

Pathway Programs into Initial Teacher Education Policy

Effective date: 7/06/2023

1. Purpose and context

Under Division 2B of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) has established the requirements, criteria and standards that a program or course must satisfy before VIT can approve it as a Pathway Program into initial teacher education (ITE).

This purpose of this policy is to outline how VIT implements its function to approve Pathway Programs into ITE.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all higher education providers and registered training organisations (RTO's) that deliver a program identified and marketed as a Pathway Program into ITE.

This policy applies to AQF Level 5 –7 Pathway Programs into ITE that meet the following definition

- a) program(s) identified or marketed by the provider as offering to provide entry into an undergraduate ITE program accredited in Victoria
- b) program(s) with the primary purpose of providing a pathway into a Victorian undergraduate ITE program
- c) program(s) that offers a cognate discipline study in the field of education / teaching
- d) program(s) delivered in Victoria by a recognised higher education provider or RTO.

Higher education providers and RTO's that deliver a program that meets the above criteria must submit their program for by approval by VIT, in the form approved by VIT.

VIT monitors the use of Pathway Programs into accredited ITE programs. VIT reserves the right to request approval of a Pathway Program into an ITE program, otherwise out of scope, where it is identified or marketed by the provider as offering entry into an ITE program.

3. Relevant legislation and policy

- [Australian Qualifications Framework](#)
- [Framework for the Approval of Pathway Programs into ITE](#)
- [Education and Training Reform Act 2006](#)
- [TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021 \(HES Framework\)](#)
- [Victorian Selection Framework](#)

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)	AITSL is a Commonwealth government agency 'providing national leadership for the Australian States and Territories in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership'.
AQF Level 5	A diploma level undergraduate qualification
AQF Level 6	An advanced diploma or associate degree qualification
AQF Level 7	A bachelor degree qualification
Equivalent Pathway Program	A program or course of study that offers to provide a pathway to entry into a program or course of study leading to qualifications for entry to teaching as a teacher (s2.6.1 of the Act)
Initial Teacher Education Program (ITE)	A program or course of study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) leading to qualifications for entry to teaching as a teacher; and b) that is approved by the Institute under Division 2A as an initial teacher education program (s2.6.1 of the Act)
Pathway Program	A program or course of study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) offering to provide a pathway to entry into an initial teacher education program; and b) identified or marketed as offering a pathway specified in paragraph (a); and approved by the Institute under Division 2B as a pathway program
Registered Training Organisation (RTO)	RTOs deliver nationally recognised training in the VET sector. To deliver this training, they need to be approved by ASQA.
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)	TEQSA is Australia's independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education and operates under the <i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</i> (TEQSA Act).
Standards and Procedures (AITSL)	The VIT adheres to the current <i>Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures</i> . Published by AITSL, these standards set out the requirements that an initial teacher education (ITE) program must meet to be nationally accredited.
The Victorian Selection Framework (VSF)	The VSF provides requirements for students to meet prior to entering an ITE program in Victoria. Under the VSF students entering an ITE program must demonstrate academic capability by achieving an ATAR selection rank of at least 70 or equivalent and undertaking a personal attributes measure to determine their suitability to teach.

5. Principles

The following principles apply to this policy.

PRINCIPLE 1

Selection requirements for students entering an ITE program from a VIT approved Pathway Program are aligned with the intent of the Victorian Selection Framework (VSF).

PRINCIPLE 2

Approved Pathway Programs into ITE provide support to quality candidates from diverse backgrounds, with a strong disposition to teach, to successfully pathway into a Victorian ITE program.

PRINCIPLE 3

Approved Pathway Programs into ITE are rigorous, and support students to demonstrate the required academic skills and personal attributes to successfully enter a Victorian ITE program.

PRINCIPLE 4

A risk-based approval process for Pathway Programs into ITE provides a quality assurance measure for prospective ITE students that the program they have chosen will support them to enter a Victorian ITE program.

