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## **Going Global: Graduate Teacher Accreditation across Jurisdictions**

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the University of Exeter.

### **Abstract**

In recent years teacher education institutions have seen an increase in the number of graduates seeking to teach in jurisdictions other than the state or province in which they trained. A further development has been internationalisation of student populations where teaching training is undertaken internationally and the graduate seeks registration in their country of origin. The differing criteria for accreditation of teacher registration boards create complex and in many instances difficult decisions by course coordinators who are responsible for reviewing an applicant's academic record for entry and the suitability of the course they offer for accreditation in another state, province or country. With ongoing changes in the criteria of teacher registration boards the process of graduates seeking registration in jurisdictions outside where they train has further complicated the portability and hence the globalisation of a teacher education qualification.

Teaching is becoming a internationalised profession and the various registration boards in different countries, states and provinces are constantly responding to ongoing quality assurance measures. Assessment practices by teacher registration boards are varied and generally focus on a review on individual student transcripts to ensure that the applicant meets regional registration requirements. In this mire of analysis of subject names, mandatory requirements, numbers of days professional experience and the definitions of what is or isn't professional experience, the role of the course coordinator in assisting students with accreditation and understanding complex rules across jurisdictions creates a complex scenario that is restricting the concept of a internationalised teacher education qualification.

Even between the Australian States of NSW and QLD mutual recognition of teacher education qualifications due to different professional standards are increasing the barriers to recognition of teaching qualifications between the States. For instance for primary education the QLD requirement of the content of a first degree is that it should provide content knowledge to support teaching areas and the teacher education program is of one-years duration. In NSW the first degree must contain a specific number of curriculum areas taught in primary and the traditional one-year Graduate Diploma of Education courses are being phased out as the NSW Institute of Teachers implements new professional standards requiring a minimum three-semester course.

This paper opens a discourse, based upon the experiences of course coordinators across four jurisdictions, to establish the commonality of elements of teacher education programs with the view to developing processes by which a teacher education qualification may become as internationalised as possible in an ever changing world of professional standards. The paper outlines the various requirements for entry to post graduate courses in primary and secondary education in New Zealand (NZ), Queensland (QLD), New South Wales (NSW) and Ontario (ONT). This paper details the potential issues that restrict movement of graduates across teacher registration board jurisdictions.

## **Introduction**

In recent years teacher education institutions have seen an increase in the number of graduates seeking to teach in jurisdictions other than the state or province in which they trained. A further development has been internationalisation of student populations where teaching training is undertaken internationally and the graduate seeks registration in their country of origin. The differing criteria for accreditation of teacher registration boards create complex and in many instances difficult decisions by course coordinators who are responsible for reviewing an applicant's academic record for entry and the suitability of the course they offer for accreditation in another state, province or country. With ongoing changes in the criteria of teacher registration boards the process of graduates seeking registration in jurisdictions outside where they train has further complicated the portability and hence the globalisation of a teacher education qualification.

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## **New Zealand**

Graduate teacher accreditation in New Zealand is determined by the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC). The NZTC was established in 2002. It is an autonomous crown entity, funded by teachers, who must be registered by the NZTC, to teach in New Zealand. The NZTC's agreed role is to provide professional leadership in teaching, enhance the professional status of teachers and contribute to a high quality teaching and learning environment for children and other learners (NZTC, 2008a).

The legislative authority is outlined in Section 139 AE of the Education Act, 1989, in which the NZTC is required to determine standards for teacher registration and the issue of practising certificates, establish and maintain professional standards for qualifications that lead to teacher registration and to conduct, in conjunction with quality assurance agencies, approvals of teacher education programmes on the basis of the professional standards (NZTC, 2008a).

This means that the NZTC's approval is required for all New Zealand teacher education programmes. Full details of the requirements may be found in NZTC's Standards for Qualifications that lead to Teacher Registration: Guidelines for the Approval of Teacher Education Programmes (NZTC, 2008b). The main points of this document are outlined below.

To gain NZTC approval providers must provide specific information under the following headings to the Council: (*relevant details in italics*)

- Conceptual framework
- Programme Aims
- Graduate profile and standards
- Graduate status – *“All teaching qualifications will meet the standards for a bachelors degree or a graduate diploma...”*
- Research
- Consultation (internal and external)
- Programme content, design, structure and progression
- Assessment policies and procedures
- Practicum information – *“Practicum experience is expected to take place in registered schools ...in New Zealand....At least 14 weeks are likely to be necessary for all programmes. Preferably 20 or more weeks are likely to be necessary for practicum over a three year programme.”*
- Learning and teaching resources
- Entry standards – *“meets the registration criteria of good character and fit to be a teacher; achieves the level of a bachelors degree or a graduate diploma; can communicate clearly in English or in Maori...; attains a level of 7 in all components of the academic version of the IELTS test when they are immigrants to New Zealand and English is their second language; has the qualities and dispositions which enables them to meet the registration criteria...”*
- Recognition of prior learning
- Student support and guidance systems staff members
- Staff research and professional development

Finally, there are the Graduating Teacher Standards, introduced in 2007, which were designed to ensure that teacher graduates are of a consistent quality (NZTC, 2008d).

