



Tasmania

Submission 127  
TE Inquiry  
**PREMIER**

29 APR 2005

Mr L Hartsuyker MP  
Chair  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Hartsuyker

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry into the quality and adequacy of teacher training courses. The attached submission provides the Tasmanian Government's response to each of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to Tasmanians receiving the best possible education, which is reflected in Tasmania *Together* education and training goals and benchmarks. Tasmania *Together* is the State's long-term social, economic and environmental vision that articulates where Tasmanians want to be in 2020. The Government and the Department of Education in particular have directly contributed to the achievement of the targets established for the Tasmania *Together* education and training goals and benchmarks.

The Government has a well-developed relationship with the University of Tasmania (UTAS) through both an overarching Partnership Agreement and links at the Faculty/Agency level. This provides a strong basis for the Government to work with UTAS – as the sole provider of teacher training in the State – to further assist new teachers in meeting the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century education system.

I hope that your Committee will find this submission of interest and assistance to your current Inquiry into the preparedness of graduates to meet the current and future demands of teaching in Australia's schools.

I look forward to being advised of progress on the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

David Llewellyn MHA  
**Acting Premier**



Tasmania

**TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT**

**SUBMISSION TO**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

**INQUIRY INTO THE QUALITY AND ADEQUACY OF  
TEACHER TRAINING COURSES**

**APRIL 2005**

## INTRODUCTION

*Quality teachers make a difference. They are the single, most important determinant of student achievement, making a significant and lasting impression on all our lives.*

*Australia's Teachers: Australia's Future  
Advancing Innovation, Science, Technology and Mathematics, **Agenda For Action**,  
Department of Education, Science and Training, 2003, (p. 1)*

The provision of high quality education services to all Australians is of paramount importance for the achievement of the nation's social and economic goals. It is therefore essential that high quality and appropriately qualified teachers be in place in Australian schools now and into the future.

This submission responds to the Inquiry into Teacher Education in the context of the Tasmanian Government's focus on improving economic opportunities through skills development and training, and the Department of Education's roles and responsibilities in education and training.

The Tasmanian Government strongly supports the role the University of Tasmania (UTAS) plays in the State. The Partnership Agreement signed between UTAS and the Government in 2000 aims, amongst other things, to achieve closer collaboration on strategic planning and public policy development, as well as workforce planning and training.

The Tasmanian Government has implemented a number of skills development and training initiatives to address skills shortages. One initiative has been to improve the retention of students at school until Year 12. However to achieve this teacher training may need to provide new teachers with the skills to encourage students to remain at school or college until Year 12, which would also improve the students' long-term employment and economic prospects.

More broadly for the Review the need to ensure much stronger connections between education jurisdictions and systems and the teacher training institutions is of paramount importance.

This submission highlights the following as key elements in quality teacher training programs:

- The need for teacher training programs to be accountable to clearly stated requirements and expectations.
- The need for teacher training programs to be developed in consultation with the profession, reviewed against best practice to ensure relevance and quality and be based on strong partnerships between training institutions, employers and the teaching profession.

- The need for teacher training programs to be based on recognised professional standards for beginning teachers and to include well administered school experience programs that provide significant ‘hands-on’ experience in school settings.
- The need for teacher training programs to ensure theory components are well-researched, relevant and linked to professional practice.
- The need for teacher training programs to be reflective of and responsive to the skills and capabilities required of teachers in 21<sup>st</sup> century schools and to be taught by top teaching practitioners and highly regarded faculty staff who have strong links to the teaching profession.

## THE EDUCATION CONTEXT FOR TEACHERS IN TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

The Tasmanian Government, through the Department of Education is engaged in an agenda of educational reform and school transformation in response to societal change and to a growing understanding of the nature of effective teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Three overarching policy drivers: *Tasmania Together*, *Learning Together* and *Tasmania: A State of Learning*, provide a policy framework for this transformation agenda.

Within this policy framework the Government is engaged on a major curriculum reform agenda with the implementation of a new curriculum framework: *The Essential Learnings Curriculum*, and important structural and organisation transformation designed to meet the needs of all students including those with special and/or additional needs.

Strategies and initiatives arising out of this framework are bringing about major structural and curriculum reform in Tasmanian public schools and increasing the capacity of schools to meet the needs of all the students in their care:

- Teachers are benefiting from, and engaging in, leading edge educational research in an environment of sustained and strategic professional learning.
- School communities are working together to provide inclusive learning environments and to implement intervention strategies at a local level.
- A clear focus on improving learning outcomes underpins decision making at all levels.

Another feature of this change agenda is the strong relationship between the State Department of Education and the Independent and Catholic school systems. Through shared professional learning and collaboration on curriculum reform projects and the development of professional standards, an unprecedented coherence and congruence is developing across the education jurisdictions in Tasmania.

The Government has an ongoing commitment to improve the quality of teacher training and the preparedness of beginning teachers in Tasmania - high quality, locally provided teacher training is the key to the ongoing supply of highly skilled and qualified teachers for Tasmanian public schools.

