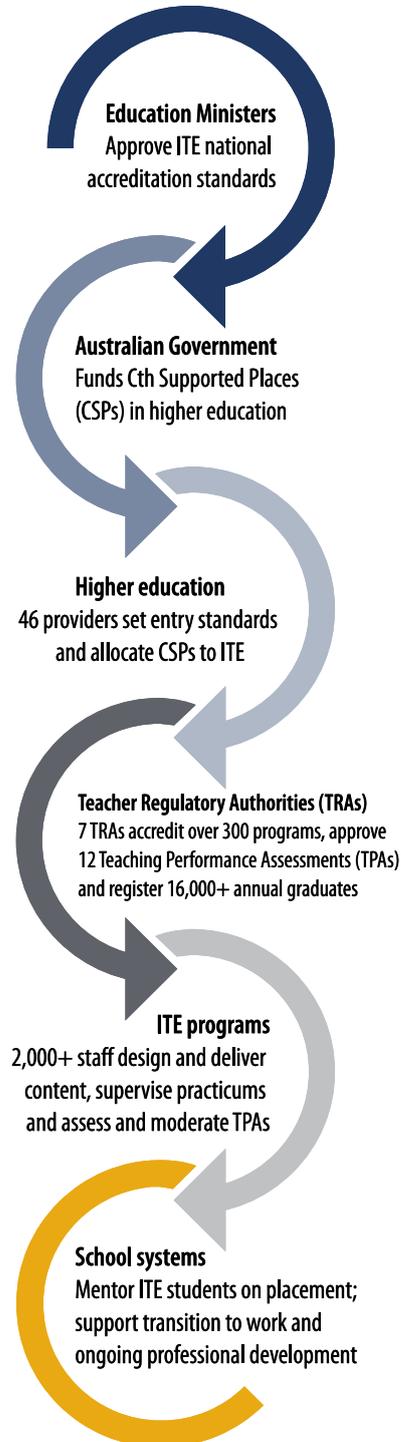
⁴ Ingvarson et al. 2007; Ingersoll, Merrill & May 2014; Podolsky et al. 2019

⁵ AITSL 2022a; Podolsky et al. 2019; Ronfeldt 2021

⁶ Estimates based on the impact of reducing six-year dropout rates for the 2016 commencing ITE cohort and three-year attrition rates for beginning teachers (calculated as the number of 2019 ITE completions multiplied by the proportion of graduates employed as teachers four months after graduation)

Figure 1: Delivering the Panel’s recommendations

How the ITE system operates:



Role in reforming ITE:

- Education Ministers Meeting: Strengthen accreditation**
 - Mandate ‘core content’ for ITE
 - Establish a board to monitor and report on ITE quality, delivery and outcomes (including ensuring consistent delivery of core content)
- Australian Government: Encourage performance**
 - Establish nationally consistent indicators and public reporting
 - Encourage performance through Transition Fund and Excellence Fund
- Higher education: Support improvements**
 - Incorporate the core content into ITE programs
 - Monitor performance against indicators
- State & territory TRAs: Ensure consistency of accreditation**
 - Contribute to revised national accreditation
 - Implement core content requirements
 - Work with national board to increase consistency in ITE program quality
- ITE programs: Deliver core content & practicum changes**
 - Ensure high-quality delivery of core content
 - Support high-quality practicums through use of delivery models
 - Support mid-career employment pathways
- School systems: Establish roles & responsibilities & support for quality practicums**
 - Establish system-level agreements to set expectations
 - Invest in delivery models to ensure high-quality practicum placements
 - Support mid-career employment pathways
 - Support ongoing teacher development and mentoring through continued engagement with higher education providers, TRAs and ITE programs

PRIORITY REFORM 1: STRENGTHENING ITE PROGRAMS TO DELIVER EFFECTIVE BEGINNING TEACHERS

The Quality Initial Teacher Education (QITE) Review (2022) found that many beginning teachers are underprepared to teach in several key areas, particularly reading, cultural responsiveness, supporting diverse learners, classroom management, and family/carer engagement. The QITE Review also found that ITE students' preparedness to teach would be bolstered by a strengthened focus on evidence-based teaching strategies.

Accredited ITE programs must ensure all graduate teachers meet the Graduate level of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (Teacher Standards). The Panel was asked to provide advice on amending the *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* (Accreditation Standards and Procedures), to ensure ITE graduates are taught sufficient evidence-based practices to support them to meet the Graduate Teacher Standards.

Establish the core content and mandate it in national accreditation

The Panel has identified the core content for ITE programs which covers what every teacher should learn in ITE to be prepared for the classroom and best support students. The core content reflects the knowledge and evidence-based practices that support ITE students in meeting the Graduate Teacher Standards and have the greatest impact on student learning. The Panel has defined four types of core content:

1. **The brain and learning:** content that provides teachers with an understanding of why specific instructional practices work, and how to implement these practices.
2. **Effective pedagogical practices:** practices including explicit modelling, scaffolding, formative assessment, and literacy and numeracy teaching strategies that support student learning because they respond to how the brain processes, stores and retrieves information.
3. **Classroom management:** practices that foster positive learning environments.
4. **Responsive teaching:** content that ensures teachers teach in ways that are culturally and contextually appropriate and responsive to student need. This includes core content on:
 - First Nations peoples, cultures and perspectives
 - cultural responsiveness, including students who have English as an additional language/dialect (EAL/D)
 - family engagement for learning
 - diverse learners, including students with disability.

The Panel acknowledges that the core content is not intended to cover everything a beginning teacher should learn. It is up to higher education providers to design courses that coherently incorporate the core content into ITE programs.

In submissions to the Panel's Discussion Paper, stakeholders broadly supported both the core content and formalising it in the accreditation of ITE programs to ensure the content is prioritised and consistently delivered in ITE. The Panel recommends adding the core content as a schedule to the Accreditation Standards and Procedures (**Recommendation 1**).

Embed the core content in ITE programs

Research shows that coherently integrating essential content into teacher education supports beginning teachers to build a deeper understanding of teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond et al. 2019). To ensure the core content is coherently embedded into ITE programs, higher education providers should be assessed against amended Accreditation Standards and Procedures so that:

- pre-service teachers must have demonstrated knowledge and met the learning outcomes of the core content prior to graduation (Standard 1.1)
- the core content must be part of the coherent evidence-based rationale for program development, design and delivery (Standard 2.1)
- the discipline-specific content of ITE programs is consistent with the core content (Standard 4.2).

The Panel recommends that higher education providers should design courses that coherently incorporate the core content into ITE programs and should provide evidence (during accreditation) that they have met the revised Accreditation Standards and Procedures (**Recommendation 2**).

Strengthen the national quality and consistency of ITE programs

The consistency of ITE program quality was raised by both the 2014 TEMAG Review and the 2022 QITE Review. Ensuring consistent, high-quality delivery of the core content depends on consistent and rigorous accreditation.

There have been significant amendments to the Accreditation Standards and Procedures since the TEMAG Review to strengthen national consistency and the rigour of accreditation decisions. However, there are insufficient mechanisms to ensure all Teacher Regulatory Authorities are consistently assessing ITE programs against the Accreditation Standards and Procedures in the same way. There is also no systematic approach or program of research designed to inform improvements to the quality of ITE programs. This reflects the fact that there is no single body responsible for ITE.

Rather than moving to a national accreditation model, the Panel considers that strengthened oversight and governance arrangements for ITE programs are needed to ensure the quality and consistency of ITE programs. The Panel recommends establishing an ITE quality assurance board, including independent membership based on relevant expertise, similar in operation to the Australian Teacher Workforce Data Oversight Board, to report to Education Ministers annually on the quality and consistency of ITE programs and their outcomes (**Recommendation 3**).

PRIORITY REFORM 2: STRENGTHENING THE LINK BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND FUNDING FOR ITE PROGRAMS

The QITE Review acknowledged the centrality of the Accreditation Standards and Procedures in defining threshold standards for ITE but recommended the development of a quality measure for ITE programs to encourage quality improvements. Amending the Accreditation Standards and Procedures to include the core content for ITE programs and establishing an ITE quality assurance board would play an important role in strengthening the quality of ITE. However, accreditation does not sufficiently recognise and reward ITE providers with a culture of continuous improvement.

The QITE Review noted the lack of transparency in the current system, where information on ITE is not easily available to the public. While accreditation requires higher education providers to evaluate their ITE programs, they are free to choose the outcomes and evidence they would use.

The Panel was asked to provide advice on establishing a quality measure for ITE programs and strengthening the link between performance and funding.

Establish nationally consistent, transparent indicators for ITE programs

One way to inspire performance and encourage providers to improve is through the creation and implementation of nationally consistent, transparent indicators, to identify trends over time.

The Panel has defined four categories of relevant nationally consistent indicators, aligned to accreditation requirements, to encourage improvements and provide visibility for prospective students of different ITE programs:

- 1. selection:** diverse, high-achieving cohorts in areas of workforce need
- 2. retention:** retention of students over the duration of ITE, from entry to graduation
- 3. preparedness of beginning teachers:** perceived preparedness for entry into the teaching profession and student satisfaction with the quality of their program
- 4. transition:** employment outcomes of recent graduates and early career teachers.

The Panel recognises that the national indicators are a starting point for transparent and consistent reporting of ITE programs; more research and work is required to build more effective and robust measures into the future. The proposed ITE quality assurance board (Recommendation 3) should be responsible for the development of future measures, informed by research and improved data.

The Panel recommends publicly reporting on these indicators through the Australian Teacher Workforce Data collection to recognise specific areas of strength and sustained improvement, identify areas for further improvement and inform student choice (**Recommendation 4**).

Streamline reporting requirements

The Accreditation Standards and Procedures require providers of new ITE programs to develop a plan for demonstrating the impact of their program and to provide evidence of impact at the end of the accreditation period (Program Standard 6).

Stakeholder feedback reveals that higher education providers value this requirement as a way of identifying how their program has performed and where it can improve. Despite this, they face two main difficulties in meeting this requirement: collecting and analysing this data and understanding the level of detail and types of information needed to meet accreditation requirements.

The Panel recommends mandating the nationally consistent, transparent indicators as key outcomes for ITE programs to streamline higher education providers' evaluation of and reporting on outcomes (**Recommendation 5**).

Establish a Transition Fund and an Excellence Fund to improve the quality of ITE programs

Modest financial incentives for higher education providers making genuine and successful efforts to improve the quality of their ITE programs is a low-risk option to encourage improved quality (Productivity Commission 2023). In submissions to the Panel's Discussion Paper, stakeholders supported a focus on funding that improves the quality of all ITE programs, rather than rewarding individual higher education providers. The Panel considers that two types of financial incentives could encourage higher education providers to improve the quality of their ITE programs: a Transition Fund and an Excellence Fund.

The Panel recommends establishing a Transition Fund to support higher education providers to improve performance and assist with any costs associated with incorporating the core content into ITE programs. Funding could support activities such as developing curriculum resources and professional development resources for staff, as well as undertaking research on how to best support ITE students during their program (**Recommendation 6**).

The Panel recommends establishing an Excellence Fund to encourage excellence in ITE programs. The fund could support higher education providers who are identified as excellent in a particular aspect of ITE delivery by the ITE quality assurance board (**Recommendation 3**). Higher education providers would need to demonstrate a commitment to share best practice and take a leadership role in fostering improved performance across the sector. Funding could support activities such as high-performing or fast-improving higher education providers in a particular aspect of ITE delivery mentoring others, showcasing successful mentorship models for students, and incentivising collaboration and the creation of communities of practice (**Recommendation 7**).

PRIORITY REFORM 3: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING

High-quality practical experience under the guidance of experienced and expert teachers is essential for beginning teachers to develop their skills and expertise in the classroom. This on-the-ground experience is critical to contextualise learning and ensure graduate teachers are well prepared to begin their teaching career. Evidence shows that high-quality practical experience means ITE students are more likely to complete ITE, make a successful transition to teaching and stay in teaching for the long term.

The critical role of practical experience in ITE means it has been subject to several reviews and actions at both the Commonwealth and the state and territory level, including the TEMAG Review (2014) and QITE Review (2022). These reviews have highlighted the importance of high-quality practical experience and acknowledged that its delivery is complex and resource intensive.

A survey of ITE students commissioned by the Panel highlighted that while many beginning teachers experienced high-quality practical experience placements, many did not feel that the expectations of their performance were clearly communicated or that they had mechanisms in place to resolve grievances. This reflects concerns that practical experience design and delivery vary significantly across jurisdictions, higher education providers and schools, leading to a spectrum of experiences for ITE students.

The Panel was asked to provide advice on how to build on recent reforms to continue improving the quality of practical experience in teaching.

Establish system-wide coordination of practical experience delivery

Provider–school agreements for delivering practical experience, introduced following the TEMAG Review, have gone some way to improving the quality of practical experience. However, they are not sufficient to address broader challenges, such as inconsistency across the system and the high administrative burden of delivering practical experience. The roles, responsibilities and expectations of parties delivering practical experience are often unclear, and support for beginning teachers varies. Some jurisdictions have system-led delivery models across multiple schools to deliver high-quality professional experience (such as the NSW Professional Experience Hub Schools, the ACT Affiliated Schools Program, the NT Teaching Schools Program and Victorian Teaching Academies of Professional Practice). These models focus on the actual delivery of quality practical placements to support supervising teachers, ITE students and partner schools in implementation, but they are not widely adopted.

The Panel recommends a more structured whole-of-system approach for the delivery of high-quality practical experience to clarify roles and responsibilities, improve consistency, reduce administrative burden and address ongoing challenges (**Recommendation 8**).

Develop national guidelines for high-quality practical experience

Amendments made to the Accreditation Standards and Procedures following the TEMAG Review do not go far enough in providing clear directions for delivering high-quality practical experience placements, with only the number of practical experience days specified. Given the variety of student and provider experiences found by the Panel, there is a case for clearer guidance at the national level.

National guidelines should be developed to provide clear expectations and advice for consistent high-quality practical experience. The guidelines would build on existing practical experience resources already being used in some jurisdictions (**Recommendation 9**).

Provide systemic support and investment in practical experience

Stakeholder feedback to the Panel highlighted the significant financial cost and administrative burden on higher education providers and the school system in delivering high-quality practical experience. This has also been highlighted as a concern in submissions to the Universities Accord review. Many ITE students also reported incurring significant financial costs in undertaking their placements.

Systemic support and investment by jurisdictions is needed to deliver high-quality practical experience; this would drive improvements in student outcomes and attract and retain beginning teachers. This support and investment should prioritise system-level agreements, whole-of-system delivery models, and targeted support for beginning teachers to deliver on the Panel's vision that all beginning teachers receive a high-quality practical experience (**Recommendation 10**).

Support and value effective mentoring

Skilled mentors are critical to the quality of practical experience and learning outcomes for ITE students. Several of the initiatives identified by the Panel would have a significant impact on the support for mentor teachers. National guidelines and system-level agreements would outline clear roles and responsibilities for mentor teachers and support more consistent matching arrangements; and delivery models would improve mentoring skills through increased administrative support and quality professional learning.

However, there are further actions that can be taken to support and value mentor teachers. Currently there is minimal professional recognition for mentor teachers. For example, the ability for mentoring to contribute to a teacher's professional learning hours varies between jurisdictions. Mentoring ITE students should also be linked more explicitly with Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALT) certification or equivalent frameworks. States and territories should pursue professional recognition of mentor teachers to support teachers in mentoring ITE students during their practical experience placements (**Recommendation 11**).

PRIORITY REFORM 4: IMPROVING POSTGRADUATE INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ATTRACT MORE MID-CAREER ENTRANTS

Mid-career ITE entrants can help to address workforce supply issues and contribute to increased diversity in the teaching profession. However, mid-career cohorts face specific barriers to entering ITE programs and transitioning to classroom teaching, including the length of time and cost involved in retraining as a teacher, loss of income during study, and difficulty balancing competing commitments. Targeting these barriers can incentivise the entry of mid-career cohorts and improve the retention of mid-career entrants in the teaching profession. The QITE Review made several recommendations regarding attracting mid-career cohorts into teaching, including the provision of evidence-based incentives and alternative pathways.

Ongoing reform efforts across the sector to improve postgraduate initial teacher education are required to attract more mid-career entrants. The Panel was asked to provide advice on how programs could be improved to attract mid-career entrants into ITE while maintaining high standards.

Develop and expand mid-career pathway programs

There are already many different types of programs targeted at mid-career entrants. These include employment pathways and accelerated programs, alongside flexible online and part-time study options to suit the needs of different mid-career entrants. These have been established within existing regulatory arrangements. Employing ITE students while they are undertaking their program, such as through alternative authorisation to teach (AAT) (e.g. permissions to teach and conditional accreditation) arrangements and as part of an accelerated program, can help to attract more teachers to the profession (QITE Review 2022). These arrangements allow ITE students to begin their teaching career before graduating.

However, the Panel's survey results reveal that only 12 per cent of mid-career ITE students report undertaking paid work as a teacher or education paraprofessional during their ITE program. Most of these students report finding this would be highly beneficial. The survey also shows that 10 per cent of mid-career entrants participate in an accelerated program; again, the majority find this would be beneficial.

Stakeholders pointed out that employment-based programs should be designed to maintain a high-quality experience for students and buy-in from employers, who must be willing and able to employ and support mid-career ITE students during their program. Several higher education providers and jurisdictions are in support of developing and scaling up employment-based ITE programs.

The Panel recommends developing and scaling mid-career pathway programs, such as employment-based and accelerated pathways, using the flexibility within existing regulatory arrangements. Employment-based pathways could be supported by a more structured approach to identifying and engaging with schools that are willing and able to employ ITE students, under AAT arrangements. These pathways can be supported through system-level agreements between school systems and higher education providers to articulate a framework for delivering these programs, including relevant details such as employment arrangements for ITE students (**Recommendation 12**).

Better promote mid-career pathways

In the survey of ITE students commissioned by the Panel, 82 per cent of mid-career respondents said they were unaware that mid-career pathways were available before they commenced their course. Higher education providers do not clearly communicate available incentives to mid-career entrants, and flexible study options are often unadvertised despite being the most commonly available feature to support mid-career entrants.

The Panel considers that higher education providers can do more to promote mid-career pathways and other supports available to prospective mid-career entrants. This could include promoting the availability of supports such as flexible study options and government-funded mid-career pathway programs (**Recommendation 13**).

Build the evidence base for mid-career programs

There are a range of existing programs that target specific mid-career cohorts. Given the cost of delivering bespoke programs, jurisdictions and higher education providers have raised the need to build the evidence base on the impact and effectiveness of these programs. There is broad support for more research to fill this evidence gap that can be used to develop and scale up programs.

The Panel recognises that there is a need for collecting data and building the evidence base on mid-career programs to improve our understanding of how different program features attract and retain mid-career cohorts. This would ensure that governments, school sectors and higher education providers are able to design and deliver effective programs that make a meaningful contribution to the overall mid-career pipeline into the workforce (**Recommendation 14**).

RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendation 1: Establish the core content and mandate it in national accreditation

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership to add 'core content' as a schedule to the Accreditation Standards and Procedures. The schedule should describe what initial teacher education programs should teach and the learning outcomes that should be achieved for the core content.

Four types of core content have been defined, which cover the knowledge and evidence-based practices that have the greatest impact on student learning and are essential for all beginning teachers:

1. **The brain and learning**
2. **Effective pedagogical practices**
3. **Classroom management**
4. **Responsive teaching.**

Recommendation 2: Embed the core content in initial teacher education programs

Higher education providers to design courses that coherently incorporate the core content into initial teacher education programs and to provide evidence during accreditation that they have met the amended Accreditation Standards and Procedures.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen the national quality and consistency of initial teacher education programs

Education Ministers to agree to establishing an initial teacher education (ITE) quality assurance board to report to Education Ministers annually on the quality and consistency of ITE programs and their outcomes.

The ITE quality assurance board would oversee a systematic approach to assessing and improving the quality, consistency and outcomes of ITE programs, by:

1. providing independent verification of the implementation of the revised Accreditation Standards and Procedures
2. assessing and monitoring students' knowledge of the core content and periodically reviewing and recommending updates to the core content for beginning teachers
3. undertaking cross-institutional moderation of Teaching Performance Assessments
4. reporting on (to Education Ministers and publicly) and periodically reviewing and recommending adjustment of the nationally consistent, transparent indicators
5. reporting on the quality and delivery of practical experience and the evidence base for mid-career programs
6. overseeing a program of research designed to inform improvements to the quality of ITE programs, including thematic quality reviews on areas requested by Education Ministers.

Recommendation 4: Establish nationally consistent, transparent indicators

Education Ministers to agree to adopt an identified set of nationally consistent, transparent indicators based on the Australian Teacher Workforce Data collection.

The Panel has defined four categories of relevant nationally consistent, transparent indicators to encourage higher education providers to improve the quality of programs, and inform prospective initial teacher education (ITE) students' choice of programs best suited to their needs:

- **selection:** diverse, high-achieving cohorts in areas of workforce need
- **retention:** retention of students over the duration of ITE, from entry to graduation
- **preparedness of beginning teachers:** perceived preparedness for entry into the teaching profession and student satisfaction with the quality of their program
- **transition:** employment outcomes of recent graduates and early career teachers.

Recommendation 5: Streamline reporting requirements in the Accreditation Standards and Procedures

Education Ministers to agree to streamline the reporting requirements for higher education providers by mandating the nationally consistent, transparent indicators (Recommendation 4) as key measures for demonstrating the impact of initial teacher education programs, and to explore other opportunities to streamline accreditation requirements.

Recommendation 6: Establish a Transition Fund to support embedding of core content

Education Ministers to agree to establish a Transition Fund made available to higher education providers to support them to embed the core content in their initial teacher education programs and improve performance.

Recommendation 7: Establish an Excellence Fund to improve the quality of initial teacher education programs

Education Ministers to agree to establish an Excellence Fund to support higher education providers identified through the initial teacher education (ITE) quality assurance board's work as high performing, fast improving or excellent in a particular aspect of ITE delivery. Identified higher education providers would be funded to take a leadership role in fostering improved performance across the sector.

Recommendation 8: Establish system-wide coordination of practical experience delivery

Education Ministers to agree to enter into suitable agreements, such as memorandums of understanding, that establish clear roles and responsibilities for the development of beginning teachers across all parties (higher education providers, Teacher Regulatory Authorities and teacher employers). Agreements would set expectations for practical experience placements, put in place delivery models to ensure quality and make sure beginning teachers have the opportunity to apply and practise the core content while on placement.

Recommendation 9: Develop national guidelines for high-quality practical experience

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to develop, and the initial teacher education (ITE) quality assurance board to endorse, national guidelines for consistent high-quality practical experience, including information on:

- what formal partnerships should include
- design and delivery features of practical experience to ensure it is aligned with evidence
- mechanisms for communication between higher education providers, schools and students
- supporting high-quality assessment of ITE students against the Graduate Teacher Standards and the core content, including the provision of standardised reporting templates
- mentoring ITE students as part of AITSL's development of national mentoring standards for early career teachers, with a focus on mentors being able to coach on the core content.

Recommendation 10: Increase systemic investment in practical experience

Education Ministers to consider how to increase systemic support for and investment in practical experience to improve student outcomes and attract, develop and retain beginning teachers.

Recommendation 11: Ensure professional recognition for mentor teachers

Education Ministers to agree to pursue professional recognition of mentor teachers by:

- counting part of the hours mentor teachers spend supervising practical experience placements towards their professional learning requirements for obtaining and maintaining teacher registration
- requiring the experience of mentoring initial teacher education students as evidence for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers or equivalent certification.

Recommendation 12: Develop and expand mid-career pathway programs

Education Ministers to work with higher education providers to develop and scale high-quality mid-career programs, such as employment-based and accelerated pathways, using the flexibility within existing regulatory arrangements. This includes using:

- alternative authorisation to teach mechanisms (e.g. permission to teach and conditional accreditation) to support paid employment
- system-level agreements between jurisdictions and higher education providers (Recommendation 10) to provide a framework for delivering employment pathways and identifying schools willing to employ initial teacher education students.

Recommendation 13: Promote mid-career pathways

Higher education providers to better promote mid-career pathways and available supports to prospective initial teacher education students, including promotion of flexible study options and employment and accelerated pathways.

Recommendation 14: Build the evidence base for mid-career programs

Education Ministers to agree to build the evidence base to support design and delivery of effective mid-career programs. This would be achieved by consistently collecting, evaluating and sharing data on mid-career programs.

INTRODUCTION

On 12 August 2022, Australia's Education Ministers met with teachers, principals and other education experts to discuss the teacher shortage in Australia. One of the key issues raised at this Teacher Workforce Shortage Roundtable was the need to improve initial teacher education (ITE) to boost graduation rates and ensure graduating teachers are better prepared to begin teaching.

The Teacher Education Expert Panel (the Panel) was established in September 2022 to provide advice on key issues raised at the roundtable and in the Report of the [Quality Initial Teacher Education \(QITE\) Review](#) (released in February 2022), chaired by Professor Mark Scott AO (Vice-Chancellor, University of Sydney), with Emeritus Professor Bill Loudon AM (Emeritus Professor of Education, University of Western Australia), Professor Michele Simons (President, Australian Council of Deans of Education), Dr Jenny Donovan (CEO, Australian Education Research Organisation), Mr Andrew Peach (General Manager – School Participation, National Rugby League and previously Executive Principal, Marsden State High School, QLD), and Ms Rebecca West (Foundation Deputy Principal, South Rock State School, QLD).

