Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Policy

Effective date 8/06/2023

1. Purpose and context

Under Division 2A of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (the Act), VIT has established the requirements, criteria and standards that a program or course must satisfy before VIT can approve it as an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Program.

The VIT accreditation process adheres to a nationally agreed approach to accreditation, endorsed by the Education Council in 2015.

The process ensures all ITE programs meet the Australian standards outlined in the *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* (AITSL). These standards are designed to ensure all graduates of ITE programs have the knowledge, skills, and experience to make a positive impact on student learning.

The purpose of this policy is to outline how VIT implements its function to approve ITE programs being delivered in Victoria.
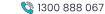
2. Scope

This policy applies to all higher education providers that deliver ITE programs in Victoria.

This policy applies to ITE programs that are:

a) accredited and / or seeking accreditation in Victoria or;
b) multi-jurisdictional ITE providers that are incorporated in Victoria.

3. Relevant legislation, policy, and information

- Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures
- Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Graduate career stage)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Fact sheet – Suitability considerations for applicants and pre-service teachers
- Framework for the Approval of Pathway Programs into ITE
- Guidance notes – Stage two accreditation submissions
- Guidelines – Changes to accredited ITE programs
- Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia
- Internship Initial Teacher Education Programs Policy
- Permission to teach (PTT) policy
- 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)	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (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'.
The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST)	Approved as the professional practice standards used by VIT to regulate Victorian teachers and early childhood teachers. Nationally consistent standards published in February 2011 by AITSL. The APST comprise seven Standards, which outline what teachers should know and be able to do. The Standards are grouped into three domains of teaching: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice, and Professional Engagement. Victoria uses the Areas of Focus and Descriptors of the APST at the Professional Career Stages of Graduate and Proficient.
Initial Teacher Education Program (ITE)	A program or course of study— a) leading to qualifications for entry to teaching as a teacher. b) and that is approved by the Institute under Division 2A as an initial teacher education program (s2.6.1 of the Act).
Guidelines (AITSL)	VIT adheres to the current *Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia.* These were developed by AITSL to support the implementation of the Standards and Procedures. They are primarily designed to promote consistent assessment and rigour in the accreditation process.
Non-self-accrediting authority	TEQSA requires higher education providers without self-accrediting authority to receive program accreditation from TEQSA prior to delivery at the relevant institution.
Pre-service Teacher (PST)	A student enrolled in an accredited ITE program.
Provider	Higher education institutions that deliver ITE programs. These are either self-accrediting (e.g. universities) or non-self-accrediting (e.g. TAFE colleges, private higher education institutions).
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) is Australia's independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education and operates under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act).
Self-accrediting authority	A higher education provider with self-accrediting authority means a higher education provider authorised to self-accredit one or more courses of study under the Act *(Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011).*

Term	Definition
Standards and Procedures (AITSL)	VIT adheres to the current *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures.* 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 Victorian Selection Framework (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

When accrediting ITE programs, VIT has regard to ensuring quality teaching and enabling the best educational outcomes for pre-service teachers (PSTs) and Victorian learners / children and young people.

Principle 2

VIT accredits ITE programs in line with the national accreditation process outlined in the AITSL Standards and Procedures.

Principle 3

ITE programs accredited in Victoria undertake a rigorous assessment and accreditation process. They support PSTs to demonstrate the required academic skills and personal attributes to successfully meet the Graduate level of the APSTs.

Principle 4

Selection requirements for prospective PSTs entering an ITE program are aligned with the intent of the Victorian Selection Framework (VSF).

6. Statement of policy

A VIT-accredited ITE program has been formally assessed and recognised to adequately prepare students to meet the Graduate teacher level of the APST. Accredited ITE programs ensure that PSTs have the appropriate skills and knowledge to be effective teachers and support improved learning outcomes of their students.

6.1. Program requirements and criteria

6.1.1.   All ITE programs must meet each of the Program Standards outlined in the AITSL Standards and Procedures to be accredited by VIT.

6.1.2.   The program criteria relate to the following key elements:
   I.   program outcomes
   II.   program development, design, and delivery
   III.   program entry
   IV.   program structure and content
   V.   professional experience

VI.   program evaluation, reporting and improvement.

6.2. Jurisdictional overlays

6.2.1. The accreditation process supports VIT's strategic objective to:
   I.   set the standards and enable quality teaching
   II.   provide for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, including considering community expectations.

6.2.2. Providers delivering ITE programs in more than one state or territory must meet the specific requirements of those jurisdictions.

6.2.3. The Victorian Selection Framework

   I.   The Victorian Selection Framework (VSF) raises the entry standards and attracts high quality candidates from diverse backgrounds into the teaching profession. It requires providers to use clear, transparent, and evidence-based selection criteria for entry into ITE programs. VIT monitors compliance with the VSF through Annual Reporting data collected from ITE providers.

   II.   The VSF was introduced in 2018 and requires ITE providers to implement specific academic and personal attribute measures for students entering into Victorian ITE programs.

