

NSW Supplementary Documentation: Elaborations in Priority Areas

Aboriginal Education

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Priority Area: Aboriginal Education

This document has been adapted from the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership document Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education in Australia Criteria: Focus Areas 1.4 and 2.4 (2017). Modifications made to the AITSL document ensure its relevance to the NSW context.

Preamble

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) establishes two major goals. These are that ‘Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence’, and that ‘All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, [and] active and informed citizens’.

Accordingly, the Australian Curriculum sets consistent national standards to improve learning outcomes for all young Australians. In addition, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) acknowledges the gap in learning outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their non-Indigenous peers. Nationally, state and territory education systems’ goals aim to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas and can fully participate in the curriculum.

To support all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in achieving these goals, education ministers have agreed to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015 (SCEEC, 2015). This strategy prioritises seven interdependent priority areas. The first of these requires that “action is taken to ensure children and young people are taught by skilled educators who are culturally competent in the local context”, and that “providers, including principals, set high expectations for learning that incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives” (p.5).

It is therefore a key strategy for the achievement of the goals of the Melbourne Declaration for all Australian children and young people that initial teacher education programs prepare all teachers to be competent in all the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) at the Graduate Career Stage (Graduate Teacher Standards). The Standards, and the Focus Areas they comprise, reflect the characteristics of quality teaching, and achieving the Standards helps to ensure the quality of the profession and the learning outcomes for all young Australians.

In addressing the appropriate pedagogical content knowledge that teachers require to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and to teach all students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages, the Standards have incorporated specific reference to these knowledge’s and skills. Focus areas 1.4 and 2.4 aim both to provide the best possible educational opportunities for Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and to provide all Australians with knowledge and understandings about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages that are accurate, culturally correct and current.

Rationale and Use

These elaborations have been developed to provide guidance to initial teacher education providers and assist accreditation panels in determining whether initial teacher education programs meet the requirements of the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures in respect to Graduate Teacher Standard Descriptors 1.4.1 and 2.4.1.

Standard 1: Know your students and how they learn

Standard Descriptor 1.4.1:

Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

Standard 2: Know the content and how to teach it.

Standard Descriptor 2.4.1:

Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.

All accreditation panels must take into account the criteria in assessing whether appropriate and sufficient evidence is provided.

These elaborations will support providers to develop and provide appropriate program content, professional experience and assessment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

The elaborations encourage and provide opportunities for providers to be flexible and innovative in supporting graduate teacher achievement of the Standard Descriptors.

The broad objective is to assure the education community as a whole that graduates of initial teacher education programs meet the requirements of Standard Descriptors 1.4.1 and 2.4.1.

1. Program Design

Structure

The relevant content may be incorporated into specific units as well as being taught across all years of the program and embedded within all curriculum areas. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, perspectives, histories and experiences are incorporated into areas of the curriculum which are not explicitly historical or sociological, including, for example:

- environmental education
- arts education
- literacy
- numeracy
- science.

The program documentation makes it clear that learning in and assessment against Standard Descriptors 1.4.1 and 2.4.1. are not optional components of the program. Whether there are specific units or content is embedded across units, the documentation validates how every teacher education student undertakes learning in and assessment of these Standard Descriptors.

Resources

Staff members and external personnel responsible for the delivery of content have appropriate qualifications and/or knowledge in this area.

Program documentation includes reference to the teaching and learning materials, knowledge and information sources, and the human and information resources provided to teacher education students to support their learning in Standard Descriptors 1.4.1 and 2.4.1.

Resources are appropriately acknowledged, developed and/or endorsed by respected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, (e.g. those provided by AITSL such as the Respect, Relationships, Reconciliation resource (3Rs), the AITSL Illustrations of Practice_and ACARA resources).

2. Content

Initial teacher education program content is designed to allow teacher education students to achieve the broad knowledge and understanding required by Standard Descriptors 1.4.1 and 2.4.1.

Initial teacher education program content embeds intercultural understanding and the development and deepening of teacher education students' understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, societies, cultures, histories and contemporary experiences.

Teacher education students investigate policies, programs and practices of direct relevance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Initial teacher education program content ensures that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students can see their cultures, histories and world views positioned in the curriculum of the initial teacher education program, and that teacher education students engage with this curriculum.

