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Teacher Education Accreditation : A  
Review of National and International  
Trends and Practices

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## Chapter I: Introduction

With increased evidence that the quality of our teachers is the most important educational resource in our schools, greater attention is being given to factors that shape that quality. These undoubtedly include the capacity of teacher education providers to attract able students and to prepare them well to meet the demands of teaching. Assuring this capacity is a joint responsibility of governments, universities and the profession.

‘Accreditation’, as used in this report, refers to an endorsement by an independent external agency that a professional preparation course is adequate for the purpose of a particular profession; that the course is able to produce graduates who meet standards for entry to the profession and are competent to begin practice.<sup>1</sup>

Accreditation is a key mechanism for assuring the quality of preparation courses in the professions. Accreditation is also an important mechanism for engaging members of a profession in decisions about standards expected of those entering their profession, as well as standards expected of preparation courses.

### Background to this report

In June 2005 the National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership commissioned ACER to conduct a project to provide advice on developing a national system for the accreditation of pre-service teacher education programs.

The project brief fell into two main sections. The first was to conduct a *literature review* examining:

- Current accreditation and course approval policies and practices in Australia to identify similarities and differences and implications for a national accreditation system;
- Developments in the accreditation of teacher education programs in other countries and whether any of the identified approaches could provide a basis for a national accreditation system in Australia;
- Accreditation frameworks developed by other national professional bodies in Australia to identify any elements that might be incorporated in a national accreditation system for pre-service teacher education programs.

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, “courses” will refer to specific teacher education qualifications, such as a B.Ed. or a Dip.Ed. course. A university may provide several different teacher education courses that constitute its “program”.

The second was to prepare a *discussion paper* that would provide a basis for consultation with the profession containing:

- A rationale for a national system for the accreditation of pre-service teacher education programs, organised through the profession itself;
- Identification and analysis of key issues in developing a national system. This will include an analysis of the benefits of a national system, as carried out through a body representing the profession compared with current state-based arrangements for program approval;
- Options for the nature of a national accreditation system, including underpinning principles and possible implementation strategies. This should include strategies whereby a national system supplements rather than competes with State-based processes.

This report focuses on the first task, the literature review.

## **Purposes of accreditation**

The primary function of accreditation is to assure the public that graduates from specific programs are professionally qualified and competent. By doing so, accreditation can help to raise professional status and drive quality improvements within the pre-service sector.

Typically, accreditation goes hand-in-hand with professional registration processes, in that accreditation is an endorsement that a program produces graduates who can meet provisional registration standards. The setting of registration standards, in turn, is a mechanism whereby the profession, acting in the interest of the public, can synthesize the implications of research for best practice and, thereby, shape accreditation standards and the practice. By improving quality, accreditation can be a positive and powerful instrument for raising the status of the profession.

While Universities have internal course accreditation processes, most Universities recognise that external accreditation of their preparation programs by professional bodies is an important component of a quality assurance framework. In the case of teacher education, the 1996 Australian Council of Deans of Education report, *Preparing a Profession* (ACDE, 1998), provided support and useful guidelines for a national accreditation system for teacher education courses. Recent ACER research indicates that there is significant variation in the quality of teacher education across providers (Ingvarson, Beavis, & Kleinhenz, 2004; Ingvarson, Beavis, Danielson, Ellis, & Elliott, 2005a; Ingvarson, Beavis, & Kleinhenz, 2005b). There is also significant variation in the academic standards required to gain entry to teacher education courses in different universities. Establishment of an accreditation process for teacher education has the potential to improve the entry standards of students in teacher education, enhance the quality of teachers and school leaders, and

strengthen the profession by providing clear guidelines about entry to the profession, progression and career development.

## **Review procedure**

In reviewing current accreditation policies and practices in Australia in Chapter 2, we interviewed key personnel from all state and territory teacher registration authorities and key teacher educators in each jurisdiction. We reviewed relevant legislation and policy statements, and collected relevant documents, mainly using website sources. We also conducted a search of Australian research literature with a focus on studies that considered and evaluated current accreditation procedures, but found little work in this area.

Our review of international developments in Chapter 3 takes the form of case studies of six accreditation systems including Scotland, England, Ontario (Canada), New Zealand and two national accreditation systems operated by independent agencies (non-statutory) in the USA; the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). We also surveyed recent developments in Europe, where the 1999 European Union agreement to make higher education qualifications across European countries more comparable (the “Bologna process”) has triggered a process of restructuring higher education degree programs.

Each case study examined the:

- underpinning rationale and authority basis for the accreditation system;
- approaches to developing standards for the assessment of teacher education programs;
- procedures for gathering evidence about programs for the purposes of assessment and accreditation;
- operational issues in establishing and managing accreditation systems; and, where possible; and
- research on the impact of the various approaches to accreditation.

The review of developments in other professions in Chapter 4 was conducted mainly through accessing website material and interviews with senior officials of the relevant professional associations. Professions Australia, a national organisation of professional organisations, hosted a national workshop on accreditation of professional accreditation programs in October 2005 that provided useful summations of accreditation procedures in several professions. We are indebted to David Woodhouse at the Australian Universities Quality Authority (AUQA) who provided valuable advice and papers on the distinctive roles of AUQA and external professional accreditation bodies.

Reviewing accreditation in other professions proved to be very useful in considering options for Teaching Australia, as most have been through the process of establishing a national approach to accreditation in recent years. The Australian Medical Council (AMC), for example, represents a long-standing working model of delegated course provider accreditation authority. The AMC derives its authority from legislation in each state and territory. Health Ministers and state and territory authorities have established uniform minimum requirements for initial registration as a medical practitioner and the purpose of AMC accreditation is to ensure that programs are producing graduates who meet those standards of performance. The primary function of the AMC is “to advise and make recommendations to the State and Territory Medical Boards in relation to the accreditation of Australian (and New Zealand) medical schools and of courses conducted by those schools leading to basic medical qualifications.”

The final chapter, Chapter 5, looks ahead at the prospects for a national approach to the accreditation of teacher education courses. It reviews findings from the previous chapters, which indicate general recognition of the advantages of a national approach, and identifies issues to be considered in developing a national accreditation process that supplements existing state-based accreditation and approval processes.

## **Chapter 2: Teacher Education Accreditation in Australia**

### **Overview of the present situation**

Nearly forty tertiary institutions prepare teachers in Australia. Most are public universities, but a small number are private higher education institutions that prepare teachers to work in schools linked to particular religious groups, such as Avondale College in NSW and Tabor College in South Australia. Some institutions have only one teacher education course, such as the University of Adelaide Diploma in Education. Some have six or more courses, such as Edith Cowan University and Queensland University of Technology.

There are about 200 teacher education courses all together. Approximately 16,000 students completed such courses in 2005. Seventy percent of these graduated from the fifteen largest institutions. Some courses, such as the Diploma of Education at Monash and Melbourne Universities, graduate over 400 students each year. Other courses, graduate as few as 20. We know very little about the relative effectiveness of these courses in preparing future teachers.

At this point, processes for the implementation of accreditation of teacher education courses in Australian are not well established. There are a variety of state-based processes in operation and/or under development or review and no nationally mandated requirement for accreditation of teacher education programs. The minimum formal requirement for an initial teacher education qualification is a degree level education course of four years duration (or a discipline based degree followed by a one or two year professional teaching qualification) in a recognized higher education institution. Beyond this agreed minimum requirement, there are different processes for endorsing, approving or accrediting pre-service courses.

Since the mid 1960s, there have been calls at both the federal and state levels for the introduction of pre-service teacher education course accreditation. Today, nearly half a century later, just three states have legislation requiring formal approval or accreditation of teacher education programs and only two states, Queensland and Victoria, have implemented formal processes of course review and approval. New South Wales is in the process of fine-tuning entry standards for teaching and linked, formal processes for approving teacher education programs. Legislation in South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory implies that teacher education course accreditation or approval is required, but does not specifically mandate formal accreditation of teacher education courses by the respective registration authorities. Rather, it requires teacher registration authorities and teacher education providers to 'confer', cooperate', 'collaborate', and/or 'liaise' in developing teacher education programs. In Tasmania, the legislation indicates that teachers must have completed an 'approved course relating to teacher training'. Essentially, most states require teacher education programs to be 'endorsed' or 'approved' rather than 'accredited'. In South Australia for example the teacher registration authority confers with institutions about initial teacher

education courses to confirm that certain criteria, such as core subjects and minimum days of professional experience, are met. Processes for course approval and endorsement are currently being developed in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. To date, there is no teacher registration or teacher education course approval legislation in the ACT.

Table I shows the range of teacher education accreditation arrangements operating in Australia.

**Table 1: Current teacher education course approval processes in each State and Territory**

<b>State and Name of Act</b>	<b>Regulatory Authority</b>	<b>Functions of the Acts with respect to initial teacher education course approval processes</b>	<b>Current status of teacher education course approval processes</b>
<b>Queensland</b> The Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Bill 2005	Queensland College of Teachers	228 (g) Approving and monitoring pre-service teacher education programs for provisional registration	Operational; well developed and regarded
<b>Victoria</b> Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001	Victorian Institute of Teaching	5 (1) (b) to approve teacher education courses that will lead to qualifications or competencies in teaching that satisfy the requirements for registration as a teacher	VIT approval procedures operational.  Internal university course approval processes operate.  Draft paper on new approval processes is currently out for consultation. <i>The Standards, Guidelines and Process for the Accreditation of Pre-service Teacher Education Courses</i>
<b>South Australia</b> Teachers Registration and Standards Act 2005	Teachers Registration Board of South Australia	6(c) to confer and collaborate with teacher education institutions with respect to the appropriateness for registration purposes of teacher education courses	Operational  Internal university course approval processes operate
<b>Western Australia</b> Western Australian College of Teaching Act 2004	Western Australian College of Teaching	To confer and collaborate with persons who employ or engage teachers, teacher education institutions, the teaching profession, teacher organisations and the general community in relation to standards of courses of teacher education acceptable for the purpose of teacher registration	College of Teaching course approval processes under development  Internal university course approval processes operate

<p><b>Tasmania</b> Teachers Registration Act 2000</p>	<p>Teacher Registration Board</p>	<p>6(e) To develop and improve professional teaching standards</p> <p>Powers of the Board 7.(d)... do anything necessary ... to perform its functions</p> <p>12(1)(a)(i) In order to be registered a person is to satisfy the Board that he or she has successfully completed an approved course relating to teacher training....</p>	<p>Internal university course approval processes operate</p> <p>A discussion paper- <i>The Guidelines, Approval Process and Graduate Teacher Standards for Pre-service Teacher Education Courses.</i> is currently being finalised for consultation with stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>New South Wales</b> Institute of Teachers Act 2004</p>	<p>NSW Institute of Teachers</p>	<p>3 Without limiting subsection (2), the functions of the Institute include providing advice to the Minister on: (a) the approval by the Minister of initial and continuing teacher education courses or programs that are relevant for the purposes of accreditation under this Act, and (b) the approval by the Minister of persons or bodies who may provide professional development in accordance with the requirements of the professional teaching standards</p>	<p><i>The Policy and Procedures for Approval of Initial Teacher Education Programs</i> received Ministerial approval in July 2006. Supplementary guidelines for operation are being developed. The approval process will be fully operational late 2006.</p>
<p><b>Northern Territory</b> Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004 As in force at 1 February 2005</p>	<p>Teacher Registration Board</p>	<p>11 (d) to liaise with institutions providing teacher education courses in relation to standards and relevance of those programs to the teaching profession in the Territory</p>	
<p><b>Australian Capital Territory</b></p>	<p>No statutory agency. (Teacher Registration and Standards Section, ACT DET manages processes)</p>	<p>In the early stages of consultations with key stakeholders</p>	<p>None</p>

## **Development of teacher education course approval and accreditation processes**

In principle, there has long been widespread acceptance of the need for teacher education programs to be formally approved or at least endorsed or ratified at the various levels. There are well developed teacher education course approval processes within Universities as there were in their predecessors, the Colleges of Advanced Education. There are also processes within state jurisdictions to ensure that courses meet the needs of employing bodies, especially state departments of education. Typically, the major employing authorities, the state and territory departments of education, have endorsed or approved teacher education programs as preparing teachers to implement state-based school curricula. Historically, when teachers colleges were part of the state departments of education, there were very close connections between employment authorities and teacher education courses and staff members. In states without a teacher registration authority, the practice of internal university review together with employer sponsored endorsements continues. In addition, private providers of tertiary education programs are subject to further state based institution and course approval processes. In New South Wales, for example, private providers of teacher education require accreditation under the NSW Higher Education Act 2001.

Although teacher education courses may go through a number of ‘endorsement’ or ‘approval’ processes, only in Queensland and Victoria are these processes clearly articulated with teacher registration and standards. Significantly, teacher education course approval processes, or reports of approvals or endorsements, were rarely found in the annual reports of teacher registration authority examined for this study.

In Australia, current efforts to develop more regulated approaches to initial teacher preparation have, at their core, efforts to improve educational outcomes for students, recognition of the impact of teacher quality on student learning and enhancement of teacher professionalism and the status of the profession. It is believed that better quality teacher education and greater consistency across programs will impact positively on graduate teachers’ initial competencies. Concomitantly, there are specific and growing concerns about student safety and wellbeing. Teacher registration processes together with improved teacher education are considered important to enhancing student wellbeing. Generally, the concept of regulated pathways to teacher registration is well established. However, while there is a wide agreement that teacher education programs should be embraced within some sort of regulatory accreditation framework, the ways in which this should happen, and the links between registration and accreditation are less well defined.

## **Current course approval models in each state**

The concept of a regulated pathway for initial teacher education has its origins in the emerging sense of professional identity felt by teachers in the 1960s and in concerns about the longer term quality of teacher education graduates. As the teacher training institutions developed, they were concerned with both bringing teacher trainees to acceptable standards of general education and with ensuring effective teaching in the classroom (Report of the National Enquiry into Teacher Education, Auchmuty, 1980).

In the last few years, Queensland and South Australia, have been joined by Victoria, Tasmania, and Western Australia, and most recently the Northern Territory and New South Wales in establishing teacher registration bodies for government, independent and Catholic school teachers. Within the jurisdictional legislative framework for teacher registration, each state has provisions to approve, endorse or accredit teacher education programs. However, to date, with the exception of Queensland and Victoria, where well developed teacher education accreditation processes operate, generally courses are endorsed in much the same way as prior to the establishment of teacher registration authorities - that is, internally, within the self-accrediting universities, complemented sometimes, by endorsements from the registration authorities and/or external procedures implemented by some employing bodies. Most states are still in the process of developing or fine-tuning formal, registration-linked initial teacher education course approval or accreditation processes.

Typically, internal university-based course accreditation operates in the following manner. The initial teacher education course is planned and designed by teacher educators within each institution. This design is often program or specialty based such as 'primary', 'early childhood', 'secondary mathematics', or 'special education'. Teacher educators are usually supported in their endeavours to varying degrees by representatives from the profession, experts from stakeholder groups, and academics from other tertiary institutions. Courses such as the Bachelor of Learning Management at CQU and the Bachelor of Education at Avondale College that were developed in very close cooperation with stakeholders are unusual (Ingvarson et al., 2005). Generally, contributions from the profession are limited to representation on a reference group or course advisory committee. Extensive course documentation that adheres to university policies is prepared and is then approved at the School or Faculty level before proceeding to the Academic Board level (or equivalent), and finally, to the University Senate level, or similar.

Most state employing authorities also operate formal or informal processes of teacher education course endorsement. In New South Wales for example, all initial primary and secondary teacher education courses have long been endorsed by the Teacher Qualification Approval Process (TQAP) administered by the NSW Department of Education and Training. This process ended with final approval by the NSW Institute of Teaching teacher education program accreditation in July 2006. Teacher education programs preparing graduates for both the early years of primary

schooling and the early childhood sector (0-5 years) must also be endorsed by the Department of Community Services, the department responsible for regulating early childhood services within the state.

In today's political and educational climate, teacher registration and the accompanying moves to accredit teacher education courses are part of a wider accountability movement to assure better teachers and schools and to strengthen the quality and status of the teaching profession.

All university operations, including internal course approval procedures and processes for monitoring and assuring teaching quality are subject to an audit by The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). As mentioned above, private teacher education providers must also gain accreditation within the provisions of the relevant state or territory higher education act.

### **The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)**

The roles of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and external accreditation authorities charged with assessing the quality of professional preparation programs are quite distinct. AUQA is an independent, not-for-profit national agency that promotes, audits, and reports on quality assurance in Australian higher education. AUQA was formally established by the Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in March 2000. . . "in a rare show of solidarity, the six state governments, two territory governments and the federal government agreed to collaborate in establishing such an agency" (Woodhouse & Carmichael, 2005).

AUQA's audit role is distinct from, and not a substitute for, the external accreditation role of State and Territory statutory authorities, in the case of regulated professions, or, in the case of unregulated professions professional bodies such as Engineers Australia or the CPA and ICAA in accountancy.

AUQA holds higher education institutions accountable for adherence to the institution's internally defined mission and objectives. It operates at the institutional level. In contrast, accreditation by State and Territory statutory authorities and professional bodies holds specific professional preparation programs and courses to account against external standards for graduate knowledge and capability and program quality.

Academic audits of self-accrediting institutions are whole-of-institution audits based on a self-assessment and a site visit. AUQA investigates the extent to which the institutions are achieving their missions and objectives. They assess the adequacy of the institution's quality assurance arrangements in the key areas of teaching and learning, research and management, including the institution's overseas activities. They assess the institution's success in maintaining standards consistent with university education in Australia.

While universities are now expected to build their own internal quality assurance mechanisms under AUQA guidance, these mechanisms are not intended to replace the quality assurance functions of external agencies or professional bodies. Rather, universities are encouraged to integrate the reviews of these agencies into their self review systems, which AUQA audits on a five-year cycle.

### **The current state of accreditation of teacher preparation courses in Australia**

Accreditation or course approval processes are at varying stages of development and implementation. Queensland and South Australia were the first states to establish linked provisions for teacher registration and accreditation in the early 1970s. Victoria (Education Act 1958) and Tasmania (Education Act 1932) had registration for teachers in non-government schools for some decades, but only introduced universal, mandatory teacher registration and course approval processes after 2002. By the beginning of 2002, Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania had teacher registration authorities and provision for initial teacher preparation course approval. Western Australia, Victoria, the Northern Territory and New South Wales had enacted teacher registration legislation and established teacher registration authorities by 2005. There is no teacher registration or teacher education accreditation in the ACT.

The following section details the rationale and approaches to teacher education accreditation operating in each State and Territory. The two states with the most well developed approaches to teacher education accreditation are discussed first, and in most detail.

#### **Queensland**

Queensland was first Australian state to introduce compulsory teacher registration in 1975. Today, Queensland is recognised as a leader in the development of professional standards for teachers in the Australian context and its processes provide a respected model for states that have embarked on teacher registration more recently.