   III.   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.

6.3. Application process

6.3.1. Providers should have ongoing communication with VIT regarding the preparation of their application for accreditation.

6.3.2. Providers seeking VIT approval of an ITE program must provide evidence to VIT in the form approved by VIT.

6.3.3. The form approved by VIT

   I.   An application for the approval of a program or course of study as an initial teacher education program or renewal of approval must be submitted to VIT:
      a.   on the nationally agreed templates for accreditation valid at the time of submission, as detailed within the Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs (AITSL)
      b.   with responses that are relevant and specifically address each of the Program Standards and each of the Graduate Teacher Standards as detailed within the Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia Standards and Procedures (AITSL) and the Guidelines for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs (AITSL)
      c.   addressing all Victorian overlays on national accreditation requirements with the accompanying accreditation fee, fixed by the Minister.

   II.   VIT reserves the right to request additional information and / or evidence as part of an application for accreditation.

6.3.4. Incomplete application

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

6.3.5. Application fee
  I.   Under s2.6.6F(2a) of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, an application for the accreditation of an 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.

6.3.6. Accreditation panel
  I.   Once VIT has confirmed the initial eligibility of a program for accreditation, it will convene a panel to assess the application for accreditation.
  II. Prior to the accreditation panel, all members are required to complete the nationally delivered AITSL Panel Training.
  III. The accreditation panel will convene to formally consult and assess the program against the Program Standards.
  IV. The recommendation made by the panel will be submitted to the VIT Accreditation Committee for consideration.
  V.   For national consistency, accreditation panels include an interstate panellist.

6.4. Approval

6.4.1. Section 2.6.68(2) of the Act provides that VIT's Council must establish the Accreditation Committee.

6.4.2. Accreditation Committee has delegated authority from VIT's Council, under s2.6.6E of the Act, to approve a program or course of study as an ITE program.

6.4.3. Where a program is approved –

  I.   ITE Programs will be approved for a standard period of five years unless otherwise determined by Accreditation Committee
  II. the provider may identify and market the program as an accredited ITE program
  III. the provider will be notified of the decision in writing.

6.4.4. Where a program is not approved, the provider will be notified in writing that they are unable to market the program as an accredited ITE Program.

6.4.5. Providers without self-accrediting authority

  I.   Non-self-accrediting providers require TEQSA approval of their ITE program prior to their application for accreditation with VIT.
  II. A non-self-accrediting provider may not market or advertise an ITE program prior to receiving approval from VIT and TEQSA.

6.4.6. Dual early childhood/primary programs

  I.   ITE providers offering combined early childhood / primary programs are required to obtain program approval from both VIT and the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), with VIT accrediting the primary component of the program and ACECQA assessing the early childhood component.

6.5. Revocation

6.5.1. VIT's Accreditation Committee may remove the approval of an ITE Program at any time for the following reasons;
  I.   the provider(s) fails to report as required
  II. the program no longer meets the Program Standards
  III. the provider(s) and / program fails to comply with any conditions
  IV. the program is not aligned with VIT's overarching legislative obligations to have regard to raising the quality of teaching and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, including considering community expectations.

6.6. Program changes

6.6.1. ITE providers are required to discuss potential program changes with VIT to an accredited ITE program. VIT will then determine the significance of the change and the process for approval of the proposed change.

6.6.2. Annual reporting

    I. Providers are required to report to VIT annually.

    II. Through this process, providers must notify VIT of any program changes.

    III. The VIT will determine if the changes reported require a program change application to be submitted for assessment.

    IV. If so, VIT will undertake the assessment and if it is approved by the Accreditation Manager, it will be presented to the Accreditation Committee for noting.

6.6.3. Significant changes

    I. The VIT may determine the program change to be significant and an application for accreditation to be submitted by the Provider.

    II. For a significant program change, VIT will consult with the Provider to determine if it can be assessed under a Stage Two application or if the program change is so substantial, it must undergo a Stage One assessment.

6.7. Conditions

6.7.1. Under s2.6.6P of the Act, the VIT may impose, vary, or revoke conditions on approval of an ITE program and at any time during the approval period.

6.7.2. The imposition or variation of conditions on programs are intended to provide assurance to VIT and the community that programs continue to meet the standards and criteria required to be approved or endorsed by VIT.

6.7.3. The VIT will have regard to raising the quality of teaching and ensuring child safety and wellbeing when imposing or varying conditions.

6.7.4. Where VIT intends to impose or vary conditions on a program during its approval, 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 applications in relation to the proposed conditions.

    II. where a provider does not make applications, the conditions will apply to the program at the end of the 14 days.

    III. where a provider makes applications, VIT will work with the provider to reach a resolution. If the conditions require variation following the applications, these will be proposed to Accreditation Committee for approval.

6.7.5. Conditions that apply universally to all accredited ITE programs will usually be published on VIT's website.

6.7.6. 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.

6.7.7. 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. The 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. ensuring child safety and wellbeing.