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Australian Institute
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Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers

Principles and processes

April 2012

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) has been working closely with key education stakeholders to develop the *Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers: Principles and processes*. The paper outlines the purposes and principles underlying certification and the assessment process.

In developing the nationally consistent approach to certification, AITSL consulted with all state and territory education authorities, national and local Catholic and Independent school authorities, teacher regulatory authorities, peak national bodies, including unions and principal associations, and practising teachers and principals

The Institute's responsibility to lead this work is outlined in its Letter of Expectation from the Commonwealth Minister for Education.

This document was endorsed by Education Ministers at the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) on 20 April 2012.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership was formed to provide national leadership for the Commonwealth, state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership with funding provided by the Australian Government.

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ISBN: 978-0-9872351-2-1

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Preamble

The National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality commits all governments to national consistency in certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers. *The National Professional Standards for Teachers*[1] describe what teachers should know and be able to do at these career stages.

Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers is an important element in a broader teacher quality strategy that develops, recognises and supports excellent practitioners. Formal recognition of exemplary teachers can make an important contribution to the quality teaching and leadership in schools. Certification will benefit all those involved in the process, including teachers, school leaders and education systems. The recognition and certification of excellence aims to encourage teachers to engage in a process aimed at developing ongoing, collaborative learning professionals who strive to reflect upon and improve their practice.

Those who apply for certification will closely examine their own practice and receive comprehensive feedback against professional teacher standards. Teachers committed to improving their practice are vital to student success. As well, they contribute to the advancement of their schools through modelling and leading others to improve practice. Certification at the higher career stages enhances the professionalism of teachers, enabling them to gain recognition for the quality of their teaching and progress their careers while remaining in the classroom.

Much research has concluded that participation in standards-based certification processes accompanied by the appropriate feedback can improve teacher practice. 'A reliable and valid system of performance assessment based on common standards would provide consistency in gauging teacher effectiveness...and anchor a continuum of performance throughout a teaching career.'[2]

Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers: Principles and processes is designed to ensure that the processes for certification of teachers at the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages are rigorous and authentic.

This paper is not intended to address issues around industrial relations or existing awards. The way in which certified teachers may be recognised or rewarded is an employment matter.

1 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) 2008, National partnership on improving teacher quality, viewed 28 July 2011, http://www.coag.gov.au/intergov_agreements/federal_financial_relations/docs/national_partnership_on_improving_teacher_quality.pdf

2 L. Darling-Hammond 2010, Evaluating teacher effectiveness: How teacher performance assessments can measure and improve teaching, Washington, Center for American Progress, pg. 3

Purposes and principles

Purposes

Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers has three primary purposes:

- to recognise and promote quality teaching
- to provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practice
- to provide a reliable indication of quality teaching that can be used to identify, recognise and/or reward Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers.

By contributing to teacher quality, a nationally consistent approach to certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers will help to achieve the national goals for schooling expressed in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*.[3]

Principles

The proposed approach to the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers is informed by the following principles:

Standards-based: Certification is awarded against the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. It represents an assessment against the Standards, independent of any use it might then be put to by teachers, their employers, or others. It is not proposed to limit the number of teachers who can be certified as Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers, provided they meet the Standards.

Student-improvement focused: Certification recognises those teachers who are highly effective in improving student outcomes. Evidence of student outcomes is central to the certification process. Student outcomes are broadly defined and include student learning, engagement in learning and wellbeing.

Development driven: Certification is part of a wider career development approach that includes professional learning, performance assessment and development. Participation in the certification process should be a positive experience for participants and provide useful feedback that further enhances development and learning, including for those teachers who do not achieve certification.

Credible: Certification is credible when assessments of teacher performance are based on rigorous, valid, reliable, fair and transparent measures and processes. The evaluation of teacher practice will be based on consistent application and moderation of these processes by trained assessors, and multiple methods and sources of evidence. Consistency of judgements will be maintained across the diverse contexts where teachers work, so that context does not disadvantage any applicant.

Evidence-based: Certification must be built on nationally and internationally recognised best practice and contribute to the development of evidence about what works in promoting and recognising teacher quality. The operation of the certification process will be evaluated and the results used to further improve it.

3 Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) 2008, *Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians*, viewed 28 July 2011, http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf

A nationally consistent approach

A nationally consistent approach to certification must maintain consistency of standards and judgements across the nation, while being able to be implemented at scale in the diverse contexts in which Australian teachers work. There will be a nationally consistent approach to certification, where a common process is applied by the appropriate bodies in each jurisdiction.

In each jurisdiction, there will be one or more bodies managing the certification process referred to as the *certifying authority*. Arrangements will be negotiated in each jurisdiction.