The new recently passed teacher registration act - Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005) requires all pre-service teacher education courses to be approved by the Queensland College of Teachers

for graduates to be granted teacher registration in the state. This approval process is designed to be an “interactive, collaborative, and collegial process”.

The Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 includes:

. . . approving and monitoring pre-service teacher education programs for providing registration 230(h)

The Queensland registration system was first initiated in response to teacher shortages rather than a quest for teacher improvement (Burke, 1997). When the Queensland Government announced short courses of teacher 'education' to address staff shortages in the early seventies, industrial concerns about the quality of these courses led to a review of teacher education. The key recommendation of the Review was to establish a Board of Teacher Education responsible to the Minister for Education. A central function of this Board was to provide a system of teacher registration and authority to accredit teacher education courses. Because teacher registration was to be restricted to graduates of accredited courses, the Board was required to develop mechanisms to ensure that teacher education courses met the needs of the wider profession and community. These mechanisms underpin contemporary processes of course approval in Queensland.

The previous Board of Teacher Registration and its Professional Education Committee developed its Guidelines on the Acceptability of Teacher Education Programs for Teacher Registration Purposes in 1990, in consultation with stakeholders. They were regularly updated in the light of emerging educational trends and issues throughout the 1990s.

More recently, following consultations as part of the Board's 'Fresh Look' into teacher education and teacher registration, the Guidelines were replaced by Professional Standards for Graduates and Guidelines for Pre-service Teacher Education Programs (referred to as the Standards and Guidelines). Published in 2002, these guidelines have provided a model for state and national efforts to develop teacher education professional standards and accreditation guidelines.

The Professional Standards for Graduates and Guidelines for Pre-service Teacher Education Programs cover three areas:

- professional standards for graduates of teacher education programs, defining attributes considered necessary for effective beginning teachers;
- mandatory program components, to enable programs to be accepted; and
- guidelines on program consultation and acceptance.

The Professional Standards for Graduates within the Standards and Guidelines are organised in five broad areas, each of which must be addressed in pre-service programs. These are:

- professional and discipline knowledge bases;
- literacy and numeracy;
- engaging learners and creating intellectually challenging learning environments;
- professional relationships and ethical practice; and
- ongoing professional learning and reflection.

The Standards and Guidelines document is available at the Queensland College of Teachers'

website [www.qct.edu.au](http://www.qct.edu.au).

Development and introduction of new Professional Standards for Teaching is an immediate priority of the new Queensland College of Teachers. Transitional provisions in the regulations will ensure that the current Professional Standards for Graduates remain in force for up to 12 months or until superseded by the College's new Standards. Teacher education programs currently approved and based on these Standards will also remain valid.

The Professional Standards for Teaching outline desired professional outcomes for both the graduate entry level (provisional registration) and fully qualified level (full registration). Professional Standards relate to both admission to the teaching profession and continuing practice. They are considered the key to identifying acceptable programs of pre-service teacher education and to identifying equivalent preparatory programs and teaching experience. The Queensland efforts to align teacher professional standards with initial teacher education course design and implementation are considered exemplary by other teacher registration authorities and are widely used as a model to shape new approval procedures in other states.

### ***Accreditation processes***

The current course approval process requires teacher education providers to articulate a course's rationale, provide information on its evidence base, and outline the process and extent of consultations conducted with the field as part of course development. Information is also required on teaching and learning approaches in a given course; modes of delivery (including the use of information and communications technologies); the links between learning experiences and assessment; the contribution to the course of the embedded professional experiences component (including supervised teaching practice in schools); and the means of assessing and monitoring student attainment of the Board's graduate standards. Providers are required to submit annual reports on course implementation, including minor changes, and to advise any major changes to course content, delivery or assessment.

As mentioned, registration is a prerequisite for employment as a teacher in Queensland and the main route to registration is via graduation from an approved Queensland teacher education program. Graduates from other approved Australian teacher education programs or those with current registration in another state are also eligible for registration (or provisional registration). Persons from outside Queensland who are seeking teacher registration must complete an application for registration and provide details of their course of teacher education. Because some states do not yet have teacher registration, each case is treated individually, much to

the annoyance of teacher education providers, who may be expected to describe and defend their courses for each individual applicant, even though the course may be recognized within the home state and in other states.

## **Victoria**

As in Queensland, Victoria has a clearly defined process for the review and approval of teacher preparation courses that is administered alongside teacher registration processes by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). The Institute requires teacher education providers to identify how their pre-service courses meet input guidelines regarding content and professional experience components. The current Institute processes of approving teacher education courses are built on long established processes for endorsing teacher education courses operated by the state education authority and are similar to the combination of university based and employer guided processes that operate in other states. However, the Victorian processes are now formalised within the regulatory framework of the VIT.

Registration for all teachers and the associated pre-service teacher education course approval processes are relatively new for Victoria. The Victorian Institute of Teaching was established by an Act of Parliament (the Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001) in December 2001, but it was not until 2004 that registration was required of all teachers. Establishment of the VIT as a statutory authority created a single registration authority governed by a twenty member Council.

In addition to recognising and promoting the teaching profession and regulating members of the teaching profession, the Institute is required to:

approve teacher education courses that will lead to qualifications or competencies in teaching that satisfy the requirements for registration as a teacher (5.1(b)).

The pre-service teacher education approval processes operate under the guidance of the VIT's Accreditation Committee. Membership of this twenty-five person Committee includes representatives from the eight Victorian universities offering initial teacher education courses, practising teachers, parents and representatives of employing authorities. For teacher education course approval processes, a smaller Panel drawn from the Accreditation Committee is established for each course seeking approval or review. Typically, representatives from the University developing the course liaise with the Manager for advice on course development. Once prepared, the course documentation is reviewed by the Panel and submitted with a recommendation to the Accreditation Committee.

Approval criteria for initial teacher education courses have grown out of guidelines initially developed by the Victorian Standards Council of the Teaching Profession. These are the (1) Guidelines for the Evaluation of Teacher Education Courses,

December 1998, (2) Specialist area guidelines – minimum discipline studies, and (3) Interim guidelines for courses preparing teachers for the middle years.

Generally, the process of approval involves Universities providing documentary evidence that their courses meet the relevant criteria. The university might also include evidence of student course completions and satisfaction, employment rates, graduate destinations and employer satisfaction with graduates, but such data are not mandatory.

In some cases, where a teacher education course appears complicated, or there are questions about the degree to which criteria have been met, the Panel may visit the provider and engage in more detailed discussions with university personnel. Concern was expressed that current course approval approaches do not give sufficient information about what happens during courses, or their outcomes, to make a sound judgment about the quality of a course.

While there is no legislative requirement in Victoria to approve teacher preparation programs from other states, Charles Sturt University and the University of Tasmania have sought to have their courses approved in Victoria, as some graduates are likely to seek employment in Victoria.

### ***Standards for Graduates***

In February 2003, the VIT began to develop professional teaching standards for full registration as part of the 'Standards and Professional Learning Project'. The standards were designed to provide assurance of quality teaching to the public and to provide a framework to guide on-going professional learning. They describe different stages or 'levels' of teachers' expertise and experience, from 'beginning' to 'advanced'.

In mid 2004, the VIT embarked on a process of reviewing its guidelines for the assessment and approval of teacher education programs (The Future Teachers Project). Consistent with international practice, it is developing a set of graduate standards that are aligned with the National Standards and that 'will equip graduates with the knowledge, skills and approaches necessary for teaching in 2010'. Part of the Future Teachers Project is to (a) develop new committee guidelines for pre-service teacher education course approvals, and to (b) review the accreditation processes for pre-service teacher education courses. Currently, a draft paper outlining new teacher education course approval processes - The Standards, Guidelines and Process for the Accreditation of Pre-service Teacher Education Courses is out for consultation.

As noted earlier, the current process for approving teacher education courses is an input based approach that derives from procedures established by the Standards Council and the main employing authority, the Victorian Department of Education. New initiatives are aimed at devising an approval process that is more standards and

outcomes based, while still including key relevant inputs - such a professional experience (practicum) requirements. It is intended that new graduate standards will provide a framework for assessing teacher education programs and establish a process for reporting and benchmarking within teacher education. It is envisaged that universities will engage in a self-examination process and report to the VIT on the extent to which standards are being met and how well. Informants reported that progress on developing standards and approval processes has been 'slower than anticipated', partly because of the recently completed Parliamentary Review of Teacher Education in Victoria.

In developing graduate standards and reviewing processes for approval of pre-service teacher education courses, the VIT is also engaged in a joint process with other registration authorities, under the auspice of the Australasian Forum of Teacher Registration and Accreditation Authorities (AFTRAA) to develop a more nationally consistent framework for endorsing initial teacher education programs. It is intended that this framework would be closely aligned with the National Framework and would include a well-defined process for collecting and reviewing information on teacher education programs.

### ***South Australia***

Like Queensland, South Australia has required teachers in both government and non-government schools to be registered since the early 1970s. More recently, stronger measures to protect children and students across the preschool and schooling sectors and to recognise the professionalism of South Australian teachers have underpinned new legislation, which came into operation in March 2005 as part of the State Government's Keeping Them Safe child protection reforms.

The new Teachers Registration and Standards Act 2005 has at its heart the welfare and care of children together with improvement, advancement and professional recognition for teachers in South Australia. The Act was designed to strengthen the powers of the Teachers' Registration Board.

In South Australia, current legislation focuses on a process of 'endorsement' of initial teacher education courses. As elsewhere, course endorsement is linked to registration. Course documentation is presented for Board review and teacher education providers are deemed to provide 'approved' courses if this process has been followed. As yet, there are no clearly developed policies or procedures for rigorous review and assessment of teacher education programs. Currently, the Teachers' Registration Board is working with AFTRAA and key stakeholders to develop a set of professional teaching standards that are aligned with the National Framework. It has commenced conversations with teacher education providers to develop formal procedures to guide development, review and assessment of teacher education courses.

## **Tasmania**

Tasmania has had registration requirements for teachers in non-government schools since 1932. In the mid nineties, the Education Act 1932 was repealed and replaced by the Education Act 1994. Current teacher registration processes for all teachers in Tasmania are governed by a more recent Act, the Teachers Registration Act 2000, which came into effect on 1 January 2002. The Act is administered by the Teachers Registration Board which was established to ensure that all children in Tasmanian schools are taught by skilled and qualified teachers of good character.

The Teachers Registration Act 2000 provides that only persons who are registered, provisionally registered, or who have a limited authority to teach may be employed as teachers in Tasmanian government and non-government schools. In order to be registered as a teacher, a person has in part to satisfy the Board that he or she, 'has successfully completed an approved course relating to teacher training ...' While the functions of the Act don't specifically mention accreditation or approval of teacher education courses, the Board can 'do anything necessary' under its general powers, to perform its functions, including approving, endorsing or accrediting teacher education courses. Because teacher registration requires completion of an 'approved' course, the Board can act to approve teacher education courses.

To date, initial teacher education courses have been subject to the normal internal approval processes within the single state-based provider of teacher education, the University of Tasmania. The current combination of university-based course approval, together with stakeholder input, mainly employer and professional, is similar to that operating in other states.

At the commencement of its operation the Teacher Registration Board ratified the existing pre-service teacher education courses offered by the University of Tasmania. In 2005 it established a Board Sub-Committee – the Teacher Education Committee – to oversee the development of a course approval process based on graduate standards. The draft graduate standards align with the National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching (MCEETYA, 2003) and are also consistent with the corresponding work of interstate registration and accreditation authorities. A discussion paper (The Guidelines, Approval Process and Graduate Teacher Standards for Pre-service Teacher Education Courses) addressing the guidelines, approval process and the graduate standards will soon be released for consultation. It is expected that formal course approval processes will commence in late 2006-2007.

## **Western Australia**

There is no requirement in the Western Australian legislation for the Western Australian College of Teaching to conduct formal approval of teacher education programs. Currently, teacher education programs are approved by internal

processes within universities. However, procedures for implementing the legislative function specifying that the Western Australian College of Teaching will 'confer and collaborate ... in relation to standards of courses of teacher education acceptable for the purpose of teacher registration' are currently being discussed.

Established in 2005, the Western Australian College of Teaching is the professional body for teachers, administered by teachers and representing all teachers in Western Australia. The main emphases of the College are to:

- enhance the status of the profession of teaching;
- ensure on-going professional development of all teachers;
- establish professional standards and values for teaching in schools; and
- administer the schemes of teacher registration and disciplinary proceedings

While there is no specific requirement in the legislation to 'approve' teacher education programs, it is expected that the College of Teaching will have some responsibility for approving or endorsing teacher education programs to ensure that they meet relevant standards.

A key informant from the university sector in Western Australia suggested that a national, rather than Western Australian specific, process of teacher education course approval and accreditation would be helpful, given the realities of the teacher education sector in that state. At least some teacher education courses are taught in more than one state and the need for greater national consistency in teacher education to enhance course credibility, strengthen evidence-based practice and facilitate better graduate outcomes and teacher mobility was emphasized. Notwithstanding this view, the need for sensitivity to local contextual needs was highlighted.

### ***Northern Territory***

Like other states with recently established teacher registration authorities, the Northern Territory is in the process of determining the final form of its procedures to endorse or approve teacher education programs. While the Northern Territory legislation requires only 'liaison' with institutions providing initial teacher preparation in relation to standards and relevance of courses to the teaching profession in the Territory, the registration authority, the universities (Charles Darwin University and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education), and employer groups are working collaboratively to develop and endorse teacher education programs. New course endorsement and approval processes are currently being implemented.

The Teacher Registration Board provides an independent voice to advise on the professional requirements for teachers, pre-service teacher education and professional learning standards to safeguard the integrity of the teaching profession. As indicated above, the Board is currently in the process of working with teacher

education providers and other key stakeholders to finalise course approval procedures that will build on to existing well accepted, collaborative processes for reviewing and endorsing teacher education programs.

The Board's normal approval process for teacher education courses are guided by a set of standards for professional conduct of teachers, a framework for self regulatory registration processes, and a public statement about expectations of teachers' practice. An important function of the professional standards is to provide a 'seamless guide to professional development from pre-service teacher education through induction and probation to established professional practice' (Training Record Book (TRB), Professional Standards Project, 2005, p. 1). The Professional Standards are aligned with the National Standards and are designed to meet unique Territory needs.

### ***Meeting unique Territory needs***

The Northern Territory has a diverse range of educational settings and schools. A high Indigenous population enhances its diversity, with many isolated and remote communities. Recruiting teachers to Territory schools, especially remote schools, is an ongoing challenge. Only about 20% of teachers in government schools and approximately 5-7% of teachers in Catholic Schools have graduated from Territory-based teacher education programs. Most are drawn from outside the Territory. The high turnover of teaching staff, estimated at about 25% each year, further complicates the teacher supply and demand picture. Clearly, teacher registration and developing a process for recognition of teacher qualifications from around the country is a major task for the Territory.

In late 2005, Charles Darwin University commenced a review of initial teacher education courses. It made provision for a Board representative to sit on the Course Advisory Committee and strengthened mechanisms for collaboration between key stakeholders. Evolving course approval processes take into account the new Northern Territory Professional Teaching Standards and the National Framework. The need to ensure that assessment processes within teacher education courses are sufficiently rigorous and clearly articulated to ensure graduates met the Professional Standards are issues that warrant special attention in new course approval processes. The Teacher Registration Board is working in close collaboration with stakeholders to fine-tune new approval protocols as part of the process of developing and revising Northern Territory teacher education courses.

Given the nature of Territory schools and student populations, employers indicated that review and approval processes for teacher education programs were very important to help retain and continually strengthen course focus on issues relevant to the socio cultural diversity within schools and especially, ESL, Indigenous and intercultural issues, literacy, behaviour management and classroom-based professional practice. Employers emphasised that graduates needed to be 'conversant with contemporary issues' and well prepared for the 'unique teaching

contexts' of Territory schools. The continuing challenges of attracting teachers to remote territory schools and the implications for teacher registration and teacher training were flagged as issues that would require on-going attention. In particular, it was mentioned that new approaches to preparing Indigenous teachers were being explored and that these would need to be framed within the spirit and requirements of the Act.

The Northern Territory teacher registration authority is an active participant in the Australasian Forum of Teacher Registration and Accreditation Authorities. Stakeholders commented on the importance of greater national consistency and alignment in processes of teacher registration and course approval. The 'strong level of trust' amongst AFTRAA members was considered to augure well for greater national alignment of processes and especially in the light of the National Standards. Further, because the majority of teachers in the Territory were trained outside the state, the case for including the Northern Territory in a broader national process of approval for teacher education courses was considered desirable by some stakeholders. All stakeholders, however, emphasised the importance of 'influencing' teacher education programs to meet the unique and the 'significantly different' local needs and challenges. All were supportive of continuing the current close partnerships between teacher education providers and the wider education community.

## **New South Wales**

Like other states that have only recently passed teacher registration Acts, New South Wales is in the process of fine-tuning formal approval processes for initial teacher education programs. Under the NSW Institute of Teachers Act 2005, the Institute is required 'to approve teacher education courses that will lead to qualifications or competencies in teaching that satisfy the requirements for registration as a teacher'. The NSW Institute of Teachers and the Quality Teaching Council established under the NSW Institute of Teachers Act 2005 have responsibility for developing the new course approval processes.

A draft set of guidelines for approval of teacher education programs based on the NSW Professional Teaching standards and developed in consultation with stakeholders was released for consultation in late October 2005. The final document - Policy and Procedures for Approval of Initial Teacher Education Programs was approved by the Quality Teaching Council and the Minister for Education in mid 2006. A series of supplementary documents that will give teacher education providers guidance in key areas - special education, literacy, Information and communication technology, professional experience, Indigenous education, classroom management and culturally and linguistically diverse students are being developed. Formal approvals for new initial teacher education courses are also expected to begin sometime in 2006.

As in other states, teacher education providers in NSW have well established internal processes for developing and approving initial teacher education courses.

NSW universities (except private higher education institutions) are self-accrediting and education faculties and schools follow course approval procedures similar to those established during the existence of the Higher Education Board. The Board was disbanded in the late 1980s. Typically, universities develop initial teacher education courses to meet, amongst other criteria, the needs of employing authorities and other relevant stakeholders. They establish a Course Advisory Committee or Reference Group to advise on the overall structure and focus and delivery of the course, including the Professional Experience or practicum. The relevant School or Faculty Board then considers the course, before it is reviewed by the University's Academic Board. The final step in the internal accreditation process is acceptance by the University Senate or Council. Until the new Institute procedures commenced, most NSW teacher preparation courses for primary and secondary teachers were endorsed by the NSW Department of Education and Training's Teacher Qualification Advisory Panel (TQAP). This was originally established to assure graduates' eligibility to seek employment in the state school system. The Teacher Qualification Advisory Panel ceased operation in August 2006.

### ***The proposed new process for NSW***

According to the NSW Institute of Teachers, there are currently some 110 initial teacher education courses in NSW that require approval. Program approval is mandatory but a transitional period has been agreed to with the education Deans to phase in the new arrangements. It is anticipated that pre-service teacher education programs that have gained TQAP endorsement in the last 12 months will receive provisional approval until they are due for review or replacement. The first course reviews are likely to commence late in 2006. Programs will be approved for up to 5 years and there is a review and appeals mechanism in place to deal with issues such as non compliance.

