

Submission To The Education Minister

From: Islamic Schools Association of Australia (Victoria Branch)

The Islamic Schools Association of Australia – Victoria Branch (ISAA) advocates and represents the interests and needs of Islamic schools in Victoria. Islamic schools are a significant sector in Victoria, with over 13 schools and 25 campuses, educating over 20,000 students from Early Learning through to Year 12.

ISAA is concerned in relation to matters relating to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), and is providing this submission to the Victorian Minister of Education as part of the meeting of ISAA with the Minister being held on 20 June 2024.

TEACHER SHORTAGES

We note that we are in the midst of a severe teacher shortage, with governments agreeing to work together to make it easy people to come into the teaching profession, and for overseas teachers to gain registration in Australia. As you will be aware, on 15 December 2022, Education Ministers agreed on a National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (Action Plan) which sets out a clear pathway to addressing the national issue of teacher workforce shortages. The plan can be found at: <https://www.education.gov.au/national-teacher-workforce-action-plan>.

SUMMARY OF CONCERNS

The concerns are summarised as follows:

Approach towards Overseas Educators:

VIT is making it difficult for educators from reputable overseas jurisdictions (such as Singapore) obtain teacher registration in the state of Victoria. These educators are now having to gain registration through other states (which is being granted), and then apply under the Mutual Recognition provisions.

In particular, VIT is not accrediting qualifications of Primary Teachers from Singapore, as they do not do subjects like Health, PE, Art, Music etc as part of their Primary qualification. These are excellent educators with valuable experience.

Reluctance to Grant Permission to Teach (PTT), with grants being restricted to 0.6 FTE:

We are deeply concerned about the approach taken by VIT in granting Permission To Teach (PTT) to religious educators, language teachers and other teachers on a pathway to gaining admission their Initial Teacher Education qualification (ITE). We have found that initially PTT is being denied for a number of educators, and on the pleas of the school and applicant, it is being granted with a restricted time fraction of 0.6. These restrictions aimed at creating a 'work-study' balance and shorter registration times, are unjustifiably harsh and 'tone deaf' in the current context of teacher shortages and the high cost of living.

PTT Policy Review

It has come to our attention that Victoria is the only state or territory, aside from South Australia, with the stringent requirement of PTT status for religious educators. This requirement is further exacerbated by the obligation to enrol in an ITE for subsequent grants of PTT. This policy is creating is making it difficult to recruit and retain staff in religious and language, and is having a paradoxical effect as many

schools are changing their religious programs into watered down, instruction-based programs that do not require registered teachers for teaching.

A detailed letter was sent to the Minister of Education from ISAA in February 2024 (Attachment 2) noting these concerns.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE SO FAR

The following table summarises our efforts in relation to these concerns:

| Who | Description |
|--------------------|---|
| Individual schools | Conversing and liaising with VIT, including meetings with senior personnel including Ms Liz Aloni (Director) and an appeal to the CEO. |
| Individual Schools | Wrote to their respective State Members of Parliament requesting a meeting with the Victorian Education Minister. Letters were generally sent around the week commencing 20 May. |
| ISAA | Wrote to the Hon. Jason Clare (MP) on 16 April, requesting assistance on the points mentioned above (similar to the letter included in Attachment 2). |
| ISAA | Wrote to the Hon. Ben Carroll (MP) on 17 April, requesting assistance on the points mentioned above (letter included in Attachment 2). |
| ISAA | Meeting held on 27 May with Mr Dan Skehan (Senior Policy Advisor), as the representative for the Federal Education Minister, the Hon. Jason Clare MP. 7 schools were present at this meeting. |
| ISAA | Meeting held on 29 May with Ms Liz Aloni (Director of VIT), as the representative for the Victorian Education Minister, the Hon. Ben Carroll MP. 6 schools were present at this meeting. |
| Member Schools | A number of member Islamic schools met Meg Hansen and other Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) personnel to seek their assistance in advocating for the concerns mentioned above. |

LOOKING FOR PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

We recognise and appreciate the important role of VIT in regulating the teaching profession. We also note that VIT refers to schools as ‘co-regulators’, which is manifested through VIT relying on schools to assign Teacher Mentors to provisionally registered teachers, and approving evidence based education portfolios that allow teachers to achieve ‘proficient’ status. As a co-regulator with VIT, we seek authenticity and integrity of our contributions and suggestions (which have been provided to VIT) to address any concerns VIT may have in relation to overseas educators and staff on PTT. We are strongly of the view that the approach that VIT has taken on these matters, at times, has not adhered to procedural fairness, and that its decisions appear harsh and unreasonable.

IMPACT ON SCHOOLS

In Attachment 1 we present a few case studies to highlight the impact of the approach being taken by VIT on our schools. Please note that these are a subset of numerous such cases.

