



NSW Institute of Teachers

Accreditation at Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership

Information for External Observers



NSW INSTITUTE OF TEACHERS



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INTRODUCTION

This information package is designed to provide information and support to external observers who will be participating in the process for candidates seeking accreditation at either Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership.

This information package should be read in conjunction with the following NSW Institute of Teachers documents:

- *Policy and Procedures for the Accreditation of Teachers at Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership*
- *Accreditation at Professional Accomplishment: Information For Candidates*
- *Accreditation at Professional Leadership: Information For Candidates*
- *Evidence Guide for Professional Accomplishment and Evidence Guide for Professional Leadership.*
- *Evidence Guide for Professional Accomplishment – Support Document and Evidence Guide for Professional Leadership – Support Document.*

The accreditation model for the higher levels is based on the use of externally moderated professional judgements and multiple sources of evidence. Candidates have the capacity in this model to demonstrate the Professional Teaching Standards over time.

The accreditation process for the higher levels must identify candidates who are recognised as meeting the Standards for Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership by the teaching profession. Accreditation identifies outstanding teaching and educational leadership that is independent of a specific school context.

Candidates can apply for either Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership. There is no requirement for a candidate to meet a specific key stage before proceeding to the next key stage.

THE CANDIDATE AT PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT


The Professional Teaching Standards describe what teachers know, understand and are able to do as well as reflecting the commitment, values and attitudes that teachers bring to their work. The Standards at Professional Accomplishment build on those at the level of Professional Competence and describe a benchmark of accomplished teaching.

Candidates demonstrating the Standards at Professional Accomplishment are viewed by others as being highly accomplished and successful practitioners. They are recognised as having in-depth subject knowledge and effective teaching skills in relation to a diverse range of students.

These candidates engage in educational and professional discussions and debates. They recognise their role in contributing to the professional learning of others, including mentoring beginning teachers. These candidates are advocates for the profession and their school. They communicate effectively to diverse audiences and interact professionally with the community.

THE CANDIDATE AT PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Standards at Professional Leadership build on those at the level of Professional Competence and Professional Accomplishment and describe a benchmark of exemplary professional practice. Candidates demonstrating the Standards at Professional Leadership are viewed by others as having a record of outstanding teaching and educational leadership and are committed to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. These candidates can articulate a vision of education to their students, peers, the profession and the wider community.



Candidates at Professional Leadership are knowledgeable about the latest developments in pedagogy and can apply those developments to improve teaching and learning. They have outstanding interpersonal and leadership skills which are underpinned by principles of fairness, compassion and integrity.

These candidates recognise the talents of others and promote and encourage those people to achieve their potential. They apply critical analysis and problem-solving skills to educational matters. They engage in professional learning and assist and support the professional learning needs of others, including induction programs for beginning teachers. They communicate effectively with the community to support the development of the school and to promote student learning.

KEY ASPECTS OF THE ACCREDITATION MODEL

The accreditation model comprises the following two distinct phases:

- *A preliminary application phase*

In this phase, candidates have their achievements assessed through an online application as an indicator of their likely success in meeting the accreditation requirements.

- *An accreditation phase*

In this phase, candidates collect evidence from a range of sources leading to the submission of their final application.

Preliminary Application Phase

The preliminary application process:

- provides candidates with a clear indication of likely success in gaining accreditation should they proceed with their application, thereby giving them some confidence in proceeding
- is designed to deter candidates from commencing the accreditation phase needlessly when there is little likelihood of success, and provides feedback to them as to what additional experience, achievements or professional development is required in order to increase their likely success in gaining accreditation
- takes the form of an online assessment instrument which will be based on candidates providing information in terms of the evidence requirements for Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership
- will provide realistic and valid assessment
- enables all candidates to gain a clear understanding of what is required for accreditation and to be able to undertake a self-assessment against the criteria.