The NSW approval process assesses the capacity of programs to meet graduate teaching standards. Teacher education providers will submit course documentation, highlighting compliance with the Graduate Teaching Standards to the Quality Teaching Council where it will be reviewed by an expert panel. On site visits will also be conducted to further investigate the extent to which the standards are embedded in course design, practicum and other course related matters.

There is no fee for undergoing the accreditation process and the cost of preparing course documentation and completing the course approval process is not likely to be more expensive than the system of internal course approvals and submitting documentation to TQAP. Private teacher education providers will continue with existing legislative requirements, plus the Institute managed processes.

Courses that prepare graduates for roles outside the school teaching sector, such as some Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) courses, will still need to gain approval from the Department of Community Services.

## **Stakeholders' views**

University, employer and teacher registration body personnel consulted in the process of this review raised several common issues that should be considered in thinking about more nationally consistent approaches to initial teacher education course accreditation. First, most informants reported on the desirability of maintaining close, often informal, as well as formal relations between teacher education providers, employing bodies, the profession and other key stakeholders currently evident in local contexts. Teacher registration authority informants also conveyed the view that AFTRAA was a strong, cohesive body that was already planning for closer alignment of teacher education course approval processes across the states to facilitate teacher registration and mobility. Other common issues around teacher education course approval processes related to concern for duplication of process, the length of the review cycle and the costs of accreditation.

Several informants from within the university sector highlighted the already rigorous internal university course approval processes, and suggested that development of additional external processes would need to be carefully considered to avoid duplication and increased costs. The present course review processes within most Universities involve considerable consultation and collaboration with stakeholders and while these take time they were considered essential to meeting the needs of the profession, the community and graduates. But as one stakeholder said, while, 'positive', these processes take 'far too long'. At his university, all courses were reviewed every four years, and as the review process lasted for about a year and a half, there was no time to 'embed deep changes' before the cycle started again. The four-year review cycle is a 'slow cumbersome process', 'fraught with problems' and 'confusing for students'. Several informants commented that frequent internal course review processes result in an almost 'continuous process of change' and few students get to benefit from changes before further changes occur. It was considered that any additional layers of course approval, unless very carefully planned, would further slow the course approval process to the detriment of student and staff experiences and graduate outcomes. Existing concern for frequent and often 'slow' 'cumbersome' processes of internal course reviews, points to a need for careful thought about the course approval cycles in any consideration of new accreditation processes.

Typically, while there was general support for a national framework for guiding teacher education program course approvals currently being developed by AFTRAA, there was strong rejection of any plans to add additional layers of regulation. It was generally agreed that any national approach to course approval should be aligned with the National Framework, but operate independently within each jurisdiction. It was agreed that the present efforts of AFTRAA and the teacher registration boards to develop nationally consistent standards and processes were moving in this direction. Despite this generally positive view of nationally consistent perspectives on accreditation and greater commonality across teacher education programs, there were reservations about the viability of a national system of pre-service course approval because it would be too 'unwieldy' and lack sensitivity to the 'unique needs

of local communities', especially in isolated and/or Indigenous communities. There was a very strong view that establishing a national system 'on top of' the existing state based course approval system would create unnecessary work and expense for all parties. As one informant said - it would be a 'logistical nightmare'. This view was echoed in most states with informants concerned that a new national system of accreditation would result in duplication of processes and additional layers of bureaucracy.

### **End note: Australasian Forum of Teacher Registration and Accreditation Authorities**

In August 2003, the collective teacher registration authorities in Australia formally adopted the title of AFTRAA. The Forum provides a vehicle for facilitating national collaboration on matters related to teacher registration and teacher development and regulation, and the recognition of teacher education qualifications through exchange of information and discussion of shared issues with a view to ensuring consistent approaches nationally, within the contexts of state-based legislation. A major task for AFTRAA members is the promotion of the teaching profession. AFTRAA has a representative on Teaching Australia. AFTRAA appears to be evolving into a cohesive national group although with limited regulatory functions.

## **Chapter 3: Teacher Education Accreditation in Other Countries**

### **The “Bologna Process” and Teacher Education in Europe**

The governance and structure of teacher education is currently a higher reform priority in European countries than accreditation (OECD, 2005), with the exception of some countries such as Germany. A 1999 agreement among European countries to make higher education qualifications more comparable (the “Bologna process”) has triggered a process of restructuring higher education degree structures. This forms part of the effort to make the European region the highest performing knowledge-driven economy in the world by 2010 (the “Lisbon agreement”).

The “Bologna Process” has major implications for professional preparation. The Bologna process is a voluntary alignment of national systems of higher education, according to clear objectives and a schedule for implementation. The intention is to create a European Higher Education Area in which student and staff mobility is facilitated, and national higher education institutions add a European dimension to their operations. One consequence is that higher education institutions will be increasingly competing in a European-wide market for students. This is resulting in a much greater emphasis on quality assurance, and some reduction in institutional autonomy. For example, the Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance was established in 2004 to assist higher education institutions in implementing quality assurance procedures, and in coordinating evaluations. Portugal has recently developed an accreditation system aimed at “providing greater public assurance that initial teacher education programs are more driven by social demand, namely by the changing school education needs (Campos, 2004).

A recent paper prepared by Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) indicates that Australia needs to monitor the Bologna process carefully and that “Australian higher education has much to gain by aligning with the key Bologna actions” (p. 7). Effective action in this area would be facilitated by a national approach to accreditation.

Partly because of the Bologna process, many European countries have begun reforms to the aims, content and organisation of teacher education, or are intending to do so. Reforms to evaluation and accreditation systems are an integral part of these more general teacher education reforms. Developing systems for quality assurance and accreditation in teacher education is regarded as one of the most important ways of improving the quality and effectiveness of education as a whole.

### **Implications for teacher education**

The Bologna process particularly affects teacher education as the structure, length and location (university or non-university) of teacher qualifications vary so much within Europe. For example, the length of initial teacher education ranges from three years (e.g. for some primary teachers in Ireland and Spain) up to 6.5 years for some

secondary teachers in Germany, seven years in some programs in the Slovak Republic, and eight years for some secondary teachers in Italy (OECD, 2005). There are also some quite large differences in duration within a single country, with courses for some upper secondary teachers lasting about twice as long as courses for primary teachers in Italy and Spain.

The broad implications are that all teacher education will eventually be provided in university-level institutions (e.g. in Austria the teacher training colleges are being replaced by new pedagogical universities), and that more countries will introduce consecutive models of teacher education (with a Bachelor's and Master's degree structure, and the Master's component providing teachers' professional training). Concurrent models of teacher education are currently the most common in Europe, particularly at the primary and lower secondary education levels (Eurydice, 2002).

With the main exceptions of France and Germany, primary teacher education is generally structured along concurrent lines (with some countries offering both concurrent and consecutive models at this level). The large majority of countries also provide concurrent teacher education programs for lower and upper secondary education teachers. In five countries upper secondary general teacher education is provided mainly through the concurrent model: Belgium (Flemish Community); Greece; Hungary; Ireland; and Italy.

The need to satisfy European Commission requirements for the comparability of higher education qualifications is now one of the major drivers for reform of initial teacher education in Member countries. In countries where change in teacher education has been slow, the political imperative to implement European-wide agreements is breaking down the barriers to reform.

A recent Eurydice study (2006) examines arrangements for evaluating and accrediting institutions and programs for initial and in-service teacher education for primary and general secondary education in 30 European countries. In most countries, only one body is responsible for accreditation. This is usually an agency, committee or independent body acting on behalf of the public authorities. According to the Eurydice report, general regulations for the external evaluation of higher education apply to the evaluation of teacher education in most countries. Only a few countries have regulations about accreditation that apply specifically to teacher education. The publication of external evaluation results is compulsory in 19 countries. The process of external evaluation or accreditation usually includes:

- Analysis of written plan;
- Analysis of self-evaluation report;
- Analysis of background documents; and
- Site visit.

The most frequently covered aspects of teacher education programs include:

- Content of activity and teaching methods;
- Competences of trainers; and
- Infrastructure (ICT, teaching material etc.).

Evaluators are usually peers and evaluation experts. About half the countries also make use of graduate surveys.

### **Identification of key teacher competencies**

It is unlikely that there will be a common curriculum for teacher education in Europe in the foreseeable future. Countries are reluctant to cede such control, and there are formidable barriers to obtaining Europe-wide agreement on teacher preparation, not least because the models of schooling differ so widely.

Nevertheless, the European Commission (2005) has set out common European principles for teacher competencies and qualifications. These are intended to support policy makers at national and regional level in reforming teacher education. In summary, the principles are that:

1. The teaching profession should be well qualified
  - Teachers should be graduates from a higher education institution or equivalent;
  - Those teaching in initial vocational education should be highly qualified in their professional area and have a suitable teaching qualification;
  - Teacher education programs should be delivered in all three cycles of European higher education (Bachelor, Masters and Doctorate) to ensure their place in the European higher education area, and to increase the opportunity for advancement and mobility within the profession; and
  - The contribution of research and evidence-based practice to the development of new knowledge about education and training should be promoted.
2. Learning in the teaching profession should be seen as a continuum which includes initial teacher education, induction and continuing professional development
  - Coherent and adequately resourced lifelong learning strategies, covering formal and non-formal development activities are needed to deliver continuous professional development for teachers; and

- The content of initial and continuous professional development programs should reflect the importance of interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to learning.
3. Teacher mobility should be encouraged
    - Mobility projects for teachers should be facilitated and promoted as an integral part of initial and continuous professional development programs;
    - Opportunities to study European languages during initial teacher education and in continuous professional development programs should be available and promoted; and
    - Priority should be given to developing greater trust and transparency of teacher qualifications within Europe to allow for mutual recognition and increased mobility.
  4. The teaching profession should work in partnership with other stakeholders
    - Partnerships between institutions where teachers will be employed, industry, training providers and higher education institutions should be encouraged in order to support high quality training and effective practice, and to develop networks of innovation at local and regional levels.

### **A weakening of institutional autonomy in teacher education**

Table 2 summarises the extent of autonomy experienced (as of 2000/01) by initial teacher education institutions in Europe in the preparation of teachers for the lower secondary level (Eurydice, 2002). (For countries that do not have institutional separation between lower secondary and upper secondary schools, the situation would apply to the preparation of all secondary teachers.) In only three of the 33 countries shown in Table 2 do higher education institutions have full institutional autonomy for all aspects of teachers' preparation (the Czech Republic, Iceland and Malta). At the other extreme, there is only one country (Germany) in which teacher education for the lower secondary level is fully regulated (by the individual Lander, not the federal government). In the great majority of countries there is a mix of external regulation and institutional autonomy. In general, the balance of institutional autonomy tends to be greater over teachers' general subject education than over their professional training.

Over the 20 years to the late 1990s there was general trend towards greater institutional autonomy for initial teacher education (Eurydice, 2002). Broad guidelines replaced detailed legal regulations, in part to help make teacher education more responsive to a fast-changing labour market. More recently, however, education authorities have tended to increase regulation of initial teacher education, prompted by the desire for more uniform patterns of preparation and lifting quality. The Bologna process is accelerating external oversight of the sector.

**Table 2: Extent of institutional autonomy granted to institutions providing initial teacher education for lower secondary education, 2000/01**

	General subject education		Professional training	
	Content	Time	Content	Time
Austria	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Belgium (Fl.)	Limited	total	Limited	total
Belgium (Fr.)	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Bulgaria	Total	total	Limited	limited
Cyprus	Total	total	Limited	limited
Czech Rep.	Total	total	Total	total
Denmark	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Estonia	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Finland	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
France	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Germany	None	none	None	none
Greece	Total	total		
Hungary	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Iceland	Total	total	Total	total
Ireland	Total	total	Limited	limited
Italy	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Latvia	Total	total	Limited	limited
Lithuania	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Luxembourg	(abroad)	(abroad)	None	none
Netherlands	Limited	total	Limited	total
Malta	Total	total	Total	total
Norway	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Poland	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Portugal	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Romania	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Slovakia	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Slovenia	Total	total	Limited	limited
Spain	Limited	limited	Limited	limited
Sweden	Limited	total	Limited	limited
UK (Eng.)	Total	total	Limited	limited
UK (NI)	Total	total	Limited	limited
UK (Sco.)	Limited	Limited	Limited	limited
UK (Wa.)	Total	total	Limited	limited

*Key: No institutional autonomy:* institutions follow very detailed regulations issued by the relevant education authority that specify compulsory subjects, curriculum options, and their precise time allocations.

*Limited institutional autonomy:* official documents form the basis on which institutions may develop their own curricula. The regulations may specify either minimum requirements regarding compulsory groups of subjects and/or the share of provision to be devoted to general and professional training in terms of time, examination targets, or the minimum standards required of teachers on completion of their training.

*Total institutional autonomy:* institutions are totally free to decide how initial teacher education is organised in terms of both content and time. Source: Eurydice (2002).

## **OECD Report: Teachers Matter**

The recent OECD review of teacher policy, *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (OECD, 2005), gave particular attention to initial teacher education. A number of countries involved in the review expressed concerns about the approaches used in teacher education programs, one of the most common being the problem of linking theory to practice. The review indicated a trend to incorporate a wider variety of school experiences throughout teacher education programs from the start and to develop a stronger and more genuine partnership between schools and teacher education institutions. Another trend is the creation of more flexible or alternative pathways into teaching, a trend that raises difficulties for traditional approaches to course approval and accreditation and calls for approaches that focus more on standards-based outcomes and evidence of performance.

The OECD report points out that accreditation criteria need to move from a focus on 'inputs' - curriculum and teaching processes - to outcomes – i.e. what graduates of the programs know and are able to do. This is a means of encouraging diversity in teacher education:

Accreditation criteria should focus more on the outcomes of teacher education programs than on inputs, curriculum and processes. A focus on the latter elements runs the risk of consolidating conventional wisdom about how best to prepare teachers, thereby leading to greater uniformity of programs and reducing the scope for innovation. In any event it is what trainee teachers learn and can do that should be the policy focus. How they get to that point is better left to the teacher education programs and other programs for teacher preparation. (OECD, 2005, p.1130).

Switzerland illustrates this approach in recent reforms to teacher education. These reforms have meant that all initial teacher education has been upgraded to University level and is provided at the established multi-faculty universities and at 15 newly created Universities of Applied Science in Education (Paedagogische Hochschule,/Haute Ecole Pedagogique). Agreements on standards for graduates across the country has increased graduates' choice of jobs and facilitated mobility.

The reforms have established consensus on key principles, including better integration of discipline-based studies and pedagogical training, common competencies for teachers at all levels, formalised partnerships with schools and better alignment with school standards and the professional profile of teachers. The new institutions have implemented modularisation of studies to increase flexibility and to make courses available to a wide range of students, including those seeking to upgrade their qualifications and "side entrants" from other careers who wish to become teachers (OECD 2005, p. 113).

## Accreditation in English-speaking countries

In general, countries that have a national accreditation framework agree that it should:

1. establish nationally agreed standards for accrediting teacher education programs that are based on agreed profession wide standards for graduate teachers, and
2. establish processes for accrediting teacher education programs, based on the standards

To explore these two elements further, six accreditation systems in five countries were investigated.

- England: The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA);
- Scotland: The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS);
- New Zealand: The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC);
- Ontario, Canada: The Ontario College of Teachers;
- USA: The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE); and
- USA: the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC).

A summary of these systems can be found in Appendix I.

Each of these accreditation systems has developed sets of standards that describe the professional attributes of graduates of accredited initial teacher education programs, in terms of what they should be expected to value, believe, know and be able to do. Each has developed specific requirements which institutions must meet in order to be accredited. All have also developed processes for assessing evidence prepared by programs and institutions in response to the standards and requirements.

### Overview

Accreditation has traditionally been based on an assessment of the “course” and resources, i.e. quality of *provision*. This has often led to a focus on the minutiae of unit outlines, activities and reading lists, all of dubious validity as indicators of how well a course is preparing teachers to teach. Increasingly, accreditation is based on the quality of *outcomes*, i.e. graduate knowledge and competencies. Units of study are designed with particular standards in mind. Students are clearer about what they need to show they know and can do by the end of the course.

Accreditation may take one of two forms. Accrediting agencies may ask the training institution to show how it ensures that its graduates have met the standards. Or,

particularly when the accrediting agency is also the registration or licensing agency, it may assess graduates of teacher education programs independently using “graduating standards”. The standards for “Qualified Teacher Status” developed by the Training and Development Agency in England are one example. Part of the evidence for accreditation is the proportion of graduates who have demonstrated that they have met the graduating standards of the accrediting body.

## England

Accreditation of teacher training in England is the responsibility of the Teacher Development Agency (TDA), an “executive non-departmental public body of the Department for Education and Skills” (TDA website). To teach in a state-maintained school and be registered with the General Teaching Council for England, teachers who have graduated from an Accredited Teacher Training Institution must meet the required standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

The Standards for the award of QTS are generic outcome statements that describe what a trainee teacher should know, understand, and be able to do in order to achieve QTS. The Standards are organised in three sections:

- S1. Professional Values and Practice;
- S2. Knowledge and Understanding; and
- S3. Teaching.

Each of these is further articulated in indicators that describe the criteria for the award of QTS, The teacher training institutions are responsible for ensuring that their graduates qualify for QTS.

The *Handbook of Guidance* which accompanies the Professional Standards for QTS and the Requirements for Initial Teacher Training (RITT), states that various people are involved in making the necessary judgements involved in the award of QTS, and that assessments are wide ranging:

The guidance focuses particularly on assessment, because the Standards are outcome statements that indicate what trainee teachers must know, understand, and be able to do in order to achieve QTS. The many different people involved in assessment – school based tutors, class teachers, higher education tutors and the trainees themselves – need to develop a common understanding of what is involved in meeting the Standards. Assessment against the Standards is a matter of skilled professional judgement made at different times in different contexts, and often draws on evidence from a range of sources collected over time.

The only assessments of graduates that are carried out by the TDA itself are the QTS skills tests. These tests are computerised. Registration and booking

for the tests takes place online via the TDA website. Trainee teachers have unlimited opportunities to pass the tests, but must have passed all tests before QTS can be awarded.

To be accredited as Providers of initial teacher training, institutions need to show that they meet four Requirements:

- R1: Trainee Entry Requirements (8 sub-requirements)
- R2: Training and assessment (6 sub-requirements)
- R3 Management of the Initial Teacher Training partnership (6 sub-requirements)
- R4 Quality Assurance (6 sub-requirements)

The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspects teacher training institutions to ensure they meet the Requirements for Initial Teacher Training (RITT).

Self-evaluations, carried out by providers, are key elements of inspection evidence. Inspectors use these to identify issues and set the detailed agenda for inspections. Self-evaluation draws on information from a variety of sources, including peer reviews and the evaluation of the impact of action and improvement plans.

