

# Guide to the Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia

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The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) worked closely with key education stakeholders to develop the national education *Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia*. The policy outlines the purposes and principles underlying certification and the assessment process.

In developing the nationally consistent approach to certification, AITSL consulted with all state and territory education authorities, national and local Catholic and Independent school authorities, teacher regulatory authorities, peak national bodies, including unions and principal associations, and practising teachers and principals.

The Institute's responsibility to lead this work was outlined in its 2011/12 Letter of Expectation from the Commonwealth Minister for Education.

*The Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia* was endorsed by Education Ministers at the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) - now the Education Council - on 20 April 2012.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership was formed to provide national leadership for the Commonwealth, state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership with funding provided by the Australian Government.

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# Contents

## 01 National certification 3

Background	3
Purpose	4
Principles	4
Australian Professional Standards for Teachers	5

## 02 National certification in jurisdictions 6

A national process	6
State/territory certifying authorities	6
Support for applicants and assessors	6

## 03 State/territory specific information 7

Introduction	7
Organisation specific arrangements	7
Timeframes	7
How to apply	7

## 04 Certification process 8

Certification assessment	9
Pre-Assessment	10
Stage 1: Submission of evidence	12
Submitting applications	19
Assessment Stage 1: Decision making	20
Assessment Stage 2	21
Assessment Stage 2: Decision making	24
Certification decision	25
Appeals	25

## 05 Support materials 26

Documentary evidence supplement	26
Tools and templates	26
Learning from practice - workbook series	26
Annotated evidence	26
Classroom Practice Continuum	27
Assessor Training Program	27

## 06 Roles and responsibilities 28

Applicant	28
Assessor	29
Principal	30
Referees	30
Certifying authority	31
Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership	31

## 07 Renewal of certification 32

## 08 Glossary 33

## 09 Appendix A: Applicant checklist 35

## 10 Appendix B: Australian Professional Standards for Teachers 37

Highly Accomplished and Lead Standards	37
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This Guide to Certification provides information to assist applicants, certifying authorities and other personnel in understanding the requirements of the certification process and the roles and responsibilities of those involved.

# 01 National certification

This Guide to Certification provides information to assist applicants, certifying authorities and other personnel in understanding the requirements of the certification process and the roles and responsibilities of those involved. It should be used in conjunction with the *Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia*<sup>1</sup>, the documentary evidence supplements, specific state/territory requirements, as well as other relevant support material.

## Background

All Australian Education Ministers endorsed the *Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia* in April 2012. National certification uses the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*<sup>2</sup> (the Standards) as a basis for making rigorous and consistent judgements regarding the certification of teachers at the higher career stages across Australia.

It is well established that teacher quality is the single greatest in-school influence on student engagement and outcomes. In addition, evidence indicates that improving the quality of the teaching workforce is fundamental to any overall improvements in schooling<sup>3</sup>. National certification aims to contribute to the improvement in teacher quality by focusing on self-reflection and providing external feedback to teachers on their professional practice. The ultimate goal for improving teacher quality is to improve the educational outcomes for all young Australians.

Certification is an important element in a broader teacher quality strategy that includes initial teacher education, registration, performance and development processes and professional learning that develops, recognises and supports excellent practitioners. Formal recognition of exemplary teachers can make an important contribution to the quality of teaching and leadership in schools. Certification enhances the professionalism of teachers, enabling them to gain recognition for the quality of their teaching and progress their careers while remaining in the classroom.

Certification will benefit all those involved in the process, including teachers, school leaders, education systems and, most importantly, students. The recognition and certification of excellence is intended to encourage teachers to engage in a process aimed at developing collaborative learning professionals who strive to reflect upon and improve practice. It involves considered reflection on the teacher's individual classroom practice and their impact and influence on the practice of colleagues and student outcomes. Feedback on the teacher's strengths and areas for improvement is also provided.

It is important that, where possible and appropriate, certification aligns with other processes that teachers are required to undertake. These might include observations of practice, annual performance reviews against performance and development goals, processes to maintain registration/accreditation<sup>4</sup> as a teacher, and alignment to school plans and school-wide approaches to professional learning.

1. AITSL 2012, Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia, Education Services Australia, Carlton South, viewed November 2012, <[http://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/certification\\_of\\_highly\\_accomplished\\_and\\_lead\\_teachers\\_-\\_principles\\_and\\_processes\\_-\\_april\\_2012\\_file.pdf](http://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/certification_of_highly_accomplished_and_lead_teachers_-_principles_and_processes_-_april_2012_file.pdf)> (Formerly published as the Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers – Principles and processes)

2. AITSL 2011, Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, Education Services Australia, Carlton South, viewed November 2012, <[http://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/apst-resources/australian\\_professional\\_standard\\_for\\_teachers\\_final.pdf](http://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/apst-resources/australian_professional_standard_for_teachers_final.pdf)> (Formerly published as the National Professional Standards for Teachers)

3. Hanushek, E A 2004, Some Simple Analytics of School Quality, National Bureau of Economic Research, Massachusetts.

4. In accordance with the regulatory regimes in individual jurisdictions. In New South Wales full registration is *Proficient Teacher Accreditation*. Some teachers in NSW are currently not required to be accredited, and these teachers are not excluded from this certification process if they meet the other eligibility requirements. Following amendments to the *Teacher Accreditation ACT 2004*, all teachers in NSW are required to be accredited as of Day 1, Term 1, 2018.

## Purpose

Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers has three primary purposes:

- to recognise and promote quality teaching
- to provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practice
- to provide a reliable indication of quality teaching that can be used to identify, recognise and/or reward Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers.

By contributing to teacher quality, the national certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers will help to achieve the national goals for schooling expressed in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.

### Goal 1

Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence.

### Goal 2

All young Australians become:

- Successful learners
- Confident and creative individuals
- Active and informed citizens<sup>5</sup>.

## Principles

The *Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia* is informed by the following principles:

### Standards-based

Certification is awarded against the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*. It represents an assessment against the Standards, independent of any use it might then be put to by teachers, their employers, or others. It is not proposed to limit the number of teachers who can be certified as Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers, provided they meet the Standards.

### Student-improvement focused

Certification recognises those teachers who are highly effective in improving student outcomes. Evidence of student outcomes is central to the certification process. Student outcomes are broadly defined and include student learning, engagement in learning and wellbeing.

### Development driven

Certification is part of a wider career development approach that includes professional learning, performance assessment and development. Participation in the certification process should be a positive experience for participants and provide useful feedback that further enhances development and learning, including for those teachers who do not achieve certification.

### Credible

Certification is credible when assessments of teacher performance are based on rigorous, valid, reliable, fair and transparent measures and processes. The evaluation of teacher practice will be based on consistent application and moderation of these processes by trained assessors, and multiple methods and sources of evidence. Consistency of judgements will be maintained across the diverse contexts where teachers work, so that context does not disadvantage any applicant.

### Evidence-based

Certification must be built on nationally and internationally recognised best practice and contribute to the development of evidence about what works in promoting and recognising teacher quality. The operation of the certification process will be evaluated and the results used to further improve it.

5. Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) 2008, *Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians*, viewed 28 July 2011, <[http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/National\\_Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Educational\\_Goals\\_for\\_Young\\_Australians.pdf](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf)>

## Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

The *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* are a public statement of what constitutes quality teaching. The Standards define the work of teachers and make explicit the elements of high-quality, effective teaching in 21st century schools, which results in improved educational outcomes for students. The Standards do this by providing a framework that makes clear the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required across teachers' careers. They present a common understanding and language for discourse between teachers, teacher educators, teacher organisations, professional associations and the public (Appendix B).

The Standards are organised into four career stages and guide the preparation, support and development of teachers. The Graduate Standards underpin the accreditation of initial teacher education programs and the Proficient Standards underpin processes for full teacher registration. The Standards at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead are the basis for national certification.

### Highly Accomplished teachers

Highly Accomplished teachers are recognised as highly effective, skilled classroom practitioners and routinely work independently and collaboratively to improve their own practice and the practice of colleagues. They are knowledgeable and active members of the school.

Highly Accomplished teachers contribute to their colleagues' learning. They may also take on roles that guide, advise or lead others. They regularly initiate and engage in discussions about effective teaching to improve the educational outcomes for their students.

They maximise learning opportunities for their students by understanding their backgrounds and individual characteristics and the impact of those factors on their learning. They provide colleagues, including pre-service teachers, with support and strategies to create positive and productive learning environments.

Highly Accomplished teachers have in-depth knowledge of subjects and curriculum content within their sphere of responsibility. They model sound teaching practices in their teaching areas. They work with colleagues to plan, evaluate and modify teaching programs to improve student learning. They keep abreast of the latest developments in their specialist content area or across a range of content areas for generalist teachers.

Highly Accomplished teachers are skilled in analysing student assessment data and use it to improve teaching and learning. They are active in establishing an environment which maximises professional learning and practice opportunities for colleagues. They monitor their own professional learning needs and align them to the learning needs of students.

They behave ethically at all times. Their interpersonal and presentation skills are highly developed.

### Lead teachers

Lead teachers are recognised and respected by colleagues, parents/carers and the community as exemplary teachers. They have demonstrated consistent and innovative teaching practice over time. Inside and outside the school they initiate and lead activities that focus on improving educational opportunities for all students.

They establish inclusive learning environments that meet the needs of students from different linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. They seek to improve their own practice and to share their experience with colleagues.

They are skilled in mentoring teachers and pre-service teachers, using activities that develop knowledge, practice and professional engagement in others. They promote creative, innovative thinking among colleagues.

Lead teachers apply skills and in-depth knowledge and understanding to deliver effective lessons and learning opportunities and share this information with colleagues and pre-service teachers. They describe the relationship between highly effective teaching and learning in ways that inspire colleagues to improve their own professional practice.

They lead processes to improve student performance by evaluating and revising programs, analysing student assessment data and taking account of feedback from parents/carers. This is combined with a synthesis of current research on effective teaching and learning.