This agenda is already well advanced and the infrastructure that will enable and support change is established. The implementation of these changes will proceed more quickly through the UTAS, as the local teacher training provider, assisting in the transformation agenda and where teacher education is based on and is responsive to the educational agenda unfolding in Tasmanian schools.

## **TEACHER TRAINING IN TASMANIA**

UTAS is the only teacher training institution based in Tasmania. Teachers are trained through a variety of degree courses offered by the Faculty of Education or, in the case of music teachers, a degree course offered through the Conservatorium of Music.

In recent years the interest in teacher training courses at UTAS has increased significantly. In response, the Bachelor of Teaching, Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Human Movement courses have been over-subscribed. There have also been significant increases in the number of mature age students entering teacher training courses.

The two year Bachelor of Teaching degree is an innovative and highly regarded training pathway. Offered as a post graduate pre-service course taken after the completion of a first degree, the Bachelor of Teaching offers training for early childhood, primary, middle school and secondary teachers. It also provides a clear pathway for those coming into teaching from another career.

The Bachelor of Teaching course provides a far more comprehensive training program than its one year predecessor. While it still competes with a variety of one year diplomas or accelerated courses being offered by other universities and training institutions, it is seen as the preferred training pathway for secondary teachers in Tasmania. The Department of Education and the Tasmanian Teacher Registration Board, as key education stakeholders, have given this status reality through salary recognition and accelerated teacher registration processes.

The Bachelor of Education offers a four year degree course for those wishing to teach in the early childhood/primary sector.

While student numbers across both the Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Teaching courses are about the same, significantly larger numbers of students train for careers as primary teachers. This can result in poor employment opportunities for graduates seeking work in the over subscribed primary sector, especially in urban areas.

The Bachelor of Human Movement course is a four year degree course, which offers students a range of possible career pathways. Students are asked to identify specific career directions in the final two years of the course to allow for more focused training.

The Bachelor of Human Movement teaching degree is highly regarded by students and by schools as local level employers. Graduates are perceived to be highly skilled, enthusiastic, flexible and adaptable, and they are often sought to fill a variety of roles, not just that of Health and Physical Education teacher.

The Conservatorium of Music offers a four year combined degree course: the Bachelor of Music - Bachelor of Teaching, designed for students wishing to become music teachers.

Similarly the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology, in conjunction with the Faculty of Education, offer a combined Bachelor of Science – Bachelor of Teaching

degree which aims to qualify students for employment as secondary teachers with subject specialisation in a combination of science, mathematics or information technology.

The University also offers a Bachelor of Education (In-Service) degree and a Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Education degree. Both of these courses offer flexible pathways with the Bachelor of Education (In-Service) being more relevant to the K – 12 school sector. Primarily designed to provide an opportunity for practising teachers to upgrade their qualifications, it is not recommended as a pathway into teaching for inexperienced practitioners.

## TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS TEACHER WORKFORCE – A CURRENT SNAPSHOT

The total teaching workforce in Tasmanian Government schools, as of 30 June 2004 was 4,961 full time equivalent (FTE) persons.

### Teachers Employed (FTE)

Teacher Type	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Base grade teachers	4,096.82	4,102.50	4117.59
Advanced skills teachers	468.28	459.73	465.63
Principals and assistant principals	380.30	386.95	377.50
Superintendents	8.00	1.00	1.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,953.40</b>	<b>4,950.18</b>	<b>4,961.71</b>

### Average Age of Teachers

	Teachers		Advanced Skills Teachers (AST) 2-3		Principals and Assistant Principals	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
2002	42.2	42.5	45.6	47.6	48.1	49.8
2003	42.5	42.6	45.9	47.8	48.1	49.9
2004	42.7	42.7	46.2	48.4	48.8	50.1

The Tasmanian Department of Education employs teachers through the following mechanisms:

- Advertising of substantive permanent vacancies
- Direct appointment to permanent vacancies via a graduate recruitment program
- Contracting fixed term teachers
- Conversion to 'permanent replacement teacher' status after six consecutive terms of satisfactory employment as a fixed term teacher
- As relief teachers to fill short term casual vacancies

