

Framework for Teacher Registration in Australia



Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands, sea countries, and waterways from across Australia. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and living cultures; and to Elders past and present.

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Introduction

Australian teachers are members of a registered profession. Registration is a public description of the unique academic, personal and ethical benchmarks that individuals must meet to qualify and continue to practise as teachers.

Teacher registration is managed and administered by jurisdictional teacher regulatory authorities. Each teacher regulatory authority operates within the Framework for Teacher Registration in Australia (the Framework). The Framework is arranged under eight key principles that describe the benchmarks for entry and continuing membership of the teaching profession across Australia.

Teachers play a central role in keeping children safe in education settings. Registration requires teachers to meet suitability requirements at entry to the profession and throughout their career. Meeting suitability requirements provides assurance to the community, parents/carers and teachers that child safety is a paramount consideration in the registration of teachers.

A key pillar of teacher registration is the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Teacher Standards). The Teacher Standards make explicit the skills, knowledge and practice required to be an effective teacher.

The application of the Teacher Standards underpins decisions about:

- the content and level of qualifications required for entry into the profession
- the process to become a fully registered member of the profession and
- teachers' ongoing proficiency and continued registration.

This Framework has guided the direction of Australian teacher regulatory authorities since 2011 and outlines a nationally consistent approach to the registration of teachers across the states and territories.

Elements of nationally consistent registration

Teacher registration is granted and managed by teacher regulatory authorities in each Australian state and territory.

This Framework sets out uniform principles for the registration¹ of teachers in education settings² across Australia. It outlines a nationally consistent approach to the registration of teachers, where applicable, across the states and territories.

The Framework is used by teacher regulatory authorities to drive consistent and sound regulatory outcomes, in the best interests of children and young people in education settings.

This Framework also embeds a consistent approach to child safety, ensuring that only suitable people can become and remain registered as teachers.

Key principles underpinning the Framework

1. Qualifications

There is a minimum qualification, including a teacher education qualification, for registration.

2. English language proficiency

Registration requires achievement of a level of professional proficiency in English suitable for a teacher working in Australian education settings.

3. Suitability

Registration requires applicants to be suitable to work with children and young people and be a teacher, based on an assessment of their fitness, character, conduct and criminal history.

Registered teachers must continue to meet suitability requirements to maintain their registration.

4. Mutual recognition

A person holding a specified registration, in the profession of teaching or for an activity covered by that occupation, is entitled to hold registration in a second jurisdiction for an equivalent activity, subject to the requirements of mutual recognition legislation.

5. Alternative authorisation to teach

There is provision, in clearly defined circumstances and under specified conditions, for persons who are not eligible for provisional or full teacher registration to be entitled to teach.

¹ Note: NSW uses the term accreditation rather than registration.

² 'education setting' is used inclusively to refer to Australian primary and secondary schools, early childhood settings and other educational settings where teacher registration applies.

6. Initial and full registration

A teacher has an initial period of registration before meeting the requirements for full registration. The initial period allows them to be employed as a teacher and undertake workplace learning and development that equips them to meet requirements for becoming fully registered.

7. Renewal of registration

Fully registered teachers are required to renew their registration by demonstrating ongoing proficiency against the Teacher Standards, recency of practice, continued professional learning, ongoing suitability to teach and any other requirements set by teacher regulatory authorities.

8. Sanctions or withdrawal of teacher registration

A teacher regulatory authority can impose sanctions or withdraw a teacher's registration if they fail to meet the required standards of personal and professional behaviour or professional performance.

Teachers who have engaged in conduct that poses an unacceptable risk to child safety and wellbeing will have conditions or exclusions from registration imposed, commensurate with the risk posed.

1. Qualifications

There is a minimum qualification, including a teacher education qualification, for registration.

The qualifications required for registration are:

- at least four years of higher education (full-time or equivalent) study, including an initial teacher education program accredited in Australia, using the Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures, or
- a teacher education qualification approved by Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA); and/or
- an overseas or historic qualification assessed as equivalent.

2. English language proficiency

Registration requires achievement of a level of professional proficiency in English suitable for a teacher working in Australian education settings.

The English language requirements for registration as a teacher are:

- an IELTS³ (Academic) assessment across all four skill areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing – with no score below 7 in any of the four skill areas and a score of no less than 8 in speaking and listening, or
- an ISLPR⁴ assessment with a score of level 4 in all four areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing, such assessments to be deemed valid only if provided by approved testing sites where the assessment is teacher focused, or
- any other nationally agreed English Language Test (ELT).

The date of the assessment must be no more than three years prior to the time of application for registration.

