



NSW Institute of Teachers

Policy and Procedures for Accreditation at Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership



NSW INSTITUTE OF TEACHERS





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Policy and Procedures for Accreditation at
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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy is designed to enable teachers to be accredited against the Professional Teaching Standards set at Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership. 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 and Professional Leadership describe a benchmark of outstanding teaching. They do not reflect specific job descriptions. For example, the Standards at Professional Leadership encompass non-positional leadership and are available to classroom teachers as well as promoted teachers and principals.

The *Policy and Procedures for Accreditation at Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership* is based on the use of externally moderated professional judgements and multiple sources of evidence to make an accreditation decision. The policy builds in the capacity for teachers to demonstrate the Professional Teaching Standards over time.

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

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

The *Institute of Teachers Act 2004* allows for a determination that a person or body is a teacher accreditation authority (TAA) for particular accreditation levels. To date, TAAs have been confirmed only for the point of employment and for Professional Competence accreditation. A key decision with respect to the policy relates to the person or body to be the TAA for these higher levels.

The Institute will also produce a range of information packages, resource materials and website information.

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2. DETERMINING THE TEACHER ACCREDITATION AUTHORITY

2.1 The Institute of Teachers Act

Section 4 of the *Institute of Teachers Act 2004* describes the meaning of the teacher accreditation authority (TAA) as follows:

- in relation to a government school, the TAA is the Director-General of Education and Training or such other person or body as may be approved by the Director-General. The Director-General may determine, in approving a person or body to make accreditation decisions, the levels of accreditation the person or body is approved to make; and
- in relation to a non-government school, the TAA is the Minister or such person or body as may be approved for the time being by the Minister. In respect to a non-government school that is a member of a system of non-government schools approved by the Minister under Part 7 of the *Education Act 1990*, the person or body approved by the Minister under this subsection may be the approved TAA for that system. The Minister may determine, in approving a person or body to make accreditation decisions, the levels of accreditation the person or body is approved to make.

In both government and non-government schools, approval to be a TAA is subject to the person or body complying with:

- (i) the accreditation procedures and guidelines set out in the Professional Teaching Standards;
- (ii) the conditions imposed by or under the *Institute of Teachers Act 2004*; and
- (iii) such other conditions as the Minister (or Director-General as in government schools) thinks fit to impose.

2.2 Guidelines for the identification of TAAs Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership (A/L)

Section 20 of the *Institute of Teachers Act* states that the Professional Teaching Standards may deal with and make provision for or with respect to, amongst a number of matters, the procedures and guidelines to be followed by TAAs in relation to the accreditation of teachers.

One of the most significant issues to be addressed in the policy is the assurance of consistency and comparability of accreditation decisions. This consistency and comparability is less likely to be achieved if an individual school is a TAA, particularly when the number of teachers seeking Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership in any one year may be relatively small.

Therefore to help ensure consistency and comparability of accreditation decisions across all NSW schools, the following indicative guidelines for the identification of TAAs for Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership are suggested.

1. A TAA at Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership would need to be responsible for determining accreditation decisions across at least 20 schools
2. Ten or more of the 20 schools would have more than 200 students
3. The schools would need to reflect the diversity of school types and settings and therefore would include at least one primary (K-6) and at least one secondary school (Years 7-10 or 7-12)¹

The different settings would comprise a number of schools that include students from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds.

1 A K-12 school could be categorised as either a primary or a secondary school for this purpose. A school that includes a preparatory year within a secondary school environment (ie 5-12) is regarded as a secondary school.



An entity may be established specifically for the purpose of being a TAA.

More detailed guidelines to establish a TAA (A/L) are to be developed.

These guidelines will include a requirement for an internal TAA policy.

It is expected that the TAA (A/L) policy will include an internal review mechanism designed to address issues of procedural fairness between the teacher applicant and his or her TAA (A/L) in relation to the final accreditation decision.

3. KEY ASPECTS OF THE ACCREDITATION MODEL

3.1 A phased model

The accreditation model comprises the following two distinct phases:

■ *A preliminary application phase*

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

3.1.1 Preliminary Application Phase

It is proposed that the preliminary application process:

- provides teachers with a clear indication of likely success in gaining accreditation should they proceed with their application, thereby giving them some confidence in proceeding;
- stops teachers 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 teachers providing information in terms of the evidence requirements for Professional Accomplishment or Leadership;
- will provide realistic and valid assessment;
- enables all teachers 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. Teachers undertaking the preliminary application will be encouraged to provide accurate information about their past and current experience.

