

Question One:

How long have Teacher for Australia Graduates been in schools?

Answer:

Teach for Australia graduates have or will be recruited via five recruitment rounds. Three rounds have been completed. A breakdown of when each cohort of graduates from the five recruitment rounds has or will commence in schools is below.

- Associates in Cohort 1 in schools 2010 and 2011
- Associates in Cohort 2 in schools 2011 and 2012
- Associates in Cohort 3 in schools 2012 and 2013
- Associates in Cohort 4 in schools 2013 and 2014
- Associates in Cohort 5 in schools 2014 and 2015

Question Two:

Why are NAPLAN results released at the time they are and not earlier?

Answer:

NAPLAN results are released in September each year, which is approximately 4 months after students sit the tests. This is the time required to mark and statistically analyse a full population test such as NAPLAN that delivers four papers per student to over a million students (i.e. over 4 million NAPLAN tests).

After students sit the tests they are collected, transported to marking centres, and scanned before marking can begin. Given the remoteness of some schools, it can take up to three weeks before all materials have been returned. The marking of the writing task in the larger states, for example, takes up to 4 weeks to complete prior to the data being available for analysis to begin.

The marked data is then collated for each student and a database including each student and his or her record on every test and item is compiled within each jurisdiction. The statistical analysis undertaken within jurisdictions currently takes 4–6 (7-day) weeks. The data is then sent to ACARA for a national Central Analysis of Data process. The data is then cleaned and analysed rigorously for the Stage 1 process which is used to construct the NAPLAN Summary (Preliminary) Report. After the data has been analysed centrally it is returned to jurisdictions for checking and use in the printing of student reports. The printing, packing and distribution of student reports is another complex process that takes up to two weeks to complete prior to distribution to schools.

Question Three:

What are the costs of NAPLAN?

Answer:

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) manages the national aspects of NAPLAN testing, consisting of test development, analysis and reporting of results at the national level, on behalf of the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC). ACARA is funded 50 per cent by the Australian Government and 50 per cent by the states and territories of Australia, with each state and territory contributing an amount based on the relative student numbers within its jurisdiction.

ACARA undertakes work on the national assessment and reporting programs within its budget. The Australian Government contributed \$12.175m to the ACARA budget over the 2011–12 financial year.

Administration and delivery of NAPLAN tests, including printing, distribution and marking of test papers, and the printing and distribution of student reports is the responsibility of the relevant test administration authority in each state and territory. This obligation to meet the delivery costs is a requirement of the National Education Agreement under which the Commonwealth provides general recurrent funds to states and territories.

Question Four:

What criteria must a teacher meet to demonstrate that they are proficient for each stage of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers?

Answer:

A description of the requirements that teachers must meet for each standard at each career stage (including the proficient stage) of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers is available at <http://www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au/Standards/AllStandards>.

Question Five:

What are the respective roles of the Commonwealth, states and territories and the Catholic and Independent systems in the delivery of pre-primary, primary and secondary education?

Answer:

Australia is a federation which includes six states, two territories and a national government (generally known as the Australian Government). Australia has both public and private schools which are usually referred to as 'government' and 'non-government' schools.

Government schools operate under the direct responsibility of the relevant state or territory minister. They have a less direct relationship with non-government schools, which are established and operate under conditions determined by government and state or territory registration authorities. Non-government schools can be part of a system of schools (systemic) or completely independent (non-systemic).

Many non-government schools have a religious affiliation and the non-government sector in Australia is often split into 'Catholic' and 'Independent' for reporting purposes. The states and territories (the states) have primary responsibility for funding government schools and provide supplementary funding assistance to non-government schools. The Australian Government is the primary source of public funding for non-government schools and also provides supplementary funding assistance to government schools.

Questions Six

Has the Country Areas Program funding in New South Wales had been rolled into the central bucket? Can you outline for us what has happened to the Country Areas Program?

Answer:

The Australian Government Country Areas Program (CAP) funding is provided specifically for non-government school students disadvantaged by geographic isolation. The funds are provided at the national level (as a national grant) and are distributed between the two non-government educational sectors: Catholic and independent, on the basis of relative need. This relative need is determined on a proportional demographic basis.

The Australian Government recognises that the non-government education authorities in the states and Northern Territory are best placed to determine the local allocation of CAP funds, according to the priorities identified by them and based on their knowledge of local need, provided they comply with the Schools Assistance Act 2008 Administrative Guidelines.

From January 2009, CAP funding previously provided to state and Northern Territory government schools became part of the National Education Agreement (NEA). A feature of this agreement is that it provides flexibility for states and territories to allocate Commonwealth funding to areas which they believe will produce the best outcomes for students.

The reference to NSW may refer to the Local Schools, Local Decisions reform, where Principals are being given more responsibility for the management of school budgets in NSW Government Schools.

Question Seven:

The Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute, who spoke to the inquiry, they talked about a UK program of forming clusters of disadvantaged schools and grouping students together to form viable class sizes to overcome issues about critical mass, which they suggested might be useful in rural or regional areas of Australia as well. I am wondering if you are aware of that program and if you are aware of any schools that have been doing that or whether you have any ideas about instituting that—or would that not be a matter for the Commonwealth? Do you have any Examples?

