

National Professional Standards for accomplished primary teaching

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(taken from the primary standards website: <http://primarystandards.aamt.edu.au>)

1. What is 'accomplished primary teaching'?

Every teacher enters the profession as a "beginning teacher" and, as their career unfolds, they become progressively more knowledgeable and proficient in the art and science of teaching. Some teachers are recognised by their colleagues and others as being "better than most others". This project aims to have practising teachers and other stakeholders define and describe those critical aspects of practice that are the distinguishing characteristics of highly accomplished primary teachers.

2. Why do we need to develop these standards? How will the standards be used?

Primary teachers are best qualified for this work because they are actively "doing" and closely observing primary teaching on a daily basis. No one knows this work better than primary teachers.

"Profession-wide standards are a powerful tool for increasing public recognition and elevating the status of teaching" (see Teaching Australia (2008) *Draft guidelines for drafting national professional standards*). They can also clarify expectations about accomplished practice, guide personal reflection on primary teaching, inform professional learning and provide mechanisms for acknowledgement of accomplished professional practice.

3. How will the descriptors of accomplishment for advanced primary teachers fit with other work around standards?

A Charter for the Australian teaching profession, a standards model, and a set of Advanced Teaching Capabilities have been developed.

Descriptors of accomplishment are elaborations of the advanced teaching capabilities; they provide detailed descriptions of accomplished practice that are specific to primary teaching. Other projects will develop descriptors for specific learning areas and phases of schooling.

4. How will the project address the broad scope that is "primary teaching"?

"Primary teaching" can involve work across nine years of schooling (PP/R/K-7), in government and non-government schools in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote schools. Primary teaching can involve children with diverse needs and backgrounds such as ESL, Indigenous, migrant, special needs and gifted and talented. How will the project address such a broad scope of professional work?

The initial challenge is to describe what is universal to all primary teaching regardless of location, student characteristics, school sector or other qualifiers. With this in mind, primary teachers and stakeholders from the full scope of practice are encouraged to engage with the work.

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5. How does this project articulate with Early Childhood Australia's (ECA) standards for advanced early childhood teaching?

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) is developing standards for advanced early childhood teaching. So how does the work of ECA articulate with the Accomplished Primary Teaching Standards project? There will be overlap between these developmental projects and we expect to learn from each other.

6. Can I be involved if I'm not a primary school teacher?

The project team is keen to involve primary teachers and other stakeholders who may not be directly involved in classroom practice. The "stakeholder" category includes university teachers, researchers and students; retired teachers; para-professionals such as psychologists and therapists; people working in central, regional and district offices; members of kindred professions; administrators, consultants and school leaders; school support personnel and members of the community at large. If you are interested in primary teaching you are encouraged to contribute to this work.

7. Is this work linked to discussions about performance pay for teachers?

It is important to make a distinction between professional standards and conditions of employment (including pay) and who is responsible for each. The profession is taking responsibility for developing and articulating standards and associated resources such as the Charter for the Australian teaching profession. Pay and working conditions will continue to be negotiated between teachers and the various state, territory and private employers.

8. How can professional associations and other collegiate groups get involved in this work?

Many professional associations and collegiate networks are involved so check with your group first. If your association, group or network is not involved, register your interest straight away at <http://primarystandards@aamt.edu.au/>