

Submission
No 4

INQUIRY INTO TEACHER SHORTAGES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: NSW Council of Deans of Education

Date Received: 25 July 2022

NSW Council of Deans of Education. Submission to the Inquiry into Teacher Shortages in NSW 2022

Who are the NSWCDE?

The [NSW Council of Deans of Education](#) is the peak body representing NSW Teacher Education Providers, University Education Faculties and Schools of Education. The NSWCDE leads the delivery and development of education programs, partnerships, and research. It acts as an advocate for pre-service and in-service teacher education and works cooperatively with key stakeholders. NSWCDE is the state affiliate of the [Australian Council of Deans of Education](#) for New South Wales.

Background and Context

The NSWCDE welcomes opportunities to extend the quality provision of pre-service and in-service education programs and research across all schooling sectors to address teacher shortages in NSW. We have strong partnerships with NSW schools in the government, Catholic and independent sectors through the NSW Department of Education's Hub School program; our shared professional experience agreements across all school sectors; agreements with the NSW Teachers' Federation and Independent Education Union about payment for in-school supervisors across sectors; and collaborative research projects commissioned by the NSW Department of Education.

Summary of Recommendations

This submission proposes sustainable solutions, which we believe collectively will go some way to addressing NSW's short- and longer-term teaching workforce needs:

1. Fund initiatives to attract a more diverse cohort of candidates to undergraduate and postgraduate Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs, including a strong media campaign, early identification with bespoke routes into teaching, financial incentives, and the expansion of more diverse university-school partnerships across all sectors of schooling, early and secondary education in NSW.
2. Address the working conditions of teachers in NSW as a key strategy to retain them in the profession. Specifically, we argue for a change in the narrative - from, "we need to improve teacher quality," to one of, "we need candidates of quality to join a valued profession where teaching is viewed as a quality job".
3. Maintain a master's level minimum qualification, coupled with funding innovations, which promote more flexibility and accelerated pathways for graduate applicants (including career changers) to transition into the teaching profession. Maintaining this qualification level is in line with international trends and demonstrates Australia's national commitment to teaching as a high-status profession.

4. Systematic programs to employ preservice teachers early in their degrees as paraprofessionals.
5. Provide targeted funding to employing authorities or schools specifically for initiatives to strengthen and scale-up effective school-university partnership practices including high quality, sustainable professional experience opportunities.
6. Introduce consistent, well-supported induction programs for new teachers (including casual teachers), with induction mentors, and research-based professional learning programs for all teachers.

Elaboration of Recommendations

1. Attracting a more diverse cohort into ITE so that teachers better mirror the diversity in school students and society

First, we need to change public perception about the teaching profession. A national media campaign is needed to raise the status and attractiveness of teaching as a career.

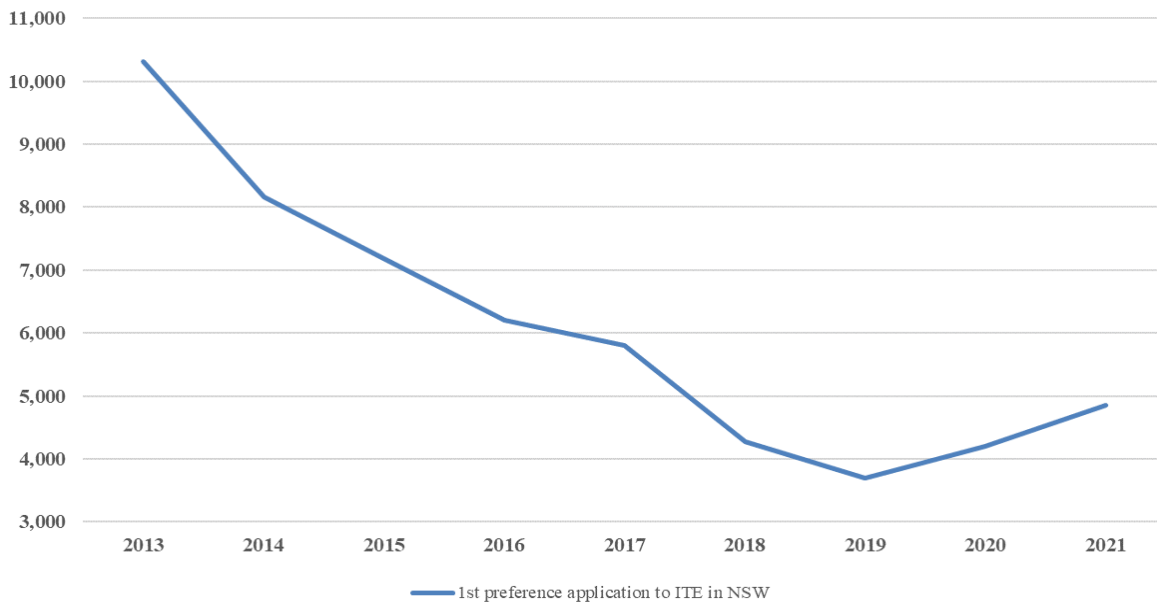
High-achieving school leavers are largely motivated by:

