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Welcome to Professional Practice
The official newsletter of the Victorian Institute of Teaching

NEWSLETTER - December 2013

NEED FURTHER INFORMATION?

If you have any questions regarding your registration please contact us:
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REGISTRATION UPDATE

More than 100,000 teachers completed their online registration tasks recently using their MyVIT account, and we'd like to thank those teachers for their prompt and thorough response. As 2013 draws to a close, here are some registration matters that some teachers will need to consider for the new year, and links to where you can find more information.

FULLY REGISTERED TEACHERS

DO YOU HAVE YOUR REGISTRATION SORTED FOR NEXT YEAR?

The vast majority of teachers have completed their registration tasks and have received or are awaiting receipt of their registration card.

However, if you are still to complete your payment, renewal of registration and/or updating your criminal record check, you need to attend to this urgently. NB this includes posting the required documents for your criminal record check to the Institute. You should have received a letter explaining that 31 December 2013 is the cut-off date, after which teachers who have not completed their tasks will become unregistered.

REMEMBER TO KEEP RECORDS OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Whether you are renewing your registration in 2014, or later, you may need to provide evidence that you have met your professional development requirements – so you should be keeping records as you go. More information [here](#).

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TEACHER MENTORS

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE NEW PROCESS FOR PROVISIONALLY REGISTERED TEACHERS MOVING TO FULL REGISTRATION?

There will be mentor training sessions in 2014 where you can find out about how to use the new process.

More information can be found [here](#).

CASUAL RELIEF TEACHERS

APPLYING FOR FULL REGISTRATION IN 2014?

Keep an eye on [the Institute website](#) in 2014 for information which will help you with this process.

You can find information about support for casual relief teachers [here](#).

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PRT AND MENTOR TRAINING SESSIONS

You will be receiving a circular from the Institute in the coming weeks providing dates of our training sessions for provisionally registered teachers and mentors coming up in 2014.

The new process of applying for full registration now applies to all teachers. The 2014 training sessions will provide valuable information on the new process.

More information can be found [here](#).

PROVISIONALLY REGISTERED TEACHERS

WHAT STAGE ARE YOU AT IN YOUR MOVE TO FULL REGISTRATION?

Remember that you have two years from the date of your initial registration to complete the move to full registration.

More information can be found [here](#).

The application process is now completed online in your [MyVIT account](#).

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SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE CODE OF CONDUCT

“There is no doubt that we are living in a technologically-driven society. A culture of technology has evolved and our students deserve to be a part of that culture in a connected classroom.”

(US school principal and author Rob Furman, [Huffington Post](#) November 2013)

While some may not share Furman's views about what exactly should constitute a 'connected' classroom, it's clear that technology is playing an increasing role. Technology can enhance the learning of students – not only by engaging them more actively, but also by teaching them digital citizenship – how to build safe spaces and communities, and understand how to manage personal information. A formal hearing discussed in last September's issue of [Professional Practice](#) was an example of a teacher not applying the same rules of digital citizenship to their own situation.

The vast majority of teachers understand the responsibilities and boundaries that are inherent in the role. But the increasing presence of technology-based media has brought challenges to maintaining professionalism and setting boundaries relating to students.



[The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct](#) states that teachers “... exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students” and that “A professional relationship will be violated if a teacher... holds conversations of a personal nature or has contact with a student via written or electronic means including email, letters, telephone, text messages or chat lines, without a valid context.”

Clearly the example from the September issue was an extreme case, and not an argument against the use of social media per se. In that case, social media was merely the medium for inappropriate behaviour. But even for a teacher with a full grasp

of their professional responsibilities, social media is a powerful tool, and its reach can be very hard to control. Consider the potential dangers posed by these hypothetical situations:

- A teacher is 'friended' by someone they mistakenly regard as an acquaintance, but is in fact a student or students using an alias. The teacher divulges personal information, such as comments about other staff members.



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- A teacher accepts an invitation to a Facebook group. Other members of the group express views or post images which, by association, compromise the teacher's professional reputation.
- A teacher 'friends' a student not in their class. They are, however, aware that the student has family welfare issues. Rather than referring the matter to a welfare contact person within the school, they are tempted to give advice despite lacking the appropriate training.
- A teacher posts an article on their Facebook site. A student comments on it. Another Facebook friend then messages the student directly and engages them in inappropriate contact.
- A teacher 'friends' a parent from their school and discusses personal information about other staff or students.
- A teacher's social media presence is unrestricted, and they are unaware they can be searched via Google. Their personal space is found by a student who then initiates inappropriate contact.
- A teacher is 'tagged' in a photograph on another person's Facebook page. The photo is widely accessed and could bring their reputation into disrepute.