Lead teachers represent the school and the teaching profession in the community. They are professional, ethical and respected individuals inside and outside the school.

## 02 National certification in jurisdictions


### A national process

Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers are certified through a national process applied by the certifying authorities in each participating state/territory. To ensure national consistency, rigour and quality, certifying authorities certify teachers against the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, using a national process and quality assurance measures.

### Portability


National certification is portable, allowing teachers to maintain their status as a Highly Accomplished or Lead teacher if they move between participating states/territories and sectors. This does not mean that any industrial arrangements attached to certification, such as a particular rate of pay, or other recognition, such as registration/accreditation status, are automatically transferrable. The way in which certified teachers are recognised or rewarded is an employment matter.

### Industrial arrangements

 Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.


### State/territory certifying authorities

In participating states and territories, one or more bodies manage the certification process - referred to as the certifying authority. The certifying authority/authorities in each state/territory where certification is offered are responsible for implementing and managing the national certification process in that jurisdiction. All applicants apply for certification through their certifying authority and this authority is the first point of call for all interested parties. All certifying authorities are listed on the AITSL website.

 Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.

### Support for applicants and assessors


The certifying authority/authorities in each jurisdiction where certification is offered are responsible for implementing and managing the national certification process in that jurisdiction.

 Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.




## 03 State/territory specific information


### Introduction

 Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.


### Organisation specific arrangements

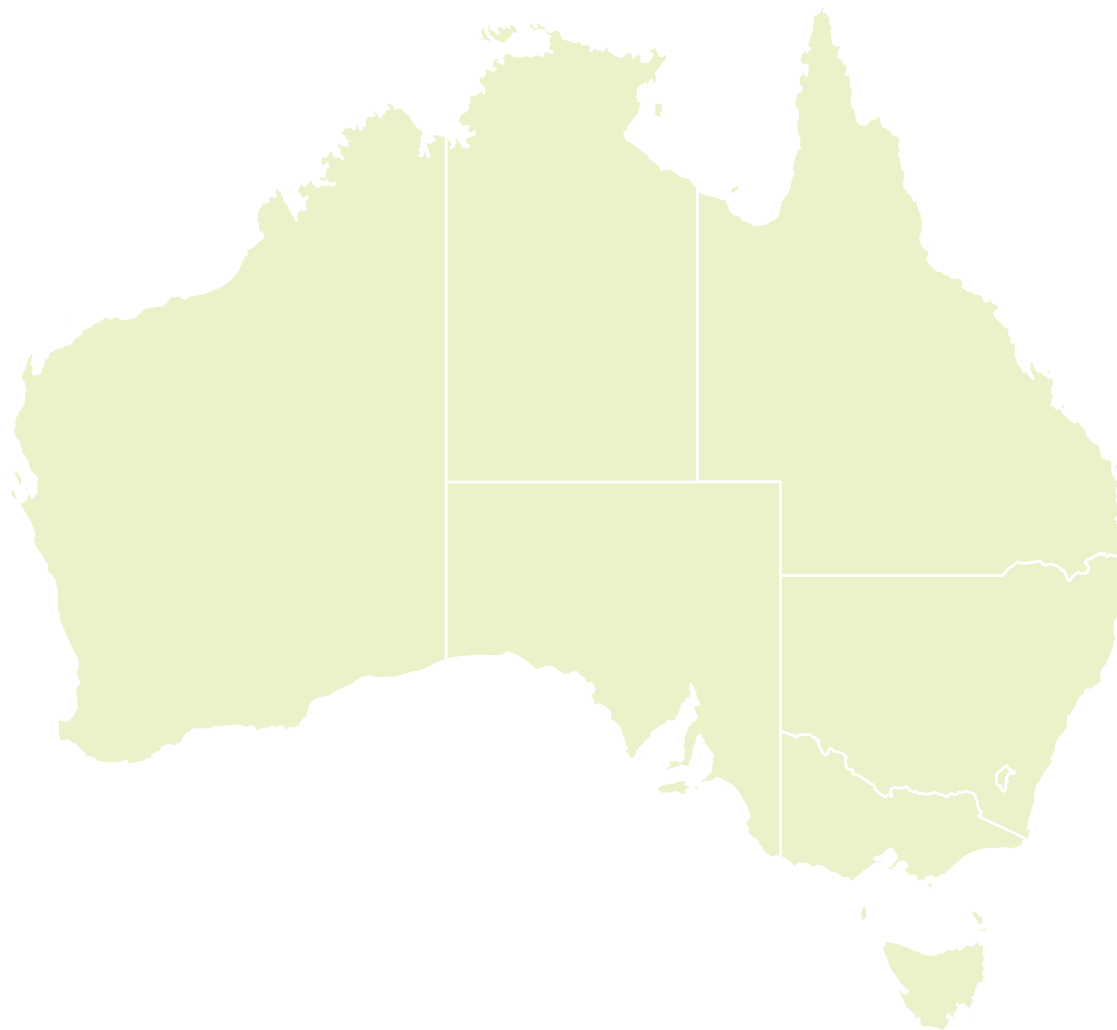
 Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.

### Timeframes

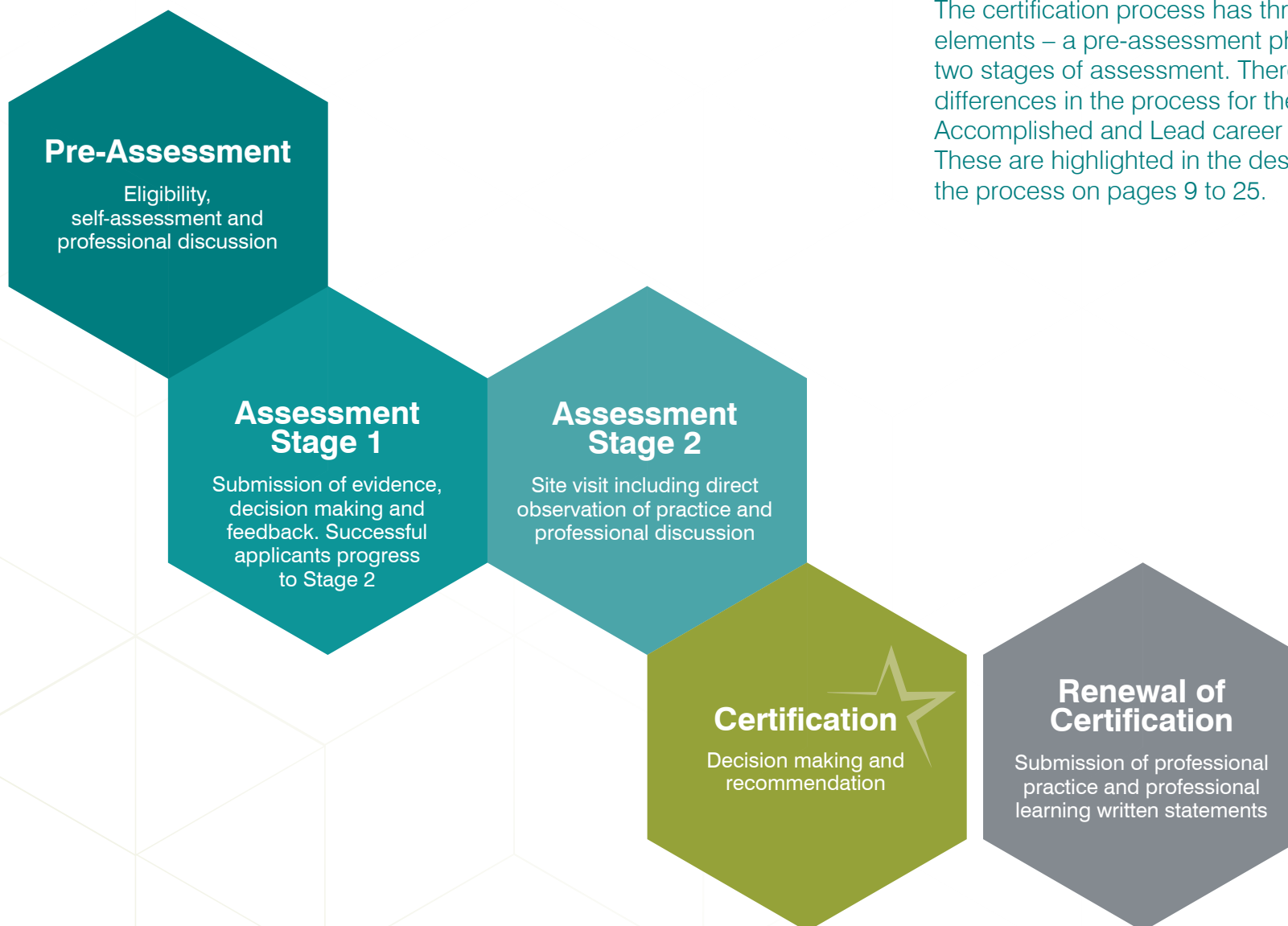
 Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.

### How to apply

 Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.



## 04 Certification process



The certification process has three main elements – a pre-assessment phase and two stages of assessment. There are some differences in the process for the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages. These are highlighted in the description of the process on pages 9 to 25.

## Certification assessment

Prior to commencing a certification application teachers determine their eligibility and readiness to apply for certification.

The assessment of certification applications has two stages. Applicants must be successful at Stage 1 before proceeding to Stage 2.

Assessors make the final assessment and recommendation to the certifying authority based on the assessment of all evidence provided against the Standards at Stage 1 and Stage 2.



### Pre-Assessment

To be eligible to apply for certification at the Highly Accomplished or Lead teacher career stage, the applicant must:

1. be an Australian citizen or have a permanent residency visa
2. have full registration with an Australian state or territory teacher regulatory authority
3. have been assessed as satisfactory in their two most recent annual performance assessments for those applying for the Highly Accomplished career stage
4. have been assessed as satisfactory in their three most recent annual performance assessments for those applying for the Lead career stage.