This report contains the Panel's advice on four reform areas, as per the Terms of Reference (Appendix A):

1. Strengthen ITE programs to deliver confident, effective, classroom ready graduates
2. Strengthen the link between performance and funding of ITE programs
3. Improve the quality of practical experience in teaching
4. Improve postgraduate programs to attract mid-career entrants.

The Panel considered the need to increase the number of people starting and finishing ITE, including those currently under-represented, such as First Nations people, as well as the needs of regional and remote and other hard-to-staff schools and subject specialisations. The Panel also considered interactions with other policy processes and government commitments, including the Australian Universities Accord, as well as prior ITE reform efforts such as the 2014 [Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group](#) (TEMAG).

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

The Panel's [Discussion Paper](#) was released on 23 March 2023. It set out the key findings of the Panel to date, as well as opportunities and considerations for delivering on the reform areas and discussion questions to inform its advice. The paper was informed by several research pieces commissioned by the Panel (details at Appendix C).

To ensure the views of key stakeholder and audience groups were thoroughly captured by the Panel, a public consultation process was undertaken between March and April 2023. Interested parties were invited to provide written responses to the Discussion Paper by 21 April. A total of 115 submissions were received, from a range of stakeholders (Appendix B). Additional consultation activities included stakeholder meetings, surveys and focus groups (Appendix C).

Feedback from the consultation process has been considered by the Panel and reflected in the report.

CONTEXT FOR INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION REFORM

ITE is a shared responsibility: the Australian Government funds university places for ITE; states and territories accredit ITE programs through Teacher Regulatory Authorities (TRAs); higher education providers elect to offer, in total, more than 300 ITE programs; ITE students contribute fees; and schools support ITE students through practical experience and on entry into the classroom.

ITE in Australia has been the subject of significant national reform and review. Reforms identified by TEMAG in 2014 have been progressively implemented since 2015 and have led to significant progress in raising standards in the selection and preparation of teachers. This included introducing Teaching Performance Assessments (TPAs), the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education (LANTITE), non-academic selection criteria for entry into ITE, strengthened accreditation processes and quality assurance, and the establishment of the Australian Teacher Workforce Data (ATWD) collection.

The QITE Review found positive reports of the quality of recent graduates from ITE programs, indicating these reforms were producing positive outcomes. Despite these efforts, the QITE Review identified the need for further reform to attract high-quality, diverse candidates; to ensure their preparation is evidence based and practical; and to induct them well into the profession.

Beginning teachers also report that ITE programs could have better prepared them with the practical skills required for the work of a teacher. Feedback provided by beginning teachers to the 2022 Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) on the main ways higher education providers could have better prepared them for employment most commonly related to:

- **Course attributes (content, delivery and guidance)** (32 per cent of responses): Beginning teachers reported a need for better and more relevant course content, which they viewed as being too theoretical and focused on teaching philosophies. They also reported a desire for more practical and relevant teaching assessments; improved lecturer engagement with the course content; and more support with seeking employment, such as interview preparation.

‘Less information on learning philosophers and more information on practical activities/lessons to teach curriculum areas. More evidence-based strategies to effectively teach oral language and literacy are required’ (GOS respondent).

- **Practical experience** (31 per cent of responses): Beginning teachers reported they would have benefited from a greater focus on more practical experience for teaching in the classroom. They also felt that longer, more diverse and better organised practical experience placements would have better prepared them for employment.

‘More effectively organised practicum placements with enthusiastic and inspiring teachers’ (GOS respondent).

- **Teaching knowledge and skills** (25 per cent of responses): Beginning teachers reported they would have benefited from more practical knowledge applicable to the classroom, including in the areas of classroom management; teacher administration, assessment and reporting methods; inclusive education; curriculum knowledge; engagement with parents/carers; and how to teach literacy and numeracy.

‘The course content was very heavy, more hands on experience would have been more beneficial than constantly writing essays. I would have liked more instruction on behaviour management and how to build my skill set when dealing with children with defiant or destructive behaviours’ (GOS respondent).

IMPLEMENTING QITE REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

The QITE Review made 17 recommendations to strengthen ITE and encourage more people to become teachers, including raising the status of teaching (Recommendation 1) and reducing teachers' workloads (Recommendation 3).

In keeping with its Terms of Reference, this Panel's report focuses on successfully implementing two key recommendations from the QITE Review: Recommendation 7 to strengthen ITE programs to deliver confident beginning teachers, and Recommendation 15 to strengthen the link between performance and funding of ITE. The report also focuses on key issues raised at the Teacher Workforce Shortage Roundtable and in the Report of the QITE Review.

The Panel has considered how these recommendations should be implemented, given the sector's complex regulatory and funding environment. Ensuring a strong foundation for beginning teachers cannot be addressed by any one jurisdiction or part of the sector; successfully implementing the Panel's recommendations will be a shared responsibility.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report contains four chapters aligned to the key areas of reform within the Panel's remit. Each chapter provides an outline of the context, key findings and recommendations for reform, informed by stakeholder feedback received on the Panel's Discussion Paper.

- **Chapter 1** focuses on strengthening ITE programs to deliver confident, effective beginning teachers (aligned to QITE Review Recommendation 7) and provides Recommendations 1–3.
- **Chapter 2** focuses on strengthening the link between performance and funding of ITE programs (aligned to QITE Review Recommendation 15) and provides Recommendations 4–7.
- **Chapter 3** focuses on improving the quality of practical experience in teaching and provides Recommendations 8–11.
- **Chapter 4** focuses on improving postgraduate ITE programs for mid-career entrants and provides Recommendations 12–14.

Supporting information is provided in the appendices:

- **Appendix A:** Terms of Reference
- **Appendix B:** Submission list and stakeholder meetings
- **Appendix C:** Consultation and engagement summary
- **Appendix D:** Core content for ITE programs
- **Appendix E:** Mapping the core content to the Graduate Teacher Standards
- **Appendix F:** Amendments to the Accreditation Standards and Procedures to embed core content in ITE programs
- **Appendix G:** Reporting the nationally consistent, transparent indicators for prospective ITE students
- **Appendix H:** Components of jurisdiction-level agreements for high-quality practical experience
- **Appendix I:** Components of national guidelines to support high-quality practical experience.

Chapter 1

Strengthening initial teacher
education programs to deliver
confident, effective beginning teachers

STRENGTHENING INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO DELIVER CONFIDENT, EFFECTIVE BEGINNING TEACHERS

Key points

- The QITE Review found that many beginning teachers are underprepared to teach in several key areas, such as the teaching of reading, cultural responsiveness, supporting diverse learners, classroom management, and family/carer engagement.
- The Panel was asked to provide advice on amending the accreditation of initial teacher education (ITE) programs to ensure beginning teachers are taught sufficient evidence-based practices to meet the Graduate Teacher Standards and support them to lead a classroom.
- The core content identified by the Panel reflects the knowledge and evidence-based practices that have the greatest impact on student learning and are essential for beginning teachers to know and be able to use.
- In submissions to the Panel's Discussion Paper, stakeholders were broadly supportive of the core content and formalising the core content in national accreditation.
- Higher education providers should design appropriate curricula incorporating the core content into their programs.
- Adding a schedule to the Accreditation Standards and Procedures would enable Teacher Regulatory Authorities to require and assess evidence of core content when they accredit ITE programs.
- To improve the quality and consistency of accreditation decisions, a national ITE quality assurance board should be established to annually report to Education Ministers on ITE programs and their outcomes.

CONTEXT

Like members of any skilled profession requiring ongoing registration and review, as teachers gain more experience and develop and refine their skills, they are assessed against more complex and rigorous standards.

Accredited ITE programs in Australia aim to ensure all graduate teachers meet the first level of the Teacher Standards, the Graduate level. All ITE programs, and students graduating from these, must meet the descriptors at this first career stage (AITSL 2022b).

Previous reviews of ITE have reported that the content of ITE programs may not always be informed by evidence. The QITE Review highlighted that the national Accreditation Standards and Procedures do not require ITE students to learn specific evidence-based practices except in the area of early reading instruction. Some jurisdictions, such as NSW, have chosen to set more prescriptive accreditation requirements, but this approach is not nationally consistent across jurisdictions.

The QITE Review (Recommendation 7) found that many ITE graduates are underprepared to teach in several key areas, particularly in the teaching of reading, cultural responsiveness, supporting diverse learners, classroom management, and family/carer engagement. In addition, ITE students felt their preparedness to teach in general would be bolstered by a focus on evidence-based teaching strategies and literacy and numeracy. This recommendation was informed by stakeholder views provided to the QITE Review, which indicated the Accreditation Standards would benefit from the inclusion of specific content targeting the needs of ITE students on entering the classroom.

The Panel has been asked to provide advice on amending the Accreditation Standards and Procedures to ensure ITE students are taught sufficient evidence-based practices to meet the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (Teacher Standards) and empower them to lead a classroom.

KEY FINDINGS

1.1 Evidence-based practices

Evidence-based practices are those practices supported by research evidence as to their effectiveness. This means there is broad consensus from rigorously conducted evaluations that they work in many cases across various contexts and for different subgroups of students. There are also evidence-based practices on approaches to teaching subject-specific content, such as reading and numeracy, that can complement generic evidence-based pedagogical approaches.

To identify the evidence-based practices most relevant to ITE, the Panel commissioned the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) to review and synthesise the most rigorous and relevant evidence-based practices in education from meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and literature reviews. AERO rated these sources of information against its 'standards of evidence' as to what constitutes rigorous and relevant evidence,⁷ focusing on evidence generated in an Australian context where possible, and on identified practices that all beginning teachers should know.

1.2 Core content for ITE programs

A review of ITE programs identified that a shared feature of high-quality programs was core content, which explicitly covered development, learning and subject matter pedagogy with opportunities for practice (Darling-Hammond & Bransford 2007).

To support ITE students in meeting the Teacher Standards, the Panel has identified four types of core content. The core content covers what every teacher should learn in ITE to be prepared for the classroom and best support students. It prioritises the knowledge and practices which are essential for all ITE students to learn. It would equip beginning teachers with a strong understanding of what works best to improve student learning based on the best evidence.

Stakeholders highlighted that the core content does not cover all the knowledge and skills required by beginning teachers (Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) submission; NSW Council of Deans of Education submission). The Panel acknowledges that the core content is not intended to cover everything a beginning teacher should learn.

⁷ [Standards of evidence | Australian Education Research Organisation \(edresearch.edu.au\)](https://www.edresearch.edu.au/standards-of-evidence)

The core content does not set out the full curriculum for ITE programs

The core content does not seek to support ITE students to meet all Graduate Teacher Standards or attempt to address the subject-specific content or the related knowledge of the Australian curriculum. It remains appropriate for individual providers to use their expertise in teacher education to design appropriate curricula for their ITE program.

The core content areas identified by the Panel are:

- 1. The brain and learning:** content that provides teachers with an understanding of why specific instructional practices work, and how to implement these practices.
- 2. Effective pedagogical practices:** practices including explicit modelling, scaffolding, formative assessment practices, and literacy and numeracy teaching strategies that support student learning because they respond to how the brain processes, stores and retrieves information.
- 3. Classroom management:** practices that foster positive learning environments.
- 4. Responsive teaching:** content that ensures teachers teach in ways that are culturally and contextually appropriate and responsive to student need. This includes core content on:
 - First Nations peoples, cultures and perspectives
 - cultural responsiveness, including students who have English as an additional language/dialect (EAL/D)
 - family engagement for learning
 - diverse learners, including students with disability.

The Panel's Discussion Paper provided extensive analysis of the available research on core content areas. Submissions from stakeholders indicated broad support for the core content (ACDE submission; Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities (ATRA) submission; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) submission; state and territory government submissions and meetings; National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) submission). NCEC stated that it 'strongly agrees ITE program content should be evidence-based and endorses the four types of core content identified by the Expert Panel'. Similarly, ATRA 'accept and support the identified core content areas as being of importance to ITE as contemporary evidence-based practices'.

Stakeholders identified some knowledge and practices which they felt should be included in or expanded on in the core content. This included making explicit reference to supporting students with disability and EAL/D students; integrating relevant evidence-based ICT and digital technologies; and reflecting the research on trauma-informed care and practices and the importance of supporting the capacity of teachers to foster positive student-teacher relationships and the wellbeing and mental health of students.

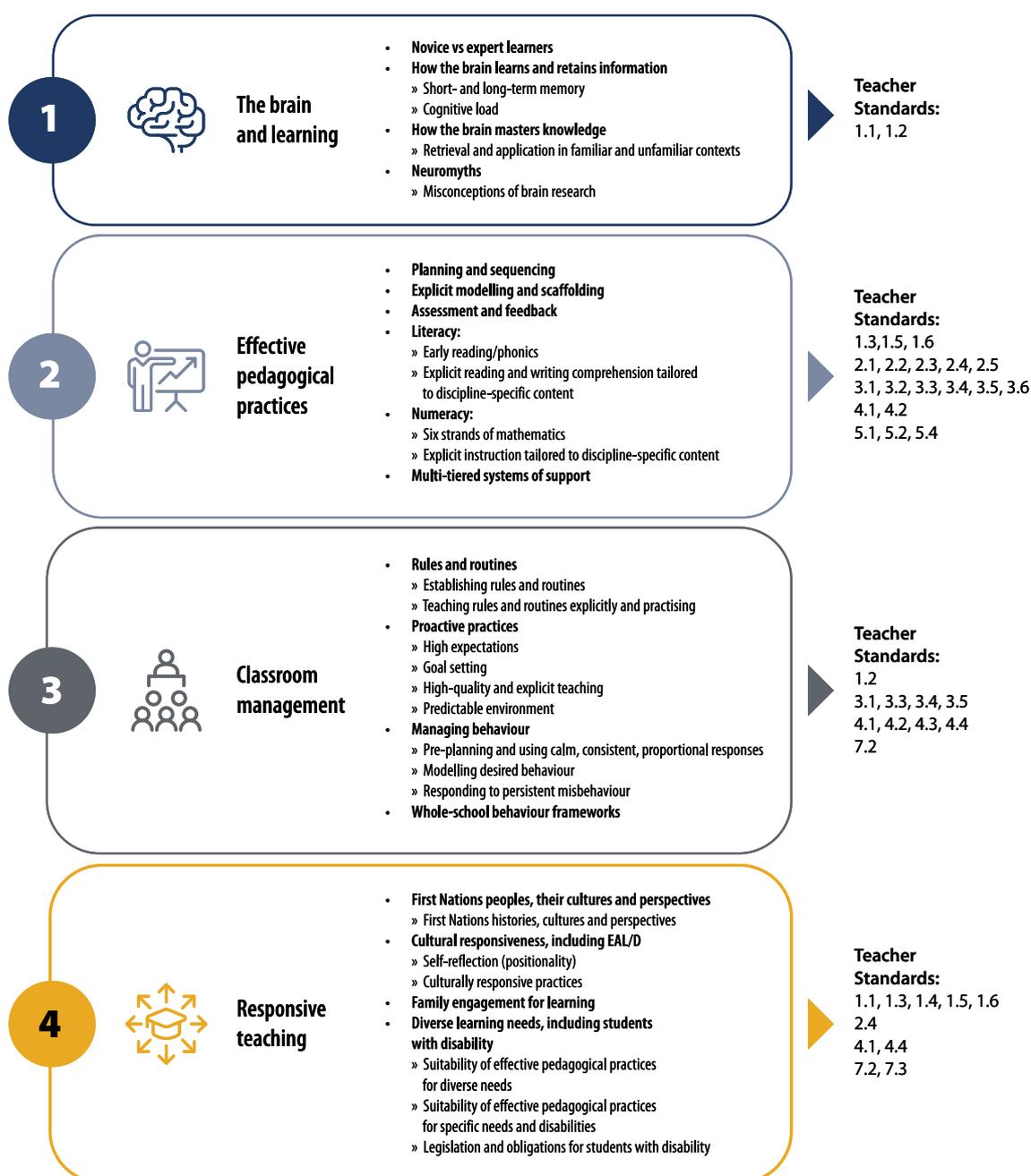
In submissions, some stakeholders highlighted areas of the core content where further specificity would be beneficial. This included concerns about the direct application of cognitive science to teaching and learning; the importance of removing scaffolding in numeracy as students develop proficiency; and how specific research references were captured or reflected.

The core content (see Figure 1.1 and Appendix D) incorporates the amendments identified by stakeholders in cases where the changes are in line with AERO's 'standards of evidence', are relevant for all ITE students and are a priority for ITE students to have learned pre-graduation rather than post-graduation.

For example, the core content now explicitly references EAL/D students and students with disability and includes reference to teachers' obligations set out in the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the Disability Standards for Education, 2005 (Appendix D). Key references have also been added to Appendix D incorporating stakeholder feedback, including suggestions around the need for more examples of how cognitive science can be applied in practice. The term 'enabling factors for learning' has been rephrased as 'responsive teaching' to incorporate feedback from stakeholders.

Figure 1.1 summarises the core content and its alignment to the Graduate Teacher Standards. The core content has been mapped against the Graduate Teacher Standards and this reflects feedback received from stakeholders. Appendix E maps the core content to the standards in more detail.

Figure 1.1: Summary of the core content and alignment with the Graduate Teacher Standards



1.2.1 What should be the learning outcomes of the core content and what should ITE programs cover?

The Graduate Teacher Standards provide the framework for designing the content of ITE programs and assessing graduate teachers’ readiness to teach. The core content identifies the knowledge and evidence-based practices which support teachers to meet the Graduate Teacher Standards.

To support ITE students in meeting the Graduate Teacher Standards, the Panel has defined ‘Learning Outcomes’ for the core content and ‘What ITE Programs Should Teach’, mapped to the relevant Teacher Standards. An example for ‘Planning and Sequencing’ is provided at Table 1.1 and the full core content is provided at Appendix D. This approach provides specific guidance to higher education providers on what the core content should cover.

The Panel recognises that the core content does not meet all of the Graduate Teacher Standards or attempt to address discipline-specific content. ITE providers would include further content appropriate to each program and would determine how to best design courses to ensure that ITE programs coherently incorporate the core content. This topic is covered in more detail in section 1.3.

Table 1.1: Core content example: Learning outcomes and what ITE programs should teach for effective pedagogical practices

Core Content 2 – Effective Pedagogical Practices	
<i>Supports Graduate Teacher Standards: 1.3, 1.5, 1.6; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5; 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6; 4.1, 4.2; 5.1, 5.2, 5.4</i>	
Learning Outcome	Core content ITE programs should teach
Knowledge of and skill in planning and sequencing content and tasks so that they become increasingly challenging and incorporate spacing and retrieval practice.	Planning and sequencing
	The key features of coherent and deliberate planning and sequencing of tasks and lessons including curriculum-aligned learning objectives, clear descriptions of how students will show evidence of mastery, the common progression of learning in a subject area and the critical curriculum knowledge needed for students to progress.
	How to plan a sequence of lessons that incorporate spacing and retrieval practice, build upon each other, meet students where they are in their learning and help students retrieve past learning and consolidate it in long-term memory.
	How to sequence tasks within a lesson that build upon each other, meet students where they are in their learning and help them understand the progression of skills needed to attain mastery.

Note: This is not the full content for Effective Pedagogical Practices – please see Appendix D for full version

1.3 Embedding the core content in ITE programs

Research shows that coherently integrating key content in ITE programs supports ITE students to build a deeper understanding of teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond et al. 2019). Changing the Accreditation Standards and Procedures would formalise the core content in ITE programs and ensure it is coherently integrated throughout ITE programs.

In responses to the Panel’s Discussion Paper, some stakeholders did not support amending the Accreditation Standards and Procedures to incorporate the core content in ITE programs. ATRA viewed the existing Standards and Procedures as being sufficiently high level to remain contemporary as research in ITE evolves.

However, most submissions did support amending accreditation to reflect the core content (including ACDE submission; AITSL submission; NCEC submission). The AERO Board highlighted a preference for authoritative national elaborations of core content. It argued that anything less would be insufficient to underpin consistent national understanding of these practices by accreditation panels and ITE program developers. The ACDE also recommended amending particular standards, where the best evidence can be provided on how the core content has been incorporated.

The Panel does not believe that a full review of the Accreditation Standards and Procedures is required to implement the core content, as was recommended by some stakeholders. It believes that amendments to particular standards and procedures would be sufficient to embed the core content and would allow for the recommendations to be implemented more quickly.

1.3.1 Amending the Accreditation Standards and Procedures

Amending the Accreditation Standards and Procedures to include the core content must involve consideration of the three integrated elements of national accreditation for ITE programs:

- The Graduate Teacher Standards, which describe the knowledge, skills and attributes expected of graduates of nationally accredited programs
- The National Program Standards, which make explicit what is required in high-quality ITE programs to give confidence that the Graduate Teacher Standards will be achieved
- The National Accreditation Procedures, which set out a nationally consistent process to accredit ITE programs.

The ITE core content identifies the knowledge and evidence-based practices which support ITE students to meet the Graduate Teacher Standards, and it articulates the practices which every graduate teacher should learn and be able to demonstrate. Changes to the Accreditation Standards and Procedures should reflect this intention.

Amending the Accreditation Standards

Stakeholders had different views on the specific changes which should be made to the Accreditation Standards to reflect the core content. A range of submissions to the Panel expressed concern that imposing overly prescriptive requirements on ITE providers would restrict their ability to integrate content in the most effective way for their programs and students and to update the core content as new evidence emerges (Australian Catholic University submission; University of Technology Sydney submission; Griffith University submission; ATRA submission; University of Southern Queensland submission; Network of Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching in the Discipline of Education submission).

The consistent themes in submissions were that changes to accreditation should:

- be minimal, given the complexity of making amendments
- allow providers flexibility in how to incorporate the core content into ITE program structure
- ensure the core content coherently runs through ITE programs – for example, discipline-specific subjects
- ensure the core content can be updated over time as new evidence emerges – for example, see the proposed schedule in Appendix F
- not require TPAs to assess the core content.

There are currently six National Program Standards for ITE accreditation. The Panel proposes primarily reflecting the core content in Standard 1.1, as the core content identifies the knowledge and evidence-based practices which support ITE students to meet the Graduate Teacher Standards. This would ensure that knowledge and application of the core content is a requirement for all graduates of ITE programs and would make the core content and procedures central to ITE program accreditation.

The Panel proposes making amendments to two further sub-standards: Standard 2.1, to ensure the core content is coherently embedded through program development, design and delivery; and Standard 4.2, to ensure the discipline-specific content is consistent with the core content.

Table 1.2 provides an overview of proposed amendments. Appendix F provides further details and the proposed schedule for the changes.

Table 1.2: Proposed amendments to the Accreditation Standards

Program standard	Definition	Proposed amendments (details in Appendix F)
<p>Standard 1.1 (Program design and assessment processes)</p>	<p>Standard 1 defines the key outcomes for ITE Programs – ‘Program design and assessment processes identify where each Graduate Teacher Standard is taught, practised and assessed and requires that pre-service teachers have demonstrated successful performance against all of the Graduate Teacher Standards prior to graduation.’</p>	<p>As the ITE core content supports ITE students to meet the Graduate level of the Teacher Standards, Standard 1.1 should be amended to require that pre-service teachers have demonstrated knowledge and met the learning outcomes of the core content prior to graduation. A schedule for the core content should be attached to Standard 1.1 describing the learning outcomes and what ITE programs should teach (see Appendix D).</p>
<p>Standard 2.1 (Program development, design and delivery)</p>	<p>Standard 2.1 articulates the requirements that program development, design and delivery has ‘a documented coherent rationale based on authoritative and evidence-based understandings of how the program will develop effective teachers who meet the Graduate Teacher Standards’.</p>	<p>The core content should be part of the coherent evidence-based rationale for program development, design and delivery.</p>
<p>Standard 4.2 (Preparing pre-service teachers for curriculum/ mandatory content requirements)</p>	<p>Standard 4.2 articulates the requirements for ITE programs to ‘prepare pre-service teachers for the school curriculum and learning areas of their chosen discipline and/or stage of schooling in accordance with Schedule 1’.</p>	<p>The core content does not seek to support ITE students in meeting all Graduate Teacher Standards; nor does it attempt to address the subject-specific content or the related knowledge of the Australian curriculum. However, it is appropriate and important that the discipline-specific content is consistent with the core content.</p>

Amending the Accreditation Procedures

The National Accreditation Procedures set out a nationally consistent process to accredit ITE programs, supplemented by national guidelines. The Accreditation Procedures and Guidelines outline the evidence which must be provided to show that the Program Standards are met, and the process that accreditation panels (TRAs) should follow to assess the evidence.

Key pieces of evidence that must be provided in initial accreditation (Stage 1) include:

- Template 1: Application overview, with Dean sign-off
- Template 2: Program Standards Matrix, showing how Program Standards have been met
- Template 3: Graduate Teacher Standards Matrix, showing how Teacher Standards have been met
- Template 4: Plan for Demonstrating Impact, covering program evaluation.

The Panel has considered how to best amend the National Accreditation Procedures to assess the delivery of core content while minimising the accreditation burden on higher education providers.

As described in Table 1.2, the core content should primarily be reflected in Standard 1.1. The core content identifies the knowledge and evidence-based practices which support ITE students to meet the Graduate Teacher Standards. Higher education providers demonstrate meeting Standard 1.1 by completing 'Template 3 – Graduate Teacher Standards Matrix', providing evidence of where each Graduate Teacher Standard is taught, practised and assessed, as well as a 'Graduate Teacher Standards Map' which shows how the standards are delivered over the duration of the program.

