

# Applying for Proficient Teacher Accreditation Procedure

Information for K-12 teachers

May 2024

# Information for teachers

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NESA oversees the system of accreditation and recognition of teachers' professional capacity against the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers \(the Standards\)](#) which includes the requirements and processes for achieving Proficient Teacher. The functions of NESA do not extend to industrial matters concerning teachers, such as the salaries or employment conditions of teachers.

This document outlines the procedures for teachers to achieve Proficient Teacher accreditation. Each of the steps is further described in the supporting resources which are linked to throughout this document. These procedures should be read in conjunction with your employer's internal procedures.

## What is Proficient Teacher accreditation?

Teachers enter the profession provisionally or conditionally accredited and develop their teaching practice as they work towards achieving the mandatory accreditation level of Proficient Teacher.

Proficient Teacher accreditation is a school-based process that supports teachers to develop their practice aligned with [the Standards](#). It is a structured school-based process where teachers are supported by their colleagues, schools and the profession.

Provisionally and conditionally accredited teachers develop their practice throughout their daily work in a school by participating in a range of professional activities. Teachers engage in professional activities across the three domains of teaching: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement.

All teachers must meet the conditions of accreditation set out in [Section 1 of the NSW Teacher Accreditation Manual](#) (TA Manual) to become and remain accredited in NSW.

## How long does accreditation take?

You must achieve Proficient Teacher accreditation within a set timeframe. Your timeframe is based on your employment at the time you were initially accredited.

| Work type           | Provisionally accredited teachers | Conditionally accredited teachers |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Full-time           | 3 years                           | 4 years                           |
| Casual or part-time | 5 years                           | 6 years                           |

As a guide, a minimum of 160 days of teaching should give a provisionally or conditionally accredited teacher adequate opportunity to meet the accreditation requirements.

# Overview of the Proficient Teacher accreditation process

## At a glance



## 1. Begin your application in eTAMS

### Complete the online orientation course

Read NESA's Welcome to Teacher Accreditation pack and complete NESA's mandatory online [Proficient Teacher Orientation Course](#).

We recommend that you complete the [Orientation Course](#) in the first three months of becoming provisionally or conditionally accredited, but you must complete it before you submit your Proficient Teacher application. (You can complete the Orientation Course as often as you need to.)

We also recommend you attend a [NESA workshop](#) on working towards Proficient Teacher accreditation.

### Talk with your principal

Discuss your readiness to begin your application for Proficient Teacher accreditation and the allocation of an Accreditation Supervisor with your principal. Your Accreditation Supervisor will support you through the process to achieve Proficient Teacher accreditation.

#### Casual teacher tips

Approach the principal at the school where you most often teach.

### Be allocated an Accreditation Supervisor

Confirm the school that has agreed to support you with your Proficient Teacher accreditation in your [NESA online account \(eTAMS\)](#). This is so you can have an Accreditation Supervisor allocated to you by your principal.

### Read the Standards

Read and understand [the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) at the Proficient Teacher career stage.

## 2. Develop your practice

### Engage in professional activities across the three domains of teaching

Develop your teaching practice through engaging in a range of professional activities across the three domains of teaching, including teaching experience, reflection and seeking guidance and feedback from colleagues.

### Collect documentary evidence of your practice

Collect documentary evidence of your teaching practice as outlined in the [Proficient Teacher Evidence Guide](#).

The documentary evidence should be produced over time as a natural outcome of teaching and not be created for the specific purpose of accreditation.

#### Tips for documentary evidence

Your documentary evidence does not need to demonstrate all 37 Standard Descriptors, but it must collectively address at least one Standard Descriptor from each of the seven Proficient Teacher Standards.

If you are teaching across multiple schools you can have your evidence authenticated by a Proficient Teacher in their NESAs online account (eTAMS).