To ensure national consistency, rigour and quality of certification, certifying authorities will agree to certify teachers against the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, using a common national process and quality assurance measures. These bodies will participate in, and in turn conduct training to implement nationally consistent processes; undertake monitoring and moderation; provide summary data on certification decisions; and participate in evaluation, review and improvement of the certification process. More detail on these activities is provided in the section *Quality assurance*.

Certification will be portable, allowing teachers to maintain their status as a Highly Accomplished or Lead teacher if they move between jurisdictions and sectors. This does not mean that any industrial arrangements attached to certification, such as a particular rate of pay, are automatically transferable. The way in which certified teachers are recognised or rewarded is an employment matter.

Certification against the National Professional Standards for Teachers

The four career stages in the Standards provide benchmarks to recognise the professional growth of teachers throughout their careers. The descriptors across the four career stages represent increasing levels of professional knowledge, practice and engagement for teachers. Progression through the stages describes a growing understanding, applied with increasing sophistication across a broader and more complex range of situations.

Teachers do not have to be certified as Highly Accomplished before applying for Lead teacher status in recognition that many teachers may be practising as Highly Accomplished without necessarily applying for certification.

The Standards at the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages are the basis for certification, and are presented in the Appendix.

Certification processes

The certification process has three main elements – a pre-assessment phase and two stages of assessment. There are some differences in the process for the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages. These are highlighted in the description of the process that follows.

Personnel involved in the certification process

Teachers volunteer to apply for certification. In addition to the applicant, personnel involved in the certification process are referees (including colleagues and peers), principal/supervisor and assessors.[4]

Two trained assessors external to the school/setting of the applicant are nominated by the certifying authority to assess the certification application following the common national process.

Referees nominated by the applicant are required to provide verification and evaluative statements against specific focus areas of the Standards about which they have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice.

The principal/supervisor or their delegate is required to undertake the following responsibilities:

- pre-assessment – short professional discussion with the applicant based on the Standards regarding their readiness for applying for certification
- assessment stage 1 – provide a report on an observation of teacher practice and as a referee provide evaluative statements against specific focus areas of the Standards of which they have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice
- assessment stage 2 – short professional discussion with the external assessor during the site visit to provide evaluative statements against the specific focus areas of the Standards demonstrated in observations of practice.

These responsibilities can predominantly be undertaken as part of the school's regular performance and development process.

The principal/supervisor may delegate these responsibilities to a Deputy/Assistant Principal or equivalent member of the senior leadership team of the school/setting who has significant knowledge of the applicant's practice.

Pre-assessment

Prior to commencing a certification application teachers determine their eligibility and readiness to apply for certification.

Eligibility requirements

To be eligible to apply for certification at the Highly Accomplished or Lead teacher career stages the applicant must:

- be an Australian citizen or have a permanent residency visa[5]
- have full registration with an Australian state or territory regulatory authority[6]
- have been assessed as satisfactory in their two most recent annual performance assessments[7] for those applying for Highly Accomplished career stage
- have been assessed as satisfactory in their three most recent annual performance assessments for those applying for Lead career stage

Teachers do not have to be certified as a Highly Accomplished teacher before applying for Lead teacher status.

Self-assessment

It is recommended that self-assessment be undertaken prior to commencing a certification application. All candidates will have access to an online tool to self-assess their readiness to apply for certification and to provide them with an understanding of what is required for certification.

All applicants must conduct a professional discussion with their principal/supervisor or delegate regarding their readiness to apply for certification and/or what additional preparation they need to proceed with their application. Obtaining the endorsement of the principal/supervisor to proceed is not mandatory but is strongly recommended.

4 Principal in this document includes the equivalent position to Principal in early childhood and other settings. There will be situations where a principal or equivalent is not available to fulfil the role outlined for the principal in this document, for example in the case where an applicant is a teaching principal. In this situation, the applicant should seek support from a senior person who is in a position to comment authoritatively on the applicant's teaching.

5 This also includes New Zealand citizens teaching in Australian schools or early childhood settings.

6 In accordance with the regulatory regimes in individual jurisdictions. In New South Wales full registration is *Accreditation at Professional Competence*. Some teachers in NSW are not required to be accredited, and these teachers are not excluded from this certification process if they meet the other eligibility requirements.

7 Annual performance assessments may be those conducted using the current school/system processes where these exist and are not required in a specific format. It is recognised that currently some schools may not have these processes, or the circumstances of teachers mean they have not received an assessment. In these cases, the referees will provide evidence of past performance. Following the implementation of the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* the specific requirements of an annual performance assessment outlined will need to be met.

Certification assessment

The assessment of certification applications has two stages. Applicants must be successful at Stage 1 before proceeding to Stage 2.

