



Successful induction for migrant teachers



Did you know?

Understanding the wider community culture and dynamics help new teachers acclimatise, especially in regional and remote contexts.

Introduction

A strong induction and orientation gives new migrant teachers the grounding and support they'll need to succeed in their new school and role.

This resource is targeted at school leaders. It aims to enable conversations and actions that help new migrant teachers both professionally and personally integrate into Australian classrooms and school communities.

While not exhaustive, this resource intends to stimulate discussions that occurs as part of an employer provided induction program about the differences between Australian schools and those of their home country or other countries in which they have taught.

Induction topics for newly appointed migrant teachers

The school context

To support newly appointed migrant teachers adjust to school and community it is useful to engage them in conversations that helps them gain a balanced idea of life as a teacher in the school location. Knowledge of the school context can include providing information regarding the following:

- school and student demographics
- staff wellbeing initiatives including any extra curricula activities
- how the school supports staff professional development and if it has a school early career teacher program
- the expectations around additional duties including teaching out of area/out of field.

Understanding wider community

Understanding the wider community culture and dynamics help new teachers acclimatise, especially in regional and remote contexts. Helpful information could include:

- population size and demographics of the town/region
- what the main economic activities are of the area
- the essential services available, e.g. public transport
- shopping and retail options
- what community services and programs are available e.g. local sporting clubs, cultural events/activities
- what recreational opportunities exists e.g. options for surfing, fishing, bushwalking, skiing etc
- how geographically accessible/constrained the location is throughout the seasons of the year.

Cultural induction

Newcomers are unlikely to understand the community culture and community life. Helpful things to do include:

- appoint a cultural capabilities mentor. Typically, a trusted, knowledgeable local who can help them transition into the school and community
- highlighting culturally significant areas
- explain culturally important student attendance requirements
- providing First Nations knowledge, resources and information

Academic year

An overview of the Australian academic year and daily timetable will help orient new migrant teachers in their role. Useful topics might include:

- compulsory school ages in your state/territory
- year/age students start kindergarten, prep or pre-primary and primary school, secondary school and the legal age students can leave
- the transition from primary into secondary and senior secondary school and how students prepare for higher learning
- the academic year in Australia, including term start and end dates. It is helpful to tie this information in with your school's assessment and reporting calendar so teachers know the important deadlines.

School timetable and calendar

Explaining daily timetable nuances and the Australian yearly school calendar is very helpful. Useful topics might include:

- lunch breaks, including whether home-packed lunches are common and if lunch is eaten under teacher supervision
- 'fruit snack' or allocated snack times in primary schools school policies on food sharing and allergies
- school canteen operation
- mandatory supervision and playground/yard duties or active work during breaks
- scheduling weekly lesson timetables depending on year level and school requirements
- Australian-specific public holidays and school celebrations, such as Grandparents' Day or Book Week
- non-contact time/release from face-to-face teaching during the school day or after school hours and the expectations during those hours
- pupil-free and professional practice days and teacher requirements
- days for sporting carnivals, swimming lessons etc
- teacher support and mandatory sport supervision requirements
- 'sun smart' practices and during what school terms students must wear hats.

Curriculum, assessments and reporting

In-depth discussions on the curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements will lay the foundation for successful entry into the school community and the new role. Useful topics might include:

- how to create lesson plans using school documentation
- the state and national curriculum
- explaining the curriculum and approach
- the school's instructional model and pedagogical practices
- explaining the vision for instruction
- diverse student needs including your policies and processes, e.g. the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD).
- providing a mentor and opportunities to observe teaching
- the delivery of various school-wide assessments, the assessment schedule and delivery requirements
- how to share information with parents and the quality of messaging/reports and sending them out in line with other teachers
- how you communicate with parents and sharing student progress.

General operations

Sectors and schools vary in their day-to-day operations. Newly appointed migrant teachers need to know their obligations and responsibilities. Starting points for this discussion might include:

- an explanation of the school improvement cycle and where the school is in that cycle
- demonstration of your incident reporting system
- information on the various committees and/or programs available for teachers
- what is appropriate staff attire
- how students address teachers and vice versa
- processes for handling forms, e.g. excursions, parental consent.



Did you know?

Every school in Australia is unique, outlining the various positions in your school will help orientate migrant teachers so they know who can help with what.

Employment types and roles

Useful topics include explaining:

- contracts and employment types, e.g. part-time, full-time, casual, fixed-term and ongoing
- codes of conduct and professional policies and the consequences of a breach
- school-specific policies such as social media, community engagement and personal conflicts of interest.

Every school in Australia is unique, outlining the various positions in your school will help orientate migrant teachers so they know who can help with what.

Examples of roles to discuss could include:

- School leadership including the duties of the Principal, Assistant Principals and Middle Leaders
- Year Level or Curriculum Teams and their collaboration requirements
- how Education support staff are directed and organised
- Office administration roles including the Business Manager, School Secretary and Daily Organisation Leader
- Student Wellbeing Team including the duties of the School Counsellor, Mental Health Coordinator, Mentors, Cultural Liaisons and School Nurse, and how students are directed to these services
- External support staff including Occupational Therapists, Speech Language Pathologists, and any external programs, such as music lessons and tutoring.

Some migrant teachers may not be familiar with the idea of students leaving class during a lesson, so explaining the process and appropriate times will help with their understanding.

Communication

Knowing how a school shares information will be important. Below are some valuable points you can cover:

- email etiquette and professional standards of conduct including what types of messages are appropriate to send via email
- ICT use and online teacher/student communication protocols
- what non-confidential information is suitable to pass on to parents, other teachers or students and which types of information that should be kept confidential.
- location of online links and other resources
- using shared drives and documents and what information shouldn't be altered
- how to navigate online
- keeping shared school space organised
- responsibilities for contributing content to family and community newsletters
- commonly used Australian education acronyms and ones that are unique to your school
- different staff meetings and teams, and how to communicate effectively within them, noting that migrant teachers may be hesitant to share their knowledge in large group settings
- modes of communicating with parents like parent-teacher conferences and if email or alternate messaging sites are permitted
- the teacher staff room including their pigeonhole or mailbox.

Further support and resources

AITSL's Teaching in Australia resource offers a broad overview of the Australian education system for overseas-trained teachers. It includes links to a broad perspective of resources across different states, territories, systems and sectors.



AITSL's Teach in Australia resource is a guide for prospective migrant teachers seeking employment in the Australian education workforce. It covers how to find and apply for teaching jobs in Australia.