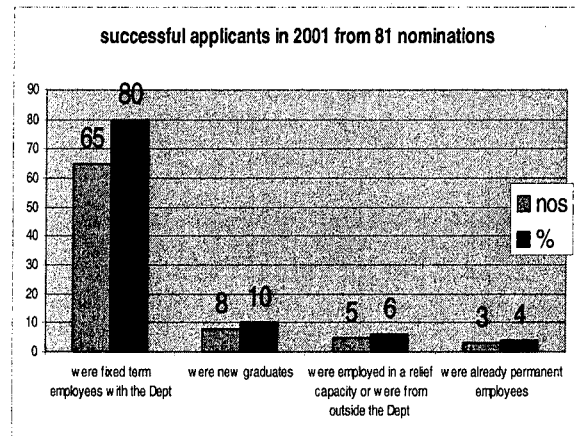
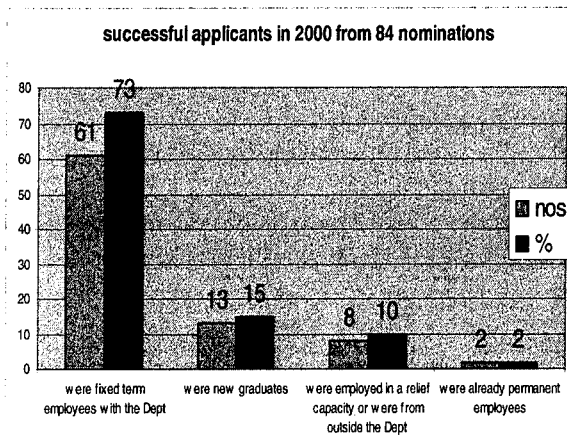


## Appointment of Permanent Base Grade Teachers

Calendar Year	New graduates appointed through graduate recruitment program	Appointments through merit selection	Conversions to permanent status
1999	14	22	172
2000	11	80	124
2001	13	101	120
2002	26	75	141
2003	42	177	11
1 January to 30 June 2004	37	23	8

Most graduate teachers, particularly in urban areas, begin their teaching in relief and fixed term positions. Graduate teachers are eligible to apply for permanent employment, however teachers with a few years experience are more likely to be successful in a merit based selection process for advertised permanent vacancies.

### The status of successful base grade applicants, 2000 and 2001



## THE GRADUATE RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

The Graduate Recruitment Program identifies top graduates through a stringent selection process that includes written applications, referee reports and interviews. Applicants are evaluated against a combination of academic and teaching aptitude criteria. The program has proven to be very successful at identifying quality graduates and is highly valued by all stakeholders including the trainee teachers. Over 50% of the total number of education graduates exiting the University in both 2003 and 2004 applied for the program.

Since 1999 just over 170 permanent positions with advanced standing on the salary scale have been awarded to graduates from UTAS under the Graduate Recruitment Program.

## **TEACHING GRADUATES IN 2004**

Graduate numbers from UTAS Faculty of Education for 2004 were as follows:

▪ Bachelor of Education	142
▪ Bachelor of Education (In –Service)	34
▪ Bachelor of Human Movement	47
▪ Bachelor of Teaching	142
▪ Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Education	15

## RESPONSE TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 1. Examine and assess the criteria for selecting students for teacher training courses.

In many ways the Tasmanian Government believes that the current model of recruitment to teacher training courses is inadequate. In particular, the separation between the training institution and teacher employers and their schools is generally seen as dysfunctional and can give rise to both inappropriate selections of students for teacher training and an imbalance in the numbers of places allocated to primary and secondary teaching.

The Government recognises that increasingly, some teacher education students do seek to undertake an education degree as a general qualification and do not expect to take up a lifetime career in education. It is therefore reasonable to expect some students will seek alternative career pathways at the conclusion of their degree. However, the majority of students could be expected to join the teaching profession.

Many graduates exit University with specific early childhood/primary qualifications or a desire to work in the primary sector. This often results in an over supply of early childhood/primary teachers, especially in urban areas, and an undersupply of specialist and secondary teachers. The Tasmanian Department of Education provides supply and demand data to the University to assist in better targeting of enrolments into areas of need.

Notwithstanding these supply and demand issues, it is estimated that around 70% of teaching graduates from UTAS find employment with the Department of Education.

It is also essential that teacher trainee selection processes identify and encourage the right people to take on a career in education. To this end selection criteria for teacher training courses should set high standards in keeping with the overall value placed on teaching as a profession and involve processes that determine an applicant's aptitude for teaching and their interpersonal and communication skills, as well as selecting on the basis of high academic attainment.

Teacher education courses must also be accessible, flexible, and responsive to the needs of a diverse teacher trainee cohort. The current Tasmanian teacher cohort does not reflect the general community in terms of gender balance or ethnicity. This is of course the case across all Australian educational jurisdictions and partnerships between all education stakeholders are again needed to identify strategies that will help redress these imbalances.

The Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education in the Agenda For Action, (Section 5 – Attracting and retaining high quality teachers) has identified a series of appropriate actions to address these particular issues.

## **2. Examine the extent to which teacher training courses can attract high quality students, including students from diverse backgrounds and experiences.**

The issue of how to ensure an ongoing supply of high quality and appropriately qualified teachers is multi-dimensional with many factors influencing and impacting upon our ability to ensure supply meets demand.

Most, if not all Australian educational jurisdictions are already heavily investing in programs and initiatives to attract and retain high quality teachers. Strategies include:

- Ensuring that teaching is competitive in the professional employment marketplace by providing attractive and competitive employment and wage conditions;
- Improving job satisfaction and career opportunities for current employees;
- Engaging in marketing strategies aimed at raising and maintaining the status of teaching as a highly valued profession in the community; and
- Engaging in strategic recruitment campaigns including incentive-type programs and other initiatives that target areas of most need.