ISAA Submission To The Education Minister

Attachment 1: Case Studies

1. AL SIRAAT COLLEGE – RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR APPLYING FOR PTT RENEWAL

Person A is a religious educator at Al Siraat College, and has been employed by the College for the last 6 years. He has had PTT and has been teaching Arabic and Islamic Studies. Following an application to renew his PTT, his application was initially rejected on the basis that he had not taken progressed sufficiently in his studies towards achieving teacher registration. We explained that the person did have delays in progressing their qualifications as faced COVID disruptions, had started a family with 2 children born in quick succession and needed to support his wife who had been unwell.

We had several meetings with VIT over this case, including with the Assistant Manager in Registrations, the Manager of Teach Engagement and Registration and with a Director at VIT. In our phone conversations with VIT, we were told that “he chose to support that over his teaching”. VIT also questioned as to why he could not work 0.6, to which we replied: “he needs to eat, and feed his family”. We discussed this case with the Assistant Manager, Manager, Director and wrote an appeal to the CEO. In the end our appeal was rejected, with VIT informing us that we should be happy that he has even been given a PTT (as this is not normally given unless a person is near the end of their teacher qualification), and imposed a 0.6 FTE restriction.

We note that:

- We are in the middle of a dire teacher shortage.
- Reducing the time fraction of this educator creates significant complexities for the College across recruitment and timetabling. Put simply, we are taking away an established teacher that has already built a relationship with the students and is teaching them effectively all because VIT want to impose a ‘work study’ balance.
- The reality that he needs to work on a full-time basis to support their families, especially during this time of a higher cost of living. This means that we either need to find him additional employment in a non-teaching role at 0.4, or he will need to find another full time role to support his family.

We believe that the actions taken by VIT are unjustifiably harsh, discriminate against Islamic scholars on a pathway to registration (as they need additional time to do a pre-degree prior to being eligible to do a teaching qualification) and are ‘tone deaf’ in the current context of teacher shortages and a high cost of living.

2. AL SIRAAT COLLEGE – PRIMARY TEACHER FROM SINGAPORE APPLYING FOR REGISTRATION

Person B is a highly qualified, and recognised senior Primary Teacher from Singapore. The College worked through a recruitment process and sponsored her on a work visa, incurring significant expenses in the process. The College has recruited a significant number of teachers from overseas, including a number of Primary Teachers from Singapore. Given our understanding of VIT requirements from past applications, we generally sponsor teachers and incur relocation costs whilst the VIT application is in process. When she applied for her teacher registration, it was denied as VIT assessed that her degree “does not meet the standards of the Australian Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs”. This was a surprise, as we have had many teachers with similar qualifications have their teacher registration in the past. When this was discussed with the Assistant Manager in Registrations, we were told that “please let me know who they are, and we will review their status as well”. After a lot of negotiation and emails, VIT agreed to grant her PTT, and insisted on restricting the grant to a 0.6 FTE. We refused to accept this condition, and eventually a short grant of PTT was given for only 6 months, to this teacher time to enrol in a ITE program, and then provide this evidence to VIT for a further grant.

We had several further meetings with VIT over this case, including with Manager in Accreditations and a Director at VIT. In our phone conversations with VIT, we were told that VIT was reviewing its position

on such educators and agreed to grant registration pending 'further information'. We asked VIT: "What further information could you possibly need" given the amount of information already provided. After several weeks of following up with VIT, we did not receive any further feedback, until the teacher obtained registration in the State of Queensland, and then was granted registration in Victoria on the basis of Mutual Recognition.

During this application, both the College and applicant experienced significant delays, anxiety, and uncertainty in addition to the students missing out on having a quality educator in the classroom for a substantial period of time.

We believe that the actions taken by VIT shows that:

- They have a ridiculous policy in relation to accrediting overseas qualifications, especially given that once a person gains any form of teacher registration can teach any subject across any year level.
- Are unwilling to work with schools on a pragmatic and solution based approach.
- Have inconsistent processes, as they did not engage further once they agreed to grant registration pending 'further information'.
- Do not trust schools as co-regulators.

3. ILIM COLLEGE – PTT APPLICATIONS

I wanted to share my concerns regarding the inconsistent responses from VIT concerning PTT applications. As you know, VIT requires applicants to be enrolled in a teaching degree on a full-time basis and to provide evidence of enrolment and the completion of subjects.

Earlier this year, I submitted two applications: one applicant had already completed 7 subjects in her Master's of Teaching degree, while the other had not even started her degree. Surprisingly, VIT accepted the PTT application of the latter and rejected the former. This inconsistency is perplexing, as one would assume that the teacher who is already enrolled and has completed subjects would have a higher chance of approval.