Stage 1 – assessment of evidence submitted against the Standards, which includes annotated evidence of teacher practice, a written statement addressing the Standards, observation reports and referee comments

Stage 2 – direct assessment of teacher practice onsite by an external assessor which includes observation, discussion with principal/supervisor, discussion with other colleagues as required, and professional discussion with applicant.

Assessment stage 1: Submission of evidence

Evidencing the Standards

To achieve certification, evidence of performance that improves teaching and learning is required at the Highly Accomplished or Lead career stages of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. Evidence includes:

- direct evidence - annotated artefacts, observation reports and feedback on teacher practice
- teacher reflection on the direct evidence
- referees statements.

The detail of the evidence to be provided differs between the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages, and is outlined below.

Direct evidence

At both career stages, the following principles apply:

- evidence collectively demonstrates achievement of each of the seven Standards and takes account of each of the descriptors at the relevant career stage
- a piece of evidence can address multiple descriptors, within and across the Standards and should demonstrate the holistic nature of the teacher's practice
- evidence will be drawn directly from the teacher's work
- evidence demonstrates the impact of the teacher's work on student outcomes, that could include student learning, engagement in learning and wellbeing
- evidence of the impact of the applicant's practice on others
- evidence must clearly reflect the teacher's individual contribution and demonstrate impact over a period of time.

The evidence drawn directly from practice will include:

- annotated artefacts of the teacher's practice
- at least two reports of classroom observation[8] at least one of which must be by the principal/ supervisor or delegate.

8 AITSL will develop a template to record observations, or existing observation reports may be annotated to demonstrate achievement of the Standards.

Examples of this evidence may include:

- lesson plans and supporting documentation that detail the planning and delivery of a teaching sequence and its impact on student learning
- annotated samples of student work
- analysis of student performance data and outcomes, demonstrating how this has influenced teaching strategies and planning
- documentation of assessment strategies, and their links to the intended learning outcomes
- student/parent feedback drawn from regular practice
- evidence of participation in professional learning, how it has improved teaching practice and the strategies/knowledge been applied to improve student outcomes
- documentation used to support engagement with parents, the community and colleagues. Evidence of the impact of this engagement should also be included.

Collectively, each of the seven Standards must be addressed by at least two pieces of evidence, and each of the descriptors at the relevant career stage will be accounted for at least once.

It is recognised that the evidence teachers can provide will vary depending on a number of contextual issues including level of schooling, position within a school, type of school and jurisdiction and sector. Teachers are encouraged to utilise evidence that is specific to their own context.

Some teachers may not be able to provide direct evidence which accounts for every descriptor drawn from their regular work. For example, a teacher may not have had the opportunity to teach Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students or students with a disability. However, using annotation to draw links and explain a teacher's knowledge in this area enables evidence that is not directly related to the descriptor to be used.

Teacher reflection on the direct evidence

The applicant will submit a short written statement addressing the Standards, which includes:

- an overview of the teacher's context and background to the evidence
- key features of the evidence
- a summary of major strengths as a teacher against each domain of the Standards – Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement.

In addition, for the Lead career stage, the applicant will submit a short description of an initiative the applicant has led within the school or across schools. This will be an initiative implemented over a period of time that was designed to build the capacity of colleagues.

The initiative must:

- be implemented over a minimum of 6 months
- be linked to school and/or system initiatives
- demonstrate the applicant's leadership in design, implementation, evaluation and review
- demonstrate evidence of impact on colleagues' knowledge, practice and/or engagement.

The written statement on the within or across school initiative will refer to the direct evidence.

Referees

Applicants must nominate referees who are able to provide evaluative statements regarding the applicant's evidence and performance against the specific focus areas of the Standards of which they have direct knowledge. The current principal/supervisor or delegate must be a referee. If the applicant is in a new[9] position the previous principal/supervisor's details must also be provided. Referees may include but are not limited to classroom teachers, school leaders, education consultants, teacher educators, and/or specialist staff.

Referees will have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice and the evidence they have provided. Applicants will state which Standards each referee can provide evidence against. Those referees, including the principal/supervisor, who have provided observation reports, will cover the observation in their statement.

Applicants will provide three to five referees, of which at least two including the principal/supervisor will be contacted by the assessors. Referee statements will be documented. At the Lead career stage, at least one referee must have knowledge of the within or across school initiative led by the applicant. A jurisdiction may require that all nominated referees provide comment.

9 'New' – less than 1 year in that position.

Assessment stage 1: Decision making and feedback

Applicants' achievement against the Standards will be determined through an independent assessment of evidence by two assessors external to the school/setting of the applicant and nominated by the certifying authority. Assessors will be trained in the certification and assessment process, and have the expertise to assess against the Standards at the relevant career stage and in the applicant's context.

