

Initial Teacher Education Program Accreditation Policy



ACT
Government



Purpose

The Initial Teacher Education Program Accreditation policy (the policy) provides the framework for accrediting Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs in the ACT under the ACT *Teacher Quality Institute Act 2010* (the Act) and the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership's (AITSL) *Accreditation of ITE Programs in Australian – Standards and Procedures* (Standards and Procedures).

The ACT Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) has adopted the AITSL *Guidelines for the Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia* (Guidelines) to support the consistent interpretation and assessment of the accreditation standards.

Accreditation of programs is cyclical, with periods not exceeding five years and conducted in two stages:

- Stage one: Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers (providers) submit a plan detailing how the program will meet each of the Program Standards and demonstrate impact.
- Stage two: focuses on the interpretation of evidence collected by providers regarding program impact, to support ongoing program improvement and quality assurance.

Flexibility, diversity and innovation are key principles underpinning the accreditation process. Providers are encouraged to be innovative in the delivery of programs to meet the diverse needs of pre-service teachers and the profession. The Standards and Procedures and Guidelines are not intended to constrain provider's innovation or regulate higher education provision.

The policy also promotes the implementation of the 2023 Final report of the Teacher Education Expert Panel (TEEP) to:

- strengthen ITE programs to deliver confident, effective beginning teachers (recommendations 1-3), including the addition of core content
- draw a stronger link between performance and funding of initial teacher education (recommendations 4-7)
- improve practical teaching experience (recommendations 8-11)
- enhance postgraduate initial teacher education programs for mid-career entrants (recommendations 12-14)

The Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Program Accreditation policy supports the intention of the TQI Act that ITE programs prepare pre-service teachers for employment in the profession.

Policy statement

This policy is designed to ensure that all graduates of ITE meet the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at the Graduate career stage. These Standards demonstrate an approach to accrediting ITE programs based on an assessment of their impact, drawing on two distinct but related types of evidence: evidence of pre-service teacher performance, that is evidence that is collected from within a program in relation to a pre-service teacher's performance; and evidence of graduate outcomes, that is evidence that is collected following completion of a program in relation to the achievements of a program's graduates.

The national accreditation system focuses on program development, program delivery and program outcomes and improvement. It places importance on the demonstration of impact and continuous improvement throughout and at the end of an accreditation period, comprising two accreditation stages and incorporates annual reporting. The Program Standards apply to both accreditation stage one and stage two; however, stage two includes a focus on evidence of outcomes and continuous improvement. Accreditation at stage one and stage two will be granted under the relevant regulatory scheme.

The national accreditation system for ITE programs has three integrated elements:

1. the Graduate Teacher Standards, which are the Graduate career stage of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, and make explicit the knowledge, skills and attributes expected of graduates of nationally accredited programs
2. the Program Standards, which make explicit what is required of high-quality initial teacher education programs, that give confidence the Graduate Teacher Standards will be achieved

3. the Accreditation Procedures, which set out a nationally consistent process to accredit programs, including the establishment and composition of accreditation panels, assessment of programs by these panels, reporting accreditation decisions, and mechanisms for achieving national consistency

TQI manages accreditation of initial teacher education programs as:

- a consultative process involving TQI, the ITE program provider applying for accreditation, teacher employers and other stakeholders in the profession and the community, and
- an iterative process that involves close collaboration between the ITE program provider and TQI from the initial planning for the program through to final accreditation.

Under section 76 of the Act the TQI must be satisfied in regard to:

- the suitability of the education program to prepare pre-service teachers for employment as early childhood, primary school, or secondary school teachers;
- the assessment processes to be used to establish whether a person has achieved the learning outcomes of the education program;
- any nationally agreed recognised standards for the accreditation of education programs are met.

The Standards and Procedures for the accreditation of ITE programs and their application are informed by eight principles:

1. **Impact** - The accreditation process relies on evidence about the program's impact. Evidence of impact is drawn from both pre-service teacher performance and graduate outcomes
2. **Evidence-based** - Evidence must underpin all elements of initial teacher education, from the design and delivery of programs to the teaching practices taught within programs. Evidence is the basis on which panels make accreditation recommendations
3. **Rigour** - A relentless focus on rigour across all elements of the accreditation process is vital in assuring robust and nationally consistent decisions, as well as the quality of programs and their graduates
4. **Continuous Improvement** - Accreditation contributes to the improvement of the quality of ITE and consequently of teaching and learning in Australia. The ongoing cycle of review and re-accreditation will provide assurance of graduate teacher quality and increase public confidence in the profession
5. **Flexibility, diversity and innovation** - Accreditation encourages the capacity of providers to be innovative in the delivery of programs to meet the diverse needs of students and the profession, as long as the program can demonstrate a positive impact
6. **Partnerships** - National accreditation is built around partnerships involving shared responsibilities and obligations among providers, education settings, teachers, employers, and Authorities and a shared commitment to improve initial teacher education and work in partnership to positively affect student learning and graduate outcomes.
7. **Transparency** - The accreditation process requires transparency across all elements of initial teacher education, from entrant selection to program outcomes. This results in publicly available data that is valid and comparable, as well as clarity for pre-service teachers about what to expect from initial teacher education and, in turn, what is expected of them throughout their course.
8. **Research** - Accreditation generates and relies upon a strong research base that informs program design and delivery, and informs the continual improvement of teacher education programs by providers

Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA)

As part of the Standards and Procedures, ITE providers are required to include the teaching performance assessment. A teaching performance assessment (TPA) is a tool used to assess the practical skills and knowledge of pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers collect evidence of practice to complete a TPA in the final year of their initial teacher education program. It is assessed by providers and is a requirement for graduation.

ACT Specific ITE Program Requirements

Child Safety

The ACT Government response to the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutionalised Child Sexual Abuse requires that ITE programs include explicit instruction to raise awareness of safe learning environments for children using the education resources developed by the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner. Standard 4.5 of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers addresses teachers' responsibility to teach children to use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically.

Culturally responsive practices

ITE programs must provide opportunities for preservice teachers to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives through the development and provision of program content, professional experience and assessment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Providers, systems and schools/early childhood settings are responsible for establishing and maintaining culturally responsive practices at all professional experience sites.

Artificial Intelligence

TQI recognises the importance of incorporating emerging technologies to enhance teaching and learning experiences and drive innovation in education. TQI has a responsibility to be aware of ACT Government policy guides in relation to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in its operations and to examine the risks to regulatory responsibilities resulting from the application of artificial intelligence by stakeholders in the accreditation process. ITE programs would benefit from including instruction about responsible and ethical use of generative AI tools to support teaching and learning in schools and early childhood settings. This includes processes to identify inappropriate use of AI and any required response.

Role of Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is invested with the authority to carry out the functions, powers and duties of the Minister for Education and Early Childhood under the TQI Act.

The CEO receives applications from the provider of ITE programs. The CEO, through the appointment of the Director Accreditation supports the provider in its submission of the application and in providing evidence to TQI in support of its accreditation application(s). The Director, Accreditation provides secretariat support to the Accreditation Panel and is the conduit between the Panel and the provider during the Panel's assessment. The CEO after considering the advice of the accreditation panel, appointed by the Board, accredits or refuses to accredit the ITE program(s).

Role of the TQI Board

The TQI Board establishes the Accreditation Panel – called an Expert Committee – under Division 3.3 of the TQI Act, to help the Institute to decide an application to accredit an ITE program.

The Accreditation Panel

Section 77 of the Act requires TQI to establish an Expert Committee. The TQI Board appoints members to the Expert Committee. The Committee is appointed to help TQI decide an application for accreditation of an ITE program. TQI will ensure that the expert committee established as the accreditation panel for each application is composed of people trained in the national accreditation process specified in the program standards.

Becoming an ITE accreditation panellist involves completing a national learning program facilitated by AITSL. This equips panellists to make assessments against the Program Standards using the Accreditation Guidelines, including:

- becoming familiar with the Standards and Procedures that underpin the accreditation process
- structuring panel discussions and decisions
- ensuring consistent judgements are made in the assessment of accreditation applications.

A TQI accreditation panel will generally comprise between four and six members and will include an officer of the TQI as the executive officer for the panel. Each accreditation panel must include an interstate member who has completed the national ITE accreditation panel training.

The role of the accreditation panel is to determine whether the program meets the criteria for accreditation and to make a recommendation to TQI. As part of the assessment process, the Panel can make suggestions to the provider about how their program(s) can better meet the Standards and Procedures. The provider is encouraged to make iterative improvements to the program as part of the accreditation process. Should the accreditation panel not be in agreement about a recommendation TQI will appoint a Reviewer to assist the panel to arrive at a consensus recommendation.

TQI determines the application for accreditation based on the evidence submitted by the provider and the accreditation panel's reports and communicates the decision to the provider.

Summary of legislative details

Review of accreditation

Section 80(1) of the Act provides for annual review of an accredited program by TQI. To ensure quality assurance and continuous improvement, TQI will require providers of an accredited program to report annually on significant issues, changes or improvements to the program which may affect the suitability of the program for preparing pre-service teachers for employment in the profession.

Conditions on accreditation

Under section 74(4) of the Act TQI may impose a condition on accreditation, for example requiring the provider to notify TQI of any substantial change to the program within the period of accreditation. TQI must give notice of its intention to impose a condition to the applicant.