This has created confusion at the College, and made us uncertain about future PTT applications. Consistent approaches from VIT would greatly simplify the process for us.

4. ILIM COLLEGE – PTT OF A RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR

Person C is a religious educator at Ilim College, and has been employed by the College for the last 3 years. He has had PTT and has been teaching Quran and Islamic Studies. Following an application to renew his PTT, his application, if approved, would be only 0.6FTE after 3 years of 1.0FTE. He has continued his ITE course and is due to complete this within 12 months. The length of process and uncertainty was very stressful for the teacher.

It took well over 6 weeks of exchanging calls and information to finally have the PTT approved. The approval took until the day his PTT was to expire and would require the College to stand him down. After a review the PTT was granted for 1.0 FTE

We note that given staff shortages, reducing the time fraction of this educator created significant complexities for the College. We had to stand down a teacher who was working effectively in the classroom and had already built a relationship with the students because of VIT's approach of wanting to impose a 'work study' balance when the person only had a relatively short amount of time left to complete their course.

5. AL-TAQWA COLLEGE – PTT FOR A RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR

Person A is a religious educator at Al Taqwa College, and has been employed by the College for a number of years. He had studied overseas in Germany and got his degree. His assignments were in

English. He finished off some of his studies in Australia. He has had PTT and has been teaching Arabic and Islamic Studies. He was to sit the IELTS test and was unsuccessful in one area by half a point. VIT did not renew his PTT.

Several phone calls to VIT took place to assist this teacher, and was refused, due to half a mark. The teacher sat the IELTS test several times and was off in one section by half a mark. This staff member who has been a valuable asset to the College has been unable to teach in a classroom even though he completed part of his studies in Australia and can communicate effectively in English.

As a school with about 2,000 students, and Arabic being an important part of our curriculum, we are struggling to find suitable teachers. We currently have a number of classes with no Arabic teachers. To keep this person on our employment, we have now given him an administrative role, whilst he could be in a classroom teaching Arabic.

We believe that the actions taken by VIT are harsh to not renew his PTT application although he has a teaching degree.

6. DARUL COLLEGE OF VICTORIA – PTT OF A RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR

Below is the basic description for one of our staff members who has been issued with PTT. The intricacies and challenges encountered by this single staff member and the school are applicable to all remaining staff who are currently on PTT with varying degrees, which is a challenge for us given the significant number of staff we have on PTT.

Person D is currently undertaking a course to complete their teaching degree. They are qualified to teach Islamic Studies with a Bachelors degree from overseas. The school has only been able to allocate a minimal number of Islamic Studies classes to this member due to the 0.6 time restriction. In an attempt to retain this member who was contemplating on pursuing another career altogether until they complete their teaching degree, the school was obligated to assign auxiliary tasks and duties to this employee. Such an arrangement has had a significant adverse impact on resource management, the ineffective allocation of staff to teaching roles and a negative impact on student learning by engaging less experienced people in the classroom due to the 0.6 time constraint.

This predicament is magnified when the school is compelled to apply similar measures and approaches with other staff members who have been issued with PTT.

7. MINARET COLLEGE – 7 EXPERIENCED PRIMARY TEACHERS FROM SINGAPORE

Below are 7 cases from Minaret College of experienced Primary qualified teachers from Singapore who have had their registration denied. Can you imagine the anxiety, uncertainty, frustration and impact on our Primary faculty of having to:

- Go through an expensive and detailed international recruitment process to employ these teachers, necessitated by our school growth and a lack of local applicants.
- Pay significant visa and relocation costs to sponsor and relocate these teachers and their families.
- Deal with newly recruited teachers coming into Australia with a positive outlook, who are now highly stressed, uncertain about their future and have lost confidence with a significant impact on their self-esteem.
- Deal with the anxieties of having to forgo a good applicant and face significant abortive costs relating to recruitment, visa processing and relocation.
- Having these teachers unable to teach whilst their PTT application is being processed.
- Dealing with significant timetabling and operational issues when PTT grants, when finally issued are given with a restricted FTE (generally 0.6).

- Apply to other states to get teacher registration (which is being granted), so that they can apply again in Victoria under mutual recognition.

