



TEACHER STANDARDS

The Independent Education Union of Australia believes that standards form quality benchmarks in relation to teaching and learning for registration authorities, universities, employers, the profession, students, parents, and the broader community.

The IEUA supports the development of a standards framework, the key purpose of which is to support improvements in the quality of teaching and hence improved student learning.

A national framework for teacher standards, as provided for in the MCEETYA National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching, can inform a teacher's career-long education and development. It also informs the shape and focus of teachers' professional learning on a nationally consistent basis by Higher Education Institutions, employing authorities and other organizations involved in the development and provision of teachers' professional development.

Professional standards, both entry level and advanced, should be the result of a collaborative exercise but in the main should be defined, developed and owned by practicing teachers.

It is the strong view of the IEUA that the articulation of standards should properly sit within the mandate of an appropriately teacher controlled and broadly representative body or bodies so that the agreed standards best serve the entire profession.

Teacher quality and effective teaching practice and the standards derived from them are influenced by context and setting. These include such elements as the available resources; relevant, ongoing and quality professional development; collaborative workplace structures which provide teachers with the time and space to talk with each other about their students and their work; proper induction and mentoring processes; effective leadership; and a supportive workplace culture.

The IEUA believes that industrial structures and processes also form part of a standards framework. For instance, where employers believe that teachers are not meeting teaching standards,

processes should be in place within agreements which set out the respective rights and obligations of the various parties. Moreover, industrial agreements provide the framework for the negotiation of salaries and conditions to recognise the work of teachers throughout stages of their career, including rewarding accomplished teachers and leaders. Such agreements form part of the standards framework for the profession.

The IEUA has long supported systems of registration to establish proper entry level standards into the teaching profession. These also give teachers a mechanism to participate in determining the essential knowledge and skills base of their profession through the accreditation of pre-service education courses and other standard setting measures.

In the public interest in general, and in the interests of students in particular, only qualified teachers should be able to be classroom practitioners. A system of teacher registration recognises that teaching is a profession, with unique knowledge, skills and aptitudes and has the capacity to affirm and enhance the status of the profession.

A comprehensive national framework of teacher registration, consistent with the MCEETYA National Framework, will ensure that standards of entry into the profession are established and protected. Given that there now exist Institutes/Colleges of teachers in most state/territory jurisdictions, there is an opportunity for cooperative work across States and systems, facilitated by AFTRAA (Australian Forum of Teacher Registration and Accreditation Authorities) on agreed focus areas to support the emergence of common nationwide frameworks. This is supported by the IEUA.

The IEUA is of the view that employers need to make a firm commitment to the ongoing professional development of staff to ensure that skill levels and professional practice are both maintained and enhanced.

The IEUA believes that the principles of professional collegiality and teacher

development should underpin the development and application of a standards framework.