

Teacher Quality Institute Communications Strategy

Including Areas of Focus for 2022

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This is a living document and will be updated annually to meet the changing communications needs of TQI.



TQI OVERVIEW

The ACT Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) is an independent statutory authority established by the ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act 2010 (TQI Act) to build the professional standing of all ACT teachers and to enhance the community's confidence in the teaching profession. TQI is governed by a Board comprised of key ACT education stakeholders, the teaching profession, and the ACT community. TQI emphasises collaboration across school sectors and amongst teachers, schools and universities.

TQI undertakes its responsibilities by integrating the direct regulation of the teaching workforce with specific strategic measures designed to raise the quality of that workforce including, importantly, embedding the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in the teaching practice of all ACT teachers. This integrated approach covers all ACT teachers as they enter, and progress through, career stages in the profession.

TQI promotes continuous professional learning and development and the professionalism of all teachers in the ACT.

TQI FUNCTIONS & SERVICES

TQI's functions, set out in section 11 of the TQI Act, are to:

- register or grant permits-to-teach to eligible people
- keep a register of, and records relating to, teachers working or intending to work in the ACT
- keep a register of, and records relating to, pre-service teachers undertaking or intending to undertake professional experience in an ACT school
- use and share information on the teacher register and pre-service teacher register to facilitate planning and research in relation to teacher quality or the teaching workforce
- promote and encourage the continuous professional learning and development (including increased levels of skill, knowledge, expertise and professionalism) of teachers working in the ACT
- determine standards for, and facilitate and issue directions for, the ongoing professional learning and development of teachers working in the ACT
- · develop and apply codes of practice about the professional conduct of teachers working in the ACT
- · determine standards, including assessment and certification standards, for the ACT teaching profession
- · accredit education programs for pre-service teachers and teachers.

In performing its statutory functions, TQI delivers the following range of services to all sectors of school education, ACT universities providing teacher education, and the teaching profession in the ACT:

- professional regulatory services
- · quality assurance of initial teacher education and ongoing professional learning
- · advice and training on standards and certification, accreditation of programs and teacher registration
- · facilitation of collaborative teaching practice
- promotion of continuing development and professionalism.



TQI OFFICE STRUCTURE

The TQI office is structured around four Portfolios.

The leaders of these Portfolios, along with the Chief Executive Officer, form the TQI Leadership Team:



INTRODUCTION

TQI is ten years old! Crossing into the second decade brings with it an opportunity to review all elements of the regulatory model. The TQI Leadership Team is reviewing existing TQI communications activities, plans and collateral to identify ways to be more efficient with available time and resources, and adapt to changing stakeholder communications opportunities and requirements.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, TQI staff and stakeholders adapted to working from home within a very short timeframe. A great deal has changed for teachers due to extended periods of home learning. Many things also changed for TQI due to staff working off-site (e.g. methods of communicating, processes, timelines, relationships etc.). Given this, TQI is considering and adjusting communications methods and channels for engaging with stakeholders and each other.

In an effort to be proactive in the communications space, the TQI Leadership Team has developed an overarching Communications Strategy (the Strategy – this document) to:

- · provide a pragmatic communications approach that can be implemented by TQI staff
- build on previous communications work undertaken by TQI over the past ten years
- set TQI's communications direction for the second decade of service
- · leverage successful brand recognition
- · strengthen TQI's reputation with stakeholders
- establish a feedback loop to identify and address stakeholder issues and concerns
- coordinate and align communications activities across the four TQI portfolios.



TQI is an ACT Government co-branded organisation.

As such, TQI is aware that all announcements and campaigns made to the community should link in some way to the ACT Government's priorities¹:

- · Economic growth and diversification
- · Enhancing liveability and social inclusion
- · Suburban renewal and better transport
- · Health and education investment

This Strategy is based on, and builds upon, the directions outlined in the ACT Government Brand Guardian². This Strategy drills down further and focuses on TQI specific communications matters. Careful consideration will also be given to announcements and campaigns that fall across several Directorates. The delivery of information and messages will be clear and coordinated. TQI will not work in isolation on communication campaigns if other Directorates are also stakeholders

The following TQI policies, strategies, frameworks, and guidelines were considered during the development of *this Strategy.* These documents will be referred to, and considered, in the development of all TQI communications:

- Regulatory Framework (including the Continuing Professional Learning and Program Accreditation Policy and the Teacher Registration and Permit to Teach Policy).
- Professional Experience Framework.
- TQI Strategic Direction 2020-2022 (including TQI's vision, purpose, guiding principles, and values).
- Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher Certification (AITSL Guides, ACT Supplements and Assessor Handbook).
- TQI Code of Professional Practice and Conduct.
- TQI Design Style Guide.

