

Inquiry into the Recruitment and Training of Teachers

**Submission from members of the Department of Education and Training
North Coast Region Senior Executive. (School Education Directors and
Principal Education Officers)**

Our comments are organised against the terms of reference. They reflect individual ideas supported in general by the group.

1. *The best means of attracting quality teachers to NSW Public Schools and meeting the needs of school communities*

Graduates should:

- be recruited earlier in their final year and offered reduced teaching loads ramped up in their first 3 years;
- be provided with 5 year career plans that guarantee them leadership development and professional learning opportunities so that the career advantages of working in a large system are clear;
- After 2-3 years service, be eligible for leadership scholarships that prepare them for promotions positions;
- Be allocated a first year mentor and advocate from a nearby school who would be an identified outstanding teacher;
- Include at least 2% Aboriginal teachers, case-managed in their first 2 years of service by staff identified by the APU. They should be placed in schools that have recently received cultural awareness training and who must report on specific strategies to induct and support Aboriginal staff during the first 2 years of each appointment.

The gap between classroom and promotion position salaries needs to be much greater. Starting salary is good but there is not enough financial incentive to seek more responsible positions.

For borderline UAI applicants – screening for attitude and commitment to teaching.

2. *The effectiveness and efficiency of current means of recruiting teachers to NSW Public Schools, including* **a. *recent graduates***

generally mature aged graduates are good.

b. career change teachers

Many career change teachers find the role a challenge. Suggest practical experience in schools before / or early in retraining to understand reality and complexity of being a teacher in NSW

Some mature aged graduates do not have the literacy/numeracy levels required.

3. Differences and similarities between primary and secondary school recruitment needs

Staff should be appointed to an area rather than a school. The area would be defined by one hour travel from the nearest major population centre. This would allow for far greater mobility/refreshing of staff between schools and a level of discretion in placing nominated and compassionate transfers from outside the area.

Comcomitant to this would be the re-organisation of primary schools, and perhaps their high school, into linked campuses around a population centre, eg Gloucester, Junee. This would support inexperienced staff placed in PP5 and 6 schools by allowing their rotation into larger campuses during the year and/or between years, allow them to attend much larger and diverse staff meetings/professional learning opportunities, support their OH&S and expose them to a greater range of educational settings and experiences.

All teacher trainees need to have empathy, understanding and commitment towards Aboriginal and Special Needs students.

4. Existing initiatives and programs of the Department of Education and Training, including

a. Teach NSW

Develop sponsorships with NSW Teachers Health Fund and Credit Union is provide cheap or enhanced membership for first – third year outs.

b. scholarships for undergraduates

The pool of teachers with Psychology majors is rapidly drying up and we will not be able to fill a significant number of counsellor positions within a few years. Scholarships should be extended to undergraduates who are prepared to complete a 'major' in psychology.

Paid cadetships for talented trainees with post-school life experiences from 2nd year university

c. accelerated training courses

5. *The role of the NSW Institute of Teachers and its accreditation and endorsement requirements*

All future teachers, to gain endorsement by the NSW Institute of Teachers, should have qualifications which include components relating to children with disabilities and behaviour management.

Increase the mandatory component of special education training for preservice teachers, especially in behaviour management and how to adjust the curriculum for students with special needs.

Literacy training must address direct instruction and phonemic awareness. Whole language approach alone is effective for 70 % of students. Students who struggle with literacy need more direct instruction.

All qualified teachers should undergo a minimum number of hours of professional learning in a year (ie 20hrs)

To date, the Institute's material and processes have been received positively.

6. *The role, distribution and effectiveness of university pre-service teacher education*

It is important that all teacher training courses contain, at a minimum, a course relating to children with disabilities and a course on behaviour management

The effectiveness of training Aboriginal trainees at the Catholic University needs to be examined, in particular, the attention to spoken English skills.

More emphasis needs to be placed on

- the Quality Teaching Framework and the positive relationship between engaging students in curriculum and behaviour management.
- a variety of classroom and behaviour management strategies.
- a greater understanding of a standards framework in each curriculum.
- the teaching learning cycle and the importance of assessments driving programming.

- lecturers being current in classroom practice and curriculum.
- the integration of technology across KLAs.