The Graduating Standards are in three domains:

1. Professional Knowledge
  - a) Graduating Teachers know what to teach
  - b) Graduating teachers know about learners and how they learn
  - c) Graduating teachers understand how contextual factors influence teaching and learning
2. Professional Practice
  - a) Graduating teachers use professional knowledge to plan for a safe, high quality teaching and learning environment
  - b) Graduating teachers use evidence to promote thinking
3. Professional Values and Relationships

- a) Graduating teachers develop positive relationships with learners and the members of learning communities
- b) Graduating teachers are committed members of the profession. (NZTC, 2008d).

Clearly, the NZTC is extremely powerful in shaping and monitoring the teacher education programmes offered by New Zealand universities and private providers and in determining the standards expected of graduates of those institutions. Student teachers who graduate from a programme meeting the requirements outlined above, are granted provisional registration by the NZTC. This allows graduate to apply for a fixed term or permanent appointment in a New Zealand school.

In the first year of teaching, a provisionally registered teacher can teach a maximum of 80% of a full time teaching load (20 hours per week). An additional hour must be made available for an advice and guidance programme that the employer school is obliged to provide. This equates to a total of 15 hours per week. In the second year the teaching load increases to 90% plus one hour for the advice and guidance programme.

On satisfactory completion of the two years, the employing principal attests that the provisionally registered teacher meets the criteria for full teacher registration. If the criteria are not met, provisional registration continues for another year.

Teachers from overseas wishing to teach in New Zealand must have their qualifications assessed for comparability with New Zealand qualifications by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). Where qualifications are deemed to be not comparable, they may be considered for registrations under specific provisions or applicant may be required to undertake a teacher education qualification in New Zealand. Teachers holding current teacher registration in Australia maybe eligible to be considered for registration under the provisions of the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Act.

These provisions allow for a reasonably free flow of teachers into New Zealand, particularly from the United Kingdom, South Africa, Canada and Australia. This is assisted by The New Zealand Ministry of Education's provision of financial incentives for NZQA approved teachers from outside New Zealand, in curriculum areas where there is a teacher shortage.

## **Queensland**

Teacher registration in Queensland is governed by the recently formed Queensland College of Teachers (QCT). The QCT has three registration classifications. Provisional registration is granted to all applicants who seek it having completed an approved program in a Queensland University. Generally, provisional registration lasts for two to four years. After two years, registrants can apply for full registration and have to meet the professional standards for full registration. Full registration is renewed every five years, subject to the registrant demonstrating a range of professional requirements. A third, Permission to Teach is granted to people who do not have a teaching qualification but can demonstrate suitability to teach and discipline knowledge in the area in which they are being employed to teach. Permission to teach is only granted when the employing body can demonstrate that no registered teacher is available to fill the position. Finally, there is mutual recognition of registered teachers from New Zealand, and other Australian states, although application for registration is still required. These are covered by Acts of Parliament. New South Wales is notably absent from the list.

Universities in Queensland that offer teacher registration must have all programs approved under the Program Approval Guidelines (QCT, 2007a). Program Approval requires the University to demonstrate to the relevant Professional Standards Committee that the Education program gives students opportunity to grow in the Professional Standards for Teachers (QCT, 2007b) and that the University has the resources and capabilities to teach the documented program. The Program Leader or Team must complete a self-evaluation proforma that responds to each of the 10 standards with evidence of how any particular standard is attained through the content, teaching and learning activities and assessment of courses within the program.

At the University of the Sunshine Coast, Program Approval has been sought and gained for the one-year postgraduate program – the Graduate Diploma in Education. The program contains a number of pathways – Early Learning, Middle Phase, Senior Years, Primary (for international students only), VET and ICT. The Primary pathway was not approved for domestic students based on the current employment outlook for teachers in the primary sector.

Of the University's cohort, about one-third is international students from North America who will use their registration in Queensland to seek registration in Ontario, Canada. Therefore the registration requirements for Ontario from the Ontario College of Teachers represent another layer of regulations that must be considered to ensure that Queensland registered teachers are also registrable in Ontario.

