



**FLINDERS UNIVERSITY**  
**ADELAIDE • AUSTRALIA**

GPO Box 2100  
Adelaide 5001  
Australia

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Professor Faith Trent, AM  
*Faculty of Education Humanities Law & Theology*

Telephone: (+61 8) 8201 3169  
Fax: (+61 8) 8201 3171  
E-mail: [faith.trent@flinders.edu.au](mailto:faith.trent@flinders.edu.au)

## **FLINDERS UNIVERSITY - RESPONSE TO TEACHER EDUCATION REVIEW**

Flinders University welcomes the opportunity to participate in the National Inquiry into Teacher Education. Teacher education has been part of the offerings of Flinders University and its predecessor institutions, Bedford Park Teachers' College and Sturt CAE over 40 years and thus sees itself as having a long tradition in the area, providing for diverse needs in teacher education at different levels and subject specializations. For this reason the full list of undergraduate awards appears in the text, to assist the committee in understanding the complexity of teacher education. The postgraduate awards are listed in Appendix 1.

The University wishes to extend to the Committee an invitation to visit the campus as part of its work so that the interaction with local schools (including the Australian Science and Mathematics School which is located on the campus), the Rural Education Forum, Faculties across the University, Yunggoorendi- (the Indigenous Higher Education Centre for Teaching and Research) and other stakeholders can be more fully understood as part of the context in which teacher education takes place.

Flinders University offers a range of courses at undergraduate level in teacher education. These courses are reviewed systematically as are all courses in the University. In 2004, following a review involving staff across the University but specifically in Education with staff from the Sciences, the Arts and Health Sciences, together with staff from the Australian Science and Mathematics School, the University committed to all undergraduate students in 4 year programs undertaking a combined Bachelor of Education/ Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Health Science award at junior primary, primary, middle school or secondary level. This development which commenced in 2005 means that the 4 year Bachelor of Education awards will be replaced by these new awards over the next three years.

Thus in 2005, the University offers undergraduate entry 4 year programs (for 2005 and 2004 intake)

BEd (Junior Primary/Primary)/BA  
BEd (Middle School)/BA  
BEd (Secondary)/BA

BEd (Junior Primary/Primary)/BSc  
 BEd (Middle School)/BSc  
 BEd (Secondary)/BSc

In 2006 the following will be added (for 2005 and 2004 intake)

BEd(Middle School)/BHS  
 BEd(Secondary)/BHS  
 BEd (Junior Primary/Primary) (for 2003,2002 intake)  
 BEd (Upper Primary/Lower Secondary)  
 BEd (Secondary Science)

The University offers graduate entry 2 year programs (these will continue)

BEd (Junior Primary/Primary)  
 BEd (Middle Schooling)  
 BEd (Secondary)  
 BEd (Special Education)  
 BSpecial Education (one year program for practising teachers)

The University also wishes to make the following comments about the Terms of Reference.

### **TERM OF REFERENCE 1**

The University is concerned that this inquiry makes use of the term “teacher training” rather than “teacher education”. This is not a mere pedantic objection, but lies at the heart of decisions about the nature, curriculum and intended outcomes of the programs offered at Flinders University. We consider that programs should be of sufficient length and depth that not only do graduates acquire the day-to-day skills and knowledge necessary to be a beginning practitioner, but that they also understand the educational traditions, the research underpinning practice and the willingness to engage in lifelong learning. For this reason, the University discontinued its one year teaching program because it is of the strong view that such courses do not benefit either the graduate or the community in the longer term, as they are focused on training alone.

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE 7 AND 9**

Terms of Reference 7 and 9 talk of primary and secondary education alone. This ignores the early childhood field and middle schooling, both of which have been the focus of considerable growth and development over the past 10 years. Further in the continuum of education it is necessary for graduates to understand the growth and development of their students from before the beginning of formal schooling until they enter adulthood.

Term of Reference 7 talks of achieving accreditation which seems to sit oddly as it is programs which receive accreditation not individual students who achieve registration in South Australia (if that is what is meant).

Term of reference 7 also speaks of “dysfunctional families” which is of considerable concern as it implies that teachers can or should decide what a “dysfunctional family” is and who fits the category. In fact it is pejorative views like these that the program would discourage as it leads to unhelpful behaviour among teachers. and legitimate resentment among both students and their families.