Answer:

The National Partnership Agreement on Low Socio-economic Status School Communities (Low SES NP) supports six nationally-significant reforms which aim to lift the quality and quantity of education received by students from disadvantaged backgrounds. One of these key reforms is the establishment of external partnerships with parents, other schools, businesses and communities and the provision of access to extended services.

State and Territory annual and progress reports demonstrate that many Low SES NP schools are collaborating across sectors and with other schools to optimise resources, share learning's and strengthen professional collaboration and networks.

Reform strategies being implemented in states and territories include:

- In the NSW Independent sector, strategies aimed to reduce the disadvantage of teachers in regional areas and hard-to-staff schools and improve leadership. These strategies focused on three areas: making professional learning more accessible; mentoring; and building collegial relationships and networks.
- At the whole-school level in NSW, local self-evaluation based on rigorous evidence is guiding schools to make more informed local strategic decisions and to enhance the value and coherence of school plans. Schools are being supported in this process often through working together in networks which leverage the experience of different approaches.
- In the NT, a number of areas of reform are being progressed cross-sectorally to benefit schools and systems across all sectors in addition to the implementation of targeted initiatives within sectors.
- Brisbane Catholic Education has reformed school leadership capacity through a developmental series of leadership experiences and creation and piloting of Professional Learning Communities. This is providing improved in-school support for school principals particularly in disadvantaged indigenous, multicultural and hard-to-staff schools.
- Tasmania has formed a number of school networks, federations and clusters. These Federations are demonstrating strong partnerships between their networked schools with a sharing of curriculum expertise, resourcing and location-specific activities with shared access.
- In the Western Metropolitan region of Victoria, the Koorie Transition Officer has been developing links with secondary school coordinators across the region in order to develop career pathways for Koorie youth. The transition officer has also been introducing a communication strategy across the region to facilitate communication between Koorie parents, schools, principals, networks and community providers.

- SA has adopted an integrated approach to the National Partnership, through programs such as the Innovative Community Action Networks (ICANs) that enables students, families and communities to work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for students.
- In the government sector in Victoria, the Extended School Hubs have formed a range of partnerships between schools, non-government organisations, local government, business and the broader local community. For example, The Wyndham Hub, which is using the Smith Family as its lead coordinating agency, developed a partnership with Orygen Youth Mental Health and implemented formal consultation to the student welfare team at a secondary school. A panel of Orygen staff met weekly to provide support to targeted students and families and this has resulted in a significant increase in the engagement of families with the secondary college.
- The Western Australian Department of Education has led the establishment of the National Extended Service Schools Exchange, which provides a platform for national sharing of information, ideas and resources to support implementation of extended services in schools. Extended services can include child care, access to community activities, parenting and family support, as well as targeted and specialist support services. The Exchange also provides an opportunity for school level exchange of emerging practice across schools wishing to share experiences.

The Carnarvon Cluster in Western Australia (Carnarvon Senior High School, East Carnarvon Primary School and Carnarvon Primary School) appointed an Executive Principal to support leadership initiatives across the three schools. This activity will support stronger cooperation and agreement across programs, moving to the future amalgamation of the schools in the Carnarvon area. The Compass Attendance Initiative is an example of a multi-agency project within Carnarvon reporting strong results.

Question Eight (Written):

The committee heard that mathematics is not required as a pre-requisite for many primary teaching courses, even though most primary school teachers will teach mathematics. Can you comment on whether you believe that senior high school mathematics should be a pre-requisite subject for primary school teachers? [AMSI, Submission 11, p. 14]

Answer:

Given the impact that teacher quality has on student outcomes it is important to have graduates who have strong relevant knowledge, and are classroom ready, across a range of areas including teaching literacy and numeracy.

In 2012, the Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures and Standards were introduced. From 2013 all new programs, and programs due for reaccreditation, are required to seek accreditation under the national standards.

Standard 1 of the Accreditation Standards requires providers to show that graduates of their programs meet the Graduate career stage of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. These Standards are a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality. The Standards define the work of teachers and make explicit the elements of high-quality, effective teaching in 21st-century schools, which result in improved educational outcomes for students. The Graduate career stage includes the requirement that teachers have an understanding of their subject/s, curriculum content and teaching strategies.

In addition, the Accreditation Standards require that all entrants to initial teacher education have the personal literacy and numeracy equivalent to those of the top 30 per cent of the population. Where this is not the case on entry, providers must ensure students are supported to achieve this before graduating.

More information on the Accreditation Standards can be found at:

http://www.aitsl.edu.au/verve/resources/Accreditation_of_initial_teacher_education.pdf

More information on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers can be found at:

<http://www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au/>.

Question Nine (written):

Would you support Australia requiring all teaching graduates to pass a test to demonstrate that they meet the minimum standards of knowledge and skill before they are registered as teachers? (This occurs in the UK, see Australian Council for Educational Research, Submission 26, p. 4).