Teachers applying with Queensland registration must provide a transcript of both undergraduate and Graduate Diploma programs, a certificate of registration and a statement of good professional standing from the Queensland College of Teachers. Applicants then have their credentials evaluated. This process also includes regular correspondence between the Ontario College of Teachers and the University to clarify various aspects of the teacher education program.

One example of the contrast between the two registering bodies is what must be included in the teacher education program. Whereas the Queensland Program Approval Process is based on Professional Standards, the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) requirements are more granular:

- 40 per cent of one year focused on teaching methods – preparation in how to teach students in particular grades or subject areas
- 20 per cent of one year focused on education foundations – the history, philosophy and psychology of education
- 20 per cent in any other area of education
- a minimum of 40 days of practice teaching supervised by the program provider. (Ontario College of Teachers, 2008c)

Queensland's requirements are more focused on standards than definition of particular aspects, requiring the program to encompass 'professional studies in Education, discipline studies [for undergraduate programs] and include embedded professional experiences'. (Queensland College of Teachers, 2007a, p 21) Therefore in the development and review of our Queensland program the requirements in Ontario, while aligned with what is offered in most one year teacher education programs in Queensland, must be considered.

Secondly, It has been mooted by the OCT that they will change the amount of supervised practicum from 40 to 60 days in the near future. The current Queensland requirement is for 55 days so our program will have to change to respond to this change in an international registration context. Regular reference to the Ontario college of Teachers' website and attendance at meetings organised for overseas universities in Canada are vital in ensuring the alignment.

Thirdly, there is slight mismatch between the teachable areas of Ontario and Queensland that have the potential to be problematic. For example Ontario recognises teachables in Classical Studies Greek and Classical Studies Latin. There is no viable syllabus for either of these areas in Queensland, yet to meet Queensland's requirements, the applicant must have used Queensland Curriculum frameworks, therefore these areas cannot be studied by an international student in Queensland.

Finally, and this conundrum is not particularly related to registration, there is some resistance to the notion of the 'international teacher' at the school level. When Canadian pre-service teachers enter the local classroom, not all schools see it as an amazing opportunity for cultural exchange. Some teacher mentors have expressed a concern that their time and expertise is not spent mentoring a teacher who is likely to teach beside them in the following year. Many international graduates would like to teach in Australia and some do navigate the visa requirements to do so. Others head to other countries with less parochial views and use their well-respected Queensland registration to secure employment as teachers throughout Asia and Europe before returning to Canada.

These teacher-graduates are international in the sense that they use their knowledge about teaching and learning to adapt to different systems and curriculums and to teach responsively in different cultures. Their choice to engage in teacher education in an international setting speaks powerfully about their ability to take risks, seek new opportunities, be flexible and engaged with their context - all positive qualities for teachers. When and if they return to their country of origin, they bring new richness to their classrooms as a result of their global experiences.

### **New South Wales**

Since 2004 the body responsible for the accreditation of teachers and the endorsement of courses is the New South Wales Institute of Teachers (NSWIT). The process of accreditation of graduates and the endorsement of courses is based around the framework of Professional Teaching Standards that comprises four key stages, three teaching domains and seven elements (NSWIT, 2008b).

The four key stages are designed as a foundation for the accreditation of teachers. The key stages are graduate teacher, professional competence, professional accomplishment and professional leadership. The top level of professional leadership accredits teachers with a record of outstanding teaching and demonstrated commitment to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. The Professional Teaching Standards within each key stage are intended to describe the nature of teachers' work in three domains: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Commitment (NSWIT, 2008b).

The seven elements are:

- Teachers know their subject/content and how to teach that content to their students
- Teachers know their students and how students learn
- Teachers plan, assess and report for effective learning
- Teachers communicate effectively with their students
- Teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments through the use of classroom management skills
- Teachers continually improve their professional knowledge and practice
- Teachers are actively engaged members of their profession and the wider community. (NSWIT, 2008b)

Each of the seven elements contains multiple criteria that must be assessed at each of the four key stages in a teacher's professional life.

For entry to a graduate teaching course in NSW applicants must satisfy certain requirements including holding an appropriate Bachelor degree. For entry to primary education the degree must contain a minimum study determined as eight units (semester long course) in Key Learning Areas considered relevant. This requirement can be met by either one full academic year (two semester units) of study in four key learning areas or two full academic years (four semester units) of study in one key learning area and one full academic year (two semester units) of study in two other key learning areas (NSW Institute of Teachers, 2008). Key Learning Areas are defined as English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative and Practical Arts and Personal Development Health and Physical Education.