1. Social justice: ability to contribute to society
2. Intellectual challenge and autonomy
3. Remuneration along with career prospectsⁱ

Unfortunately, there has been a 29 per cent decline in enrolments in teaching degrees in NSW over the five years from 2014-19.ⁱⁱ

The situation is much worse when it comes to teaching as a top choice for students. In NSW from 2013 to 2021, applications from students who put teaching down as their first preference – in other words, the students who most want to become teachers – dropped by over half, even despite a 30 per cent uptick in the last two years.

ITE first preference applications in NSW, 2013-2021



Source: UAC. 1st preference applications from U/G & P/G

University-school partnerships can play a strong role in attracting and retaining diverse candidates into teaching. Formalised university-school partnerships in diverse contexts are often seen as an investment in the local community and may promote minority student interest in teaching as a careerⁱⁱⁱ. The NSW Department of Education's Hub School Initiative^{iv} is a good existing model that could be expanded, particularly into rural and regional areas, across sectors, and into early childhood centres. The Hub School model of university-school partnerships, currently funded in NSW, includes government hub schools working in close partnership with a university and a network of local schools. Each hub school has an in-school Professional Experience Coordinator (PEXC) to support induction of teacher education students into the school community. Hub school networks could encompass a more diverse range of schools and early childhood centres from government, catholic and independent sectors, including rural/regional schools/centres, specialist schools such as STEM schools, special purpose schools and hard to staff schools/centres. These hub networks could provide opportunities to promote teaching as a profession among senior students in each community and could establish a clustered approach to placements, with professional experience coordinators (induction mentors) in every hub network and opportunities for students to take placements in diverse schools.

University-school partnerships in diverse schools can enable bespoke and contextualised initiatives including some that have been trialled elsewhere and some new suggestions:

- Enabling prospective candidates to try out teaching prior to applying (in line with the 'Discover Teaching' initiative, UK) conducted through partner schools in students' demographic.
- Recognising prior experience and industry expertise for eligibility into MTeach degrees for those with no formal qualifications.
- Use of financial incentives to attract diverse students, eg. scholarships and fee waivers, opportunities to work as paraprofessionals in schools while studying, bonuses for obtaining

successful certification and bonuses for teaching in “hard to staff” schools or subject areas experiencing shortage (eg. in line with US initiative [Teacher diversity in America](#)). Underwriting the cost of teacher preparation through service scholarships and loan forgiveness in exchange for a commitment to teach in high-need schools or subject areas, typically for at least 4 years.

- Funding to support early identification of diverse students including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in senior school and developing wrap-around support to facilitate the pathway to a BEd (including support for LANTITE, which is a significant barrier for diverse teacher education candidates).
- Implementing ‘Grow Your Own’ programs in rural/remote contexts that enable teacher education candidates from rural and remote schools to work at the school in a paraprofessional role while studying for a BEd (or MTeach) online, with school holiday intensives.

2. Address teaching conditions: teaching needs to be a quality job

The teaching profession in NSW is in crisis. Teachers are abandoning the profession and potential teachers are driven away by limited career advancement opportunities, heavy workloads, burnout and wellbeing, pay ceilings, and poor public perceptions of the profession^v.