Communications should, where relevant to the purpose and function of TQI, also take into account the strategic objectives expressed within the ACT Government's *Future of Education Strategy* and be cognizant of the strategic objectives of the Catholic Education system and of Independent schools.

DOCUMENT AUDIENCE

The intended audiences of this document are TQI Senior Staff and the TQI Board (including the Board's committees).

¹ Communication and Engagement Priorities

² ACT Government Brand Guardian



COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

In addition to the <u>ACT Government Brand Guardian</u> communications principles (demonstrate our relevance; show a connection to our community³; speak simply and succinctly; consider and be inclusive with our audience; and, ensure our communication is accessible to everyone), the guiding principles for all TQI communications are:

- Clarity Develop messages that are clear, unambiguous, and provide a clear call-to-action.
- Planning Clearly plan the communications activities, with the target audience's needs in mind.
- Understanding Consider the time of the school year and/or events that may be impacting the target audience and could conflict with the intended message.
- Trust Develop professional and healthy relationships with stakeholders to build collaboration and understanding.
- Governance Follow the ACT Government Brand Guardian, the TQI Design Style Guide, and agreed-to communications approval processes.
- Listen Monitor the effectiveness of all communications activities. Provide opportunities for audiences to provide feedback and where appropriate, follow-up and act.
- Consistency Ensure communication materials are consistent (and do not conflict) with related policies, plans and programs.
- Timeliness Release communications in a timely manner.
- Future-focused Provide information to the audiences outlined in this strategy before they need to know it.

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³ ACT Community Communication Priorities



TQI COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

The goal of all TQI communications activities will be to get the right message, to the right people, at the right time, through the appropriate channel. To ensure there is the necessary level of flexibility to do so, there will be no prescribed key messages in *this Strategy*. Individual communication activity plans will outline relevant key messages in detail.

This overarching Strategy determines that TQI messaging must always reflect TQI's Purpose:

- Uphold the standards of the teaching profession.
- Protect students and the community by ensuring education in schools is provided in a professional and competent way
 by approved teachers.
- Enhance the status of the teaching profession by recognising the professional learning and development of teachers throughout their careers.
- Maintain community confidence in the teaching profession.

TQI communication activities will also meet one or more of the following goals:

- Inform stakeholders about TQIs functions and services and support their understanding.
- Explain the intent of TQI action, with the intent linking back to TQI's purpose.
- · Advocate for the teaching profession.
- · Encourage stakeholders to engage with TQI.
- Create awareness of, and support for, TQI priorities.
- Provide support for teachers through timely reminders of key dates and 'hints & tips'.
- Demonstrate TQI is listening by inviting and responding to feedback.
- Strengthen the partnership between TQI and the profession.
- Celebrate and promote quality teaching.



TQI COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH

The TQI Team will manage the implementation of *this Strategy*, as well as individual communication activity plans (which will adhere to the principles expressed in *this Strategy*). *This Strategy* outlines the 'WHY' and 'WHAT' of all TQI communications. Separate communication activity plans will specify the 'WHO', 'WHEN' and 'HOW'.

TQI knows 'HOW' to communicate

- Communications materials will be developed in collaboration with a range of stakeholders, including portfolio
 managers, the TQI CEO, external communications consultants and designers, and the TQI Board (when required).
- TQI will work in partnership with other communications specialists, such as Education, Catholic Education and Whole
 of Government Media & Communications teams.
- TQI will understand the value of our 'on-communicators'. Universities on-communicate to Pre-Service Students. Principals on-communicate to teachers. Recipients of communication are also agents for delivery.
- · Key messages will be distilled to ensure the audience can digest information as quickly and easily as possible.
- The tone of communication will be friendly, knowledgeable, and approachable.
- All TQI communications collateral will include the appropriate TQI branding and follow TQI templates and stylesheets where available and applicable.
- Communications activity will be monitored and evaluated for effectiveness.
- TQI will 'lean in' to negative feedback and use it as an opportunity to improve future communications outcomes.
- All feedback loops will be closed, and stakeholders will be informed of actions taken as a result of TQI receiving their feedback.

TQI knows 'WHAT' and 'WHEN' to communicate

- Communications will be pitched in a way that recognises teachers have been operating under the *Regulatory Framework* for the past ten years.
- The frequency and topic of communications will reflect an understanding of the rhythm of the school year.
- · Communications will be based on an understanding of what teachers need to hear and when they'd like to hear it.
- Communications will be a 'step ahead', highlighting approaching regulatory activity (reflecting upon professional learning, renewal of registration) and will include hints and tips.
- Where possible, all messages will be framed in a positive manner.
- Regular review of communications data will inform future communications plans.
- Communications will be developed with the intention of generating responses from teachers that TQI will capture, monitor, and review.
- TQI portfolio managers will consider the content and timing of other portfolio communications activities before disseminating information to their audiences.