The Tasmanian Department of Education continues to invest in its current and future teaching workforce by undertaking comprehensive workforce planning, and implementing targeted recruitment strategies.

Tasmanian teacher pay levels are pegged to national averages ensuring pay parity with other States and Territories. There has been a significant increase in the level of permanent employment within the Department and a range of family and employee friendly practices have been put in place to ensure teachers with family responsibilities are able to remain engaged in the workforce.

Teachers are supported professionally through access to ongoing professional learning and comprehensive support structures associated with the implementation of curriculum reform and many have opportunities to undertake varied career pathways.

Various initiatives recognise and reward high quality teaching and provide opportunities for teachers to undertake further study and research overseas. These initiatives raise the profile of outstanding educators in the community and are highly regarded by the teaching workforce.

The attractiveness of teaching as a career will also be influenced by:

- The quality and accessibility of teacher training courses on offer;
- The value assigned to the final qualification; and
- The capacity of the training pathway/qualification to provide the graduate with a valued career path.

Research clearly shows that many beginning teachers are critical about the quality and relevance of their teacher training. New graduates often express concerns about their

capacity to cater for individual differences, manage student behaviour, report on student progress and communicate with parents.

Similar criticism can also be heard from within the ranks of the teaching profession itself as those who employ beginning teachers often call for teacher training courses to better link theory to practice and increase the amount of school experience.

In response, research into teacher education has been ongoing. This research has provided a number of common themes on which to base further investigation and/or action and has highlighted that teacher training courses should be:

- Accountable to clearly stated requirements and expectations;
- Developed in consultation with the profession and reviewed against best practice to ensure relevance and quality;
- Based on strong partnerships between training institutions, employers and the teaching profession that make clear the respective roles and responsibilities each has in relation to the training agenda;
- Based on recognised professional standards for beginning teachers;
- Structured around a balance between well-researched and current educational philosophy that is clearly linked to teaching practice and focused and well administered school experience programs that provide significant 'hands-on' experience in school settings;
- Taught by top teaching practitioners and highly regarded faculty staff who have strong links to the teaching profession; and
- Reflective of and responsive to the skills and capabilities required of teachers in 21<sup>st</sup> century schools.

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

It is not possible for the Tasmanian Government to comment on this term of reference.

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

It is not possible for the Tasmanian Government to comment on this term of reference in relation to UTAS.

However, it is emphasised that faculty members should be highly regarded by and have strong links with the teaching profession. In the same way that quality classroom teachers are the key driver of student outcomes, high quality university lecturers and teachers will have the greatest impact on the quality of pre-service teacher learning outcomes.

Selection criteria and remuneration levels must reflect a commitment to ensuring that the highest quality educators are engaged in teacher education.

**5. Examine the educational philosophy underpinning the 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**

It is not possible for the Tasmanian Government to provide general comment on this term of reference, as there is considerable variation between the various courses and modules available within the Faculty of Education. It is apparent that the educational philosophy, methods, course structure and assessment and evaluation vary considerably.

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

There has been considerable progress in improving the relationship between the Faculty of Education and other University Schools and Faculties in the past two years.

As mentioned earlier, two combined degrees are now available to students wishing to teach secondary science/mathematics/IT or music. They have been developed, in part, to provide accelerated training pathways in high demand skill areas and they have required extensive collaboration between Faculties within the University. While regarded as a positive development, combined degrees challenge the Faculty of Education to maintain the high standard of training provided via the Bachelor of Teaching degree within this shorter timeframe structure.

Notwithstanding this challenge however, combined degrees offer the University an opportunity to explore different training models and partnerships. However, attempts to negotiate a combined degree for potential guidance officers who are required to have both a teaching qualification and capacity to be registered as psychologists, have been less successful.

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

- (i) teach literacy and numeracy;**
- (ii) teach vocational education courses;**
- (iii) effectively manage classrooms;**
- (iv) successfully use information technology;**
- (v) deal with bullying and disruptive students and dysfunctional families;**
- (vi) deal with children with special needs and/or disabilities;**
- (vii) achieve accreditation; and**
- (viii) deal with senior staff, fellow teachers, school boards, education authorities, parents, community groups and other related government departments.**

Research suggests that many beginning teachers are critical about the quality and relevance of their teacher training. Issues cited include:

- Catering for individual differences;
- Developing sequenced learning programs;
- Managing of student behaviour;
- Student assessment and reporting on student progress;
- Inclusion of students with a disability;
- Communication with parents;
- Handling administrative responsibilities; and,
- Managing stress.

In recognition of these issues the Tasmanian Department of Education and UTAS Faculty of Education have developed much stronger collaborative and cooperative partnerships in the past three years and steps have been taken to improve the coverage of practical approaches and skills in the classroom by prospective teachers. Links between the two already exist across a number of areas of activity. For example, the Tasmanian Department and the Faculty undertake joint research; Department staff contribute to course development and delivery on a casual or secondment basis; and schools have been central to the practicum component of the Faculty programs over many years. Significantly, a new jointly funded and governed Institute of Inclusive Learning Communities has also been established this year.