6. Statement of policy

A VIT-approved Pathway Program into ITE has been formally assessed and recognised to appropriately prepare prospective students for entry into Victorian ITE programs.

6.1. Alignment with the Victorian Selection Framework (VSF)

- 6.1.1. The criteria for the approval of Pathway programs into ITE maintain adherence with the objectives of the VSF and set clear expectations on ITE entrant selection processes. All criteria for program approval are consistent with the VSF in determining the academic and non-academic attributes for ITE program entry.
- 6.1.2. VIT-approved Pathway Programs maintain consistency with the VSF by requiring students in a Pathway program to demonstrate the following attributes prior to entry
 - academic success that is equivalent to the 70 ATAR
 - literacy and numeracy skills consistent with expectations in an ITE program
- 6.1.3. VIT-approved Pathway Programs will support students to develop the non-academic attributes for ITE program entry. The enrolling ITE program will require the prospective student to complete the approved personal attributes measure prior to entry into an accredited ITE program, in line with Program Standard 3.2 of the Standards and Procedures.

6.2. Program requirements and criteria

- 6.2.1. All pathway programs into ITE must meet the criteria outlined in the Framework for the approval of Pathway Programs into ITE (the framework) in order to be approved by VIT.
- 6.2.2. The program criteria support VIT's objectives to set the standards and enable quality teaching.

The program criteria relate to the following key elements

6.2.3. Program development, design and delivery

- I. the provider describes a coherent, evidence-based rationale for the program, including stakeholder input, to ensure outcomes of the program meet the objectives of pathway program approval.
- II. the provider must consult with at least one of the associated ITE providers when developing and designing the Pathway Program into ITE.

6.2.4. Academic capabilities

- I. the provider details how the successful completion of the pathway program aligns with the VSF and national entry requirement into ITE. This includes demonstration of requisite literacy and numeracy skills and academic success in higher education at or above a credit level, noting
 - a. core units must be graded
 - b. the literacy and numeracy measure(s) should be completed towards the end of the pathway program / or near the time of entry into the ITE program to accurately assess the development of skills throughout the program.

6.2.5. Personal attributes

- I. the provider details how the program supports the development of personal attributes required for entry into an ITE program, as per the VSF and the national standards. These attributes include
 - a. motivation to teach
 - b. strong interpersonal / communication skills
 - c. willingness to learn
 - d. resilience
 - e. self-efficacy
 - f. conscientiousness
 - g. organisational and planning skills.

6.2.6. Program structure and support

- I. In AQF 5 and AQF 6 programs, the provider presents a program design and structure which supports the development and growth of a student's academic skills and personal attributes to successfully enter an ITE program.
- II. Multiple touch points for the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and personal attributes should be provided for throughout the duration of the program.

6.2.7. Evaluation and reporting

- I. The pathway provider and / or all associated ITE providers must comply with VIT's reporting requirements on their approved pathway programs into ITE.
- II. VIT will review data reported by a provider for monitoring and compliance purposes.

6.3. Application and approval process

- 6.3.1 Providers should have ongoing communication with VIT regarding the preparation of their application for approval.
- 6.3.2 Providers seeking VIT approval of a Pathway Program into ITE must provide evidence to VIT in the form approved by VIT.
- 6.3.3 The VIT reserves the right to decline a program submission at its discretion, including but not limited to, where the program is not in scope and / or not in the form approved by VIT and / or if the submission is incomplete.
- 6.3.4 The form approved by VIT
 - I. The application must be submitted to VIT
 - a. on the VIT-developed templates that are valid at the time of submission
 - b. with responses that are relevant and specifically address each of the criteria with accompanying evidence
 - c. with the accompanying application fee, fixed by the Minister, paid in full.
 - II. The VIT reserves the right to request additional information and / or evidence as part of an application for approval of a Pathway Program into ITE.