Engage in ongoing discussions with your Accreditation Supervisor as you collect documentary evidence, engage in professional activities and reflect on your practice to:

### Select 5-8 items of evidence from your collection

Each item of documentary evidence must address 2–4 Standard Descriptors for submission in your NESAs online account (eTAMS).

### Annotate your 5-8 items of evidence

Write the [annotations](#) for the selected items of documentary evidence in your NESAs online account (eTAMS).

### Complete an observation of your practice

Organise an observation of your teaching practice with your Accreditation Supervisor. The [observation](#) needs to include the three phases of the observation: the planning, observing and reflecting. Where it is not possible for your Accreditation Supervisor to conduct the observation in-person you may arrange a virtual or recorded observation.

Upload your Accreditation Supervisor's [observation report](#) to your NESAs online account (eTAMS).

Act on any feedback from your Accreditation Supervisor.

## 3. Finalise your application

### Submit your application in eTAMS

When you and your Accreditation Supervisor agree that your application is ready, submit it in your NESAs online account (eTAMS).

In determining your readiness, the Accreditation Supervisor makes a holistic judgement that your practice aligns to all 37 Standard Descriptors at the Proficient Teacher level, based on:

- their observation and knowledge of your practice
- professional conversations with you throughout the accreditation period
- your representative selection of 5-8 items of annotated documentary evidence of practice demonstrating your practice at the level of the Proficient Teacher Standards.

### Accreditation Supervisor makes a declaration

Your Accreditation Supervisor will review your evidence in relation to the Standards and may send it back to you for revisions if needed.

When your Accreditation Supervisor makes a holistic judgement that your practice meets the Standards for Proficient Teacher, they will make a declaration to your principal within 28 days of the date you submitted your application, and you will be notified of this by email.

### Principal makes an accreditation recommendation to NESAs

Your principal will review your application and make a recommendation about your accreditation to NESAs within 28 days of the declaration.

You will get an email when the recommendation has been made.

## 4. NESAs makes the accreditation decision

### NESAs makes an accreditation decision

The final part of the process is the accreditation decision, which is made by NESAs within 28 days of the principal's recommendation. You will be notified of the accreditation decision by email.

### Your first maintenance of accreditation begins

If NESAs accredits you at Proficient Teacher, you will start your first [maintenance period](#) on the day the accreditation decision is made, and NESAs will issue you a certificate.

# **‘What if’ scenarios for teachers**

## **What if the school where I am employed cannot support me with an Accreditation Supervisor to work towards Proficient Teacher accreditation?**

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The school which supports you needs to know you and your practice, so you should approach a school where you work regularly. If they can't support you now, discuss a timeline that might be possible for future support.

### **Casual teacher tips**

If you are a casual teacher working in more than one school, if the school you approached is not able to support you, reach out to another school who you have established a relationship with to support you in your accreditation. A teaching block of 6-10 weeks may assist casual teachers to seek the support of a school.

## **What if my Accreditation Supervisor tells me there is an issue(s) with my practice aligned to the Proficient Teacher Standards?**

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Act on all feedback from your Accreditation Supervisor to address the issue(s).

If your Accreditation Supervisor thinks that the issue(s) may impact the accreditation recommendation from your principal, they will write to you advising of the issue(s). They will also notify your principal within 28 days of becoming aware of the issue(s).

Read the written notice from the Accreditation Supervisor and talk to them about the Standard Descriptor(s) you have not yet met, and how to further develop your practice to meet those Standard Descriptors.

## **What if my Accreditation Supervisor has made a declaration that my practice does not meet the Proficient Teacher Standards?**

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Your Accreditation Supervisor has to give reasons for this kind of declaration. You should read their evaluative comments in your NESAs online account (eTAMS).

Your principal will review your whole application, including the declaration, and can:

- ask you to make revisions to your application
- make a recommendation to accredit you
- make a recommendation to not accredit you, or
- say that they are unable to make a recommendation.