It is the shared view of the Tasmanian Department of Education and the UTAS Faculty of Education that the context in which they currently operate offers a unique opportunity to develop and implement innovative projects through this formal collaborative partnership. Recent initiatives include:

- Secondment to the Faculty of senior Departmental staff who have played a key role in influencing the preparation of prospective teachers for teaching in Departmental schools;
- Secondment of other classroom practitioners as visiting presenters/lecturers; and
- Formation of a joint working party between the Faculty and Department of Education to address a number of challenges and impediments to providing pre-service teachers in Tasmania with the best possible initial training. This is partly a response to a growing uncertainty among the profession at the national and local level about the extent to which the courses offered are adequately preparing new teachers to succeed in an increasingly complex profession and a very competitive employment context. The project has a dual focus. The first focus is on enhancing the school experience component of pre-service teacher programs and the second on innovative and flexible Faculty program delivery. In addition, these approaches will provide new opportunities for collaborative pre-service teacher course content development and implementation to be explored and developed.

## **Specific comment on some identified areas**

### **(i) Literacy**

The Tasmanian Government through the Department of Education has been, and continues to be, concerned about the extent to which pre-service teachers at UTAS are provided with print literacy teaching approaches and skills in the classroom and opportunities to develop and practice these skills. At the same time, the Government acknowledges the awareness of the issues and efforts that have been made by the present Dean, Professor Roslyn Arnold, and many present members of UTAS Faculty of Education to address identified issues.

Although there is no formal quantitative data base of evidence in relation to this objective of the Inquiry, anecdotal information suggests that many prospective teachers, especially those being trained for secondary teaching, do not feel well prepared to teach print literacy skills. However, it should be noted that the experience and opinion of prospective teachers about the adequacy of their preparation in relation to teaching literacy, varies according to the course/program that students have undertaken and the particular lecturers/tutors who have been responsible for this aspect of their degree.

There are a number of reasons that can be identified for this lack of preparation identified by some prospective and newly graduated teachers:

- The lack of agreement about what it means to be 'literate' amongst Faculty staff. Faculty staff seem to be divided along 'philosophical' or 'ideological' lines, which shape very different approaches to the teaching of literacy and of print literacy.
- Lack of specific training/post graduate work in the area of literacy teaching and learning amongst Faculty staff. In a small state like Tasmania and in a small Faculty like the one at UTAS many academics are required to teach in curriculum and methods areas outside their expertise;
- The lack of a systemic and consistent approach to the teaching of reading and other literacy skills across the Faculty, making this coverage dependent on the views and skills of individuals;
- Time constraints in the curriculum coverage that do not allow sufficient time to be devoted to this area, particularly as the concept of 'literacy' and 'essential literacy skills' continues to expand and become more complex;
- A belief by some members of the Faculty of Education that:
  - 'Classical' research models do not really support the teaching of reading and other literacy skills and that research emerging though the field of educational psychology is suspect;
  - That the teaching of 'print literacy' is a minor and insignificant element of teaching about 'literacy' from a broad socio-cultural perspective;
  - That teaching pre-service teachers to undertake thoughtful and powerful interventions to support the struggling reader is a minor or insignificant (or potentially confusing) element of teaching 'literacy';



- Reading teaching approaches and skills should be covered during the school experience components of the teacher training course (with the responsibility being with classroom practitioners) rather than as part of the academic curriculum; and
- Teaching students different theoretical perspectives about the teaching of reading and literacy allows them to critically examine different approaches and apply elements of teaching accordingly;
- The lack of recent classroom experience and knowledge of reading teaching and learning and approaches by members of the Faculty and their subsequent incapacity to teach these skills; and
- Differences in professional perspective between the UTAS School of Psychology and the Faculty of Education on the teaching of reading.

While coverage of literacy teaching approaches and skills varies according to the particular course and the Faculty member who is responsible for teaching that course, the secondment of an officer from the Department of Education to the Faculty has increased the coverage of skills and strategies in the teaching of reading. The lecture outlines for Curriculum and Methods Study Primary English/literacy indicate coverage of both theoretical and practical areas involved in the teaching of literacy.

Planning work is also being undertaken by all members of the Faculty involved in the teaching of literacy to develop a comprehensive module that will focus on teaching basic literacy skills and supportive literacy interventions for delivery in all undergraduate programs in the Faculty of Education.

This module will:

- Involve helping students to identify and to intervene with students who are not achieving literacy outcomes;
- Provide a coherent and consistent approach across programs that have elements of literacy teaching; and
- Ensure that pre-service teachers have skills to explicitly teach print literacy.

This module is intended to be implemented in Semester 1, 2006. The Department of Education will be working with the Faculty on the development of this module and will be emphasising the need for the inclusion of explicit teaching skills.