Assessors may include teachers, school leaders, supervisors, education consultants, teacher educators, jurisdictional officers and/or specialist staff. As external assessors, they may not assess applications from their own school or applications where they have significant prior knowledge of a teacher's practice.

Over time, as their numbers increase, it is expected that certified teachers will take a role in assessing applications. This will enhance professional ownership of the process. As this occurs, it is expected that certified Lead teachers will assess Lead applications, while Highly Accomplished applications could be assessed by certified Lead and/or Highly Accomplished teachers.

The Stage 1 evidence will be assessed individually by two assessors, who will then confer, contact at least two referees and come to an assessment decision. If they cannot reach an agreement a third assessor will assist.

Assessment will be at the level of the seven Standards. Assessors will make an on-balance judgement about whether the Standard has been demonstrated, based on the evidence provided which takes account of each descriptor within that Standard. Applicants must be assessed as meeting all seven Standards to proceed to Stage 2.

Feedback

Feedback will be provided to all applicants at the end of stage 1:

- for unsuccessful applicants, feedback will provide detail regarding strengths and what areas require further improvement
- for successful applicants progressing to stage 2, feedback will identify the areas of focus for the onsite observations.

To ensure consistency with jurisdictional administrative and legal/appeal processes a jurisdiction may require referees to submit written statements and make these available to the applicant.

Assessment stage 2: Site visit including direct observation of practice and professional discussion

Stage 2 consists of direct observation of the applicant's practice and discussion with the applicant and with his/her supervisor, and other colleagues as required by an assessor. Stage 2 provides additional evidence to inform a final judgement as to whether an applicant meets the Standards, and allows the applicant to reflect on and demonstrate deep understanding of the evidence presented during Stage 1.

Following successful completion of Stage 1, there will be contact between the applicant and one of the assessors involved in Stage 1 about what areas within the Standards will be the focus of the site visit. The applicant will then take responsibility for structuring the site visit to allow observation of these agreed priority areas.

Following this discussion, the applicant will construct a program for a site visit. The visit is expected to be undertaken within one day and must include:

- pre-observation discussion led by the teacher about what is to be observed, which Standards will be demonstrated, the context and background of the observation
- observation of classroom practice which involves the applicant teaching more than one lesson, for example one session/two periods (or equivalent)
- discussion with the principal/supervisor to further explore the performance of the applicant against the Standards
- discussion with other colleagues as nominated by the applicant to provide further evidence against the Standards
- particularly at the Lead career stage, observation of other activities within the school, as required to demonstrate achievement of the Standards and as negotiated between the applicant and the assessor
- professional discussion with the applicant of up to one hour in length to:
  - debrief and reflect on the observation
  - explore the evidence provided in stage 1 in further depth
  - respond to questions.

Following the site visit, the assessor who conducted the visit will document the evidence provided during the site visit, and submit this to a second assessor. Where practical, this will be the same assessor who was involved in Stage 1. They will arrive at a decision on whether the applicant meets all seven Standards at the relevant career stage. Again, a third assessor may be involved where the first two are unable to reach a decision. A further site visit may be held at the instigation of the assessors where evidence remains inconclusive or insufficient.

Certification decision making

Assessors will make the final recommendation to the certifying authority based on the assessment of evidence against the Standards, observations of practice, referee statements and onsite discussions. Applicants will be provided with a copy of the assessment against the Standards and notification of the recommendation.

The certifying authority will endorse/decline the recommendation of the external assessors. This decision will be based on the certification assessment meeting the requirements of the certification process. On confirming a recommendation in favour of certification, the certifying authority will formally certify the teacher.

Appeals will be made available according to the legislation and processes existing in the jurisdiction where the decision is made.

Unsuccessful applications for certification as a Lead teacher are not automatically considered for Highly Accomplished status. Where an unsuccessful applicant for Lead teacher chooses to apply for certification as a Highly Accomplished teacher they may re-submit their application using substantially the same evidence, but the evidence will need to be annotated to demonstrate achievement of the Standards at the Highly Accomplished career stage, and the written statement adjusted accordingly. A new site visit may be required. This will be at the discretion of the assessors.

In order to conform with the managerial, administrative and legal processes of the jurisdiction or employing authority, and on the proviso that all elements of the common national process are adhered to, a jurisdiction may locate the final decision on certification with a specified person or persons. The decision maker will fully consider the advice of the external assessors and will undertake all the final decision making steps required by the common national process.

Renewal of certification

Certification will be granted for a fixed period of five years. The renewal process requires a re-assessment against all of the Standards through a written statement and feedback from referees who have direct knowledge of the applicant's teaching practice.