For entry to secondary education the undergraduate degree must contain a minimum of six sequential semester-long units of discipline knowledge in a designated teaching area and four of the units must be at level two (second year or above). For a second designated teaching area four units are required with two of the units at level two. On the surface the requirements above look simple enough. However in practice the additional specifications by the NSW Institute of Teachers requires a complex analysis of student transcripts matched against the thirty-one pages of additional definitions for secondary education and six pages for primary education.

For instance with the designated teaching area of Secondary Business Studies six semester units in a business major may not necessarily qualify you to enter the post graduate teaching course. Further definition of the relevant academic study indicates that the applicant should have a major in business studies with at least one unit in finance or accounting, one unit in business management and the remaining units draw from business law (Australian/English), economics, human resource management, industrial relations and marketing (NSW Institute of Teachers, 2008). Within the description the definition of a unit in business management remains unclear and the interpretation is to a degree left with program coordinators approving entry.

Another example of this occurs in the area of Personal Development Health and Physical Education (PDHPE). PDHPE as a combination of discipline areas is unique to NSW. Six units of sequential study in a Movement Science, Exercise Science, Sports Management or another degree in the traditional discipline area will probably not qualify you for entry to the graduate teaching course in PDHPE. The six unit major requirement is further defined by the NSW Institute of Teachers (2008, p. 39) as

*A major in*

- *personal development and/or*
- *health studies (with a socio-cultural perspective) and/or*
- *physical education*

*with at least three units of study in health education including mental health, sexual health, relationships, drug education, child protection education, gender studies and risk taking behaviour*

*and*

*at least three units of study in physical education including contemporary physical activities, dance, gymnastics, games and sport.*

*Vocationally oriented courses, coaching certificates, umpiring/refereeing accreditation in sports and physical activities are not recognised as equivalent.*

The simple definition of six semester long units becomes extremely complex when reviewed in terms of specific designated teaching areas. The three required units in health education must cover all areas specified including mental health, sexual health, relationships, drug education, child protection education, gender studies and risk taking behaviour. Unless the undergraduate program is specifically tailored to the NSW PDHPE definition it is highly unlikely that in a degree from another Australian state or from overseas could cover all specified areas in just three units. In addition the unit focus must have a socio-cultural perspective. The broad definition of a socio-cultural perspective means that the themes of social structures (including law and politics), social factors (community expectations), faith or religion, culture, economics, family structures, employment, support networks and social relationships, need to be evident in the units of study. Under the specifications a standard university unit in the biology of sexual health would not meet the criteria. Similarly a unit in mental health dealing only with a hegemonic medical approach would also not meet the specifications. In addition the three units in physical education must cover contemporary physical activities, dance, gymnastics, games and sport. Again finding units that cover more than one area means that to meet the specifics up to five units may be necessary to cover all the dimensions of the definition.

The requirements in terms of undergraduate content studies for entry to a graduate teacher education course are defined specifically in terms of not only the number of units but also the type or nature of a unit in a discipline area. The rigidity of the process also does not allow any degree of flexibility. The result of this process is that for most students applying from overseas or interstate additional undergraduate content units are required to be studied either prior to or in conjunction with the teacher education qualification. In addition the NSWIT also specify mandatory elements to be covered in the teacher education qualification itself. These include specific content in special education, behaviour management, educational information technology, Indigenous studies, literacy and NESB perspectives.

In comparison with NZ, QLD and Ontario, the NSWIT requirements for accreditation as a teacher are more specifically defined with the result that graduates and practising teachers coming into NSW may need to undertake additional study in order to be accredited as a teacher. As NSW, for the purposes of teacher accreditation, is not compliant with the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Act portability of a qualification to teach both out and into the state is limited.

### **Certifying to teach in Ontario, Canada, after having trained abroad**

In Canada, Education is controlled by the Provincial level of government. In Ontario, the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) has been in existence for about 12 years. It is the governing body of teachers as well as the certifying body for teachers. Teacher contracts and salaries are negotiated without OCT intervention as each school board in Ontario negotiates with its own local district bargaining unit that is affiliated with its Provincial Federation or union .

When returning from any jurisdiction with a newly acquired certificate of teaching, a teacher must submit the appropriate paperwork to the OCT to receive their interim certificate which is the initial license to teach in Ontario. All official paperwork must be submitted directly to the OCT by the university issuing the certificate.

Applicants who have completed their teacher education program outside Ontario are initially certified with an Interim Certificate of Qualification. This certificate is valid for 6 years from the date of issue. Once all conditions attached to the interim certificate have been fulfilled and the applicant has successfully completed one year (10 months/194 days) of successful teaching, they can then apply to convert their interim certificate to a Certificate of Qualification.