The preliminary application is designed to be an indicator of likely success rather than a guarantee of success. Candidates undertaking the preliminary application will be encouraged to provide accurate information about their past and current experience.

Although it is not advisable, it is possible for a candidate to proceed without undertaking a preliminary application or being assessed as 'not yet ready to proceed'.

Accreditation Phase

Professional discussions

When a candidate decides to proceed to the Accreditation Phase, he or she should discuss their intention with their principal or line manager (particularly in the case of a school principal applying for accreditation).

The principal or manager will notify the Institute that he or she has been advised that the candidate is proceeding with their accreditation submission.

Acknowledging that a discussion has taken place has the effect of recognising the potential impact on the school organisation of the candidate progressing through an accreditation process, given that the process involves external moderation including site visits by external observer(s).

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Collection of evidence

The final accreditation decision will be based on the candidate consistently meeting all of the Professional Teaching Standards at the relevant level.

Candidates may include evidence that precedes the date of their submission. All evidence will be considered on the basis of its continuing relevance to the candidate's practice.

Evidence submitted will include copies of referees' reports, other documentation and copies of reports from the external observer(s).

There is a recommended maximum three year timeframe for the completion of a candidate's submission. Provision will be made to accommodate periods of leave (eg maternity leave) and other circumstances.

Two evidence guides and support documents for Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership will support the candidate both in their collection of evidence and in understanding the basis of the accreditation decision.

These evidence guides provide clear examples of the types of evidence that typically demonstrate the achievement of each of the Standards or groups of Standards. The candidate will generally collect evidence on a basis broader than individual Standards (for example, on an element or domain level of the Standards).

THE ROLE OF THE EXTERNAL OBSERVER

External observers have a crucial role in the accreditation model. External observations provide an opportunity for independent review of a candidate's practice.

As the external observer you will have a broad understanding, knowledge and experience in pedagogy and classroom practice with a teaching background is cognate with the candidate's. You will come from the same system but not the same school as the candidate.

You will consider the candidate's practice with reference to the indicators described in the Evidence Guide – Support Document as well as the candidate's submission. The timing of your observations will be negotiated by the Institute with the TAA/Principal and candidate. You write a final report and provide a copy to the candidate and the Institute.

As the external observer you do not make any accreditation decisions. Rather, your report is a source of information about the candidate's practice that will be included in the final accreditation documentation. This documentation is then considered when making the accreditation decision. An example of the template used for the report is attached as an appendix.

The Observation

The timing of your site visits will be negotiated between all the parties involved. Given that the candidate guides the process, he or she should discuss the structure of the observation with you prior to your visit. The candidate will specify the Standards to be observed.

In most cases two days will be set aside for the observations. The first day will be designed around the candidate's plan and the second is available for the candidate and/or you to use if you wish. The candidate may request a different observer for the second day.

It is important that time is set aside to debrief and discuss the day. This gives the candidate an opportunity to explain and expand on what you observed. This is a collegial dialogue (rather than an interview) where you provide feedback.



OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Candidate

Candidates determine the process of accreditation which should begin with their own reflection and analysis of their achievements. They are responsible for managing the entirety of their application, liaising with others involved in the accreditation process, including the NSW Institute of Teachers, and monitoring their progress in relation to the maximum timeframe for completion.

They should gain support from their principal or line manager and negotiate the timing of external observations, identify referees who will support their application and collect evidence of their demonstration of the Standards at Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership.

It is their responsibility to decide when to submit the final documentation.

Referees

As a number of the Standards at Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership rely on observation rather than documentation, substantiating evidence from people identified by the candidate to be referees will be an important contribution to the final submission and accreditation decision.

The role of referees is to support the candidate's application in relation to one or more Standard or Standards and to the claims made by the candidate. Referees will verify claims made by candidates by attesting that they have seen evidence of their capacity to meet one or more Standard/s.