It is with these qualifications that Flinders University is pleased to address the terms of reference and then to make some additional observations.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE 1 & 2**

- 1. Examine and assess the criteria for selecting students for teacher training courses.*
- 2. Examine the extent to which teacher training courses can attract high quality students, including students from diverse backgrounds and experiences.*

Currently, Flinders University selects students into Teacher Education courses in the same way as they are selected into the majority of courses in the University.

Undergraduate students are drawn from year 12 completers, from Mature Age students, from those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, from successful Foundation Course students, from those of rural and remote schooling background, from TAFE and other tertiary transfers. Each of these categories has a quota so that the teaching force will continue to be diverse and to allow for those who have been educationally disadvantaged in the past to have equal access to the teacher education courses at Flinders University.

Graduate entry students are drawn from those who have completed a suitable undergraduate degree. Here too quotas apply, but they are in some cases (eg secondary) based on the subjects undertaken, the level of teaching which will be undertaken after graduation and the needs of the profession.

Interviews are generally not conducted as the University considers that it is difficult to assess suitability in this way before the course commences and the purpose of the course is to assess suitability and proficiency against identified criteria. Quotas are determined against application levels, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who do not meet other cut-off levels being interviewed by staff from the School of Education and from Yunggoendi- the Indigenous Higher Education Centre for Teaching and Research at Flinders University to assist in ensuring that selected students receive adequate support to enable them to complete the course successfully.

The University also provides bonus points for Year 12 students from Remote and Rural backgrounds in recognition of the fact that their educational choices are likely to have been limited by lack of access to a full range of year 12 subjects.

The University and the School of Education consider that these sophisticated selection procedures serve us well. As can be seen from the data below and attachment 1, the level of intellectual achievement is high (we consider that this is important for teachers), the range of backgrounds and ages of students provide diversity in both ethnicity and experiences. The current profile shows that there are 295 males to 856 females enrolled in teacher education courses.

### **TERM OF REFERENCE 3**

*Examine attrition rates from teaching courses and reasons for that attrition.*

The attrition rates for Bachelor degrees for the University were 11.8% in 2001, 12.6% in 2002, 12.6% in 2003 and 11.9% in 2004. The comparable statistics for the undergraduate courses in teacher education are below that mark, with 8.0% in 2001, 8.9% in 2002, 7.0% in 2003 and 6.5% in 2004. For graduate entry the comparable statistics (excluding the distance based Bachelor of Special Education) are 8.0%, in 2001, 9.1% in 2002, 6.0% in 2003 and 8.0% in 2004.

It is worthwhile noting therefore, that the attrition rate in education courses is lower than in other aggregated Bachelor courses, and below the expected DEST numbers and that as the TER cutoff has increased at undergraduate level, the attrition has decreased.

The Bachelor of Special Education, while having a higher attrition rate (around 15% in each year), has a lower attrition rate than other distance education courses in the sector.

The reasons given for attrition (apart from those who fail) are insufficient funds to continue, lack of interest – teaching is not for them, pressures from home and work. The majority of students are forced to take considerable amounts of part-time work to survive and some employers are unsympathetic when students have University responsibilities. Included in the official attrition rates are some students who have transferred to another university and may continue in teacher education.

### **TERM OF REFERENCE 4**

*Examine and assess the criteria for selecting and rewarding education faculty members.*

Selection and rewarding of staff in education is undertaken in the same way as it is in the other parts of the University. Policies with respect to these processes are on the University's website ([www.flinders.edu.au](http://www.flinders.edu.au)). The highlights of these procedures as they pertain to education staff are described below.

#### **Selection:**

*Full time posts* - Once a post has been identified as part of strategic planning and it is within budget, filling it is approved by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee. The School of Education then, through the Dean, prepares a detailed job and person specification which

includes qualifications, experience in the field as well as in higher education, particular areas of required expertise, research achievements and interests and a selection panel. This is signed off by the Executive Dean and the DVC (Academic).

After the post is advertised applicants address selection criteria and provide a CV. Three pertinent referees are required. Applicants are invited to interview and depending on the level and tenure of the position, may be requested to undertake a presentation to the selection panel and the entire School of Education.

*Part time and casual employees.* The School continues to value staff who are employed in schools having a part in the education of teacher education students. These staff are selected from a pool who apply to be part-time lecturers, again against a set of criteria. An additional bonus of having the Australian Science and Mathematics School on campus, is that University staff teach in the School and ASMS staff teach into teacher education courses. In addition, students undertake practicums in the school. In this way there is a constant flow of contemporary information and knowledge about the context of schooling currently.