3.1.2 Undertaking a preliminary application

A teacher's decision to apply for accreditation at Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership may be based on professional discussions with their principal or appropriate manager or supervisor. Preliminary applications will be received from the individual teacher applicant and feedback provided confidentially to the teacher.

Preliminary applications will be based on criteria approved by practising teachers. Advice will be provided as to whether the teacher is either *ready to proceed with the application* or *not yet ready to proceed* to the accreditation phase based on the results of this application. Where a teacher is assessed as being *ready*

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to proceed with the application, the Institute will confirm this result to the teacher. These teachers will be provided with information on how to proceed to the accreditation phase.

If the Institute's assessment of a preliminary application is *not yet ready to proceed with the application*, the teacher will be provided with feedback by the Institute. This feedback will relate to what additional experience, achievements or professional development is recommended to increase their likely success in gaining accreditation. Teachers can subsequently re-apply when they have addressed the feedback from the preliminary application and are ready to try again.

Although it is not advisable, it is possible for a teacher to proceed without undertaking a preliminary application or being assessed as *not yet ready to proceed with the application*.

3.1.3 Review of the preliminary assessment

Where a teacher is assessed as *not yet ready to proceed with the application* and the teacher does not agree with that assessment, the teacher may request a review of the preliminary application. This review will be undertaken through an Institute review process within a defined timeframe. The results of the Institute review process will be communicated to the teacher.

3.2 Accreditation Phase

3.2.1 Professional discussions

Where a teacher is assessed as *ready to proceed with the application* and decides to proceed to the Accreditation Phase, the teacher should discuss his or her intention to proceed with his or her principal or line manager (particularly in the case of a school principal applying for accreditation).

If the teacher chooses to proceed, it would be prudent at this stage to seek out and canvass the opinions of the referees identified to support his or her submission. The advice from referees could contribute to a decision to proceed.

The teacher accreditation submission will include a section for the teacher to acknowledge that they have discussed their application with their principal or appropriate manager.

The principal or manager will notify the Institute that he or she has been advised that the teacher 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 teacher progressing through an accreditation process. The process involves external moderation including site visits by external observers.

3.2.2 Payment of accreditation fee

A teacher deciding to proceed would need to make arrangements for the payment of the full accreditation fee. The timing and exact amount of this fee are available on the Institute's website.



3.2.3 Commencing a submission

The Electronic Teacher Accreditation Management System (eTAMS) managed by the Institute of Teachers will generate a profile for each teacher. The teacher will enter their evidence and associated information into their eTAMS profile. The teacher can log on to change or add to their submission. Over time, all documents included in their submission can be stored electronically.

A notification that the teacher is commencing to compile a submission will also be emailed to their TAA (A/L).

3.2.4 Collection of evidence

Two evidence guides for Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership will support the decision about accreditation. These evidence guides will provide clear examples of the types of evidence that typically demonstrate the achievement of each of the Standards or groups of Standards. Evidence will generally be collected on a basis broader than individual Standards, for example, on an element or domain level of the Standards. Teachers may submit progressively on a Domain level (see Section 3.2.8) although this is not mandatory.

Teachers may include current as well as other evidence that precedes the date of their submission. All evidence will be considered on the basis of its continuing relevance to the teacher's practice.

The Institute is developing a range of support materials that is designed to assist teachers to present their evidence.

The final accreditation decision will be based on the teacher consistently meeting all of the Professional Teaching Standards at the relevant key stage.

3.2.5 Referees

As a number of the Standards at Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership lend themselves to observation rather than documentation, substantiating evidence from people identified by the teacher to be referees will be an important contribution to the final submission.

Referees may contribute to a teacher's application in relation to one or more Standard or Standards.

Referees will verify claims made by applicants by attesting that they have seen evidence of a teacher's capacity to meet one or more Standard or Standards.

Teachers applying for accreditation would need to supply the names and contact details for people who can be called upon to support the teacher's application.

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

At a minimum, the mix of referees will need to include an existing or recent supervisor, a colleague and a teacher who has received professional support from the teacher. There is no maximum number of referees a teacher may select

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

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3.2.6 Nature and timing of external observations

External observations are a crucial aspect of the accreditation model. External observations provide an opportunity for independent review of a teacher's practice.