To avoid confusion with the evidence requirements for the Graduate Teacher Standards and minimise changes to the accreditation processes, the Panel proposes that a separate template should be developed to assess the core content in accreditation (called, for example, Template 3.1). This is similar to an approach described by ATRA in its submission on the Discussion Paper and aligns with NSW's approach to priority areas, which the Panel understands has been in use in NSW since 2017. Higher education providers could cross-reference evidence across Templates 3 and 3.1 to avoid duplication of content.

A draft Template 3.1 for assessing delivery of the core content in accreditation is provided at Appendix F of this report. As part of **Recommendation 1: Establish the core content and mandate it in national accreditation**, AITSL should work with the sector to finalise this template and provide guidance to providers and accreditation panels on assessing the core content in accreditation.

Guidance should be provided on the evidence requirements for the core content. This evidence could include unit outlines, reading lists and 'critical tasks' (supported by assessment criteria, marking rubrics and worked examples). Longer term, guidance should also be developed on the types of assessment tasks that should be used to assess ITE students' skills/capability against the learning outcomes of the core content.

Appendix F details the recommended changes to the National Accreditation Standards and Procedures and provides a draft Template 3.1.

1.3.2 Implementing the revised Accreditation Standards and Procedures

Under the current accreditation arrangements, higher education providers will not be required to provide evidence of the core content until their ITE programs are due for accreditation. The Panel has, however, considered options for earlier assessment of ITE programs against the amended Accreditation Standards and Procedures.

The Accreditation Standards and Procedures articulate that the time between accreditation cycles should not exceed five years. This means existing ITE programs (over 300) would be re-accredited and assessed against delivery of the core content at different points over the next five years (on average 60 programs accredited per year). This accreditation cycle would result in a significant lag in implementing the core content in ITE programs and a further lag before beginnings teachers graduate with knowledge of the core content.

To expedite implementation, Education Ministers could instruct AITSL to amend the Accreditation Standards and Procedures to include out-of-cycle accreditation of the core content, with a set date by which all ITE programs should be assessed and approved by TRAs. Most jurisdictions have used out-of-cycle procedures to ensure timely

implementation of previous changes to accreditation, including the introduction of LANTITE assessments and Teaching Performance Assessments. The date by which all ITE programs should be assessed would need to consider time frames for:

- revision of the Standards and Procedures and accompanying guidelines and supporting templates, and publication of documentation
- education and training of accreditation panellists and higher education provider staff involved in the accreditation process to support high-quality implementation
- making changes to ITE programs to embed the core content
- higher education providers' internal approval processes.

It is important to note that before ITE accreditation, changes to programs must be approved by the academic boards of higher education providers, which can take up to 18–24 months. Higher education providers would have an important role to play in expediting their internal approval processes, to ensure all ITE programs could be accredited before the agreed date by which all ITE programs are to be assessed.

Some jurisdictions have capacity in their legislation to impose conditions on accreditation. These provisions are primarily used by TRAs to increase flexibility in accreditation and support implementation of accreditation changes. It would be open to these jurisdictions to place conditions on accreditation if evidence of the core content is not satisfactory, specifying a time frame for compliance with the requirements for the core content.

1.4 Nationally consistent assessment of ITE program quality

Australia's ITE landscape is complex. There is no single body or government with sole responsibility or accountability for ITE. This reflects the separation of responsibilities between the Australian Government and the states and territories. The current ITE system, in which the Australian Government is the primary funder of ITE, and the states and territories have the legislative authority to accredit ITE programs, is limiting the ability to implement reform that encourages a focus on quality (QITE Review 2022).

A significant collective effort by all stakeholders has been made over the last decade to strengthen national consistency and the rigour of accreditation decisions in response to the 2014 TEMAG Review. Jurisdictions have participated in a standard-setting process and quality assurance activities, establishing an advisory group on TPAs, conducting national analysis of the quality of ITE programs, and publishing a summary of each accreditation decision. The ITE sector views many of these mechanisms favourably.

Despite the TEMAG reforms, the QITE Review found there are no mechanisms to ensure all TRAs are consistently assessing ITE programs against the Accreditation Standards and Procedures in the same way.

AITSL stated in its submission to the QITE Review that 'the revision or amendment of the Accreditation Standards and Procedures cannot overcome the structural differences that result from eight different interpretations of the accreditation standards' (AITSL 2021, p.20).

Some submissions highlighted the important relationship between nationally consistent assessment of ITE program quality and high-quality delivery of the core content in ITE programs. AITSL recommended that 'the Standards and Procedures be revised in the context of a strengthened authorising environment. Without such a change, the reforms described in the Discussion Paper are likely to be subject to inadequate and inconsistent implementation' (AITSL Board submission).

1.4.1 National ITE accreditation

Most professions have delegated the accreditation function to specially created national accreditation bodies. For example, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency was established in 2008 as a single national registration and accreditation scheme for registered health practitioners (Ingvarson et al. 2014).

TEMAG recommended a national accreditation process for ITE programs, administered by a national regulator (TEMAG 2014). This would assure ITE programs are held to the same standard regardless of their delivery mode or location. National accreditation has a number of potential benefits (QITE Review 2022):

- ensure national consistency and rigour in the accreditation process
- simplify the accreditation process for providers, particularly those operating across several jurisdictions
- ensure any future developments can be implemented in a timely manner
- drive continuous improvement and quality assurance
- allow a risk-based regulatory approach to be implemented over time
- enable the collection of national data to support workforce planning.

However, implementing a national system of accreditation for ITE programs involves challenges and risks. Specifically, a national system:

- would require substantial regulatory and legislative change, as all TRAs have been established through legislation in their respective jurisdictions (QITE Review 2022, p.62)
- would require significant financial outlay
- could lead to a 'one size fits all' approach in the design of ITE programs
- may be less responsive to local contexts. This is particularly important in smaller jurisdictions with strong relationships between ITE providers and their TRA (noting that Tasmania and the Northern Territory only accredit programs from one provider each).

In responses to the Panel's Discussion Paper, there was limited support for moving to national accreditation. Some higher education providers were supportive of national accreditation on the proviso that there would not be duplication of registration functions between national and state and territory jurisdictions (Australian Catholic University submission; Edith Cowan University submission). Catholic Schools NSW was also supportive, noting that a national registration authority and consistent standards would provide effective means of ensuring consistent, robust delivery of the core content in ITE programs.

ATRA did not support national accreditation or changes to the authorising environment, noting that existing quality assurance practices should ensure national consistency and harmonisation in the accreditation of ITE programs.

1.4.2 Strengthening the quality and consistency of ITE programs nationally

While national accreditation would be the simplest mechanism for ensuring nationally consistent ITE program quality, the pathway to achieving it is fraught with risks and challenges. The Panel has weighed feedback from key stakeholders and considered existing arrangements and architecture in relation to achieving national consistency in the accreditation of ITE programs. The Panel believes that strengthened oversight and governance arrangements for ITE programs are needed to ensure the quality and consistency of ITE programs, rather than moving to a national accreditation model.

The QITE Review highlighted the value of undertaking a 'health check' of the national accreditation system and noted that an ITE quality assurance board, established with states and territories, could support this by undertaking inquiries and publicly reporting on ITE programs in Australia (QITE Review 2022). This Panel supports the QITE Review's finding and recommends establishing an ITE quality assurance board. This is essential to strengthening the quality and consistency of ITE programs nationally.

Establishment of an ITE quality assurance board

In line with the QITE Review findings, an ITE quality assurance board would independently assess ITE program content and performance, including as directed by Education Ministers. The board and its membership would align with the current national architecture, following existing models like the Australian Teacher Workforce Data Oversight Board, with the chair of the board to be a member of the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee. Board membership would be based on relevant expertise across the sector and would support the spirit of independent review.

Under such an arrangement, AITSL would continue to have responsibility for updating and amending the Teacher Standards as instructed by Education Ministers, and TRAs would continue to regulate ITE providers. The ITE quality assurance board would oversee a systematic approach to assessing the quality, consistency and outcomes of ITE programs and report to Education Ministers. It would:

- provide independent verification of the implementation of the revised Accreditation Standards and Procedures
- assess and monitor students' knowledge of the core content and periodically review and recommend updates to the core content for beginning teachers
- undertake cross-institutional moderation of TPAs
- report on (to Education Ministers and publicly) and periodically review and recommend adjustment of the nationally consistent, transparent indicators
- report on the quality and delivery of practical experience and the evidence base for mid-career programs
- oversee a program of research designed to inform improvements to the quality of ITE programs, including thematic quality reviews on areas requested by Education Ministers.

The ITE quality assurance board would develop an annual national ITE quality and performance report on the outcomes of these activities to identify where national consistency of ITE program quality could be improved. The board's role would not restrict states and territories from going further in prescribing how their ITE programs should meet accreditation requirements and improve overall performance and quality.

In responses to the Discussion Paper, there was broad support from across the sector for an ITE quality assurance board with the scope outlined above. Some stakeholders highlighted the potential for strengthened governance arrangements to supplement the current authorising environment (ACDE submission); oversee the quality across ITE programs (AITSL Board submission); ensure the Panel's reforms are enacted effectively (NSW Department of Education submission); assure that the Accreditation Standards and Procedures are applied fairly across ITE programs (Australian Council for Educational Research submission) and support cross-institutional moderation and national benchmarking (Assessment for Graduate Teaching Consortium submission). State and territory departments of education were broadly supportive of national oversight if legislative responsibility for accreditation remained with TRAs.

Roles and responsibilities of the ITE quality assurance board

The ITE quality assurance board would have the following key roles and responsibilities.

Provide independent verification of the inclusion of evidence-based practices in ITE programs

The board would publish information about the national consistency of the revised Accreditation Standards and Procedures on the core content of ITE programs. It would derive this information by independently assessing the consistency of evidence showing delivery of the core content across ITE programs accredited each year. This may result in the ITE quality assurance board making recommendations on the evidence required to show core content being delivered in ITE programs.

This follows the practice used in other countries which have mechanisms in place to assess the content delivered in ITE. The National Council on Teacher Quality in the United States reviews teacher education programs across the country and provides information to the public about the quality of these programs.

Assess and monitor students' knowledge of, and periodically review, the core content

The board would annually survey final-year ITE students on whether they had an opportunity to practise evidence-based teaching practices during their program. This provides an indication of the extent to which students have the opportunity to develop their knowledge of and skill in the core content.

Stakeholders note that the core content should be updated as ITE research evolves, to ensure that it adheres to the best evidence-based practices (ATRA submission; NSW Department of Education submission; University of Canberra submission). The board should undertake periodic reviews of the core content for ITE programs, assessed against available evidence, and recommend to Education Ministers if and how the core content should be updated.

Example: ITE student survey

The Panel surveyed final-year ITE students who responded to the Australian Government Department of Education's higher education Student Experience Survey. ITE students were asked if their ITE program provided an opportunity to practise key teaching practices. In the survey responses:

- 73 per cent agreed they had many opportunities to practise explicit modelling and scaffolding of content in classrooms
- 68 per cent agreed they had many opportunities to plan and sequence content and tasks so that they become increasingly challenging for students, and to implement these plans in classrooms
- 63 per cent agreed they had many opportunities to practise the use of calm, consistent and proportional responses to student behaviour in classrooms.
- 52 per cent agreed they had many opportunities to use assessment to evaluate students' progress, adjust instruction and provide targeted feedback in classrooms
- 40 per cent of primary school teaching students agreed they had many opportunities to practise the explicit teaching of phonics in classrooms.

Introduce cross-institutional moderation of Teaching Performance Assessments

TPAs assess what ITE students are taught, to ensure they develop key capabilities to prepare them for the classroom. The TEMAG Review noted that a 'consistent and transparent graduate assessment against an agreed benchmark is a key feature of profession entry requirements both internationally and in comparable professions in Australia' (TEMAG 2014, p.38). However, the assessment standards are likely to vary across ITE programs, as the Accreditation Standards and Procedures do not require national moderation and benchmarking of TPAs. This means it is still difficult to ensure graduate teachers from one higher education provider are achieving a consistent standard compared with graduates from other higher education providers.

National consistency would be improved by providing the ITE quality assurance board with delegated authority to make decisions on TPAs, including national standard setting, moderation and comparability (Recommendation 10, QITE Review 2022). This would ensure ITE students are consistently assessed against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Graduate Level Standards), regardless of their higher education provider.

Report on, periodically review and recommend updates to the ITE indicators

The ITE quality assurance board would report on the nationally consistent, transparent indicators for each higher education provider, as outlined further in Chapter 2. It would analyse the results of the indicators and contextual information and report on the outcomes. This information would be made publicly available for use by governments, higher education providers, and other interested users such as prospective ITE students.

The Panel acknowledges that the indicators outlined in this report are not exhaustive or a comprehensive measure of the quality of ITE programs. We recognise that further work would be required to address data and evidence gaps to provide insights into the pathways of ITE students and develop better quality measures into the future. The board should be responsible for the development of future measures, informed by research and improved data.

Report on the quality and delivery of practical experience and the evidence base for mid-career programs

The Panel found that the quality of practical experience is highly variable for ITE students, particularly for beginning teachers in regional and remote areas.

As part of the annual survey of final-year ITE students, the ITE quality assurance board would survey students about their practical experience placements. This data would be used to track improvements in quality over time and advise on whether if and how high-quality practical experience is being achieved.

The Panel also found that programs to attract mid-career entrants are in their infancy and evidence on their effectiveness is just emerging. Building the evidence base for mid-career programs is needed to inform their future development. The board could support this through developing a framework for defining and measuring the success of mid-career programs, for use by jurisdictions and higher education providers in evaluating mid-career programs. The board could also collate evaluation findings from different programs to share lessons learned.

Oversee research to build the evidence base for improving the quality of ITE

Due to the diverse and disparate nature of the delivery of ITE programs, identifying and sharing best practice across the sector can be challenging.

There is a paucity of rigorously designed impact evaluations in ITE research (Mancenido 2022). Existing research into the effectiveness of ITE programs largely draws on seminal texts and program evaluations, which often rely on graduates' perceptions about their preparedness for teaching, and employers' perceptions of graduate effectiveness (Wilson et al. 2002; Ronfeldt 2021). There is also a lack of publicly available research conducted in the Australian context (Ingvarson et al. 2014).

This reflects limited education research funding: education received just 1.6 per cent of all grant dollars provided by the Australian Research Council over the last 20 years (Teachers and Teaching Research Centre - University of Newcastle submission). It leads to many unanswered questions about how to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The ITE quality assurance board would commission independent research-based comparative evaluations of ITE programs through thematic reviews of ITE best practice, as directed by Education Ministers. This would identify higher education providers who are performing particularly well and enable better understanding of how they are achieving best practice.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following an extensive review of available literature and research, the Panel identified four areas of core content for ITE programs. These areas of content cover what every teacher should learn in ITE to be prepared for the classroom and best support students. They are knowledge and evidence-based practices that would have the greatest impact on student learning.

The Panel recommends amending the Accreditation Standards and Procedures to embed the core content into ITE programs, describing what ITE programs should teach and the learning outcomes to be achieved.

Recommendation 1: Establish the core content and mandate it in national accreditation

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership to add 'core content' as a schedule to the Accreditation Standards and Procedures. The schedule should describe what initial teacher education programs should teach and the learning outcomes that should be achieved for the core content.

Four types of core content have been defined, which cover the knowledge and evidence-based practices that have the greatest impact on student learning and are essential for all beginning teachers:

1. **The brain and learning**
2. **Effective pedagogical practices**
3. **Classroom management**
4. **Responsive teaching.**

To ensure the core content is coherently embedded into ITE programs, higher education providers should be assessed against the amended Accreditation Standards and Procedures.

In feedback to the Panel, some stakeholders highlighted that core content does not cover all knowledge and skills required by beginning teachers. The Panel acknowledges that the core content does not cover all content a beginning teacher should learn. It recommends that higher education providers should incorporate the core content into ITE programs in a way that is relevant to their local context.

Recommendation 2: Embed the core content in initial teacher education programs

Higher education providers to design courses that coherently incorporate the core content into initial teacher education programs and to provide evidence during accreditation that they have met the amended Accreditation Standards and Procedures.

Ensuring consistent, high-quality delivery of the core content depends on consistent accreditation decisions. While there has been significant work to strengthen national consistency and the rigour of accreditation decisions, there are no mechanisms to ensure all TRAs are consistently assessing ITE programs against the Accreditation Standards and Procedures in the same way.

While national accreditation would be the simplest mechanism for ensuring nationally consistent ITE program quality, this would be challenging to implement. The Panel believes that an ITE quality assurance board could assess national consistency of the quality of ITE programs and publicly report these outcomes to Education Ministers. Stakeholders were broadly supportive of strengthened governance arrangements to supplement the existing accreditation system.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen national quality and consistency of initial teacher education programs

Education Ministers to agree to establishing an initial teacher education (ITE) quality assurance board to report to Education Ministers annually on the quality and consistency of ITE programs and their outcomes.

The ITE quality assurance board would oversee a systematic approach to assessing the quality, consistency and outcomes of ITE programs, by:

1. providing independent verification of the implementation of the revised Accreditation Standards and Procedures
2. assessing and monitoring students' knowledge of the core content and periodically reviewing and recommending updates to the core content for beginning teachers
3. undertaking cross-institutional moderation of Teaching Performance Assessments
4. reporting on (to Education Ministers and publicly) and periodically reviewing and recommending adjustment of the nationally consistent, transparent indicators
5. reporting on the quality and delivery of practical experience and the evidence base for mid-career programs
6. overseeing a program of research designed to inform improvements to the quality of ITE programs, including thematic quality reviews on areas requested by Education Ministers.

Chapter 2

Strengthening the link between performance and funding of initial teacher education programs

STRENGTHENING THE LINK BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND FUNDING OF INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Key points

- The QITE Review acknowledged the centrality of the Accreditation Standards and Procedures in strengthening the quality of ITE through enforceable standards but recommended the development of a quality measure for ITE programs to encourage quality improvements.
- The Panel was asked to provide advice on defining a set of performance measures for ITE and strengthening links between performance and funding.
- The Panel has defined four categories of relevant nationally consistent, transparent indicators for ITE: **selection, retention, preparedness of beginning teachers** and **transition**.
- Publicly reporting on these indicators would increase transparency, ensure consistency and help prospective ITE students choose programs best suited to their needs.
- These indicators can be used to streamline how evidence of impact is demonstrated and assessed in ITE program accreditation.
- A Transition Fund could support higher education providers to improve performance and assist with any costs associated with incorporating core content into ITE programs.
- An Excellence Fund could support select higher education providers to take a leadership role in fostering improved performance across the sector.

CONTEXT

The Accreditation Standards and Procedures (AITSL 2022a) play an important role in strengthening the quality of ITE through enforceable standards of quality. However, they do not sufficiently recognise and reward ITE providers with a culture of continuous improvement. The QITE Review recommended the development of a quality measure for ITE programs to encourage quality improvements, including through the allocation of higher education funding (Recommendation 15 of the QITE Review).

The QITE Review also noted the lack of transparency in the current system, where information on ITE programs is not easily available to the public. Furthermore, the Panel notes that the current system allows for only limited comparison across higher education providers (e.g. using the Australian Government initiative ComparEd).

Accreditation requires higher education providers to evaluate their ITE programs. Part of meeting the Accreditation Standards is identifying intended outcomes through a plan for demonstrating impact (Standard 6). This plan must include evidence on ITE student performance and graduate outcomes – but otherwise, higher education providers are free to choose the outcomes and evidence they use when evaluating their own ITE programs. One way to address this inconsistency is to develop nationally consistent, transparent indicators for ITE programs.

The Panel has been asked to provide advice on establishing a quality measure for ITE programs and whether and how funding of higher education providers should be based on quality and other factors.

While the Panel proposes indicators for ITE programs based on currently available data, these indicators are not exhaustive or a comprehensive measure of the quality of ITE programs. The Panel acknowledges that further knowledge and work would be required to address data and evidence gaps, provide insights into the pathways of ITE students and develop better quality measures. As noted in Chapter 1, the Panel sees this as a role for the proposed new ITE quality assurance board.

KEY FINDINGS: ESTABLISHING NATIONALLY CONSISTENT, TRANSPARENT INDICATORS FOR ITE PROGRAMS

2.1 Purpose of the indicators

Accreditation plays an important and effective role in supporting the quality of ITE programs. While the Accreditation Standards and Procedures strengthen the quality of ITE through enforceable standards, they do not sufficiently recognise and reward ITE providers with a culture of continuous improvement.

Creating and implementing standardised indicators, and annually and transparently reporting on them, can identify trends over time and create a culture of continuous improvement (Edith Cowan University submission). The annual reporting of indicators would complement the less frequent accreditation processes, which are conducted every five years.

Some stakeholders highlighted the importance of measuring and encouraging continuous improvement, and the value of having national benchmarks and consistent data across ITE providers in Australia (Edith Cowan University submission, Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher Association NSW submission).

2.2 Reporting on indicators

The Panel's Discussion Paper considered data available for reporting on higher education providers' ITE programs and highlighted the need for greater transparency of information on ITE programs.

The Panel proposes reporting on ITE programs across four categories to identify higher education providers demonstrating improvement in **selecting** diverse, high-quality candidates in areas of workforce need; supporting and **retaining** their ITE students to graduate as teachers; supporting ITE students to be **prepared to begin teaching**; and supporting graduate teachers to **transition** effectively into the teaching profession. The four categories provide a holistic assessment of ITE programs and are consistent with previous reviews of ITE, as well as the structure of the Accreditation Standards and Procedures.

This reporting would complement the Accreditation Standards and Procedures, which already require programs to evaluate how they select students, support them and prepare them for employment after graduation. The Accreditation Standards and Procedures include requirements to:

- provide publicly available information on student selection processes for entry into initial teacher education programs, including student cohort data
- design the program to address the learning needs of all pre-service teachers admitted, including through provision of additional support to any cohort or individual who may be at risk of not being able to participate fully in the program or achieve its expected outcomes
- show evidence of graduate outcomes, including employment data and graduate and principal satisfaction surveys
- take account of employer and national system needs, including workforce demands for teaching specialisations.

Principles for selecting indicators

The indicators were selected on the basis of:

- international precedent
- relevance to the Australian context
- cost-effectiveness, drawing on available, relevant and accurate data
- informing improvement
- applicability across programs, contexts and cohorts
- excluding requirements that would be more appropriate in accreditation.

The list of indicators is shown in Table 2.1. Some stakeholders provided examples where improvement in one indicator, such as selection of under-represented cohorts, may compromise progress in another indicator, such as retention (Australian Catholic University submission; NSW Department of Education submission; University of Southern Queensland submission; University of South Australia submission). Weightings are not applied to indicators, and each indicator would always be reported individually. This provides a holistic assessment to incentivise a broad effort to improve across the indicators. Reporting would be accompanied by contextual information about each higher education provider – a concern raised by numerous stakeholders (see section 2.3.6).

Table 2.1: Indicators for ITE programs

Selection: This category refers to the entry and participation of diverse, high-achieving cohorts in areas of workforce need		
1	Participation of First Nations Students	Proportion of First Nations students enrolled in ITE
2	Participation of regional and remote students	Proportion of regional and remote students enrolled in ITE
3	Participation of low socio-economic status (SES) students	Proportion of low SES students enrolled in ITE
4	Participation of high-achieving students	Proportion of school leavers with an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) above 80 enrolled in ITE
5	Participation of STEM students	Proportion of secondary STEM students enrolled in ITE
6	Participation of non-English-speaking background students	Proportion of students with a non-English-speaking background enrolled in ITE
Retention: This category refers to retaining students over the duration of ITE, from entry to graduation		
7	First-year attrition rate	Proportion of students leaving ITE in their first year
8	Six-year dropout rate	Proportion of commencing students leaving the ITE program within six years
Preparedness of beginning teachers: This category refers to students' perceived preparedness for entering the teaching profession and their satisfaction with the quality of their course		
9	Student satisfaction with the quality of their program	Results from the 'Student satisfaction' question in Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching survey data
10	Graduate preparedness for employment	Results from the 'Preparedness to teach' question in the Graduate Outcomes Survey
Transition: This category refers to the employment outcomes of recent graduates and early career teachers		
11	Graduate employment outcomes	Proportion of teaching graduates employed upon graduation
12	Sustainability of employment	Proportion of graduates registered and employed at the end of the second year post graduation
13	Employment in areas of highest workforce need	Proportion of graduates employed in regional and remote areas, in low SES locations or in STEM subjects

In response to the Discussion Paper, there was widespread support among stakeholders for encouraging more diverse cohorts into ITE (Swinburne University of Technology submission; University of Canberra submission; Australian Primary Principals Association submission). Several stakeholders (La Trobe University submission, ATRA submission, ACDE submission) recommended an additional indicator to capture the cultural and linguistic diversity of ITE students. The Panel therefore proposes to include an additional indicator that captures the participation of non-English-speaking background students.

Other feedback included concerns about the inclusion of ATAR as an indicator (University of Technology Sydney submission; Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne submission; Flinders University submission). The Panel recognises that prior academic achievement of students is important, with ATAR an important but incomplete indicator of the quality of students and their potential as teachers (e.g. Hanushek, Piopiunik & Wiederhold 2019; QITE Review 2022). Enrolling students with high ATAR scores does not discourage higher education providers from continuing to apply rigorous selection criteria across a range of academic and non-academic skills.

Other concerns were raised about the retention indicators penalising students studying part time. However, attrition and dropout rates only include students who exit the program and do not include those who are still studying (who would be classified as still enrolled).

The indicators are not targets or requirements (unlike elements specified in the Accreditation Standards). Rather, they assess and measure improvements in the profile of ITE students, their progression and outcomes from their programs.