TQI knows 'WHO' to communicate with

A list of TQI's primary audiences and secondary stakeholders can be found in the following table. The table also outlines TQI's communications requirements, preferred channel, and frequency of messaging for each audience group.

TQI AUDIENCES

PRIMARY AUDIENCES

GROUP	COMMUNICATIONS EMPHASIS	CHANNEL	FREQUENCY
Pre-teacher	Welcome to a profession of high standards, ongoing learning, and growth.	Presentations Emails	Once a semester
Teaching <10 years	 You've entered a profession of ongoing learning, and growth. TQI is here to support you in your professional learning and growth. The community has confidence in the job you do. 	Bulk email	Once a term
Teaching >10 years	 Your professional experience builds strength in the regulatory system. You help progress your colleagues' careers through mentoring. You contribute to the ongoing learning and growth of our regulatory system by sharing your high-quality practice (Certification messaging). 	Bulk email	Once a term
Casual Teachers	There are options for you to continue contributing to the teaching profession by maintaining registration.	Network Follow-up emails	Once a term
Teachers on leave	There are options available to maintain your registration.	Email	As required
Retiring Teachers	There are options for you to stay connected to the profession in a teaching capacity.	Email	As required
Employers (EDU / CE / IND)	 You can have confidence in the strength of the regulatory system. We work in partnership to ensure the quality of the teaching workforce. 	 Meetings Presentations Emails Board representation 	 Regular Once a term As required Quarterly
Principals (including new principals)	This is your role and responsibility outlined in the Regulatory Framework.	Email Network for new Principals (to be introduced)	 Once a term Once a semester
External PL providers	It is important to offer high-quality PL opportunities that meet the needs of the ACT context. This is your role and responsibility outlined in the PL Framework.	1. Email 2. Phone	As required As required
Community members	The Regulatory Framework ensures we have quality teachers in our schools. TQI promotes the teaching profession by facilitating special events (such as World Teachers Day)	Email Phone Media release Website	Once a term



SECONDARY STAKEHOLDERS

GROUP	COMMUNICATIONS EMPHASIS	CHANNEL	FREQUENCY
Universities	You can have confidence ITE program accreditation as these programs meet a rigorous set of standards	Scheduled meetings	Quarterly As required
Other State Teacher Regulatory Authorities	Let's learn from each other's experiences, and share our communications 'lessons learned'.	Scheduled meetings	Quarterly As required
TQI Board	You are the gatekeeper and provide the quality assurance that helps us ensure TQI communications and activities reflect the profession. You keep us accountable to ensure our communications	Scheduled meetings	Quarterly As required
	activities have impact. You keep us accountable to the Regulatory Framework/System – ensuring safety for students and quality teaching.		
Unions	We both (unions and TQI) care about the environment that supports and enables teachers to be the best they can be.	Scheduled meetings	Quarterly As required
Government MLA / Commonwealth Dept of Education	The ACT Government has a strong Regulatory Framework for teachers. It has the dual focus of child safety and teacher quality.	Scheduled meetings	Quarterly As required
TQI Staff Members	Teachers are our customers and as such, our 'priority'. If they don't understand, or need something explained further, this is our first job.	Scheduled meetings	Quarterly As required





COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

CHANNEL	PURPOSE	NOTES
Email	Termly communication regarding various elements of the regulatory system.	There are restrictions around total number of recipients (e.g. batches of 1000)
Social Media	Provide information, inform, and celebrate success – opt-in	Comms plan / review data to see where best ROI
TQI Website	Public facing 'pull' communications	Focus for 2022
Videos	Self-serve 'pull' communications	To free up staff / freeing up staff to invest time in higher value work.
Portal / Mobile App	Self-select 'pull' communications (elements of registration requirements)	Recent refresh with potential to be realised. Needs to be seen as a 'single source of TQI truth'.
TQI Post Newsletter	Quarterly email to all teachers to promote excellent practice.	Promote, investigate campaign email services (like Mailchimp and ensure the compatibility with CRM).
SMS	Reregistration – annual reminder	Use this channel sparingly – there is a risk of annoying the audience if this channel is abused.
SharePoint - internal	Easy access to TQI information and collaboration space for staff	Develop and updated SharePoint site (fresh slate – review existing and build new)
Phone	One to one communication – responding when self-select 'pull' communications isn't enough. Individualised solutions and problem solving /	
D:	answering questions.	
Direct mail	Registration letters/cards	
FAQs for Staff	Internal process and key messages to share with audiences	To be available and easily accessible on the TQI SharePoint site
FAQs for audience	Easy access to common queries – self-select.	To be available on the TQI Website
Factsheets	Overviews, summaries of each portfolio, and key TQI functions.	Determine best audience for ROI
Focus groups / consultation	Affirm or build elements of the Regulatory Framework.	
sessions	Demonstrate engagement with the profession. Give people the opportunity to be heard.	
Media releases	Promote TQI as a responsive regulator. Respond to negative media. Assure community of strength of regulatory system.	Preprepared for registration, regulation and quality of the ACT teaching workforce.
Board members	Disseminate preprepared messages and communications artefacts as required	
TQI Workshops	Supporting the profession to meet the regulatory requirements.	



