



Regulatory decision

Socialising outside of a professional context

Under the Education and Training Reform Act (2006) (the Act), VIT must conduct a preliminary assessment of all notifications and complaints that it receives.

During the preliminary assessment, VIT may require further information from

- *the registered teacher who is the subject of the notification or complaint*
- *the person or body who made the notification or complaint, and/or*
- *any person who may have information relevant to the notification or complaint.*

During an investigation, VIT will gather information and documentation that may assist in determining

- *whether the conduct occurred*
- *the impact that the conduct had on children and others*
- *the risk that the person may pose to the safety and wellbeing of children*
- *whether the person is fit to teach*
- *whether the person is physically and mentally able to teach, or*
- *what the most reasonable and proportionate outcome may be to address the conduct.*

Under the Act, VIT has the power to impose any conditions, restrictions or limitations on a teacher's registration if it deems appropriate to do so. This can be done at any time, including when making a decision on an application for registration, or while the teacher is already registered with VIT.



Scenario

The VIT received a complaint regarding the alleged conduct of Teacher A.

It was alleged that while working at a high school, Teacher A had socialised with learners after their graduation ceremony at a local bar and consumed alcohol in their company.

The following year, a learner in the school who had friends in the grade above disclosed the information to another teacher in the school. The learner claimed their friends, and former school students "went out for drinks with Teacher A after graduation".

The teacher immediately raised the issue with their principal who then reported the matter to VIT.

Immediate action

After the complaint was flagged, the principal set an urgent meeting with Teacher A. Teacher A apologised for the conduct and provided their resignation on the spot.

The VIT conducted a preliminary assessment before deciding to investigate the matter further.

The decision

The investigation found that at the learner's invitation, Teacher A had attended the bar following the graduation ceremony and consumed alcohol. Teacher A also purchased a drink for a learner and exchanged phone numbers with the group.

During the investigation period, and following Teacher A's resignation from the school, they accepted a new temporary teaching position in a different suburb. Teacher A also engaged a counsellor, completed courses on the Child Safe Standards and sought out information and training on the Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct and Ethics (the Code).

Teacher A shared that the day after attending the bar, they felt regret for their actions and declined further invitations from the learners to socialise. Following the week of the incident, Teacher A had not been in contact with any learners outside of school. They also disclosed the matter to their new principal during the recruitment process and had been transparent in their dealings following the report.

The outcome

The VIT placed conditions on Teacher A's registration.

Teacher A was directed to complete a professional learning program approved by VIT which addressed specific principles of the Code.

By annual registration the following year, Teacher A had completed the professional learning requirements stipulated by VIT, sought further additional learning and provided a reflective statement.

Reflection

This case study reflects that as a registered teacher, Teacher A has a responsibility to always be in a professional relationship with their learners, whether in an education setting or not.

It also shows how VIT applies its regulatory approach, particularly in relation to the below principles of the [Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct](#)

- Principle 1.4 – Teachers maintain objectivity in their relationships with learners
- Principle 1.5 – Teachers are always in a professional relationship with their learners, whether at the education setting where they teach or not
- Principle 2.1 – The personal conduct of a teacher has an impact on the professional standard of that teacher and on the profession as a whole
- Principle 3.2 – Teachers are aware of, and comply with, the legal requirements that pertain to their profession.

Further information

View the Code of Conduct and further guidance material including case studies, videos, podcasts and professional learning opportunities at www.vit.vic.edu.au/maintain/conduct/codes.