The indicators also do not prescribe how a higher education provider could improve. Stakeholders expressed a desire for ITE providers to remain flexible and to retain the ability to cater to their unique environments and cohorts (Australian Special Education Principals Association submission; Alphacrucis University College submission). Some stakeholders were concerned that standardised performance measures would lead to standardising ITE programs (La Trobe University submission; School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University submission). The Panel believes that diverse and specialised programs should still improve against these indicators.

2.3 Future development of the indicators

The chosen indicators would provide greater consistency and transparency of ITE programs. The indicators are also a first step in understanding the quality of ITE programs, but other indicators are needed to measure quality reliably. The proposed ITE quality assurance board discussed in Chapter 1 (Recommendation 3) should have responsibility for developing future indicators. It would have responsibility for commissioning research to develop better measures that track the pathway or life cycle of a beginning teacher, their experiences in ITE and the knowledge they acquire, through to their practice as a teacher and their longevity in the profession.

The current indicators leverage available data (collected through the ATWD collection and actions being progressed under the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (NTWAP)) and complement the Accreditation Standards and Procedures. The ITE quality assurance board would review and revise these indicators periodically (e.g. every three years) to respond to new research, improvements in data collection, and accreditation requirements (including the Panel's core content requirements).

2.3.1 Readiness to begin teaching

Many stakeholders suggested that TPAs be used as a better measure than survey measures of how well prepared a graduate teacher is to begin teaching (NSW Council of Deans of Education submission; University of the Sunshine Coast submission; University of Sydney School of Education and Social Work submission; Edith Cowan University submission).

One key challenge with including TPAs as a measure of the readiness to begin teaching is the absence of national moderation or benchmarking of the different TPAs used by higher education providers (AITSL submission). Once national moderation is in place (see Chapter 1), the ITE quality assurance board could consider including TPAs as a measure of preparedness for beginning teachers.

Some stakeholders also suggested using principal employer surveys. These stakeholders often pointed to the Western Australian Principal Perceptions of First Year Graduates Survey and recommended scaling this up to a national level (University of Newcastle, School of Education submission; Charles Sturt University submission; Network of Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching in the Discipline of Education submission).

2.3.2 Transition

The final two indicators – sustainability of employment, and employment in areas of highest workforce need – would be updated as additional data becomes available.

- Data on longer term employment outcomes can be assessed as the ATWD collection matures.
- Data on employment in areas of highest workforce need can be assessed through the development of supply and demand projections in the ATWD (Actions 26 and 27 of the NTWAP).

2.3.3 Data for the indicators

The indicators should be reported on through the ATWD. The ATWD annually collects and connects national teacher registration data, initial teacher education data, and teacher workforce data. The ATWD Key Metrics Dashboard website can be used to report the nationally consistent indicators. Stakeholders broadly agreed that the ATWD Key Metrics Dashboard is a logical site for publishing the indicators (AERO Board submission; University of Newcastle, School of Education submission; University of the Sunshine Coast submission).

Importantly, the data underlying these indicators is already collected and reported (albeit not in a way that encourages improvement or facilitates comparison across higher education providers). This does not place an additional reporting burden on higher education providers, a concern raised by some stakeholders (University of Technology Sydney submission; Australian Association of Special Education submission; Australian Early Childhood Teacher Education Network submission).

2.3.4 Defining improvement

The Panel considers that each indicator should be viewed separately. Indicators should not be aggregated into summary measures, as this obscures the importance of each individual indicator.

Stakeholders were supportive of measuring improvement by comparing their current data to their own past data (NSW Council of Deans of Education submission; Australian Catholic University submission; Flinders University submission).

The indicators would be compared against two benchmarks:

- 1.** Previous long-term data – the average of each higher education provider’s average data over the previous five years. This accounts for each higher education provider’s context and avoids penalising providers for factors outside their control.
- 2.** National average of all higher education providers in that year. This recognises that higher education providers who are already above average may have little room for further improvement.

2.3.5 Public transparency and accountability

Publicly reporting the indicators would increase government accountability at a national and a state and territory level over ITE programs, encourage higher education providers to improve their ITE programs, and provide standardised information that prospective students could use to inform their choice of higher education provider.

Stakeholders were supportive of public reporting and the resulting benefits to transparency and accountability (Charles Darwin University submission; Australian Council of State School Organisations submission; Flinders University submission). Several stakeholders recognised that much of this data is already publicly available but could benefit from consolidation in a single source (ACDE submission; Flinders University submission).

2.3.6 Reporting on ITE programs

Principles for reporting on the indicators

The reporting of indicators must be public and standardised. To maximise their impact on improving quality, the reporting of indicators should be easily actionable for governments, higher education providers and prospective students (Table 2.2).

Some stakeholders raised concerns that public reporting would cause the public to misinterpret and misuse the data when making decisions (University of Technology Sydney submission; Australian Primary Principals Association submission). Public reporting of the data should be accompanied by clear explanatory text and relevant contextual information.

Where possible, data should be reported at a program level as well as at a provider level, as program-level data can be more informative (however, with small program cohorts this is not always feasible).

Table 2.2: Key reporting principles

At a minimum, data would be:	To maximise impact, data should be:
Updated annually	Easy to action for governments, higher education providers and prospective students by providing information that is relevant to them.
Reported on the ATWD Key Metrics Dashboard in the first instance. The data could then be republished elsewhere (e.g. higher education providers’ websites, education department websites about ITE).	Easy to understand by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ helping people interpret the data accurately. Data will not be displayed in isolation, and contextual information will be provided as part of reporting and as explanatory text ■ only showing relevant and reliable data (e.g. not reporting data if the sample size is too small) ■ clearly stating the limitations or caveats associated with the data (e.g. First Nations people are likely to be under-reported for known reasons) ■ providing an opportunity to download underlying data files.

Contextual information to aid interpretation

To support accurate interpretation of data, contextual information about the institution and programs would accompany the indicators. This could include supplementary data related to the indicators (e.g. data on why the institution’s students leave ITE), information about ITE offerings (e.g. programs offered, size of student cohorts) and broader environmental contexts (e.g. geographic location).

Several stakeholders expressed concern that their results on certain measures are outside of their control. The indicators most commonly singled out as being impacted by a broad range of factors include attrition and dropout rates (Charles Darwin University submission; University of Canberra submission; Queensland University of Technology submission) and sustainability of employment (ACDE submission; Queensland University of Technology submission; School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University submission).

The Panel believes that higher education providers do have influence over these outcomes. For example, a student’s choice of institution is more influential on attrition than other student-level factors like attendance type (part or full time) or equity group status (HESP 2017).

However, there are certainly cases where external factors affect these indicators (e.g. attrition due to personal reasons). When data on attrition and sustainability of employment is reported, it should be accompanied by contextual information from each higher education provider (e.g. the reasons why ITE students and beginning teachers intend to leave their program and the teaching profession). This data is already collected through the ATWD collection.

Displaying data

Reporting on the indicators will show trends over time. Where it is possible and sample sizes are sufficient, data would be published by program as well as by higher education provider.

In the first summary table each higher education provider’s results would be summarised by comparing statistics from the most recent reporting period to previous long-term results (see Table 2.3).⁸ Each of the four categories would have its own table.

⁸ Example data for illustrative purposes.

Table 2.3: Excerpt from selection summary tables comparing indicators across higher education providers

Selection	First Nations students		Regional and remote students		Low SES students	
	2020	Difference 2015–2019	2020	Difference 2015–2019	2020	Difference 2015–2019
National average	2.4%	▲0.2	24.8%	▼1.7	20.4%	▼0.4
HEP1	2.4%	▲0.8	4.8%	▼6.9	14.3%	▼3.2
HEP2	2.1%	▲0.3	20.1%	▼0.6	14.7%	▼0.3
HEP3	1.5%	▲0.1	24.1%	▼0.3	23.2%	▲0.2

HEP = higher education provider.

Summary tables would be linked to tables for each higher education provider, showing how each provider’s results compared to their previous long-term results and the national average. An example is shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Example of reporting performance for each higher education provider – HEP2

Indicator	2020	2015–2019	Difference 2015–2019	National average 2020	Difference from national average
Selection					
First Nations students	2.1%	1.8%	▲0.3	2.4%	▼0.3
Regional and remote students	20.1%	20.7%	▼0.6	24.8%	▼4.7
Low SES students	14.7%	15.0%	▼0.3	20.4%	▼5.7
Retention					
1st year attrition	25.5%	20.7%	▲4.8	21.8%	▲3.7

2.4 Informing student choice

More accessible information about the features of ITE programs would drive ongoing improvements if it were used by students in choosing their higher education provider (Productivity Commission 2023). Student choice increases competition between higher education providers, creating a financial incentive for higher education providers to improve in order to attract students.

Some stakeholders did not believe public reporting of these indicators would drive improvements (Network of Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching in the Discipline of Education submission; Central Queensland University Australia submission; University of the Sunshine Coast submission; University of Southern Queensland submission). The Panel conducted a survey of current ITE students and found that students would value knowing more about these indicators (see summary information below). The Panel heard that ITE students currently have a limited understanding of the indicators but that knowing more information would have helped them decide which higher education provider to choose.

Accessible information on the nationally consistent indicators would inform student choice

The Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government (BETA) designed a survey to identify the factors that influenced ITE students' decision to attend their chosen ITE provider. ITE students (N = 278) who were not yet in their final year were surveyed. The university being located close to home, having flexible study options (e.g. part-time study options) or having attractive course offerings were most commonly nominated as influential factors.

ITE students were then asked specifically about the indicators currently proposed. More than 65 per cent reported that they had little to no information about each of these indicators when they were deciding which university to attend. Students reported the most knowledge about graduate employment outcomes (31 per cent knew 'a lot') and the least knowledge about selection indicators (12 per cent knew 'a lot' about competitive entry requirements while 14 per cent knew 'a lot' about the diversity of student populations).

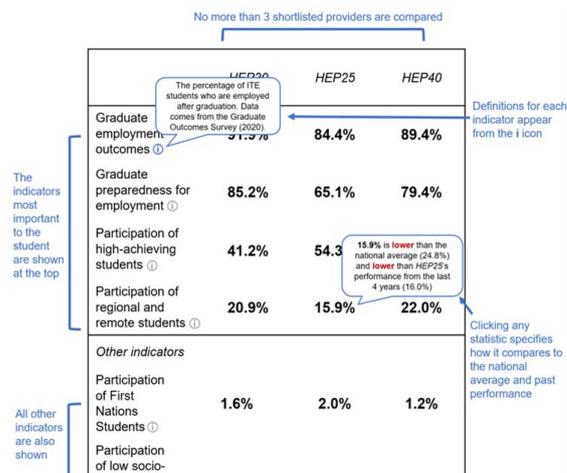
When asked if more information about these indicators would have helped them decide which university to attend, most students said that knowing more about student satisfaction (81 per cent), employment outcomes (81 per cent) and graduation rates (73 per cent) would have helped. The indicators related to selection (competitive entry requirements and a diverse student population) would have helped fewer than 50 per cent of students decide which university to attend.

2.4.1 Displaying indicators for prospective ITE students

The indicators should be presented in a way that aids and simplifies decision-making, such as through an interactive comparison tool. This tool would allow students to specify their preferences and only receive information that is relevant to them. This ensures students can easily use relevant data to inform their decision-making, without being overwhelmed (as the amount of information about 47 higher education providers each being measured on multiple indicators is likely to be overwhelming).

Students would be able to specify what kind of ITE program they want to pursue (e.g. an undergraduate course in primary education in South Australia) and which indicators are most important to them. The tool would then give them targeted information comparing relevant providers on the indicators they care most about. An example of the final results is shown in Figure 2.1⁹ (and more information about how the tool would work is provided in Appendix G).

Figure 2.1: Interactive comparison tool for prospective ITE students



⁹ Example data for illustrative purposes.

2.5 Streamlining reporting requirements

The Accreditation Standards and Procedures require new ITE programs to develop a plan for demonstrating the impact of their program and to provide evidence of impact at the end of the accreditation period (Program Standard 6).

Focus groups with higher education providers reveal that they value this requirement as a way of identifying how their program has performed and where it can improve. ATRA highlighted the value of assessing plans on the impact of ITE programs on student learning and ITE student performance and the need to ensure this data is sufficient to inform and drive quality improvements.

Despite this, the focus group findings revealed two main difficulties in meeting this requirement: collecting and analysing this data, and the level of detail and types of information needed to meet accreditation requirements for Program Standard 6. In addition, higher education providers selecting their own outcome measures creates inconsistency in how ITE programs are evaluated. Table 2.5 outlines these challenges and how the indicators can reduce the reporting burden on higher education providers.

Table 2.5: Plans for demonstrating impact – streamlined reporting for higher education providers

Challenges	Streamlined reporting
Collecting and analysing data to demonstrate the impact of their ITE programs is resource intensive and not readily accessible.	Providing data on an agreed set of indicators would reduce the burden of collecting this data. This would allow for more time spent on program improvement.
Unclear expectations for the level of information required in providing, evaluating, and interpreting data on the impact of their ITE programs.	Consistent standardised reporting would provide a streamlined approach to demonstrate evidence of impact.

The Accreditation Standards and Procedures require higher education providers to include a minimum of five types of evidence in their 'Plan for Demonstrating Impact' and for program reporting. Some stakeholders supported the use of indicators in accreditation processes (ACDE submission). Focus groups highlighted that many of the Panel's indicators are used to demonstrate the impact of their ITE programs.

The minimum evidence requirements in the Accreditation Standards and Procedures (Program Standard 6.3) should be reduced from five to three requirements:

- aggregated assessment data from the Teaching Performance Assessment for all pre-service teachers
- aggregated assessment data from any other assessments identified in a plan for impact as contributing to evidence in relation to pre-service teacher performance and impact
- aggregated data from the nationally consistent, transparent indicators for all pre-service teachers.

This would standardise the reporting of key outcomes across providers and streamline the existing reporting requirements. It would make it easier to report on selection cohorts, participate in national/jurisdictional data collections and provide evidence of graduate outcomes, as this would be collected and reported on through the indicators available in the ATWD.

As part of streamlining the reporting requirements for higher education providers, other opportunities to streamline accreditation should also be explored.

Key findings: linking performance to funding

Publicly reporting on the performance of ITE programs would incentivise higher education providers to improve their performance and be accountable for the Commonwealth funding they receive:

- Higher education providers would be able to see where they are performing well, and which aspects they can improve on.
- Prospective ITE students would be able to use this information to inform their choice of higher education provider.

The Panel also recognises that improving performance can be resource intensive. For example, better supporting ITE students during their ITE programs may require professional learning for ITE staff. There is also a limited evidence base that higher education providers can draw from to improve the performance of ITE programs. Investing in and sharing findings from research can help show how to best support ITE students to become great teachers.

There is a limited evidence base to improve student completion rates

The Productivity Commission reports that identifying successful programs to improve student completion rates is difficult. The Tertiary Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) developed a guide on 'good practice' examples for increasing retention. While it identified 29 'good practice' examples, TEQSA had to rely on a thin evidence base and acknowledged that 'many providers have difficulty demonstrating whether particular initiatives have worked'. There was a lack of evidence for whether these initiatives led to improved completion rates. For example, some higher education providers reported students feeling positive about the experience, without reporting any impact on retention.

2.6 Financial incentives

Modest financial incentives for higher education providers making genuine and successful efforts to improve the quality of their ITE programs is a low-risk option to encourage improved quality (Productivity Commission 2023). The Panel identifies two types of financial incentives which could support higher education providers to improve the quality of their ITE programs: a Transition Fund and an Excellence Fund (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6: Proposed financial incentives

Incentive	Overview	Timing	Cost estimate
Transition Fund	In the shorter term, a dedicated Transition Fund for ITE programs could support all higher education providers to improve performance and assist with any costs associated with incorporating core content into ITE programs.	The Transition Fund could provide funding for a set period of time to support higher education providers	Up to \$5 million total
Excellence Fund	In the longer term, a dedicated Excellence Fund for ITE programs could support select higher education providers to take a leadership role in fostering improved performance across the sector.	The Excellence Fund could also be made available for a set period of time to build the capability of higher education providers.	Up to \$2.5 million total

2.6.1 Transition funding

A Transition Fund could support higher education providers to improve their performance and assist with any costs associated with incorporating the core content into ITE programs. This could help lift the quality of ITE programs delivered nationally by ensuring all providers are supported to improve their performance.

Stakeholders broadly supported transition funding to support improvement and demonstrate the quality and delivery of ITE through cross-sector partnerships and collaboration, sharing best practice, participating in national-level data collection, and scaling up priority projects. Some stakeholders highlighted the value of additional funding to support in-school mentoring, to allow ITE students to support themselves during their study and practical experience placements (NSW Council of Deans submission; Australian Primary Principals Association submission) or to incentivise providers to undertake earlier and more extensive reviews of their programs (ACDE submission).

The Transition Fund could provide modest grant funding (up to \$5 million) supporting higher education providers to embed the core content and lift the performance of their ITE programs. This could include activities such as:

- developing curriculum resources
- professional development resources for staff
- sharing research findings on how to best support ITE students during their program.

Principles

Clear principles should guide the implementation of transition funding, as shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Principles for implementation of transition funding

Collaboration	Identified need	Impact	Measurement
Higher education providers to collaborate to embed core content and improve performance.	Support higher education providers to improve the quality of their programs in areas of need.	Create institutional change to ensure successful delivery of core content in ITE programs and improve performance.	Demonstrate improvement through institutions determining how to measure success.

Eligibility

Higher education providers could apply for grant funding, with a proposal for how they would use the funding to incorporate core content in ITE programs and improve performance. Providers would have the option to pool funding by collaborating on a shared proposal, to support improvement across the sector.

Assessment

Transition funding should be contingent on higher education providers demonstrating how they would support the delivery of ITE content and improved performance against the principles.

Reporting

Higher education providers would report on how they implemented their initiatives. At the end of the funding period, higher education providers should report on the outcomes of these activities, to show the impact of funding and lessons learned. This would build the evidence base on successful approaches to deliver core content in ITE programs and to lift performance.

2.6.2 Excellence Fund

An Excellence Fund could provide funding to select higher education providers to take a leadership role in fostering improved performance across the sector.

Stakeholders highlighted the need to ensure funding of ITE programs does not create a two-tier ITE system (ATRA submission; Independent Education Union submission; Catholic Schools NSW submission) or unintended consequences for providers who support more rural and regional students or students from diverse equity backgrounds (NSW Council of Deans submission).

The Panel considers there is value in establishing an Excellence Fund to support high-performing or fast-improving higher education providers to share their learnings with, mentor and raise the performance of other higher education providers.

The ITE quality assurance board (discussed in Chapter 1) would undertake thematic reviews of ITE best practice in areas agreed to by Education Ministers. This could be used to identify higher education providers undertaking successful approaches to improve the quality of their ITE programs. For example, the Panel’s survey of final-year ITE students reveals around half agreed they had many opportunities to use assessment to evaluate their students’ progress, adjust instruction and provide targeted feedback in classrooms. The ITE quality assurance board could review how ITE programs teach assessment and which higher education providers are successfully delivering this in their ITE programs.

The Excellence Fund could provide grant funding (up to \$2.5 million) to these higher education providers to share their successful approaches for improving the quality of ITE programs in these key areas. This could include activities such as:

- high-performing providers mentoring other providers (La Trobe University submission)
- showcasing successful mentorship models for students (Macquarie University submission)
- seed funding to incentivise collaboration and communities of practice (NSW Department of Education submission).

The Excellence Fund should follow the same criteria as the Transition Fund for the principles, eligibility, assessment, allocation and reporting, such as requiring providers to:

- apply for grant funding with a proposal for how they would implement the initiative to raise the performance of the ITE sector
- demonstrate the need for funding, the expected impact of the proposed initiative for their ITE program and how they would measure success
- report how the funded initiative has supported the ITE sector in improving quality.

2.7 Further options considered by the Panel

The Panel also considered two existing Commonwealth policy levers that the Australian Government could pursue to drive quality improvements in ITE programs: mission-based compacts and Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs).

2.7.1 Mission-based compacts

Higher education providers could be held more accountable for their performance through Commonwealth agreements with each provider, called mission-based compacts (compacts). Compacts provide an avenue for the Australian Government to negotiate with higher education providers on improving areas of underperformance and outlining strategies for how they will improve.

Mission-based compact agreements

Mission-based compacts provide an avenue for enhanced provider accountability for the performance of ITE programs. Compacts are one of the quality and accountability requirements that providers must enter into to receive grant funding. The purpose of compacts is to provide a strategic framework that outlines how each provider's distinctive mission aligns with the Commonwealth's goals for higher education, innovation, teaching and learning, research and equity. This makes higher education providers accountable for their strategies in meeting Commonwealth policy priorities.

The Australian Government could consider including ITE as a national priority area in compacts, subject to any outcomes from the Universities Accord on the role of compacts. This would make explicit the Australian Government's objective of improving the performance of ITE programs and the supply pipeline of beginning teachers.

The compacts could specify how higher education providers seek to improve their ITE programs against the nationally consistent, transparent indicators.

2.7.2 Commonwealth Supported Places

The QITE Review recommended allocating CSPs on the basis of ITE performance: higher education providers who meet specific performance criteria would be rewarded by having CSPs reallocated to them. The Panel acknowledges that while this could provide an incentive to improve performance, linking performance to CSPs at this time represents a real risk of exacerbating the national shortage of teachers. Despite growing demand for teachers, the number of beginning teachers entering the profession has declined by 12 per cent since 2017.¹⁰

There is no guarantee that increasing places at some higher education providers would balance out the loss of students at another institution, or that all universities would offer these students a place at their institution. Allocating places to particular higher education providers may not align with student preferences, as the majority of ITE students across regional and metropolitan locations only apply to one higher education provider. This could negatively impact local teacher workforce needs, as ITE students tend to work in the same locations where they studied.

Higher education providers may also not have a strong incentive to offer additional ITE places. Base funding for education courses declined under the Job Ready Graduates package, due to the significant reduction in student contributions (base funding declined from \$18,430 in 2020 to \$17,354 in 2021 in 2022 dollars). This is lower than the estimated teaching cost of \$18,629 for delivering postgraduate ITE programs.

Stakeholders raised further concerns about linking performance and funding, including:

- Aggregating the indicators into a single measure (which would be required for allocating additional places) would obscure the importance of each individual indicator and require difficult and subjective judgements around how each indicator should be weighted relative to the others.
- Weighting the indicators may preference particular higher education providers. For example, weightings in favour of student retention and employment outcomes may disadvantage higher education providers serving regional and remote cohorts, who are essential to supplying teachers in regional and remote schools.
- Competition for additional places could come at the cost of collaboration between higher education providers, which may not lead to improvement for the whole ITE sector.

The Productivity Commission (2023) highlighted similar issues with performance-based funding of universities more generally. It recommended instead exploring financial rewards to providers that have made successful efforts to improve their teaching quality. This aligns to the Panel's proposed Excellence Fund.

The Panel does not consider it appropriate to link performance to CSPs in the present context, given the national shortage of teachers and potential risks to teacher supply. While the risk of unfilled places could be managed when student demand for ITE significantly exceeds supply, higher education providers are not experiencing this situation. The Panel is of the view that publishing nationally consistent, transparent indicators to inform student choice would deliver a market-driven response for incentivising improved performance, without the associated teacher supply risks. The Panel's survey of ITE students shows that prospective ITE students would use the indicators to inform their choice of higher education provider. However, the Panel notes that allocating CSPs on the basis of performance is an option that could be considered in the future if current teacher workforce shortages improve and the associated risks to teacher supply can be effectively addressed.

In addition, strengthening the Accreditation Standards and Procedures would provide additional quality assurance, as higher education providers who cannot meet this higher threshold would be ineligible to offer ITE programs.

Conclusions and recommendations

The Accreditation Standards and Procedures, while effective in terms of enforcing standards do not sufficiently recognise and encourage high performance in ITE or instil a culture of continuous improvement among higher education providers. The Panel was asked to provide advice on defining a set of performance measures for ITE and strengthening the link between performance and funding.

¹⁰ Australian Government analysis of ITE completions between 2017 and 2021, Selected Higher Education Student Statistics

Stakeholders broadly supported the case for standardised indicators based on principles such as international precedent, relevance to the Australian context and cost-effectiveness. The indicators represent potential areas for targeted improvement; they are not targets or benchmarks and do not prescribe how a higher education provider could improve. These indicators would be accompanied by relevant contextual information for each higher education provider.

Recommendation 4: Establish nationally consistent, transparent indicators

Education Ministers to agree to adopt an identified set of nationally consistent, transparent indicators based on the Australian Teacher Workforce Data collection.

The Panel has defined four categories of relevant nationally consistent, transparent indicators to encourage higher education providers to improve the quality of programs, and inform prospective initial teacher education (ITE) students' choice of programs best suited to their needs:

- **selection:** diverse, high-achieving cohorts in areas of workforce need
- **retention:** retention of students over the duration of initial teacher education, from entry to graduation
- **preparedness of beginning teachers:** perceived preparedness for entry into the teaching profession and student satisfaction with the quality of their program
- **transition:** employment outcomes of recent graduates and early career teachers.

Establishment of nationally consistent, transparent indicators presents an opportunity to ensure consistency and to streamline accreditation for higher education providers, as it would allow for the minimum evidence requirements in the Accreditation Standards and Procedures to be reduced from five to three requirements. The Panel observed that time and resources currently devoted to collecting data to demonstrate the impact of ITE programs could be spent informing program improvement.