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

For this Communications Strategy to be implemented successfully, it will need to be driven and supported by the following stakeholders:

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
TQI Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	 Provide leadership and guidance on TQI communications priorities. Contribute to, review, provide feedback, and approve communications artefacts and activities. Raise and address communications-related risks or concerns with the TQI Communications Manager# and Senior Directors/Portfolio Managers. Promote and distribute TQI key messages. Adhere to the TQI Design Style Guide. Comply with agreed TQI communications approval processes.
TQI SENIOR DIRECTORS / PORTFOLIO MANAGERS	 Plan, drive, and be responsible for, portfolio-related communications activities. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of portfolio-related communications artefacts and activities. Review and endorse documents for other TQI portfolios. Raise and address communication-related risks or concerns with the TQI CEO, Communications Manager, and Senior Directors/Portfolio Managers. Contribute to, review, provide feedback, and approve communications artefacts and activities as required. Promote and distribute TQI key messages. Adhere to the TQI Design Style Guide. Comply with agreed TQI communications approval processes.
TQI COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER or nominated staff member responsible for TQI communications.	 Provide guidance on communications and engagement activities. Raise communications-related risks or concerns with the TQI CEO. Work with TQI CEO & Senior Directors/Portfolio Managers to deliver targeted messages to stakeholders as required. Ensure adherence to the TQI Communications Strategy (this document), ACT Government Brand Guardian, and TQI Design Style Guide. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of communications artefacts and activities. Ensure all communications activities are documented, with instructions, to ensure the TQI Communications Manager is not a 'single point of communications failure'. Comply with agreed TQI communications approval processes.
TQI DESIGNER or nominated staff member responsible for visual communications.	 Review and update all TQI communications collateral (from a visual communications point of view) prior to dissemination. Ensure adherence to the ACT Government Brand Guardian and TQI Design Style Guide. Comply with agreed TQI communications approval processes. Understand and adhere to communication goals and principles.
STAFF MEMBERS	 Provide feedback, or communication-related concerns and risks, to the TQI CEO, Communications Manager, and Senior Directors/Portfolio Managers. Promote and distribute TQI key messages as required. Adhere to the TQI Design Style Guide. Comply with agreed TQI communications approval processes.
TQI BOARD MEMBERS	 Endorse the overall Communication Strategy and demonstrate its objectives by promoting and distributing TQI key messages as required. Elicit feedback from the teaching profession to inform further communication activity. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of communications artefacts and activities. Adhere to the TQI Design Style Guide. Comply with agreed TQI communications approval processes.



COMMUNICATIONS APPROVAL & REVIEW PROCESS

The following TQI staff members will be involved in the review and approval of TQI communications artefacts prior to dissemination.

Where possible, reviewers will be given a minimum of two days to provide feedback and/or approval. The content of all TQI communications artefacts should be reviewed and endorsed by a second Senior Director and sent to the TQI Designer to ensure formatting adheres to the TQI Design Style Guide.

ROLE	REVIEW & APPROVAL
TQI CEO	Review and approve all TQI communications strategies, plans and collateral
TQI SENIOR DIRECTORS/ PORTFOLIO MANAGERS	 Review and approve content and articles relating to the Senior Director's portfolio.
	 Review and endorse artefacts from other TQI portfolios (as required).
TQI COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER or nominated staff member responsible for TQI communications.	Review / edit / format all high-level internal communications content for distribution to the team.
TQI DESIGNER or nominated staff member responsible for visual communications.	 Review and check formatting of all TQI Communications artefacts, prior to dissemination, to ensure adherence to the TQI Design Style Guide and ACT Government Brand Guardian.