### Stage 1

Assessment of evidence submitted against the Standards, which includes:

1. **direct evidence**
  - a. annotated evidence of teacher practice – artefacts that directly represent teachers' work that have been annotated to each of the Descriptors in the Standards
  - b. observation reports (included in the collection of annotated evidence)
2. **teacher reflection on the direct evidence**
  - a. a written statement addressing the Standards
  - b. a written description of a Lead initiative (at the Lead career stage only)
3. **referee statements** – to verify the practice described in the direct evidence and evaluate the teacher's practice against specific Standards/Descriptors. Referee statements are not considered artefacts or direct evidence of the Standards/Descriptors.



### Stage 2

Direct assessment of teacher practice onsite by an external assessor which includes:

1. observation of practice
2. professional discussion with applicant
3. referee discussion with principal/supervisor, and with other colleagues as required and nominated by the applicant.



### Certification

Decision making and recommendation includes:

1. Assessors will make the final assessment and recommendation to the certifying authority based on the assessment of all evidence provided against the Standards at Stage 1 and Stage 2.
2. The certifying authority will endorse/decline the recommendation of the external assessors.
3. On confirming a recommendation in favour of certification, the certifying authority will formally certify the teacher.

## Pre-Assessment

Eligibility,  
self-assessment and  
professional discussion

Prior to commencing a certification application, teachers determine their eligibility and readiness to apply for certification.

## Pre-Assessment

### Eligibility requirements

**To be eligible to apply for certification at the Highly Accomplished or Lead career stages, the applicant must:**

- be an Australian citizen or have a permanent residency visa<sup>6</sup>
- have full registration with an Australian state or territory regulatory authority<sup>7</sup>
- have been assessed as satisfactory in their two most recent annual performance<sup>8</sup> assessments for those applying for Highly Accomplished career stage
- have been assessed as satisfactory in their three most recent annual performance<sup>8</sup> assessments for those applying for Lead career stage.

Jurisdiction/employer based industrial arrangements attached to certification may have other eligibility criteria, including length of service.

Teachers do not have to be certified as a Highly Accomplished teacher before applying for Lead teacher status.

### Annual performance assessments

Annual performance assessments should be based on the essential elements of the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* and conducted using school/system processes. They are not required in a specific format. In circumstances where teachers have not received an assessment, the referees will provide verification of past satisfactory performance.

Subject to meeting the eligibility requirements, there is no additional minimum number of years of teaching required before applying for certification as a Highly Accomplished or Lead teacher, or for applications for Lead following the achievement of certification at the Highly Accomplished career stage.

6. This also includes New Zealand citizens teaching in Australian schools or early childhood settings.

7. In accordance with the regulatory regimes in individual jurisdictions. In New South Wales full registration is *Proficient Teacher Accreditation*. Some teachers in NSW are currently not required to be accredited, and these teachers are not excluded from this certification process if they meet the other eligibility requirements. Following amendments to the *Teacher Accreditation ACT 2004*, all teachers in NSW are required to be accredited as of Day 1, Term 1, 2018.

8. Annual performance assessments should be based on the essential elements of the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* and conducted using school/system processes. They are not required in a specific format. In circumstances where teachers have not received an assessment, the referees will provide verification of past satisfactory performance.

## Teaching requirements

To be successful, applicants for certification will need to have an authentic teaching role where they teach students over a period of time. This will enable them to demonstrate achievement of the complete range of Standards and Descriptors.

There is no requirement for a specified number of hours or teaching load, but the teacher will need to be responsible for an ongoing teaching program and the assessment of the students.

To achieve certification, teachers will need to be able to demonstrate their skills in teaching students in a classroom situation<sup>9</sup>. Therefore the process includes a series of observations of a teacher's practice, including classroom observations.

Providing applicants can demonstrate all teacher Standards through an ongoing teaching role with students, including in a classroom situation, certification is available to teachers in a range of roles including school support professionals, regional support officers, consultants and advisory teachers and those in equivalent roles who work with students. However, holding a leadership position such as these is not a guarantee that an application for certification will be successful.



### Self-assessment

- It is strongly recommended that a self-assessment be undertaken by the applicant prior to commencing a certification application. For example, applicants have access to tools on the AITSL website to self-assess their readiness to apply for certification.
- As Stage 2 of the certification process includes a classroom observation element, it is also recommended that teachers familiarise themselves with levels 4-6 of the Classroom Practice Continuum.

### Discussion with principal

- All applicants must conduct a professional discussion with their principal/supervisor or delegate as nominated by the principal/supervisor<sup>10</sup> regarding their readiness to apply for certification.
- Obtaining the endorsement of the principal/supervisor to proceed with the certification process is not mandatory but is strongly recommended.

## Changing role/position and/or school/site during the certification application process

If an applicant's role or position changes after commencing the certification process, or they move to a different school/site, they must be able to demonstrate their continued practice at the relevant Highly Accomplished or Lead career stage. An applicant may choose to draw on evidence from their previous role/position and/or school/site, however they must be able to provide evidence of impact on their current colleagues and students.

If the applicant is successful in progressing to Stage 2, their current supervisor and colleagues must be able to attest to their practice during the site visit.

## Changing jurisdictions during the certification application process

An application for certification is unable to be transferred between certifying authorities in different jurisdictions. Therefore, if an applicant moves between jurisdictions after commencing the certification process, then the applicant will need to withdraw their application. If the applicant moves to a jurisdiction that offers national certification and reapplies, then the applicant must be able to provide evidence that demonstrates their continued practice at the relevant Highly Accomplished or Lead career stage in their new role. This includes being able to provide evidence of impact on their current colleagues and students.

Additional evidence of practice from an applicant's previous jurisdiction may be considered at the discretion of the applicant's current certifying authority. If the evidence is accepted by the certifying authority the applicant must also provide a referee from the previous jurisdiction that can directly validate the evidence.

If the applicant is successful in progressing to Stage 2, their current supervisor and colleagues must be able to attest to their current practice during the site visit.

9. "Classroom situation" is intended as a broad and inclusive term and does not refer solely to a mainstream school classroom. This could include early childhood settings, distance education, and hospital schools, and the many other settings and situations in which the teaching of students occurs.

10. Nominated by the principal/supervisor. May be the Deputy/Assistant Principal or equivalent member of the senior leadership team of the school/setting who have significant knowledge of the applicant's practice.

## Assessment Stage 1

Submission of evidence, decision making and feedback. Successful applicants progress to Stage 2

Assessment Stage 1 involves the assessment of evidence submitted by the applicant against the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*. Each of the seven Standards must be addressed by at least two pieces of evidence, and each of the Descriptors at the relevant career stage must be accounted for at least once.



## Stage 1: Submission of evidence

Stage 1 evidence includes:

1. **direct evidence**
  - a. annotated evidence of teacher practice p.16
  - b. observation reports (included in the collection of annotated evidence) p.17
2. **teacher reflection on the direct evidence**
  - a. a written statement addressing the Standards p.18
  - b. a written description of a Lead initiative (at the Lead career stage only) p.18
3. **referee statements.**

During assessment Stage 1, applicants must submit a collection of evidence which is effectively annotated to demonstrate the impact of their practice on student outcomes and the practice of colleagues against the Standards/Descriptors.

The collection of evidence must also include two observation reports, and a written statement addressing the Standards. For the Lead career stage, the applicant must also submit a short description of an initiative they have led within the school or across schools and the impact of that initiative.

Applicants must nominate three to five referees who will be able to verify the practice described in the direct evidence and provide evaluative statements against the applicant's practice against specific Standards/Descriptors.

### Evidencing the Standards

To achieve certification, evidence of practice that improves teaching and learning is required that is aligned to the Highly Accomplished or Lead career stages of the Standards.

All evidence submitted by the applicant must be authentic, verifiable and robust, and be a true representation of the teacher's impact over time. To ensure a line of sight to current practice, evidence must generally be from within the past five years of the applicant's practice.

Evidence submitted by the applicant will comprise artefacts that are annotated to demonstrate impact on and improvement in student outcomes and the practice of colleagues. This impact and improvement is demonstrated by the applicant providing links to the relevant Standards/Descriptors for the assessor as part of the collection of evidence submitted.

The evidence must be supported by referees' written and/or verbal evaluative statements against the Standards/Descriptors. Further detail regarding the referee statements is outlined on page 19.

Certifying authorities may require all nominated referees to provide comment. To ensure consistency with jurisdictional administrative and legal/appeal processes a jurisdiction may require referees to submit written statements and make these available to the applicant.



*Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.*

## Demonstrating improvement

The collection of evidence must demonstrate positive impact and improvement in student outcomes and the impact on and improvement in the practice of others. How well teachers understand their teaching environment, how that context influences their teaching choices and how they articulate their knowledge and understanding are important factors for consideration in the certification process.

**Student outcomes:** these are broadly defined and include learning, engagement in learning and wellbeing. The level of student performance is not what is being assessed; rather the teacher's practice and subsequent positive impact on student outcomes.

**Impact on the practice of others:** Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers also undertake roles that guide, support, advise and lead others. Their influence reaches beyond the classroom, so they not only work to improve their own practice but also to build the capacity of others. Demonstrating the improvement of colleagues' practice is an important component of an application for certification. An example of this might be professional learning provided to colleagues that accesses resources and specialised assistance to meet particular student learning needs and evidence how colleagues have incorporated this into their practice.