#### **(ii) Numeracy**

The Tasmanian Government considers there are excellent communication, co-operation and consistency of message between UTAS Mathematics Education staff and Department of Education staff. This often assists in supporting students when some of the above structural issues cause potential difficulties.

Generally, the background provided for the teaching of numeracy is well considered within the Bachelor of Teaching degree although the University has had difficulty with staffing for 2005.

Many Department of Education staff believe there is a need for more time to provide the necessary background for teaching numeracy in the Bachelor of Education degree. The course outline, which is very comprehensive, cannot be well considered in the time allowed. Many students need to consolidate their own mathematical understandings before they can absorb some of the critical theoretical and pedagogical issues they meet. As a comparison, there is less time devoted to mathematics in the Bachelor of Education in Tasmania than comparable degrees at other universities.

The preparation of graduate teachers to teach numeracy raises many of the same issues that were discussed in relation to literacy. Complicating the issue is the lack of self-confidence many prospective teachers have about the teaching of numeracy and mathematics.

Increasingly, graduates in Human Movement are being employed as teachers in the Middle Years. Many of these graduates are finding themselves in situations where they are being required to teach numeracy. It is of some concern that they may well have graduated with no preparation for this. This has occurred because there is no mandated aspect of this degree to provide a background for teaching numeracy.

**(iii) Effectively manage Classrooms and (v) deal with bullying and disruptive students and dysfunctional families**

Anecdotal evidence suggests that these are areas where prospective teacher seek more intensive preparation. They are also the areas the cause considerable stress for prospective and newly graduated teachers and are often cited as the reasons for attrition from teacher training.

The fundamentals of managing classrooms are covered within *Curriculum and Methods* study. However, there is heavy reliance on student teachers gaining these skills during their time on school experience. This underlines the importance of school experience in teacher preparation and the need for this element of study to have higher prominence and levels of support. Departmental resources and personnel are made freely available to the Faculty of Education to ensure that prospective teachers are familiar with departmental policies and guidelines and have the fundamental resources to manage disruptive behaviour and support students.

The Government recognises that this is an area where newly appointed teachers require considerable support and mentoring in their first years of teaching.

**(iv) Successfully use information technology**

The Department has worked with the UTAS Faculty of Education to ensure that all pre-service teachers in both the Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Teaching are able to complete the four prescribed professional learning modules developed for in-service teachers or receive credit through competency-based assessment.

This ensures that graduate teachers have the necessary foundation required to use Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning through a

four module approach developed by the Department of Education. The modules noted above cover basic computer skills, word processing and publishing, email in education, multi-media and web-publishing.

Pre-service teachers are also able to begin work for an additional module on *Embedding Educational Technologies* while they are undergraduates. However they need to demonstrate their competencies in this module over twelve months following their graduation and employment as a teacher.

Pre-service teachers can also start portfolio work towards their Graduate Certificate of ICT use in Teaching and Learning while being students, but again need to have been teaching for at least twelve months before they can be finally accredited for this certificate.

As a result of this collaborative work the Government is confident that graduate teachers have at least a base level of ICT competence that forms a foundation for further professional learning.

#### **(vi) Deal with children with special needs and/or disabilities**

This area has long been identified by the Department of Education as requiring more specific preparation of teachers. This was reinforced by the findings of a recent review of services for students with special and/or additional needs, *Essential Learnings for All* (2004). The review emphasised the need to build the capacity of teachers to work in an inclusive way with the full range of students and recommended that:

*The department liaise with the University of Tasmania to ensure that the teacher education program addresses policy and practice in relation to the inclusion of students with special and/or additional needs.*

As a result of this recommendation a partnership between UTAS and Department of Education has been recently developed to improve the preparation of pre-service and in-service teachers to work effectively with students who have special and/or additional needs.

A joint institute, the Institute for Inclusive Learning Communities, was established early in 2005 under the direction of a Board comprising external 'expert' members (Professor Malcolm Skilbeck and Professor John Elkins) and senior representatives of the University and the Department of Education. The Institute will:

- Provide in-service professional development for Tasmanian educators across a range of areas, primarily those related to inclusive teaching;
- Develop modules for pre-service teachers at the University of Tasmania to ensure graduates are well equipped to teach students with special and/or additional needs;
- Provide in-service training for district support teachers;
- Contribute to an accredited professional training program leading to a formal qualification for assistant teachers;

- Contribute to training courses for teacher aides who are working with students who have special and/or additional needs;
- Undertake action research to explore a range of educational issues, especially those related to inclusive teaching practices;
- Develop educational resources for teachers and pre-service teachers;
- Undertake a range of educational projects and/or research on topics of mutual interest to the Department of Education and the Faculty of education; and
- Provide supervision for research higher degree students undertaking studies in areas covered by the Institute.

It is anticipated that the work of the Institute will greatly contribute to the improved preparation of teaching graduates in relation to inclusive practices.