6.3.5. Incomplete application

- I. Under Section 2.6.6N (3) of Division 2A of the Act, VIT reserves the right to decline a Pathway Program into ITE submission at its discretion, including but not limited to
 - a. if the submission is not presented in the accepted form
 - b. if an application is not complete
 - c. if there are significant gaps in evidence
 - d. where it is not accompanied by the application fee
 - e. where the program is not in scope.

6.3.6 Application fee

- I. Under s2.6.6N(3b) of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, an application for the approval of a Pathway Program into ITE program must be accompanied by the fee set by the Minister for Education.
- II. The initial payment is for one program, when a submission contains more than one program, the provider will pay for the additional program(s) applications prior to the program being provided to Accreditation Committee for decision.

6.3.7 Approval process

- I. Section 2.6.68(2) of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* provides that VIT's Council must establish the Accreditation Committee.
- II. Accreditation Committee has delegated authority from VIT's Council, under s2.6.3(1) (bb), to approve a programs or courses of study as pathway programs.
- III. Where a program is approved
 - a. approval is for a standard period of five years unless otherwise determined by Accreditation Committee
 - b. the provider will be notified of the decision in writing
 - c. the provider may identify and market the program as a VIT approved Pathway Program into ITE.

6.4. Revocation

- 6.4.1. The VIT's Accreditation Committee may remove the approval of a Pathway Program into ITE at any time for the following reasons
- I. the provider(s) fails to report as required
 - II. where the program no longer meets the approved criteria
 - III. where the provider(s) and / program fails to comply with any conditions
 - IV. where the program is not aligned with VIT's overarching legislative obligations to have regard to raising the quality of teaching and providing for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, including taking into account community expectations.

6.5. Program changes

- 6.5.1. Following approval of a Pathway Programs into ITE, providers must report to VIT significant program changes that affect the criteria on which approval was granted. Significant changes include how / where the program criteria have been met.
For example
- I. change of weighted average mark requirement
 - II. change of minimum equivalent full time study load (EFTSL) required
 - III. change of literacy or numeracy assessments
 - IV. removal of support mechanisms for academic or non-academic skills
 - V. changes to unit sequence / course map.
- 6.5.2. Where components of a program that are shared across both an accredited ITE program and an approved Pathway Program into ITE are amended, providers must identify in their program change request the following
- I. all affected programs
 - II. the ability of the program(s) to meet the associated criteria and standards
 - III. confirmation of continued compliance with any relevant conditions.

6.6. Conditions

- 6.6.1. Under s2.6.6P of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, VIT may impose, vary or revoke conditions on approval of a Pathway Program into ITE and at any time during the approval period.
- 6.6.2. The imposition or variation of conditions on programs are intended to provide assurance to VIT that programs continue to meet the standards and criteria required to be approved or endorsed by VIT.
- 6.6.3. The VIT will have regard to raising the quality of teaching and providing for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people when imposing or varying conditions.
- 6.6.4. Where VIT intends to impose or vary conditions on a program during its approval or endorsement period, the proposed conditions along with the reason for the imposition of conditions will be communicated to the provider.
- I. The provider will have at least 14 days to make submissions in relation to the proposed conditions.
 - II. Where a provider does not make submissions, the conditions will apply to the program at the end of the 14 days.
 - III. Where a provider makes submissions, VIT will work with the provider to reach a resolution. If the conditions require variation following the submissions, these will be proposed to Accreditation Committee for approval.

- 6.6.5. Conditions that apply universally to all approved Pathway Programs into ITE will usually be published on VIT's website.
- 6.6.6. A condition that is unique to a program and / or provider may be published if it is in the best interests of the relevant stakeholders for this information to be published.
- 6.6.7. Where a provider objects to the publication of a condition, they may request in writing to VIT's Accreditation Committee that the condition not be published. Accreditation Committee will consider these requests on a case-by-case basis and make a determination based on the following factors
 - I. the perceived public interest in the condition being published
 - II. ensuring VIT is a transparent and responsible regulator
 - III. having regard to raising the quality of teaching
 - IV. providing for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.