Full inspections always involve direct observation of training in English and Mathematics as well as gathering of documentary evidence. Inspectors also visit the provider and partnership schools to observe training, scrutinise training materials, plans and supporting documentation. They discuss the training with school-based tutors and trainees to judge how well the objectives of the training are being achieved.

## **Scotland**

The Scottish Executive Education Department's *Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education Courses in Scotland* (SEED 1998) state that 'all courses must be acceptable to the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) as leading to registration as a primary or secondary teacher.' The Council registers teachers who have fulfilled the requirements of Scottish programs of initial teacher education.

The Standard for Initial Teacher Education in Scotland was prepared under the aegis of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAAHE) by a group of initial teacher education specialists drawn from higher education institutions, the GTCS, local authorities, schools and HM Inspectors of schools, and with an observer from the Quality Assurance Agency.

The Standard describes the knowledge, skills and dispositions expected of graduates of accredited ITE programs in the form of 'Benchmarks'. The Benchmarks are grouped under the headings of:

- Professional values and personal commitment;
- Professional skills and abilities; and
- Professional knowledge and understanding.

For each Benchmark there are a number of (three to eight) 'expected features'. Some features under the sub-heading 'curriculum' attempt to distinguish between primary and secondary stages of schooling, e.g. graduates of programs for secondary teachers are required to:

- Know how to match the demands of work in their own subject with pupil's skills in literacy and numeracy.

The Benchmarks and expected features are cross-referenced to Section D - 'competencies' – of the *Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education Courses in Scotland*. Other sections of this document set out: *Conditions for the approval of all courses of initial teacher education*, and *Requirements for courses*

All programs of initial teacher education in Scotland require the approval of Scottish Ministers. The GTCS, which is also the registration body for teachers in Scotland, advises Scottish Ministers on whether programs in initial teacher education should receive approval. As mentioned already, self evaluation is a crucial element of the accreditation process. Teacher education institutions are required to prepare Self-Evaluation Documents that address the Standard for Initial Teacher Education Benchmark Information. Institutions are also required to present an extensive range of additional information, which is scrutinised and discussed during the accreditation visit.

The Council's Accreditation and Review Committee delegates program scrutiny to Evaluation Panels, which visit the institutions for four or five days. Each Panel normally consists of six members, at least two of whom are external to the Council. The external members are drawn from the educational community and include representatives from the higher education sector, local authorities and schools. The Panel may meet with student teachers and/or teachers from partner schools.

## **New Zealand**

The New Zealand Teachers Council is currently developing 'graduating standards' for the purpose of provisionally registering new teachers. It is not intended, at this stage, that these standards will be used to accredit actual programs or courses, but they will influence course content.

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) has the overarching mandate for the approval of all courses and the accreditation of institutions that provide them. In practice, some accreditations are delegated to other quality assurance bodies linked to the universities, college of education or institute of technology sector. The standards and requirements for accreditation vary.

## **Ontario, Canada**

The Ontario College of Teachers establishes standards of practice and conduct, issues teaching certificates, and may suspend or revoke them. It accredits teacher education programs and courses and provides for ongoing professional learning opportunities for its members.

Programs seeking to be accredited must be consistent with and reflect:

- The College's Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession;
- Current research on teacher education; and
- The integration of theory and practice in teacher education.

The College was granted legislated authority to accredit programs of professional education in December, 2002. Universities seeking accreditation of programs must present comprehensive evidence of meeting 16 specific requirements. This includes a written self-appraisal report that indicates the ways in which the program satisfies the requirements.

Applications for accreditation are reviewed by a panel of at least six members appointed by the College's Accreditation Committee, one of whom is nominated by the institution. The panels conduct site visits for renewal of accreditation. A site visit is optional for a new program. Panel members scrutinise and discuss evidence presented to show that the institution meets the Requirements for Accreditation. They interview members of staff, current students in the program, and teachers in schools who are involved in the practicum components of the program.

Institutions are required to set up an 'Exhibits Room', to be available from the first day of the site visit, so that Panel members can familiarise themselves with the materials, which include course outlines for all courses, evaluation instruments for the curriculum materials, examples of teacher candidates' work at various achievement levels and from all programs at all sites, and internal review reports from the last five years, if available. Accreditation panels also provide an opportunity for the public to make submissions on the quality of the program.

## **United States of America**

As education is constitutionally a state responsibility in the USA, each state has legislation in place that requires university teacher education programs to be

“approved”. In most states, state departments of education conduct the approval function, but many states, such as California and Colorado, have established independent statutory professional standards authorities. There are similar state-level program approval authorities for most professions.

Alongside these compulsory state program approval processes, there are also independent national agencies that offer voluntary accreditation. These voluntary, not-for-profit agencies are a unique feature of professional education in the USA and most have been in place since the end of the Second World War. They are usually established by a coalition of constituents, including professional associations, universities, unions, client groups and employing authorities. Given the purposes of this review, it seemed to focus on the two national agencies that have been established to provide voluntary accreditation. One, the National Council for Teacher Accreditation (NCATE) has been offering accreditation for over 50 years. The other, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) was only established recently.

### **The National Council for Teacher Accreditation (NCATE)**

NCATE's main role is to provide a voluntary, national assessment and accreditation service. It is recognised by the U.S. Department of Education as the accrediting body for colleges and universities that prepare teachers and other professional personnel for work in elementary and secondary schools (NCATE, 2006). While states have their own program approval processes, many require their universities to gain NCATE accreditation also. Some states will only employ teachers who have graduated from NCATE accredited teacher education institutions.

NCATE is a coalition of more than 30 national associations called “constituents” (including the two main teacher unions), representing the profession of education. Membership of its policy boards includes representatives from organisations of teacher educators, school administrators, teacher subject association and unions, state and local policy makers and professional specialists such as librarians and school psychologists.

About 600 of the country's 1300 education courses were accredited in 2001, and these produced more than two thirds of America's teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2001, p.753).

NCATE standards define ‘graduating standards’ for teachers in terms of what teachers who have newly graduated from those institutions can be expected to know and do. The NCATE standards are developed and articulated by groups with a majority of teaching practitioners, under the aegis of the Standards Committee of the NCATE Unit Accreditation Board. The standards are revised every five years to ensure that they reflect research and state of the art educational practice. Much of this work is carried out by teachers’ professional associations whose work guides the design and delivery of the ITE programs. Thus the National Council for Teachers

of Mathematics, the National Science Teachers Association and 17 other specialty associations set professional standards for their respective disciplines, and NCATE incorporates these standards into its accreditation system.

## **The NCATE standards**

The 6 NCATE standards are divided into two sections: 'candidate performance' (standards 1 and 2) and 'unit capacity' (standards 3-6). Each of the 6 standards contains three components:

- (1) the language of the standard itself;
- (2) rubrics that delineate the elements of each standards; and
- (3) a descriptive explanation of the standards.

The NCATE standards are designed primarily for the accreditation of colleges and departments of education, but they also define what is to be expected of newly graduated teachers. Of the 6 overarching standards, Standard 1 is the most explicit in this regard:

### **Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions**

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state and institutional standards.

## **Alignment with other standards**

The final sentence of NCATE Standard 1 points to the important links between the NCATE standards and other sets of standards with which they are aligned,; for example, The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), the *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)* and various sets of state licensure standards. (The 'institutional' standards referred to in Standard 1 include 'candidate proficiencies' that are spelt out in further articulations of the NCATE performance standards).

The NCATE standards and the standards with which they are aligned create expectations that graduating teachers will be able to provide evidence of their capacity to create classroom environments where diversity is understood and valued, curriculum in which diversity issues are incorporated, and inclusive teaching strategies. The standards also expect the schools of education to produce graduates who understand and use technology to inform and improve all areas of teaching and learning.

NCATE assesses and accredits an entire school, college or department of education, as well as individual teacher education programs within those institutions. The institution as a whole is required to meet standards that ensure that candidates know their subject matter and how to teach it, that faculty members have appropriate qualifications and that programs are adequately resourced. Institutions are also required to develop an assessment system and use data from it for program improvement. Additionally, individual programs must undergo review according to relevant sets of standards in the content area.

A college, department, or school of education seeking NCATE accreditation must meet specific preconditions, as set out in the NCATE accreditation standards (NCATE 2006). When the preconditions are met, NCATE schedules an accreditation visit. The institution then prepares a report, showing how it meets each of the six standards. The report will also include information on graduates' performance in external assessments, such as examinations of subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge required by state licensing authorities. The NCATE team interviews members of the faculty, reviews all the evidence and writes a report on its findings. All material is forwarded to NCATE's Unit (i.e. Teacher Education Institution) Accreditation Board, which reviews the data and makes the final accreditation decision. All procedural accreditation documents are available on NCATE's website ([www.ncate.org](http://www.ncate.org).)

Three to eight members of the NCATE Board of Examiners conduct the NCATE site visits, which take about five days. (NCATE has a pool of about 450 examiners, comprising teachers, teacher educators, and representatives from NCATE's policy-making and specialty organisations.) The NCATE Accreditation Board, made up of one-third teachers, one-third teacher educators and one third school specialists and local and state policymakers, meets twice a year, and it rules on about 120 accreditation requests annually. Specialists who are members of the relevant subject matter/developmental level professional association review individual programs in specific content areas. If NCATE is assessing, for example, an institution that prepares science teachers, the assessment and visitation panel will include members from the National Science Teachers Association.

NCATE is funded mainly through accreditation fees paid by accredited institutions and its 33 member organisations

Assessment of graduate performance is an integral component of NCATE's accreditation process. Unlike previous processes, when institutions were accredited on the basis of course analysis, quality of teaching, as demonstrated by actual performance assessed against the standards, is now a crucial factor when the decision to accredit a course is being made:

NCATE 2000 aims to create a performance-based system *that takes into account graduates' performance in the accreditation decision* (our emphasis). While continuing to examine what programs do in the course of preparing teachers, the system will also use performance measures

ranging from education schools' internal assessments of students, including portfolios, videotapes, and performance events of various kinds, to scores on performance-based state licensing examinations that are compatible with NCATE's standards. (Darling- Hammond, 2000).

Candidates at NCATE-accredited schools of education in the new millennium will experience a focus on performance unlike any seen by candidates in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Beginning with the NCATE 2000 standards (<http://www.ncate.org>), institutions accredited by NCATE will be expected to focus on candidate performance. Teacher candidates will be expected to show mastery of the content knowledge in their fields and to demonstrate that they can teach effectively. Administrators will be expected to demonstrate that they can create an environment conducive to student learning. All candidates will understand the criteria by which their professional competence will be judged. Multiple assessments of candidate performance will be the rule. Institutions will set benchmark levels of performance, based on exemplars provided by NCATE-affiliated professional associations (Wise et al., 2000).

In the past, it was sufficient to demonstrate that candidates had completed coursework which covered content stipulated under the various standards, but under the new NCATE/state guidelines program completers must also demonstrate mastery of educational precepts in a P-12 educational setting.... the performance of an institution's program completers and graduates and the performance of students will be expected to meet acceptable standards in the national accreditation and state approval processes. (Conn, 1999)

### **The Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)**

Like NCATE, TEAC offers teacher education institutions a voluntary accreditation system. However, the two systems differ significantly in philosophy. Founded in 1997, TEAC grew out of a task force of the Council of Independent Colleges. It is a creature of a small group of teacher education institutions. Individual TEAC directors are elected at annual meetings by the current directors. The TEAC Chair is president emeritus of the Council of Independent Colleges. The TEAC Board of Directors comprises individuals who are major stakeholders in education, but these individuals are not representative of any organisation.

Programs accredited by TEAC set their own standards within TEAC guidelines, TEAC has three 'quality principles'

1. Evidence of student learning;
2. Valid assessment of student learning; and
3. Institutional learning.

### **TEAC's accreditation requirements and processes**

TEAC accredits programs only (courses in Australian terms), not whole institutions, for which there is evidence that their graduates are competent, caring, and qualified. The only programs reviewed for TEAC accreditation are those for which the institution has evidence of success.

Programs are assessed on the extent to which they live up to their own claims for competence and their own stated goals (within TEAC principles). A variety of evidence is called for, including evidence of graduates' knowledge, skills and dispositions. The assessments are made by TEAC reviewers. All TEAC programs are required to provide:

1. Credible evidence of their common claim that their graduates are competent;
2. Evidence that the means by which they establish the evidence is valid;
3. Evidence that program decisions are based on evidence; and
4. Evidence that the institution is committed to the program.

Programs that seek TEAC accreditation prepare a 'research monograph' in which they present evidence that they are meeting the three principles, using multiple measures, including teacher candidates' grades and employer surveys. In 2003, TEAC was formally recognised by the US Department of Education as an accreditor of teacher education programs

In summary, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) accredits teacher education providers based on their performance in relation to their own objectives, rather than common professional standards. TEAC rejects the idea of professional standards and encourages institutions to document their work and its outcomes in relation to their own goals. The hope is that the self-study process will create high expectations and self-initiated change. Others have expressed concern that the lack of external standards will allow programs to become complacent and ignore rigorous research about the elements of programs that prepare teachers well (Wilson & Youngs, 2005).

## **What can Australia learn from these models?**

In what ways can these examples help to suggest ways in which a national system for professionally accrediting initial teacher education courses might be established in Australia?

The English and Scottish examples illustrate the relative straightforwardness of establishing accreditation processes in national non-federal jurisdictions, where accreditation processes can be closely linked to teacher registration and the school system generally. These links are particularly close in England, where the TDA has overall responsibility for teacher education, ongoing teacher professional development and QTS arrangements, as well as for accrediting teacher education courses, and where the same agency (OFSTED) inspects both schools and teacher training institutions.

These close-knit arrangements have some advantages. Teacher education courses in most countries are often criticised for being out of touch with schools. The TDA, with its remit to support schools in managing their staff training and development, is well placed to identify the links between teachers' pre and post graduate professional learning. OFSTED inspectors, who work with teachers and teacher educators in both school and university settings, can help to ensure that teacher training is aligned with the day to day realities in schools. Their role in this respect is enhanced through the operation of a National Curriculum.

As a federal system, in which responsibility for education rests with the states, Australia has more in common with the USA than with England, but here too are some important differences. Education in the USA is much more decentralised to local authorities than in Australia; and where Australia has 33 institutions that offer teacher education courses, the USA has 1300. These differences, together with some important cultural and historical differences between the Australian and American education systems, suggest that it would be no more possible to directly adopt an NCATE or TEAC type of teacher accreditation system than it would be to copy the English one.

However, some useful directions are to be found in the NCATE system. Most are in the field of standards development, which is clearly an essential early step in the establishment of any teacher accreditation system.

Professional standards should reflect a consensus about what is known and valued in the profession. All of the international examples of teacher education accreditation described above were based upon sets of standards that described what could be expected in the work of newly graduated teachers. Of these standards, however, only those of NCATE were the result of long and considered processes of consultation and development among major stakeholders and practitioners. For many years, NCATE has invested heavily in building professional consensus and alignment of its standards with the standards of other major education bodies in the

USA, such as the standards for highly accomplished teaching developed by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the standards for beginning teachers developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium: [www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org)).

NCATE's concern to ensure that its standards are an accurate reflection of teachers work is seen in their field specific nature. Of the standards described in the examples, all but NCATE were generic. Generic standards are useful in setting out the main areas and important aspects of teachers' work, but their capacity to describe the complexity, depth and breadth of teachers' work is limited. This becomes apparent when judgements about a teacher's work are being made. Expertise in teaching, as in other professions, is domain specific.

An effective national system of teacher education accreditation in Australia would be most credible if, like the NCATE system, it was built upon well developed, agreed field specific graduate professional standards that were aligned with similar sets of standards across the country. Australia has already made excellent advances in this area, especially through the current *National Framework for Professional Teaching Standards* which provides an organising structure that is being used as a base by state and territory regulatory authorities.

Another feature from which Australia could learn, is the care and attention NCATE has paid, over many years, to ensure the involvement of stakeholders, including teachers' professional associations. The professional input which these associations can offer enhances the credibility of the accreditation processes and gives teachers and teacher educators a sense of ownership. Again, Australia has already made a start in this direction by encouraging some national professional associations to develop their own profession-wide standards for their disciplines.

Australia may have something to learn in terms of how NCATE operates as a voluntary accreditation body, but this can be problematic. Voluntary participation in a national teacher accreditation system would seem to be the only option in the USA, because of the very large number of teacher education institutions, the many and varied states, and the localised nature of schools and education generally. These differences are less pronounced in Australia. In view of the much fewer number of education institutions here, it may well be possible to reach agreement on a national system of accreditation that does not depend upon voluntary participation.

However, some lessons may be learnt from NCATE's actual relationships with the states. Over a long period, NCATE has worked solidly to build partnerships with individual states and state licensing bodies through a program formalised in 1993. More than two thirds of new teacher graduates now come from NCATE accredited institutions:

Through 1987, NCATE had no relationship with the states. The states conducted parallel processes, so that institutions wrote two reports,

hosted two reviews, and were judged by two sets of standards. In 1988, the newly overhauled NCATE created State/NCATE Partnerships, which were formalised as a program in 1993. The purpose of the partnership is to align state and professional standards – indeed to mesh state standards with professional standards where possible, and to reduce duplication of effort between professional accreditation and state program approval. The program has been a success (Wise, A. Establishing Teaching as a Profession: the Essential Role of Professional Accreditation)

## **Chapter 4: Accreditation in other professions**

The purpose of this chapter is to review recent developments in other professions for the accreditation of professional preparation programs. The chapter documents how, in most professions other than teaching, the accreditation function has been delegated by state registration authorities and professional bodies to national accreditation agencies over recent years. In regulated professions, such as medicine, these agencies are charged with the responsibility to develop a nationally consistent accreditation system on behalf of both state and territory registration authorities and professional bodies.

Teaching stands out as one of the few professions where state and territory governments, registration boards, and professional associations have yet to come together to authorise a single national agency to carry out the accreditation function on their behalf - although there have been definite signs of movement in that direction recently.

### **Two types of accreditation agencies**

There are two types of agencies for the accreditation of professional preparation courses in Australia: one for regulated professions (such as architecture, nursing, medicine or teaching) and one for unregulated professions (such as engineering and accountancy).

'Regulated' occupations require a person to gain registration or some other form of licence before they can practise. Regulation represents an intervention by the state on behalf of the public in occupations where public safety needs to be ensured. Doctors, teachers and electricians are examples of workers who need to be registered or licensed before they can practice.

In regulated professions, State governments establish accreditation authorities, such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Registration, or a license to practice, depends, in part, on graduation from a course that the agency has accredited. Although these agencies are established by statute, responsibility for operational procedures is delegated in large part to members of the profession. Increasingly, state governments are cooperating in delegating the accreditation function to national agencies, such as the Australian Medical Council.