Referees may include but are not limited to people such as classroom teachers, executive staff, principals, education consultants or advisors, teacher educators, specialist or itinerant staff, members of the community and representatives of external organisations.

Referees complete an on-line submission in support of the candidate's application. This submission relates directly to particular Standards and the claims made by the candidate.

Principal or Line Manager

At several points in the accreditation process the candidate might discuss their decision and their progress with their principal or line manager. They acknowledge that particular discussions have taken place.

Teacher Accreditation Authority (TAA)

Teacher accreditation authorities for the key stages of Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership may not necessarily be the same person/body as that for the key stage of Professional Competence. The TAA has the responsibility for considering and making recommendations with regard to the final submission. They may wish to provide the candidate with some feedback with regard to the quality of their submission prior to its completion.

The TAA is responsible for sending the submission to the Institute. Prior to doing this, they may review the submission to ensure consistency with others they have received.

The submission is sent back with a recommendation to the TAA once it has been considered by a cross-sectoral committee, the Moderating and Consistency Committee. The TAA considers the committee's advice and makes the final accreditation decision. The TAA informs the candidate, their principal or line manager and the Institute of the decision. As the TAA has the authority to accredit, the TAA can choose not to take the advice of the committee. If this is the case, then the TAA will need to respond to the committee in writing, outlining the reasons for the decision.

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ASSESSMENT OF FINAL SUBMISSION

The final submission will be considered by the Moderating and Consistency Committee. This committee comprises experts from various stakeholder groups. The role of this committee is to consider reports from all TAAs and ensure consistent accreditation decisions.

The accreditation advice that the committee provides will be based on the appropriateness and adequacy of the evidence in relation to the *Evidence Guide for Professional Accomplishment* or the *Evidence Guide for Professional Leadership* and a comparative analysis of a range of reports. The committee will be required to take the candidate's teaching context into account in their deliberations.

POLICY AND SUPPORT MATERIALS

Several documents developed by the Institute are designed to assist in the accreditation process. These are:

- *Policy and Procedures for Accreditation at Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership*
- *Evidence Guide for Professional Accomplishment and Evidence Guide for Professional Leadership*
- *Evidence Guide for Professional Accomplishment – Support Document and Evidence Guide for Professional Leadership – Support Document*
- *Accreditation at Professional Leadership and Professional Leadership: Information for Principals and Teacher Accreditation Authorities*
- *Accreditation at Professional Accomplishment: Information for Candidates*
- *Accreditation at Professional Leadership: Information for Candidates*
- *Accreditation at Professional Accreditation and Professional Leadership: Information for Referees.*

Additional information can also be found on the Institute's website:

www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au or by contacting Institute staff on 1300 739 338.

APPENDIX 1

Example of Online Template for External Observer's Report

APPENDIX 2

Overview of the Accreditation Model – Flowchart (please see page 8)

EXTERNAL OBSERVER'S REPORT – EXAMPLE

Candidate's name: _____

Candidate's accreditation no: _____

External Observer's name: _____

Confidentiality clause (please tick)

- I confirm that I have read *Information for External Observers* and that in providing the following statement/assessment on the candidate for Professional Accomplishment I agree to maintaining confidentiality at all times

You must complete a supporting comment for each Standard to which you attest

Element 1 Teachers know their subject content and how to teach that content to their students

Standard 1.3.1— Exhibit and share comprehensive knowledge of the content/discipline(s) with other teachers to develop exemplary, content-rich, teaching activities and programs.

- The teacher's answers to questions from students and colleagues about subject content are clear and accurate

Supporting comment

Describe the context(s) in which you witnessed the candidate demonstrate this Standard

Standard 1.3.2 – Mentor colleagues to ensure that classroom programs and teaching strategies are pedagogically sound and research-based.

- The teacher actively participates in or coordinates professional dialogue in a range of contexts about current research

Supporting comment

Describe the context(s) in which you witnessed the candidate demonstrate this Standard

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