It is important to remember that it is a combination of the applicant's undergraduate degree and their teaching certificate that is considered by the OCT when interim certificates are being awarded. In Ontario, a teacher at the Intermediate or Senior level must have supporting subjects in their undergraduate degree for their "teachable" subjects. An Intermediate teacher must have one teachable and a Senior teacher must have two teachable subjects. It is common for foreign universities to only offer a one teachable Senior course. Senior teachers wanting to teach in Ontario must therefore upgrade their qualification. If a teacher's undergraduate degree supports the second teachable, then the OCT will award an interim certificate to teach with conditions that the teacher upgrades their second teachable within a timeframe, usually one school year.

Upgrading a teachable is quite simple and can be done online in about four months. Courses to upgrade can also be taken on site at most Universities or may be offered through the University at a School Board Office. Some courses are offered over a four-week term during the Summer, either at the University or offsite. These courses are called Additional Qualification courses and are offered by most Ontario universities. These AQ courses are provided for teachers to increase their training.

The course needed to upgrade to a second teachable is called an Additional Basic Qualification (ABQ). Students can take an ABQ course in Primary or Junior without a subject specialism. This means that if you are a secondary teacher who wishes to teach at the upper elementary level you can take one ABQ course in Junior education and then be qualified to teach the junior years.

## Discussion

There is much to value in the experiences and qualifications of a teacher educated in another country or jurisdiction. In addition to a wealth of life experiences, the teacher graduates can offer the jurisdiction they wish to work in a broader understanding of other models of schooling, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Many international pre-service teachers identify the experience itself as adding to their capacity as teachers, particularly in relation to cultural awareness.

While there are a number of differences between the registration requirements of the jurisdictions discussed that restrict the portability of the qualification, there are many more commonalities. All teacher education courses offered in these jurisdictions have similar elements, although as this paper has demonstrated, their implementation can be constraining, and all have to demonstrate alignment with a set of professional standards. The discussion that follows reflects on some of the differences and commonalities and suggests a number of ways forward that might enhance increasing global recognition of teaching qualifications from these jurisdictions.

Even between the Australian States of NSW and QLD mutual recognition of teacher education qualifications due to different professional standards are increasing the barriers to recognition of teaching qualifications between the states. For instance for primary education QLD has no specific requirement on the content of a first degree and the teacher education program is of one-year's duration. In NSW the first degree must contain a specific number of curriculum areas taught in primary and the traditional one-year Graduate Diploma of Education courses are being phased out as the NSW Institute of Teachers implements new professional standards requiring a minimum three-semester course.

If you hold current registration in one or more Australia States or NZ, an application for registration in all Australian States except NSW has to be recognized under the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Act (QCT, 2008). NSW is very significant in its absence under the Act. The changing requirements in NSW related to the length of study to qualify for primary education, specifications in terms of undergraduate degree content and mandatory areas to be covered in the postgraduate course appear to be significant barriers to moving forward towards a more global approach to the recognition of teacher education qualifications across jurisdictions.

What is common with the registering bodies in NZ, QLD, NSW, and Ontario is the process of evaluation of courses and graduating students against professional teaching standards. This will continue to become the case as professional bodies seek to enhance the profile of their profession, using standards for registration or certification as a method to do so. In many of the jurisdictions discussed, assessing teacher standards will become an ongoing feature of registration, with teachers having to demonstrate their ongoing professional status through a combination of work, supervision and mentoring and further study. At the moment, the degree of prescription in relation to teaching standards varies widely across the various jurisdictions. In addition the differing specifications in terms of undergraduate content as a prerequisite to entry to a post-graduate teacher education course also have significantly different requirements with NSW being the most prescriptive especially in the area of PDHPE.

The development and approval of short courses similar to the ABQ in Ontario or 'Return to Teaching' in Queensland to obtain additional certification in other teaching areas or update teachers on the latest curriculum developments in the field would facilitate a more flexible approach to the recognition of qualifications across jurisdictions. Another answer to the current challenges of

portability may be had through utilization of standards. As well as making assessments on the courses of study undertaken, jurisdictions could choose to require teachers trained in other jurisdictions to demonstrate their capacity in the professional standards. Extension of agreements related to mutual recognition across the various registration boards will also assist in internationalising a teacher education qualification. Establishment of a mutual recognition agreement between all Australian States, including NSW and with the Ontario College of Teachers would be the first step towards internationalisation of a teacher education qualification from Australian universities.

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