In unregulated professions, national professional associations themselves may establish an accreditation function as part of their wider professional services and operations. For the engineering profession, for example, the accreditation role has been for many years the responsibility of Engineers Australia (EA). Graduates of an engineering education program accredited by EA not only gain admission to graduate membership of EA; they gain access to more advanced professional certification levels conferred by Engineers Australia, such as Chartered Engineer. "Accreditation involves an evaluation of undergraduate engineering education programs offered by

universities and other educational providers and a judgement against designated criteria set down in accordance with the Engineers Australia accreditation policy.” In contrast with regulated professions, “consideration of engineering programs for accreditation is at the request of the specific educational institution and is not obligatory.” (www.engineersaustralia.org.au)

While these agencies also place high priority on engaging members of the profession in all phases of accreditation, the major corporations and employers of engineers also exercise a strong influence over the content of graduate competency and accreditation standards.

## **Background**

Accreditation as a process of assuring the quality of profession preparation programs has a long history, especially in the USA. Accreditation was one of the major recommendations that came out of the Flexner Report in the 1920s that led to major reforms of medical education in the US. Until 1985, medical training in Australia, as in most other Commonwealth countries, came under the British Medical Council. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education in the US was created in 1954 by a consortium of professional associations and the public. Some countries such as the USA and Canada, also have well established national agencies for accrediting accreditation bodies across the professions – and principles to guide their assessment of accreditation agencies.

National accreditation agencies in other professions in Australia are usually registered corporations limited by guarantee. Their membership is drawn from a broad cross section of the groups associated with the standards of professional practice and usually includes representatives of state ministers, state registration boards, the relevant council of deans and relevant professional and industrial associations (e.g. the AMA has one member on the Australian Medical Council.)

## **Some definitions of accreditation across the professions**

Accreditation is the process by which an institution (e.g. a university) convinces the public and other institutions of its program’s soundness and rigour. (Wilson & Youngs, 2005)

Accreditation is the process to determine and to certify the achievement and maintenance of reasonable and appropriate national standards of education for professionals. (Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada)

Accreditation is the formal endorsement that the graduates from a program are deemed to possess the competencies required to progress toward registration as an architect. (Architects Accreditation Council of Australia)

Recently, there has been a general shift in accreditation systems in other professions - from a focus on inputs and course approval processes to a focus on the knowledge, skills, dispositions and abilities that graduates should be able to demonstrate in authentic work contexts, that is, professional standards. This shift means less prescription about how graduates are prepared, but requires more valid indicators of outcomes and performance capacity. Who assesses the latter, and how to make assessment most effective, are largely matters still requiring further research and development.

### **Rationales for moving to national accreditation systems in other professions**

Two broad and inter-related reasons are usually mentioned for external assessment and accreditation of professional education programs, especially in regulated occupations. The first is to serve the public interest and provide a safeguard that a qualification from a university provides graduates with the knowledge and skills required to practise safely and competently. Accreditation in this sense is a summative assessment. The second reason is to support processes for evaluation and improvement, both through internal assessment and through comparison with other programs and research on effective practice and professional preparation, while encouraging innovation and diversity. In other words, accreditation is a powerful lever for formative assessment for improvement.

Contrary perhaps to common understanding, there is an important relationship between formative assessment and summative assessment. The quality of formative assessment depends on the rigour and validity of the summative assessment process. The best way to ensure useful formative assessment is to have valid criteria for summative assessment to guide the formative assessment and improvement process; i.e. valid accreditation standards.

Table 4 indicates that most professions in Australia have moved to a national approach to accreditation. For those that have done so, the process has generally been protracted, and often characterised by some friction and suspicion among interested parties. However a recent national meeting of professional associations revealed that those that had adopted national systems were generally satisfied with the new arrangements. As they focused more on outcomes, accreditation agencies were able to place greater value on innovation and diversity in the ways universities prepared graduates to meet entry standards to the professions.

Why have most professions moved to a national system of accreditation? For several professions, accreditation concerns were now international, not national. Facing greater competition from overseas, Australian universities want their qualifications to have international currency. The engineering profession, for example, had developed the “Washington Accord” which establishes international guidelines for engineering education (See Box 1).

In accountancy, globalisation of the profession has led the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) to develop international education standards for accreditation. (IFAC recently awarded Australia international best practice).

**Box I**  
**Engineers Australia: Why accreditation?**

- To certify individual academic programs for delivery of STAGE I competencies within the National Generic Competency Standards framework;
- Guarantee to students of the professional standing and value of their degree;
- International comparability & graduate mobility;
- Setting standards of best practice;
- Public identification of programs - independently evaluated; and
- Statement of requirements & necessary resources for provision of engineering education

**Objectives of accreditation**

- A consensus within our own engineering community of standards which encourage diversity and assure quality;
- Self regulatory regime;
- Standards which reflect and influence best international practice;
- Recognised by international accord; and
- Voluntary not compulsory

An important question to ask is, “How well are current accreditation policies and practices serving these two purposes of quality assurance and improvement?” Research on the effects of accreditation is rather scarce, probably because the issues involved in implementing valid research designs to test this question are complex. Accreditation processes and standards also need to be built on firm foundations – a knowledge base for teaching – a knowledge base for professional practice.

Other desirable objectives of accreditation are often cited: for example, that it will improve allocation of resources to preparation programs; improve the status of the profession; strengthen practitioner involvement in profession preparation; encourage diversity and innovation in professional education; enhance mobility between jurisdictions and employers; and minimise overall costs. Little research has been conducted to provide evidence for these claims.

In the medical profession, there is general acceptance that some external process of evaluation of medical training programs and the quality of graduates of medical schools is required to ensure that the educational standards of any one medical school do not fall below acceptable standards and that graduates are suitable for registration as interns under supervision. (See Box 2).

**Box 2**  
**Accreditation as a Quality Assurance Mechanism (Australian Medical Council)**

In Australia and New Zealand, accreditation of medical schools based on a process of regular review by an independent external agency has been chosen as the preferred means of providing such quality assurance of the primary phase of medical education. The accreditation process is perceived to have the following advantages:

- regular external review provides the medical school with periodic stimulus to undertake a systematic process of self-examination and self-directed improvement;
- the accreditation process encourages diversity and acknowledges that there is no single best way to produce a good doctor;
- each team learns from and builds upon previous assessments;
- the accreditation report assists medical schools by drawing attention both to factors that are affecting the school's capacity to deliver the medical curriculum and to its strengths; and
- the accreditation process allows an emphasis to be placed on medical education issues not adequately addressed by national licensing examinations, such as selection of medical students, communication and other clinical skills, development of professional attitudes, and development of lifelong learning skills.

Architecture provides an interesting example of collaboration between state registration authorities and the relevant professional association in developing a national approach to accreditation. Each state and territory has its own Architects (Registration) Board responsible for administering the legislation controlling registration and practice of architecture in the interests of the public. As a regulated profession, it is a legal requirement that anyone using the title "architect" or offering services must be registered. The steps involved in gaining registration include:

1. Gaining a qualification from an accredited program
2. Undertaking a period of practical experience followed by the Architecture Practice Examination (three part process: log book of experience, written exam, oral exam)
3. Applying for registration to a state or territory Architects Registration Board

A major review of the Australian Architecture Course Recognition and Accreditation Procedure has been completed recently. Accreditation is now defined as a "formal endorsement that the graduates from a program are deemed to possess the competencies required to progress toward registration as architect." Noteworthy here is the emphasis on evidence of outcomes in the accreditation decision.

Although the accreditation function and responsibility for assuring the quality of programs remains with state or territory statutory authority, responsibility for conducting the accreditation process was delegated to a national agency, the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACCA) in 1974. AACCA is recognised as the national organisation responsible for establishing, coordinating and advocating national standards for the registration of architects in Australia and for the recognition of Australian architects overseas by the relevant Registration Authorities.

The Legal structure of AACCA changed in 2004 from an entity under the Associations Incorporation Act to a company limited by guarantee. AACCA is a non-statutory body, the nominating bodies of which comprise each of the state and territory registration boards. It is responsible for the coordination of matters of common concern to its members, including the accreditation of architecture programs and the assessment of overseas qualifications.

AACCA is therefore constituted of, and accountable to, all State and Territorial Architects' Registration Boards in Australia. The decision for the registration of architects lies solely with the Boards. It is not a Registration Authority and can only make recommendations to the various Boards. Its roles are to:

- Promote common academic standards throughout Australia for registration;
- Assess architectural education;
- Coordinate acceptable standards of architectural education for mutual recognition agreements;
- Define acceptable standards of practical experience for registration; and
- Provide for the examination of persons seeking registration.

Each state and territory registration board nominates two members of AACCA. The nominees are the members of AACCA. They elect an executive committee on an annual basis. The Council employs an executive officer and a small staff located in Canberra.

### **Accrediting accreditation agencies: Key principles for accreditation systems**

Some countries such as the USA and Canada, have well established organisations that coordinate accreditation across professions. The Association of Specialised and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) in the USA is one such body. About 50 professions are members of ASPA, includes the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council. ASPA has an extensive code of good practice for member organisations and its motto is, "Enhancing quality in higher education through specialised and professional accreditation". The guidelines for good practice for the equivalent organisation in Canada, the Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada, are shown in Box 4 below.

**Box 4**  
**Guidelines for Good Practice of Academic Accreditation of  
Professional Programs (Association of Accrediting Agencies of  
Canada)**

1. The accreditation process is transparent, consistent, fair, and maximizes objectivity and confidentiality.
2. The purpose of accreditation status is to maintain the quality of programs and to promote their continuing improvement.
3. The accreditation agency is an autonomous organization from the educational program under accreditation.
4. The accreditation agency has representation by the relevant stakeholders to accreditation.
5. There are sufficient financial, human, and other resources to carry out the operations of accreditation effectively.
6. The accreditation review is held at the site(s) of the educational program under review and includes input from relevant stakeholders.
7. Qualified peer reviewers conduct the accreditation review.
8. There is a mechanism for training peer reviewers.
9. There is a clear description of the accreditation process, including the goals and specific steps taken by all parties in the accreditation process.
10. There is a time-defined accreditation status and requirements to maintain the status.
11. There are mechanisms to define accreditation status.

It would be a valuable exercise to discuss which of these general guidelines or principles would be seen by Australian stakeholders as most relevant in developing a national approach to the accreditation of teacher education programs, which would be least relevant or appropriate, and what other principles should be added to this list.

Most professions in Australia have a set of principles for the conduct of accreditation. The Australian Medical Council has adopted the following definition and statement of principles on the conduct of its medical school accreditation process (see Box 5).

### **Box 5**

#### **Australian Medical Council: Statement of Principles**

Accreditation is a collegial process based on self and peer assessment for public accountability and improvement of academic quality. The AMC accreditation process is intended to be constructive and to respect the expertise and autonomy of the universities that provide basic medical education.

The AMC medical accreditation process will:

- focus on the achievement of objectives, maintenance of academic standards, public safety requirements, and expected outputs and outcomes rather than on detailed specification of curriculum content;
- as far as possible, mesh external registration requirements and public safety aspects with internal academic priorities;
- monitor implementation of recommended changes after the accreditation of the course is approved; and
- include an ongoing cycle of review.

The AMC will:

- in making decisions, gather and analyse information and ideas from multiple sources and viewpoints;
- use clear standards and procedures, and implement its accreditation process in an open and objective manner;
- include mechanisms to ensure that members of assessment teams, committees, and staff apply standards and procedures in a consistent and appropriate fashion; and
- review its processes and standards periodically.

#### **Accreditation arrangements across Australian professions**

Table 4 provides a comparison of registration and accreditation arrangements across major professions. Four of the professions are regulated and state registration authorities have legal authority for quality assurance functions (i.e. they “own” the name; e.g. “architect”). Two unregulated professions are included; accountancy and

engineering (shaded). They do not control use of the appellation, “accountant”, or “engineer”. However they do control use of terms for membership categories; e.g. Certified Practising Accountant”.

While all regulated professions control the registration process and standards, Table 4 indicates that state regulatory bodies are increasingly cooperating in the development and use of national standards for registration purposes. In this regard, it is interesting to recall that a national competency framework for beginning teachers was published in 1996 by the Australian Teaching Council after widespread consultation. (Australian Teaching Council, 1996)

Most state regulatory authorities retain control over accreditation, but as indicated in Table 4, apart from nursing<sup>2</sup> and teaching, these authorities are creating, and delegating to national organisations the responsibility for conducting accreditation. For architects, psychologists and doctors, these national bodies are the result of a merging of functions formerly carried out separately by professional associations; for example, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and state regulatory authorities. Engineering and accountancy have each markedly increased their influence over university professional programs through developing a unified national agency to conduct accreditation. They believe the quality of programs has improved as a result.

Table 5 summarises existing models of accreditation in other professions in Australia and includes models for teacher education accreditation in England and the USA. These models represent a range of possible options in the development of a national approach to accreditation in the teaching profession.

Of all the models in Table 5, the NCATE approach represents the strongest in terms of broad-based professional involvement in the development and implementation of the accreditation process. However, it is an expensive alternative. The Training and Development Agency in England represents the tightest control by a national government over the supply of teacher education students and the provision of teacher education.

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<sup>2</sup> Nursing in Australia has commenced the development of a national accreditation system. This initiative is likely to gain increased impetus as a result of the recent agreement by the Council of Australian Governments (July 2006) to establish a single, national system for the accreditation of education and training programs for the health professions.

**TABLE 4: A comparison of accreditation arrangements in Australian professions**

	<b>Regulated occupation</b>	<b>Body responsible for registration</b>	<b>Responsibility for accreditation?</b>  <b>Compulsory or voluntary?</b>	<b>Who conducts the accreditation?</b>	<b>Level of professional influence over university programs</b>	<b>Focus of accreditation</b>	<b>Who pays?</b>
Nursing	Yes	State regulatory authorities (e.g. Nursing Board of Victoria)	State regulatory authorities  Compulsory	State regulatory authorities, but they use national accreditation framework developed by Aust. Nursing & Midwifery Council	Moderate	Traditional process: Description of course, staff, resources	?
Law	Yes	State regulatory authorities\ National standards under development	State regulatory authorities Compulsory	National accreditation currently under consideration	High	Content of courses	?
Architecture	Yes	State regulatory authorities  National Competency Standards developed by AACA	State regulatory authorities, but delegate to national body AACA  Compulsory	National body: Architecture Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA), using National Visitation panels	High RAIA has major influence on standards and AACA proces	Evidence of students achieving NCSA competency outcomes	2/3rd of cost born by state boards and RAIA 1/3 <sup>rd</sup> by university

Psychology	Yes	State regulatory authorities (State Psychologist Registration Boards)  National standards	State regulatory authorities, but delegate to national body APAC  Compulsory.	National body: From 2006, the Australian Psychological Accreditation Council (APAC) will assess and approve the qualifications from recognised Schools of Psychology for registration as a psychologist in Australia	High The APS and the Council of Registration Boards signed an agreement to establish APAC.	Trad form: Description of course, staff, resources	?
Medicine	Yes	State regulatory authorities AMC is “national standards advisory body for medical education” (National registration model being examined)	National: AMC’s Medical School Accreditation Committee oversees the accreditation process, and develops accreditation policy and procedures Compulsory	National body: Australian Medical Council’s Accreditation Committee –uses national expert visitation teams with out of state membership	High (AMC predominantly practitioners and university medical educators)	Description of course, staff, resources, student survey. The AMC concentrates predominantly on the ability of the medical school to achieve the objectives it has set for itself	Unis pay direct costs ~ \$70,000

Engineering	No	Professional not-for-profit association, Engineers Australia (EA), owned by its members  National competency standards	National - Engineers Australia accredits tertiary education courses to international benchmarks  Voluntary	Engineers Australia Accreditation Board	High EA is the accreditation body	Assessment is based on evidence of competencies: the teaching and learning environment, the structure and content of the program. Providers must have mechanisms for validating outcomes	Unis subscribe to EA annually: fee covers direct costs over 5 years
Accountancy	No	Partnership of National professional bodies CPA and ICAA and universities National standards	Voluntary – but necessary for recognition by professional bodies/eligibility for CPA, etc	Professional associations: CPA and ICAA	High CPA & ICAA set accreditation standards	Quality of course	?
Teaching	Yes	State regulatory bodies  State level standards	State regulatory bodies  Compulsory	State regulatory bodies	Low (in most states)	Course approval processes	?

**TABLE 5: Existing models of national accreditation**

Model of national accreditation	Example	Summary of model	
Pre-development	Teaching	Most State and Territory regulatory bodies have only recently been established with responsibility for registration and accreditation. No national agency, but cooperation exists through AFTRAA e.g. mutual recognition of registration exists; moves to greater alignment of standards for entry / registration.	
Status quo	Nursing	Existing State and Territory regulatory bodies conduct accreditation process independently. State and Territory governments and the regulatory bodies established the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council to facilitate the further development and alignment of nationally consistent standards for qualifications and registration. Accreditation of courses remains the responsibility of State and Territory regulatory bodies	
Partial Delegated Model (E.G. /)	Psychology/architecture	Existing State and Territory regulatory bodies continue to control registration and accreditation functions, but, through various mechanisms, agree to the establishment of a national agency (APAC/AACA) to conduct the accreditation process on their behalf .	
Full Delegated Model	Medicine	Existing State and Territory regulatory bodies continue to control registration, but Ministers created and delegated responsibility for the accreditation function to a national agency the Australian Medical Council.	
Professional Model	Accountancy/Engineering	National professional body establishes its own categories of membership. Access to professional membership is conditional on graduating from a profession approved tertiary preparation program	

Independent, Voluntary Professional Model	National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education(NCATE)/USA	Independent agency establishes itself to provide a voluntary national accreditation service (in the USA accreditation is carried out by private, non-profit organisations designed for this specific purpose). While states retain control over the licensure (registration) and course approval functions, many (~40) legislate that teacher education providers must obtain accreditation from NCATE if their graduates are to be eligible for state license.	NCATE is a “constituent” body. Its Board is made up of about 30 professional organisations, including teacher educators, Unions, subject associations and employer organisations
Tightly Coupled State Model	Training and Development Agency (TDA), England	National Government establishes statutory authority (TDA) and diverts to it funds allocated to teacher education. The Authority establishes standards and guidelines and invites service providers (universities and others) to apply for funding. Another national quality assurance agency (OfSTED) assesses courses and quality of graduates and TDA adjusts future level of funded student places accordingly.	

## Case Study: The legal profession

The regulation of lawyers, together with most substantive areas of law, is currently the responsibility of state and territory governments, courts and the local legal profession. Regulatory activities are supported in all jurisdictions by State and Territory legislation, but there are certain activities that derive from the inherent powers of the Supreme Courts of the States and Territories. Pure self-regulation of the legal profession has long since disappeared in Australia in favour of approaches that involve governments, the profession and the courts in the regulatory supervision of lawyers. In most jurisdictions, there is a system of co-regulation that actively involves both the government and the profession in the regulation of lawyers. In some States - South Australia and Western Australia, for example - the legal professional associations now have a limited role in the disciplinary system which is principally conducted by government.