Considering the above, social media may seem all too difficult to contemplate. Where to start? It's very likely that your school has a policy on social media use. Independent Schools Victoria provides a document titled: [Guidelines and Checklist for Acceptable Use Policies and Agreements](#), designed to assist schools in forming their own policy about the use of technology. For individual employees, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's [Using Social Media: Guide for DEECD Employees](#) is a useful resource. As a general rule, there are a number of safeguards you can apply:

- Don't combine your personal online space with your professional online space.
- If you wish to use social media for professional purposes, talk to the relevant staff member at your school. Consult school and/or employer policy, and obtain the necessary permission.
- Always obtain consent prior to uploading any information relating to students.
- Use privacy settings and make yourself aware of terms and conditions. Remember these rules change on a constant basis.
- Consider any content you upload relating to yourself – even in a personal space – and how it reflects on your professional reputation and your standing in the community.
- Think carefully before you choose to view content that has been forwarded to you via social media.

There are ways that you can utilise social media to enhance the learning experience. [Here](#) is a useful resource for tips on setting up a group on Facebook and [here](#) is information for how you can use Twitter.

And there are a lot of options out there.

[Edmodo](#) is a platform with the same look as Facebook, encouraging students to interact about their classwork through a more exciting and familiar format.

[Ning](#) is a social media site you can design to suit you and your class.

[Yammer](#) is a microblog for professionals (with restricted length messages, like Twitter) where you can connect with your

colleagues and share notes.



Social media is not necessarily a 'no-go zone' for teachers. If we do agree with Rob Furman that teachers have an obligation to incorporate technology in the learning environment, social media certainly provides some interesting options. But it's worth remembering that care is needed - if the medium is the message, the message must always be professional.

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A NATIONALLY CONSISTENT APPROACH TO ACCREDITATION

National consistency has been a key element of recent educational reform. Along with the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and a nationally consistent approach to teacher registration, a national approach to accreditation of initial teacher education programs has also been developed.

WHAT IS ACCREDITATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Accreditation is the process of assessing, reviewing and approving initial teacher education programs. This process is undertaken by panels which include teachers and principals, using their experience to help shape the way we prepare tomorrow's teachers. The purpose of accreditation is to improve teacher quality through continuous improvement of initial teacher education, and to ensure that education providers are accountable for their delivery of quality programs.

[The Australian Accreditation Standards and Procedures](#), launched in April 2011, were developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and agreed to by all Commonwealth, state and territory ministers. There are three integrated elements in the national approach to accreditation:

- Graduate Teacher Standards, which define what graduate teachers should know and be able to do.

- Program Standards, which draw on the Graduate Teacher Standards and set out what we expect of initial teacher education programs.
- An agreed national process for accreditation, including the establishment and composition of accreditation panels, which ensures that the above standards are applied to the review and assessment of initial teacher education programs.

The Victorian Institute of Teaching has been accrediting initial teacher education programs since its inception, and the national approach to accreditation builds on the processes developed by the Institute. Program accreditation will continue to be undertaken by the state and territory teacher regulatory authorities. However they will now do this using a common set of graduate teacher standards, program standards and the agreed national accreditation process.

CURRENT INITIATIVES IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

Initial teacher education remains high on the national education agenda. AITSL has been working with the Australian regulatory authorities (Including the Victorian Institute of Teaching) and the Australian Council of Deans of Education to focus on three new Commonwealth policy initiatives in initial teacher education:

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DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL SELECTION GUIDELINES FOR ADMISSION INTO INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

In addition to academic achievement, the guidelines will seek to recognise the personal qualities needed for teaching, such as communication, emotional and interpersonal skills.

DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL APPROACH TO PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

