



ACT
Government



Initial Teacher Education Program Accreditation Policy



Purpose

This policy provides the framework for the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs in the ACT under the *ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act 2010* (the Act) and relevant national standards.

The policy supports the intention of the Act that initial teacher education programs prepare pre-service teachers for employment in the profession in a nationally consistent and rigorous framework.

Application

This policy is relevant to:

- providers of Initial Teacher Education programs designed to prepare pre-service teachers for teacher registration as pre-school, primary or secondary school teachers, in all Australian jurisdictions, subject to other requirements as set out by the relevant teacher regulatory authority
- programs of study that prepare pre-service teachers for assessment at the Graduate Teacher level of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*
- Programs that have their professional experience component delivered in ACT schools.

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
- Part 7 – Accreditation – education programs
 - Division 7.1 – Register of accredited education programs
 - Division 7.2 – Accreditation of education programs.

Other relevant legislation includes:

- *ACT Teacher Quality Institute Regulation 2010 (as amended 2014)*
- *ACT Teacher Quality Institute (Australian Professional Standards for Teachers) Determination 2013 (No 1) Notifiable Instrument NI2013–491.*

Definition

Accreditation is awarded by TQI for initial teacher education programs which satisfy ACT legislative requirements, the agreed national program and teacher standards, national priority areas and ACT professional experience requirements as notified from time to time.

The purpose of accreditation is to provide quality assurance that the initial teacher education program has been designed and will be delivered in such a way as to ensure that the course meets the agreed national Program Standards and that those graduating from it will have met the Graduate level of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and the legal requirements for tertiary qualifications required for registration as a professional teacher in the ACT.

Programs accredited by TQI will be confirmed as being nationally accredited and will be included on the list of nationally accredited programs administered by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and on the ACT register.

Relevant standards

The *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures*, (December 2015) provides details of the national Program Standards. These standards were agreed and endorsed by Education Council in 2015.

The *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL February 2011) have been notified under the Act as standards for the teaching profession in the ACT in 2013 (*Notifiable Instrument NI2013-491*).

Program applications must clearly demonstrate explicit meeting of these program and teacher standards. TQI grants or refuses the application for accreditation based on an assessment that the program's structure, curriculum content, assessment and professional experience components meet the program standards and enable graduates to meet the graduate level of the teacher standards.

Principles

The following principles underpin the accreditation of initial teacher education in the ACT:

- **Pursuit of professional excellence**

A culture of continued career-stage professional learning, professional reflection and the pursuit of high levels of achievement as a teacher is an essential foundation for a profession that is responsive to society's needs and community expectations.

Accredited initial teacher education programs explicitly aim to foster such a culture in entrants to the teaching profession in the ACT.

- **Conformity to standards**

Initial teacher education programs provide the mechanism for entrants to the teaching profession in the ACT to demonstrate their achievement of the Graduate level of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

Compliance with the Standards is an integral part of the regulatory framework for the teaching profession in the ACT. Accredited initial teacher education programs explicitly show how their content, mode of delivery and assessment processes enable students to demonstrate their achievement of the Graduate level of the Standards.

Accredited programs also meet the requirements of the national Program Standards for *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia* (2015).

- **Professional collaboration**

Integration of the theory and practice of teaching relies on collaborative partnerships between initial teacher education providers, schools and practising teachers.

Effective preparation of mentor teachers is essential to ensuring that professional conversations between them and pre-service teachers are productive.

Accredited initial teacher education programs incorporate effective professional experience components which facilitate work-integrated learning, mentoring and cross-sectoral collaboration.

- **Sound foundations for continued learning and professional teaching practice**

The ACT community expects high levels of literacy and numeracy, content knowledge and pedagogy of entrants to the teaching profession in the ACT.

Accredited initial teacher education programs demonstrably apply rigorous evidenced-based assessments to ensure entrants to the profession have sound foundations for meeting these expectations throughout their career.

Requirements for application for accreditation

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

Programs demonstrate suitability to prepare pre-service teachers for employment by documenting how the Graduate Standards, National Priority Areas, employer needs and ACT professional experience requirements are addressed by the program. Assessment processes used in the program must relate to ensuring reliable and rigorous evaluation of student achievements through the program. The standards required to be met for accreditation are set out in section 5 above.

Section 73(2) of the Act requires applicants to provide information to enable TQI to decide the application.

The national *Guidelines for the accreditation of initial education programs in Australia (June 2016)* details the information to be included in an application for accreditation. In addition, applications for accreditation must address any ACT specific requirements as determined by TQI.

Accreditation panels

Section 77 of the Act requires TQI to establish an Expert Committee to help it decide an application for accreditation of an initial teacher education 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.

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. 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 (June 2016)*, a provider may apply to renew 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.

Right of appeal

Section 88 of the Act provides that decisions made by TQI

- to refuse to accredit a program
- to accredit for less than the period applied for, or for less than 5 years
- to impose a condition or
- to renew an accreditation

are reviewable decisions.

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.

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.

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.

TQI holds on file a copy of application documents, reports, correspondence with providers and assessment panel members and notification of accreditation to AITSL.

Privacy

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 at <https://registration.tqi.act.edu.au/privacy.aspx> 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
- the impact if you do not consent to supplying TQI with the information requested
- what to do if you believe that TQI has not handled your personal information correctly

To request a copy of the TPP 5 notice in another format, please contact TQI.

Conflict of interest

Members of Accreditation Panels and TQI staff involved in accreditation processes shall sign undertakings to ensure conflicts of interest are managed in accordance with ACT Government legislation and policies.

Policy information

Approved by

The ACT Teacher Quality Institute Board.

Approval date

Current policy approved by the TQI Board on 20 June 2017.

Publication of policy

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