Answer:

Given the impact that teacher quality has on student outcomes it is important to have graduates who have strong relevant knowledge and are classroom ready, across a range of areas, including teaching literacy and numeracy, working in 21st century learning environments, working in diverse contexts and classroom management.

In 2012, the *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* (Accreditation Standards) were introduced. From 2013 all new programs, and programs due for reaccreditation, are required to seek accreditation under these national standards. Standard 1 of the Accreditation Standards requires providers to show that graduates of their programs meet the Graduate career stage of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (Professional Standards), on course completion.

The Professional Standards are a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality. They set out what teachers should know and be able to do at different stages across their careers (Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead). The Graduate Standards articulate the required skills and knowledge of a graduate on attainment of an initial teacher education qualification and they include having an understanding of their subject/s, curriculum content and teaching strategies. Domain 1 of the Professional Standards requires beginning teachers know students and how they learn, and know the content and how to teach it.

In addition, the Accreditation Standards require that all entrants to initial teacher education have the personal literacy and numeracy equivalent to those of the top 30 per cent of the population. Where this is not the case on entry, providers must ensure students are supported to achieve this before graduating.

As part of the National Plan for School Improvement, the Australian Government recently announced the introduction of a literacy and numeracy assessment that pre-service teachers will need to pass in order to graduate. This will provide a mechanism for universities to assess pre-service teachers in a consistent way and ensure all teacher education graduates have the literacy and numeracy skills to be effective teachers upon course completion, as required by the Accreditation Standards.

AITSL is working with all key stakeholders including Universities Australia, the Australian Council of Deans of Education, universities and education authorities on the implementation of these initiatives.

More information on the Accreditation Standards can be found at:

www.aitsl.edu.au/verve/resources/Accreditation_of_initial_teacher_education.pdf.

More information on the Professional Standards can be found at:

www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au/.

Question Ten (Written):

Please comment on Dr Ben Jensen's suggestion that education department should restrict the number of placements available in government schools for pre-service teachers to obtain experience. In this scheme, state and territory governments could ensure that only the top students become teachers – while not interfering with the number of students that universities train (Proof Committee Hansard, 4 March 2013, Melbourne, p. 37):

There has been a lot of talk about putting in minimum ATAR requirements, for example. I have some reservations about doing that. I think we have fought long and hard to uncap places at universities, and I am worried about it going back down that road. But there is no doubt that what is considered high-quality initial teacher education is a greater emphasis on high quality of placements in schools—so you spend more time in schools being developed, mentored et cetera during your course. At the moment, there is great trouble finding high-quality placements, partly because there are so many students in these education courses.

That is a clear lever that systems in the states and territories have. They have that as a lever. They can say: 'We have done the demographic analysis et cetera; supply and demand says we need this many teachers over the next five years.' Therefore, they can actually restrict placements. They can say: 'Instead of having 5½ thousand graduates and only hiring 500 of them, we're only going to provide 500 placements over the next few years.' That will take care of the too-low ATAR problem, for lack of a better word. Simple supply and demand will say: 'We're restricting supply to 500.' That means you are not putting a cap on the universities. They can still do what they want, but they will not get registered in a teaching degree out of that: 'You can do a Bachelor of Education, but you won't get a placement because we're zoning that to the top 500.' From that, there is a clear way, without getting into a government mandated ATAR minimum, to just say, 'We're restricting supply,' or demand, if you look at it from that perspective.

Answer:

The Australian Government introduced a demand driven funding system for undergraduate places at public universities at the beginning of 2012. The demand driven system was announced as part of the Australian Government's response to the Bradley Review of Higher Education. The new funding arrangements were introduced to enable the sector to grow and provide the highly skilled, flexible graduates needed by an economy based on knowledge, skills and innovation.

The Government has also introduced measures to ensure the quality of teacher graduates remains high during the period of expansion under the new higher education funding system. In 2012, the Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures was introduced. From 2013 all new programs, and programs due for reaccreditation, are required to seek accreditation under the national standards. Standard 1 of the Accreditation Standards requires providers to show that graduates of their programs meet the Graduate career stage of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

The Professional Standards are a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality. They set out what teachers should know and be able to do at different stages across their careers (Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead). The Graduate Standards articulate the required skills and knowledge of a graduate on attainment of an initial teacher education qualification and they include having an understanding of their subject/s, curriculum content and teaching strategies.

Another requirement of the Accreditation Standards include that all entrants to initial teacher education will require levels of personal literacy and numeracy equivalent to those of the top 30 per cent of the population. Where this is not the case on entry, providers must ensure students are supported to achieve this before graduating.

More information on the Accreditation Standards can be found at:

http://www.aitsl.edu.au/verve/resources/Accreditation_of_initial_teacher_education.pdf.

More information on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers can be found at:

<http://www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au/>.

Question Eleven (Written):

What percentage of those seeking registration, under the new AITSL system, fail? (That is, what percentage of students who have been passed by universities, are refused registration?) Please breakdown your answer to the new starters as well as existing teachers seeking registration under AITSL.

Answer:

The Australian Government does not collect this type of information from the state and territory teacher registration authorities.