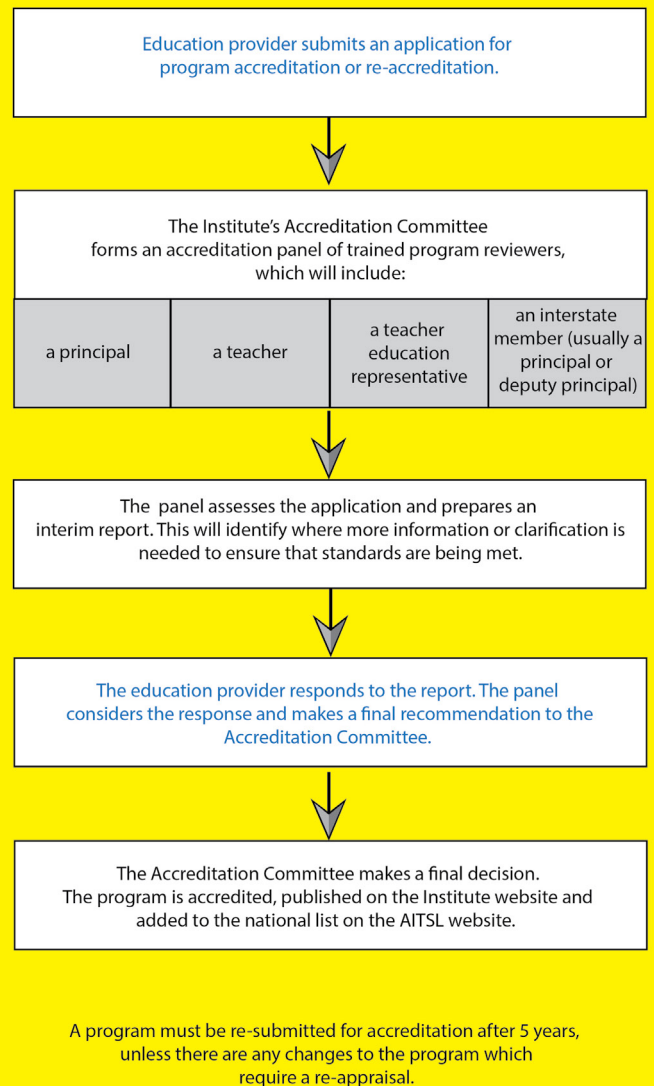
This is designed to ensure that pre-service teachers obtain quality placements with suitably trained and experienced supervising teachers and are assessed according to a national framework using the national graduate standards.

DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY ASSESSMENT FOR INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

To ensure that all new teachers have the reading, writing and maths skills they need to be effective teachers and positive role models, an online test is being developed that all initial teacher education students will need to pass before graduating.

This national focus on initial teacher education has been reflected at state level with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's [From New Directions to Action](#) paper, published in October this year. It sets out a range of priorities including the need to attract stronger candidates into teaching and improve their preparation. Some of the proposed actions include pursuing ways to attract high achievers into teaching and ensuring teacher education programs are responsive to feedback from principals and teachers.

How the Victorian Institute of Teaching accredits initial teacher education programs



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CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

Registered teachers across Victoria are involved in a broad range of projects and practices that build knowledge and strengthen the practice of the teaching profession.

Every year awards and scholarships are granted to teachers and principals whose professional work has been recognised by their peers and who have been nominated for an award.

On behalf of all registered teachers, the Institute congratulates the following teachers who in the past term have received the following awards and scholarships:

AUSTRALIAN TRAINING AWARDS 2013

These [national awards](#) recognise innovation and excellence in the training sector.

VET Teacher of the Year Finalist: Robyn York

Leadership in VET Quality Finalist: Kate Dempsey

2013 WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY AWARDS

These [national awards](#) recognise innovative and outstanding environmental programs and initiatives from across Australia.

Environmental School Award

Winner: Bentleigh West PS

Biodiversity Award

Finalist: Bentleigh West PS

NEITA 2013 ASG INSPIRATIONAL EDUCATOR AWARDS

These [national awards](#) promote public recognition of the teaching profession and specifically those teachers and leaders whose inspirational approach to education stimulates student learning.

Victorian State Winners: Robyn Brooks (Irymple South PS), Michael Juliff (St Peter's PS East Bentleigh), Grant Puglia (Gardenvale PS), Kylie Rackham (Emerald SC), Sean Stanek (Woodville PS), Karen Wade (Bentleigh SC)

State Finalists: Sanji Anil (Kingswood College); Mary-Anne Balmer (St John's Catholic PS Clifton Hill); David Barclay, Vicki Mackrell (Doncaster PS); Adrienne Baucke (Parkmore PS Katrina Bourke (St Peter's PS Sunshine); Sarah Brown (Milgate PS); Rochelle Cukier (Armada PS); Lynda Dawson (Williamstown HS); Daniel Egan (St Francis Xavier PS); Ernie Fleming (Bendigo South East College); Clea Forrest, Shaun Mohr, Roxanne Leed, Shane Bruty (St Columba's Catholic PS); Russell Fox (Croydon Community College); Danny Gesundheit (Kew HS); James Gow, Marg Batt, Glennis Kerr, Susan Kubiak (St Anthony's Catholic PS); Susan Harrison (St Peter and Paul's PS); James Hart (Beaconhills College); Kim Hawkes (St Joseph's PS Red