To be eligible for renewal of certification, teachers must maintain their full registration as a teacher, including requirements for professional practice and professional learning. They must also continue to receive satisfactory annual performance assessments.

To achieve renewal applicants will submit a written statement describing how their professional practice continues to meet the Standards at the relevant career stage, and how the professional learning they have undertaken since achieving certification has improved their practice. The statement will be supported by details of up to five referees, including the current principal/supervisor or delegate, who can attest to the material referred to in the statement and make comment on the applicant's performance against the Standards.

An external assessor appointed by the certifying authority will assess the statement and seek comment from at least two referees, including the current principal/supervisor or delegate, document the outcome of this discussion, and make a recommendation to the certifying authority on renewal.

Quality assurance

As part of renewal of certification the certifying authority may request release of information from other certifying authorities.

Quality assurance mechanisms are essential to achieve and maintain rigorous, valid and credible assessments of teachers' practice for the purposes of certification.

Moderation mechanisms will include but are not limited to:

- use of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* as the basis for assessment
- consistent assessor training
- use of experienced assessors
- support of assessors by the certifying authority
- a guide to certification and renewal of certification
- provision of examples of teacher practice at the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages through Illustrations of Practice and examples of evidence portfolios
- materials to support implementation, focussing on key components of the certification process:
  - effective classroom observations, including templates for observation reports
  - providing instructive feedback
  - assessing teacher effectiveness.

In partnership with the certifying authority, AITSL will monitor these mechanisms and adjust them to ensure their effectiveness.

Assessment processes and recommendations will be monitored and moderated by the certifying authority. This may take the form of an audit of the evidence of a sample of teachers who have been granted certification at the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages.

To support the certification process AITSL will coordinate and collate authoritative research on assessing teacher quality, and the reward, recognition and certification of excellence in teaching. In addition, AITSL will seek to actively participate in international benchmarking studies on recognition of quality teaching and will monitor and evaluate the operation of national processes to continuously improve the approach to certification.

Certifying authorities will collect and provide summary data on certification decisions at each stage of the assessment process. Evaluation, review and improvement of the certification process will be undertaken. AITSL will report annually to the Ministerial Council on the operation of the nationally consistent approach to certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers.

Roles and responsibilities

Item	AITSL	Jurisdictional certifying body
National standards and certification process	Establish, review and maintain the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, the certification process, and supplementary materials (supporting documentation, evidence guides and advice to assessors).	Advise and collaborate on establishment, review and maintenance of the certification process.
Nationally consistent training of assessors and jurisdictional officers	Provide support materials for nationally consistent training to assessors and jurisdictional officers.	Conduct nationally consistent training for assessors and jurisdictional officers.
Materials to support implementation	Develop materials to support implementation targeted at teachers, school leaders and systems.	Utilise materials to support implementation.
Promotion of voluntary certification	Develop information packages to enhance understanding and promote voluntary certification.	Conduct information sessions. Disseminate information and make available guides for users.
Appeals		Run or participate in appeals processes, depending on jurisdictional requirements. Where an appeal is upheld, convene a new assessment process.
National data	Maintain summary data on the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers. Establish links with relevant bodies for provision of data and information relating to the implementation of nationally consistent processes for certification.	Maintain a jurisdiction database of the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers. Provide AITSL with summary data at each stage of the certification process.
Quality assurance	Review nationally consistent certification and work with jurisdictions to implement improvements.	Participate in quality assurance and review processes to support national consistency.
Reporting	Report annually to the Ministerial Council on the implementation of nationally consistent processes for the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers.	Report to AITSL on implementation of nationally consistent processes for certification.

