



# Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) Evaluation Report – Restricted Permit to Teach

19 March 2024

## Restricted Permit to Teach Model

### *Background*

The 2022 Quality Initial Teacher Education (QITE) Review identified the need for further ITE reform to attract high-quality diverse candidates, to ensure their preparation is evidence-based and practical and induct them well into the profession. In response to the QITE Review, the Australian Government established the Teacher Education Expert Panel (the Panel) in September 2022 to provide advice on implementing two of these recommendations and key issues raised at the Teacher Workforce Shortage Roundtable. The Terms of Reference included providing advice on reforms to:

- strengthen ITE programs to deliver confident, effective, classroom ready graduates
- strengthen the link between performance and funding of ITE
- improve the quality of practical experience in teaching
- improve postgraduate ITE for mid-career entrants.

### *Drivers*

Locally, territory initiatives to address teacher supply included the joint work of the Teacher Shortage Taskforce, out of the Australian Education Union (ACT Branch) and the ACT Education Directorate. Cognisant of national projections that forecast over the next decade strong overall growth in the demand for teachers, but a decline in the number of teaching graduates, the taskforce recognised the critical need for attraction and retention incentives for preservice teachers, mid-career professionals and re-engagement of teachers to the profession.

The Taskforce discussed financial support for pre-service teachers while they complete their practicum placements in ACT public schools, while EDU and AEU also worked closely to strengthen processes for schools and preservice teachers to engage PSTs for temporary employment to teach in schools in the last year of their studies through the Permit to Teach process. EDU also focussed on recruitment strategies for the Initial Teacher Education pipeline through the Affiliated School partnership with the University Canberra.

In October 2022, at the Board's request, the TQI Initial Teacher Education Committee (ITEC) discussed a change to the Permit to Teach policy and the development of broad guidelines for proposals based on agreed principles for Board approval. Input was to be sought from teacher employers, ITE providers and ITE students; and a set of high-level indicators of success and an implementation review process was to be developed.

In May 2023, the Evaluation plan for the Permit to Teach for initial teacher education students beginning their final year was accepted by the Board. While the original intent of the policy change presented as a workforce shortage measure, it was envisaged that the evaluation would also provide an opportunity to gauge the value of the work-embedded learning enabled by the change in accordance with the TQI

Strategic Direction Goal: Accredite Initial Teacher Education programs and *support preparation for the profession*.

In the context of teacher workforce shortages nationally, the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan December 2022, identified priority areas to attract, train and retain teachers including Priority area 2 - Strengthening initial teacher education, to be addressed by the Teacher Education Expert Panel (TEEP); which in its Strong Beginnings Report June 2023, included among others, a recommendation pertinent to the RPTT initiative, to ‘improve postgraduate ITE programs for mid-career entrants’.

### *Consultation and research*

As outlined in the *TQI 2023 Evaluation plan – Restricted Permit to Teach for initial teacher education students in their final year* relevant parties would:

- conduct student and principal surveys
- collect data on student completion and subsequent registration & employment rates
- gather from key stakeholders within UC/ACU and schools/systems to identify possible improvement to the processes
- report to the TQI ITEC committee/TQI Board
- include reference to the employment-based pathway in future narrative reports submitted for the purpose of ITE program accreditation i.e. UC.

ACT TQI provided a summary of formative evaluation findings from a mid-point PST focus group in an update to ITEC in August 2023 (tabled September Board Meeting); and a summary of summative evaluation findings from an end-of-year PST focus group and a principal/supervisor survey (October 2023) in an update to ITEC in November 2023 (tabled November Board meeting).

### *Summary of findings*

From responses of stakeholders i.e. PSTs, school leaders, supervisors:

- While the process for receiving a RPTT was initially slow and frustrating, as procedures were refined and better understood, it became very accessible and efficient.
- Support from schools for PSTs to teach while completing their studies which included mentoring, classroom management support and social-emotional support, was in most cases strong, with a few exceptions.
- A few schools had PSTs provide in-built relief or work above 0.6 FTE load (planning and assessment), in contradiction of the agreement.
- The RPTT provided PSTs with a more authentic experience of all aspects of teaching and school life compared with practicum placement e.g. engagement with parents.
- The RPTT provided PSTs more opportunity to contextualise and apply learning in practice, and demonstrate the Graduate Teacher Standards, leading to better teaching and higher grades.
- PSTs grew in capacity, confidence and had their career choice affirmed.
- PSTs found teaching while studying difficult to manage, stressful and overwhelming at times, particularly when university assignments were due.
- There was a financial cost for some PSTs having to ‘save up’ to fund their professional practice placement.
- Some PSTs found leaving their RPTT school to attend a placement in another school, disruptive.
- Schools/teacher colleagues in schools willingly made significant adjustments (flexible timetabling, additional release time, covered classes & extra marking etc.) to assist PSTs which greatly increased colleagues’ workload.
- While liaison between employer and schools, universities/employers and TQI was effective, there

was room for improvement between PSTs and universities.

- Schools/teacher colleagues found the experience of working with the final-year PSTs to be highly mutually beneficial and valuable for schools, and strongly endorsed the initiative.

### *Participant recommendations - suggested improvements*

From the comments of stakeholders i.e. PSTs, school leaders and supervisors:

- Adjust the timing of university assignments, preferably in the school holidays, to relieve the stress of competing demands; the university to consolidate subjects over two days and /or offer classes online asynchronously / outside of work hours to overcome disruptions to timetabling in the secondary school context, in particular.
- Designate a mentor teacher for regular check-ins, feedback, observations.
- TQI provide targeted information for PSTs regarding PL requirements, a condition of permits-to-teach.
- Universities to vary the requirement for *diverse placements* to take place in a range of schools/settings; and move the *Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) during the final placement* to the RPTT context. (NB Both are national program accreditation requirements).
- A workflow graphic to support understanding.
- As they require considerable assistance, time allowance for coordinators managing PSTs who are working with a RPTT, which would support the coordinators as well as the sustainability of the initiative.
- 'We need to be careful of burn out'.