English language proficiency assessment is not required for registration as a teacher where all the qualifications required for registration (or qualifications assessed as comparable) have been undertaken in English in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada or the Republic of Ireland.

Teacher regulatory authorities have the discretion to consider specific claims by applicants for equivalence in meeting the English language proficiency level.

³ International English Language Testing System

⁴ International Second Language Proficiency Ratings

3. Suitability

Registration requires applicants to be suitable to work with children and young people and be a teacher, based on an assessment of their character, conduct and criminal history. Registered teachers must continue to meet suitability requirements to maintain their registration.

3.1. Suitability to teach

Suitability to teach involves assessing:

- i. a person's competence (professional knowledge, practice and engagement) to teach and
- ii. whether they are safe to work with children and young people, having regard to their fitness, criminal history, character and conduct.

In determining a person's ongoing suitability to teach, matters under consideration include:

- the person's history of compliance with their teacher registration requirements
- any previous decision to refuse to grant, refuse to renew, suspend or cancel a registration or other authorisation to teach (however described)
- the person's point-in-time criminal history
- any behaviour that departs from the standard of behaviour reasonably expected of a registered teacher or shows the person is not of good character
- whether the person has contravened an order made by a teacher regulatory authority or a disciplinary body (however described)
- whether the person has failed to pay any costs, expenses or fines under a law that deals with the registration of teachers
- whether the individual has a medical condition or impairment that may manifest in conduct or behaviours that may pose a risk to children
- relevant information from other teacher regulatory authorities, ACECQA, registration bodies and/or overseas employers
- any other matters relating to the person that a teacher regulatory authority considers appropriate.

3.2. Criminal records checks

A check on national criminal history will be undertaken on application for registration as a teacher.

All teachers are required to undergo a national criminal history record check at the time of initial assessment for registration and at the time of renewal, as determined by teacher regulatory authorities to best assess child safety risks. The check will be undertaken through a recognised national agency.

Overseas criminal history checks are required when an applicant or teacher has resided as an adult in a country other than Australia. In cases where an overseas check cannot be obtained (because the country in which the applicant resided does not provide criminal history checks), the applicant must complete a statutory declaration that they do not have a criminal history in that country.

4. Mutual recognition

A person holding a specified registration, in the profession of teaching or for an activity covered by that occupation, is entitled to hold registration in a second jurisdiction for an equivalent activity, subject to the requirements of mutual recognition legislation.

Jurisdictions will release information to other teacher regulatory authorities about registered teachers who apply for registration under mutual recognition legislation (*Commonwealth Mutual Recognition Act 1992* and the *Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997*). This will include instances of withdrawal of registration or other disciplinary action taken, disciplinary procedures currently underway but not completed, investigations currently not completed, and any conditions currently attached to a registered teacher.

5. Alternative authorisation to teach

There is provision, in clearly defined circumstances and under specified conditions, for persons who are not eligible for provisional or full teacher registration to be entitled to teach.

Alternative authorisation to teach is granted by a state or territory teacher regulatory authority. There is no obligation for jurisdictions to recognise people with alternative authorisation to teach from other jurisdictions until they have met all registration requirements (including suitability requirements).

There are two purposes of alternative authorisation to teach:

- i. to address workforce shortages

There is provision, in clearly defined circumstances and under specified conditions, for persons who are not otherwise eligible for provisional or full registration to entitle them to teach.

- ii. a pathway to registration

This provides a pathway to registration for individuals who are working towards an accredited initial teacher education qualification, within a specified period of time.

6. Initial and full registration

A teacher has an initial period of registration before meeting the requirements for full registration. The initial period allows them to be employed as a teacher and undertake workplace learning and development that equips them to meet requirements for becoming fully registered.

6.1. Transition to full registration

Full registration is achieved by providing evidence of performance at the proficient teacher career stage of the Teacher Standards. The maximum period for meeting the requirements for full registration is five years, with provision for extension on a case-by-case basis.

Teacher regulatory authorities provide guidance on the time in an Australian education setting required for the teacher to demonstrate the Teacher Standards. The teacher may apply for full registration when they have met the Teacher Standards to the satisfaction of the teacher regulatory authority. There is capacity for flexibility in appropriate circumstances.

6.1.1 Support

A provisionally registered teacher will be supported to help achieve and demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to meet the Proficient career stage of the Teacher Standards. This support will vary appropriately according to the teacher's context and circumstances.

6.1.2 Evidence

The evidence presented by a teacher should demonstrate the achievement of each of the Teacher Standards and reference the descriptors. A single piece of evidence can address multiple descriptors, within and across the Teacher Standards.