Recommendation 5: Streamline reporting requirements in the Accreditation Standards and Procedures

Education Ministers to agree to streamline the reporting requirements for higher education providers by mandating the nationally consistent, transparent indicators (Recommendation 4) as key measures for demonstrating the impact of initial teacher education programs, and to explore other opportunities to streamline accreditation requirements.

Financial incentives are a low-risk option to encourage quality improvements. The Panel acknowledges that improving performance can be resource intensive for higher education providers. Higher education providers could be supported to improve the quality of ITE programs through two distinct funds:

- a short-term Transition Fund to support implementation of core content and lift performance of providers: activities could include developing curriculum resources, professional development for staff, and sharing research findings on how to best support ITE students during their program
- a longer term Excellence Fund to highlight ITE provider exemplars and foster a culture of continuous improvement in the ITE sector: activities could include exemplar higher education providers sharing best practice with other providers, showcasing successful mentorship models for students, and seed funding to incentivise collaboration.

Recommendation 6: Establish a Transition Fund to support embedding of core content

Education Ministers to agree to establish a Transition Fund made available to all higher education providers to support them to embed the core content in their initial teacher education programs and improve performance.

Recommendation 7: Establish an Excellence Fund to improve the quality of initial teacher education programs

Education Ministers to agree to establish an Excellence Fund to support higher education providers identified through the initial teacher education (ITE) quality assurance board's work as high performing, fast improving or excellent in a particular aspect of ITE delivery. Identified higher education providers would be funded to take a leadership role in fostering improved performance across the sector.

Chapter 3

Improving the quality of
practical experience in teaching

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING

Key points

- Successfully integrating theory and practice through practical experience gives initial teacher education (ITE) students the opportunity to develop their skills and teach in a real classroom.
- ITE students who have positive practical experience placements are more likely to successfully transition into teaching and remain in the profession longer term.
- The Panel was asked to provide advice on how to improve the quality of practical experience in teaching, building on previous reforms.
- The Panel found that the quality of practical experience is highly variable for ITE students, particularly for ITE students in regional and remote areas.
- Major barriers to high-quality practical experience include variable support for delivery of practical experience; ineffective relationships between providers, schools and school systems; unclear expectations for planning and delivery; resourcing challenges; limited mentor teacher capacity and capability; and limited support for ITE students with outside commitments.
- System-wide coordination of practical experience delivery through jurisdiction-level agreements and delivery models would lift the quality of practical experience.
- National guidelines would support the delivery of consistent, high-quality practical experience.
- High-quality practical experience is costly and resource intensive. Systemic investment would incentivise schools to support delivery of practical experience and assist ITE students to juggle paid work, study, and practical experience placements.
- Professional recognition for mentor teachers across jurisdictions would encourage more experienced and expert teachers to consider mentoring ITE students in their schools.

CONTEXT

High-quality practical experience in teaching is critical to driving improvements in student outcomes. Successfully integrating theory and practice through practical experience means that ITE students are more prepared to teach in a real classroom. Practical experience is particularly important for core skills such as behaviour management and differentiated teaching (Goss & Sonnemann 2017). Research also shows that high-quality practical experience helps to attract and retain teachers. ITE students who have positive practical experience placements in relevant settings are more likely to stay in ITE; make a successful transition to teaching; and stay in teaching for the long term, including in those settings (e.g. regional and remote areas) (AITSL 2022a; Podolsky et al. 2019; and Ronfeldt 2021).

The critical role of practical experience in ITE means it has been subject to several reviews and actions at both the Commonwealth and the state and territory level, including the TEMAG Review (2014) and the QITE Review (2022). These reviews have also highlighted the importance of high-quality practical experience but acknowledged that its delivery is complex and resource intensive. They have led to considerable reforms, but more attention and investment is still required to ensure high-quality practical experiences for all students.

The Panel has been asked to provide advice on how to improve the quality of practical experience in teaching. The findings and recommendations in this report have been informed by a review of the existing literature, a survey of ITE students, and stakeholder consultation with higher education providers, education departments, TRAs, peak sector organisations, and operational staff responsible for practical experience placements.

Stakeholder feedback was consistent in highlighting practical experience as the area in most need of reform. The Panel received broad stakeholder support for the reform options raised in its Discussion Paper.

KEY FINDINGS

3.1 High-quality practical experience for ITE students

High-quality practical experience starts before a student enters the classroom. It begins with well-defined and easily arranged placements; early communication between the student and the school; defined learning outcomes for each placement, linked to the Teacher Standards; and flexibility for the student to accommodate work and other commitments. On site, students are exposed to high-quality teaching and supervised and mentored by an experienced and skilled teacher; tasks are aligned to the Teacher Standards and coursework; and students are given opportunities to learn and develop their expertise, informed by ongoing feedback from skilled professionals. Post placement, students have further contact with their school, and an opportunity to reflect on their learning and experience.

There are different approaches when it comes to delivering the above features of high-quality practical experience placements. Some school systems and higher education providers have gone 'above and beyond' the minimum accreditation requirements for professional learning and support for teachers, entering into multi-provider partnership agreements and providing innovative delivery models that support multiple schools. However, this does not happen consistently across the practical experience placement ecosystem, leading to variation in ITE student experience.

Due to the variation in how practical experience is delivered and the complexity of arrangements, it is difficult to quantify how much high-quality practical experience costs. Feedback from higher education providers has highlighted that delivering practical experience is costly and resource intensive. What we do know is that delivering practical experience across all providers, jurisdictions, schools and school systems is a major financial and resource commitment. Factors to consider include the time needed by the provider, student, school and school system to set up and agree to practical experience placements; the time and monetary cost incurred by ITE students to undertake placements; the cost of paying experienced teachers to supervise, observe and mentor ITE students; and the time and cost of providing feedback and ongoing support and communication to ITE students before, during and after placements.

The Panel has articulated a vision of high-quality practical experience placements that are targeted and delivered across as many different school and provider settings as possible (see Table 3.1). It is based on available research, existing guidance and stakeholder engagement. Its characteristics can also be incorporated into system-level actions (both nationally and for different jurisdictions) to support high-quality practical experiences from a regulation and resourcing standpoint. Further detail on this is provided in section 3.3.

Table 3.1: Consistent characteristics of high-quality practical experiences for ITE students

Phase	High-quality characteristic
Before practical experience placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Placements are easily arranged by the higher education provider ■ The placements for an individual student occur in different settings ■ The host school communicates with students before their placement ■ Each placement has an expected learning outcome aligned to one or more of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers ■ Students have a sound understanding of the skill level required of them before placement ■ Students are able to accommodate their other commitments around their placement
During practical experience placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students have a skilled mentor or supervising teacher ■ Students are exposed to high-quality classroom teaching ■ Expectations regarding student performance are clearly communicated ■ Tasks during placement are aligned with what a student was taught during their ITE program ■ Students undertake tasks focused on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers ■ Students are provided opportunities to learn and develop their skills in the classroom appropriate to their level of expertise (e.g. more guidance during their initial placement as opposed to more independence later) ■ Students receive regular observation, assessment and feedback to support their development ■ The higher education provider maintains contact and provides support during a student's placement ■ Students feel connected to and receive support from peers during placement ■ There are mechanisms in place to resolve a student's grievances or issues while on placement ■ Students feel they are able to manage their time while on placement
After practical experience placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A student's required documentation is completed in a timely manner ■ The school communicates with the student post placement ■ A higher education provider allows a student to reflect on and share their placement experience

3.2 Reforms to improve the quality of practical experience

The TEMAG reforms sought to improve the quality of practical experience through introducing mechanisms focused on higher education providers, largely through accreditation and formalised partnerships between providers and schools. This included:

- higher education providers to deliver integrated and structured professional experience through formalised partnership agreements with schools
- higher education providers to ensure sufficient placements of appropriate timing and length are available for all ITE students
- higher education providers to ensure ITE students have early opportunities to assess suitability for teaching, including through exposure to the classroom
- systems/schools to use the Teacher Standards in identifying highly skilled teachers to supervise practical experience.

These reforms have gone some of the way to improving the quality of practical experience. Despite this, ITE students report they are still not consistently experiencing high-quality placements. The Panel's survey results revealed that there were five key characteristics of high-quality placements that many ITE students did not experience during and after their placement:

- 30 per cent of students indicated that there were no appropriate mechanisms in place to resolve grievances or issues during their placement
- 27 per cent of students did not feel that the expectations of their performance were clearly communicated
- 30 per cent of students felt that they could not connect with and receive support from their peers during placement
- 32 per cent of students said that they were not able to manage their time and their other commitments while on placement
- 32 per cent of students indicated that their higher education provider did not give them the opportunity to reflect on and share their placement experience.

ITE students in regional and remote locations were less likely to report experiencing high-quality practical experience. For example, only 45 per cent of students in remote areas received regular observation, assessment and feedback to support their development. A lower proportion of students in remote areas had an opportunity to learn skills and content aligned to their ITE program and at a level appropriate to their expertise.

3.3 Key challenges to delivery of high-quality practicum placements

Despite reform efforts since TEMAG, key challenges in delivering consistently high-quality practical experience persist.

3.3.1 Variable support for high-quality practical experience

There is a large degree of variation in how practical experience is implemented across jurisdictions (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Gaps in implementation of support mechanisms across jurisdictions

Support mechanisms	Availability
Multi-provider partnership agreements	<p>Some jurisdictions have established system-level partnerships or agreements between state and territory governments, providers, and schools to support the coordination and delivery of practicums.</p> <p>These agreements seek to establish clear roles and responsibilities, set expectations, and aid the facilitation and organisation of placements.</p> <p>These vary in their depth, breadth, and purpose.</p>
Professional learning and support for mentor teachers	<p>Some school systems provide guidance, resources, frameworks, or professional learning focused on supporting mentor teachers.</p> <p>These resources or programs often have a focus on supporting how to assess an ITE student against the Graduate Teacher Standards.</p> <p>Not all school systems provide specific professional learning or support for mentor teachers.</p> <p>This variation results in inconsistency in the quality of mentoring and ultimately the quality of a practical experience placement.</p>
Delivery models supporting multiple schools	<p>Some school systems have delivery models across multiple schools to deliver high-quality professional experience.</p> <p>These are models that focus on the actual delivery of quality practical placements to support supervising teachers, ITE students and partner schools in implementation.</p> <p>While there are some key examples of delivery models across multiple schools for practical experience placements, this is the support mechanism that is currently least used.</p>

3.3.2 Ineffective relationships between providers, schools and school systems

Higher education providers are required to establish formal partnerships with schools to facilitate placements. However, systems and schools do not engage consistently in the delivery of professional experience, and the commitment of schools and supervising teachers to professional practice is variable (Ure et al. 2018).

Some jurisdictions have established system-level partnerships or agreements between state and territory governments, providers and schools to support the coordination and delivery of practical experience. In other jurisdictions there is a lack of consistency in the scope and specificity of formal partnerships between higher education providers and schools, and the delivery models used to ensure high-quality placements. According to stakeholder interviews, in many jurisdictions this causes coordination processes around matching to be decentralised and reliant on individual higher education providers reaching out to schools themselves.

The aggregation of many different placement arrangements between schools and higher education providers (on behalf of many students) results in an increased risk of variable quality of those placements, as well as excessive workload for both higher education providers and schools. For example, a single school could be liaising with several different providers, each with their own requirements. This highlights a clear need for more system-level coordination, to reduce the burden on schools and higher education providers in trying to match individual students.

Stakeholder consultation indicates that ineffective relationships between providers, schools and school systems results in an inconsistent, inefficient, ad hoc student-school matching process, evidenced by:

- competition between providers to obtain practicum placements
- difficulty matching ITE students with an appropriate school for their subject specialisation/skill level
- last-minute placement arrangement with minimal time for ITE student preparation
- insufficient support for ITE students.

Higher education providers have little capacity to influence how schools engage with ITE and how they select and prepare mentor teachers to work with ITE students during their placement. In addition, stakeholder consultation raised the need for greater incentives for schools to buy in to high-quality practical experience, including professional and financial recognition based incentives.

3.3.3 Unclear expectations for the planning and delivery of practical experience placements

The Accreditation Standards and Procedures set the requirements for practical experience but do not provide clear expectations for the planning and delivery of practical experience placements. Focus groups with school-level stakeholders revealed that practical experience placements vary in length and timing across higher education providers, which creates a significant administrative burden when coordinating these placements.

While some jurisdictions have created resources to clarify expectations, these are not universal. For example, the New South Wales Education Standards Authority developed a comprehensive NSW Professional Experience Framework that has been endorsed by all NSW education sectors and applies to all NSW ITE providers. Queensland education sectors have co-developed a Professional Experience Reporting Framework to provide a consistent approach to assessing professional experience in Queensland. However, similar frameworks are not available in every state and territory; nor are they necessarily consistent in their expectations.

This lack of consistency may also reflect that there is not always a clear, research-based platform for certain elements of practical experience placement delivery. For example, the National Catholic Education Commission and the NSW Council of Deans of Education both identify that the 'optimal time' for professional experience is an under-researched but critical area, given that there is considerable variation in when an ITE student's first placement may occur (NCEC submission; NSW Council of Deans of Education submission). While a certain degree of flexibility is appropriate, to accommodate different jurisdictional contexts, there is a lack of best practice evidence for certain elements of practical experience design and delivery (Australian Catholic University submission).

3.3.4 Resourcing challenges

Due to the variations and complexities described above, it is difficult to quantify how much practical experience costs. The Australian Government provides funding for practical experience to higher education providers, which includes payments for mentor teachers. While funding continues to be included in the Australian Government's contribution to teacher education courses it is no longer specified in Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding, and the funding for practical experience is not 'ring-fenced'.

The Panel has heard from stakeholders that high-quality practical experience is expensive (University of Queensland submission), that it is not adequately funded (Victorian Council of Deans of Education submission) and that appropriate resourcing is the most significant lever for improving the quality of practical experience in ITE programs (Australian Education Union submission). In particular, stakeholders consider that funding has not kept pace with the significant financial and administrative demands placed on providers to effectively coordinate and deliver high-quality practical experience (ATRA submission). The need for funding models to support rural and remote placements, due to prohibitive accommodation and travel costs for many ITE students, was also raised (Griffith University submission), while other stakeholders observed that the academic and administrative costs of practical experience placements are beyond the typical costs of higher education coursework (Queensland Deans of Education submission). However, the amount of money actually spent on practical experience is unknown.

In its Discussion Paper, the Panel noted that base funding for education courses (Commonwealth and student contributions) has declined under the Job Ready Graduates package due to the significant reduction in student

contributions, potentially discouraging providers from investing in improving the quality and quantity of ITE students. This difficulty was reinforced in the Panel's consultations. The University of Canberra stated that the quality of professional experience could be improved by direct funding to universities for the costs associated with providing student placements in schools. It noted that the reduction in base funding for ITE programs through Job Ready Graduates has reduced funds available for all aspects of ITE programs, including funds available to support high-quality school placements. It advocated for a return to previous funding levels consistent with the high priority the Australian Government is placing on addressing the teacher workforce shortage and the quality of teacher education (University of Canberra submission).

Stakeholder feedback to the Australian Universities Accord higher education review has highlighted that the rising cost of placements is adversely affecting the pipeline of skilled workers into health and education (Australian Catholic University submission). The Australian Catholic University also stated that the cost to universities of facilitating placements is increasing more quickly than the funding universities receive to educate students and is taking up 'a potentially unsustainable proportion of university budgets'. The University of New England highlighted that, due to the shortage of teachers and health professionals, employers cannot accommodate and supervise students on placement, further slowing the supply of new teachers into the workforce. Significant coordination between systems and providers, accrediting bodies and universities, together with more funding, would be required to drive transformation in this area (University of New England submission).

Factors contributing to the cost of delivering practical experience include:

- the time and resourcing needed by the provider, student, school and school system to set up and agree to practical experience placements
- the time and cost to provide feedback and ongoing support and communication to ITE students before, during and after placements
- the cost of preparing and paying experienced teachers to supervise, observe and mentor ITE students.

In addition to the costs incurred by providers, schools and school systems, mentor teachers must juggle the demands of their teaching workload to support and mentor ITE students. Time release arrangements may not fully compensate mentor teachers for the hours they spend mentoring ITE students, and this can in turn deter other experienced teachers from taking on this role.

Noting these elements, stakeholders asserted that the cost of practical experience placements is 'high and must be tackled at a national and jurisdiction level' (ACDE submission).

3.3.5 Limited teacher capacity, capability and incentives to supervise and mentor ITE students

Stakeholder consultation indicates there is an ongoing challenge in identifying highly skilled mentor teachers to supervise ITE students (Independent Education Union submission; RMIT submission; Federation University Institute of Special Education submission). Focus groups with higher education providers identified mentoring as a significant challenge in providing high-quality practical experience.

Teachers may be unclear about what is required of them if they are given mentoring responsibilities. AITSL highlights ambiguity about the 'expectations of mentors, their role, the mentoring processes expected, the pre-requisite experiences and qualities, the training available and the resources to support [mentors]'. Focus groups with principals also identified that mentors were rarely given adequate release time to genuinely engage with ITE students.

Teachers may also not be adequately supported to effectively mentor ITE students. Principals reported in focus groups that they do not always have adequate control over the capability of supervising teachers and are limited to those who can volunteer time. Processes for selecting mentors may be ad hoc and unstructured, leading to 'considerable variation' in the quality of mentors and of practical experience placements for ITE students (AITSL submission).

Currently the amount of financial recognition mentor teachers receive varies between jurisdictions. Despite this being a significant cost to higher education providers, many stakeholders said that the amount is insufficient to properly recognise the work required to provide a quality practical experience placement (University of Newcastle submission; Macquarie School of Education submission; Flinders University submission).

3.3.6 Limited support for ITE students with outside commitments

Many students juggle full-time or part-time study with paid work and/or caring and parental responsibilities. Taking time off from work or personal commitments to undertake practical experience is challenging for many, both personally and financially.

ITE students incur significant financial costs in undertaking their placements, which may not be sustainable for them (Victorian Department of Education submission). Personal costs incurred when completing practical experience placements can include direct costs (such as purchasing materials for the classroom and travelling to the host school) and indirect costs, such as lost work shifts. The Panel's survey results reveal:

- 50 per cent of survey respondents from metro and regional areas said they spent up to \$100/week on travel costs, while just under 50 per cent from remote areas reported spending at least \$150/week on travel
- over 80 per cent of survey respondents forewent paid work to complete their placements
- almost 80 per cent of survey respondents purchased learning resources (up to \$100) for placements
- on average, a third of survey respondents incurred additional care costs of at least \$150 a week because of placements
- all survey respondents with additional accommodation costs during placements reported spending at least \$150/week on this accommodation
- respondents who completed a remote placement were at least twice as likely to report having to spend money on accommodation during their placement.

The survey results also reveal that 37 per cent of ITE students whose practical experience placement involved financial costs have withdrawn or considered withdrawing from ITE due to these costs.

Some targeted supports for certain cohorts are available already, but stakeholders reported that this may not be sufficient to compensate ITE students for the costs they incur. Stakeholders broadly agreed that additional, more targeted financial supports for the students who need them most would improve outcomes from practical experience placements (ACDE submission; Victorian Deans of Education submission; Queensland Deans of Education submission; Monash University submission; University of Queensland submission).

3.4 System-level approach to delivering practical experience

The Panel considers that further actions are needed to build on previous reforms to realise the aspiration of consistent, high-quality practical experience for all ITE students through:

1. more comprehensive system-level agreements to clarify roles and responsibilities
2. system-level delivery models that promote quality and reduce administrative burden
3. national guidelines for consistent, high-quality practical experience
4. support for supervisor and mentor teachers
5. systemic investment in practicums, including targeted student support.

3.4.1 System-level agreements for delivering practical experience

Provider–school agreements have gone some way to improving the quality of practical experience but are not sufficient to address broader challenges such as inconsistency across the system and high administrative burden. A more collaborative whole-of-system approach is needed to improve consistency and reduce administrative burden in a way that better meets system aspirations for high-quality practical experience for all students. This is consistent with AITSL's evaluation of school–university partnerships, which found that 'implementation now requires more collective action with wider engagement by systems, other employers and crucially by more schools' (PTR Consulting 2018).

System-level agreements should be developed to support delivery of more consistent, high-quality practical experience placements for all students. Agreements should include components that:

- define clear roles, responsibilities and expectations for the development of beginning teachers across all parties (ITE providers, TRAs and employers)
- support and value mentor teachers
- encourage system-level delivery models
- improve coordination in matching placements to demand
- demonstrate understanding of core content
- measure implementation and impact.

Victorian provider collaborative agreements

The Victorian Government established a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with higher education providers to strengthen Victorian government schools' capacity to host high-quality practical placements. The MOU aims to:

- streamline the administration of placements – for example, by establishing designated placement booking windows
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of schools, ITE providers and ITE students during placement
- introduce one standard placement assessment template for all ITE students, used by all ITE providers
- support schools and ITE providers to build new relationships, particularly in areas of high forecast workforce demand.

These aspects of the MOU are intended to increase the transparency and predictability of communication between higher education providers and schools in order to support schools' planning and allocation of staff resources to arrange placements. The MOU also includes a commitment that the department and Victorian higher education providers will continue to work together to strengthen the strategic distribution of placements. From 2023, each government school is allocated a minimum number of placement days to host, depending on school size and location. This system-level delivery model is designed to share responsibility for hosting placements more equitably and provide fairer access to graduate recruits.

Stakeholders across the jurisdictions and the higher education sector broadly support system-level agreements and note the importance of ensuring consistency in practical experience for ITE students (Queensland College of Teachers submission; Macquarie School of Education submission; Northern Territory Department of Education submission; Charles Darwin University submission). The Panel acknowledges that while a system-level approach is needed, the system-level agreements should still enable an operating environment that supports provider flexibility and innovation in delivering placements.

These agreements would not supersede accreditation requirements or existing provider–school agreements but rather remove administrative burden by centralising and standardising processes in the context of a more consistent system-wide approach. The table at Appendix H outlines the components that should be considered as part of system-level agreements to address specific ongoing challenges.

3.4.2 Adoption of delivery models to support high-quality practical experience

A more collaborative whole-of-system approach needs to be complemented by successful delivery models on the ground. A number of jurisdictions have system-level delivery models providing an intentional, comprehensive and cohesive approach to delivering high-quality practical experience across higher education providers and schools. They do this through supporting clusters of schools to deliver high-quality practical experience placements, including the provision of professional learning, funding and resources. There is often a focus on the alignment between ITE course content and practical experience placements. This aims to strengthen the link between theory, research and practice to enhance the effectiveness of ITE.

Evidence on these delivery models shows positive impacts on the quality of practical experience, including:

- a change of culture and attitude towards ITE students within schools, improved mentoring skills and increased capacity for supervising teachers, and stronger connections and support for partner schools
- improved levels of ITE student confidence, greater readiness to enter teaching, and greater understanding of the whole-of-school context and processes.

It would be inappropriate to impose a standardised approach given there are already a range of delivery models operating across jurisdictions that are working in their unique contexts. There is also limited evidence as to which delivery models work best, and best practice is likely to differ between jurisdictional contexts (for example, one delivery model may be more appropriate for regional, rural and remote contexts).

There is value, however, in encouraging new and scaled-up delivery models, whereby more students are exposed to higher quality practical experience (see Table 3.3 for examples). The features of these models, common to existing delivery models, could include:

- professional development of mentor teachers
- focus on alignment between theory, research and practice (e.g. core content)
- points of coordination between schools and providers to encourage strong links (e.g. practicum coordinators, school-based clinics and research projects)
- centralised resources for stakeholders involved in practical experience (e.g. mentor teacher guide and assessment templates)
- logistical support for schools to manage high-quality placements (e.g. financial and administrative support)
- explicit links to practical experience requirements.

Table 3.3: Current examples of system-wide delivery models across jurisdictions

System delivery model	Description
NSW Professional Experience Hub Schools	Specific initiatives to support involved schools to host high-quality practical placements, including Professional Experience Coordinators, professional learning for school staff, sharing resources between schools, and linkages between schools and higher education providers. The NSW Council of Deans of Education (CDE) endorses this model as a high-quality model for practical placements (NSW CDE submission).
ACT Affiliated Schools Program	A collaborative partnership incorporating school-based clinics, practical experience, university-facilitated professional learning, research-driven school and system improvement and school-based research projects to meet school and system needs.
NT Teaching Schools Program	A program where students can undertake practical experience placements in designated partnership schools. These partnerships facilitate a close working relationship between Charles Darwin University (CDU) and partnership schools, resources for mentors, ongoing communication between CDU and the Northern Territory Department of Education, as well as ongoing professional learning for mentor teachers and Professional Learning Leaders in schools. The model highlights the increased efficiency benefits of a well-run partnership agreement and has been responsible for a 118% increase (from 423 to 923) in ITE student placements between 2020 and 2021 (CDU 2021).
Victorian Teaching Academies of Professional Practice (TAPP)	A program that delivers an immersive preparation experience for ITE students, testing innovative approaches to ITE, strengthening the links between theory, research, and practice. Each TAPP has a different focus – from collaborative course design to evidence-based feedback, to professional learning for mentor teachers.

3.4.3 National guidelines for consistent, high-quality practical experience

The practical experience requirements in the Accreditation Standards and Procedures do not provide clear directions for planning and delivering high-quality placements. Given the variety of student and provider experiences, there is a case for guidance at the national level.

AITSL should develop national guidelines for consistent high-quality practical experience, building on the accreditation requirements by:

- better defining and communicating the national aspiration for practical experience, including what a high-quality practical experience looks like
- reducing the administrative burden in meeting the Accreditation Standards and Procedures by providing a consistent interpretation to follow
- defining standards for mentoring ITE students during the placement.