## Restricted Permit to Teach Summative Evaluation

### *Evaluation – Considerations*

Objectives of the policy change – what success will look like<sup>1</sup>.

While the original intent of the policy change presented as a workforce shortage measure, the evaluation provided an opportunity to gauge the value of the work-embedded learning enabled by the change.

**The theory of change:** *Providing final year Pre-service Teachers (PSTs) with the opportunity for work-embedded learning supports their preparation for the profession and being ready-to-teach.*

Core questions:

*Did providing final year Pre-service Teachers (PSTs) with the PTT opportunity for work-embedded learning:*

- *increase teacher supply?*
- *support their preparation for the profession and being ready-to-teach?*
- *impact on the capacity of students to attain the Graduate Teacher Standards at the end of the final year of their ITE course?*

<sup>1</sup> 2023 Evaluation Plan – Restricted Permit to Teach for initial teacher education students in the final year, TQI Board, June 2023.

### Evaluation findings

- Most employers/universities have adhered to the agreed parameters for employing students and approaches to their support.
- Confirmed against the outputs for the principles as articulated in the agreements/implementation plan:
  - The integrity and quality of the ITE program has been maintained in most cases, with some improvement required.
  - Initial teacher education students have been adequately supervised, monitored and supported while working in schools, with a few exceptions.
  - Employers/universities have found the processes put in place by TQI to facilitate PTT for final year students to be effective.
- Responses of PSTs and school leaders/supervisors (surveys, focus groups) support the following statements:
  - *ITE students' ITE training has not been compromised.*
  - *PTT holders experienced agency in their own learning/development as a teacher professional.*
  - *ITE student well-being has been supported.*
  - *ITE students have developed the skills they need for future success.*
  - *Quality teaching by RPTT holders has been facilitated.*
  - *Schools have been ready and able to support ITE student needs.*
  - *Where it has been sought, feedback from families/community has been favourable.*
  - *The processes put in place by TQI/the employers/the universities to enable the issuing of permits-to-teach to final year students have been effective. Improvement in communications and information collateral is required.*

While the experience of final-year pre-service teachers (PSTs) studying and working under a Restricted Permit to teach (RPTT) was largely positive, a few final-year PSTs reported being overwhelmed due to some of the agreed conditions not being fulfilled. In light of evaluation findings, minor amendments to agreements may be required.

Information about the RPTT and the parameters of the initiative were not widely understood, particularly among faculty staff.

It has been recommended that the RPTT initiative be broadened to include PSTs located in the ACT while studying online programs with extra-territory providers, subject to employer-provider agreements being in place.

### Impact – University of Canberra review of Restricted Permit to teach Pilot

Measure	UC review
An acceptable rate of uptake of the employment option for final year students through the restricted PTT. Metric: The rate of uptake considered acceptable is 25% of the eligible final year cohort.	Across 2023, 319 UC Preservice teachers were deemed to be eligible for the RPTT and 88 PSTs undertook RPTT positions – 28% (see p 4)
Completions of the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) by final year students provides a proxy measure for gauging preparation for the profession and being ready to teach. An equivalent or higher success rate for those who have taken up the option of a PTT while they complete their studies is demonstrated.	Participants in the RPTT received slightly higher marks for an assignment aligned with the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) (Elements 1 to 3) compared with other FYITE students in 2023 and 2022.

Metric: The percentage of successful TPAs by final year PTT holders compared with those who have continued to study without taking up the PTT option.	67.28% for final year RPTT compared to 65.69% who did not take up the option
Average performance in the TPA by final year students provides a proxy measure for gauging preparation for the profession and being ready to teach. Equivalent or higher average performance and fewer resubmissions for those who have taken up the option of a PTT while they complete their studies is demonstrated compared with their counterparts not taking up the option.	RPTT participants received slightly higher marks for an assignment aligned with the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) (Elements 1 to 3) compared with other final year students in 2023 and 2022.
Metric: G or G+ standard achieved and the number of TPA resubmissions required by final year PTT holders compared with those who have continued to study without taking up the PTT option.	No RPTT participants were required to resubmit their TPA.
Positive stakeholder reflections on the quality of the experience.	PSTs and school leaders/supervisors have provided mostly positive reflections, with the caveat of some negative impact from demanding workload and associated stress.
As a workforce supply measure, allowing final year students to work while they study has not devalued ITE courses.	It is clear and defensible to state that the granting of a RPTT to a PST has not adversely impacted PSTs' academic performance.
The opportunity for work-embedded learning afforded through the restricted PTT, has enabled better preparation of ITE students for the profession and supported them in being ready-to-teach. <i>TBA</i>	The interviewees identified several benefits of participating in a RPTT such as familiarity with the day-to-day requirements of teaching, access to school systems and resources, building confidence in their teaching practice, having their own classroom, and support for their university studies from the insights and authentic experiences provided by classroom teaching.
Longitudinal teacher registration data indicates that teachers who have had the opportunity for work-embedded learning through the restricted PTT as ITE students, are more likely to be retained to the profession and to progress to Full registration.	Beyond the scope of this 2023 evaluation. <i>TBA</i>

### Summary

Providing final year Pre-service Teachers (PSTs) with the RPTT opportunity for work-embedded learning:

- has increased teacher supply.
- supported PST preparation for the profession and being ready-to-teach.
- positively impacted the capacity of students to attain the Graduate Teacher Standards at the end of the final year of their ITE course.