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

Teacher training cannot prepare students to be expert or accomplished teachers. The Government believes that there needs to be clear expectations for beginning teachers assisted the development of a set of agreed professional standards reflective of and responsive to the skills and capabilities required of teachers in 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. Employers have a responsibility to provide ongoing support and professional learning as part of the continuum of teacher training and development.

Transition into the profession brings a range of challenges for the beginning teacher. The Government regards induction of beginning teachers into the profession a key responsibility and as such, comprehensive induction programs are implemented in all schools employing beginning teachers. The Government also recognises the benefit to be gained from establishing a professional relationship with student teachers before graduation and to this end Department of Education staff work with the Faculty of Education to ensure relevant information is available for students.

Over the last five years the Department of Education has forged strong partnerships with UTAS in order to:

- Provide regular advice regarding departmental supply and demand needs and to encourage students to seek employment in harder-to-staff locations;
- Enhance the quality of teacher training and build stronger links with schools;
- Promote innovative and high quality pre-service experience in schools;
- Assist students to make a successful transition from University to employment; and
- Support beginning teachers in their initial years of teaching.

There are opportunities for the University to become more closely engaged with and contribute to the educational reform and school transformation goals that are driving effective teaching and learning across Tasmanian schools.

Collaboration between UTAS and the Department of Education has a long history at the local level:

- Practising teachers have often been seconded into the Faculty of Education as course lecturers, or have shared their experience with students in a more ad hoc fashion e.g. as guest lecturers or through school visits;
- Many course units utilise partnerships with local schools or clusters of schools to strengthen links between theory and practice in areas like literacy teaching and learning; and
- Most schools are involved in the School Experience and Internship programs offered to students as part of various teacher training courses.

The Department of Education, as a key employer of graduates has also maintained a presence with final year students. In past years students were bonded to the Department after completion of their training. The Department now actively competes with other education jurisdictions for the University's top graduates, and, in doing so, attempts to win 'employer of choice' status with the newly qualified teachers.

In 2002 the Department of Education and the Faculty Of Education established a joint committee – the Peak Education Action Committee (PEAC) to provide a strategic focus to the multiple ways in which the Department of Education and the Faculty relate. PEAC facilitated greater understanding between the two organisations and progress has been made on a number of initiatives including ways to enhance the delivery of pre-service teacher education programs.

More recently the Department of Education has created a new senior appointment, Director, University Liaison, to streamline communication and facilitate innovation with the University. Two joint working groups have also been established – the Working Group on School Experience Issues and the Working Group on Innovative Teaching.

These forums have proven to be effective, especially in relation to the School Experience program. Significant issues have been identified including:

- The length, timing and structure of school experience program and its relationship to the course work components of the degree programs;
- School/Faculty/student roles and expectations – ensuring consistency and clear communication;
- The role of colleague teacher;
- Support for schools and colleague teachers;
- Supervision by Faculty staff;
- Assessment criteria – ensuring consistency and shared understanding;

- Ways to better manage poor performance;
- Placement issues – ensuring sufficient numbers of schools are involved; and
- Flexibility – managing individual student needs and pathways.

The Working Groups have the potential to reconceptualise the school experience component of the teacher training courses and bring about flexible models of course delivery, and, as a result, provide a catalyst for review and renewal of the degree courses overall.

As discussed previously a further UTAS/Department of Education partnership has been recently developed to support the implementation of new approaches to managing inclusive education. This will be delivered through the Institute for Inclusive Learning Communities, which has been established under the direction of a Board comprising representatives of UTAS and the Department of Education.

A number of other combined initiatives and innovations developed in recent years have strengthened relationships between UTAS and the Department of Education and have enhanced the quality of the learning experience for pre-service teachers. These include:

- **Professional Experience in Remote Schools (PEIRS)**  
The PEIRS program is a *Learning Together* initiative integral to the Department of Education teacher recruitment strategy. The aim of the program is to give pre-service teachers experience in rural and isolated schools and communities. It is hoped that this experience will encourage pre-service teachers to consider placements in rural and isolated areas once they graduate. The program provides support for accommodation and travel costs and schools are encouraged to involve the pre-service teachers in community life during their stay. The program also encourages teams of pre-service teachers to undertake PEIRS school experience together. This provides an 'in-built' support structure for the pre-service teachers and also allows the schools involved to be innovative in the way they structure and manage the school experience program.
- **Graduate Recruitment Program**  
As mentioned earlier the Graduate Recruitment Program is a targeted, highly effective recruitment strategy that identifies and offers employment to top UTAS teacher graduates. Faculty of Education and Department of Education staff are involved in the selection process. High academic performance is used as a prerequisite for the program. Other selection criteria evaluate personal capacities, interpersonal skills, teaching performance and/or other relevant experience and an overall aptitude for teaching.
- **Bachelor of Teaching - Middle School**  
The two year Bachelor of Teaching Middle School course prepares students to teach from grades 4 to 8. The course is highly regarded and is seen as being responsive to changing school needs. Many secondary schools actively seek to employ Middle School graduates as they have a cross curriculum focus as well as a subject specialisation based on their first degree.