## 1. Direct evidence

### 1.a Annotated evidence of teacher practice



**Evidence must be a direct representation of a teacher's work. At both career stages, the following principles apply:**

- evidence collectively demonstrates achievement of each of the seven Standards, with each Standard being accounted for by at least two pieces of evidence
- evidence collectively demonstrates each of the Descriptors at the relevant career stage, with each Descriptor being accounted for at least once; there is no requirement for each Descriptor to have a separate piece of evidence
- a piece of evidence can address multiple Descriptors, across the Standards, and should demonstrate the holistic nature of the teacher's practice
- evidence demonstrates the impact of the teacher's work on student outcomes, including student learning, engagement in learning and wellbeing
- evidence demonstrates the impact of the teacher's practice on colleagues
- evidence must clearly reflect the teacher's individual contribution and demonstrate impact over a period of time
- individual pieces of evidence may be referenced by more than one annotation and can demonstrate more than one Standard/Descriptor.

**The evidence drawn directly from practice must include:**

- annotated artefacts of the teacher's practice
- at least two reports of classroom observation, at least one of which must be by the principal/supervisor or delegate as nominated by the principal/supervisor.



### Examples of Stage 1 evidence may include:

- lesson plans and supporting documentation that detail the planning and delivery of a teaching sequence and its impact on student learning
- annotated samples of student work
- analysis of student performance data and outcomes, demonstrating how this has influenced teaching strategies and planning
- documentation of assessment strategies, and their links to the intended learning outcomes
- feedback from colleagues, school leaders and others linked to the practice described in the collection of evidence
- student/parent feedback
- evidence of participation in professional learning, how it has improved teaching practice and the strategies/knowledge applied to improve student outcomes
- documentation used to support engagement with parents, the community and colleagues, along with evidence of the impact of this engagement.

### Authentic evidence

It is recognised that the evidence teachers can provide will vary depending on contextual issues including level of schooling, position within a school, type of school, and jurisdiction and sector. Teachers are encouraged to utilise evidence that is specific to their own context.

Some applicants may not be able to draw direct evidence from their regular work to account for some Descriptors. For example, an applicant may not have taught Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students or students with disability. However, by using annotations to explain their knowledge of a range of inclusive practices and the implementation of these, links can be drawn to these Descriptors. This will support applicants to provide evidence that demonstrates understanding of and capacity to satisfactorily address the Descriptors. The Certification documentary evidence supplements found on the AITSL website may also support applicants to evidence these Descriptors.

### Preparing a collection of evidence

Applicants will need to provide evidence of performance at the Highly Accomplished or Lead career stages of the Standards that improves teaching and learning.

When preparing and presenting a collection of evidence the teacher should keep in mind the audience and set the scene for the reader. They should ensure that each piece of evidence is credible, verifiable and robust. The collection of evidence and supporting documentation should be presented in a user-friendly format which will enable the assessors to understand the various components and all of the connections that an applicant has drawn. Applicants can assist themselves and the assessor by indexing their evidence and mapping it against the Standards.



*Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.*



## Definitions

### Collection of evidence

The collection of evidence is the entire submission of evidence for Stage 1 assessments. It includes annotated evidence which demonstrates the impact of the applicant's practice, as well as observation reports, a written statement addressing the Standards and a written description of a Lead initiative (for Lead applicants). When presented together, these form evidence of a teacher's practice against all Descriptors within the seven Standards at the relevant career stage.

A collection of evidence comprises stand alone, annotated artefacts and/or sets of annotated artefacts. Examination of quality collections of evidence indicates that the Standards can be effectively demonstrated in approximately 35 artefacts or fewer. Assembling and structuring the collection of evidence is the responsibility of the applicant. However, assessors will be looking for well chosen, high quality artefacts that effectively and concisely demonstrate achievement of the Standards, rather than a large number of artefacts. The written statement addressing the Standards and the description of a Lead initiative (for Lead applicants) are in addition to the artefacts.

The collection of evidence also includes referee statements and/or discussions with referees that verify the practice described in the direct evidence and evaluate the applicant's practice against specific Standards/Descriptors. These referee statements are additional to the annotated artefacts outlined above.

### Evidence set

An evidence set is defined as a group of artefacts related by a general theme. For example, a unit plan which is combined with an assessment rubric, student feedback and student data are four 'artefacts' that could be combined into an evidence set. Applicants may choose whether or not to link their artefacts into evidence sets.

### Annotation

Written commentary by the applicant that demonstrates their thinking on why and how the evidence they have submitted addresses the Standards/Descriptors. Annotations will also illustrate how the applicant's practice has had impact on student outcomes and the practice of colleagues.

### Artefact

Artefacts are pieces of evidence that demonstrate a teacher's achievement against one or more Descriptors. Artefacts can be separate, for example a lesson plan, or grouped into evidence sets.

## Annotating evidence

A key component of the application for certification is the annotation of evidence submitted for assessment.

An artefact must be able to demonstrate practice, but submission of an artefact alone does not fulfill the requirements.

Effective annotation of an artefact or sets of artefacts will enable an applicant to demonstrate their thinking on why and how the artefacts submitted address the Standards/Descriptors and show impact on teaching and learning.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the artefacts submitted are effectively annotated. This will enable the assessor to:

- understand the nature of the evidence
- understand why the evidence has been included in the collection
- make the connection between quality artefact/s and the Descriptor/s being evidenced
- see the impact of the applicant's practice on student outcomes and the practice of colleagues.

Annotations may take different forms. They may be notations attached to an artefact or an explanatory paragraph attached to a set of artefacts.

Further support on developing annotations can be found on the AITSL website.



### To effectively annotate artefacts applicants are advised to:

- clearly identify the Standard(s)/Descriptor(s) being accounted for. If more than one Standard/Descriptor is being demonstrated then each of these must be addressed
- use language that demonstrates understanding of the Descriptor(s) and how the artefact demonstrates this, making explicit the links between the artefact and the practice outlined in the Descriptor(s)
- describe how the evidence demonstrates achievement of the Standard(s)/Descriptor(s)
- include analysis and reflection on practice demonstrated
- identify impact on student outcomes, where applicable
- identify impact on the practice of other colleagues, where applicable
- identify the teacher's individual contribution
- identify the leading/supporting/sharing/modelling role undertaken by the teacher, where applicable.



### Approaches to annotating include but are not limited to:

- annotation per Descriptor (approximately 150 words each)
- annotation per artefact – covering multiple Descriptors (approximately 350 words)
- annotation per evidence set – covering multiple artefacts and Descriptors (approximately 600 words).

## 1.b Observation reports

As part of their annotated collection of evidence, applicants are required to submit observation reports. These are reports, written by an observer of the applicant's lesson, that provide feedback on the applicant's classroom practice against the Standards. There must be at least two classroom observation reports at least one of which must be from the principal/supervisor or delegate as nominated by the principal/supervisor.

Observation reports may be compiled using existing observation frameworks, tools and templates in the teacher's school/system. If the existing observation frameworks, tools or templates don't reference the Standards, the applicant must annotate the observation report to refer to and show links to the Standard(s)/Descriptor(s).

The Classroom Practice Continuum has been developed by AITSL to support observations as part of the certification process.

The observation reports are included as artefacts submitted by the teacher. The applicant should ensure the context in which the observation took place is explicit and that the assessor has information about the learning intentions and outcomes.



### Each observation report must include:

- a clear link to the Standard(s)/Descriptor(s) and aspects of practice being focused on (this could be part of the annotation provided by the applicant)
- a description of behaviour observed by the observer
- evaluative comments by the observer regarding the applicant's classroom practice.

## 2. Teacher reflection on the direct evidence

### 2.a Written statement addressing the Standards

The written statement is included in the collection of evidence and is in addition to the annotated artefacts. Reference will be made to the annotated artefacts in the collection of evidence that support the written statement.

It will be no more than three, single sided A4 pages in length or the equivalent where submitted online.



*Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.*



#### **The applicant will submit a short written statement addressing the Standards, which includes:**

- an overview of the their context and background to the evidence
- the key features of the collection of evidence, making reference to annotated artefacts
- a summary of their major strengths as a teacher against each domain of the Standards: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement.

### 2.b Written description of a Lead initiative

Applicants applying for the Lead career stage are also required to include a description of their Lead initiative as an integral component of their collection of evidence. This will be in the form of a short description of an initiative the applicant has led within the school or across schools. The initiative must have been implemented over a period of time and designed to build the capacity of colleagues. The applicant must have had a lead role in the implementation of the initiative to enable them to meet the requirements for the Lead career stage.

The Lead initiative must be sustainable and demonstrate positive impact over time. The initiative can be a task delegated to the applicant, which they have then designed and implemented. The Lead initiative can be demonstrated by applicants who hold formal leadership positions as well as by those who are full time classroom teachers. The description will outline the teacher's individual contribution in the Lead initiative.

The written description of the Lead initiative is included in the collection of evidence and is in addition to the annotated artefacts. Reference must be made to the annotated artefacts in the collection of evidence that demonstrate the Lead initiative.

The description of the Lead initiative will be no more than two, single sided A4 pages in length or the equivalent where submitted online.



*Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.*



#### **The Lead initiative must:**

- be implemented over a minimum of 6 months
- be linked to school and/or system initiatives
- demonstrate the applicant's leadership in design and/or implementation, evaluation and review
- demonstrate evidence of impact on colleagues' knowledge, practice and/or engagement.

### 3. Referee statements

At Stage 1, applicants must nominate referees who are able to verify the practice described in the direct evidence. Referees must have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice and must be able to evaluate this against specific Standard(s)/Descriptor(s). The current principal/supervisor or delegate, as nominated by the principal/supervisor, must be one of the referees. If the applicant is in a new<sup>11</sup> position their previous principal/supervisor's details must also be provided.

Referees may include but are not limited to classroom teachers, school leaders, education consultants, teacher educators, and/or specialist staff.

Applicants must provide the details of three to five referees. At least two referees, including the principal/supervisor, will be contacted by the assessors. Referees' verbal comments will be documented. At the Lead career stage, at least one referee must have knowledge of the Lead initiative led by the applicant.

A jurisdiction may require that all nominated referees provide comment. To ensure consistency with jurisdictional administrative and legal/appeal processes a jurisdiction may require referees to submit written statements and make these available to the applicant.



*Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.*

Further information regarding the responsibilities of referees is outlined in the roles and responsibilities section on page 30.

It is the teacher's responsibility to provide each referee with information on the areas within the collection of evidence and the identified Standards/Descriptors they will be asked to comment on and the evidence they will be asked to verify by the external assessor. It is important that applicants carefully select their referees, ensuring that each has the appropriate level of experience, knowledge of the Standards and knowledge of the practice of the applicant.



- Referees will have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice and the evidence they have provided.
- Applicants will state which Standards/Descriptors each referee can provide evidence against.
- Those referees, including the principal/supervisor, who have provided observation reports, will refer to the observation in their statement.

### Submitting applications



*Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.*

11. 'New' – less than 1 year in that position.


## Assessment Stage 1: Decision making

Applicants' achievements against the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* will be determined through an independent assessment of evidence by two assessors external to the school/setting of the applicant and nominated by the certifying authority.

The Stage 1 evidence will be assessed individually by two assessors, who will confer, contact at least two referees and come to an assessment decision. If they cannot reach an agreement a third assessor will facilitate consensus.

Assessment will be at the level of the seven Standards. Assessors will make an on-balance judgement about whether there is sufficient evidence that each Standard has been demonstrated, based on the evidence provided which takes account of each Descriptor within that Standard. Applicants who do not provide sufficient evidence of meeting any of the seven Standards will not proceed to Stage 2.

Unsuccessful applications for Stage 1 as a Lead teacher are not automatically considered for Highly Accomplished status. An unsuccessful applicant for Lead teacher may choose to apply for certification as a Highly Accomplished teacher using much the same evidence. However, the evidence used will need to be annotated to demonstrate achievement of the Standard(s)/Descriptor(s) at the Highly Accomplished career stage, and the written statement adjusted accordingly. If an unsuccessful applicant decides to reapply for the same career stage, they are encouraged to revise their evidence and supporting annotations.

 *Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.*

## Feedback

Applicants will receive a written report from the certifying authority including feedback at the end of Stage 1:

- for unsuccessful applicants, feedback will provide detail regarding strengths and what areas require further improvement
- for applicants progressing to Stage 2, feedback may identify areas of focus for the site visit. Further information on the site visit is in the following section.



*Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.*

## Assessment Stage 2

Site visit including direct observation of practice and professional discussion

Stage 2 provides additional evidence to inform a final judgement as to whether an applicant meets the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*. It allows the applicant to reflect on and demonstrate deep understanding of the evidence presented during Stage 1 and its impact on teaching and learning.

Stage 2 consists of a site visit by an external assessor that includes: direct observation of the applicant's practice, discussion with the applicant and with their supervisor, and other colleagues as agreed. The assessor will have been involved in Stage 1 of the certification process.



## Assessment Stage 2

### Direct assessment of teacher practice onsite by an external assessor

Direct assessment of practice onsite by an external assessor includes:

1. observation of practice
2. professional discussion with applicant
3. discussion with the principal/supervisor, and with other colleagues as negotiated with and nominated by the applicant.

### Site visit

The applicant will be required to take a lead in the planning and management of all aspects of the site visit, in collaboration with the external assessor and their principal/supervisor.

Following successful completion of Stage 1, the date of the site visit will be agreed between the applicant and the assessor. They will also discuss and agree on areas within the Standards that will be a focus of the site visit. Suggested areas may also be outlined in the Stage 1 report. While the site visit will provide additional evidence against a range of Standards, the applicant should keep in mind the areas suggested by the assessor to ensure they are a focus of the site visit.

It may be necessary for the assessor and the applicant to undertake the pre-observation discussion prior to the site visit. For this discussion, teaching materials, including formal planning documentation and resources, are to be made available to the assessor to provide a complete picture about where the lessons to be observed fit within the applicant's practice.

The site visit may also include an observation of other activities within the school to demonstrate achievement of the Standards/Descriptors. This will be negotiated between the applicant and the assessor but is not compulsory.



*Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.*



**The site visit is expected to be undertaken within one day and the program must include:**

- pre-observation discussion led by the teacher about what is to be observed, which Standards/Descriptors will be demonstrated, the context and background of the observation
- observation of classroom practice, which involves the applicant teaching more than one lesson, for example one session/two periods (or equivalent)
- professional discussion with the principal/supervisor to further explore the performance of the applicant against the Standard(s)/Descriptor(s)
- professional discussion between the applicant and the assessor of up to one hour in length to:
  - debrief and reflect on the observation
  - explore the evidence provided in Stage 1 in further depth
  - respond to questions.



## 1. Observation of practice

It is essential to set aside time before the classroom observation for the applicant and the external assessor to discuss the plan for the observation. Time is also required following the classroom observation for reflection and discussion.

### Pre-observation discussion

The pre-observation discussion enables the applicant to present the context of what will be observed.

Teaching materials, including formal planning documentation and resources, are required to be made available to the assessor for the pre-observation discussion, to provide a complete picture about where lessons to be observed fit within the teacher's practice.

While each of the seven Standards must be addressed in Stage 1, not all Standards can be evidenced through direct observation in the classroom. The teacher will discuss and provide evidence on the focus of the lesson and what Standards/Descriptors will be demonstrated.

### Observation of classroom practice

Applicants will need to teach more than a single lesson, for example one session / two periods or the equivalent of this timeframe. The assessor will also observe students and discuss with them work they are undertaking during the observation. The assessor's discussions with students will focus on their learning during the observation.

The Classroom Practice Continuum, based on the Professional Practice Domain of the Standards, will support assessors in determining whether the applicant's practice meets the relevant Standards and career stage.

### Observation of other teacher activities

Observation of other activities within the school are not compulsory, however they may be negotiated between the applicant and assessor, particularly for the Lead career stage. For example, these may include observation of working with colleagues. Applicants at the Highly Accomplished career stage may also wish to negotiate an observation of other teacher activities.

## 2. Professional discussion with applicant

In addition to the pre-observation discussion, the assessor will undertake a professional discussion with the applicant of up to one hour in length. The applicant will be required to:

- debrief and reflect on the observation
- explore the evidence provided in Stage 1 in further depth
- respond to assessor questions.

The applicant will provide a copy of, and refer to, the collection of evidence submitted at Stage 1 during the site visit.

## 3. Discussion with colleagues/others

During the site visit, it is a requirement that the assessor meet with the principal/supervisor to seek evaluative comments and further explore the performance of the applicant against the Standards. This will take approximately 30 minutes.

The applicant may nominate colleagues or others with knowledge of the applicant's practice to meet with the assessor during the visit to provide verification of the teacher's evidence presented during Stage 2 of the assessment. No more than 3 colleagues or others may be nominated at Stage 2, including the principal/supervisor. These may be the same referees nominated at Stage 1 or others.

People involved in these discussions may include but are not limited to classroom teachers, school leaders, education consultants, teacher educators, and/or specialist staff. They must have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice and the evidence they have provided. Applicants will state which Standard(s)/Descriptor(s) each person can provide evidence against.

The assessor will endeavour to meet with all colleagues and others nominated by the applicant. Assessors may request to seek evaluative comments from colleagues not nominated but this must be agreed to by the applicant.

## Assessment Stage 2: Decision making

Following the site visit, the assessor who conducted the visit will document the evidence and submit this to a second assessor. A decision on whether the applicant demonstrates the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* at the relevant career stage, based on all the evidence provided against the Standards at Stage 1 and Stage 2, will be determined by both assessors.

A third assessor may be involved where the first two are unable to reach consensus. A further site visit may be instigated by the assessors where evidence remains inconclusive or insufficient.

## Certification

Decision making and recommendation

Assessors will make the final assessment and recommendation to the certifying authority based on the evidence provided against the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* at Stage 1 and Stage 2.

### Certification decision

The certifying authority will endorse/decline the recommendation of the external assessors based on the certification assessment meeting the requirements of the certification process. On confirming a recommendation in favour of certification, the certifying authority will formally certify the teacher.

Unsuccessful applications for certification as a Lead teacher are not automatically considered for Highly Accomplished status.



*Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.*

In order to conform with the managerial, administrative and legal processes of the jurisdiction or employing authority, and on the proviso that all elements of the common national process are adhered to, a jurisdiction may locate the final decision on certification with a specified person or persons. The decision maker will fully consider the advice of the external assessors and will undertake all the final decision making steps required by the common national process.

The certifying authority will provide successful and unsuccessful applicants with a copy of the assessment against the Standards and notification of the recommendation.

### Appeals

Recourse to appeal is available according to the legislation and processes existing in the jurisdiction where the decision is made.



*Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.*

## 05 Support materials

The Guide is complemented by a range of materials to support implementation of national certification including:

- Documentary evidence supplements
  - Highly Accomplished career stage
  - Lead career stage
- Tools and templates
- Learning from Practice - workbook series
- Annotated evidence
- Classroom Practice Continuum
- Assessor Training Program.

### Documentary evidence supplements

The Documentary evidence supplements for the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages provide information regarding evidencing for Stage 1 of the certification process. The supplements contain:

- a summary of categories and types of evidence that could be used
- detailed examples of evidence that could be used to demonstrate achievement of each Descriptor of the Standards at the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages.

An evidence mapping template is included to assist applicants in structuring their collection of evidence to ensure that it demonstrates all Standards and accounts for all Descriptors.

### Tools and templates



*Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.*

### Learning from practice - workbook series

The *Learning from practice* workbook series were developed to support teacher self-reflection, self-inquiry and discussion with colleagues.

*Recognising exemplary teachers* was developed specifically to support certification applicants. This workbook explores the benefits of undertaking certification and provides further information about what the process involves. Guiding questions are included to assist in the development of certification applications.

*Working with the Standards, Developing a professional mindset and Demonstrating impact* also support applicants to engage with the Standards and select quality evidence.

The workbook series can be found on the AITSL website.