Currently, accreditation of law degrees is the responsibility of Legal Practitioners Admissions Boards in the States and Territories. The applicant law school must submit details of the subjects proposed to be taught to this body by 30 June in the year preceding the degree accreditation. Materials are then submitted to the Qualifications Committee and the Accreditation Sub-committee in turn, who make a recommendation to accredit, or otherwise, to the Board.

The last decades have witnessed profound change in Australia. Public policy has embraced the concepts of open markets, competition policy and mutual recognition of state and territory systems of licensing and operations by each other state and territory. The legal profession has responded to these changes by recognising that the practice of law needed also to change and, consequently, the current structures are under review.

In 1994, the Law Council adopted the *Blueprint for the Structure of the Legal Profession* which has guided the Council, its Constituent Bodies and governments since then. In March 2002, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) commenced a further phase of examining the regulation of laws through the National Practice Model Laws Project. This project coincides with the Council's National Practice Project and is essentially about reviewing and seeking national consistency in the standards and rules applying to the regulation of lawyers.

The aim of the reform program being conducted by government in conjunction with the legal profession is to:

- Encourage competition leading to greater choice and other benefits for consumers;
- Enable integrated delivery of legal services on an Australia-wide basis which is commensurate with existing and future market demand for legal services;
- Streamline state and territory regulation to allow lawyers to practice 'seamlessly' within Australia; and

- Enable Australian law firms to compete on a national and international basis and market themselves to international companies looking to invest in Australia.

The National Practice Model Laws Project has involved the Law Council and its Constituent Bodies working closely in consultation with the Commonwealth and Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (SCAG) to introduce greater levels of consistency in State and Territories laws and regulations governing the way in which lawyers work. The Project places Australia at the forefront of legal profession regulation internationally.

In the initial stages of the Project, a range of options for reform were considered by the Law Council and submitted to government - *Towards National Practice*. A collaborative legal profession and government process followed to allow for detailed policy formulation and analysis to expand on the reform options. At the August 2003 SCAG meeting, Commonwealth, State and Territory Attorneys-General agreed to endorse comprehensive model provisions as a basis for consistent laws to remove barriers to the national practice of law and deliver a range of benefits for lawyers and consumers. This landmark agreement is a significant milestone in the Project, bringing Australia closer to achieving a truly national legal services market.

The direction adopted by government has been the 'national standards' approach. This means:

- The regulation of legal practice remains a responsibility of State and Territory governments and courts; and
- The focus is not on achieving 'one size fits all' regulatory structures, but rather that different regulatory structures operating at the state and territory level will apply nationally consistent standards of regulation.

At a general level, legal practice is subject to a co-regulatory model of professional associations requiring their members to meet standards of conduct and performance, and governmental bodies overseeing or conducting regulation of aspects of legal practice. The balance between government structures and professional associations performing regulatory duties varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and reflects local conditions and issues experienced over time. Equally, arrangements for the funding of regulatory processes vary between jurisdictions.

The National Legal Profession Model Laws Project will see changes to regulatory standards including, in some cases, the adoption of nationally uniform legislation to implement the national standards.

The Law Council has been championing regulatory reform over the last decade to facilitate the national practice of law. The finalisation of the National Legal Profession Model Bill and the National Legal Profession Model Regulations are landmark events in the history of regulation of the legal profession. Under the proposed reforms, Australian legal practitioners will be able to practice anywhere in Australia with the

one practising certificate. Among a range of provisions and regulations the model also provides for a uniform standard for law degrees and practical legal training, and Australia-wide recognition of those qualifications.

## **Summary**

In regulated professions such as medicine, architecture and teaching, responsibility for ensuring initial preparation courses rests constitutionally with State Governments. Graduation from an accredited professional preparation program is usually an eligibility requirement for registration as a practitioner.

The recent pattern in most professions, other than nursing and teaching, is for state and territory registration authorities to delegate their accreditation function to a national agency. In this situation, state regulatory authorities retain control over accreditation, but delegate the responsibility for implementing agreed accreditation procedures to national agencies. For architects, psychologists and doctors, these new national bodies are the result of a merging of functions formerly carried out separately by state regulatory authorities and professional associations (e.g. the RAI). They have been created because the relevant stakeholders and constituent organisations believed a national agency would be more effective in establishing a credible and efficient accreditation system.

In Australia, state and territory professional registration (and accreditation) boards are composed, in the main, of highly accomplished practitioners. Typically, they also include members of the public as well as people with expertise in other areas who can support aspects of their work, such as lawyers. In most professions, the relevant Minister appoints members of state registration bodies. Teacher registration agencies, such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching, are unusual in having part of their membership based on elections among registered practitioners.

The public entrusts accreditation agencies with developing assessment procedures that ensure graduates have the knowledge and skill required to practice safely and effectively. These agencies aim to serve the interest of their profession by ensuring that they first serve the public interest. Professional status flows from the credibility with which they carry out their quality assurance functions and responsibilities.

Unregulated professions such as engineering and accountancy have each established national accreditation procedures. These professions have increased their ability to shape university professional programs through developing a national agency with responsibility for accreditation. They report that the quality of programs has improved as a result. An important reason behind their move to national accreditation is the increasing pressure on universities to offer graduates engineering and accountancy qualifications that are recognised internationally.

Important considerations in moving to national accreditation have been: involving the best possible people in developing accreditation standards and guidelines and in

accreditation panels and visitation teams; opening up accreditation processes to greater transparency, independence and expertise; and providing much greater opportunities than in the past for collegial sharing of experience and ideas about effective ways to prepare professionals. The Australian Medical Council reports that, over time, accreditation has provided a valuable means of raising the quality of preparation in some medical schools where there was concern about capacity to meet the standards. A national approach has also strengthened the capacity of medical schools to defend themselves internally, as well as externally, against threats to the quality of provision in preparation programs.

Another study might examine what economies of scale have been associated with the establishment of national accreditation bodies. Arguments for national accreditation agencies have also been reinforced by the fact that graduates are also more likely to seek qualifications that are recognised nationally and internationally. The Australian Medical Council, for example, regularly uses experts in medical education from other countries in its accreditation procedures.

This review of developments in accreditation in other professions revealed further purposes for external accreditation that, as yet, are not commonly found in rationales for bodies responsible for the accreditation of teacher education courses.

Entrants to professions increasingly demand qualifications that have international credibility. Universities increasingly want to ensure that their professional preparation programs are attractive to students from overseas, as well as to local citizens. This means that pressure is coming from all stakeholders to increase the rigour of accreditation, and the guarantees it provides about the quality of graduates. Arrangements for mutual recognition are evolving in several professions. Graduates from Engineers Australia accredited courses, for example, now receive reciprocal recognition privileges offered by equivalent professional bodies in the USA, United Kingdom, Hong Kong (SAR), New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and others that are co-signatories to the Washington Accord, an international agreement on joint recognition of engineering qualifications.

Some professions, such as accountancy, have progressed from national accreditation to create international accreditation agencies as well, such as the European Quality Improvement System. Several business schools in Australian universities have applied successfully for EQIS accreditation – and are making use of this in marketing their courses. Other professions, such as engineering, have followed a different approach. Rather than create a new international accreditation agency, countries that are signatories to the Washington Accord on mutual recognition agree to subject the quality of their national accreditation systems to inspection by other signatories.

## **Chapter 5: Issues in teacher education accreditation**

The preceding chapters, in summary, have indicated considerable variation in the nature and rigour of current procedures for the accreditation in teacher education across states and territories. The legislation that describes the course approval and accreditation functions for states and territory registration authorities also varies considerably. To date, smaller states and territories have found that their capacity to implement a rigorous and useful accreditation processes can be limited. The procedures for accreditation set up by the Queensland College of Teachers were highly regarded by stakeholders within the state and by informed observers outside the state. Across the states and territories, there was general recognition that a national approach to accreditation, with common registration standards, would have several advantages over the current situation.

The Australian Council of Deans of Education has expressed support for a national approach to accreditation and some concern that current systems lead to duplication of work for universities that prepared teachers to work across state boundaries. Many universities now prepare graduates who move to teach in other states and some run the same course in more than one state. Universities in smaller states were strongly supportive of a national approach that would lead to greater cross-fertilisation of ideas.

The literature review documents how most professions in Australia, apart from teaching, have delegated the accreditation function to specially created national accreditation agencies. These agencies provide a nationally consistent accreditation system on behalf of both state and territory registration authorities and professional bodies. Teaching stands out as one of the few professions where state and territory governments, registration boards, and professional associations have yet to come together to establish a single national agency to carry out the accreditation function on their behalf - although there has been some movement in that direction recently.

Internationally, there are similar trends. The “Bologna Process” represents an agreement among European countries to make higher education qualifications more comparable, with major implications for teacher education. In the USA, England and Scotland there is a trend to move the emphasis of accreditation from “inputs”, such as the nature of courses, to measures of outcomes in relation to competency or performance standards for beginning teachers. For some time, state licensing (registration) bodies in the USA have been requiring universities to gain accreditation from a national professional body, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), if their graduates are to be granted a license to teach. While no country provided a model that could be replicated in Australia, NCATE came closest to offering a system that had rigour and that engaged the professional associations in all phases of its operation.

In summary, the review of developments in Australia and overseas, and in other professions, indicated that there was a positive attitude among most stakeholders to

the idea of a national approach to the accreditation of teacher education courses. There was growing recognition that a national approach might help stakeholders to achieve what they could not achieve separately.

## **Toward a national approach to the accreditation of teacher preparation courses**

### **Context**

Teaching Australia has been established for the purposes of supporting and enhancing the quality of teaching and school leadership, and strengthening and advancing the standing of the profession. A central principle is that teachers and school leaders shall conduct its functions. Consistent with its objectives, Teaching Australia intends to establish a national teacher education accreditation system, in collaboration with state and territory registration bodies and key stakeholders.

As Teaching Australia has no statutory authority, its accreditation system will be voluntary. It is not Teaching Australia's intention to develop an accreditation system that 'controls' the profession. Its accreditation system must contribute to raising the status of the profession, and encourage able people to enter it. It will operate in accordance with principles that require it to act openly, collaboratively, effectively and ethically. Once these principles are implemented, Teaching Australia's accreditation system should steadily gain credibility, both for its rigour and for its capacity to enhance the quality of professional preparation courses.

### ***Functions of a national system of accreditation***

Teaching Australia is uniquely placed to implement a national approach to accreditation that transcends existing state-based approaches and/or incorporates them. A Teaching Australia sponsored accreditation system, together with existing state-based accreditation and endorsement processes and teacher registration could provide an important vehicle for the profession to regularly review and improve programs in the light of research about effective practice and the changing expectations of practitioners. It could provide practitioners with a stronger voice in deciding who will join their profession and how professional competence will be defined and monitored.

A national accreditation system managed for and by the profession could reassure the states and teacher registration authorities who have legislative responsibility for education, employers and the community, that teacher education providers maintain high standards and that graduating teachers are ready and able to provide quality learning environments for students.

Currently, teacher education accreditation or approval processes are closely linked with registration in most jurisdictions. Internationally, accreditation processes form the basis for teacher registration by verifying that the initial teacher education providers and programs conform to specific 'quality standards' set by the approval

or accrediting agency. Typically, teacher registration and accreditation agencies operate in partnership and in conjunction with teacher education providers to assure continuous program improvement and quality. In Australia, a teacher education accreditation process that supplements existing state-based accreditation and approval, and operates independently of registration or other key quality or regulatory mechanisms, will need to add sufficient value to an institution's profile to warrant its participation. If national accreditation is a voluntary process, it will require considerable status and credibility to attract institution participation, and there would need to be clear benefits to an institution's profile and outcomes. Mandatory national accreditation would need to be tied to teacher registration or other regulatory frameworks or to state-based employment requirements.

Key functions of a national accreditation system are likely to include:

- (a) assessment and accreditation of initial teacher education programs and/or courses;
- (b) collaborating with institutions and the profession to ensure on-going improvements to initial teacher education programs respond to evolving social and educational needs and to emerging evidence on learning development, curriculum and pedagogy;
- (c) collaboration with accreditation systems in other countries (e.g. for mutual recognition); and
- (d) auditing national teacher workforce supply and demand with the aim of advising on requirements for teacher education places in universities

Importantly, a national approach to teacher education accreditation would aim to:

- Identify what the profession expects of beginning teachers and providers of teacher education;
- Ensure effective approaches to teacher preparation;
- Encourage research and innovation in approaches to teacher preparation;
- Add value to existing approval processes (as provided by existing regulatory authorities, current providers and employers);
- Acknowledge and respect the academic values, diversity and autonomy of teacher education schools/providers;
- Stress developmental and quality enhancing components of course assessment and accreditation;
- Build on existing institutional and authority-based course approval and accreditation mechanisms and experiences;
- Involve major stakeholders - the universities, the 'profession' (employers, teachers, students, professional organisations) and existing teacher registration authorities; and

- Draw on existing national bodies and other infrastructure for development and implementation.

### **Issues for consideration**

There are several key issues to be considered in developing a national accreditation process that supplements existing state-based accreditation and approval processes.

The main issues are:

1. Relationships between existing state accreditation functions and national accreditation functions
2. Accreditation standards and the knowledge base of teacher education
3. Principles for the development of accreditation systems
4. Articulating an agreed knowledge base and professional standards
5. Accreditation logistics, cycles and costs

In addressing each of the above, some fundamental questions that cross boundaries must be clarified. These include:

- Should accreditation standards and assessment procedures apply to both institutions and their total suite of programs (faculties, schools, or departments) or to teacher education courses individually? (A focus on outcomes in accreditation implies the latter);
- How can national accreditation have quality assurance as well as developmental and advocacy functions?
- Should accreditation act as both a minimal quality filter and a benchmark of high quality and excellence?
- What is an appropriate balance in course accreditation standards and assessment between input and outcome standards?
- What should be the nature of the relationship and balance between existing national (e.g. AUQA), state, employer and institutional quality assurance activities?
- What should be the relationship between a national accreditation system operated by Teaching Australia and existing arrangements for course approval and accreditation at state and territory levels; distinct, supplementary, or complementary?
- How should the costs of a national accreditation system be met?

## **I. Relationship between existing state accreditation functions and national accreditation functions**

Legislative authority for the accreditation or approval of teacher education courses rests with the state governments. In considering a new national accreditation system, the nature of the relationship between existing teacher registration and accrediting authorities and the new accrediting body must be explored. Given the present educational context, national accreditation is likely to operate as a supplementary accreditation process to complement and enrich existing state accreditation and approval processes, and perhaps, to provide beginning teachers with access to advanced levels of professional certification.

Currently, accreditation standards and processes differ substantially between the states and territories making national cohesiveness and consistency difficult to achieve. Despite mutual recognition provisions, current legislation and procedures mean that a graduate from a teacher education course in one state may not necessarily be eligible for teacher registration outside that state. It is sometimes necessary to apply individually to each state or territory registration authority. This situation is clearly not tenable in a relatively small country where workers (including teachers) and families are mobile and where there is an expectation of high quality, nationally consistent schooling and smooth transitions from school to school and education system to system.

A national accreditation system has the potential eventually to replace the need for accreditation at state and territory levels if it gains sufficient credibility. Whether national accreditation would create conditions for eligibility for registration as a teacher in any State or Territory of Australia – as is the case for medical practitioners whose medical course providers are accredited by the Australian Medical Council- is an important point for clarification and negotiation on a state by state and national basis. A national accreditation process should also consider assessing and/or endorsing New Zealand teacher education schools, and courses in other countries that provide significant numbers of teachers for Australia.

National accreditation will afford greater consistency, comparability and quality assurance across teacher education programs. It is a logical response to current concerns about coherence across education systems, educational quality and the challenges of strengthening the profession. National accreditation linked to state-based registration standards (or to a national registration system), would facilitate consistency in registration processes across the states and territories. State and territory teacher registration authorities would need to agree to grant registration to graduates from programs with national accreditation, subject to police checks, and perhaps other state-specific requirements that relate predominantly to curriculum.

A national accreditation system must also determine how non-complying courses and institutions are treated. Establishing clear protocols for dealing with non-

compliance is a major task in any accreditation process. What would happen, for example, if an initial teacher education course meets state accreditation or approval standards but does not gain national accreditation? Could a course meet state-based accreditation standards in Queensland, but not gain national accreditation? Could teachers achieve state registration in the Northern Territory and national accreditation through Teaching Australia processes, but not meet NSW registration requirements because their courses did not contain the specific mandatory curriculum requirements for teaching in NSW? Negotiation is needed about the ways in which mutual recognition provisions can work in practice when each state has different curriculum demands and registration conditions. Problems are already being experienced regarding state based course approval and mutual recognition requirements; teachers graduating in one state can have difficulty registering in another state (e.g. from NSW to Qld).

The USA approach to teacher education accreditation has some aspects that could be considered in developing an Australian accreditation framework. Most states have compulsory course approval criteria and procedures that are implemented by statutory professional standards bodies or state education departments. (Graduates in many states are required to pass tests of content and pedagogical content knowledge set by state governments, in addition to graduating from an approved course.) Universities can in addition, if they choose, apply for national professional accreditation to an independent national agency, such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), or the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). These national agencies serve as a second accrediting agency for institutions seeking additional credibility and commendation. Some states, instead, forgo operating their own course approval system and mandate that universities in their state must gain NCATE accreditation, if their graduates are to be eligible for a license to teach. In effect they outsource accreditation to NCATE .

In these senses, accreditation can either stand alone or complement state accreditation. In either case the accreditation standards and evaluation procedures would need to be objective and rigorous if they were to lead to improvement. A similar situation could evolve in Australia. A voluntary national teacher education accreditation scheme could complement existing state-based legislated and established approval systems. It might emphasise developmental and advocacy functions, but it would still need to have credibility as a quality assurance mechanism. It is possible that states, especially those without established accreditation processes, might negotiate to outsource their accreditation functions prescribed by regulation to a national body, while registration would remain a responsibility of state and territory Ministers of Education.

A national process of teacher education accreditation can provide a range of benefits. First, it can provide a nationally consistent set of expectations that leads to more consistent quality and outcomes for students. Secondly, it responds to the public's expectation that teacher education providers should meet rigorous standards and be nationally accredited, as are practitioners in many other

professions. A system of national accreditation would provide a benchmark for a national standard of professional excellence in teacher education, and the likelihood of enhancing the status of the profession. State and national accreditation can operate side by side, as it does in the USA.

National (and international eventually) accreditation may improve the visibility of teacher education programs within universities and other higher education providers. This might enable interested parties to negotiate and lobby more effectively at the national level for a better funding model for teacher education. Accreditation requirements can give teacher education providers leverage for increasing status and support from governments, and within their institutions.

## **2. Accreditation standards and the knowledge base of teaching and teacher education**

An accreditation system, by definition, is a system for assessing and endorsing the quality of professional preparation programs. The extent to which it is useful for improvement and the extent to which it gains respect and credibility are critically dependent on the validity of the accreditation standards, the evidence gathered about courses, and procedures for assessing that evidence.