## **Rewards**

The University has a comprehensive academic promotions policy which is applied across the University. There are no quotas on promotion and staff are promoted through their ability to meet a profile which has been determined in consultation with the School of Education and which identifies qualifications, experience, teaching and research performance, administration and service to the schooling sector. The process is transparent and perceived to be fair.

The University also has a Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching and staff in Education are eligible to apply. Some staff both individually and as part of a team have won awards. There are also grants for innovations in teaching and learning which are competitive across the University and again, some staff in Education have been successful in winning these awards.

## **TERM OF REFERENCE 5:**

*Examine the educational philosophy underpinning teacher training courses (including the teaching methods used, course structure and materials, and methods for assessment and evaluation) and assess the extent to which it is informed by research.*

## **Underpinnings:**

The educational philosophy that underpins the teacher education programs at Flinders can be seen in the course aims and student learning outcomes. Through their teaching, research and professional activities, the School of Education aims to be at the forefront of knowledge creation about education. They use that knowledge to promote the role of education as an agent of social change and justice and to enhance individual development.

The learning outcomes indicate that Flinders graduates will be characterized by:

- A passion for learning and enquiry.
- The capacity to negotiate effective relationships with students, teachers, parents and community members, cognisant of cultural, social, economic and political differences.
- Confidence in the use of information and communication technologies and the new literacies.
- Confidence in their approach to classroom practice, with an ability to read and shape the contexts in which they teach, and draw on their depth of knowledge in fields of study that are related to the key learning areas.
- The capacity to critical reflect on teaching practices and theories, on their own teaching and their lives, using these reflections to inform their practice.
- Active support of policies and practices that take account of social and individual differences and ensure that all students learn.
- Attention to social justice in our democratic society, acting powerfully in their classrooms, schools and communities.
- A striving for excellence and creativity in their teaching.,

### **Teaching methods:**

The teaching methods in the School reflect contemporary research into teaching and learning, in schools as well as in universities. There is a strong interrelationship between theory and practice within all topics (courses). A strong use is made of problem-solving in learning, experiential workshops, and digital media in classes. The School's "classroom of the future" which is based on the future design of school classrooms features cutting-edge technology for learning with digital media. Widespread use of the internet is made in teaching as well as in other forms of distance and remote learning technologies. In short, there is a strong use of modeling in the way IT is integrated across the curriculum and in the ways in which classes are conducted.

### **Course structure:**

The new teacher education programmes at Flinders are built upon a combined degree structure. This structure, ensures that students undertake a BA, B.Sc or B.H.S with their B.Ed as part of an integrated program. The programmes have a developmental structure that builds on an increasing knowledge base, a balance between input from a range of discipline areas; philosophy, sociology, psychology, and balance between on-campus and school experience. These changes reflect the fact that the University supports the notion that teachers need to have in-depth content knowledge, an ability to undertake honours studies in a range of disciplines including education as well as understanding of students, a range of teaching strategies, understanding of curriculum and its issues, a knowledge of the context of schooling and a demonstrated ability to teach.

**Assessment:**

The assessment methods employed by the School of Education provide students with opportunities to achieve and demonstrate learning outcomes in a variety of ways that are responsive to students' learning styles, accommodate students' needs and, in themselves, model good practice for the students as future teachers. In many topics, students are able to choose from a range of assessment options and negotiate individual assessment contracts. Whatever the method, assessment in the School of Education has a dual purpose to assist student learning and to verify the attainment of the desired learning objectives.

**Evaluation:**

The School of Education's 'Teaching and Learning Committee' monitors the quality of teaching and learning in the School. It scrutinizes topic proposals and the results of Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET). Aggregated results are also sent to the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee and scrutinized by the Executive Dean. Action is taken if there are concerns regarding any aspect of courses. At the end of each year a report is provided to the School and the Faculty on topics and at five year intervals, a full review, which includes external stakeholders, graduates and current students, is undertaken. Recommendations from that review go to the Executive Dean who is responsible for ensuring that actions result. Changes to courses following such a review go to the Vice-Chancellor's Committee, which is comprised of the senior members of the University and from there, to Academic Senate for discussion and subsequently endorsement. The fact that this process is successful can be seen by the recently implemented changes to produce the combined awards which have attracted excellent students.