COMMUNICATIONS RISK MITIGATION & MANAGEMENT

Within any communications strategy, there are always some risks that occur in terms of interpretation of either content or intent. As such, *this Strategy* will be supported by the *TQI Communications Risk Assessment* (to be developed in 2022) that will assist staff in identifying both potential risks and mitigating actions. The analysis of risk surrounding communication will be reflected in the *TQI Risk Register*.



MONITORING & EVALUATION

Evaluating TQI's communications outcomes will provide the opportunity to learn where *this Strategy* may need adjusting, and improve communications processes, based on audience feedback and constructive suggestions.

Audience reaction to TQI communications will be monitored via a range of channels including:

- · TQI Portal traffic data
- TQI Communications Log (tracking all completed communications activities)
- · social media analytics
- · online event polling
- post-event surveys
- any solicited and/or unsolicited feedback coming from TQI audiences or stakeholders.

Each individual communications plan will include a more detailed and tailored evaluation approach. Evaluating individual communications plan outcomes will also allow an opportunity to monitor *this Strategy's* success and implement improvements where needed.

TQI COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

This Strategy clearly outlines expectations for all TQI communications activities and artefacts.

In the development and planning of your communications activity or artefact, have you:

- adhered to the ACT Government Brand Guardian directions
- · considered all related TQI policies, strategies, frameworks, and guidelines
- · followed the TQI Communications Principles and Approach
- identified the TQI Communications Goals you plan to meet
- · considered your Audience's needs
- · selected an appropriate Communications Channel
- · fulfilled the Communications Responsibilities for your Role
- undertaken the appropriate Approval Process
- · planned to Monitor and Evaluate your communications activity's outcome and share the findings?



AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2022

Acknowledging the shift into our second decade, the focus over the next 12 months will be to strengthen the relationship with TQI's primary audience – teachers. The following phased approach focuses on strengthening the teacher relationship, and their perception of TQI, and maintaining community confidence in the teaching profession at the same time.

1. Connecting with the profession

Strengthen existing:

- · Send termly communications to all teachers on the register.
- Refresh TQI's visual brand (including the development of a series of approved templates).
- Develop TQI portfolio communication plans and a social media plan.
- Provide communications training to TQI staff (understanding *this Strategy*, use of new templates, and adhering to the *TQI Design Style Guide*).
- Create a front-line tool kit (phone scripts, fact sheets, flow charts) to ensure consistent communication experience.
- · Evaluate effectiveness of TQI Website
- Develop a *TQI Communications Risk Assessment* which will assist staff in identifying both potential risks and mitigating actions and strengthen TQI's approach to decision making around communications.

Foster new:

- Promote the use of the TQI Portal through the development of a mobile application.
- Provide self-service 'pull' communications where appropriate.
- Develop an SMS messaging service for appropriate use with teachers.



2. Engaging with the profession

Strengthen existing:

• Strengthen existing communications touchpoints. An example is strengthening all elements of Certification communications (activities and artefacts) as TQI moves to the Modular Model.

Foster new:

• Seek new ways to engage with stakeholders by identifying segments of TQI's audience who may have been overlooked in the past, and plan to engage with them in the future.

Three immediate priorities are:

- 1. Engage with Early Childhood Teachers (ECT) over professional registration.
- 2. Engage with teachers to develop TQIs Regulatory Framework.
- 3. Engage with pre-service teachers as TQI strengthens the pre-service teacher register.

3. Maintaining community confidence

Strengthen existing:

- Consultation Sessions: Where possible, all workshops and consultation sessions will be designed and prepared in such a way that multiple people can deliver these sessions (via face-to-face and online channels).
- Establish cross-sectoral working groups to leverage opportunities to raise community awareness of the importance of the teaching profession (World Teachers' Day).

Foster new:

- Develop a 'community awareness' campaign that promotes the value of ACT teachers.
- Board-approved communication with different elements of profession (e.g., email to all new educators, relief teachers).
- Prepare press releases for hot topics (quality of the teaching workforce, regulatory action including child safety)
- Prepare collateral to allow TQI to talk with the community about teacher quality (letters to the Editor, opinion pieces).



KEY MESSAGES FOR 2022

- The ACT has a highly professional workforce and our teachers have held professional registration for the past 10 years
- As TQI enters its second decade it wants to ensure the voice of ACT teachers is reflected in the work it does.
- TQI is talking with teachers to understand how they experience the regulatory system.
- Teachers' participation in the regulatory system (for example, by evaluating professional learning) improves quality for all.
- TQI wants teachers to see themselves as active, positive participants within the profession and within the regulatory system.

Note: TQI intends to talk further with the profession throughout 2022 to ensure key messages are on target.