Content of the program is such that teacher education students are able to demonstrate understanding of:

- the similarities and/or diversities of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and knowledge sources, spirituality, beliefs and values, and concepts of kinship and culturally sensitive issues.
- past and present government policies and their impact on Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as well as the broader Australian society/history.
- how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including those not growing up or having grown up in their families and communities, connect to their families and communities, and the marked effect that historical and current political policies and practices have had on shaping their lives and circumstances.
- how media representations and personal histories and experience shape and influence perceptions of and assumptions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their community life.
- what constitutes racism and anti-racism strategies, policies and legislation
- what it means to act in culturally appropriate/inclusive ways
- what cultural safety and inclusivity are, and
- the skills and knowledge to engage with Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Examples of content might be learning activities that:

require teacher education students to investigate a range of 'published' integrated curriculum, which are inclusive and embed significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material across all learning areas

make linkages between local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and the learning areas of the Australian curriculum, e. g. ACSSU048 - Earth's rotation on its axis causes regular changes, including night and day. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People use their knowledge of astronomy for time-keeping through observing patterns in celestial bodies, the use of rising and setting stars and constellations as indicators of special events, the solar cycle, and lunar phases and their relationships to ocean tides and eclipses as well as astronomical measurements of the equinox, solstice and cardinal points.

highlight positive representations of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and cultures, as well as representations such as art, sport and NAIDOC, and include, for example people filling key roles in their own and the broader community. For example, the Yarning Strong set of chapter books and graphic novels introduces a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and academics.

require an appreciation of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, languages and local histories, and the diversity within each jurisdiction and across Australia.

are addressed in an affirmative manner, that demonstrates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students that their cultures are valued and acknowledged e.g. the inclusion of informed, accurate content in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

include the impact of government policies, programs and practices, both past and current, with emphasis placed on having an understanding and appreciation of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian societies. e.g. investigate a local community context – the history and contemporary issues and their impact on education.

include knowledge of what constitutes racism and anti-racism strategies, policies and legislation, e.g. discussion in relation to how educational processes/practices are linked to structural power relations along axes of socioeconomic, gender, racial and ethnic differences.

address the need to understand the roles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support personnel at system and school levels and the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational and community organisations in improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, e.g. guest lecture given by an Aboriginal Education Officer in relation to their role/s, and how their advice can be used in planning and decision-making.

3. Professional Experience

The Professional Experience component of programs provides teacher education students with opportunities to:

- build effective relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners.
- create a positive learning environment that engages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners effectively.
- demonstrate knowledge of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
- make evident commitment to and devise strategies for implementing and nurturing the cultural safety, identity and diversity of learners.
- apply culturally inclusive practices in relation to curriculum, classroom teaching and assessment.
- identify communication strategies to develop genuine inclusive educational partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities
- demonstrate their ability to provide learning opportunities that are culturally appropriate and responsive to all students' needs.
- record their reflections on how they recognise and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their classes including those who may not identify, and respond appropriately and knowingly to the learning needs of these students.
- apply EALD (English as an additional language or dialect), including Aboriginal English methodologies and strategies, into literacy programs.
- reflect on relevant international, national and local jurisdictional educational priorities and policies that impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education
- include local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and knowledges in their lessons across all curriculum areas
- review at the classroom and school environment and reflect on whether the curriculum is relevant, inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can see themselves reflected in their schooling.

Professional Experience is a key component of initial teacher education programs. National Program Standard 5, the *NSW Supplementary Documentation: Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education* policy and the *Framework for High Quality Professional Experience in NSW Schools* establish the common and fundamental requirements for this program component. In particular, it is expected that “the professional experience components of programs are relevant to a classroom environment, and are as diverse as practicable” (p.17)

It is not possible to guarantee that every teacher education student will undertake professional experience in every school context and experience all possible students and communities. In relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families and communities, it is therefore imperative that teacher education students have opportunities to both undertake and demonstrate their learning in respect to Standard Descriptor 1.4.1 throughout their program.

Learning how the professional experience site interacts with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Peoples and their communities is a key component of professional experience whether or not there are students in the class or school who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students, as is practising and demonstrating Standard Descriptor 1.4.1 where there are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Teacher education students have opportunities to both undertake and demonstrate their learning in respect to Standard Descriptor 2.4.1 in both course work and professional experience components, regardless of the contexts of their professional experience placements.

Examples of what teacher education students might practise include:

identifying and report on relevant issues and considerations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and community members in relation to schooling, including an understanding that English may not be their first language.

locate, select and use accurate, relevant and appropriate resources and syllabuses in terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and knowledges.

reflect on their own and other teachers' and teacher education students' lessons and units incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and knowledges such as historical and current events, health, land and sea management.

explore case studies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds and cultures to build understanding using a range of community based resources, texts and research papers

share and apply their learning, beliefs and practice using verbal and non-verbal communication and presentations in class

participating in discussions with supervising teachers in relation to system/state Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education directions, policies and priorities

4. Assessment

Assessment determines a teacher education student's achievement of expected learning outcomes appropriate to the AQF level of the program, and includes a range of written and oral methods, practice and demonstration.