Person E:

Qualifications: Doctor of Philosophy - University of Canterbury - NZ
 Bachelor of Science - Loughborough University-United Kingdom
 Diploma in Physical Education - National Institute of Education - Singapore
 Master of Physical Education - University of Otago - NZ

Teaching Experience:

Senior Tutor (fixed term) and Practicum Assessor in the College of Health and Human Development, University of Canterbury for undergraduate's programme in Sports Coaching , New Zealand-2015-2018
 Relief Teaching at Papanui High School(Y9-Y13) in Health/OE and PE, New Zealand – 2017-2019
 Head of Department PE & CCA – Jurongville Secondary School, Singapore. 2019- 2023
 Part-Time Lecturer for Masters of PE, Singapore- 2020 (4 months)
 Assisted school's HOD in Curriculum Planning for PE Syllabus in school. Taught Physical Education, Singapore 2012 (6 months)
 HOD PE/CCA – Chua Chu Kang Primary School, Singapore.-2007-2010
 Subject Head of PE/CCA – St. Anthony's Primary School, Singapore.2005-2007
 PE & Lower Science - Yusof Ishak Secondary School, Singapore-2001-2004
 PE & English – Greenridge Primary School, Singapore-1997-1999
Total Years of Experience – 19 years and 9 months

VIT outcome:

Provisional declined. Permission to teach registration granted (FTE 0.6) until end of 2024. Shah must be enrolled in a teaching post graduate degree and must complete at least 2 units to be granted a PTT renewal. Please see below email from VIT declining the provisional registration.

VIT gave the following response, mentioning that the teacher did not have experience in generalist Primary subjects:

Specifically, in Victoria, further to the above criteria, to meet the requirements as a:

- primary teacher, you are required to have at least one year of full time study that includes subjects in each of the learning areas of the primary curriculum including:
 - English,
 - mathematics,
 - sciences,
 - humanities and social sciences,
 - the arts,
 - languages,
 - health and physical education, and
 - information and communication technology, and design technology.

The teacher has now applied for teacher registration in Queensland and been given registration by them.

Person F:

Qualifications

Bachelor of Science - Singapore University of Social Sciences
 Postgraduate Diploma in Education (specialising in Primary PE) - National Institute of Education - Singapore
 Diploma in IT- Temasek Polytechnic – Singapore

Teaching Experience: Physical Education & Mathematics Educator Yumin Primary School, Singapore 2018 – 2023

Total Years of Experience – 5 Years

VIT outcome:

VIT Provisional registration declined.

Reason “In order to be deemed an eligible Primary-focused initial teacher education program, the course must address all primary key learning areas. However, your diploma only covers physical education and mathematics, and therefore does not address the remaining key learning areas, and cannot be considered a primary initial teacher education program”.

Permission To Teach Registration granted (FTE 0.8) until end of 2024. Must be enrolled in a teaching post graduate degree and must complete at least 2 units to be granted a PTT renewal. Please see below email from VIT declining the provisional registration.

Thank you for your email.

I can see that you have previously submitted and had an application that was closed, and [REDACTED] provided you with the following information as to why your qualifications were deemed ineligible.

In order to be deemed an eligible Primary-focused initial teacher education program, the course must address all primary key learning areas. However, your diploma only covers physical education and mathematics, and therefore does not address the remaining key learning areas, and cannot be considered a primary initial teacher education program.

Can I just confirm what further documentation you were wanting to upload which would change the outcome of our assessment of your qualifications?

I do not mean to sound blunt or rude in any way, I just want to make sure you are not spending the money to have us assess the same qualifications again to only have the same response given.

I hope this makes sense, if you need any further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Kind regards,

Person G:

Qualifications:

Bachelor of Arts - National University of Singapore

Postgraduate Diploma in Education (specialising in Primary - NIE)

Teaching Experience:

Maths/English/Science Primary Teacher Jurong Town Primary School, Singapore 1994 (Mar) -2001

Officer Civics & Moral Education (Pri/HQ) Curriculum Planning Development Dept (MOE), Singapore 2001-2005

Subject Head of NE/SS/HE Boon Lay Garden Primary School, Singapore 2006-2009

Curriculum Planning Officer - Character & Citizenship Education Student Development Curriculum Division, Singapore 2010-2014

Maths/English Primary Teacher West Grove Primary School, Singapore 2015 (6 months)

Maths/English Primary Teacher Yuhua Primary School, Singapore 2017-2021 (April)

Maths Lower Secondary Teacher Assumption Pathway School, Singapore 2022-2023

ECE Relief Teacher Pre Staffing Solutions, New Zealand Sep 2016- May 2017

Total Years of Experience – 24 years and 7 months

VIT outcome:

VIT Provisional registration declined.

Reason: Diploma does not cover all primary key learning areas and cannot be considered a primary initial teacher education program.

Permission To Teach Registration granted (FTE 0.6) until end of 2024. Must be enrolled in a teaching post graduate degree and must complete at least 2 units to be granted a PTT renewal. Please see below email from VIT declining the provisional registration.

Thank you for your email and the documents. Based on the information provided with your application, you do not currently meet the criteria for provisional teacher registration in Victoria.

The Institute's minimum qualification requirement for provisional registration is four years of approved Post-Year 12 study, including at least one year of pre-service teacher education incorporating primary or secondary methods of teaching together with at least 45 days of supervised practice teaching undertaken in primary or secondary school settings.