Given this, the desire to attract and select high quality candidates has implications that are system-wide, involving factors relating to the attractiveness of teaching as a profession and its ability to make best use of their skills. System factors of importance include:

- Remuneration structures and career progression (eg. it only takes 6-8 years for teachers to start earning the maximum salary in Australia, and the top of the scale is only about 33-53% higher than starting salaries, compared to 66% on average across OECD countries)^{vi};
- Perceived intellectual challenge through one’s career (eg. developing specialist qualifications to support clearer non-leadership career pathways for teachers that want to stay and excel in the classroom);
- Teacher workload (particularly time on teaching vs “red tape” administrative/reporting tasks)^{vii};
- Level of autonomy^{viii};
- The quality of induction, support and professional development provided by employers; and
- The cultural valuing of teachers including the ways in which the profession is portrayed in the media.

These factors are recognised in recent reports in Australia and overseas including:

- In Australia, the Grattan Institute’s report ‘Attracting High Achievers to Teaching’^{ix} noted that “...more bright young people would choose teaching if there was financial support while studying, better pay for top teachers, and better progression opportunities beyond traditional principal career paths”. Findings in the report highlight that, unlike high performing systems such as Singapore and Finland, our best teachers are not provided with adequate opportunity to share their expertise or pursue innovative ideas; rather, they tend

to be “confined to their own classrooms or stretched with ‘add-on’ instructional leadership responsibilities without adequate time, guidance, or support to improve teaching in their school.

- OECD Report^x observed: Competitive compensation and other incentives, career prospects and diversity, and giving teachers responsibility as professionals are important parts of strategies to attract the most talented teachers to the most challenging classrooms.
- Finland has moved to increase investment in the support of novice teachers with additional time to collaborate with their peers to develop curricula and assessments – and considerable autonomy^{xi}.
- Ontario has instituted a comprehensive multi-year induction program for new teachers, which includes intensive mentoring and professional development, as well as appraisal^{xii}.
- In England, the ‘Early Career Framework’ extending on the ‘Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy’ extends induction and professional support for early career teachers to 2 years, with reduced workload, which is fully funded by DfE^{xiii}.

3. Maintain a master’s level minimum qualification, but with more flexibility and accelerated pathways, for graduate applicants and career changers to transition into the teaching profession.

In addition to the factors motivating high-performing school-leavers to the teaching profession outlined above, mid- and late-career changers are influenced by career stability and work-life balance in the long term, and minimal disruption to their personal lives and their capacity to earn in the career change process^{xiv}.

Master’s qualifications for teaching have become an international trend and are more highly valued than the PG Diploma, particularly for career changers^{xv}. In addition, master’s level degrees include a valuable research component as required within the AQF Framework, which places a strong focus on understanding, interpreting, and using data and evidence: key skills for teaching. The value of more flexible, accelerated master’s programs in attracting career changers and targeting teacher shortages in particular subject areas and hard to staff schools has been shown internationally over recent years^{xvi}.

Accelerated programs have a greater emphasis on workplace learning in schools. We support initiatives within MTeach programs which can attract professionals from other field by minimising disruption to their personal lives and their capacity to earn while ensuring an effective alignment between theory and practice. Integrated strategies in university-based programs overseas and in Australia are based on key principles:

- Subsidised preparation through scholarships/bursaries and employment (0.6-0.8 FTE load) (eg. as paraprofessionals or teachers) generally in 2nd year, or from 2nd half of 1st year;
- Employment-based pathways for postgraduate entry that ‘front-end’ content and professional experience placements, and then place candidates into classrooms part-time as teachers as they finish their Master of Teaching degrees. This approach requires high levels of mentoring, support and collaboration between universities and employers.
- Flexible pathways, such as fast-tracking (eg. 18-month programs using intensives and trimester structures) or part time over 3-4 years while teaching;
- Flexible delivery (online and blended; weekly or intensive offerings);

- Effective mentoring in schools by designated induction mentors working closely with university supervisors;
- Connection with other ITE students within communities of practice offering opportunities for collaboration and peer support;
- Guaranteed post-qualification employment (eg. in mutually agreed positions and schools with teacher shortages).