**Teaching is informed by research:**

All of the staff of the School of Education are active researchers with most investigating the field of teaching, including their own teaching. Staff are publishing and presenting papers at international conferences on student learning and tertiary teaching. Particular areas of research include: problem-based learning, teachers' learning, student concerns and coping strategies, bullying, gifted education, measurement and assessment, teaching of science, and student teachers' practicum experiences. A full list of research can be found in Appendix 2. The School is presently mapping students' learning in relation to the aims of the Bachelor of Education degree. The teaching that is undertaken in the School of Education is informed by the research that academics read and the research that academics do.

**TERM OF REFERENCE 6:**

*Examine the interaction and relationships between teacher training courses and other university faculty disciplines.*

Flinders Education courses involve a combined degree that builds on a premise that intellectual inquiry is essential. Therefore, for all levels of teaching, students have studied across various faculties in the university in disciplines related to the 8 key learning areas, as well as having a thorough grounding in education. In addition, staff of Yunggoendi First Nations Centre contribute to a core topic, called ‘Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students’, in all undergraduate teacher education programs. The School of Education has been active in involving other Faculties in supporting the development of teachers. This has involved departments of Languages, Marine and Earth Sciences, Speech Pathology, Medicine and Health, as well as those in Arts and Sciences. The School of Education has collaborated with the School of Medicine in the development of problem-based learning.

## **TERM OF REFERENCE 7**

*Examine the preparation of primary and secondary teaching graduates to:*

### **7.1 Teach literacy and numeracy**

A basic tenet of the teacher education program is that all teachers are teachers of literacy and numeracy. Therefore, all students studying primary, middle school and secondary school education at Flinders undertake core curriculum studies in both literacy and numeracy. In addition to dedicated topics on the teaching of literacy and numeracy, students also study topics whereby literacy and numeracy are parts of integrated curriculum topics. The submission to the National Literacy Review states, inter alia, that the assumptions about literacy underpinning core topics

“We recognise and teach that there are many different ‘literacies’, which are sets of social and cultural practices that are constructed and change over time. Simply put, literacies are what we use to ‘get things done’ in social contexts. Recognising the multiple manifestations of literacy in our society, the core topics described above emphasise that literacy:

- is built on and articulates with oracy (listening and speaking);
- includes reading, writing, and viewing, as well as critical thinking;
- is essential for both pleasure and enterprise;
- is essential for success in our society;
- is not a set of hierarchical skills nor does it develop in a linear fashion;
- is concerned with the construction, use, deconstruction and reconstruction of texts;
- is not the same as ‘English’, although they have features in common;
- is never neutral; that is, it has a political dimension;
- is a cross-curricula issue; and that
- we continue to learn new literacy practices throughout our lives.”

*School of Education, Flinders University  
Response to the National Review of Teaching of Literacy, 2005*



## **7.2 Teach vocational education courses**

At present, Flinders does not teach vocational education courses. The University does not prepare students in traditional areas designated as vocational, nor in Home Economics or Technology.

## **7.3 Effectively manage classrooms**

All Flinders' Education students study classes in student behaviour management. In the new combined degree program, a core topic entitled 'the Social and Cultural World of the Classroom' will bring together the disciplines of psychology and sociology in order to help students better understand the broad range of contributors to student (and teacher) life and behaviour in the classroom.

## **7.4 Successfully use information technology**

Flinders' students have access to specialist topics in the application of information technology in teaching and learning. In addition, students learn how to incorporate ICTs in teaching through the modeling that is provided in all of their topics; through studying in the "classroom of the future" (undertaken by all students) and by the use of ICTs in study projects and assignments

## **7.5 Deal with bullying and disruptive students and dysfunctional families**

Please note: Students are not prepared to "deal with dysfunctional families". Rather, Flinders' students develop understandings of children and families within perspectives that derive from child and adolescent development and the social and cultural contexts of the classroom. Two Flinders academics (Slee and Owens) are internationally recognized experts on bullying and their research is shared with students in elective topics that concern themselves with students peer relationships. Flinders offers a specialist topic in 'Family Professional Partnerships' which operates from a strengths-based view of families rather than a deficit view that might describe families as "dysfunctional".

## **7.6 Deal with children with special needs and/or disabilities**

Again, the use of the word "deal" in regard to the education of students with disabilities or special needs implies a set of assumptions about teacher/student relationships. All education students at Flinders undertake a dedicated topic on teaching students with special needs in the regular classroom. In addition, all of our curriculum and pedagogy topics take an inclusive education perspective. This recognizes that it is the responsibility of all lecturers and teachers to provide a learning environment that is inclusive of all learners. Teacher education students are also exposed to ways of working with gifted students, some of whom may also be identified as having special needs.