Specifically, in Victoria, further to the above criteria, to meet the requirements as a:

- secondary teacher, you are required to have at least a major study sequence (equivalent to $\frac{3}{4}$ year of study across at least 3 years of study) in one teaching area and preferably a second teaching area comprising of at least a minor sequence of study (equivalent to $\frac{1}{2}$ a year of study across at least two years of study)
- primary teacher, you are required to have at least one year of full time study that includes subjects in each of the learning areas of the primary curriculum including:
 - English,
 - mathematics,
 - sciences,
 - humanities and social sciences,
 - the arts,
 - languages,
 - health and physical education, and
 - information and communication technology, and design technology.

The result of a thorough assessment of your qualifications reveals that you have not completed the required method studies for either a primary or a secondary teaching program.

Please note that some primary teachers also prepare as a specialist teacher during their initial primary teacher education program e.g. special education.

In order to meet the criteria you will need to complete the following:

- an approved initial primary and/or secondary teaching qualification of at least one year's duration, inclusive of teaching methods and 45 days supervised practice teaching undertaken in a primary or secondary school setting.

Thank you for your email. After careful consideration with my manager we have decided that despite the provided additional documentation you still are not eligible for teacher registration in Victoria. In order to be eligible for teacher registration the Initial Teacher Education study needs to address Key Learning Areas (KLAs) specified in my previous email. Although your Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Specialisation in Teaching at Primary School Level) addresses a few, there is still a significant amount of core subjects that are not addressed such as Science, Health, Physical Education, Humanities, and Arts.

The workshops you have attended and completed are not able to substitute these core subjects which are part of the Australian primary curriculum, especially as the majority do not relate to any of the missing KLAs.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us via email or phone 1300 888 067.

Please note: *You cannot undertake the duties of a teacher, even under supervision, until your pending application is assessed and approved for registration. It is an offence to undertake the duties of a teacher in a Victorian school without holding appropriate registration.*

With kind regards,

Person H:

Qualifications:

Bachelor of Engineering - National University of Singapore

Postgraduate Diploma in Education (specialising in Primary) - National Institute of Education - Singapore

Masters of Disability and Inclusion Studies - University of Waikato, New Zealand

Teaching Experience:

English/Mathematics/Science Teacher Northland Primary School, Singapore May 1999 – Dec 2001

Year Head Northland Primary School, Singapore 2002-2006

Level Head (Mathematics) Teck Whye Primary School, Singapore 2007

Head of Department (Mathematics) Teck Whye Primary School, Singapore 2008-2009

Mathematics Teacher Assumption Pathway School, Singapore 2010-2012

Head of Department (Mathematics) Assumption Pathway School, Singapore 2012-2015

Head of Department (Mathematics) Fuhua Primary School, Singapore 2017-2020

Mathematics Teacher Fuhua Primary School, Singapore 2020-2023

Total Years of Experience – 14 years and 7 months

VIT outcome:

VIT Provisional registration declined.

Reason: Diploma does not cover all primary key learning areas and cannot be considered a primary initial teacher education program.

Thank you for your recent application for provisional registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).
Based on the information provided with your application, you do not currently meet the criteria for provisional teacher registration in Victoria.

The Institute's minimum qualification requirement for provisional registration is four years of approved Post-Year 12 study, including at least one year of pre-service teacher education **incorporating primary or secondary methods of teaching** together with at least 45 days of supervised practice teaching undertaken in primary or secondary school settings.

Specifically, in Victoria, further to the above criteria, to meet the requirements as a primary teacher, you are required to have at least one year of full time study that includes subjects in each of the learning areas of the primary curriculum including:

- English,
- mathematics,
- sciences,
- humanities and social sciences,
- the arts,
- languages,
- health and physical education, and
- information and communication technology, and design technology.

The result of a thorough assessment of your qualifications reveals that you have not completed the required method studies for either a primary or a secondary teaching program.
Please note that some primary teachers also prepare as a specialist teacher during their initial primary teacher education program e.g. special education.

In order to meet the criteria you will need to complete the following:

- an approved initial primary and/or secondary teaching qualification of at least one year's duration, inclusive of teaching methods and 45 days supervised practice teaching undertaken in a primary or secondary school setting.

A list of approved initial teacher education programs, including programs offered by Victorian higher education institutions can be found at: <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/initial-teacher-education/accredited-programs->

Person I:

Qualifications:

Bachelor of Arts - Singapore University of Social Sciences

Diploma in Education - Teaching at Primary Level - National Institute of Education - Singapore

Teaching Experience:

Primary Teacher Stamford Primary School, Singapore 2010-2022

Primary Teacher Fern Green Primary School, Singapore 2022-2023

Total Years of Experience – 13 Years

VIT outcome:

VIT Provisional registration declined.