### Annotated evidence

Applicants can find examples of annotated collections of teachers' evidence on the AITSL website. These examples are a further resource which may assist applicants in developing their collections of evidence in application for certification.

## Classroom Practice Continuum

Classroom practice is a key component of quality teaching and a major source of evidence for studying how teachers teach, determining what highly effective teachers do in the classroom that distinguishes their practice from less effective teachers and identifying what instructional practices correlate most highly to achievement. As such it is integral to the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia*. To support observation of teaching in Australia, AITSL has developed the Classroom Practice Continuum. The Continuum is aligned to the Professional Practice Domain of the Standards and supports teachers to observe each other and talk about their practice.

External observations provide an opportunity for independent review of a teacher's practice to support consistency of judgements made against the Standards.

**Stage 1:** two classroom observation reports by staff within the school are required. One must be completed by the applicant's principal/supervisor. These can use existing observation frameworks and tools that the school or system currently utilises as long as these are annotated to demonstrate achievement of the Standards/Descriptors

**Stage 2:** requires an on-site visit by a trained external assessor which involves direct observation of the applicant's practice. The Classroom Practice Continuum, based on the Professional Practice Domain of the Standards, will be used in this assessment.

## Assessor Training Program

Certifying authorities will appoint and train assessors using the national certification Assessor Training Program. This program uses a blended learning model of three online modules and two face-to-face workshops. The online modules of the program are available on the AITSL website.

The program will provide the skills and knowledge necessary for prospective assessors to fulfil the role of certification assessor as outlined in the *Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia*. As a result of undertaking the training program, potential certification assessors will:

- develop a comprehensive understanding of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* with specific knowledge of the Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher Standards
- develop an understanding of the certification process, and in particular of the role of assessors
- be capable of engaging in the certification process and making valid and consistent judgements when assessing an applicant's evidence against the Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher Standards
- be capable of undertaking informed classroom observations and locating a teacher's practice within the Classroom Practice Continuum
- be able to engage in effective communication with fellow assessors and with applicants, principals and others during site visits, and develop the required reports.

## 06 Roles and responsibilities

The certification process involves a number of defined roles and responsibilities which are outlined below.

### Applicant

The applicant has a role in each of the stages of the certification process.

#### Pre-Assessment

- assessing eligibility to apply for certification - please refer to the eligibility requirements on pages 10-11
- having a professional discussion with the principal/supervisor or delegate, as nominated by the principal/supervisor, regarding readiness to apply for certification and/or what additional preparation is needed before applying for certification. Whilst obtaining the endorsement from the principal/supervisor or is not mandatory it is highly recommended
- undertaking a self-assessment of their readiness to apply for certification. Applicants have access to tools on the AITSL website that will support them to self-assess their readiness to apply for certification. While this self-assessment is not compulsory, it is highly recommended.

#### Assessment Stage 1

- providing evidence of performance that improves teaching and learning at the Highly Accomplished or Lead career stages of the Standards
- providing effectively annotated artefacts (please refer to the Documentary evidence supplement for further detail)
- sourcing at least two classroom observation reports of the applicant's practice, at least one of which must be by the principal/supervisor or delegate, as nominated by the principal/supervisor.
- developing a written statement addressing the Standards (further detail can be found on page 18)
- providing a written description of the Lead teacher initiative (if an applicant at the Lead career stage) which references annotated artefacts
- nominating and providing details, and if required by your certifying authority, the written statements of three to five referees including the principal/supervisor and the Standard(s)/Descriptor(s) on which each referee can comment
- providing the nominated referees with copies of the relevant evidence and the Standards/Descriptors on which they will be asked to comment.

#### Assessment Stage 2

- structuring the site visit that contains all of the required observations, discussions with colleagues and others and professional discussions as outlined on pages 21-23
- prior to the site visit, determining the areas of the Standards that will be the focus of the site visit with the assessor
- structuring the site visit to allow observation of these agreed areas
- seeking approval from the principal/supervisor for the visit and the activities it involves
- ensuring all appropriate documentation, including the collection of evidence are available.

## Assessor

There are two assessors involved in the certification process. Where possible the two assessors will be the same for Stage 1 and Stage 2. If the two assessors cannot reach agreement, then a third assessor will become involved in the certification process.

### Assessment Stage 1

- completing an individual, independent assessment of the evidence submitted by the applicant against the Standards at the relevant career stage and in the applicant's context
- conferring and moderating with the teamed assessor to assess the evidence and determine the focus and questions for referee contact
- contacting at least two referees for evaluative statements on the applicant's evidence and practice
- reaching an agreement on the Stage 1 decision, based on whether the evidence presented by the applicant has provided sufficient evidence of on-balance achievement of each of the Standards, whilst taking account of each Descriptor
- providing feedback:
  - for unsuccessful applicants, feedback will provide detail regarding strengths and what areas require further improvement
  - for applicants progressing to Stage 2, feedback may identify areas of focus for the site visit.

### Assessment Stage 2

- contacting the applicant to determine the areas within the Standards that will be the focus of the site visit
- conducting the site visit and all activities outlined on pages 21-23
- providing the second assessor with feedback and any documentary evidence they obtained during the site visit
- communicating with the certifying authority and the applicant regarding a further site visit if required where evidence remains inconclusive or insufficient.

### Decision making

- the two assessors make the final assessment and recommendation to the certifying authority based on the assessment of all evidence provided against the Standards at Stage 1 and Stage 2.

## Principal

'Principal' in this document is defined as the equivalent position to principal in early childhood and other settings. There will be situations where a principal or equivalent is not available to fulfil the role outlined in this process.

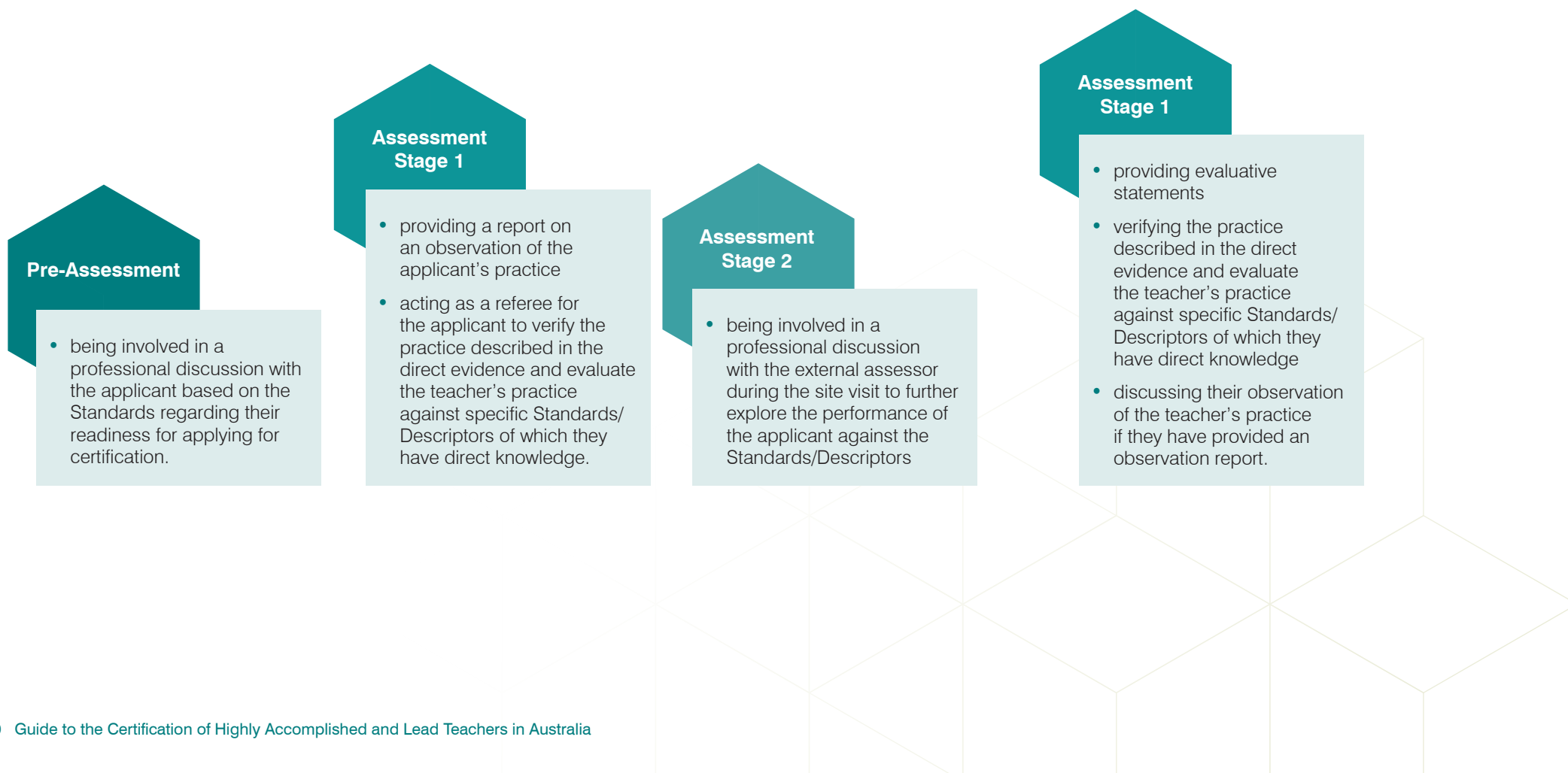
In these cases, the principal/supervisor may delegate their responsibilities to an equivalent member of the senior leadership team of the school/setting who has significant knowledge of the applicant's practice.

In cases where an applicant is a teaching principal the applicant should seek support from a senior person who is in a position to comment authoritatively on the applicant's teaching.

The responsibilities of the principal in the certification process can predominantly be undertaken as part of the school's regular performance and development process.

## Referees

Referees will have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice and the evidence they have provided against nominated Standards/Descriptors. Referees may include, but are not limited to, classroom teachers, school leaders, education consultants, teacher educators, and/or specialist staff, and must include the principal/supervisor or delegate, as nominated by the principal/supervisor.