Glossary

Item	AITSL
Annual performance assessment	Annual performance assessments may be those conducted using the current school/system processes where these exist and are not required in a specific format. It is recognised that currently some schools may not have these processes, or the circumstances of teachers mean they have not received an assessment. In these cases, the referees will provide evidence of past performance. Following the implementation of the *Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework* the specific requirements of an annual performance assessment outlined will need to be met.
Assessor	Trained assessors external to the school/setting of the applicant are nominated by the certifying authority to assess the certification application following the common national process.
Certifying authority	In each jurisdiction, there will be one or more bodies managing the certification process referred to as the *certifying authority*. Arrangements will be negotiated in each jurisdiction.
Full registration	In accordance with the regulatory regimes in individual jurisdictions. In New South Wales full registration is *Accreditation at Professional Competence*. Some teachers in NSW are not required to be accredited, and these teachers are not excluded from this certification process if they meet the other eligibility requirements.
Delegate	Nominated by the principal/supervisor. May be the Deputy/Assistant Principal or equivalent member of the senior leadership team of the school/setting who have significant knowledge of the applicant's practice.
Portable	Certification will be portable, allowing teachers to maintain their status as a Highly Accomplished or Lead teacher if they move between jurisdictions and sectors. This does not mean that any industrial arrangements attached to certification, such as a particular rate of pay, are automatically transferable. The way in which certified teachers are recognised or rewarded is an employment matter.
Principal	The person taking responsibility for day-to-day management of the teacher and assessing their performance. Supervisor includes the equivalent position to principal in early childhood settings.
Referees	Referees may include but are not limited to classroom teachers, school leaders, education consultants, teacher educators, and/or specialist staff. Referees nominated by the applicant are required to provide verification and evaluative statements against specific focus areas of the Standards of which they have direct knowledge of the applicant's practice.
Setting	Setting is used inclusively to refer to early childhood provision, including long day care and preschools and kindergarten, as well as other settings where teachers work.
School	School is used inclusively to refer to Australian primary and secondary schools, and other educational settings where teacher registration applies.
Summary data	Data that will be collected and available to certifying authorities, AITSL and reported to the Ministerial Council will include but is not limited to; name, gender, work location, certification decision, career stage applied/achieved and year certified. Certifying authorities may choose to collect more detailed data to allow for an in-depth analysis.
Student outcomes	Broadly defined and includes student learning, engagement in learning and wellbeing.

Appendix – National Professional Standards for Teachers: Highly Accomplished and Lead Career Stages

Highly Accomplished teachers

Highly Accomplished teachers are recognised as highly effective, skilled classroom practitioners and routinely work independently and collaboratively to improve their own practice and the practice of colleagues. They are knowledgeable and active members of the school.

Highly Accomplished teachers contribute to their colleagues' learning. They may also take on roles that guide, advise or lead others. They regularly initiate and engage in discussions about effective teaching to improve the educational outcomes for their students.

They maximise learning opportunities for their students by understanding their backgrounds and individual characteristics and the impact of those factors on their learning. They provide colleagues, including pre-service teachers, with support and strategies to create positive and productive learning environments.

Highly Accomplished teachers have in-depth knowledge of subjects and curriculum content within their sphere of responsibility. They model sound teaching practices in their teaching areas. They work with colleagues to plan, evaluate and modify teaching programs to improve student learning. They keep abreast of the latest developments in their specialist content area or across a range of content areas for generalist teachers.

Highly Accomplished teachers are skilled in analysing student assessment data and use it to improve teaching and learning. They are active in establishing an environment which maximises professional learning and practice opportunities for colleagues. They monitor their own professional learning needs and align them to the learning needs of students.

They behave ethically at all times. Their interpersonal and presentation skills are highly developed. They communicate effectively and respectfully with students, colleagues, parents/carers and community members.

Lead teachers

Lead teachers are recognised and respected by colleagues, parents/carers and the community as exemplary teachers. They have demonstrated consistent and innovative teaching practice over time. Inside and outside the school they initiate and lead activities that focus on improving educational opportunities for all students.

They establish inclusive learning environments that meet the needs of students from different linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. They seek to improve their own practice and to share their experience with colleagues.

They are skilled in mentoring teachers and pre-service teachers, using activities that develop knowledge, practice and professional engagement in others. They promote creative, innovative thinking among colleagues.

Lead teachers apply skills and in-depth knowledge and understanding to deliver effective lessons and learning opportunities and share this information with colleagues and pre-service teachers. They describe the relationship between highly effective teaching and learning in ways that inspire colleagues to improve their own professional practice.

They lead processes to improve student performance by evaluating and revising programs, analysing student assessment data and taking account of feedback from parents/carers. This is combined with a synthesis of current research on effective teaching and learning.

Lead teachers represent the school and the teaching profession in the community. They are professional, ethical and respected individuals inside and outside the school.

Standard 1
Know students and how they learn

Descriptor at career stage		
Focus area	**Highly Accomplished**	**Lead**
1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students	Select from a flexible and effective repertoire of teaching strategies to suit the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students.	Lead colleagues to select and develop teaching strategies to improve student learning using knowledge of the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students.
1.2 Understand how students learn	Expand understanding of how students learn using research and workplace knowledge.	Lead processes to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching programs using research and workplace knowledge about how students learn.
1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	Support colleagues to develop effective teaching strategies that address the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.	Evaluate and revise school learning and teaching programs, using expert and community knowledge and experience, to meet the needs of students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.
1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Provide advice and support colleagues in the implementation of effective teaching strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students using knowledge of and support from community representatives.	Develop teaching programs that support equitable and ongoing participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by engaging in collaborative relationships with community representatives and parents/carers.
1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities	Evaluate learning and teaching programs, using student assessment data that are differentiated for the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.	Lead colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching programs differentiated for the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.
1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability	Work with colleagues to access specialist knowledge, and relevant policy and legislation, to develop teaching programs that support the participation and learning of students with disability.	Initiate and lead the review of school policies to support the engagement and full participation of students with disability and ensure compliance with legislative and/or system policies.

