

Fact sheet

Demonstrating your proficiency using the Inquiry process

What is the Inquiry process and why is it important to developing your proficiency as a teacher?

The development of teacher practice can be looked upon as a continuum.

When you graduate from your initial teacher education program, you have engaged with and met the graduate teacher level of the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) (APST).

Once your eligibility to be a teacher is established, the VIT approves you for a 2-year grant of provisional registration. This gives you time to develop your teaching practice and work towards moving your demonstrated skills from the graduate teacher level to the proficient teacher level of the APST. This takes place over time and will be an accumulation of observations, professional discussions and experience.



When to commence your Inquiry?

You should only consider undertaking the [VIT Inquiry process](#) when you believe that you have moved your practice to the proficient teacher level (based on discussions with other experienced teachers).

The Inquiry model used by VIT is based on the work of [Professor Helen Timperley](#). It features five stages, from understanding the workplace and learners' contexts through to a teacher's reflection at the end of a sequence of teaching and learning.

The model itself will not move your practice, rather it gives you the means to demonstrate your proficiency and provides an improvement model that will assist you to affect ongoing positive change within the classroom. It is also a great way to engage with professional learning, helping you identify your own learning needs based upon the needs of your learners.

A comparison of the graduate teacher and proficient teacher levels of the APST show that while the domains and standard headings are the same, the descriptors are quite different. At a graduate level, teachers have a theoretical knowledge and understanding of the standards, whereas proficient teachers can demonstrate the standards in a practical manner as part of the teaching process.

It is important to note that the Inquiry is not a Teaching Practice Assessment or similar project which you may have completed during your initial teacher education studies; it is a practical snapshot of your everyday teaching.

Throughout the Inquiry there are opportunities for you to work closely with a mentor and other experienced colleagues through observations and professional discussions.

The steps you should follow

- spend some time to get to know your group of learners and your workplace
- be able to demonstrate knowledge of laws, policies or procedures that relate to child safety and wellbeing, and the role of a teacher to support this
- select a small number of focus learners for the Inquiry
- determine the learning levels and factors affecting learning for your focus learners, and use that knowledge to plan for what your focus learners need to know, do or understand
- identify learning outcome(s) that are challenging but achievable for your focus learners and develop an Inquiry question around these outcome(s)
- undertake professional learning to support yourself in teaching the Inquiry
- develop and implement an action plan to improve learning
- gather evidence of your practice including work samples and assessments from your focus learners
- reflect on the effectiveness of the Inquiry, and consider what this means for your future teaching and professional learning.

How long does the Inquiry take?

There is no set amount of time that the Inquiry should take and PRTs should be guided by their own context.

Generally, if a teacher is seeing their learners regularly (at least twice per week) then the Inquiry would take about 4–6 weeks. A PRT would need to allow themselves longer if they are working in a different context (e.g. CRT, specialist subject teacher). The teaching time for the Inquiry needs to allow you to teach and assess the Inquiry, and gather enough evidence to demonstrate the standards.

VIT support

Resources



register for a [PRT seminar](#)

download [PRT resources](#)

Professional Practice team



comprised of teachers, the team is available at pvt@vit.vic.edu.au

Online support



read our [FAQs for PRTs](#)

explore our full suite of [PRT fact sheets](#)



Noah Kim (registered teacher) with learners Featherbrook College