7. Any other matter arising from these terms of reference

Contemporary and future educational contexts suggest a need for teacher education programs which:

- Offer multiple entry and exit points
- Maximise the career flexibility of graduates
- Are sufficiently flexible to accommodate changing career pathways in education
- Develop educators who
 - can work across established / traditional educational boundaries
 - can integrate knowledge across traditional discipline boundaries
 - are aware of the broad educational context, and not just of their area of focus
 - can adapt to and shape change
 - can work powerfully with diversity
 - are flexible / creative / politically aware / committed to goals of social justice in and through education.

Teacher education programs should model the best pedagogical practices through:

- using a diverse range of teaching models (exposition, problem-based teaching, enquiry approaches etc.)
- team teaching
- using a diverse range of delivery strategies including ICTs
- being explicit about what teaching and assessment approaches are being used and why
- encouraging habits of independent and collaborative learning
- modelling what it means to enquire into educational practice, and
- sharing with students the processes and outcomes of enquiry into teaching.

It is the belief of some that the 4th year should be in a school fulltime under the supervision of credentialed teacher mentors who grade the student with a University staff member as moderator who sees the broader picture and teaching context.

The appointment of university staff to education faculties is most important. In recent times:

1. schools/DET have not been involved in the staff selection process,
2. University staff members have been required to have an academic qualification, often PhD but have not been school teachers and /or have had little recent school experience.

University staff, including any casual staff who work with pre-service students in the schools, must have relevant/recent school professional experiences and appropriate professional qualifications (this will ensure their standing in the profession). The preferred position is that they should be outstanding teachers first, academics second.

The Practicum

A key point of contact with the profession is the practicum experience

The practicum should be planned and designed as a key pre-service program of teacher education.

The practicum curriculum involves both on-site components including general and content knowledge pedagogy, with related experiences and activities within schools and/or other appropriate settings.

The value of the school experience cannot be understated.

Seen as a whole, the practicum is designed to have and is seen to have benefit to all parties, and serves as a model of professional collaboration.

The practicum should be a planned experience involving schools. It must be planned, designed, implemented and progressively evaluated in partnership with the school systems and participating schools, so that programs meet the ongoing needs of the students and the profession.

Areas for consideration...

1. The related university and school experience activities should as far as possible be tied closely together in time.
2. The total practicum experience is flexible enough to reflect the needs and teaching requirements of diverse school populations including Aboriginal populations.

3. The practicum is planned and designed as an identifiable curriculum entity within a pre-service program of teacher education.
4. The practicum curriculum involves both on-campus components including general and content knowledge pedagogy, with related experiences and activities within schools and/or other appropriate settings.
5. The practicum is presented and implemented as a sequenced and progressive whole.
6. The practicum is planned, designed, implemented and progressively evaluated in partnership with the school systems and participating schools, so that programs meet the ongoing needs of the students and the profession.
7. The components within the practicum have a significant assessment element within the relevant overall degree/diploma program.
8. The related university and school experience activities are as far as possible tied closely together in time.
9. That the total practicum experience be flexible enough to reflect the needs and teaching requirements of diverse school populations including Aboriginal populations.
10. While working with students in the schools or other relevant settings, the university staff cooperate as colleagues with the teachers and other professional staff working in those settings.
11. University staff members who lecture/tutor in the university practicum programs also provide developmental supervision/mentoring to the same students in the relevant school-based components.
12. If casual university staff are used to supervise students in the schools, they are involved in a relevant part of the university program component.
13. University staff members including any casual staff must have experiences and appropriate professional qualifications which give them standing in the cooperating schools.
14. Participating schools identify teachers who are willing and capable of providing the professional assistance and guidance necessary to meet the learning needs of the pre-service students at relevant practicum program stages, and make arrangements for their services to be available.
15. The student assessments involve open processes, related to clear criteria and involving the three parties – students, teacher(s) and University staff member(s).
16. A part of the assessments process there is a need for an assessment of the relevant learning gains of the pupils in the schools during the work of the pre-service student, (as appropriate to the sequence level of the practicum).
17. The university takes final responsibility for the progressive summative evaluations leading to the eventual graduation of its students, and to its program meeting relevant certification requirements. It stands behind that certification as an indicator of readiness to start work as a beginning professional teacher in the schools.

18. The interactions between university staff members and school-based staff provide mutual professional growth.
19. The activities of the students in the schools are devised and promoted as having real value to the work of the schools.
20. Strong program leadership and ongoing advocacy for the practicum is provided, both in the university and the schools.

The North Coast Region executive has a particular interest in ensuring that the practicum programs are diverse programs, including for example for the preparation of teachers who will work in remote indigenous communities.