4. Systematic programs to employ preservice teachers early in their degrees as paraprofessionals

Freeing teachers from the excessive burden of non-core activities to do what they do best – teach – can be achieved through the delegation of non-core tasks to preservice teachers working as paid paraprofessionals. Preservice teachers employed as learning support officers could help teachers monitor and record student assessment tasks, modify curriculum activities for individual students, develop and implement data management systems, help with extra curricula programs, and the like. The preservice teacher benefits from greater immersion in the school, strengthening their understanding of the relationship between theory and practice, developing an early exposure to the realities of a teacher’s life and, of course, a part-time salary. These programs can provide short- and long-term benefits:

- help preservice teachers to understand and experience school cultures, strategies for classroom management, and engagement with parents and community without the pressure of managing a whole classroom;
- become a de facto stipend for students and make teaching a more attractive option; and,
- relieve the pressure on teachers.

5. Improve the provision of professional experience placements

Professional Experience Programs constitute an essential component of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs and are consistently rated by graduates as the most important element of their preparation as teachers. In NSW, Professional Experience is guided by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Framework for High Quality Professional Experience in NSW Schools^{xvii}.

The Job-ready Graduates Package’s six percent net funding cut in 2021 for provider for each equivalent full-time Commonwealth-supported student enrolled in ‘Education’ units of study means that total funding available to support Professional Experience in ITE has decreased. Over time, and especially once the Package’s transition period ends from 2024, this reduction in funding will impact on efforts to support quality professional experience placements for students in ITE programs.

In NSW Department of Education schools, placements are sought from amongst a list of partner schools that are provided by the Department to Higher Education Providers (HEPs). Placements for catholic and independent schools are sought via Individual agreements at diocesan and school level. It is voluntary for schools and teachers to take ITE students for placements. In all cases, teachers are required to provide a report for each placement and support the completion of the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA)^{xviii} for final year placement students

Supervision of ITE students can present challenges for individual teachers and schools. For example, the support and management of placements can be viewed as an additional burden for teachers given their already high administrative and teaching loads^{xix}. However, many teachers and school leaders view the placement of ITE students in their schools as part of their commitment to the future growth of the profession. Education sectors have worked collaboratively with universities to enhance the quality and efficacy of placements.

A more systematic, technology-enabled approach to professional experience placements should be introduced in NSW. Infrastructure is needed to support placements that help to find 'best-fit' solutions for preservice teachers in schools/centres. Such infrastructure could also support future workforce planning in schools.

6. Introduce consistent, well-supported induction programs for new teachers (including casual teachers), with induction mentors, and research-based professional learning programs for all teachers.

The NSW CDE supports strengthening the support and PD provided to early career teachers in schools, including casual teachers. In the UK: Early Career Framework (ECF) initiative, the induction period was extended to two school years with Induction Mentor teachers receiving a time allocation. Early career teachers undergoing induction are now entitled to a two-year training and support program based on the ECF and funded by the Federal Government. In Ontario, the province provides a year-long induction program for graduate teachers (with an option to extend this to a second year). All new teachers are given a reduced teaching load and assigned a mentor who is an experienced teacher, who also has a reduced teaching load. New teachers also take part in professional development designed to orient and support them throughout the year.

Clear guidance is needed for jurisdictions to differentiate the expectations of *graduate* and *proficient* teacher. Broadly, the emphasis for Graduate Teachers is on the demonstration of knowledge and understanding, and use of teaching strategies, whereas for Proficient Teachers, it is on planning, design, implementation, and application. The need for consistent, high quality in-school professional support to reach and maintain Proficient standards is an issue requiring urgent attention.

The increasing complexity of teaching diverse groups means that predetermined technical skills and passed-down experiential knowledge may be insufficient for the kinds of complex problem-solving that is required for most contemporary teaching contexts^{xx}. Effective teacher professional learning is fundamental for the ongoing support and motivation of teachers. Key design features include contextual relevance, active learning, an iterative approach over a longer duration, and based on a theory of action^{xxi}. Strong university-school partnerships can enable collaborative practice-based research and ongoing evidence-based professional learning to address real issues in classrooms and school communities.

Strong and coherent education *systems* and school improvement initiatives (such as in Ontario and Finland) are grounded in evidence-based practices throughout classrooms and schools,

systematic induction and mentoring for novice teachers, and highly developed, school-embedded systems of professional learning as a collective rather than individual effort. In the context of teacher shortages too much emphasis on recruitment without a focus on professional development and retention could result in a continual churn within the teaching profession^{xxii}.