## **7.7 Achieve accreditation**

Graduates of the School of Education are qualified to teach in schools throughout Australia. They meet the requirements for registration as teachers with the South Australian Teachers Registration Board.

## **7.8 Deal with senior staff, fellow teachers, school boards, education authorities, parents, community groups and other related government departments**

Flinders Education students graduate with understandings of: the world of education, in particular schools; the work of teachers; and, of themselves as beginning teachers. The students' capacities to enter into quality relationships with others within future worksites, derives from: those understandings; the modeling that they experience from relationships at Flinders and in the sites of their teaching practicum; and their own competencies as mature, thoughtful young people. It is not anticipated that beginning practitioners should be dealing with other Government Departments and indeed in the early years should work with others in the school community to expand their skills in working with education authorities and school boards. It is also part of professional development to understand the larger systems in which schooling sits.

### **TERM OF REFERENCE 8**

*Examine the role and input of schools and their staff to the preparation in the preparation of trainee teachers.*

The relationship between schools and the University, through the School of Education is very positive. Apart from the practicum which forms a central part of the teacher education program and which is undertaken in negotiation with schools, school personnel take part in other parts of the course through presenting lectures, taking part in workshops, being on course committees. University staff take part in consultancies in the schools and also are involved with the three schooling sectors in a variety of ways, including in policy development and in undertaking research for them.

Flinders University has an especially close and well-regarded relationship with schools and their staff in both the Government and Non-Government sectors in South Australia. Trainee teachers currently undertake a six week practicum placement in either a country or a metropolitan school in their third year and an eight week practicum placement in their fourth year of the four year degree program. As well, a small number of trainee teachers from Flinders University are placed in interstate schools and in overseas schools. Over the past few years a network of "University Liaison" personnel has been developed throughout the metropolitan area and in the major country centres, including the South East, the Lower Eyre Peninsula, the Iron Triangle, The Mid North, the Riverland and the York Peninsula. Retired and semi-retired school principals, deputy principals, teachers and former university academic staff are employed on a casual basis to work with university academic staff to liaise directly with schools in the preparation of trainee

teachers. University Liaison personnel attend Professional Learning workshops at Flinders University to gain first-hand knowledge of university policies and visit schools on a regular basis at times when trainee teachers are in the schools during their teaching practicum. Responses from schools clearly indicate a very high level of satisfaction with this direct form of liaison with the university and teachers value the opportunity to work closely with university personnel.

A survey of schools conducted during March this year, of some 290 teachers in DECS and non-government schools from across South Australia in both country and metropolitan locations, indicated that more than 85% of teachers who responded would like to see trainee teachers in schools in the second year of their four year degree program. More than 70% of the teachers who responded also indicated that trainee teachers should spend a minimum of four weeks in each of the third year and final year of their degree program. There is a clear indication from teachers that they place a high value on their own role in the training of future teachers. Many teachers, in responding to the survey, indicated that trainee teachers need more than the minimum of four weeks in their third year and in their final year and, in fact, there is a strong sense that trainee teachers should spend 6 to 8 weeks each year in a school. Many teachers see their role as a “mentor” and are especially supportive of the trainee teacher program.

Difficulties arise, however, in the implementation of trainee teacher programs, when a combination of an ageing teaching force, increasing teacher workloads, greater community demands and the closing of schools, reduces the number of places available in schools for trainee teachers. Recent increases in the intake of trainee teachers by the university compounds this critical issue.

An initiative of Flinders University, the INSPIRE Peer Mentoring program, is one way of working with teachers in both primary and secondary schools to overcome difficulties associated with trainee teacher placements in schools. Trainee teachers, Peer Mentors, work in schools with identified disinclined students to improve their outlook on school and to increase retention rates. Many trainee teachers visit ‘their’ school once a week during the school year. At a recent workshop for school principals, students and teachers, held at Flinders University for the INSPIRE Peer Mentoring program, a year 12 student from an identified disadvantaged school, spoke about how he had wanted to leave school in year 10, but had continued to attend and had, in fact, passed his year 11 subjects, ‘only because of his peer mentor from Flinders’. A secondary school principal commented on the high level of involvement by his staff with the Peer Mentoring program and praised the program for allowing trainee teachers to become involved in a much wider aspect of the school program than would normally have been possible. The number of schools involved in the INSPIRE Peer Mentor program has increased from four to twenty in the past eighteen months.