Traditionally, accreditation standards have focused the nature of inputs such as course objectives, content, reading lists, and assessment tasks. Increasingly, accreditation standards for professional preparation courses are based on the capabilities or performance standards expected of entrants to the professions. Gaining accreditation, in other words, depends on evidence that graduates of that course are ready and able to teach.

There are three core components of a valid accreditation system:

- a) Accreditation standards: Standards for assessing and accrediting teacher preparation programs
- b) Guidelines and procedures for providing evidence in relation to the accreditation standards
- c) Procedures for setting standards and judging evidence.

Ideally, accreditation standards are soundly based in research on the characteristics of effective teaching and teacher education programs. A major issue in developing accreditation systems has been the limited knowledge base about effective approaches to teacher education and measures of outcomes (Cochrane-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Wilson, Floden & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001; Wilson & Floden, 2003). Rigorous Australian research in this area is also rare (Ingvarson, et al., 2005a). New approaches to accreditation that focus on standards-based performance outcomes have the potential to increase the validity of accreditation decisions while encouraging course providers to innovate and experiment with approaches to helping graduates meet those standards.

While there is evidence to support selection of entrants to teacher education on academic and verbal ability grounds, the limited knowledge base about effective modes of teacher education means that there will be doubts about accreditation standards based on program characteristics. There is strong Australian evidence, however, that the extent to which beginning teachers feel well prepared depends most on their knowledge of the content they are expected to teach, how to help students understand it and how to assess student progress in understanding that content (Ingvarson, 2005a; 2005b). There is also USA evidence from the Educational Testing Service that National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accredited courses produce a higher percentage of graduates who can pass state licensing examinations than do non-accredited courses (Gitomer, Latham & Ziomek, 1999).

Where they exist, current accreditation standards for teacher education programs in Australia are more likely to focus on inputs than outcomes (A typical set of accreditation criteria can be found in Appendix 3). In contrast, England and Scotland, for example, increasingly use accreditation standards that identify expected outcomes for beginning teachers. A major challenge for accreditation agencies is to go deeper than the current generic standards for graduates to explicate what teachers need to know and be able to do for each of the specific fields of teaching from early childhood teaching to senior secondary teaching. What someone needs to know about how to teach reading is very different from what someone needs to know to become an effective physical education teacher. Accreditation standards explicate this professional knowledge and do not debase the specialist professional knowledge base of teaching by glossing over these differences with generic standards.

Traditional accreditation procedures rely on accreditation committees reading submissions from university teacher education departments documenting how courses, staffing and resources meet input standards. The evidence in submissions is often verified by visits to the institution by members of the accreditation committees. This is a costly process of dubious validity, though visitations can provide valuable opportunities for sharing ideas and experiences.

### ***Measuring outcomes of teacher preparation programs***

A major task for accreditation agencies now is to ensure that there are valid and reliable measures of outcomes. These need to take multiple forms to ensure reliability. They can include portfolio entry tasks, measures of content and pedagogical content knowledge, classroom observations, reports of school principals, student evaluations, among others. Agencies have a choice here; they can ask the course providers to demonstrate how they assure themselves that graduates have met the performance standards, or they can develop procedures for gathering the evidence themselves, as the Training and Development Agency does in England.

The Architects Accreditation Council of Australia now requires applicants for the accreditation of architecture programs to provide documentary evidence that students have demonstrated achievement of competencies as set out in the National Competency Standards in Architecture. Scotland, similarly, asks institutions to conduct self-evaluations of outcomes using the Scottish Standards for Initial Teacher Education. In contrast, the Training and Development Agency in England uses visiting inspectors to observe a sample of student teachers nearing the end of their program in schools, and compares their judgements of their performance with those made by lecturers and supervising teachers. Many state licensing bodies in the USA now require graduating teachers to also take independent tests of professional knowledge, such as the PRAXIS II tests developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS). Some, such as Connecticut, also require newly appointed teachers to provide student work sample evidence during their first year or so of teaching that they can promote student learning and development. Others, such as California and Ohio, require a series of classroom observations using standards-based instruments such as PRAXIS III developed by ETS.

There is much work to be done in developing new methods for assessing teacher preparedness that adequately cover all the standards of knowledge and performance expected of graduates. However, there is evidence of considerable progress in this area in recent years (Ingvarson, 2005a; 2005b).

Once evidence about programs for accreditation has been gathered, judgements need to be made about whether they meet the level of performance expected. Procedures also need to be in place for training panel members and assuring they interpret the accreditation standards in similar ways. No accreditation system in Australia, to our knowledge, has addressed this issue. The Training and Development Agency in England has developed a range of levels of performance on its standards, but the profession has limited involvement in operating that accreditation system. NCATE also pays careful attention to setting standards and establishing acceptable levels of performance on the standards. Professional associations and teacher educators are deeply involved in these processes.

### ***Accreditation, quality and professionalism***

The over-riding requirement of accreditation is to ensure that teacher education providers produce teachers who are competent to practise as beginning teachers. Over the next decade, teaching quality and teacher education effectiveness will be under increasing external scrutiny. A major impetus for accreditation comes from concerns about the quality of some courses and their graduates. Accreditation provides a means by which quality can be better assured. As in most high stakes areas of education, there is debate over beliefs, values and ideologies and what constitutes quality. However, there is a remarkably high level of national and international agreement about standards for what beginning teachers are expected to know and be able to do. National accreditation can play an important role in the orientation of teacher education courses to better deliver evidence-based knowledge, skills and attitudes valued by the profession and the community and that

underpin teacher competence and quality. Enhanced teacher skills and quality will in turn strengthen and advance the standing of the profession.

National accreditation can provide assurance that accredited teacher education programs satisfy agreed national guidelines and standards. Once national guidelines and standards are established they will increase the overall consistency, credibility and rigour of teacher education courses. Smaller teacher education providers and education systems are most likely to benefit from a national accreditation system that provides more sharing of ideas and professional interaction and opportunities to benchmark their programs.

Importantly, national accreditation should afford greater trans-national consistency in teacher education course content and delivery. At the same time, the more localised state-based accreditation processes can ensure capture and reflection of educational diversity within the states and the unique needs of local school communities.

### ***Developing a national quality framework***

Progressing national accreditation will require an explicit and agreed framework of accreditation standards and measures of outcomes that is

- (a) designed in co-operation with key stakeholders,
- (b) promotes the transparency, visibility and the ongoing quality enhancement of teacher education,
- (c) ensures nationally compatible and comparable registration standards and qualifications, and
- (d) assures high and consistent “opportunity to learn” standards in terms of school experience, and linkages between theory and practice.

The review and assessment of teacher education providers and their courses should focus on establishing broad goals and objectives for initial teacher education courses, ensuring that graduate outcomes are consistent with national standards. Attention also needs to be given to monitoring processes for implementing curricula and assessing students, the quality of the institutional settings and the resources required to achieve objectives and attain outcomes.

### **3. Principles for the development of accreditation systems**

A central principle for rigorous and credible accreditation is that the process should be led by the profession and conducted by an independent agency. Collaborative processes should enable professional engagement, but the accreditation process must be objective and independent to maintain credibility. Collaboration between stakeholders and the accrediting body that is too close raises concerns about the objectivity and rigour of the accreditation processes. A successful national

accreditation process must be both independent of institutions being accredited, yet operated on behalf of the profession.

As a national accreditation process is intended to be a quality assurance process for and by the profession, close liaison and collaboration with teacher education providers (and other bodies, such as registration authorities and employers) during development of the accreditation and review process is necessary. Collaborative efforts between teacher education providers and practitioners are believed to enhance program quality and yield substantial professional benefits to graduates. The collaborative planning and self-study protocols typical in most accreditation processes have a developmental as well as an evaluative aspect. Whatever the processes adopted, guidelines for good practice in academic accreditation such as those developed by the Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada emphasise that the accreditation process must be “transparent, consistent, and fair” to maximise objectivity, rigour and confidentiality.

The area most likely to benefit from closer collaboration with the field is the professional experience or practicum component of professional preparation. Clearly however, factors outside accreditation such as resources, have an impact on quality.

#### **4. A common accreditation standards framework?**

A major purpose for developing accreditation and registration standards is to provide a “reasonably common body of knowledge and structured training experiences that are comprehensive and up to date” (Darling-Hammond, 1998). At the core of an accreditation system is consensus about the professional knowledge, skills and dispositions that are valued and expected of graduates by the community and by the profession. Professional standards articulate these values. Teacher education providers may use different approaches to helping graduates attain these standards, but attaining them is non-negotiable once the standards have been established. Standards are also ‘tools’ for making judgments about whether the capacities described in the standards have been attained. Accreditation standards provide a ‘consensus’ on what is worthy and most desirable in delivery of teacher education programs and teacher professional knowledge and practice. The standards explicate both the evidence-based and intuitive understandings and knowledge that characterise good practice. They articulate what is valued within teacher education and in the profession and what beginning teachers ‘should know, believe and be able to do’. Normally, professions are responsible for setting and monitoring their own professional standards and accreditation processes, but in an area such as teaching where the state has a ‘duty of care’ to students, standards development and monitoring should be conducted by an external body.

In the case of national accreditation, across state agreement about course assessment and outcomes will need to be negotiated. These are likely to build on existing internal university course approval processes, state accreditation processes and employer endorsements. Active involvement of practitioners and other

educational leaders in accreditation should counter common concerns that many teacher education academics are out of touch with community and school expectations and realities. There is a widespread view that university academics are too distant from day-to-day classroom realities and that this influences the currency of teacher education courses.

Notwithstanding concerns about potential lack of autonomy and independence in the accreditation process, establishing strong links between teacher education course developers and the profession via *Teaching Australia* stands to stem criticisms that teacher education courses are so institutionally and academically driven that they are divorced from the practical school and classroom contexts for which they are preparing teachers.

### ***Developing professional teaching standards***

Nationally and internationally, professional standards underpin accreditation processes. Professional standards describe a 'consensus model' of what is worthy and most desirable in professional knowledge and practice. In teaching, they describe the skills, knowledge and values that teachers require. It is generally agreed that teacher education accreditation requires clear and agreed professional standards. These standards explicate both the evidence-based and intuitive understandings and knowledge that characterise good practice. They articulate what is valued within the profession and what educators 'should know, believe and be able to do'. Professional standards become the 'tools' that determine what constitutes quality development and learning and provide specifications about levels of achievement and professional performance.

It is widely accepted that professional standards provide a powerful vehicle for teachers' professional learning. They provide a framework for guiding curriculum and structure within teacher education programs and a bridge between research and practice. But defining and agreeing on standards is difficult. Strongly debated questions relate to the explicit links between professional standards, including graduate standards, quality outcomes for students and the notion of 'profession'. If accreditation standards become too narrowly outcomes based, they are in danger of focusing only on technical skills and reducing teaching to a set of technical competencies.

In developing national accreditation the scope and complexity of teachers' work in a national sense, the benefits of national standards for stakeholders, 'ownership' of the standards, and ways in which standards can be demonstrated and assessed as part of a course review and accreditation process all need clarification and articulation.

Most states are currently in the process of articulating the scope and the content of their teachers' work to reach agreement on the basic principles underlying teaching standards for registration and accreditation processes at the state level. National accreditation should capitalise on the current MCEETYA *National Framework for*

*Professional Standards for Teaching* and on state based developments to build its professional standards.

A national accreditation process will first need agreement on professional principles before professional standards can be developed. The current *National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching* provides an 'organising structure' or 'architecture' which establishes nationally agreed, foundational dimensions and elements of 'good teaching' under the headings: Professional Knowledge; Professional Practice; Professional Values; and Professional Relationships. It is generally accepted that teaching standards, and specifically graduate standards, must be developed in conjunction with course approval frameworks and procedures and with stakeholders. Further, while there are core professional principles and a degree of commonality within and between teacher education programs, there are some unique dimensions to the professional standards for teachers of say, senior physics and mathematics and teachers of children in the first years of school.

Professional standards are likely to be developed within the following broad categories that span professional knowledge, practice, values and relationships:

- (1) content knowledge (i.e., knowledge of child development and learning; family relationships and processes; subject matter knowledge in literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the visual and performing arts, and movement/physical education; as well as knowledge about children's learning and development in these areas);
- (2) pedagogical and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions; and
- (3) the ability to promote significant educational learning experiences that enhance social and cognitive outcomes for children.

Presently, the *National Framework* is being used as a base by state and territory registration authorities to develop and nationally align emerging entry or graduate level teaching standards. MCEETYA has requested that this work be completed in 2006. In NSW for example, the new *Framework of Professional Teaching Standards* (2005) has drawn on the *National Framework* as a guide and key point of reference. Northern Territory draft professional standards have also drawn on this framework.

Establishing and reviewing professional frameworks for entry to the profession and for on-going professional development is important to robust accreditation. This implies a national system that is more than a rubber stamp. A new national accreditation system will be dependent on reaching agreement about underpinning standards for professional practice and then using these to shape the accreditation criteria.

## **5. Accreditation logistics, cycles, status and compliance issues**

As state-based teacher education accreditation processes are not yet universal across Australia, there are few definitive guidelines about status or duration of approvals or about ways of ensuring compliance. Accreditation and teacher registration at the state and territory levels are necessarily mandatory, but independent professional bodies can possibly set themselves up as providers of a voluntary accreditation system, as occurs in North America. (The USA provides the only examples of private non-profit accreditation organisations in teacher education.)

Whatever the final approach to national accreditation, the key to a valued and credible accreditation process is intellectual and professional rigour combined with a straightforward approval pathway for teacher education providers.. Common procedures, terminology, and evidence expectations across courses and institutions, together with customised reporting templates, can streamline review and approval processes at the institution level. Importantly, teacher education providers and programs must be evaluated on their capacity to demonstrate graduate proficiency across core requirements, criteria or standards. (A typical set of steps in an accreditation process can be found in Appendix 3.)

Deciding the length of the course review and approval cycle is not as straightforward as first seems. If it is too short, say less than about five years, a cohort of students may not complete a course before it changes. Some internal review processes in universities take too long and occur too often. There are cases, in some professions, of courses being reviewed every three to four years. The benefits of the review are barely felt before the course is reviewed again. Many students who take longer than the typical four years to complete a degree find themselves having to complete subjects from a new course to graduate. In addition, frequent review processes are onerous and expensive for institutions and staff. Too long, say 7-10 years, and education and staff change dramatically. An accreditation cycle of about 5 years seems likely to be most effective.

Some institutions, especially private providers, are currently involved in several forms of course approval, placing considerable stress on staff with no evidence of improved practice or graduate outcomes. One strategy to minimise the resource impact of national accreditation is to schedule internal university and external accreditation concurrently. This would be especially important if both state and national accreditation systems were in operation.

Typically, an accreditation application results in one of the following actions:

Accreditation or (re-accreditation) for a certain term – say a five, seven or ten year term, without conditions.

Provisional accreditation with conditions, requiring provision of a report or reports on specified matters at specified times with follow-up visits or actions.

Denial or termination of accreditation. Standards for program accreditation are not met and cannot be met in the near future.

Deferral of application until certain deficiencies are corrected or conditions met.

Normally, institutions that are denied accreditation or given a provisional accreditation seek to have decisions reviewed within an appeals process.

### ***Fees and charges***

At present, Australian tertiary institutions are not charged a fee to participate in state-based accreditation operated by teacher registration authorities. They do, however, incur substantial direct and indirect costs in meeting the requirements of accreditation. Typically, private higher education providers pay a fee to be accredited by the higher education authorities in their respective jurisdictions. In the USA, it is usual to pay fees for NCATE or TEAC teacher education accreditation. Deciding how to meet the substantial costs likely to be involved in a new national accreditation scheme, plus existing costs for internal course approval, state-based teacher education approval/accreditation linked to registration and possibly employer endorsement, will need to be explored in developing a national accreditation model. Accreditation of professional preparation programs for other professions in Australia is generally fee-based.

### ***The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)***

The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) operates at the institutional level and holds higher education institutions accountable for adherence to the institution's *internally* defined mission and objectives.

The roles of AUQA and external accreditation authorities charged with assessing the quality of professional preparation programs are quite distinct. AUQA is an independent, not-for-profit national agency that promotes, audits, and reports on quality assurance in Australian higher education. AUQA was formally established by the Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in March 2000.

AUQA's audit role is distinct from external accreditation roles of state and territory statutory authorities in the case of regulated professions and from professional bodies in the case of unregulated professions. Typically, state and territory statutory authorities and professional bodies in most professions require professional preparation providers and courses to be assessed against *external* standards for program quality and graduate knowledge and skill.

AUQA audits of self-accrediting institutions are whole-of-institution audits based on internal self-assessment and a site visit. AUQA investigates the extent to which institutions are achieving their missions and objectives. It assesses the adequacy of

the institution's quality assurance arrangements in the key areas of teaching and learning, research and management, including the institution's overseas activities. It also assesses the institution's success in maintaining standards consistent with quality frameworks for university education in Australia.

### **Developing a national accreditation system**

Developing clear purposes, principles, standards and criteria for the assessment and accreditation of teacher education providers and programs will be a critical first step for a national accreditation agency. These standards should emphasise general principles underpinning successful initial teacher education providers and courses. The foundations for such standards are already well developed in work by MCEETYA, the Australian teacher registration authorities and overseas teaching bodies. General accreditation principles and professional standards must be developed by or on behalf of the profession. Building a national institutional and course accreditation framework and set of accreditation procedures is likely to draw on existing successful accreditation models (eg. NCATE, Queensland College of Teachers, AMC). The process would involve key stakeholders such as practitioners, teacher education providers, education ministries, and employers.

This background paper has summarised current arrangements for approval and accreditation of teacher preparation courses across the states and territories and developments toward national accreditation in other professions. It has also outlined some of the main issues and tasks that developers of an effective accreditation system would need to address.

Providers of teacher education face several difficulties currently in providing optimal conditions for teacher preparation that they should not be expected to deal with alone. Governments, the profession and universities have a shared interest in, and a mutual responsibility for, the quality of teacher preparation. A national accreditation system has the potential to build a stronger partnership that will reflect that shared responsibility and strengthen the quality of teacher education in Australia. Operating a national accreditation system has the potential to engage many more teachers and school leaders productively in Australia's teacher preparation system.