Reason: Diploma does not cover all primary key learning areas and cannot be considered a primary initial teacher education program. Please see below email from VIT declining the provisional registration.

Thank you for your recent application for provisional registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).
Based on the information provided with your application, you do not currently meet the criteria for provisional teacher registration in Victoria.

The Institute's minimum qualification requirement for provisional registration is four years of approved Post-Year 12 study, including at least one year of pre-service teacher education **incorporating primary or secondary methods of teaching** together with at least 45 days of supervised practice teaching undertaken in primary or secondary school settings.

Specifically, in Victoria, further to the above criteria, to meet the requirements as a primary teacher, you are required to have at least one year of full time study that includes subjects in each of the learning areas of the primary curriculum including:

- English,
- mathematics,
- sciences,
- humanities and social sciences,
- the arts,
- languages,
- health and physical education, and
- information and communication technology, and design technology.

The result of a thorough assessment of your qualifications reveals that you have not completed the required method studies for either a primary or a secondary teaching program.
Please note that some primary teachers also prepare as a specialist teacher during their initial primary teacher education program e.g. special education.

In order to meet the criteria you will need to complete the following:

- an approved initial primary and/or secondary teaching qualification of at least one year's duration, inclusive of teaching methods and 45 days supervised practice teaching undertaken in a primary or secondary school setting.

Permission To Teach Registration granted (FTE 0.6) until end of 2024. Must be enrolled in a teaching post graduate degree and must complete at least 2 units to be granted a PTT renewal. Please see emails below from VIT.

I hope this email finds you well.

During my assessment of [REDACTED] application we noticed that she has not enrolled into an ITE degree yet. Therefore, we already want to inform you that if [REDACTED] is granted a PTT registration it will be for a maximum of 0,6 fte. This condition will create a more balanced situation between work and study.

You may not be eligible for a further grant of PTT if you do not make sufficient progression in your ITE qualification during this grant. Please note that generally, VIT considers progression as completing at least 0.5 [equivalent full-time student load](#) (EFTSL) per semester of the ITE program for the duration of the PTT grant. For more information about PTT, progression and what support PTT holders can expect from their school, please read this [fact sheet](#).

Kind regards

This is to inform you that after reviewing this application, decision maker has advised to shorten the duration of this grant to 6 months till 03/12/2024 at this pointing of time. It is just to ensure that applicant is enrolled into an ITE degree within these 6 months.

Please confirm by replying to this email if you want to proceed with this grant, considering it will be granted for 6 months only at this pointing of time.

Kind Regards

Person J:

Qualifications:

Bachelor of English - Singapore Institute of Management University

Diploma in Education - Teaching at Primary Level - National Institute of Education - Singapore

Teaching Experience:

English, Mathematics and Art Teacher Chua Chu Kang Primary School, Singapore 2019-2023

English Teacher Madrasah Irsyad Zuhri Al-Islamiah, Singapore 2016-2019

Primary Teacher, Learning Support Coordinator for Mathematics and Holistic Assessment (HA)

Coordinator South View Primary School, Singapore 2006-2016

Total Years of Experience – 17 Years

VIT outcome:

Reason: Diploma does not cover all primary key learning areas and cannot be considered a primary initial teacher education program. Please see email below from VIT declining registration.

Permission To Teach Registration applied, have not been granted yet.

Thank you for your emails.

I apologise for the error in my letter detailing the assessment, The letter should not have stated that the Key Learning Area (KLA) of Science was covered, it was accurate in stating that this KLA is not addressed.

There are several KLA required to be covered in a primary ITE for it to be accredited in Australia, these are: English; Mathematics; Sciences, Humanities and social sciences, the arts, languages, health and physical education, and information and communication technology, and design technology.

In making an assessment of whether we can deem a qualification comparable in content to an approved primary ITE we consider whether the qualification has addressed these. Certain KLA are given more weight than others (with literacy, mathematics, science, and humanities being indispensable). Your qualification appears to have addressed some of the required KLAs but not all of the required KLAs, with the major issue being the lack of science subject matter.

The qualification does meet the other requirements we look for, those being the duration of the qualification and that the qualification includes a minimum of 45 days supervised teaching practice.

Many thanks

Person K:

Qualifications:

Bachelor of Engineering - National University of Singapore

Postgraduate Diploma in Education (specialising in Primary) - National Technological University - Singapore

Teaching Experience:

Teacher Telok Kurau Primary School, Singapore 2023 – 2024

Teacher Eunus Primary School, Singapore 2020-2022

Teacher Kong Hwa School, Singapore 2018

Total Years of Experience – 4 Years

VIT outcome:

Reason: Diploma does not cover all primary key learning areas and cannot be considered a primary initial teacher education program. Please see email below from VIT declining registration.