The strength of the Flinders University trainee teacher program is a reflection of the commitment by schools and their staff to continue to improve the quality of teacher training and to work closely with university personnel.

**TERM OF REFERENCE 9**

*Investigate the appropriateness of the current split between primary and secondary education training.*

Flinders University does not have such a split. It is unique among higher education institutions in Australia in offering a Middle School (Upper Primary/Lower Secondary) award for over 25 years. Further, students undertake some studies together although because of employment needs in terms of curriculum they have separate classes for some aspects of their awards. Indeed the middle school students draw parts of their award from primary and some from secondary.

One of the problems facing these extremely well-educated students is that, despite all the rhetoric about the importance of the middle years, it is only very recently that the primary/ secondary employment patterns have been expanded in some sectors to include employment of these graduates. They have however, been snapped up in area schools and in regional areas where their flexibility is valued. The University has raised this issue repeatedly with employing authorities but the response has been very slow and in our view, not adequate.

**TERM OF REFERENCE 10**

*Examine the construction, delivery and resourcing of ongoing professional learning for teachers already in the workforce.*

The School of Education is committed to life-long learning in the field of education and as such, is actively involved in the design and delivery of professional development programs for teachers and leaders in sites across each of the schooling sectors in South Australia. Much of this work is channeled through a cooperative venture in South Australia known as PD Pathways. PD Pathways, which brings together the three schooling sectors, the four teacher education providers, the professional associations and the teachers' unions, provides across-university recognition of appropriate, high quality professional development delivered and managed by partnerships of individual universities and professional associations. Approved professional learning courses and activities are credited towards the completion of post-graduate qualifications at all of the participating universities.

Flinders also contributes to teachers' professional learning by offering a suite of Graduate Certificates and specializations of the Master of Education degree. These are high quality courses that draw upon current research and provide for teachers access to contemporary theories and practical applications of theoretical work for testing in their own worksites. These courses also provide training for teachers to conduct research into their own practice and into problems concerning their own work. In addition to the generic Master of Education, Flinders offers specialisations in:

- educational management and leadership,
- gifted education,
- studies of Asia,
- digital media in education,
- mathematics and science education,
- special education, and
- Teachers' professional learning.

These courses are offered by way of: intensive short courses; summer schools; print and digital distance education; as well as attendance at the Flinders campus in Adelaide. In addition, the School of Education takes selected courses to regional centres in South Australia, as well as offering programs nationally and internationally via distance education and off-shore delivery.

Despite the quite considerable effort devoted to this work by the School of Education and partner professional associations, there remains a very low take-up of structured, post-graduate standard professional learning by teachers in South Australia. Investigation at the local level suggests that this is due, in the main, to two factors: the costs and the lack of financial reward for gaining post-graduate qualifications. It is thought that if teachers' costs for post-graduate study were in some way subsidized, a far greater number of teachers would engage in this way of organizing their professional learning. Alternatively and our preferred model, if teachers were rewarded through their salaries for gaining post-graduate qualifications, far more would be motivated to invest the money required to pay for this learning. A third way to increase participation is for universities to collaborate with teacher groups and professional associations to recognize workplace learning and to design programs for specific groups of learners. The School of Education is actively pursuing this pathway but is concerned that it be an intellectually challenging exercise, not academic reward for past skill development.

### **TERM OF REFERENCE 11**

*Examine the adequacy of the funding of teacher training courses by university administrations*

It is difficult to know what this term of reference alludes to, because under the current regime funding levels for courses are determined by the federal government through CGS discipline clusters and HECS banding. The total funding to teacher education courses through these two sources is inadequate, although at Flinders University within these constraints, teacher education is fairly treated. All of the additional funding which followed the designation of teacher education as a National priority and therefore exempt from variable HECS, flows to the School of Education, despite there being costs associated with the practicum activities which are borne by the Faculty and the University.