ITE faculties within university-school partnerships can and already do play an important role in this vision of professional learning that is school-embedded, makes frequent use of peer observation and coaching, and develops professional conversations to identify problems and use evidence to improve practice.

ⁱ<https://cdn.qct.edu.au/pdf/Research/WhyPeopleChooseTeachingLiteratureReview.pdf>

Goss, P. & Sonnemann, J. *Attracting High Achievers to Teaching*, Grattan Institute Report No. 2019-08, July 2019.

ⁱⁱ *NSW Teacher Supply Strategy, released Friday 15th October 2021*

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/teacher-supply-strategy>

ⁱⁱⁱ Goe, L. & Roth, A. (2018). *Diversifying the Teacher Workforce: Evidence from Surveys, Phone Interviews, and Site Visits With Educator Preparation Programs, ETS Report Series, 2019(1)*, 1-51

^{iv} <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/professional-learning/pl-resources/pre-service-teacher-resources/professional-experience-hub-schools>

^v Madigan, D. J., & Kim, L. E. (2021). Towards an understanding of teacher attrition: A meta-analysis of burnout, job satisfaction, and teachers' intentions to quit. *Teaching and teacher education, 105*, 103425.; Räsänen, K., Pietarinen, J., Pyhältö, K., Soini, T., & Väisänen, P. (2020). Why leave the teaching profession? A longitudinal approach to the prevalence and persistence of teacher turnover intentions. *Social Psychology of Education, 23(4)*, 837-859.; Santoro, D. A. (2021). *Demoralized: Why teachers leave the profession they love and how they can stay*. Harvard Education Press.

^{vi} OECD (2020). *TALIS 2019 Results (Volume II): Teachers and school leaders as valued professionals*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/19cf08df-en>

^{vii} Laming, A. (2018). Inquiry to examine the Status of the Teaching Profession, Independent Education Union of Australia, <https://ieuwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Status-of-the-Teaching-Profession-Submission-final.pdf>

^{viii} Gallant, A. & Riley, P. (2017) Early career teacher attrition in Australia: inconvenient truths about new public management, *Teachers and Teaching, 23(8)*, 896-913, DOI: 10.1080/13540602.2017.1358707

^{ix} See note *i*

^x OECD (2012). Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century: Lessons from around the world. Preparing Teachers from all over the world, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/preparing-teachers-and-developing-school-leaders-for-the-21st-century_9789264174559-en

^{xi} See Note *vi*

^{xii} Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher education around the world: What can we learn from international practice?, *European Journal of Teacher Education, 40(3)*, 291-309, DOI: 10.1080/02619768.2017.1315399

^{xiii} Department for Education (DfE) (2019). Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786856/DFE_Teacher_Retention_Strategy_Report.pdf

Department for Education (DfE) (2020) Early Career Framework, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-career-framework-reforms-overview/early-career-framework-reforms-overview>

^{xiv} Allen, J., Rowan, L. & Singh, P. (2019). Status of the teaching profession – attracting and retaining teachers, *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 47(2)*, 99-102, DOI: 10.1080/1359866X.2019.1581422

^{xv} Ojala, K., Isopahkala-Bouret, U. & Varhelahti, M. (2021). Adult graduates' employability and mid-career trajectories after graduation with Finnish UAS Master's degree, *Journal of Education and Work, 34(1)*

^{xvi} See Notes *xiii* and *xv*

^{xvii} <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/teacher-accreditation/resources/professional-experience-framework>

^{xviii} The TPA is a mandated requirement for all Initial Teacher Education providers as part of the accreditation of their programs

^{xix} OECD, *Education at a Glance, 2020*, Figure D1.1.

^{xx} Willegems, V., Consuegra, E., Struyven, K. & Engels, N. (2017). Teachers and pre-service teachers as partners in collaborative teacher research: A systematic literature review. *Teaching and Teacher Education. 64(3)*, 230-245.

^{xxi} Kennedy, M. M. (2016). How Does Professional Development Improve Teaching? *Review of Educational Research, 86(4)*, 945-980. doi:10.3102/0034654315626800.

^{xxii} See Note *xii*