Permission To Teach Registration applied, have not been granted yet.

Qualification requirements

To be registered to teach in a Victorian school setting, applicants are required to have completed an approved initial teacher education (ITE) program with four years of full time or equivalent higher education study, including an [approved initial primary and/or initial secondary teaching qualification](#) of at least one year's duration which contains a minimum of 45 days [supervised teaching practice](#). Primary teaching qualifications must include modules covering the key learning areas of science, literacy, mathematics, and humanities.

Assessment

The VIT has assessed your application and, based on the information supplied, has determined that it does not currently meet the requirements for registration in Victoria.

Your application does not meet the requirements for teacher registration for the following reason:

1. your qualifications have been assessed as not equivalent to an approved ITE program.

The VIT's assessment of the qualifications listed in your application, based on the documentation you have provided, is outlined below.

| Qualification title | Duration (Full Time Equivalent) | Assessment |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Postgraduate Diploma in Education | One year | <p>A one-year initial teacher training qualification inclusive of 10 weeks (50 days) of student teaching practice in a primary environment.</p> <p>Equivalent to an Australian graduate diploma.</p> <p>The qualification includes modules on key learning areas of mathematics and literacy but does not include modules on science or humanities.</p> <p>On the basis of absent key learning areas this qualification is assessed as not equivalent to an approved ITE.</p> |

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------|---|
| Bachelor of Engineering | Four years | Equivalent to an Australian Bachelor Degree |
|-------------------------|------------|---|

Next steps

Your current application for provisional teacher registration has been closed as it does not meet the requirements outlined above.

If you wish to apply for teacher registration with VIT in future, you will need to provide evidence of

1. An approved initial primary and/or initial secondary teaching qualification of at least one (1) year's duration which contains a minimum of 45 days supervised teaching practice (as per [VIT's qualification policy](#)).

These requirements are in line with the national approach to teacher registration, and are necessary to ensure teachers have the appropriate content knowledge to support Victorian school-aged learners. A list of approved ITE programs in Victoria can be found on [VIT's website](#). A full list of approved ITE programs in Australia can be found on the [Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership \(AITSL\) website](#). Any of the programs listed will be accepted for teacher registration in Victoria.

While undertaking the above, you may be eligible for a grant of [permission to teach](#) (PTT). You will need to apply directly to schools for a teaching position, and they must be able to demonstrate they were unable to recruit a registered teacher for the role.

If you are able to supply evidence which demonstrates that the above assessment is inaccurate within the next 14 days, please provide VIT with that documentation so that a further assessment can be undertaken.

I recognise that it is challenging to navigate a different education system with requirements that do not clearly align with those you have trained under and appreciate this is not the outcome you were seeking.

If you have any further queries or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Attachment 2 - Letter to Minister

From: [Fazeel Arain](#)
To: ben.carroll@parliament.vic.gov.au
Cc: [Bronwyn Halfpenny](#); lily.dambrosio@parliament.vic.gov.au; gdickinson@aja.vic.edu.au; zulfiqar@aliman.vic.edu.au; [Mohammed Taksim](#); [Mohammad Hallak](#); [Abdurrahman Gokler](#); [Aynur Simsirel](#)
Bcc: [Abdullah Khan \(abdullah@aic.wa.edu.au\)](mailto:Abdullah.Khan@aic.wa.edu.au)
Subject: Letter to the Minister of Education Hon Ben Carroll MP - Re VIT
Date: Wednesday, 17 April 2024 10:20:00 AM
Attachments: [ISAA Letter to VIT.pdf](#)
Importance: High

Dear Hon Ben Carroll MP,

RE: Request for Urgent Meeting Relating to Teacher Registration Concerns With The Victorian Institute of Teaching

I'm writing to you as the Victorian Chapter President for the Islamic Schools Association of Australia (ISAA) and the Principal of Al Siraat College. I'm writing to request an urgent meeting with you to discuss several pressing matters concerning the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). These matters are of significant importance to Islamic Schools across Victoria and warrant immediate attention and resolution. A number of Islamic school principals wish to meet to discuss these matters (copied into this email).

Approach towards Overseas Educators:

We have previously communicated with VIT regarding their approach towards Singaporean educators, as outlined in the attached letters dated February (attached), with a follow-up in March. We seek clarification and resolution on the issues raised, as it pertains to fairness and equity in the treatment of our highly trained accredited educators from Singapore. We note that we are in the midst of a severe teacher shortage, with governments agreeing to work together to make it easy for overseas teachers to gain registration in Australia. As you will be aware, on 15 December 2022, Education Ministers agreed on a National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (Action Plan) which sets out a clear pathway to addressing the national issue of teacher workforce shortages. We believe that the current approach being taken by VIT is creating unreasonable obstacles for the registration of overseas teachers. The plan can be found at: <https://www.education.gov.au/national-teacher-workforce-action-plan>.