The national guidelines would support the Accreditation Standards and Procedures (Program Standard 5.1–5.5) by providing clear expectations for delivering these requirements. They would build on existing practical experience resources already being used in some jurisdictions (e.g. the NSW Professional Experience Framework) rather than ‘reinventing the wheel’.

Stakeholders broadly agree with the concept of national guidelines that would reduce the burden on higher education providers and schools in planning and administering practical experience placements (Victorian Council of Deans of Education submission; Australian Council of State School Organisations submission; NSW Department of Education submission).

Several stakeholders suggested direct amendments to Program Standard 5 (AITSL submission; ACDE submission). The Panel considers that supplementary national guidelines would support higher education providers in meeting accreditation requirements while providing flexibility in delivering practical experience suited to local contexts.

The national guidelines should be developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including jurisdictions, higher education providers and teachers. The types of information that should be covered in these guidelines to support existing accreditation requirements are outlined in Appendix I.

3.4.4 Systemic investment in practical experience

The Australian, state and territory governments invested more than \$72.2 billion in school education in 2021–22. This investment would be supported through a greater focus on improving the quality and consistency of practical experience. Across the nation, in a competitive labour market, workplaces are prioritising and investing in attracting and developing talent.

The Panel aspires for all beginning teachers to have a high-quality practical experience placement that:

- provides supervision and mentoring by experienced and skilled teachers who can reflect on their learning
- is clearly aligned to the Teacher Standards and course content.

High-quality practical experience is achieved through strong and effective communication and partnerships between jurisdictions, higher education providers, ITE students, schools and school systems, where all parties understand their roles and responsibilities and where delivery models are in place to ensure those roles and responsibilities are fulfilled on the ground.

The Panel has found that the quality of practical experience is variable and that support for high-quality practical experience differs considerably by jurisdiction. Investment in high-quality practical experience in teaching is critical to driving improvements in student outcomes, attracting and retaining beginning teachers in ITE and preparing them for the classroom. This, in turn, would assist in alleviating workforce shortages.

Systemic investment by jurisdictions in high-quality practical experience should be prioritised to support system-level agreements, whole-of-system delivery models and targeted support for beginning teachers. This could include financial support to assist with travel, accommodation and other costs for ITE students undertaking practical experience, particularly for those undertaking placements in regional, rural and remote locations. This would deliver on the Panel's vision that all beginning teachers receive a high-quality practical experience.

The Panel proposes that Education Ministers consider how to increase systemic support for and investment in practical experience to improve student outcomes and attract, develop and retain beginning teachers. One option is to consider this through the next National School Reform Agreement. The Panel notes that the broader issue of access to quality practical experience placements and industry experiences is also a priority for the Australian Universities Accord review.

3.4.5 Supporting and valuing effective mentoring

For ITE students to practise and develop their skills, they require support, learning and feedback from experienced and expert teachers before, during and after placements. Skilled mentors are critical to the quality of practical experience and learning outcomes for students.

The Panel heard that professional learning for mentor teachers is available to varying degrees across jurisdictions and school sectors. AITSL currently offers a Supervising Preservice Teachers program to all teachers across Australia. Additionally, the Queensland College of Teachers offers a mentor training program that has been used across different sectors of the Queensland education system (NCEC submission).

Several of the initiatives already identified by the Panel would have a significant impact on the support for mentor teachers. The development of national guidelines and system-level agreements would ensure there are clear roles and responsibilities for mentor teachers and would provide access to high-quality guidance and support materials. Several delivery models have been shown to improve mentoring skills and build capacity for mentor teachers, through increased administrative support for practical experience and high-quality professional learning. For example, in the ACT Affiliated Schools Program, the University of Canberra facilitates research-informed professional learning for mentor teachers delivered through workshops, masterclasses and conferences.

However, there are further actions that can be taken. There is minimal professional recognition for mentor teachers. Mentor teachers should be able to count part of their hours spent supervising practical experience placements towards their own professional learning requirements for obtaining and maintaining teacher registration. States and territories and other employers should pursue relevant regulatory changes to improve the recognition of mentoring ITE students. This should include more explicit links between mentor teacher duties and teacher registration requirements. This can encourage more teachers to become mentors and, more broadly, recognise teachers' important role in mentoring ITE students. This has already been established in the ACT, where mentoring an ITE student from the University of Canberra attracts up to five hours of required professional learning.

The NTWAP includes an action to increase the number of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALTs), with AITSL to work with states and territories to increase the number of teachers certified as HALT or equivalent to 10,000 nationally by 2025. Mentoring ITE students should be linked more explicitly with HALT certification or equivalent frameworks to support mentoring of ITE students by highly accomplished teachers (Australian Catholic University submission). HALTs (or equivalent) should be required to provide practical experience supervision as evidence for certification processes.

States and territories should pursue professional recognition of mentor teachers to support teachers in mentoring ITE students during their practical experience placements.

The Panel also recognises that the amount of financial recognition mentor teachers receive for practical experience varies between jurisdictions. Financial recognition for mentor teachers could be considered as part of systemic investment in practical experience.

3.4.6 Additional considerations by the Panel

High-quality practical experience is important for workforce development, but building strong foundations for beginning teachers does not stop when they graduate from ITE. Ongoing development and support during the initial years of service is vital to building confidence and resilience and in retaining great teachers in our schools.

This has been recognised in the UK, where the government has invested significantly (around £130 million annually) in high-quality training and mentoring for early career teachers in the first years after initial teacher training. Under the UK's Early Career Framework, all early career teachers are entitled to a funded two-year package of structured training and support which includes additional time off from their school timetable for training and mentoring during the first two years, training materials for early career teachers and mentors, and support from approved providers. While it is too early to determine the impact of these reforms on the retention of early career teachers, the initiative has been strongly supported across the sector.

The NTWAP includes an action to develop national guidelines to support early career teachers and new school leaders, including mentoring and induction. However, there is not a comprehensive approach to the professional development, mentoring and support provided to beginning teachers across jurisdictions, school systems and schools. In Victoria, the Career Start Pilot is a structured pilot program where graduate teachers are given additional time and support to focus on preparation, receive support from mentors and take up targeted professional learning and networking opportunities. Mentor teachers are also given additional time release and support. Evaluations of the Career Start Pilot have demonstrated that the program effectively addresses retention of graduate teachers, their transition into the workplace and their classroom readiness (Victorian Department of Education submission). The Panel acknowledges that more could be done nationally to support beginning teachers as they enter the teaching profession.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

High-quality practical experience allows beginning teachers to integrate theory and practice by developing their skills to teach in a classroom environment. Beginning teachers who have high-quality practical experience placements are more likely to successfully transition into teaching and remain in the profession for longer (AITSL 2022a; Podolsky et al. 2019; Ronfeldt 2021), but high-quality practical experience is costly and resource intensive to deliver. The Panel found that the quality of practical experience is highly variable for ITE students, particularly for beginning teachers in regional, rural and remote areas.

The Panel recommends that system-wide coordination of practical experience delivery through jurisdiction-level agreements and delivery models is required to lift the quality of practical experience.

Recommendation 8: Establish system-wide coordination of practical experience delivery

Education Ministers to agree to enter into suitable agreements, such as memorandums of understanding, that establish clear roles and responsibilities for the development of beginning teachers across all parties (higher education providers, Teacher Regulatory Authorities and teacher employers). Agreements would set expectations for practical experience placements, put in place delivery models to ensure quality and make sure beginning teachers have the opportunity to apply and practise core content while on placement.

The Panel found that there is no single definition of what constitutes high-quality practical experience and that a variety of delivery models are in place across providers and jurisdictions, resulting in an inconsistent experience for many ITE students.

Providing clear, national guidance around partnerships and delivery features of high-quality practical experience would support better and more consistent experiences for providers, ITE students, schools and jurisdictions.

Recommendation 9: Develop national guidelines for high-quality practical experience

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to develop, and the initial teacher education (ITE) quality assurance board to endorse, national guidelines for consistent high-quality practical experience, including information on:

- what formal partnerships should include
- design and delivery features of practical experience to ensure it is aligned with evidence
- mechanisms for communication between higher education providers, schools and students
- supporting high-quality assessment of ITE students against the Graduate Teacher Standards and the core content, including the provision of standardised reporting templates
- mentoring ITE students as part of AITSL's development of national mentoring standards for early career teachers, with a focus on mentors being able to coach on the core content.

The Panel identified that the major barriers to high-quality practical experience include poor coordination between schools and higher education providers, limited mentor teacher capacity and capability, and lack of buy-in from schools. While the true cost of high-quality practical experience is difficult to determine, the Panel heard from stakeholders that they have experienced significant financial and resource pressures in delivering practicums.

Recommendation 10: Increase systemic investment in practical experience

Education Ministers to consider how to increase systemic support for and investment in practical experience to improve student outcomes and attract, develop and retain beginning teachers.

The Panel heard that beginning teachers highly value the support and mentoring of experienced and skilled teachers. Stakeholders also reported that it is challenging for teachers mentoring ITE students to find time to support them. Several of the initiatives identified by the Panel would have a significant impact on the support for mentor teachers. However, there are further actions that can be taken to support and value mentor teachers. Professional recognition for mentor teachers across jurisdictions would encourage more teachers to consider mentoring beginning teachers during their practical experience placement.

Recommendation 11: Ensure professional recognition for mentor teachers

Education Ministers to agree to pursue professional recognition of mentor teachers by:

- counting part of the hours mentor teachers spend supervising practical experience placements towards their professional learning requirements for obtaining and maintaining teacher registration
- requiring the experience of mentoring initial teacher education students as evidence for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers or equivalent certification.

Chapter 4

Improving postgraduate initial teacher education for mid-career entrants

IMPROVING POSTGRADUATE INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION FOR MID-CAREER ENTRANTS

Key points

- Mid-career entrants into initial teacher education can help address teacher shortages and contribute to increased diversity in the teaching profession.
- Mid-career entrants are driven by intrinsic motivations to transition into teaching but face direct and indirect costs, including loss of income (direct cost) and difficulty balancing family commitments (indirect cost).
- Mid-career entrants engaging in regional, rural and remote practical experience placements face even greater challenges.
- The Panel was asked to provide advice on improving postgraduate ITE programs to attract mid-career entrants.
- The Panel found that financial incentives (such as employment during study), guaranteed paid work and flexible study options are valued by mid-career entrants, but these are not always available in ITE programs.
- Consultation highlighted accelerated employment-based pathways as an effective model for mid-career entrants and showed these pathways are possible within existing regulatory arrangements.
- There is an opportunity to develop new or scale current employment-based programs within existing regulatory arrangements and through system-level agreements to attract more mid-career entrants.
- Higher education providers can do more to promote employment-based pathways and offer broader support to attract mid-career entrants into teaching.
- Key evidence gaps identified through consultation can be filled by leveraging and linking existing data, such as the Australian Teacher Workforce Data collection, and commissioning new research, program evaluations and modelling.

CONTEXT

Increasing the number of mid-career ITE entrants can help to address teacher shortages and contribute increased diversity in the teaching profession. However, mid-career cohorts face different barriers from their school leaver counterparts when it comes to entering ITE programs, transitioning to classroom teaching and remaining in the teaching profession.

The QITE Review made several recommendations regarding attracting mid-career cohorts into teaching, including the provision of evidence-based incentives and alternative pathways into teaching. Bespoke programs targeted at mid-career cohorts now exist in many jurisdictions but most of these programs are still in their infancy, so evidence about their effectiveness is just emerging.

The NTWAP includes actions to attract mid-career entrants into the teaching profession. This includes offering bursaries to high-quality candidates; expanding the High-Achieving Teachers Program; recognising previous study, work experience and skills; boosting the number of permanent teachers; and developing a plan to attract existing teachers back into the profession.

Building on these initiatives, the Panel has been asked to provide advice on how to improve postgraduate ITE to attract more mid-career entrants. The findings and recommendations in this report have been informed by a review of the existing literature, a survey of ITE students, and stakeholder consultation with higher education providers, education departments, TRAs, peak sector organisations, and operational staff responsible for mid-career programs.

KEY FINDINGS

4.1 Characteristics of mid-career entrants

Many mid-career individuals have a lot to offer schools. They bring considerable professional and life experience to teaching and contribute to the quality of the workforce. They may have had successful careers in other fields, including in leadership roles. Many have strong skills in working with children.

The Panel's survey of ITE students showed that mid-career entrants¹¹ who responded had the following characteristics:

- 49 per cent were studying teaching through a postgraduate qualification
- 30 per cent were previously in roles adjacent to education (e.g. education support, academia, other university work), 12 per cent had a background in professional services, and 10 per cent were STEM professionals
- 33 per cent were studying to become primary school teachers, while 31 per cent were studying to become secondary school teachers and 12 per cent were studying to become early childhood teachers¹²
- the average age range was 35–44.

4.2 Motivations for and barriers to entering the teaching profession

Mid-career cohorts may choose to transition into teaching due to intrinsic or extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivations are altruistic in nature and can include a desire to serve society, and a sense of care and commitment. Extrinsic motivations may include perceptions about teaching as a secure career and seeking a better family-work balance (Dadvand et al. 2021).

The Panel's student survey indicated that intrinsic motivations were the main drivers for mid-career entrants to transition into teaching:

- 87 per cent said they were interested in the subject matter
- 84 per cent said they were interested in working with young people/children
- 78 per cent said they wanted to make a difference.

A significant proportion of mid-career professionals are considering the switch to teaching or are open to the idea. A survey of mid-career individuals by the Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government (BETA) found that one in 10 were planning a career transition to teaching, and that one in three were open to the idea (BETA 2022). Similarly, research commissioned by the Victorian Government found that 8 per cent of the Victorian population was considering switching careers to teaching, with 43 per cent of this cohort interested in secondary school teaching (Victorian Department of Education submission).

¹¹ Defined as ITE students aged 26 and above, with two years prior work experience and not having previously worked as a teacher.

¹² Remaining 24 per cent were studying another teaching degree (such as vocational education and training or Teacher Education not elsewhere classified).

There are several key barriers to attracting mid-career entrants into teaching. Stakeholders have pointed out that the perceived length of time and cost involved in retraining as a teacher, the status of teachers, and opportunities for career progression influence the desirability of transitioning into teaching (Australian Council for Educational Research submission; Victorian Council of Deans of Education submission; Victorian Department of Education submission).

There are also significant financial barriers. Mid-career entrants generally have greater personal and financial responsibilities; therefore, the loss of income during study, the length of an ITE program, and competing commitments such as family and work can be significant barriers to switching to teaching. The Panel's focus groups also found that this made regional, remote and rural practical experience placements especially difficult for mid-career entrants, as they may be unable to support their families or may have to leave part-time employment.

4.3 Transitioning into initial teacher education

Attracting mid-career entrants into teaching requires targeted support that mitigates the barriers to transition into and successfully completing ITE.

4.3.1 Features of ITE programs to attract mid-career entrants

There are a range of programs already operating across Australia targeting specific mid-career cohorts with tailored design and delivery. These programs have key features to attract and support mid-career entrants (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Features of existing programs targeting mid-career cohorts

Key features	Description
Opportunities for paid employment during the program	There are many examples in Australia of mid-career pathways offering students the opportunity to undertake relevant paid employment while completing their ITE program. Such approaches can involve either working as a part-time paraprofessional throughout the ITE program (e.g. La Trobe University's Nexus program), working as a teacher throughout the ITE program (e.g. Teach For Australia), or working as a teacher in a paid capacity towards the end of the ITE program.
Guarantees of employment	Some state governments offer employment in government schools following completion of the program. Most often, this is a general offer of employment somewhere in the state; in other programs, a particular region might be specified. Offers of employment can lower the risk associated with a career transition for mid-career entrants.
Provision of financial incentives	State government supported pathways often include incentives such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ scholarships and bursaries ■ training allowances and stipends ■ course contribution fees or subsidised course fees ■ completion bonuses.

Mid-career entrants value features that address their key barriers to enrolling in ITE, including paid employment in a school during study, guaranteed employment upon graduation, flexible study options (such as online and part-time study) and accelerated study (Table 4.2). But these features are not always present in ITE programs.

The Panel's survey results show that the most common feature of ITE programs available to mid-career entrants is flexible study options, which most mid-career entrants report as beneficial. For example, 70 per cent of mid-career entrants were undertaking online study and 86 per cent who undertook online study reported that this was a beneficial feature of their ITE program.

Most mid-career entrants who were employed in a school during study (as a teacher or as an education paraprofessional) said that this was a beneficial feature of their ITE program. Most mid-career entrants who did not have the option of employment in a school also said that they would benefit from this option. Despite this, only 12 per cent of mid-career entrants undertook paid work as a teacher or an education paraprofessional during study.

The majority of mid-career entrants also regarded financial payments, accelerated study and guaranteed employment as beneficial, but only a minority had access to these in their ITE program.

Table 4.2: Mid-career entrants’ access to features of ITE programs

Features of ITE programs	Mid-career entrants with access to this feature	Mid-career entrants with access to this feature reporting it as beneficial	Mid-career entrants reporting this feature would be beneficial if it were available
Online study	70%	86%	54%
Part-time study	49%	84%	47%
Study outside work hours	42%	90%	62%
Financial payments (e.g. scholarships)	20%	63%	82%
Employment during study (teacher or education paraprofessional)	12%	89%	77%
Accelerated study	10%	64%	53%
Guaranteed employment post-graduation	4%	85%	78%

Stakeholder submissions support financial incentives to lessen the opportunity cost of entering teaching as a way of attracting mid-career entrants (University of Queensland submission; University of New South Wales submission; Monash University submission; University of Western Australia submission). A financial incentive could include reducing the length of time or cost of study – which has been found to be one of the greatest barriers to potential career changers entering the teaching profession (Victorian Department of Education submission).

The NCEC submission suggested the following important features for mid-career entrants:

- Developing social and professional support networks between colleagues
- Tailoring mentoring support to mid-career entrants on commonly faced issues such as the mismatch between the expectation of teaching and the reality; feeling a lack of autonomy and a lack of appreciation of their professional knowledge; and building confidence to increase their professional knowledge and autonomy.

4.3.2 Employment-based pathways

Higher education providers already offer different types of postgraduate employment-based pathway programs, but they are not widespread. Under such models, ITE students undertake paid employment during their study either throughout their degree or towards the end of their degree. This can include paid employment supervised by a teacher or unsupervised employment under an alternative authorisation to teach arrangement (AAT) (e.g. permission to teach or conditional accreditation). These arrangements allow ITE students to begin their teaching career before graduating.

Employing ITE students while they are undertaking their program can help to attract more teachers to the profession. This is particularly important for attracting beginning teachers into government school systems, which can be more likely to educate students in harder to staff schools.

These employment-based pathways can also be part of an accelerated program, enabling ITE students to graduate before two equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL) years. In an accelerated program, the content of the course itself is not cut down or altered but is condensed into a shorter time frame – often requiring students to undertake study intensives (e.g. summer trimester).

These programs must still meet regulatory requirements:

- Meet course requirements under the Australian Qualifications Framework: a Master of Teaching degree must be two years EFTSL.
- Maintain quality standards: the program must still be delivered in line with the Accreditation Standards and Procedures.
- Meet teacher registration requirements: the student must meet relevant teacher registration requirements to teach unsupervised.

There are many examples in Australia of mid-career pathways that offer students the opportunity to undertake relevant paid employment while completing their ITE program, primarily funded by Commonwealth and state and territory governments. The list of examples at Table 4.3, which is by no means exhaustive, demonstrates what can be achieved with employment-based pathways to attract and retain mid-career entrants, depending on the target cohort and context.

Some jurisdictions cite conservative regulatory environments as a major barrier to accessing ITE models conducive to mid-career entrants, as regulation can be inflexible to alternative ITE pathway modes. However, Table 4.3 shows it is possible to develop a range of employment-based pathways within the current regulatory arrangements, placing ITE students in the classroom earlier and enabling them to graduate sooner.

Table 4.3: Examples of employment pathways

Example pathway	Length	Program structure	Employment commencement	Employment type
University of Melbourne, Master of Teaching (Secondary) Internship	1.5 or 2 years	Four study intensives over 2 years with online study throughout both years	Employed after 4 months	Teaching unsupervised with permission to teach, paid as a paraprofessional
Teach For Australia (TFA), Leadership Development Program	2 years	Mix of intensives and on-campus learning	Employed after 4 months	Employed as a teacher at 0.8 FTE with permission to teach
University of New South Wales, Master of Teaching (Secondary)	1.3 years	Four terms of study with breaks for a 4-week professional placement in Term 2	Employed after 7 months for a 9-week internship	N/A
La Trobe University, Nexus program	1.5 or 2 years	Three 1-week intensives throughout 2 years	Employed after 10 weeks	Scaffolded employment begins in a teacher support role for 2 terms (0.2 FTE), then 0.4 FTE in the same role for a term. Complete the second year as a full-time paraprofessional teacher with 0.8 FTE load.

Some jurisdictions have ‘market-driven’ approaches to supporting ITE programs (including mid-career programs) to operate at scale and with appropriate support. Jurisdictions procure these programs to address teacher shortages in specific geographic locations or subject areas. For example, Victoria uses a procurement process for ITE providers to respond to forecast increases in demand for school and early childhood teachers. Scalability was prioritised at the outset, with the main objective of proposals to be overall increases in student numbers, including in hard-to-staff and priority areas (AITSL submission).

4.4 Attracting and supporting more mid-career entrants

There are already many different types of programs targeted at mid-career entrants but, while ITE students report these as highly beneficial, many do not receive them as part of their program or are unaware they are available to them.

4.4.1 Develop and expand mid-career pathway programs

The Panel views a master degree as the appropriate qualification level to provide postgraduate ITE students with the appropriate level of pedagogical, disciplinary, content and practical knowledge required to be successful in the classroom. The Panel does not see a case for returning to a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education as a way of shortening the time spent out of the workforce, as it is not academically and professionally proportionate with the complexity and status of teaching.

Developing and expanding employment-based mid-career programs would help ensure that ITE remains a realistic option for all potential candidates (QITE Review 2022). The limited number of mid-career entrants undertaking paid employment in a school during study, despite most reporting this as beneficial, shows there is scope to develop and expand employment-based mid-career programs within existing regulatory arrangements to attract mid-career entrants.

Stakeholders highlighted two major challenges in expanding employment-based pathways:

- Teacher employers must be willing and able to provide financial incentives and to employ and support ITE students during their program, which incurs additional cost and presents coordination issues.
- Both higher education providers and teacher employers must be able to maintain a high-quality experience for students that produces teachers who are well prepared to begin their careers.

Developing and scaling these pathways would require government support as they are expensive to implement and operate: 'The costs associated with innovation and bespoke ITE program design are significant, as is the development and running of internships and employment-based pathways. Funding is required to support the system to cater for the circumstances and needs of mid-career entrants (e.g. time release for mentor teachers, professional learning, recognition of mentor teachers' (ATRA submission).

Developing and expanding employment-based pathways could be supported by a more structured approach to identifying and engaging with schools willing and able to employ ITE students during their program, under AAT arrangements. Identifying these schools can be challenging. For example, the Melbourne Graduate School of Education Master of Teaching Internship program relies on schools to register interest in participating in the program and to indicate potential teacher vacancy areas. Monash University's Innovative Initial Teacher Education program to employ ITE students in education support roles has not been able to run in 2023 due to a lack of schools willing to take on students for this intensive program of study (Monash University submission).

The Panel considers that employment pathway programs could be supported through system-level agreements between school systems and higher education providers (discussed in Chapter 3). These agreements could articulate a framework for delivering the programs, including, where relevant:

- the higher education providers to deliver these programs
- processes for identifying and engaging with schools to employ ITE students
- employment arrangements for ITE students, including the regulatory arrangements used to offer employment and in-school mentoring and support arrangements
- supplementary funding arrangements to support delivery, such as wraparound support and financial incentives
- processes for data collection and use, including development of a stronger evidence base for mid-career programs (see section 4.5).

Supporting mid-career entrants into undergraduate ITE programs

Many potential mid-career teachers do not meet the qualification requirements for enrolling in postgraduate ITE programs. The Panel's survey of ITE students shows that around half of mid-career entrants enrol in undergraduate teaching degrees. Despite this, most mid-career programs focus on attracting mid-career professionals through a postgraduate pathway.

Stakeholders highlight that attracting mid-career entrants into undergraduate ITE programs is a gap in the mid-career landscape (Australian Catholic University submission; Flinders University submission; La Trobe University submission). Many programs targeting mid-career entrants through undergraduate ITE programs offer employment-based pathways (NSW Grow Your Own Teacher Training Program; NSW Riverina Teaching Hub program), mixed-mode study at school and online (NSW Riverina Teaching Hub program) and recognition of prior learning (Charles Sturt University Bachelor of Education (Secondary) – Industry Entry). There is further scope to develop and expand alternative pathways into teaching for mid-career entrants without a bachelor's degree if these pathways are supported by teacher employers. This would increase the potential for mid-career entrants to contribute to the supply of teachers required to meet workforce demands.

Key cohorts that could be attracted into teaching through an undergraduate mid-career pathway to improve the quality, diversity and workforce needs of the teaching profession include:

- teacher aides who only have a certificate or diploma level qualification
- diverse cohorts who may be less likely to have a bachelor qualification (e.g. First Nations people; people living in regional and remote communities)
- people with relevant professional experience who could fill specific teacher shortages but only have a certificate or diploma level qualification (e.g. design and technology teachers).

