



Draft National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

Priority Area 1: Elevating the profession

This action aims to recognise the value teachers bring to students, communities and the economy.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

UniSC supports Actions 1-4 and provides the following feedback.

A national campaign is welcomed to raise the profile of teachers (Action 1). The targeted national campaign should, amongst other things, motivate/support existing teachers to encourage their students to consider a teaching career. The need to raise the profile is ongoing; hence the campaign should not be a one-off activity. Consideration should be given to how the Australian Government, state and territory governments, education providers and other stakeholders can develop and support an ongoing communication and recruitment strategy to recognise the critical contribution our teachers make and encourage school leavers and career changers to become teachers. UniSC would support and leverage the Australian Government's campaign, noting that UniSC already communicates and markets the status and value of teachers as a profession to prospective students and our communities. UniSC would promote the initiatives in Actions 2 and 3 and encourage communities to nominate teachers for the new teaching award and Medals of the Order of Australia.

UniSC supports more highly accomplished and lead teachers being identified across states and territories (Action 4). To assist, HALT (Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher) certification processes should be simplified and harmonised across jurisdictions. The HALT role should also encompass promoting the profession for future teachers and supervising and coordinating the vital school placement component of initial teacher education programs. Time and resources need to be allocated in schools for HALTs to undertake these mentoring and promotion roles, with structured opportunities to share best practices nationally. Further consideration could be included to explore a range of specialisations for HALTs to incorporate career development beyond the named curriculum areas of mathematics and classroom management connecting with actions 23 and 24.

Priority Area 2: Improving teacher supply

This action aims to increase the number of students entering Initial Teacher Education (ITE), number of students completing the ITE and the number of teachers staying in and/or returning to the profession.

The actions proposed will be effective in increasing the number of students entering ITE, number of students completing ITE and the number of teachers staying in and/or returning to the profession.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

UniSC supports Actions 5-9 and provides the following feedback.

Increasing the number of teaching places requires a parallel commitment by schools and teachers to undertake and resource supervising and mentoring pre-service and beginning teachers.

More student placements will require more efficient systems aligned to pre-service teacher needs. Consideration should be given to a centralised / consistent approach across universities and jurisdictions.

The current VET reviews should focus on improving teaching articulation pathways between providers and universities to drive more early childhood and school teachers. Tertiary preparation courses and micro-credentials should also be considered.

UniSC is supportive of the intent of Action 6 but notes there are many bursaries already offered by universities, philanthropists, businesses, and state governments. Another layer risks duplicating existing schemes. An alternative could be directing the funding to improve school pre-service student placements. If the Government proceeds with bursary funding, funding should be allocated via an agreed ratio/process to relevant universities or a proportionate number via state governments so it can be integrated into existing schemes.

UniSC agrees with trialling additional ways to attract and retain higher achieving students and notes these will require regular and ongoing review to identify the success, or otherwise, of this further investment (Actions 7 and 8). Existing state government programs already demonstrating success should be expanded to include more universities (e.g. Queensland Government's Turn to Teaching program). The Government has agreed on a structured approach to waiving student debt for doctors and nurses who work in regional and remote locations for specific periods. A similar approach should be considered for teachers.

UniSC would be delighted to share the success of our ground-breaking rural and remote placement and bursary scheme which has demonstrated how student placements can lead to teachers having strong, enduring careers that contribute positively to rural and remote communities.

Priority Area 3: Strengthening Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

This action aims to ensure initial teacher education supports teacher supply and quality.

The actions proposed will ensure initial teacher education supports teacher supply and quality.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

UniSC supports Actions 10-13 and provides the following feedback.

Completion rates should consider variations experienced by students in equity groups because of work, family, and cultural commitments. Increasingly, ITE students are reducing study load to accommodate permission to teach arrangements in schools, affecting completion time. Completion rates for four-year degrees need to be calculated based on completions plus those still studying at the end of six years with appropriate progression.

The proposed bursary funding could be redirected to improve pre-service student placement processes and explore MTeach paid internships. Financially incentivising school placements in rural and remote locations, placements for Indigenous teachers and hard-to-staff locations is needed in recognition of higher placement costs and the opportunity to encourage graduates to work in schools further away from home. As mentioned in response to Priority Area 2, UniSC's Rural and Remote Placement program is one example of how professional experience, in partnership with the profession, supports teacher supply in rural and remote Queensland. These approaches will also support Action 12 if co-designed with First Nations teachers and communities. Developing different approaches to partnerships, attracting those already working in communities, and supporting mentor teachers and Indigenous elders in the community will be required to achieve Action 12.

UniSC agrees an RPL framework is important for those seeking access to teacher education (Action 11). The framework must be transparent and consider the resources required by applicants and assessors as well as alternative ways of achieving literacy and numeracy requirements.