If the principal asks for revisions, discuss them with your Accreditation Supervisor. Review which Standard Descriptors you haven't met and what you need to do to fully demonstrate them. Reach an agreement with your Accreditation Supervisor when you are ready to resubmit.

## What if I move to another school before my principal has made a recommendation?

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Subject to your consent, your new principal can contact your previous principal to help inform their recommendation.

## What if my principal has told me they intend to recommend to not accredit me at Proficient Teacher?

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You and your employer will receive 28 days' written notice from your principal of their intention to recommend to not accredit you at Proficient Teacher and the reasons why. After reading the written notice from the principal you should respond to the reasons provided and any requests made.

If you respond to the written notice, your principal will consider your response before making a recommendation to NESA.

If you do not respond, your principal must make a recommendation to NESA within 28 days of the notice.

NESA will make a decision to accredit or not accredit you within 28 days of receiving the recommendation and will email you their decision.

## What if my principal is unable to make a recommendation on my Proficient Teacher application?

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In limited circumstances your principal will advise NESA that they are unable to make a recommendation about your accreditation. These circumstances include:

- you not having completed at least 160 days of teaching
- you not having worked long enough in the school for the principal to make a judgement about your practice and/or
- your principal has asked for information about your practice from your previous school (subject to your consent) but this hasn't helped them to make a judgement. If you do not give consent for your principal to contact your previous principal, your principal is likely to make a recommendation that they 'are unable to make a recommendation'.

If the principal is unable to make an accreditation recommendation, they will send you a written notice about this.

Your application will be reopened.

You should read the comments and discuss how you can address the reasons the principal has given for being unable to make a recommendation. If you can address the reasons and your principal agrees, you can resubmit.

Alternatively, you can approach another school or employer for support to finalise your accreditation at Proficient Teacher if you are still within your accreditation timeframe.

You are able to submit applications with a school that supports you until the end of your accreditation timeframe.

If you are close to, or have reached, the end of your maximum timeframe you may have grounds to apply to NESA for an extension.

You can [contact NESA](#) for further advice.

## What if NESA has made the decision to not accredit me at Proficient Teacher?

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### Before NESA makes the decision

If NESA considers making a decision that does not align with the recommendation by your principal, NESA will contact the principal and, if necessary, the teacher, to discuss the recommendation before making a decision.

### NESA notifies you of the decision

Read the written notice from NESA outlining the reasons why the decision was made.

If you are still within your accreditation timeframe, you will stay accredited at Provisional or Conditional level and can continue to teach until the end of the timeframe. Your Proficient Teacher application will be closed. You will need to start a new application and can resubmit at a later date as long as you are within your timeframe.

You can approach another school or employer for support with a new application if you are still within your accreditation timeframe.

You may have grounds to apply to NESA for an extension to your timeframe to achieve Proficient Teacher if you are running out of time. If you can't achieve Proficient Teacher accreditation by the end of your maximum timeframe your accreditation may be ceased.

You can apply to NESA for an [internal review](#) of a decision to not accredit you.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the internal review, you can apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) for a review of NESA's decision to not accredit you.

## Can my accreditation timeframe be extended?

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You can apply to NESA for an extension to your timeframe in certain circumstances.

In the final six months before your due date you can apply to NESA, providing evidence of the grounds for your extension request.

Grounds for an extension of a teacher's accreditation timeframe include:

- illness and misadventure
- carer responsibilities
- undertaking further study; or
- other applicable professional or individual circumstances.

## What if I am unable to achieve Proficient Teacher by the end of my timeframe?

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If you do not gain Proficient Teacher accreditation by the end of your maximum accreditation timeframe (or extended timeframe, if applicable) your accreditation will cease.

A teacher whose accreditation ceases is no longer accredited and is not eligible for employment as a teacher in any NSW school. They may apply for [re-accreditation after ceasing](#) to re-enter the teaching profession.



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# NSW Education Standards Authority

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