## Certifying authority

In each participating jurisdiction, there are one or more bodies managing the certification and renewal of certification processes referred to as the *certifying authority*. The certifying authority/authorities are responsible for implementing and managing the national certification process in that jurisdiction. The state/territory certifying authority is the first point of call for all interested parties.

- conducting the Assessor Training Program for assessors and jurisdictional officers
- conducting information sessions for applicants
- disseminating information and making guides available to users
- maintaining a jurisdictional database of teachers that have applied for certification, and those that are certified and at which career stage
- providing summary data to AITSL at each stage of the certification process
- participating in quality assurance and review processes to support national consistency
- reporting to AITSL on implementation of the nationally consistent processes for certification
- nominating two trained assessors external to the school/setting of the applicant to assess the application for certification
- nominating a third assessor where required for the assessment of an application
- nominating an external assessor to each application for the renewal of certification
- releasing information if requested from other certifying authorities for applicants applying for renewal
- ensuring all applicants meet the eligibility criteria including the performance assessment requirement.

### Decision making

- endorsing/declining the recommendation of the external assessors based on the certification assessment meeting the requirements of the certification process
- providing successful and unsuccessful applicants with a copy of the assessment against the Standards and notification of the recommendation
- formally certifying successful applicants
- enabling appeals according to the legislation and processes existing in the jurisdiction where the decision is made.
- organising or participating in appeals processes
- convening new assessment processes where an appeal is upheld.



*Information specific to states/territories may be available, please refer to your state/territory certifying authority for further information.*

## Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

- establishing, reviewing and maintaining the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, the certification process and supplementary materials
- providing support materials for nationally consistent training of assessors and jurisdictional officers
- developing materials to support implementation
- developing information packages to enhance understanding and promote voluntary certification
- maintaining summary data on the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers and providing to the Australian Government Department of Education and Training (DET)
- establishing links with relevant bodies for provision of data and information relating to the implementation of nationally consistent processes for certification
- reviewing nationally consistent certification and working with jurisdictions to implement improvements
- reporting annually to the Education Council on the implementation of nationally consistent processes for the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers.

## 07 Renewal of Certification

Certified teachers are able to renew their certification status every five years provided they continue to meet the renewal requirements. Certification and renewal processes may be subject to review as a result of the ongoing monitoring of the national certification process.

Please refer to the *Guide to the Renewal of Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia* for detailed information on the renewal process.

## 08 Glossary

### Annotation

Written commentary by the applicant that demonstrates their thinking on why and how the evidence they have submitted addresses the Standards/Descriptors. Annotations will also illustrate how the applicant's practice has had impact on student outcomes and the practice of colleagues.

### Annual performance assessment

Annual performance assessments should be based on the essential elements of the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* and conducted using school/system processes. They are not required in a specific format. In circumstances where teachers have not received an assessment, the referees will provide verification of past satisfactory performance.

### Applicant

The applicant is the teacher undertaking the national certification process.

### Artefact

An individual piece of evidence and/or linked extracts which demonstrates a teacher's achievement against one or more Descriptors. For example a lesson plan, an observation report or a letter to parents. Not all artefacts need to be part of an evidence set.

### Assessor

The individual nominated by the certifying authority to undertake an assessment of the renewal of certification application. The assessor is external to the school/setting of the applicant and is trained under the national Assessor Training Program.

### Certifying authority

In each participating jurisdiction, there are one or more bodies managing the certification process referred to as the *certifying authority*. The certifying authority is responsible for implementing and managing the national certification and renewal of certification processes in their jurisdiction.

### Collection of evidence

The collection of evidence is the entire submission of evidence for Stage 1 assessment. This is annotated evidence which demonstrates the impact of the applicant's practice, observation reports, a written statement addressing the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and a written description of a Lead initiative (for Lead applicants). When presented together, the collection of evidence demonstrates a teacher's practice against all Descriptors within the seven Standards at the relevant career stage.

A collection of evidence comprises stand alone artefacts and/or sets of annotated artefacts. Examination of quality collections of evidence indicates that the Standards can be effectively demonstrated in approximately 35 artefacts or fewer.

Assembling and structuring the collection of evidence is the responsibility of the applicant. However, assessors will be looking for well chosen, high quality artefacts that effectively and concisely demonstrate achievement of the Standards, rather than a large number of artefacts.

The written statement addressing the Standards and the description of a Lead initiative (for Lead applicants) are in addition to the artefacts.

Referee statements and/or discussions verify the practice described in the direct evidence and evaluate the teacher's practice against specific Standards/Descriptors. These referee statements are additional to the artefacts that provide direct evidence of the Standards/Descriptors.

### Delegate

Delegates must be nominated by the principal/supervisor. Delegate may be the Deputy/Assistant Principal or equivalent member of the senior leadership team of the school/setting who have significant knowledge of the applicant's practice.

### Disability

The definition of disability (as relating to Focus Area 1.6) is taken from the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Applicants are encouraged to look at this definition when considering how their teaching practice supports, and has impact on, students with disability.

### Evidence set

A group of artefacts (pieces of evidence) related by a general theme (e.g. unit of work, curriculum area or professional learning program). For example a unit plan which is combined with an assessment rubric, student feedback and student data. Applicants may choose whether or not to link their artefacts into 'sets'.

### Full registration

Full registration is achieved when a teacher has met the Proficient career stage of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and all other requirements for teacher registration, in accordance with the regulatory regimes in individual jurisdictions.

In New South Wales full registration is Proficient Teacher Accreditation. Some teachers in NSW are currently not required to be accredited, and these teachers are not excluded from this certification process if they meet the other eligibility requirements. Following amendments to the *Teacher Accreditation ACT 2004*, all teachers in NSW are required to be accredited as of Day 1, Term 1, 2018.

## Portable

It is intended that will be portable, allowing teachers to maintain their status as a Highly Accomplished or Lead teacher if they move between participating jurisdictions and sectors. This does not mean that any industrial arrangements attached to certification, such as a particular rate of pay, are automatically transferable. The way in which certified teachers are recognised or rewarded is an employment matter.

## Principal

A principal is the person designated by the employing authority as being primarily responsible for the overall control and administration of the school. 'Principal' in this document also includes the equivalent position to principal in early childhood and other settings.

There will be situations where a principal or equivalent is not available to fulfil the role outlined in this process. In these cases, the principal/supervisor may delegate their responsibilities to an equivalent member of the senior leadership team of the school/setting who has significant knowledge of the applicant's practice.

In cases where an applicant is a teaching principal the applicant should seek support from a senior person who is in a position to comment authoritatively on the applicant's teaching.

## Referees

Referees may include, but are not limited to, classroom teachers, school leaders, education consultants, teacher educators, and/or specialist staff. Referees nominated by the applicant are required to verify the practice described in the direct evidence and evaluate the teacher's practice against specific Standards/Descriptors where they have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice.

## School

School is used inclusively to refer to Australian primary and secondary schools, and other educational settings where teacher registration applies.

## Setting

Setting is used inclusively to refer to early childhood provision, including long day care and preschools and kindergarten, as well as other settings where teachers work. Applicants working in these settings who wish to apply for certification must hold full registration and meet the 'authentic teaching role' requirement for certification.

## Student outcomes

Within the national certification process and renewal processes, student outcomes are broadly defined and include learning, engagement in learning and wellbeing.

## Summary data

Data that will be collected and available to certifying authorities, AITSL and reported to the Australian Government Department of Education and Training (DET). This data may include, but is not limited to: name, gender, work location, certification decision, career stage applied/achieved and year certified. Certifying authorities may choose to collect more detailed data to allow for an in-depth analysis.

## Supervisor

The person taking responsibility for day-to-day management of the teacher and assessing their performance. Supervisor includes the equivalent position to principal in early childhood settings. There

will be situations where a supervisor is not available to fulfil the role outlined in this process, for example in the case where an applicant's supervisor is the manager of a centre and does not have an education background. In this situation, the applicant should seek support from a senior person who is in a position to comment authoritatively on the applicant's teaching.

# 09 Appendix A: Applicant checklist

Pre-Assessment	Page of the Guide	Optional or required
<input type="checkbox"/> Check your eligibility to apply for certification. To be eligible to apply for certification as a Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher, you must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be an Australian citizen or have a permanent residency visa</li> <li>• have full registration with an Australian state or territory regulatory authority</li> <li>• have been assessed as satisfactory in your <b>two</b> most recent annual performance assessments for those applying for Highly Accomplished career stage</li> <li>• have been assessed as satisfactory in your <b>three</b> most recent annual performance assessments for those applying for Lead career stage.</li> </ul>	Pages 10-11	Required
<input type="checkbox"/> Have a professional discussion with your principal/supervisor or delegate, as nominated by the principal/supervisor, about your readiness to apply for certification. The endorsement of your principal/supervisor is not mandatory but is highly recommended.	Page 11	Required
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider undertaking a self-assessment prior to applying for certification. Tools available on the AITSL website can help you assess your readiness to apply for certification. As Stage 2 of the certification process includes a classroom observation element, it is also suggested that you familiarise yourself with levels 4-6 of AITSL's Classroom Practice Continuum.	Page 11	Optional

## Stage 1 - Assessment

Page of the Guide

Optional or required

- Prepare your collection of evidence, and submit as per the requirements of your certifying authority.

Pages 12-19

Required

Your collection of evidence must contain:

1. [direct evidence](#)

- a. annotated evidence of teacher practice – artefacts that directly represent teachers work that have been annotated to the Descriptors
- b. observation reports (included in the collection of annotated evidence)

2. [teacher reflection on the direct evidence](#)

1. a written statement addressing the Standards
2. a written description of a Lead initiative (at the Lead career stage only)

3. [referee statements](#)

There are guidelines and tips within the Guide that can support you to select and annotate evidence for your application and choose referees who can provide evaluative statements against your practice.