Suspension or cancellation of accreditation

TQI may suspend or cancel the accreditation of an initial teacher education program under sections 81 to 85 of the Act. TQI must give written notice to a provider of an initial teacher education program of an intention to suspend or cancel the program accreditation.

Under section 84 of the Act the provider can apply to cancel accreditation on their own initiative.

Under section 86 of the Act if the accreditation of the program ends, TQI must remove the details of the program from the Register of Accredited Education Programs.

Period of accreditation

Section 78 of the Act provides that accreditation of initial teacher education programs may be granted for a period of up to five years.

Renewal of accreditation

Under section 79 of the Act and in accordance with the national *Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia (2020)*, a provider may apply, in writing, to TQI for renewal of accreditation. If a provider applies to renew an accreditation, the accreditation remains in force until the application is decided. If an application for renewal is for a program accredited for five years, TQI will appoint a new accreditation panel to assist with ensuring quality assurance of the program.

Offences

Section 87 of the Act provides that it is a strict liability offence to claim falsely that a program is accredited.

Legislative reference

The accrediting authority in the ACT is the ACT Teacher Quality Institute (TQI). The legislative basis for the principles and directions set out in this policy is provided by the *ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act 2010 (the Act)*. The following parts of the Act relate directly to this policy:

- Section 6 – Purpose
- Section 11(1)(g) – Functions of the Institute
- Division 3.3 – Establishment of Committees
- Part 7 – Accreditation – education programs
- Division 7.1 – Register of accredited education programs
- Division 7.2 – Accreditation of education programs
- Section 76 – Expert committee.

Other relevant legislation includes

ACT Teacher Quality Institute Regulation 2010 (as amended 2024)

ACT Teacher Quality Institute (Australian Professional Standards for Teachers) Determination 2013 (No 1) Notifiable Instrument NI2013–491.

Right of Appeal

In the first instance where a provider is dissatisfied with a decision, they should seek reconsideration by TQI. If still dissatisfied, the provider may appeal to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal for a review of the decision. TQI will give the provider concerned notice whenever it makes a reviewable decision.

Section 88 of the Act provides that decisions made by TQI to:

- refuse to accredit or renew accreditation of an education program
- accredit or renew accreditation of an education program on condition
- accredit the program for less than five years
- extend the period of accreditation for less than the period applied for
- refuse to extend the period of accreditation
- suspend or cancel accreditation.

These are all reviewable decisions.

Register of Accredited Education Programs

Section 71 of the Act and section 19 of the TQI Regulation require TQI to keep a public register of all accredited teacher education programs. The searchable online register will be available from the Teacher Portal and on the TQI public website and will contain:

- details about the Accredited Program, and
- information on the accreditation status of programs – whether they are currently accredited, conditionally accredited, suspended or cancelled.

Contact

For support, contact TQI on 62075005 or tqi@act.gov.au

Complaints

Concerns about the application of this policy or the policy itself should be raised with TQI.

Email: tqi@act.gov.au

Telephone: +61 2 6207 5005

If dissatisfied with initial contact with TQI, formal complaints can be made supported by the [TQI Complaints Policy](#) and using the [TQI Formal Complaints form](#).

Record keeping

TQI record keeping is regulated by the *Territory Records Act 2002* and is managed in accordance with policies and guidelines issued by the ACT Territory Records Office.

Privacy and Confidentiality

TQI has issued a Territory Privacy Principle 5 (TPP 5) notice for the collection of personal information, in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2014*.

The notice is available online and outlines:

- when personal information is collected and how it is used
- when personal information may be disclosed and the legislative authority for that disclosure
- what to do if you believe that TQI has not handled your personal information correctly.

The ITE program accreditation process requires full confidentiality concerning accreditation documents and outcomes. Each panel member signs a confidentiality agreement. Documents and outcomes include the name of the provider, all information contained in the provider's submission/s in words, diagrams, graphs, tables or displayed in any other way and which forms part of the submission/s and any discussion that takes place with the provider's stakeholders during the accreditation process.

At the end of each accreditation process, all panellists are required to delete or destroy all accreditation and documents and downloaded submissions. TQI requires confirmation from panel members that all such documents have been deleted or destroyed accordingly.

Definitions

Accredited teacher education program means a program that has been accredited, having met the *Standards and Procedures: Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia*.

Professional experience means the placement of a pre-service teacher at a school to undertake the professional teaching experience required of an accredited pre-service teacher education program.

Policy information

Approved by

Teacher Quality Institute Board

Approval date

23 September 2025

Publication of policy

This policy will be published on the TQI website and made available in printed format on request. The version of the policy on the website can be regarded as the policy in force at any time.

Review and changes to policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years from the date of approval, or earlier if required. All changes to the policy are approved by the TQI Board.

Anticipated Review date

August 2028



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