▪ **Bachelor of Human Movement Professional Experience Program**

Faculty staff involved in the Bachelor of Human Movement degree responded to concerns about the quality and consistency of the professional experience program by developing a new model of professional experience in conjunction with the Department of Education and schools.

Features of the model include:

- Participating schools agree to fulfil specific criteria which aim to guarantee the quality and consistency of the professional experience;
- Faculty staff hold workshops for principals and colleague teachers to ensure shared understandings and expectations are in place;
- All professional experience placements are confirmed at the start of the year so that schools and pre service teachers can fully prepare;
- Faculty staff visit pre-service teachers during placement or undertake off-campus meetings to ensure that communication is ongoing;
- Pre-service teachers undertake placements in pairs to facilitate quality learning; and
- Ongoing feedback is sought from all participants in order to fine tune the program.

The model has resulted in the development of shared commitment and strong relationships between schools and the Faculty staff involved. It has also helped to reinforce perceptions regarding the high quality of the Bachelor of Human Movement course and the quality of graduates.

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

The organisational and administrative split between early childhood, primary and secondary years of schooling varies between states and territories and between schools and does not necessarily represent separation of students into definitive groups that require different teaching approaches. It is important that teacher preparation is flexible enough to accommodate changes in school organisation and administration that are increasingly common.

The Government does not believe that the traditional split between primary and secondary teachers (where most secondary teachers had a first 'discipline-related' degree and then proceeded to post graduate teacher training, while those wanting to teach in primary schools often undertook a Bachelor of Education as their first degree) is necessarily appropriate and this should be an area for consideration by the Inquiry.

Teaching can no longer be regarded as a 'discipline-specific' activity, although a deep knowledge and understanding of specific academic disciplines is a fundamental requirement for teachers. Increasingly curriculum frameworks (such as the Tasmanian

*Essential Learnings Framework*) emphasise the need for pre-service teachers to develop cross-curricular competencies and skills.

The Department acknowledges the need for teacher preparation to include some specialisation according to the age and developmental level of children. For example, the needs of an early years' teacher to teach early literacy skills will be different to the needs of an adult literacy teacher. Given the 'lifelong' nature of learning it is unrealistic to expect a newly graduated teacher to have covered the teaching issues related to all possible groups of students in their initial training.

At the same time, there is an increasing realisation that teachers need to be prepared to undertake teaching across a flexible range of ages. Teachers that have capacity to teach across age ranges often have a deeper understanding of the needs of children at different stages of schooling and the transitional needs of students between stages of schooling.

In addition, there are many areas of teacher training and competencies that teacher need to develop that are common across student ages ranges.

The need for teachers to be able to undertake teaching across a more flexible age range is also important to recruitment and teacher supply where 'over supply' of graduates able to teach some age groups is often accompanied by 'undersupply' of graduates able to teach other age groups.

In response to these issues, the UTAS Faculty Of Education has developed some course modules that provide specialisation in the 'middle years of schoolings' (years 5- 8) and this is seen as an encouraging development.

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

UTAS offers a range of post graduate education courses including the Doctor of Education degree, a relatively new post graduate degree which offers experienced professionals working in education an alternative to a PhD.

These postgraduate courses provide participants with flexible study pathways and the capacity to engage in research in areas of professional interest.

The University does not however engage in non-accredited professional learning for teachers already in the workforce. The Department of Education is the major provider of professional learning and professional support to the teaching workforce. Considerable resourcing is targeted to system priorities and enhancing the effectiveness of teachers and schools.

Beginning Teachers are well supported in their early years of teaching by having access to comprehensive induction programs and the Beginning Teacher Time Release Program (BeTTR), a program is highly valued by both schools and beginning teachers.



The BeTTR program, a Learning Together initiative, provides resourcing that allows first year teachers to access a reduced teaching load in order to have time for quality, planned professional learning and general support. The BeTTR program provides a mechanism for schools to address any areas of need identified by the school and/or beginning teacher.

Again UTAS is not involved in either induction programs or beginning teacher support programs in Tasmania however there is obviously potential to add value to these programs, and indeed the overall teacher training experience, if partnerships between UTAS and the Department of Education were in place to support the transition into the profession.

Similarly the development of professional learning and research partnerships between the Department of Education, schools and UTAS could also add value to the extensive system generated professional learning agendas and provide focus to the theory and research component of the undergraduate courses.

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

The development and implementation of high quality teacher training courses will obviously require significant ongoing funding. If courses are reconceptualised to reflect real partnerships with the profession, delivery modes will change and there will be a need to utilise funding in new ways:

- Funding schools to provide significant blocks of school experience as a structured part of the course content;
- Funding and managing research partnerships with education systems and schools; and
- Funding top practitioners to help develop and implement training courses.

There may be a need for university administrations to look beyond those activities that have been traditionally valued and hence funded, to new activities that could be orientated to teaching practice than research and theory.