However it is an appropriate time to discuss the funding as a whole. The inadequacy of funding stems from three basic issues:

- Under all regimes since the relative Funding model was first implemented (and it is still the basis for funding relativities in higher education), education has been funded below its appropriate level. There is documentation which shows that because education was such a large discipline, it along with nursing had their relative funding reduced from the original recommended levels. The RFM was introduced at a time before technology had a large impact in teaching and before there were significant changes in expectations of teachers. Thus it was based on a ‘chalk and talk’ notation of teaching and teacher education which is no longer either appropriate or desirable. The RFM also failed to take into account that this is the only profession which is required to pay to have its students undertake practicum and therefore actual funding which enters the University for teacher education, flows out of the University again to teachers in schools.
- As a National priority, students undertaking teacher education courses are exempt if the University chooses to have a 25% HECS+ levy. Because of financial pressure and declining Government funding to the higher education sector, Flinders University after careful consideration made the choice that all undergraduate courses would have a HECS+ of 25% commencing in 2005. In response, the Federal Government has added \$629/EFTSL to offset raising costs of the practicum. There are two problems with this. The first, is that it is calculated on an effective full-time equivalent student load which is lower than the actual number of students, because some are studying part-time. In Education at Flinders, the funding is for 753 EFTSLs, although there are 1039 students. This means, in effect, that the actual funding only assists for approximately two-thirds of the students. Further, it is difficult to know how the \$657/EFSTL was calculated, as it is certainly less than the cost of paying teachers and of practicum. Thus the Commonwealth assistance has been of the order of \$494,721 while the current costs of practicum for Flinders University is estimated to be:

To schools for taking students	\$ 583,668
For supervision (extra staff)	\$ 72,000
For supervision (University staff)	\$ 240,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 895,668</b>

Flinders’ School of Education continues to run practicums in the Anangu-Pitjinjara Lands and in other rural areas, in recognition of the needs of these communities. These are difficult enough because students find it difficult to afford such practicum experiences, even where accommodation is included and the current level of Government funding means that there can be no subsidies for students (these were discontinued some 7 years ago). The SA Government provides some support funding for the Lands practicum but even with all of this, it still costs an extra \$400/student.

When HECS+ is added to other clusters, the National Priority (Education) is funded overall at a rate comparable to Law in the lowest funding band and below most other bands. This seems a ridiculous development given the nature of teacher education which requires access to science laboratories, new technologies, physical education and other

equipment. It is impossible, in light of the above, not to conclude that teacher education is currently funded on a limited set of understandings which do not properly cost the needs of a modern teacher education program.

## OTHER

There are a number of other issues which the University wishes to raise:

- As outlined in the report *Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future-Advancing Innovation, Science and Technology and Mathematics (2003)*, students who intend to become science teachers or major in science in primary teaching, incur a higher HECS debt than those who enter other types of teaching. Given that teachers' salaries are the same across the board and should remain so, this seems likely to discourage potential entrants at a time when there is a necessity to attract high quality students. The recent report of the Australian Council of Deans (2005) of Science, *Who's Teaching Science?* demonstrates that there is a need to attract prospective students into the study of Physics and Chemistry for secondary teaching and we would argue for primary teaching as well. It is time to look at the disincentives. The pattern is, we know, likely to repeat for mathematics teaching.
- Successive reports have shown that in order to adequately prepare teachers for a complex world of work, there needs to be a combination of knowledge of subject matter and of children, learning, curriculum, school contexts and the education system. For this reason, we consider that the minimum length of teacher education courses should be four years with a minimum of two years of teacher education. While for students faced with rising debt levels a one year end-on teacher qualification, or a three year undergraduate degree might seem attractive, in a professional area such as teaching at pre-service level, this is simply inadequate.
- Some of rhetoric which is being bandied about talks of teachers not being "work ready" when, in fact, this is not a reasonable concept for professionals and is not used with respect to nurses, doctors, lawyers and other professionals. What is important, is that those graduating from Universities are seen as beginning practitioners, which like every other professional, require support and mentoring in the first years of their career.
- One of the myths about teacher *training* is that it should return to a more apprenticeship style with longer and longer periods in schools. The evidence from the British system which recently went in this direction is that it does not improve the calibre or retention of teaching staff – indeed is detrimental, except in the immediate short-term. The British have largely abandoned the experiment because they recognize that is an extremely limiting form of education for professionals who need to be able to adapt, reflect and continue to learn.

- It is our view that like all other professionals and particularly in light of research and social change, teachers need high quality, relevant and challenging professional development. This professional development also needs to be:
  - appropriately credentialed;
  - lead to promotion/salary increase; and
  - tied to registration

We support the North American model of professional development.