Granting Permission To Teach (PTT) to Religious Educators:

We are deeply concerned about the approach taken by VIT in granting Permission To Teach (PTT) to religious educators and other teachers on a pathway to gaining admission into an Initial Teacher Education qualification (ITE). The restrictions imposed, such as dictating full-time equivalent (FTE) hours to creating a 'work-study' balance and shorter registration times, appear unduly harsh and potentially beyond the scope of VIT's authority. We urge for a review of these policies to ensure fairness and transparency in the application process.

PTT Policy Disparity:

It has come to our attention that Victoria is the only state or territory, aside from South Australia, with the stringent requirement of PTT status for religious educators. This requirement is further exacerbated by the obligation to enrol in an ITE for subsequent grants of PTT. We believe this policy disparity warrants examination and reconsideration in alignment with national standards and practices.

Given the urgency and gravity of these matters, we kindly request an expedited meeting to discuss potential solutions and avenues for collaboration. Your attention to these concerns is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to the opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue with you and your team.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Please let me know when a suitable time for the meeting would be, either virtually or in person.

I look forward to hearing from you.

--

Regards,

Fazeel Arain | Principal

p. 03 9407 7000 | m. 0431 031 330 | w. alsiraat.vic.edu.au

Al Siraat College | A Learning Community

45 Harvest Home Rd | Epping VIC 3076

23 February 2024

Mr Damien Cricchiola
Acting Chief Executive Officer
(By email: ceo@vit.vic.edu.au)

Re: VIT requisites for Provisional Teaching registration for Singaporean Teachers

The Islamic Schools Association of Australia (ISAA) represents over 70 schools nationally.

Some of our member schools in Victoria have been recruiting teachers from Singapore – one of the most highly accredited teaching pools. These teachers are highly trained, with many years of practical classroom experience teaching in the world's top education system. Singapore consistently sets the global benchmark especially in Mathematics and Science, and its pedagogical practices being set as the global gold standard.

The Singapore pedagogical framework captures fundamental teaching processes and teaching areas that can be applied to all subjects and all levels, with the individual student's needs at the core. Primary and secondary school teachers in Singapore must acquire certification from the Singapore National Institute of Education (NIE), which provides many tracks and includes practicum as part of their course requirements.

The Islamic schools we represent have carefully assessed the skills of these teachers, making multiple trips to meet with candidates face-to-face. They have invested heavily in hiring and relocating successful applicants at the school's own expense. These teachers have been granted visas to work in Victorian schools, have relocated themselves and their families only to be denied registration to teach in Victoria. Applicants typically have around 10-20 years' experience and so the premium paid for experienced staff will increase operating expenses for years to come. While schools did not create this issue of teacher shortage, we are certainly bearing the brunt of its impacts and are thinking innovatively to minimise the impact on student learning. Some of the current VIT practices are working against the situation on the ground.

We note that some of the newly recruited teachers have been denied provisional registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). We understand that upon assessment of their academic transcripts for primary school teachers, it is found these teachers have not been trained to teach all subjects in Primary School, which includes an incongruent array of subjects from social sciences to physical education and art.

However, in NIE, some teachers are trained on specialised tracks, allowing them to delve deeper into, and apply the pedagogical practices with greater mastery.

Many of the member schools that have recruited these experienced teachers do not require these teachers to teach all the subjects that VIT assesses them for the schools run time tables and require specialist teachers that the Singaporean teachers have skills, experience and are qualified to teach.

To reject some teachers with decades worth of experience in one of the most recognised global educational system, seems shortsighted, inconsistent and not serving the needs of children in schools especially if for the fact that the scope of training is exactly identical to Australia's. We also believe that is against the intent of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan which was developed following a meeting of Education Ministers in 2022 (<https://www.education.gov.au/teaching-and-school-leadership/resources/national-teacher-workforce-action-plan-publication>). The Plan mentions that "States and territories will also work with relevant regulators to streamline overseas skills recognition" under Priority Area 1 (Improving Teacher Supply – sub-point 4 as noted on page 10).

We urgently require support from VIT to overcome this final hurdle. We firmly believe we have a unique opportunity to not only minimise the impact of the teacher shortage on students, but during this time we can close the gaps in their learning created during the pandemic.

We are requesting an urgent meeting with yourself, or an appropriate delegate, to understand VIT's criteria and discuss some possible measures that can be taken in the immediate future to alleviate the current strain on schools and the negative impact on our students' education.

The contact person to coordinate the meeting is Mr. Fazeel Arain, Principal at Al Siraat College.

Sincerely,



Abdullah Khan OAM
President-ISAA