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Cliffs); Kaye Herd (Ivanhoe PS); Eva Hirt (Yarram SC); Shane Holloway (Croydon Hills PS); John Irving, Amara Jensen (Beaconhills College); Ruth Joseph (The MacRobertson GHS); Jill Langdon (Camberwell South PS); Marisa Lawlor (Preshil); Brendan Leersen (Echuca West PS); Emma-May Litchfield (Mount Saint Josephs GC); Nicole Lockhart (Pearcedale PS); Matthew McDonald, Annie McGuire (St Leonard's College); Erin Murphy (Fountain Gate PS); Janine Murray (Simpson PS); Amanda Nelson (Big Hill PS); Mark Nolan (Cranbourne Park PS); Jason O'Neill (Eaglehawk North PS); James Owen (Mont Albert PS); Anne Marie Palmer (St Andrew's PS Werribee); Sue Paulka (St Patrick's Parish PS Port Fairy); Natalie Pelly, Kim Manley (Specimen Hill PS); Kathryn Pollock (Killara PS); Gary Prasad (Fairhills HS); Nancy Putrino (Wheelers Hill SC); Jan Reilly (Our Lady of the Pines PS); Katie Riddington (Crusoe 7–10 SC); Carmel Russell (Damascus College); Norma Sell (Elliminyt PS); Corneila Sheeran (Olinda PS); Serrin Smyth (Caulfield GS); Gail Swain (Victory CC); Olivia Tucci (Northside CC); Ylenia Useli, Vicki De Leo (St Joseph the Worker PS); ; Jie Van Berkel (St Anne's PS Sale); David van Es (Bendigo SSC); Linda Varker (Upper Plenty PS); Aliko Watson-Jones (Kyneton SC); Nicholas Waxman (St Mary's PS Thornbury); Marie Yanni (Overport PS)

VICTORIAN TRAINING AWARDS 2013

These [awards](#) recognise the outstanding achievement and innovation in teachers and training providers. Finalists were published in the September issue of Professional Practice.

VET in Schools Excellence Award

Winner: Highlands LLEN VETiS Cluster

HUME CITY COUNCIL TEACHERS' SCHOLARSHIPS 2013

These [scholarships](#) recognise and reward inspiring teachers in Hume City.

Early Years Educator

Finalist: Amanda Walsh (Meadows PS Kindergarten)

Primary School Teacher

Finalists: Sheena Collins-Marks (Dallas Brooks Community PS), Jamile Hakim (Holy Child PS)

Winner: Mathew O'Hagan (Roxburgh Park PS)

Secondary School Teacher

Finalists: Anthony Zerafa, Melissa Bonaddio (Mt Ridley P–12)

Winner: Vanessa Young (Mt Ridley P–12)

Open category

Winner: Kevin Pope (Meadow Heights PS)

Graduate Teacher

Finalists: Kate Inturrisi (Roxburgh Rise PS), Mucever Hasan (Sunbury Downs College)

Winner: Joanna Mattox (Sunbury and Macedon Ranges SS)

Outstanding Team

Finalists: Early Years Team, Ilim College

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PREMIER'S SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS 2013

These [awards](#) recognise programs and practices that address and contribute to a more sustainable Victoria for current and future generations.

Education category

Winner: Bentleigh SC

Finalist: The Patch PS

2013 RESOURCESMART SCHOOLS AWARDS

These [awards](#) recognise and reward Victorian schools, students and teachers for their outstanding achievements in sustainability.

ResourceSmart School of the Year

Winner: Melbourne Girls' College

ResourceSmart Newcomer of the Year

Finalists: Newborough PS, Stella Maris PS

Winner: Wunghnu PS

ResourceSmart Biodiversity School of the Year

Finalists: East Bentleigh PS, Port Fairy Consolidated, St Joseph's Catholic PS Crib Point, Aitken College, Portland SC

Winners: Bentleigh West PS, Melbourne Girls' College

ResourceSmart Community Leadership School of the Year

Finalists: Armadale PS, Bentleigh West PS, Ashwood School, , Western Port SC

Winners: St Macartan's PS, Melbourne Girls' College

ResourceSmart Energy School of the Year

Finalists: Epping Views PS, Manchester PS, McClelland College, Ruyton GS

Winners: Laurimar PS, Melbourne Girls' College

ResourceSmart Waste School of the Year

Finalists: St Louis de Montfort's PS, Werribee PS, McClelland College, Portland SC

Winners: Epping Views PS, Western Port SC

ResourceSmart Water School of the Year

Finalists: Lethbridge PS, Stella Maris PS, Braybrook College

Winners: Nunawading CC, Ruyton GS

ResourceSmart Student Action Team of the Year

Finalists: Chatham PS, Solway PS, , McClelland College, Ruyton GS

Winners: St Macartan's PS, Western Port SC

ResourceSmart Teacher of the Year

Finalists: Johanna Harwood (Eltham North PS), Brendan Kenna (Wunghnu PS), Judith Stewart (Lowanna College), Nicole Volkmann (Ruyton GS)

Winners: Tracey Gray (Port Fairy Consolidated), Stephanie Searls (Alkira SC)