The workbook *Recognising exemplary teachers* was developed by AITSL to provide further support to applicants in the certification process. Guiding questions and detailed information about the process are included to assist you in formulating an effective application for certification.

## Stage 2 – Assessment (applicants must be successful at Stage 1 to proceed to Stage 2)

- Liaise with the assessor, and your principal, to plan the Stage 2 site visit to evidence the required focus areas.

Pages 21-23

Required

The site visit comprises:

1. [observation of practice](#)
2. [professional discussion with applicant](#)
3. [referee discussion with principal/supervisor, and with other colleagues as required and nominated by the applicant.](#)

Following successful completion of Stage 1, you will be contacted by the assessor about the Stage 2 site visit. The assessor will outline the areas within the Standards that will be a focus of the site visit. It is your responsibility to plan the site visit to allow observation of these agreed areas.

# 10 Appendix B: Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

## Standard 1

### Know students and how they learn

Descriptor at career stage		
Focus area	Highly Accomplished	Lead
1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students	Select from a flexible and effective repertoire of teaching strategies to suit the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students.	Lead colleagues to select and develop teaching strategies to improve student learning using knowledge of the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students.
1.2 Understand how students learn	Expand understanding of how students learn using research and workplace knowledge.	Lead processes to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching programs using research and workplace knowledge about how students learn.
1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	Support colleagues to develop effective teaching strategies that address the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.	Evaluate and revise school learning and teaching programs, using expert and community knowledge and experience, to meet the needs of students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.
1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Provide advice and support colleagues in the implementation of effective teaching strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students using knowledge of and support from community representatives.	Develop teaching programs that support equitable and ongoing participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by engaging in collaborative relationships with community representatives and parents/carers.
1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities	Evaluate learning and teaching programs, using student assessment data that are differentiated for the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.	Lead colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching programs differentiated for the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.
1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability	Work with colleagues to access specialist knowledge, and relevant policy and legislation, to develop teaching programs that support the participation and learning of students with disability.	Initiate and lead the review of school policies to support the engagement and full participation of students with disability and ensure compliance with legislative and/or system policies.

## Standard 2

### Know content and how to teach it

Descriptor at career stage		
Focus area	Highly Accomplished	Lead
2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area	Support colleagues using current and comprehensive knowledge of content and teaching strategies to develop and implement engaging learning and teaching programs.	Lead initiatives within the school to evaluate and improve knowledge of content and teaching strategies and demonstrate exemplary teaching of subjects using effective, research-based learning and teaching programs.
2.2 Content selection and organisation	Exhibit innovative practice in the selection and organisation of content and delivery of learning and teaching programs.	Lead initiatives that utilise comprehensive content knowledge to improve the selection and sequencing of content into coherently organised learning and teaching programs.
2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting	Support colleagues to plan and implement learning and teaching programs using contemporary knowledge and understanding of curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements.	Lead colleagues to develop learning and teaching programs using comprehensive knowledge of curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements.
2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians	Support colleagues with providing opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.	Lead initiatives to assist colleagues with opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.
2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies	Support colleagues to implement effective teaching strategies to improve students' literacy and numeracy achievement.	Monitor and evaluate the implementation of teaching strategies within the school to improve students' achievement in literacy and numeracy using research based knowledge and student data.
2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	Model high-level teaching knowledge and skills and work with colleagues to use current ICT to improve their teaching practice and make content relevant and meaningful.	Lead and support colleagues within the school to select and use ICT with effective teaching strategies to expand learning opportunities and content knowledge for all students.



## Standard 3

### Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

Descriptor at career stage		
Focus area	Highly Accomplished	Lead
3.1 Establish challenging learning goals	Develop a culture of high expectations for all students by modelling and setting challenging learning goals.	Demonstrate exemplary practice and high expectations and lead colleagues to encourage students to pursue challenging goals in all aspects of their education.
3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs	Work with colleagues to plan, evaluate and modify learning and teaching programs to create productive learning environments that engage all students.	Exhibit exemplary practice and lead colleagues to plan, implement and review the effectiveness of their learning and teaching programs to develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills.
3.3 Use teaching strategies	Support colleagues to select and apply effective teaching strategies to develop knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.	Work with colleagues to review, modify and expand their repertoire of teaching strategies to enable students to use knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.
3.4 Select and use resources	Assist colleagues to create, select and use a wide range of resources, including ICT, to engage students in their learning.	Model exemplary skills and lead colleagues in selecting, creating and evaluating resources, including ICT, for application by teachers within or beyond the school.
3.5 Use effective classroom communication	Assist colleagues to select a wide range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support students' understanding, engagement and achievement.	Demonstrate and lead by example inclusive verbal and non-verbal communication using collaborative strategies and contextual knowledge to support students' understanding, engagement and achievement.
3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs	Work with colleagues to review current teaching and learning programs using student feedback, student assessment data, knowledge of curriculum and workplace practices.	Conduct regular reviews of teaching and learning programs using multiple sources of evidence including: student assessment data, curriculum documents, teaching practices and feedback from parents/carers, students and colleagues.
3.7 Engage parents/carers in the educative process	Work with colleagues to provide appropriate and contextually relevant opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in their children's learning.	Initiate contextually relevant processes to establish programs that involve parents/carers in the education of their children and broader school priorities and activities.

## Standard 4

### Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Descriptor at career stage		
Focus area	Highly Accomplished	Lead
4.1 Support student participation	Model effective practice and support colleagues to implement inclusive strategies that engage and support all students.	Demonstrate and lead by example the development of productive and inclusive learning environments across the school by reviewing inclusive strategies and exploring new approaches to engage and support all students.
4.2 Manage classroom activities	Model and share with colleagues a flexible repertoire of strategies for classroom management to ensure all students are engaged in purposeful activities.	Initiate strategies and lead colleagues to implement effective classroom management and promote student responsibility for learning.
4.3 Manage challenging behaviour	Develop and share with colleagues a flexible repertoire of behaviour management strategies using expert knowledge and workplace experience.	Lead and implement behaviour management initiatives to assist colleagues to broaden their range of strategies.
4.4 Maintain student safety	Initiate and take responsibility for implementing current school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements to ensure student wellbeing and safety.	Evaluate the effectiveness of student wellbeing policies and safe working practices using current school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements and assist colleagues to update their practices.
4.5 Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically	Model, and support colleagues to develop, strategies to promote the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.	Review or implement new policies and strategies to ensure the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.

## Standard 5

### Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Descriptor at career stage		
Focus area	Highly Accomplished	Lead
5.1 Assess student learning	Develop and apply a comprehensive range of assessment strategies to diagnose learning needs, comply with curriculum requirements and support colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of their approaches to assessment.	Evaluate school assessment policies and strategies to support colleagues with: using assessment data to diagnose learning needs, complying with curriculum, system and/or school assessment requirements and using a range of assessment strategies.
5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning	Select from an effective range of strategies to provide targeted feedback based on informed and timely judgements of each student's current needs in order to progress learning.	Model exemplary practice and initiate programs to support colleagues in applying a range of timely, effective and appropriate feedback strategies.
5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements	Organise assessment moderation activities that support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.	Lead and evaluate moderation activities that ensure consistent and comparable judgements of student learning to meet curriculum and school or system requirements.
5.4 Interpret student data	Work with colleagues to use data from internal and external student assessments for evaluating learning and teaching, identifying interventions and modifying teaching practice.	Co-ordinate student performance and program evaluation using internal and external student assessment data to improve teaching practice.
5.5 Report on student achievement	Work with colleagues to construct accurate, informative and timely reports to students and parents/carers about student learning and achievement.	Evaluate and revise reporting and accountability mechanisms in the school to meet the needs of students, parents/carers and colleagues.

## Standard 6

### Engage in professional learning

Descriptor at career stage		
Focus area	Highly Accomplished	Lead
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs	Analyse the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to plan personal professional development goals, support colleagues to identify and achieve personal development goals and pre-service teachers to improve classroom practice.	Use comprehensive knowledge of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to plan and lead the development of professional learning policies and programs that address the professional learning needs of colleagues and pre-service teachers.
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice	Plan for professional learning by accessing and critiquing relevant research, engage in high quality targeted opportunities to improve practice and offer quality placements for pre-service teachers where applicable.	Initiate collaborative relationships to expand professional learning opportunities, engage in research, and provide quality opportunities and placements for pre-service teachers.
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	Initiate and engage in professional discussions with colleagues in a range of forums to evaluate practice directed at improving professional knowledge and practice, and the educational outcomes of students.	Implement professional dialogue within the school or professional learning network(s) that is informed by feedback, analysis of current research and practice to improve the educational outcomes of students.
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning	Engage with colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher professional learning activities to address student learning needs.	Advocate, participate in and lead strategies to support high-quality professional learning opportunities for colleagues that focus on improved student learning.

## Standard 7

### Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Descriptor at career stage			
Focus area	Highly Accomplished	Lead	
7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities	Maintain high ethical standards and support colleagues to interpret codes of ethics and exercise sound judgement in all school and community contexts.	Model exemplary ethical behaviour and exercise informed judgements in all professional dealings with students, colleagues and the community.	
7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements	Support colleagues to review and interpret legislative, administrative, and organisational requirements, policies and processes.	Initiate, develop and implement relevant policies and processes to support colleagues' compliance with and understanding of existing and new legislative, administrative, organisational and professional responsibilities.	
7.3 Engage with the parents/carers	Demonstrate responsiveness in all communications with parents/carers about their children's learning and wellbeing.	Identify, initiate and build on opportunities that engage parents/carers in both the progress of their children's learning and in the educational priorities of the school.	
7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities	Contribute to professional networks and associations and build productive links with the wider community to improve teaching and learning.	Take a leadership role in professional and community networks and support the involvement of colleagues in external learning opportunities.	





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