

**Supplementary
Submission
No 119a**

**INQUIRY INTO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY OR
SPECIAL NEEDS IN NEW SOUTH WALES SCHOOLS**

Name: Australian Association of Special Education, NSW Chapter

Date received: 19 May 2017



ADDITION TO SUBMISSION, AASE NSW

The initial submission by AASE NSW to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry included a number of comments in regard to initial teacher education. Subsequent to our main submission, the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) has informed AASE NSW that the stand-alone mandatory special education unit is no longer required in pre-service teacher education programs. The new requirement developed by NESA is that teacher education programs only have to integrate or embed special content into the other units.

AASE NSW was one of the advocates for the introduction of a mandatory unit in special education in pre-service teacher education. AASE NSW strongly believes such a unit should be maintained, along with the embedding of relevant content in other units throughout teacher education courses. AASE believes it is crucial the units on special and inclusive education should be taught by academics with both qualifications and experience in the area, and where possible by those who are actively researching in the area. As noted in our main submission, with the demise of dedicated special education centres in universities, the research and teaching capacity of universities is being reduced.

The removal of the mandatory special education unit in pre-service teacher education is a significant reduction in the quality of teacher education programs.

Some reasons for retaining the mandatory unit include:

- Academics with expertise and experience in special education and inclusion are more likely to develop and teach the content;
- The evidence shows that embedding content is far less effective than providing it in a stand-alone unit;
- Accreditation authorities can more easily monitor the requirement that ALL the essential content is adequately addressed and that the time provided is equivalent to a stand alone unit;
- As increasing numbers of students with disability are educated in inclusive classrooms, it is critically important that graduates are fully prepared during their university education. The evidence suggests that many early career teachers need more, not less, high quality preparation that is based upon special education methodologies.

AASE NSW supports the embedding of relevant content across units in a course, but only in conjunction with the retention of the mandatory stand-alone unit.