Streamlining employment-based pathway arrangements

The Panel heard some stakeholder concern about the use of AAT to support employment-based pathways, because quality is not regulated as closely as other forms of teacher registration. Some stakeholders point to the need to either strengthen the AAT mechanism or adopt a registration category like conditional accreditation in NSW (NSW Council of Deans of Education, Australian Council of Deans of Education submissions). The Panel notes that ATRA and AITSL are examining AAT and teacher registration requirements as part of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan.

In particular, employing ITE students under AAT arrangements can be challenging in ensuring they are meeting the requirement for having a diversity of placements during their practical experience under Program Standard 5. Minimal guidance is provided to higher education providers, which can result in providers requiring ITE students to undertake placements in different school settings that can conflict with their employment arrangements. ITE students can be reluctant or unable to take leave, most likely unpaid, from their employment to complete their required placements in another school setting to ensure a diversity of placements and experiences (AITSL submission). AITSL could consider addressing this issue as part of opportunities to streamline the Accreditation Standards and Procedures as outlined in Recommendation 5 (Chapter 2), whilst ensuring ITE students maintain a diversity of placements.

4.4.2 Better promote ITE programs to mid-career entrants

Through its survey of ITE students, the Panel found that mid-career entrants receive several supports while they study ITE. Many mid-career entrants also report that these features would help their transition into ITE if they were available. Despite this, the Panel's survey results show 82 per cent did not know if mid-career pathway programs were available before they commenced their program.

Higher education providers can do a better job of promoting mid-career pathways to prospective students, to attract more candidates to mid-career programs. Most universities do not seem to detail available incentives on their websites, and flexible study options are often unadvertised despite being the most commonly available feature to support mid-career entrants.

The NSW, Victorian and Queensland governments have funded programs that include paid work and scholarships for postgraduate ITE students. Although these are explained clearly on government websites, they often receive little promotion on participating universities' websites. Just under half of the relevant university websites do not mention these programs or the associated financial incentives.

Although funding for mid-career programs may be capped, higher education providers should better communicate their postgraduate ITE programs to mid-career entrants. This could include promoting the availability of supports such as flexible study options and government-funded mid-career pathway programs.

Higher education providers' promotion of mid-career pathways varies

The Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government (BETA) undertook a rapid review of websites for 12 higher education providers delivering postgraduate ITE programs. BETA found that only five describe incentives on their course landing page. Of these, only two mention flexible study options.

These landing pages primarily cater to prospective students who have decided to study ITE. They mostly prioritise communicating why prospective students should choose their ITE program, not why they should consider a teaching career. Only two higher education providers promoted a career change into teaching.

There is also limited promotion of government-funded mid-career programs on higher education provider websites.

- Four universities participate in the NSW Mid-Career Transition to Teaching (MCT) Program. Only one university hosts a dedicated MCT Program webpage. The other three only mention the program in online news articles.
- Eight universities participate in Victoria's Teach Today and Teach Tomorrow programs. Information about these programs varies on university websites. Some universities provide comprehensive information about the programs, while others make no mention of their benefits.
- Three universities participate in Queensland's Turn to Teaching Internship Program. The university websites differ widely in how strongly they highlight Turn to Teaching. One university course page does not provide information about the scholarships and paid work available through the program.

4.5 Building the evidence base for mid-career programs

Mid-career programs are in their infancy and evidence on their effectiveness is just emerging. Building the evidence base for mid-career programs is needed to inform their future development.

4.5.1 Key evidence gaps regarding mid-career programs

Given the costs of delivering bespoke programs, it is important to address key evidence gaps to better inform the design and delivery of bespoke mid-career ITE programs. Stakeholders agree that more research is needed to fill these gaps to develop an evidence base that can be used to scale up existing and new programs (Australian Catholic University submission; Queensland Deans of Education submission; National Council of Catholic Education submission). For example the ACDE supports 'filling the evidence gaps that currently limit an assessment of the efficacy of [existing mid-career] pathways and the contribution they make to the overall teaching workforce' (ACDE submission).

Stakeholders have called for a better system-level approach that focuses on building and sharing learnings about mid-career programs. Consultation has identified several key evidence gaps that are critical to improving mid-career programs:

- impact of types of programs, including employment-based and accelerated programs
- size and characteristics of mid-career cohorts that can be targeted through these programs
- optimal distribution of course content across academic and work-integrated parts of the course
- marketing and promotion strategies that are most effective in attracting specific cohorts of mid-career entrants
- supports that are most effective in retaining specific cohorts, including wraparound support and types of flexible delivery
- financial 'tipping point' when different mid-career cohorts decide to enter or not enter ITE (in weighing up costs and benefits)
- level of guaranteed ongoing employment mid-career entrants need to have sufficient confidence in long-term job security.

4.5.2 Actions to fill evidence gaps

Improved data and modelling on mid-career programs are required to address the evidence gaps and improve the design and delivery of programs. Stakeholders considered that data should be better collected in several ways, including through:

- commissioning research into better understanding the characteristics of mid-career cohorts
- leveraging data from national and state government funded mid-career programs, such as those in NSW, Victoria and Queensland, and those funded through the High-Achieving Teachers Program
- commissioning evaluations of existing mid-career programs, and establishing evaluation frameworks for any new programs
- commissioning relevant modelling, such as modelling to identify the financial tipping points for mid-career entrants.

In addition, governments should consider leveraging the ATWD collection, which collects data on ITE and the teacher workforce, by linking it to data on mid-career programs. This could be used to assess the impact of different programs and identify the most effective features to attract mid-career entrants to ITE. This would provide insight into:

- the extent to which these programs improve the attraction and retention of different groups of mid-career entrants during their ITE program and into the workforce
- which different program features and combinations of features make the biggest difference to attracting and retaining mid-career entrants.

Collectively this information can then be used to build and disseminate a stronger evidence base about bespoke mid-career pathways. This would support governments, school sectors and higher education providers to design and deliver effective programs that make a meaningful contribution to the overall mid-career pipeline of new teachers into the workforce.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mid-career entrants into initial teacher education come with a broad set of skills and experience, are driven by intrinsic motivations to join the profession and can help to address teacher shortages and increase diversity in the teaching profession. However, this cohort face significant direct and indirect costs to enter teaching, including loss of income and difficulty balancing paid work and family commitments.

While there are some challenges to overcome, the Panel believes that developing and expanding mid-career programs, such as employment-based pathways, would assist in attracting new mid-career entrants into the teaching profession.

Recommendation 12: Develop and expand mid-career pathway programs

Education Ministers to work with higher education providers to develop and scale high-quality mid-career programs, such as employment-based and accelerated pathways, using the flexibility within existing regulatory arrangements. This includes using:

- alternative authorisation to teach mechanisms (e.g. permission to teach and conditional accreditation) to support paid employment
- system-level agreements between jurisdictions and higher education providers (Recommendation 10) to provide a framework for delivering employment pathways and identifying schools willing to employ initial teacher education students.

Mid-career entrants who receive supports while they study, such as flexible study options, financial payments, peer support networks and paid employment, find these beneficial in supporting their transition into ITE. However, 82 per cent did not know if mid-career pathways were available before they commenced their program.

Higher education providers can do a better job of promoting these pathways to prospective ITE students, to attract more mid-career entrants by providing more detail on incentives on their websites, targeted to mid-career entrants.

Recommendation 13: Promote mid-career pathways

Higher education providers to better promote mid-career pathways and available supports to prospective initial teacher education students, including promotion of flexible study options and employment and accelerated pathways.

Noting the cost of delivering bespoke mid-career programs, jurisdictions and higher educational providers have raised the need to build the evidence base on the impact and effectiveness of mid-career programs. There is broad support for more research to fill this evidence gap that can be used to develop and scale up programs.

The Panel supports consistently collecting, evaluating and sharing data about how different program features attract and retain mid-career cohorts. This would inform future development and design of these programs and contribute to increasing the supply of mid-career entrants into the teaching workforce.

Recommendation 14: Build the evidence base for mid-career programs

Education Ministers to agree to build the evidence base to support design and delivery of effective mid-career programs. This would be achieved by consistently collecting, evaluating and sharing data on mid-career programs.

APPENDIX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. CONTEXT

On 12 August 2022, Australia's Education Ministers met with teachers, principals and other education experts to discuss the teacher shortage in Australia. Ministers committed to developing the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan to increase the number of people entering and remaining in the profession. One of the key issues raised at the Teacher Workforce Shortage Roundtable was the need to **improve Initial Teacher Education** to boost graduation rates and ensure graduating teachers are **better prepared for the classroom**.

Recommendation 15 of the Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review recommended strengthening the link between performance and funding of Initial Teacher Education (ITE). It recommended the establishment of a national body or expert group to support the development of a quality measure for ITE courses and to advise on how funding of higher education providers should be based on quality and other relevant factors.

The establishment of the Teacher Education Expert Panel implements this recommendation and broadens its scope to provide advice on key issues raised at the Teacher Workforce Shortage Roundtable and in the Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review.

2. PURPOSE:

The Teacher Education Expert Panel will provide advice to the Education Ministers Meeting through the Australian Government Minister for Education by June 2023 on reforms to:

- **Strengthen the link between performance and funding of ITE** [Recommendation 15, Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review], by developing a quality measure for ITE courses and advising whether and how funding of higher education providers should be based on quality and other factors. The quality measure for ITE should reflect the need to increase the current average completion rate of 50 per cent in bachelor's degrees, the importance of regionally based courses and the need to increase those underrepresented in teaching degrees including First Nations people
- **Strengthen initial teacher education (ITE) programs to deliver confident effective, classroom ready graduates** [Recommendation 7, Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review]. Amend the *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures*, to ensure ITE graduates are taught sufficient evidence-based practices to meet the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and empower them to lead a classroom, with particular attention to teaching reading, literacy and numeracy, classroom management, cultural responsiveness, teaching students with diverse needs and working with families/carers.
- **Improve the quality of practical experience in teaching** with regard to best practice models used in education, medicine and other disciplines
- **Improve postgraduate initial teacher education for mid-career entrants**, to encourage more people to become teachers, while maintaining high standards.

3. APPROACH:

In undertaking its work, the Panel will consider the findings of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review and consult with school and higher education sector stakeholders and other experts including through the newly established Teacher Workforce Action Plan Working Group.

The Panel will take account of the need to increase the number of people starting and finishing initial teacher education including those currently under-represented such as First Nations people. The needs of regional and remote and other hard to staff schools and subject specialisations must also be considered.

The Panel will also consider interactions with other policy processes and government commitments including the Australian Universities Accord.

4. MEMBERS:

Professor Mark Scott (Chair)

Professor Bill Loudon

Professor Michele Simons

Dr Jenny Donovan

Mr Andrew Peach

Ms Rebecca West

APPENDIX B: SUBMISSION LIST AND STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

SUBMISSION LIST

The Teacher Education Expert Panel discussion paper received a total of 115 submissions. In addition to 20 anonymous submissions, those who gave permission for their submission to be published are listed below.

Alphacrucis University College	Charles Darwin University
Asia Education Foundation	Charles Sturt University
Assessment for Graduate Teaching Consortium	Code Read Dyslexia Network Australia
Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia	CQ University Australia
Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities	CSIRO
Australian Academy of Technological Sciences & Engineering	Dyslexia Victoria Support
Australian Association for the Education of the Gifted and Talented	Edith Cowan University
Australian Association of Special Education	Edmunds, David
Australian Catholic University (National School of Education)	Education Research Solutions
Australian Catholic University	Emeritus Professor Terry Lovat
Australian Council for Educational Research	Emeritus Professor Wayne Sawyer and Emeritus Professor Rob Hattam
Australian Council of Deans of Education	Expect to Win Pty Ltd
Australian Council of State School Organisations	Ferman, Terrie
Australian Council of TESOL Associations	Flinders University
Australian Early Childhood Teacher Education Network	Gardiner, John
Australian Education Research Organisation's Board	Graduate School of Education, The University of Western Australia
Australian Education Union	Halsey, John
Australian Primary Principals Association	HALT Association NSW
Barnes, Carol	Harpur, Paul
Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn	Independent Education Union of Australia
Catholic Schools NSW	Institute of Special Educators
Centre of Educational Measurement and Assessment at University of Sydney	Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Inc. (ICPA Aust)
	Jakupovic, Wardah
	La Trobe University
	Lovell, Oliver

Mangubhai, Dr Francis
 Mathematics Education Research Group
 of Australasia
 Melbourne Graduate School of Education,
 University of Melbourne
 Millican, Kevan
 Monash University
 Mundy, Mick
 Murdoch University
 National Advocates for Arts Education
 National Catholic Education Commission
 Network of Associate Deans of Learning and
 Teaching in the Discipline of Education
 Network of Associate Deans of Professional
 Experience Steering Committee for Australian
 Council of Deans of Education
 Norman, Karen
 North-Eastern Montessori School & Sydney
 Montessori Training Centre
 Northern Territory Department of Education
 NSW Council of Deans of Education
 NSW Department of Education
 Primary English Teaching Association Australia
 Queensland Council of Deans of Education
 Queensland University of Technology
 Regional Education Commissioner
 Rogers, Jo
 Sankey, Derek
 School of Education and Professional Studies,
 Griffith University
 Selkrig, Mark
 Southern Cross University
 Steiner Education Australia
 Swinburne University of Technology
 Sydney University
 Teach For Australia
 Teacher Education academics at the University
 of Technology Sydney
 Teachers and Teaching Research Centre –
 University of Newcastle
 Teachers TV Foundation
 The Australian Institute for Teaching and
 School Leadership
 The Australian Special Education
 Principals Association
 University of Canberra
 The University of Queensland
 The University of South Australia
 The University of Sydney School of Education
 and Social Work
 Thravea, Genevieve
 Transforming Education Australasia
 University of Newcastle, School of Education
 University of NSW, Centre for Social Impact
 University of Southern Queensland
 University of Tasmania
 University of the Sunshine Coast
 University Of Wollongong
 Victorian Council of Deans of Education
 Victorian Department of Education

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The Expert Panel held meetings with five stakeholders:

ACT Education Directorate

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Board

Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities

Department of Education, Western Australia

Queensland Department of Education

APPENDIX C: CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The Panel's findings were informed by public submissions, focus groups, surveys and research.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Following the release of the Discussion Paper, the submission process ran from 23 March to 21 April 2023. A total of 115 submissions were received from organisations and individuals. The submission process sought to explore and understand the experiences and perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders in response to questions identified in the Discussion Paper.

CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

The submission process was promoted through a variety of channels including social media, the Department of Education website, a media release and direct emails to key stakeholders.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The Expert Panel met virtually with five education stakeholders and organisations during this phase of the Review, who are listed at Appendix B. These meetings helped the Expert Panel to understand the key issues in ITE and propose effective solutions.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

In addition to the submission process, the Panel engaged in a number of activities to inform the report.

Surveys

As part of the submission process, the public was invited to respond to a survey on the extent to which the proposed opportunities in the Discussion Paper would improve ITE. The Panel received 34 responses.

To capture insights from ITE students, an online survey was conducted with ITE students who consented to undertaking further research, as part of the Australian Government's higher education Student Experience Survey. The survey was administered by dandolopartners, covered the four reform areas and received 1,063 responses.

Focus groups

Focus groups were conducted to facilitate targeted discussion with key audiences. These groups explored issues around improving the quality of practical experience and postgraduate ITE programs for mid-career entrants, and the performance measures and accreditation requirements for ITE programs. The Panel engaged dandolopartners and the Australian Catholic University to facilitate these discussions.

Research

In addition to research undertaken by the Secretariat, the Panel commissioned several specific research projects to inform its advice (Table C1).

Table C1: Research projects commissioned by the Panel

Research undertaken by	Summary of projects
Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO)	AERO was engaged to identify the evidence-based practices which have the greatest impact on student learning that ITE students should learn and be able to demonstrate, to inform amendments to the Accreditation Standards and Procedures (Reform Area 1). In doing so, AERO reviewed and synthesised the most rigorous and relevant evidence-based practices in education from meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and literature reviews.
Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government (BETA)	BETA contributed to the design of a survey of ITE students on the potential influence of the nationally consistent, transparent indicators on prospective ITE students' choice of higher education provider. BETA also provided advice on how the indicators could be displayed for public reporting and undertook a rapid review of websites for 12 higher education providers delivering postgraduate ITE programs.
Australian Catholic University Institute of Learning Sciences and Teacher Education	The Australian Catholic University's Institute of Learning Sciences and Teacher Education was engaged to assess how the performance of ITE programs could be consistently measured across higher education providers.
dandolopartners	dandolopartners was engaged to help understand the challenges and opportunities in delivering consistent, high-quality practical experience across ITE programs and to assess how programs could be improved to attract mid-career entrants into ITE. This work was informed by a review of existing literature and stakeholder consultation.
Social Research Centre (SRC)	SRC was engaged to understand what beginning teachers report as key gaps in ITE programs to effectively prepare ITE students to work as teachers. In doing so, SRC undertook a thematic analysis of approximately 10,000 open text responses collected from beginning teachers in the 2022 Graduate Outcomes Survey and 2022 Graduate Outcomes Survey – Longitudinal on aspects of their program that needed improvement and the main ways higher education providers could have better prepared graduates for employment.

APPENDIX D: CORE CONTENT FOR ITE PROGRAMS

Table D1

Core Content 1 – The Brain and Learning	
<i>Supports Graduate Teacher Standards: 1.1, 1.2</i>	
Learning Outcome	Core content ITE programs should teach
<p>Knowledge of what it means to be a ‘novice’ learner in comparison to an ‘expert’. Knowledge of and skill in the related implications for practice.</p>	<p>Novice vs expert learners</p>
	<p>The difference in the process of knowledge acquisition in the brain of a novice vs the brain of an expert. This should be taught with reference to the development of mental models and schemas.</p>
	<p>The features of biologically primary vs biologically secondary knowledge acquisition and the importance of teacher-led instruction for biologically secondary knowledge acquisition.</p>
	<p>The foundations of how a student’s brain develops from early childhood through to young adult, including the development of executive functions and the implications for teaching.</p>
	<p>The research evidence that shows why the use of self-directed approaches as a starting point for novices is ineffective and should be avoided.</p>
<p>Knowledge of the most efficient and effective process of knowledge acquisition in the brain, including the function of memory and the concept of cognitive overload.</p>	<p>How the brain learns and retains information</p>
	<p>The cognitive process of learning, including how the brain moves information through working memory into long-term memory, how to optimise this process and the potential barriers to this process.</p>
	<p>The limits of working memory including how cognitive overload occurs, and the common causes of cognitive overload.</p>
<p>Knowledge of the process that occurs in a novice brain during progression towards mastery. Knowledge of and skill in the need to adjust practice in response.</p>	<p>The most effective teaching practices to reduce cognitive overload, including explicit instruction, scaffolding, and clearly structured content that connects new information to prior learning.</p>
	<p>How the brain masters knowledge</p>
	<p>How the brain applies attained knowledge to solve problems by accessing memory or combining and re-combining memory to generate possible solutions.</p>
	<p>Why teaching practices must adapt as a student’s familiarity with the knowledge of a subject increases, including when to move from scaffolded practice to independent practice, and why this is important.</p>
	<p>How to develop and use worked examples for students who are unfamiliar with a subject, followed by more challenging problem-solving activities as students become more familiar with the knowledge of a subject.</p>

Core Content 1 – The Brain and Learning

Supports Graduate Teacher Standards: 1.1, 1.2

Learning Outcome	Core content ITE programs should teach
Knowledge and understanding of common neuromyths and the impact of their perpetuation.	Neuromyths
	<p>How to identify common neuromyths that are related to education (e.g. multiple intelligences, left vs right brain, learning styles, 10% of the use of our brain) and describe the evidence that disproves them.</p> <p>The negative impacts of making instructional choices based on neuromyths, including how neuromyths conflict with current understandings of how the brain learns.</p>

Key references for Core Content 1: The Brain and Learning

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Table D2

Core Content 2 – Effective Pedagogical Practices	
<i>Supports Graduate Teacher Standards: 1.3, 1.5, 1.6; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5; 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6; 4.1, 4.2; 5.1, 5.2, 5.4</i>	
Learning Outcome	Core content ITE programs should teach
Knowledge of and skill in planning and sequencing content and tasks so that they become increasingly challenging and incorporate spacing and retrieval practice.	Planning and sequencing
	The key features of coherent and deliberate planning and sequencing of tasks and lessons including curriculum-aligned learning objectives, clear descriptions of how students will show evidence of mastery, the common progression of learning in a subject area and the critical curriculum knowledge needed for students to progress.
	How to plan a sequence of lessons that incorporate spacing and retrieval practice, build upon each other, meet students where they are in their learning and help students retrieve past learning and consolidate it in long-term memory.
	How to sequence tasks within a lesson that build upon each other, meet students where they are in their learning and help them understand the progression of skills needed to attain mastery.
Knowledge of and skill in explicit teaching, modelling and scaffolding practices that support how a student's brain learns.	Explicit modelling and scaffolding
	The research base that shows explicit teaching, modelling and scaffolding practices are highly effective and attend best to how a student's brain learns .
	How to effectively begin instruction of a task through using a clear explanation of what students are expected to learn, chunked into small, manageable tasks with well-defined goals.
	The importance of presenting all information required to complete these chunked tasks in one place and at one time , excluding information not directly related to the task, to reduce cognitive overload.
	How to explicitly model new skills and content through 'worked examples' that clearly demonstrate how to complete the task, followed by a progressive removal of scaffolding as students become more proficient.
	How to develop and deliver appropriately challenging recall practice to promote retention and plan to include ample opportunities to practise in a lesson or sequence of lessons.
	Why independent problem-solving is only effective once a student approaches proficiency (i.e. after ample opportunities to practise progressively challenging tasks) and why independent problem-solving should not represent a large proportion of teaching and learning time.
An ability to effectively select a range of evidence-based assessment practices to evaluate progress, adjust instruction, provide targeted feedback, and support learning.	Assessment and feedback
	How to pitch an introductory lesson at an appropriate level , before starting a new unit of work, by identifying where a student is in their learning through assessing what they know, or think they know.
	How to use formative assessment practices to gather and interpret information about student learning as learning is taking place – for example, use of simple, low-key-assessments such as exit slips, quick quizzes or targeted oral questioning to prompt students to articulate their reasoning and identify common student misconceptions.
	How to design summative assessment to assess students against a standard or benchmark to gain an understanding of the level of mastery attained.
	How to produce and use developmental rubrics with criteria tailored to the specific task and/or work samples so that students understand what is expected.
	How to provide feedback as learning is taking place that is specific, honest, constructive, and clear, and uses explicit teaching strategies to re-teach concepts, scaffold, or correct misconceptions as necessary.

Core Content 2 – Effective Pedagogical Practices

Supports Graduate Teacher Standards: 1.3, 1.5, 1.6; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5; 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6; 4.1, 4.2; 5.1, 5.2, 5.4

Learning Outcome	Core content ITE programs should teach
<p>Appropriate subject matter expertise in the effective teaching of literacy, including the explicit teaching of phonics in early reading and the explicit teaching of reading and writing in subjects other than English.</p>	<p>Literacy</p>
	<p>How to deliver effective reading instruction that attends to how the brain learns to read through systematic and explicit teaching practices for the following elements: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and oral language.</p>
	<p>The research that shows explicit reading and writing comprehension, tailored to discipline-specific content, improves students' academic understanding and engagement with material as well as their overall academic performance.</p>
<p>Appropriate subject matter expertise in the effective teaching of numeracy including the explicit teaching of mathematics and building of fluency, understanding, problem solving and reasoning.</p>	<p>How to explicitly deliver reading and writing instruction through discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies as outlined in standard 4.2.</p>
	<p>Numeracy</p>
	<p>A conceptual understanding of the six strands of mathematics: number, algebra, geometry, measurement, statistics and probability; and the four proficiencies: understanding, fluency, problem solving and reasoning.</p>
	<p>The research that shows numeracy is a fundamental component of learning, discourse, and critique across all areas of the curriculum and improves students' understanding of and engagement with material within and beyond the mathematics curriculum.</p>
<p>Knowledge of theory of an MTSS framework, the direct relationship to evidence-based teaching practices and skill in how to practically implement tier 1 in the classroom.</p>	<p>How to deliver explicit numeracy instruction followed by a progressive removal of scaffolding as students become more proficient through a combination of underpinning mathematical concepts and skills (numerical, spatial, graphical, statistical, and algebraic); mathematical thinking and strategies; and general thinking skills as appropriate to discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies as outlined in standard 4.2.</p>
	<p>The importance of independent problem-solving once a student approaches proficiency in underpinning mathematical concepts.</p>
	<p>Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS)</p>
	<p>The fundamental elements and underpinning theory of a multi-tiered system of support and why it is effective.</p>
	<p>How a multi-tiered framework works in a classroom setting, with the opportunity to observe implementation of a multi-tiered framework.</p>
	<p>The research evidence showing the positive impact of high-quality instruction delivered by the classroom teacher as a protective measure in reducing the need for further intervention.</p>

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Table D3

Core Content 3 – Classroom Management	
Supports Graduate Teacher Standards: 1.2; 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5; 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4; 7.2	
Learning Outcome	Core content ITE programs should teach
A strong understanding of the role of rules and routines in establishing a structured, safe, and positive classroom environment.	Rules and routines
	How to develop and use effective rules and routines , or cues that are focused on creating learning habits that encourage students to respond quickly to instructions to reduce wasted learning time.
	When and how pre-service teachers can practise using rules and routines in a professional experience setting so that they are best supported to transition to the classroom.
	The research evidence that shows the impact of developing and reinforcing clear and well-defined rules and routines and why rules and routines need to be explicitly taught and reinforced to students to be effective.
A clear understanding of the efficacy of proactive practices in preventing misbehaviour and/or disengagement, including the role of high-quality instruction as a proactive practice.	Proactive practices
	The research evidence that shows the positive impacts clear and high expectations has on student behaviour and achievement and why it results in improved motivation, better self-accountability and understanding of consequences .
	The research evidence that shows the relationship between effective pedagogical practices and increased positive behaviour including why specific practices are particularly effective in preventing undesired behaviour .
An ability to practise and apply proactive practices, including setting high expectations, building positive relationships, providing structure, and setting ambitious, achievable and personalised goals.	Practices should include the use of structured lessons, clear and explicit instruction, effective questioning that encourages participation, reducing cognitive load and use of specific and positive feedback that acknowledges student effort.
	How to effectively set ambitious and achievable student goals including how to collaborate with students to set goals, and what consistent and persistent reinforcement looks like in the classroom so that those goals can be realised.
	The research evidence that shows the positive impact of building positive relationships on classroom behaviour and student outcomes .
	How to plan and implement practices that create a predictable and safe environment for students by reducing variance in classroom environment – for example, classroom arrangement, consistent location of prompts, consistent use of space, visible rules, and routines.