- Finally and most importantly, there need to be better ways to ensure that our outstanding graduates (and they are), can enter the teaching profession in meaningful ways, rather than spending their first years in unreliable, contract or TRT situations. Currently, Flinders University attracts highly motivated (either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> preference), well-qualified entrants to its teacher education courses. If these graduates are to continue in their chosen profession, then it is essential that they find employment, are supported by their peers and supervisors in the early years, receive adequate rewards and recognition and have opportunities for meaningful growth and development..

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Review and request that any further inquiries are addressed to Professor Faith Trent, Executive Dean, Faculty of Education, Humanities, Law and Theology. We would be pleased, if the committee so desires, to receive a visit during the consultation period.

#### APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Flinders University, School of Education, Postgraduate Awards
- Appendix 2 Flinders University, School of Education, Research Areas
- Appendix 3 Flinders University, School of Education, Course Preferences

#### REFERENCES

Australian Council of Deans of Science (2005), Report, *Who's Teaching Science? Meeting the demand for qualified science teachers in Australian secondary schools*, Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne.

Department of Education, Science and Training (2003), Report, *Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future-Advancing Innovation, Science and Technology and Mathematics*.

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## APPENDIX 1      FLINDERS UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, POSTGRADUATE AWARDS

- Graduate Certificate in Education
- Graduate Certificate in Education (Special Education)
- Graduate Certificate in Education (Studies of Asia)
- Graduate Certificate in Education (Gifted Education)
- Graduate Certificate in Education (Vision Impairment)
- Graduate Certificate in Education (Orientation and Mobility)
- Graduate Certificate in Education (Behaviour and Counselling)
- Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Difficulties)
- Graduate Certificate in Education (Professional Learning) (intermittent offers)
- Graduate Certificate in Education (Educational Planning)
- Graduate Certificate in Education (Human Resource Management)
- Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning and Teaching)
- Graduate Certificate in Education (Information and Communications Technology in Education)
- Master of Education
- Master of Education (Research and Innovation)
- Master of Education (Social Justice in Education)
- Master of Education (Special Education)
- Master of Education (Leadership and Management)
- Master of Education (Gifted Education)
- Master of Education (Studies of Asia)
- Doctor of Education
- MA (Education)
- PhD

## APPENDIX 2      FLINDERS UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, RESEARCH AREAS

- Assessment
- Attitudes to school
- Behaviour management in schools
- Child, adolescent, family development
- Children's views of schooling
- Cognitive analysis of learning and teaching
- Critical thinking
- Educational measurement and statistical analysis
- Ethics
- Exercise physiology
- Gender, culture and education
- Gifted education
- History of education
- Information and communication technologies
- Instructional psychology and problem solving
- International education
- Mathematics education
- Organisational structures and systems
- Peer relationships involving peer conflict, aggressive behaviour and bullying
- Philosophy of education
- Physical education curriculum development
- Race, culture and education
- Race, gender, nation and education
- Refugee children
- Science education
- Second language acquisition
- Sociology of education
- Teacher education
- Teachers learning and professional development
- Teachers lives and works - contemporary and historical
- Tertiary teaching
- Vision impairment

APPENDIX 3 FLINDERS UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,  
COURSE & PREFERENCES

COURSE	SCHOOL LEAVERS	NON-SCHOOL LEAVERS	TOTAL
<b>BEducation (JP/P)/ BAarts</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> preference	197	183	380
2 <sup>nd</sup> preference	157	139	298
Median school leaver entry score	83.0		
Minimum school leaver entry score	82.0		
<b>BEducation (JP/P)/ BSc</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> preference	18	11	29
2 <sup>nd</sup> preference	44	27	71
Median school leaver entry score	71.5		
Minimum school leaver entry score	71.0		
<b>BEducation (Middle)/ BA</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> preference	55	69	124
2 <sup>nd</sup> preference	110	105	215
Median school leaver entry score	80.0		
Minimum school leaver entry score	82.5		
<b>BEducation (Middle)/ BSc</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> preference	3	6	9
2 <sup>nd</sup> preference	11	6	17
Median school leaver entry score	71.0		
Minimum school leaver entry score	70.3		
<b>BEducation (Sec)/ BA</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> preference	117	100	217
2 <sup>nd</sup> preference	120	73	193
Median school leaver entry score	85.0		
Minimum school leaver entry score	86.8		
<b>BEducation (Sec)/ BSc</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> preference	13	7	20
2 <sup>nd</sup> preference	29	17	46
Median school leaver entry score	76.0		
Minimum school leaver entry score	73.4		