Standard 2
Know content and how to teach it

Descriptor at career stage		
Focus area	**Highly Accomplished**	**Lead**
2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area	Support colleagues using current and comprehensive knowledge of content and teaching strategies to develop and implement engaging learning and teaching programs.	Lead initiatives within the school to evaluate and improve knowledge of content and teaching strategies and demonstrate exemplary teaching of subjects using effective, research-based learning and teaching programs.
2.2 Content selection and organisation	Exhibit innovative practice in the selection and organisation of content and delivery of learning and teaching programs.	Lead initiatives that utilise comprehensive content knowledge to improve the selection and sequencing of content into coherently organised learning and teaching programs.
2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting	Support colleagues to plan and implement learning and teaching programs using contemporary knowledge and understanding of curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements.	Lead colleagues to develop learning and teaching programs using comprehensive knowledge of curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements.
2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians	Support colleagues with providing opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.	Lead initiatives to assist colleagues with opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.
2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies	Support colleagues to implement effective teaching strategies to improve students' literacy and numeracy achievement.	Monitor and evaluate the implementation of teaching strategies within the school to improve students' achievement in literacy and numeracy using research based knowledge and student data.
2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	Model high-level teaching knowledge and skills and work with colleagues to use current ICT to improve their teaching practice and make content relevant and meaningful.	Lead and support colleagues within the school to select and use ICT with effective teaching strategies to expand learning opportunities and content knowledge for all students.

Standard 3
Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

Descriptor at career stage		
Focus area	**Highly Accomplished**	**Lead**
3.1 Establish challenging learning goals	Develop a culture of high expectations for all students by modelling and setting challenging learning goals.	Demonstrate exemplary practice and high expectations and lead colleagues to encourage students to pursue challenging goals in all aspects of their education.
3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs	Work with colleagues to plan, evaluate and modify learning and teaching programs to create productive learning environments that engage all students.	Exhibit exemplary practice and lead colleagues to plan, implement and review the effectiveness of their learning and teaching programs to develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills.
3.3 Use teaching strategies	Support colleagues to select and apply effective teaching strategies to develop knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.	Work with colleagues to review, modify and expand their repertoire of teaching strategies to enable students to use knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.
3.4 Select and use resources	Assist colleagues to create, select and use a wide range of resources, including ICT, to engage students in their learning.	Model exemplary skills and lead colleagues in selecting, creating and evaluating resources, including ICT, for application by teachers within or beyond the school.
3.5 Use effective classroom communication	Assist colleagues to select a wide range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support students' understanding, engagement and achievement.	Demonstrate and lead by example inclusive verbal and non-verbal communication using collaborative strategies and contextual knowledge to support students' understanding, engagement and achievement.
3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs	Work with colleagues to review current teaching and learning programs using student feedback, student assessment data, knowledge of curriculum and workplace practices.	Conduct regular reviews of teaching and learning programs using multiple sources of evidence including: student assessment data, curriculum documents, teaching practices and feedback from parents/ carers, students and colleagues.
3.7 Engage parents/carers in the educative process	Work with colleagues to provide appropriate and contextually relevant opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in their children's learning.	Initiate contextually relevant processes to establish programs that involve parents/carers in the education of their children and broader school priorities and activities.

Standard 4
Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Descriptor at career stage		
Focus area	**Highly Accomplished**	**Lead**
4.1 Support student participation	Model effective practice and support colleagues to implement inclusive strategies that engage and support all students.	Demonstrate and lead by example the development of productive and inclusive learning environments across the school by reviewing inclusive strategies and exploring new approaches to engage and support all students.
4.2 Manage classroom activities	Model and share with colleagues a flexible repertoire of strategies for classroom management to ensure all students are engaged in purposeful activities.	Initiate strategies and lead colleagues to implement effective classroom management and promote student responsibility for learning.
4.3 Manage challenging behaviour	Develop and share with colleagues a flexible repertoire of behaviour management strategies using expert knowledge and workplace experience.	Lead and implement behaviour management initiatives to assist colleagues to broaden their range of strategies.
4.4 Maintain student safety	Initiate and take responsibility for implementing current school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements to ensure student wellbeing and safety.	Evaluate the effectiveness of student wellbeing policies and safe working practices using current school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements and assist colleagues to update their practices.
4.5 Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically	Model, and support colleagues to develop, strategies to promote the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.	Review or implement new policies and strategies to ensure the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.