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## Appendix I: Approaches to standards and accreditation of pre-service teacher education programs in other countries

State/Country	Scotland
Name and type of responsible bodies	<p>The Standing Committee on Quality Assurance in Teacher Education in Scotland.</p> <p>The Standard was developed under the aegis of a Standing Committee on Quality Assurance in Teacher Education in Scotland. The stakeholders included Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), local authorities, schools, the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education in Scotland, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), HM Inspectors of Schools (HMI) and the Scottish Executive.</p> <p>Neither this committee nor any of its member groups has sole authority to accredit or approve courses of teacher education. The General Teaching Council for Scotland, whose main function is to keep a register of 'qualified' teachers has legislated responsibility to:</p> <p>'keep itself informed of the education and professional preparation of teachers in teacher education institutions and to review the content and arrangement of teacher education courses.'</p>
Standards	<p>The "Standard for Initial Teacher Education" comprises a set of benchmark statements that describe requirements for each program of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Scotland. It was prepared by a group of ITE specialists drawn from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the GTCS, local authorities, schools, and HMI, with an observer from QAA.</p> <p>The Standard describes 'core professional interests' and 'key educational principles'. It emphasises the need to understand and respect different educational contexts and to acknowledge that the core professional interests will be put into practice in diverse social, cultural, linguistic and educational settings.</p> <p>The standard sets out 'Benchmarks' and 'Expected Features' within a 'triangle' of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional knowledge and understanding</li> <li>Professional skills and abilities</li> <li>Professional values and personal commitment</li> </ul> <p>The 'Expected Features' describe what the teachers will know and be able to do in relation to each benchmark. All are cross-referenced to competency statements that are currently in use in ITE programs in Scotland, and are set out in the <i>Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education in Scotland (SOED, 1998)</i>.</p>

Purposes of the Standard	<p>The Standard was expected to be 'useful' to:</p> <p>Those involved in designing, approving, accrediting and validating programs;</p> <p>Those who teach in these programs, including staff in HEIs and schools;</p> <p>Those engaged in external examining;</p> <p>Prospective employers;</p> <p>Those who are responsible for the assessment, review and monitoring of programs;</p> <p>Students who undertake these programs; those who are responsible for building CPD on the statement indicated in this document; and</p> <p>Those members of other professions, and the public more generally, who have an interest in the professional education of teachers. (QAA 2000)</p>
Assessment and Accreditation	<p>Each university and college of higher education in Scotland that provides teacher education courses is responsible for ensuring that appropriate standards are being achieved. The Quality assurance Agency for Higher Education in Scotland reviews standards and quality in all universities and colleges. It uses peer review processes where teams of academics conduct audits and reviews.</p>
Recognition	<p>Graduating from a recognised teacher education program entitles a beginning teacher to registration with the GTCS</p>

State/Country	<b>New Zealand</b>
Name and type of responsible bodies	<p>The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)</p> <p>The NZQA has the overarching mandate for the approval of all courses and the accreditation of institutions that provide them. In the New Zealand setting, these institutions include universities, colleges of education, institutes of technology and polytechnics, wānanga and private training establishments. In practice, some accreditations are delegated to other quality assurance bodies linked to the university, college of education or institute of technology sector.</p> <p>New Zealand Teachers Council</p> <p>Under the legislation, any teacher education program that may lead to registration as a teacher must also be approved by the <b>NZ Teachers Council</b>. This applies to those teaching in the early childhood, primary and secondary sectors, and to programs delivered by each type of institution. Memoranda of understanding have been developed between the Teachers Council and the quality assurance agencies to streamline this process and standardise expectations. These memoranda recognise that the Teachers Council does <i>not</i> have an accreditation role but that the Council, as the professional body for teachers in New Zealand, has a role in ensuring that all teacher education programs graduate teachers who have demonstrated developing competence in teaching, are of good character and are “fit to be a teacher”.</p>
Standards	<p>The New Zealand Teachers Council is currently developing ‘graduating standards’ for the purpose of provisionally registering new teachers. It is not intended, at this stage, that these standards will be used to accredit actual programs or courses, but they will influence course content.</p>
Assessment and Accreditation	<p>The Teachers Council and the appropriate quality assurance agency work cooperatively to form expert panels who visit the institutions, evaluate their teacher education programs and recommend them for approval or re-approval. This takes place for newly developed programs and then on a regular five-yearly cycle. Teacher education program are also monitored on an annual basis by an external monitor appointed by the quality assurance agency with the agreement of the institution and the Teachers Council. The Teachers Council works with the four quality assurance agencies to ensure that this occurs.</p>
Recognition	<p>Graduating from an <i>approved</i> teacher education program entitles a beginning teacher to provisional registration and to access an advice and guidance program leading to full registration. The guidelines for the advice and guidance program, <i>Towards Full Registration</i>, are produced and updated jointly by the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Teachers Council and published by Learning Media.</p>

State/Country	<b>England</b>
Name and type of responsible bodies	<p>The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) sets the standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and the Requirements for Initial Teacher Training (RITT)</p> <p>The TDA is an executive non-departmental public body of the Department for Education and Skills</p> <p>Its stated purpose is ‘to raise children’s standards of achievement and promote their well-being by improving the training and development of the whole school workforce. Its strategic aims are to:</p> <p>Ensure schools have an adequate supply of good quality newly qualified teachers</p> <p>Enable schools to develop the effectiveness of their support staff</p> <p>Enable schools to develop the effectiveness of their teachers and keep their knowledge up to date</p> <p>Support schools to be effective in the management of training, development and of their workforce.</p> <p>The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspects Teacher Training Institutions to ensure that they meet the QTS and RITT</p> <p>OFSTED is the inspectorate for children and learners in England. It has a comprehensive system of inspection and regulation covering childcare, schools, colleges, children’s services, teacher training and youth work. It carries out hundreds of inspections and regulatory visits each week.</p> <p>OFSTED is a non-ministerial government department accountable to Parliament.</p> <p>The General Teaching Council (GTC) for England registers teachers on the basis of their achievement of Qualified Teacher Status</p>
Standards	<p><b><i>The Standards and Requirements for Qualified Teacher Status</i></b></p> <p>The Standards and Requirements for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) set out:</p> <p>the Secretary of State’s <i>Standards</i>, which must be met by trainee teachers before they can be awarded Qualified Teacher Status; and</p> <p>the <i>Requirements</i> for training providers and those who make recommendations for the award of QTS.</p> <p><b><i>The Standards</i></b></p> <p>The Standards for the award of QTS are outcome statements that describe what a trainee teacher should know, understand, and be able to do in order to achieve QTS. The Standards are organised in three sections:</p> <p>S1. Professional Values and Practice</p> <p>S2. Knowledge and Understanding</p> <p>S3 Teaching</p>

	<p>Each of these is further articulated in indicators that describe the criteria for the award. The Teaching section has 3 sub areas: planning, expectations and targets; monitoring and assessment; teaching and class management.</p> <p>Teacher training institutions must prepare their students to meet the standards for Qualified Teacher Status set by the TDA. The TDA's 'Requirements for Initial Teacher Training' that must be met by the training institutions wishing to maintain their status of recognised providers of teacher training.</p> <p>The Requirements are organised in four sections:</p> <p>Trainee entry requirements</p> <p>Training and Assessment</p> <p>Management of the ITT partnership</p> <p>Quality Assurance</p>
Assessment and Accreditation	<p>ITT inspections assess and report on the management and quality assurance of the provision. Full inspections report on the quality of the training provided and the standards achieved by trainees. The inspectors examine course documentation, trainees' assignments and observe some of the training provided in both the training institution (university or college) and in partner schools. They also interview tutors, trainees and partnership managers to judge how well the partnership is managed and how quality is assured. Providers' self-evaluations are a key element of this process. Towards the end of the course, a sample of trainees is observed in order to judge the standards they have achieved.</p> <p>Short inspections are held for training institutions that were judged to be 'good' in the previous inspection. As well as reporting on and grading the quality of the management and quality assurance of the provision, this inspection will or will not confirm the previous good quality of the training and trainee's teaching standards. All providers are inspected twice in six years.</p>
Purposes of the inspections	<p>The main purposes of the OFSTED ITT inspections are to:</p> <p>Ensure public accountability for the quality of initial teacher training</p> <p>Stimulate continuous improvement in the quality of provision</p> <p>Provided objective judgements on providers for public information</p> <p>Inform policy</p> <p>Enable the statutory link to be made between funding and quality</p> <p>Check compliance with statutory requirements</p>
Recognition	<p>Teacher training institutions who meet the requirements of the TDA and OFSTED are recognised as providers of courses leading to qualifications that entitle graduates of their programs to receive Quality Teacher Status. A person who does not have QTS or its recognised equivalent is not eligible to teach in schools in England.</p>

State/Country	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>United States of America</b>  <b>The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education(NCATE)</b></p>
<p>Name and type of responsible body</p>	<p>NCATE's main role is to provide a voluntary, national assessment and accreditation service. Most states also have their own agencies or professional standards bodies responsible for approval of teacher education programs. NCATE accreditation is usually voluntary, but some states mandate it.</p> <p>NCATE is a non-profit, non-governmental organization. It is a coalition of more than 30 national associations (including the main teacher unions), representing the profession of education. Membership on its policy boards includes representatives from organizations of (1) teacher educators (2) teachers (3) state and local policy makers and (4) professional specialists.</p> <p>NCATE standards are used primarily to accredit programs of colleges and universities that prepare teachers for work in schools and educational settings.</p> <p>An important part of NCATE's mission is to provide assurances to the public that the graduates of accredited institutions have acquired the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. (NCATE, 2006, p. 1)</p> <p>NCATE also aims to provide leadership for reform in teacher education:</p> <p>Through standards that focus on systematic assessment and performance based learning, NCATE encourages accredited institutions to engage in continuous improvement based on accurate and consistent data. By providing leadership in teacher education, NCATE ensures that accredited institutions remain current, relevant and productive, and that graduates of these institutions are able to have a positive impact on P-12 student learning. (NCATE, 2002, p. 1)</p>
<p>Standards</p>	<p>The NCATE standards are developed and articulated by groups of teaching practitioners under the aegis of the Standards Committee of the NCATE Unit Accreditation Board. The standards are revised every five years to ensure that they reflect research and state of the art educational practice.</p> <p>The 6 'core' NCATE standards are divided into two sections: 'candidate performance' (standards 1 and 2) and 'unit capacity' (standards 3-6). Each of the 6 standards contains three components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) the language of the standard itself</li> <li>(2) rubrics that delineate the elements of each standards, and</li> <li>(3) a descriptive explanation of the standards.</li> </ul>

Purpose	<p>The NCATE standards are designed primarily for the accreditation of colleges and departments of education, but they also define what is to be expected of newly graduated teachers. Of the 6 overarching standards, Standard I is the most explicit in this regard:</p> <p>Standard I: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions</p> <p>Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state and institutional standards.</p>
Professional learning	<p>The INTASC standards provide a basis for and are part of a standards based professional learning and assessment system which has different iterations and is operationalised in different contexts.</p>
Assessment and Certification	<p>Assessment of graduates' performance is integral to NCATE standards development and implementation. Unlike in the past, when institutions were accredited on the basis of the quality of the courses offered, now quality of teaching, as demonstrated by actual performance assessed against the standards, is a crucial factor when the decision to accredit a course is being made:</p> <p>NCATE 2000 aims to create a performance-based system <i>that takes into account graduates' performance in the accreditation decision</i> (our emphasis). While continuing to examine what programs do in the course of preparing teachers, the system will also use performance measures ranging from education schools' internal assessments of students, including portfolios, videotapes, and performance events of various kinds, to scores on performance-based state licensing examinations that are compatible with NCATE's standards (Darling- Hammond, 2000).</p> <p>In the past, it was sufficient to demonstrate that candidates had completed coursework which covered content stipulated under the various standards, but under the new NCATE/state guidelines program completers must also demonstrate mastery of educational precepts in a P-12 educational setting....the performance of an institution's program completers and graduates and the performance of its students' students will be expected to meet acceptable standards in the national accreditation and state approval processes. (Conn 1999)</p>
Recognition and Incentives	<p>NCATE accreditation is voluntary. About 600 of the country's 1,300 education courses were accredited in 2001, and these produced more than two thirds of America's teachers (Darling Hammond, 2001, p.753). The main incentive for teacher education institutions to seek NCATE accreditation is that, among educators, NCATE is seen to provide guarantees of quality.</p>

<p><b>USA</b></p>	<p><b>The Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)</b></p> <p>Founded in 1997, (TEAC) grew out of a task force of the Council of Independent Colleges. Individual TEAC directors are elected at annual meetings by the current directors. The TEAC Chair is president emeritus of the Council of Independent Colleges. The TEAC Board of Directors comprises individuals who are major stakeholders in education, but these individuals are not representative of any organisation.</p>	<p>TEAC has three 'quality principles'</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence of student learning</li> <li>2. Valid assessment of student learning</li> <li>3. Institutional learning</li> </ol> <p>Additionally, all TEAC programs are required to meet standards that require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credible evidence of their common claim that their graduates are competent</li> <li>• Evidence that the means by which they establish the evidence is valid</li> <li>• Evidence that program decisions are based on evidence</li> <li>• Evidence that the institution is committed to the program.</li> </ul>	<p>TEAC reviews only programs (not whole institutions). The only programs reviewed are those for which there is evidence that their graduates are 'competent, caring and qualified.'</p> <p>Programs are assessed on the extent to which they live up to their own claims for competence and their own stated goals (within TEAC principles). A variety of evidence is called for, including evidence of graduates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The assessments are made by reviewers on the basis of evidence supplied about generic rather than discipline specific standards.</p> <p>EAC accreditation is voluntary.</p>
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## **Appendix 2: A typical set of accreditation criteria**

### **Key components:**

- a) Standards for teacher education providers, and
- b) Standards for course, curricula and graduate outcomes

#### *(1) Standards for teacher education providers*

Standards for teacher education schools relate to:

- Provider mission and objectives
- Student admission policy and selection criteria
- Student support
- Academic staff and school-based practicum supervision staff
- Educational resources
- Graduation rates, employment destinations and employer satisfaction
- School governance and administration

#### *(2) Standards for course, curricula and graduate outcomes*

Standards for course curriculum and graduate outcomes would relate to:

- The teacher education curriculum
- Course management
- Course evaluation and improvement mechanisms
- Professional experience/practicum
- Assessment of students
- Involvement with stakeholders and collaboration with the profession
- Professional attributes and standards for graduate teachers, including:
  - a) teacher content knowledge (i.e., knowledge of child development and learning; family relationships and processes; subject matter knowledge in literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the visual and performing arts, and movement/physical education; as well as knowledge about children's learning and development in these areas);
  - b) teacher pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions; and
  - c) teacher professional attributes and characteristics, including awareness of the importance of on-going professional development.

### Appendix 3: Steps in a typical accreditation process

Teacher education provider tasks	National accreditation agency tasks	Timeframe
Institution applies for accreditation and/or to have a suite of courses or course accredited or reviewed.		6 to 18 months from required/expected submission date
	Course review expert panel nominated	
Institution liaises with accrediting agency (via a liaison officer) to ensure its program and courses are aligned with national requirements		
Institution prepares a report (self-study) on its capacities and the new or revised course or suite of courses. It indicates how Professional Standards will be met and how graduate outcomes are assessed and assured. In the establishment phase institutions will need to seek approval for existing courses	Accreditation authority provides a template or questionnaire to guide the process.  The expert panel reviews this material and then conducts a site visit to the provider, inspecting its facilities in teaching hospitals.	
Provider submits institutional accreditation application		
	Panel reviews course documentation. Prepares draft report	3-6 months ↓
Site visits (3-5 days in duration)  The institution demonstrates the degree to which it meets the required standards. Audit of facilities and resources. Interviews with deans and HOS course coordinators, teaching staff and students	The panel visits providers to ascertain the viability of teacher education schools to offer initial teacher programs and specific courses and the degree to which is they meet the required input and output standards. Prepares draft report	

Provider responds to feedback on course documentation and on elements of institutional capacity (as required)	Panel liaises with teacher education provider on elements of institutional capacity and course/s (as required)	
	Panel provides a report outlining the team's analysis of the course and institution quality and assessment of performance against the standards	
	Panel reports to authority's governing body or accreditation committee with recommendation about accreditation status	
	Authority's governing body or accreditation committee endorses report and advised accreditation outcome	
Provider advised of accreditation status		Accreditation granted for between 5 - 10 yrs.
Institution addresses non compliance matters if necessary		
Institution reports on an annual basis	Panel receives report on an annual basis	

## Explanatory notes

### *The accreditation panel*

Having been notified of the intention to apply for accreditation, the accreditation agency appoints a review team or panel, including a panel chair. The chair (and/or selected team members) might first liaise with the institution seeking accreditation (as in the Queensland model). The accreditation team reviews the institution's self study documentation against the professional standards and visits the institution to gauge the extent to which it meets institutional and course requirements.

### *The institutional report or self-study*

An institutional or 'self-study report' describes and explains the institution and its courses in detail. Self-study is used to show how the institution demonstrates meets professional standards. Self-study can focus on both the institution's capacity to deliver the course (facilities, staffing levels and staff expertise and qualifications, resources, quality monitoring procedures, internal course approval processes, and degree requirements, policies regarding student selection and progress) and the extent to which the course and graduates meet specified professional standards. Specifically, it indicates procedures for course and student assessment in the light of professional standards and other accreditation requirements. The institution provides data about facilities, resources and staffing and student profiles and outcomes, such as graduation rates and employment destinations.

There may also be an intermediate step, as in the current Queensland accreditation model, where the accrediting authority liaises with the institution during the course (or review) development process to ensure that standards are being met and that quality is sustained or enhanced in the light of contemporary evidence and best practice.

Self-study is generally a collegial process that assesses the degree to which input and professional standards are being or will be met.

#### *Site visits*

Site visits enable the institution to demonstrate the degree to which it meets the required course and graduate standards. Typically, visits involve interviews with deans and heads, course coordinators, teaching staff and students and an audit of facilities and resources. They may also involve discussions with employers and other stakeholders.

#### *Accreditation outcomes*

After liaison on elements of course development (if required), the review of course documentation and the site visit, a report indicating compliance with the accreditation authority's requirements is prepared and the accreditation outcome is advised. The reports outlines the accreditation team's assessment of the institution's performance against the standards and its analysis of course and institution quality. Course approval is based on the institution's stated and expected compliance with specific course requirements (such as days or professional experience) and predicted graduate outcomes. The final decision about accreditation is made by the accreditation authority's governing body or accreditation committee.

#### *Selecting and training accreditation teams*

The accreditation process must specify the composition of the evaluation/accreditation panels to ensure that they are national in orientation, have relevant expertise and meet EEO and other requirements. In some areas of teacher

education, such as science and health and PE for example, the pool of experts is smaller than others and avoiding 'cosy' relationships and 'sweetheart' teams requires careful planning.

While accreditation teams are comprised of experts in teacher education, education and specific disciplines, they do require training in evaluation processes to ensure that accreditation processes and criteria are applied consistently across institutions and courses. If professional standards are uniformly clear, then assessment is relatively straightforward. Important in achieving consistency is the way the institution's performance is interpreted and assessed against the standards. Standards contain a range of complex concepts and nuances and they must be assessed within a common framework and on a common scale. While a standard may be judged as either met or not met, it may also require a judgement to be made about the institution's level of performance against that standard. These judgements typically involve qualitative as well as quantitative aspects.

#### *Logistics and costs*

A national accreditation scheme involving self-study, document review and site visits is likely to be both time consuming and expensive. Decisions on cost appropriation have to be made. There needs to be a clear argument to government, teacher education providers and other key stakeholders, that the considerable direct and indirect costs involved with accreditation are worthwhile.







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