6.1.3 Assessment

The evidence is assessed by the teacher regulatory authority or their nominee(s) to determine the proficient teacher career stage of the Teacher Standards has been met.

The principal or delegate (or an appropriate equivalent in an education setting) makes the final recommendation to the teacher regulatory authority, based on the assessment of evidence provided against each of the Teacher Standards.

6.1.4 Quality assurance

Teacher regulatory authorities will undertake quality assurance processes to ensure consistency in judgements. This may take the form of an audit of the evidence of a sample of teachers who have been granted full registration.

6.1.5 Reapplication

A teacher whose registration has lapsed because they did not fulfil the requirements for full registration, or who anticipates that they will not meet the requirements in the specified time period, may reapply for provisional registration. The teacher regulatory authority assesses applications on a case-by-case basis.

6.2. Returning teachers

An experienced teacher who was previously registered and does not meet the current qualification requirements for registration may be eligible for re-registration. Teacher regulatory authorities consider each returning teacher's application for registration and make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

7. Renewal of registration

Fully registered teachers are required to renew their registration by demonstrating ongoing proficiency against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Teacher Standards), recency of practice, continued professional learning, ongoing suitability to teach and any other requirements set by teacher regulatory authorities.

7.1. Requirements for renewal of registration

The maximum period of registration is five years. To continue to hold full registration, teachers undergo a periodic process of renewal.

Renewal demonstrates currency of professional knowledge, practice and engagement, and suitability to continue to be registered as a teacher.

The minimum requirements for granting the renewal of a teacher's registration are that:

- suitability to teach has been maintained (assessed on the basis of a current national criminal history records check)
- recency of professional practice requirements have been met on the basis of 100 days of professional practice in the previous five years, with capacity for flexibility in appropriate circumstances
- proficiency against the Teacher Standards has been maintained
- professional learning is demonstrated on the basis of at least 100 hours of professional learning activities referenced to the Teacher Standards, undertaken in the previous five years.

In addition, as part of the renewal process the teacher regulatory authority should consider:

- requesting release of information from all relevant bodies including teacher regulatory authorities, ACECQA, registration bodies and/or employers
- whether the teacher meets ongoing suitability requirements.

In jurisdictions where the registration period is less than five years the requirements for professional practice and professional learning may be reduced proportionately.

7.1.1 Evidence

The evidence for renewal provided by the teacher at a minimum must include a declaration by the teacher that the requirement for:

- suitability to teach has been maintained
- recency of professional practice requirements have been met
- proficiency against the Teacher Standards has been maintained
- professional development referenced to the Teacher Standards is demonstrated.

Registration decisions may be subject to audits by teacher regulatory authorities for quality assurance purposes.

7.2. Requirements for renewal for teachers not meeting professional practice requirements

Flexibility regarding recency of professional practice requirements may be applied by jurisdictions in appropriate circumstances (e.g. retired teachers returning to the teaching profession).

Professional practice requirements should not preclude teachers who are not in direct teaching roles, (e.g. principals, non-school-based teachers, school counsellors who are registered teachers) from maintaining their registration.

If professional practice requirements for renewal of registration are not met, teacher regulatory authorities may provide a form of non-practising registration (provided that these teachers meet all other requirements for renewal of their registration).

Teacher regulatory authorities may require teachers (including through the imposition of conditions) in this category to maintain up-to-date knowledge on emerging educational reforms and current best practice in learning environments. This may include requirements for specific professional learning and professional practice to be undertaken within a specified period of time.

8. Sanctions or withdrawal of teacher registration

A teacher regulatory authority can impose sanctions or withdraw a teacher's registration if they fail to meet the required standards of personal and professional behaviour or professional performance.

Teachers who have engaged in conduct that poses an unacceptable risk to child safety and wellbeing will have conditions or exclusions from registration imposed, commensurate with the risk posed.

8.1. Sharing information about disciplinary action and withdrawal of teacher registration

Teacher regulatory authorities should actively seek release of information from all relevant bodies, including teacher regulatory authorities, registration bodies, ACECQA and employers (including overseas employers), where a teacher has sought registration or been registered.

A teacher regulatory authority may request information from another teacher regulatory authority where a teacher has been registered, relating to unfinished investigations and any conditions that currently apply to the teacher's registration.

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The logo for AITSL, featuring the lowercase letters 'aitsl' in a sans-serif font. The letters are colored with a gradient from light green to yellow.

Australian Institute
for Teaching and
School Leadership
Limited

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of two overlapping triangles. The left triangle is dark teal and points to the right. The right triangle is yellow-green and points to the left. They meet at a central point, creating a white diamond shape in the middle.

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