UniSC recommends students complete their LANTITE as early as possible and before final placement (Action 13). Identifying a range of ways in addition to LANTITE that literacy and numeracy could be considered to ensure a diversity of students are attracted to teacher education programs, e.g. multiple ways to achieve literacy for senior secondary in Queensland.

Priority Area 4: Maximising the time to teach

This action aims to improve retention and free up teachers to focus on teaching and collaboration.

The actions proposed will improve retention and free up teachers to focus on teaching and collaboration.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

UniSC is supportive of Actions 14-18 and provides the following feedback.

Developing and considering teacher workload and time to teach (Actions 14 and 15) needs to consider the work of teachers and administrators in both the supervision and site coordination related to pre-service teacher placements. Hence, the teacher workload strategy must consider the important components of supervision of pre-service teachers on placements and professional development opportunities, including further university study and micro-credentials.

Maximising teaching time needs to focus on providing time for teachers to use their expertise (Action 15).

The development of quality literacy and numeracy resources (Action 16) is welcomed by the profession to support teachers in making judgements about the curriculum and pedagogy relevant to the students in their classroom.

We agree that considering teacher workload impact assessments when making changes to the National School Reform Agreement will support the identification of a suitable suite of changes that can be made within a specific timeframe across jurisdictions (Action 17).

Action 18 refers to the “Use of initial teacher education students” to support maximising the time to teach. This action needs careful consideration regarding the impact on student progression and completion when initial teacher education students undertake paid work during school hours, this is raised as a point in our response to Priority 1. UniSC suggests that paid internships, especially for Master of Teaching students undertaking a reduced teaching load, would contribute towards maximising time to teach career changers.

Priority Area 5: Better understanding future teacher workforce needs

This action aims to better understand future teacher workforce needs, including the number of teachers required.

How effective are the proposed actions in better understanding future teacher workforce needs, including the number of teachers required?

- Extremely effective
- Very effective
- Moderately effective
- Slightly effective
- Not effective at all

UniSC is supportive of Actions 19-23 and provides the following feedback.

The availability of data for planning is important, however, the ability to forward plan is a challenge for both current and future workforce predictions (Actions 19 and 20). For example, an increasing number of students undertaking permission to teach during programs of study increases the workforce but decreases completion rates (as currently defined). It may be useful for subject specialisations to be recorded by state registration authorities to provide consistent ways of reporting and recording teaching areas. The provision of information about out-of-field teaching would be supported by access to this data, and further work can be undertaken proactively to identify ways to manage change and resource areas of skill shortage.

While there are agreed national accreditation requirements, there are variations across jurisdictions to accommodate the needs of various communities and available resources. Establishing a National Quality Framework (Action 21) should focus on core national requirements and consistency of process using low-impact processes that allow programs to prioritise Indigenous communities and other priority cohorts.

UniSC agrees that prioritising teacher registration processes will support teacher supply (Action 22). Consideration of improvements and consistency of registration for teachers employed before they have completed their program will support teacher supply issues. However, pre-service teachers have not completed their program of study and require further mentoring and support in schools. Careful evaluation for retention of teachers involved in undertaking teacher roles before program completion is required to ensure that these experiences do not add to more teachers leaving the profession early or not completing their qualification.

Further research is needed to understand the complexity of reasons why teachers are leaving the profession. (Action 23) UniSC notes that previous reports have investigated this issue, and we encourage AESOC to consider these.

Priority Area 6: Better career pathways to support and retain teachers in the profession

This action aims to improve career pathways, including streamlining the process for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) accreditation and providing better professional support for teachers to retain them in the profession.

The proposed actions will improve career pathways, including streamlining the process for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) accreditation and providing better professional support for teachers to retain them in the profession.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

UniSC is supportive of Actions 24-28 and provides the following feedback.

Teaching is often identified as one career, but people often have multiple careers and numerous jobs. Hence, it would be useful to consider specialisation within teaching as a way for teachers to develop their skills in new areas, reinvigorate their passion and practice. If a teacher decides they would like to specialise in a teaching area, there is significant diversity in what it means to be qualified to teach a subject. We suggest a broader range of specialisations and recognised career pathways could be developed, e.g. rural and remote education. A national framework that provides consistency about what it means to be classed as a specialist would be useful and allow teachers to move between jurisdictions, and these could then be used to develop more career pathways in the context of the teaching profession beyond the need to move into leadership positions.

UniSC supports the proposal to develop mentoring and induction guidelines. These guidelines should be developed to support all teachers, including pre-service teachers, beginning teachers and teachers moving from one school to another (Action 25).

The development of First Nations resources (Action 26) needs to be led by First Nations scholars, teachers, teacher educators and communities.

Application processes for HALTs need to be streamlined and consider recognition of prior learning (Action 27). HALT certification processes should be simplified and harmonised across jurisdictions.

Professional development for teachers (Action 28), including micro-credentials, should align with teacher career pathways and specialisations to allow teachers to change their work context or job without having to leave teaching and education.