Teacher education students are assessed against Standard Descriptors 1.4.1 and 2.4.1 to confirm their broad knowledge and understanding.

All assessment should be referenced to the Standard Descriptors.

Teacher education students are assessed through tasks in which they:

- demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and commitment in relation to the importance of histories, cultures, contributions, perspectives, and reconciliation/recognition to contemporary Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their communities.
- demonstrate a sound knowledge of the many and varied Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and Language Groups.
- demonstrate their understanding about the impact of the above on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.
- demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.
- discuss the ways in which social justice, anti-racism and multicultural education have been conceptualised.
- have the opportunity to consider the extent to which their gender, social class or cultural background has played a part in shaping them in specific ways to be a unique individual and the impact this has on their interaction with others.
- reflect on what it means to be culturally competent, e.g. 'Educators who are culturally competent respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences' (rrr.edu.au).

For example, as an assessment item, a teacher education student might:

- develop a portfolio of digital and web Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources related to the subject areas and ages they plan to teach.
- reflect and report on activities where they meet with community members and Elders, hear First Peoples' voices, and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and partake (where appropriate) in cultural experiences.
- develop and report case studies of lived experiences regarding the use of traditional knowledge and practices, such as healing and approaches to address the effects of trans-generational trauma.
- deliver, individually or as part of a group, presentations on inclusive teaching and learning strategies.
- research and write a paper about how the concepts of oppression and privilege assist in our understanding of diverse student experiences.
- prepare and deliver a presentation to peers explaining a suite of anti-racism strategies, emphasising which ones work and why.
- draw on their reading, as well as personal experiences, to describe the extent to which one of the following attributes contributes to their individuality: gender, social class or cultural background.
- prepare a unit of work, for one or more of the Australian curriculum areas, which demonstrates better understanding, through actual or virtual interaction with community members, varied lived experiences and resilience of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

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Glossary

Aboriginal – (adjective) An Aboriginal person is someone who is of Aboriginal descent, identifies as being Aboriginal and is accepted as such by the Aboriginal community with which they originally identified.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – the Australian Indigenous population includes Aboriginal People, Torres Strait Islander People, and people who have both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. The term Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander encompasses all three.

Accreditation - a national process through which state and territory teacher regulatory authorities endorse initial teacher education programs as meeting the requirements of *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures December 2015*.

Assessment - Assessment is a process to determine a student's achievement of expected learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration (Australian Qualifications Framework, p.92)
<https://www.aqf.edu.au/sites/aqf/files/aqf-2nd-edition-january-2013.pdf>

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) - The national framework, comprising seven Standards which outline what teachers should know and be able to do. The Standards are interconnected, interdependent and overlapping.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) – specifies the standards for educational qualifications in Australia. The AQF levels define the relative complexity and depth of achievement and the autonomy required of graduates to demonstrate that achievement.

Cultural competence – Cultural competence is about knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is being aware of one's own world view and developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences as well as gaining knowledge of cultural practices and world views that differ from our own while developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures.

Cultural inclusivity – 'a learning philosophy through which stakeholders recognise, appreciate, and capitalise on cultural diversity in order to promote students' equal participation in teaching and learning'. Dreamson, N. et al (2017). Policies on and practices of cultural inclusivity in learning management systems: perspectives of Indigenous holistic pedagogies. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 36(5).

Cultural safety – 'an environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together'. Williams, R. (1999). Cultural safety – what does it mean for our work practice? *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 23(2), 213-214.

Culturally appropriate – recognition and respect of cultural differences; applying cultural competence. Hyun, E. (1998). *Making sense of developmentally and culturally appropriate practice (DCAP) in early childhood education*. New York: Peter Lang.

indigenous – the first people of any country.

Indigenous – 'Indigenous' Australians, both Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islander

People; using an upper case “I” denotes Australian.

NAIDOC – National Aboriginal and [Torres Strait] Islander Day Observance Committee. NAIDOC Day is usually observed during the second week of July.

NAIDOC Week – The acronym NAIDOC has come to represent activities celebrated throughout Australia, usually in the second week of July.

Non-verbal – Focus area 3.5: Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement. For example, factors such as maintaining eye contact, and other paralinguistic features to show affirmation like nodding, smiling, showing appropriate facial expressions.

Professional experience – Any component of an accredited initial teacher education program that comprises workplace learning in a school or other education site relevant to the program. To contribute to meeting Program Standard 5.2 professional experience must include the minimum requirements outlined in the standard.

Torres Strait Islander person – A Torres Strait Islander person is someone of Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as being Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by a Torres Strait Islander community. A Torres Strait Islander person may or may not live on an Island in the Torres Strait, but has Torres Strait Islander heritage.