Core Content 3 – Classroom Management

Supports Graduate Teacher Standards: 1.2; 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5; 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4; 7.2

Learning Outcome	Core content ITE programs should teach
<p>An ability to practise and apply techniques that positively and effectively manage behaviour in classroom contexts, including the use of calm, consistent and proportional responses, behaviour modelling and feedback that gives attention to the desired behaviour rather than the undesired behaviour.</p>	<p>Managing behaviour</p> <p>The research evidence that shows why consistent and proportional responses to student behaviour to reinforce expectations and maintain safety is most effective when paired with verbal and non-verbal calm, expected, and escalating responses.</p>
	<p>How to effectively model desired behaviour (such as respectful interactions, being organised, and being on time) and how to explicitly point to this modelling to prompt positive behaviour by setting and reinforcing expectations.</p>
	<p>How to pre-plan and rehearse responses including the use of early intervention techniques such as simple prompts, pre-corrections and verbal feedback, which reinforce high expectations in the classroom and which focus on expected behaviour. Opportunities should also be provided to practise in a practicum setting.</p>
<p>A foundational understanding of common whole-school behaviour frameworks</p>	<p>Whole-school behaviour frameworks</p>
	<p>Examples of common 'whole school approaches', processes or frameworks for positive behaviour and how a teacher engages effectively with these frameworks.</p>

Key references for Core Content 3 - Classroom Management

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Table D4

Core Content 4 – Responsive Teaching
<i>Supports Graduate Teacher Standards: 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6; 2.4; 4.1, 4.4; 7.2, 7.3</i>
Core Content ITE programs should teach
First Nations peoples, cultures and perspectives
The content covered in the Australian Curriculum Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority across stages and subjects.
The diversity within and across First Nations people including culture, perspective, language, history and varied impact of colonisation on different groups.
The research evidence that shows the positive impact of engaging with communities and families to drive successful outcomes for First Nations students and teach what appropriate engagement with families and communities can look like in practice.
Explicitly teach the concept of cultural safety and explore practical examples of what it can look like in a classroom context.
Cover content related to local First Nations context developed in collaboration with local First Nations groups with appropriate and authentic subject matter expertise.
Cultural responsiveness, including EAL/D students
The concept of positionality through engagement in critical self-inquiry for both academic writing and as a core mechanism of effective ongoing professional teaching practice.
The concept of ongoing intercultural development and the importance of self-reflection and reflexivity as ever-evolving career practices.
About the cultural diversity within classrooms and communities in Australia , and in the local context, to understand and value the perspectives of diverse groups including EAL/D and First Nations students.
How biases and assumptions about diverse groups and worldviews affect practices, behaviours, and attitudes in the classroom and how these biases adversely impact specific groups.
Family engagement for learning
The research evidence that outlines the most effective approaches for engaging with families to promote learning appropriate to student stage of learning.
Practices schools may employ, including two-way positive communication, light-touch learning updates and collaborative planning and problem solving, and understanding the role and responsibility of an individual teacher in these practices.
Diverse learning needs, including students with disability
The research evidence that shows how practices outlined in the core content are highly effective for the vast majority of students , particularly those with additional needs or from disadvantaged backgrounds.
The legislation, regulations, policies and obligations related to inclusion and support including international agreements (e.g. the UN Convention on Children’s Rights, 1989), and legal entitlements as defined by the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and core educational policy such as the Disability Standards for Education, 2005, which state that students with disability should have the same opportunities and choices in their education as students without disability.
The evidence-based approaches to cater for specific needs and disabilities that a teacher may encounter during their career, with a focus on needs with high prevalence in Australian classrooms. Content should be developed in collaboration with appropriate subject matter expertise from a range of disciplines – for example, linguistics, psychology, health, and education.

Key references and frameworks for Core Content 4 - Responsive Teaching

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APPENDIX E: MAPPING THE CORE CONTENT TO GRADUATE TEACHER STANDARDS

Professional Knowledge	
1. Know students and how they learn	2. Know the content and how to teach it
<p>1.1 Physical, social, and intellectual development, and characteristics of students</p> <p>BL: novice vs expert learners RT: First Nations RT: cultural responsiveness</p>	<p>2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area</p> <p>EPP: all</p>
<p>1.2 Understand how students learn</p> <p>BL: novice v expert learns BL: how the brain learns and retains information BL: how the brain masters knowledge BL: neuromyths CM: proactive practices</p>	<p>2.2 Content selection and organisation</p> <p>EPP: planning and sequencing</p>
<p>1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds</p> <p>RT: First Nations RT: cultural responsiveness EPP: all</p>	<p>2.3 Curriculum assessment, and reporting</p> <p>EPP: planning and sequencing EPP: explicit modelling and scaffolding EPP: assessment and feedback</p>
<p>1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students</p> <p>RT: First Nations</p>	<p>2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians</p> <p>RT: First Nations</p>
<p>1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities</p> <p>EPP: all RT: cultural responsiveness RT: diverse learning needs</p>	<p>2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies</p> <p>EPP: literacy EPP: numeracy</p>
<p>1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability</p> <p>RT: diverse learning needs EPP: multi-tiered systems of support EPP: all</p>	<p>2.6 Information and communication technology (ICT)</p>

Core Content Codes

BL = the brain and learning, **EPP** = effective pedagogical practice, **CM** = classroom management, **RT** = responsive teaching
White boxes represent where the sub-standards are fully or partially covered by the core content.

Greyed boxes represent sub-standards not covered by the core content.

Professional Practice		
3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning	4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments	5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
3.1 Establish challenging learning goals EPP: explicit modelling and scaffolding CM: proactive practices	4.1 Support student participation EPP: all CM: all RT: all	5.1 Assess student learning EPP: assessment and feedback
3.2 Plan, structure, and sequence learning programs EPP: planning and sequencing	4.2 Manage classroom activities EPP: planning and sequencing EPP: explicit modelling and scaffolding EPP: assessment and feedback CM: proactive practices CM: rules and routines CM: managing behaviour	5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning EPP: assessment and feedback
3.3 Use teaching strategies EPP: all CM: proactive practices CM: rules and routines	4.3 Managing challenging behaviour CM: all	5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements
3.4 Select and use resources EPP: all CM: proactive practices CM: rules and routines	4.4 Maintain student safety CM: all RT: all	5.4 Interpret student data EPP: assessment and feedback EPP: multi-tiered systems of support
3.5 Use effective classroom communication EPP: all CM: managing behaviour	4.5 Use ICT safely, responsibly, and ethically	5.5 Report on student achievement
3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs EPP: all		
3.7 Engage parents/career in the educative process RT: family engagement for learning		

Core Content Codes

BL = the brain and learning, **EPP** = effective pedagogical practice, **CM** = classroom management, **RT** = responsive teaching
 White boxes represent where the sub-standards are fully or partially covered by the core content.

Greyed boxes represent sub-standards not covered by the core content.

Professional Engagement	
6. Engage in professional learning	7. Engage professionally with the colleagues, parents/carers and the community
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs	7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice	7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative, and organisational requirements EPP: multi-tiered systems of support RT: diverse learning needs CM: whole school behaviour frameworks
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	7.3 Engage with the parents/carers RT: family engagement for learning
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning	7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities

Core Content Codes

BL = the brain and learning, **EPP** = effective pedagogical practice, **CM** = classroom management, **RT** = responsive teaching
White boxes represent where the sub-standards are fully or partially covered by the core content.

Greyed boxes represent sub-standards not covered by the core content.

APPENDIX F: AMENDMENTS TO THE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES TO EMBED CORE CONTENT IN ITE PROGRAMS

AMENDING THE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

There are currently six National Program Standards for ITE accreditation. The Panel proposes primarily reflecting the core content in Standard 1.1, as the core content identifies the knowledge and evidence-based practices which support ITE students to meet the Graduate Teacher Standards. This would ensure that knowledge and application of the core content is a requirement for all graduates of ITE programs and would make the core content central to ITE program accreditation.

The Panel proposes making amendments to two further sub-standards: Standard 2.1 to ensure the core content is coherently embedded through program development, design and delivery; and Standard 4.2 to ensure the core content is reflected in discipline-specific courses.

Recommended changes to Program Standard 1.1, 2.1 and 4.2

Note: recommended changes are in bolded text

Standard 1: Program outcomes

1.1 Program design and assessment processes identify where each Graduate Teacher Standard is taught, practised and assessed. **The core content at Schedule X (as Appendix D) outlines the knowledge and evidence-based practices which support ITE students to meet the Graduate Teacher Standards.** Program design and assessment processes must require that pre-service teachers have demonstrated successful performance against all the Graduate Teacher Standards prior to graduation, **as well as successfully demonstrated knowledge and met the Learning Outcomes of the core content.**

Standard 2: Program development, design and delivery

2.1 Program development, design and delivery are based on:

- a. **a documented rationale based on evidence-based understandings of how the program will develop effective teachers who:**
 - i **meet the Graduate Teacher Standards; and**
 - ii **successfully demonstrate knowledge and meet the Learning Outcomes of the core content at Schedule X (as Appendix D)**
- b. a coherent and sequenced delivery of program content including professional experience that facilitates achievement of the Graduate Teacher Standards.

Standard 4: Program structure and content

4.2 Initial teacher education programs prepare pre-service teachers for the school curriculum and learning areas of their chosen discipline and/or stage of schooling in accordance with Schedule 1. **Discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies must be consistent with the core content outlined at Schedule X (as Appendix D).**

Primary programs

All primary programs must include study in each of the learning areas of the primary school curriculum sufficient to equip teachers to teach across the years of primary schooling.

Undergraduate programs – mandatory content requirements

Discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies¹³ comprise at least one half of the program (i.e. normally two years of full-time-equivalent study), including at least:

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. English/literacy – discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies | At least one-half of a year EFTSL, including at least one-eighth of a year EFTSL for early reading instruction ¹⁴ |
| b. Mathematics/numeracy – discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies | At least one-quarter of a year EFTSL |
| c. Science – discipline and discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies | At least one-eighth of a year EFTSL |

The remainder of the program may be structured to include extension or specialist studies in priority areas or related curriculum areas.

Graduate entry programs – mandatory content requirements

Graduate entry programs must include one year of full-time-equivalent study of discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies across the learning areas of the primary school curriculum, including at least:

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. English/literacy – discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies | At least three-eighths of a year EFTSL, including at least one-eighth of a year EFTSL for early reading instruction ¹⁴ |
| b. Mathematics/numeracy – discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies | At least one-quarter of a year EFTSL |
| c. Science – discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies | At least one-eighth of a year EFTSL |

These programs may include up to one quarter of a year of full-time-equivalent study of relevant discipline studies as elective units which could be undertaken by applicants who do not fully meet prerequisite discipline study requirements.

AMENDING THE ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES AND SUPPORTING GUIDELINES

The National Accreditation Procedures set out a nationally consistent process to accredit ITE programs. The Procedures and supporting guidelines outline the evidence which must be provided to show the Program Standards have been met and the process accreditation panels (Teacher Regulatory Authorities) should follow to assess the evidence.

Recommended changes to the Accreditation Procedures and supporting guidelines

To avoid confusion with the evidence requirements for the Graduate Teacher Standards and minimise changes to the Accreditation Procedures, the Panel proposes a separate template should be developed to assess the core content in accreditation (called, for example, Template 3.1). This is most similar to an approach described by ATRA

in its submission to the Discussion Paper and is aligned with NSW's approach to priority areas, which the Panel understands has been in use in NSW since 2017. In NSW, ITE providers complete Supplementary Documentation to evidence how they have met the additional accreditation requirements of NSW (called Template 3A) and cross-reference evidence across templates to avoid duplication of content.

A draft Template 3.1 for assessing delivery of the core content in accreditation is provided below (Figure F2).

Figure F2: Draft Template 3.1

Graduate Teacher Standards 1.3, 1.5, 1.6; 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5; 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6; 4.1, 4.2; 5.1, 5.2, 5.4
Program approach to the core content

{Outline Program approach to the core content}

Learning Outcome	Core content ITE programs should teach	Evidence*
Knowledge of and skill in planning and sequencing content and tasks so that they become increasingly challenging and incorporate spacing and retrieval practice.	Planning and sequencing	
	The key features of coherent and deliberate planning and sequencing of tasks and lessons including curriculum-aligned learning objectives, clear descriptions of how students will show evidence of mastery, the common progression of learning in a subject area and the critical curriculum knowledge needed for students to progress.	
	How to plan a sequence of lessons that incorporate spacing and retrieval practice, build upon each other, meet students where they are in their learning and help students retrieve past learning and consolidate it in long-term memory.	
	How to sequence tasks within a lesson that build upon each other, meet students where they are in their learning and help them understand the progression of skills needed to attain mastery.	
Knowledge of and skill in explicit teaching, modelling and scaffolding practices that support how a student's brain learns.	Explicit modelling and scaffolding	
	The research base that shows explicit teaching, modelling and scaffolding practices are highly effective and attend best to how a student's brain learns .	
	How to effectively begin instruction of a task through using a clear explanation of what students are expected to learn, chunked into small, manageable tasks with well-defined goals.	
	The importance of presenting all information required to complete these chunked tasks in one place and at one time , excluding information not directly related to the task, to reduce cognitive overload.	
	How to explicitly model new skills and content through ' worked examples ' that clearly demonstrate how to complete the task, followed by a progressive removal of scaffolding as students become more proficient.	
	How to develop and deliver appropriately challenging recall practice to promote retention and plan to include ample opportunities to practise in a lesson or sequence of lessons.	
Why independent problem-solving is only effective once a student approaches proficiency (i.e. after ample opportunities to practice progressively challenging tasks) and why independent problem-solving should not represent a large proportion of teaching and learning time.		

Note: This is not the full content for Effective Pedagogical Practices – please see Appendix D for full version

* Evidence should be provided of where core content is taught, practised and assessed. This will ensure that pre-service teachers have successfully demonstrated knowledge and met the Learning Outcomes of the core content prior to graduation.

* Template should include clear guidance on the evidence requirements for the core content, such as unit outlines, reading lists and 'critical tasks' (supported by assessment criteria, marking rubrics and worked examples). Longer term, guidance should be developed on the assessment tasks that should be used to assess ITE students' skills/capability against the learning outcomes of the core content.

APPENDIX G: REPORTING THE NATIONALLY CONSISTENT, TRANSPARENT INDICATORS FOR PROSPECTIVE ITE STUDENTS

This appendix provides more information about developing an interactive tool for prospective ITE students. The tool would consist of four elements:

- Prospective ITE students provide information about their needs and preferences in the **initial customisation** stage.
- They **filter indicators** to those that are most important to them.
- They **create a shortlist** of three or fewer higher education providers.
- They receive a **targeted comparison** of higher education providers.

1. INITIAL CUSTOMISATION

In the first stage, prospective ITE students will provide information about their ITE needs and preferences. This ensures they only see information about appropriate higher education providers (e.g. a prospective undergraduate student would only see information about providers that offer undergraduate ITE programs).

This is important because the underlying dataset is very large: there are 47 ITE providers, who will each be measured on 13 indicators. To reduce information overload, prospective ITE students should only see data that is relevant to them. This increases the probability that students will act on the information they have been given.

This initial customisation stage could also serve a secondary purpose of educating users on what higher education providers offer. Users who have not conducted extensive research about their ITE options may benefit from knowing all appropriate higher education providers.

Table G1: Questions to be asked in the initial customisation stage

Questions	Response options
Do you want to study on campus?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, on campus <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, mixed-mode <input type="checkbox"/> No, online only
Where do you want to study?	<input type="checkbox"/> Anywhere in Australia <input type="checkbox"/> Anywhere in ACT / New South Wales / Northern Territory / Queensland / South Australia / Tasmania / Victoria / Western Australia <input type="checkbox"/> These specific providers: <i>Dropdown box of all ITE providers</i>
What degree do you want to study?	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate (I don't have a university degree) <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate (I already have a university degree)

Questions	Response options
What sort of teaching do you want to do?	<input type="checkbox"/> Early childhood teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Primary teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary teaching
Do you want to study full-time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, full-time <input type="checkbox"/> No, part-time

2. FILTER INDICATORS

In the second stage, prospective ITE students will have the option to select the indicators that are most important to them. Again, this helps with information overload, as it is difficult to compare 13 attributes simultaneously. In addition, prospective ITE students may hold different values and priorities – allowing these to be reflected in this tool will increase the relevance of its results and maximise the probability that people will act on the results.

Table G2: Questions to be asked to filter indicators

Questions	Response options
What aspects of quality are most important to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Demographics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Proportion of First Nations students enrolled in ITE <input type="checkbox"/> Proportion of regional and remote students enrolled in ITE <input type="checkbox"/> Proportion of low socio-economic status students enrolled in ITE <input type="checkbox"/> Proportion of high-achieving students enrolled in ITE <input type="checkbox"/> Proportion of STEM students enrolled in ITE <input type="checkbox"/> Proportion of non-English-speaking background students enrolled in ITE <input type="checkbox"/> Student Retention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Proportion of students leaving ITE in their first year <input type="checkbox"/> Proportion of students leaving ITE within 6 years <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Readiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student satisfaction with program quality <input type="checkbox"/> Graduates' perceived preparedness for employment <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Employment Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Proportion of graduates employed upon graduation <input type="checkbox"/> Proportion of graduates employed 2 years after graduation <input type="checkbox"/> Proportion of graduates employed in high-need locations and subjects (e.g. regional and remote schools, STEM subjects) <input type="checkbox"/> All of the above

3. SHORTLIST

To minimise information overload, prospective students should compare no more than three different providers. There are two ways of deriving this shortlist:

- The initial customisation stage may lead to three or fewer providers.
- If the initial customisation stage leads to more than three providers, users select their top three providers from the shortlist.

To help prospective ITE students decide which providers to shortlist, a simple summary of the indicators for each higher education provider could be used.

4. TARGETED COMPARISON OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS

Finally, prospective ITE students will be presented with information on how the top three providers compare on the indicators.

Other features to consider at this final stage include:

- Add in-context help and explanations. Providing clear and accurate definitions of each indicator increases comprehension of the data but hiding them away in pop-up boxes ensures the initial display is not overwhelming.
- Direct people to university/admissions websites. This would help reduce the intention–action gap and help prospective ITE students to choose a higher education provider based on quality.
- Allow people to export their results. Allowing users to print, email, or download their results can increase the probability that information about quality is used in future decision-making.
- Incorporate other factors that are important when students are choosing a provider. Including these factors in this comparison tool would increase the relevance and usefulness of the final results.

APPENDIX H: COMPONENTS OF JURISDICTION-LEVEL AGREEMENTS FOR HIGH-QUALITY PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Table H1: Components of jurisdiction-level memorandums of understanding

Opportunity	Memorandums of understanding components
Defining clear roles, responsibilities and expectations across parties	Establish clear roles, responsibilities and agreed expectations regarding each party involved in delivering practical experience placements, including specific activities they are accountable for delivering (e.g. providing feedback to ITE students).
Supporting and valuing effective mentor teachers	<p>Put in place arrangements to better incentivise and support mentor teachers and their schools, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ outlining effective ways to identify, support and train mentoring/supervising teachers ■ strategies to enhance recognition of mentoring/supervising teachers, such as crediting mentoring hours toward professional learning requirements for teacher registration ■ high-quality professional learning for mentoring/supervising teachers.
Encouraging system-level delivery models	<p>Adopt system-level delivery models across clusters of schools (such as practicum hubs) to support delivery of high-quality practical experience and to reduce administrative burden and costs, such as by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ standardising assessment and reporting templates across providers ■ providing strong links between theory, research and practice ■ establishing strong links between schools and providers ■ creating explicit links to practical experience requirements ■ providing financial and administrative support for host schools ■ establishing processes to ensure placement conditions are satisfied and for handling grievances and processing payment claims.
Clearer national guidance	Reflect the proposed national guidelines to support more consistent, high-quality practical experience and reduce administrative burden on jurisdictions, higher education providers, school systems and schools.
Improving coordination in matching placements to demand	<p>Put in place a system for the matching of placements to ensure supply/demand balance across schools and sectors. This should include prioritising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ subject and geographic areas (e.g. as in current Victorian MOU) ■ placement types (e.g. sequencing, core content exposure, learner cohorts, school types, practical experience activity) ■ placement timing and length (e.g. at different stages of the school calendar, of extended or intensive duration). <p>This would be supported by clear data sharing protocols and arrangements to ensure ongoing visibility of the placement system.</p> <p><i>Note: this does not necessarily mean that matching of placements is a centralised process; rather it is planned and coordinated.</i></p>

Opportunity	Memorandums of understanding components
Demonstrating an understanding of core content	Give beginning teachers an opportunity to apply and practise core content while on practical experience placements to ensure teaching practice is evidence based.
Continuous improvement and measuring impact	Put in place a mechanism to evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ overall implementation progress of provider–school partnerships ■ sufficiency of existing partnerships ■ extent to which parties are fulfilling responsibilities, and impact of initiatives on attracting and retaining ITE students.

APPENDIX I: COMPONENTS OF NATIONAL GUIDELINES TO SUPPORT HIGH-QUALITY PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

The Accreditation Standards and Procedures set out a number of requirements for delivering practical experience. National guidelines are needed to support higher education providers and school systems in meeting these requirements. The national guidelines should cover the following types of information.

STRENGTHENING PROVIDER–SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS (PROGRAM STANDARD 5.1)

Quality partnerships between higher education providers and schools is the crucial factor for enabling high-quality practical experience placements (ACDE submission). AITSL has developed a partnership agreement template for higher education providers and schools. This covers the purpose, scope, implementation, roles and responsibilities, time frame and review of the agreement.

However, the template does not provide clear advice about what should be included in these agreements consistent with delivering high-quality practical experience. This can lead to greater variability in quality and additional administrative complexity. The Panel recommends more comprehensive and specific information is provided on what formal partnerships should include, such as:

- placement details, including number, objectives, focus descriptors in the Graduate Teacher Standards, timing, length, sequencing/structure, intensity and diversity
- duties and responsibilities, beyond broad roles
- an explicit approach to integrating theory and practice through the placement and broader collaboration between the provider and school
- a self-assessment and monitoring tool to ensure that the partnership delivers on its objectives (e.g. Victorian Framework for Excellent Partnerships).

BEST PRACTICE PLACEMENT COMPONENTS (PROGRAM STANDARD 5.2)

The only specificity currently provided in Program Standard 5 is the number of practical experience days. The national guidelines should set out key considerations and the evidence base for different design and delivery features to ensure practical experience is aligned with available evidence and more nationally consistent. Features include:

- number and length of placements
- structure and sequence of placements
- diversity of experience.

These considerations should build on existing resources, to ensure consistent expectations across the system. For example, AITSL has previously published research on the evidence base for high-quality practical experience. The Network of Associate Deans of Professional Experience (NADPE) Steering Committee for ACDE advocates for a common language or nomenclature to govern best practice, while still allowing for context differentiation and movement across states and territories (NADPE Steering Committee for ACDE submission).

BETTER COMMUNICATION (PROGRAM STANDARD 5.3)

The Panel's student survey showed that providers can better communicate with ITE students. The national guidance should set out mechanisms and clearer guidance for communication between higher education providers, schools and students, including those relating to:

- communicating with ITE students before their placement
- communicating the skill level required for each placement
- providers maintaining contact with ITE students during placement
- schools following up with ITE students after placement.

CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT (PROGRAM STANDARD 5.4)

There is currently no nationally consistent way of assessing students against the Graduate Teacher Standards, which leads to variation in student experiences and additional administrative burden for school administrators. The national guidance should set out more specific information to support high-quality assessment, including:

- an assessment template for schools to consistently assess ITE students (such as those currently used in Queensland and by the Victorian Department of Education in its MOU)
- an evidence guide that aligns ITE student practices with the achievement of specific descriptors in the Graduate Teacher Standards, similar to what is currently provided in NSW
- the interaction of practical experience assessment with TPA requirements.

GREATER SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS (PROGRAM STANDARD 5.5)

AITSL is currently developing standards for mentoring early career teachers as part of the NTWAP. The development of the mentoring standards should consider its application for mentoring ITE students and be included in the proposed national guidelines. This should include consideration of how to coach ITE students to teach the core content. This would help to boost the capability of teachers to support students during their ITE placement.

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