Standard 5
Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Descriptor at career stage		
Focus area	**Highly Accomplished**	**Lead**
5.1 Assess student learning	Develop and apply a comprehensive range of assessment strategies to diagnose learning needs, comply with curriculum requirements and support colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of their approaches to assessment.	Evaluate school assessment policies and strategies to support colleagues with: using assessment data to diagnose learning needs, complying with curriculum, system and/or school assessment requirements and using a range of assessment strategies.
5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning	Select from an effective range of strategies to provide targeted feedback based on informed and timely judgements of each student's current needs in order to progress learning.	Model exemplary practice and initiate programs to support colleagues in applying a range of timely, effective and appropriate feedback strategies.
5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements	Organise assessment moderation activities that support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.	Lead and evaluate moderation activities that ensure consistent and comparable judgements of student learning to meet curriculum and school or system requirements.
5.4 Interpret student data	Work with colleagues to use data from internal and external student assessments for evaluating learning and teaching, identifying interventions and modifying teaching practice.	Co-ordinate student performance and program evaluation using internal and external student assessment data to improve teaching practice.
5.5 Report on student achievement	Work with colleagues to construct accurate, informative and timely reports to students and parents/carers about student learning and achievement.	Evaluate and revise reporting and accountability mechanisms in the school to meet the needs of students, parents/carers and colleagues.

Standard 6
Engage in professional learning

Descriptor at career stage		
Focus area	**Highly Accomplished**	**Lead**
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs	Analyse the National Professional Standards for Teachers to plan personal professional development goals, support colleagues to identify and achieve personal development goals and preservice teachers to improve classroom practice.	Use comprehensive knowledge of the National Professional Standards for Teachers to plan and lead the development of professional learning policies and programs that address the professional learning needs of colleagues and pre-service teachers.
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice	Plan for professional learning by accessing and critiquing relevant research, engage in high quality targeted opportunities to improve practice and offer quality placements for pre-service teachers where applicable.	Initiate collaborative relationships to expand professional learning opportunities, engage in research, and provide quality opportunities and placements for pre-service teachers.
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	Initiate and engage in professional discussions with colleagues in a range of forums to evaluate practice directed at improving professional knowledge and practice, and the educational outcomes of students.	Implement professional dialogue within the school or professional learning network(s) that is informed by feedback, analysis of current research and practice to improve the educational outcomes of students.
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning	Engage with colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher professional learning activities to address student learning needs.	Advocate, participate in and lead strategies to support high-quality professional learning opportunities for colleagues that focus on improved student learning.

Standard 7 – Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Descriptor at career stage		
Focus area	**Highly Accomplished**	**Lead**
7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities	Maintain high ethical standards and support colleagues to interpret codes of ethics and exercise sound judgement in all school and community contexts.	Model exemplary ethical behaviour and exercise informed judgements in all professional dealings with students, colleagues and the community.
7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements	Support colleagues to review and interpret legislative, administrative, and organisational requirements, policies and processes.	Initiate, develop and implement relevant policies and processes to support colleagues' compliance with and understanding of existing and new legislative, administrative, organisational and professional responsibilities.
7.3 Engage with the parents/carers	Demonstrate responsiveness in all communications with parents/carers about their children's learning and wellbeing.	Identify, initiate and build on opportunities that engage parents/carers in both the progress of their children's learning and in the educational priorities of the school.
7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities	Contribute to professional networks and associations and build productive links with the wider community to improve teaching and learning.	Take a leadership role in professional and community networks and support the involvement of colleagues in external learning opportunities.

Acknowledgements

Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers: Principles and processes was endorsed by Education Ministers at the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood on 20 April 2012.

Dr Chris Bourke MLA
Minister for Education and Training
(Australian Capital Territory)

The Hon. Peter Garrett AM MP
Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth (Australian Government)

The Hon. Adrian Piccoli MP
Minister for Education (New South Wales)

The Hon. Dr Christopher Burns MLA
Minister for Education and Training
(Northern Territory)

The Hon. John-Paul Langbroek MP
Minister for Education, Training and Employment
(Queensland)

The Hon. Grace Portolesi MP
Minister for Education and Child Development
(South Australia)

The Hon. Nick McKim MP
Minister for Education and Skills (Tasmania)

The Hon. Martin Dixon MLA
Minister for Education (Victoria)

The Hon. Peter Hall MLC
Minister for Higher Education and Skills
Minister for the Teaching Profession (Victoria)

The Hon. Dr Elizabeth Constable MLA
Minister for Education (Western Australia)
Chair, Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood

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Australian Institute
for Teaching and
School Leadership
Limited

www.aitsl.edu.au

Further information
Telephone: +61 3 9944 1200
Email: certification@aitsl.edu.au

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AITSL is funded by the Australian Government