These observations would be undertaken by skilled classroom practitioners to be called External Observers.

The timing of the observations would be negotiated by the Institute with the TAA (A/L)/principal and teacher. The External Observer will consider the teacher's practice with reference to the indicators described in the Evidence Guide as well as the teacher's submission.

The Institute will select and train the External Observers.

3.2.7 Selection of External Observers

Common criteria will be used to select External Observers from each TAA including knowledge of the specific subject/teaching area. The selection criteria for External Observers will be determined by the Quality Teaching Council. A subcommittee of the Council will form a selection panel to assess the applications.

3.2.8 Structure of submission

There is a recommended maximum 3-year timeframe for the completion of a teacher's submission. Leave of absence provisions will be established to accommodate periods of leave (eg maternity leave) and other personal circumstances.

Evidence submitted would include documentary evidence, copies of referees' reports, and copies of reports from External Observers.

It is desirable that evidence be submitted in three parts aligned to the Domains of the Standards; that is, Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Commitment. This is not to imply that teachers undertake their accreditation process one Domain at a time. Rather, a teacher would gather evidence as appropriate to his or her personal circumstance but complete or substantially complete one Domain before the other two Domains. When completed a Domain may be submitted to the TAA for consideration.

A TAA may wish to provide an applicant with some feedback with regard to the quality of his or her submission at a mutually convenient time prior to the completion of the submission.

Teachers would take responsibility for deciding when to submit their final submission.

3.2.9 Role of the Teacher Accreditation Authority (A/L)

The TAA (A/L) has the responsibility for considering and making recommendations with regard to their teacher's final submission.

Following a process of internal quality assurance, the TAA (A/L) should forward the submission to the Moderating and Consistency Committee for advice about statewide benchmarks.



4. MODERATING AND CONSISTENCY COMMITTEE FOR HIGHER LEVEL ACCREDITATION

4.1 Role of the Committee

All submissions are to be considered by a cross-sectoral committee comprising representatives of various stakeholder groups. The role of this committee is to support consistent accreditation decisions by considering accreditation submissions along with their recommendations from TAAs (A/L) in a statewide context.

The Committee will provide accreditation advice with regard to each submission. This advice will be based on the appropriateness and adequacy of the evidence in the submission in relation to the Standards and the Evidence Guides and a comparative analysis of a range of reports.

Briefing sessions and guidelines will be provided to all Committee members. The guidelines will be designed to support an understanding of the Standards and Evidence Guide as the common objective criteria that will be applied with regards to accreditation submissions.

Strict protocols will govern the conduct of the meeting. Each member will adhere to objective criteria and agreed benchmarks with regards to their analysis of each submission.

All submissions will be accompanied by a detailed description of the teacher's current and past school contexts. While achievement of all the Standards is required, the Committee will take the teaching context into account in their deliberations.

Where the Committee's advice is not to accredit a teacher, feedback and constructive advice will be provided to the relevant TAA (A/L) and the teacher.

To minimise the workload on individuals, the stakeholders represented on the Committee could nominate a small pool of nominees who could be on a roster to attend committee meetings.

4.2 Resolving disputes between the Committee and the TAA (A/L)

As the TAA (A/L) has the authority to accredit, the TAA (A/L) could choose not to take the advice of the Committee. In these cases, the TAA (A/L) would be required to respond to the Committee in writing describing the reasons for their decision. Separate procedures will be developed to guide this process.

4.3 The Institute's role in assuring the quality of accreditation decisions

A key function of the Institute of Teachers is to monitor the accreditation process across all schools and to ensure that the Professional Teaching Standards are applied fairly and consistently.

The Institute will use the advice of the Moderating and Consistency Committee to monitor the accreditation decisions of specific TAAs (A/L) at the higher levels. Should the Institute identify inconsistencies in the decision, there are a range of penalties under the Act that can be applied to the TAA (A/L).

4.4 Expert advice

The Committee would also need to draw on specific subject/stage expertise. It may be appropriate to have a number of KLA and stage panels. The role of each panel would be to provide expert advice relating to each application. The membership of these panels would comprise subject and stage specialists drawn from professional associations and other relevant organisations.

These panels could meet using teleconferencing facilities. This would minimise disruption to teachers and support a statewide distribution of expertise.

