

POLICY ON THE INDUCTION OF EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Independent Education Union Victoria Tasmania (IEU) believes that the structured and resourced induction of those new to the teaching profession is integral to the quality assurance processes in any school and system. The union believes that providing quality induction processes should be recognised as a major responsibility of schools, employing authorities and systems.

The IEU is committed to the support of Early Career Teachers in schools, through both the regulation of industrial conditions and the establishment of well-resourced induction programs. Supportive induction processes and opportunities should be extended to all Early Career Teachers, including those who are employed as Casual/Relief Teachers.

The purpose of this policy is to assist the members of the IEU, and schools in general, to develop and implement effective induction programs for Early Career Teachers.

2. Guiding Principles for the Induction of Early Career Teachers

- 2.1 School and system induction programs for Early Career Teachers should be guided by the following principles:

Variety - School induction programs should provide a variety of forms of assistance to the beginning teacher which supplement and build upon the Early Career Teacher's background knowledge and skills.

Resources - The school should provide the sufficient support and resources to ensure that the Early Career Teacher is able to work closely with a Mentor, particularly over their first year of teaching, but extended into the second year as necessary.

Workload and Support - The school should also protect the Early Career Teacher from unreasonable workload and other demands, encourage them, strengthen their confidence and satisfaction in their work, and respect their teaching style.

Industrial Protections – Entitlements to induction should be provided for in industrial agreements so that appropriate monitoring, accountability, implementation and resourcing can be ensured.

Individual school policies, consultative workload processes, and school and term by term timetabling arrangements should clearly articulate and reflect the elements and stages of the structured induction program, including practical, timetabled support for all elements of the program.

The union is opposed to any form of probationary employment, contractual arrangements or induction processes that are linked to punitive or formal performance management. Early Career Teachers need to experience a supportive work environment without feeling vulnerable about employment security.

3. The Structured Induction Program

- 3.1 The IEU strongly advocates a well-structured and resourced approach to an Early Career Teacher's experience, which can be achieved by a better combination of time release and effective mentoring. In "best practice" models, induction roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined and formally linked to professional development and collaborative working arrangements.

Individual schools, as well as the various Catholic Education Commissions, Catholic Education Offices, and school advisory bodies such as the Association of Independent Schools also need to commit resources to support quality induction programs for Early Career Teachers in the non-government sector.

3.2 The School Program

Clear guidelines and processes should be established at the school level as soon as possible for Early Career Teachers so that all of the support structures are in place for their commencement in the job. Below are the key elements which should be included in the program:

- (i) **An Individualised Program** - the development and resourcing of a specific individualised induction program for each Early Career Teacher;
- (ii) **Induction Co-ordinator** - the designation of a particular staff member as a Co-ordinator of induction in the school with appropriate time release. The Co-ordinator should be more generally responsible for the oversight of the induction program and for the smooth running of the program, including oversight of the mentoring aspect of the program. For example, an Early Career Teacher may need to raise issues and concerns about the mentoring program with someone other than their Mentor etc.
- (iii) **Provision of Information** - the provision of clear employment-related information, including, but not limited to a duty statement, materials relevant to the ethos and mission of the school, information on superannuation entitlements and options, union coverage and benefits, salary and conditions entitlements, and the provision of and training in school policies, procedures and general expectations, including, WHS, mandatory reporting responsibilities, duty of care, and teacher/parent communication;
- (iv) **Provision and Resourcing of a Mentor Teacher** - the identification, training and support of a Mentor Teacher who has appropriate time release (see clause 6.0) to work with the Early Career Teacher throughout the induction process, as well as in the activities, both recommended and required, to assist the Early Career Teacher to move from Provisional Registration to Full Registration (Victorian Institute of Teaching/ Teachers

Registration Board Tasmania);

- (v) **Role clarity** - the establishment of general principles concerning the roles and responsibilities of the Early Career Teacher and Mentor or Colleague teacher;
- (vi) **Professional Development Opportunities** - access for both the Early Career Teacher and Mentor to appropriate ongoing professional development activities, including the provision of information for the Early Career Teacher on areas such as teacher unionism, professional associations, P.D. activities etc; and mentor training for the Mentor;
- (vii) **Reduced Teaching Loads** - the entitlement of the Early Career Teacher to a lighter load (see clause 4.0) and ongoing time release (reduced load or block release) for the Mentor Teacher (see clause 6.0) to ensure appropriate time for consultation and advice etc, and the undertaking of activities required in applying for Full Registration;
- (viii) **Additional timetabled release** - the provision of timetabled support and additional release time to the Early Career Teacher to participate in the induction program and undertake the requirements of moving from Provisional Registration to Full Registration (which may be undertaken in their second year of teaching);
- (ix) **Wellbeing Counselling** - access for the Early Career Teacher to general wellbeing counselling services without any reference to professional competence;
- (x) **Review of Program** – the school should undertake a regular review of the effectiveness of the induction program.

4. **Reduced Load and Time Release for Early Career Teachers**

- 4.1 This policy recognises early Career Teachers as those who are at least in their first three years of teaching after pre-service training.
- 4.2 **Time release** - Early Career Teachers should be allocated a reduced teaching load of not less than *two hours per week* in their first year of teaching. The reduced load should be extended beyond this first year, as appropriate.
- 4.3 **Class allocations** – Early Career Teachers should not be allocated to teach curriculum areas outside of their teacher training. Wherever possible, Early Career Teachers should not be allocated classes in multiple different year levels and subject areas. Their specific allocation should support them to build and consolidate their skills and minimise multiple planning, assessment and reporting requirements.
- 4.4 **Support for Full Registration Processes** - Provisionally Registered Teachers should have access to a clear process to assist them in meeting the requirements for Full Registration. *Additional time release* should also be provided to the Early Career Teacher, particularly for but not limited to,

undertaking any activities required in respect to application for Full Registration, for example, joint planning, observation of classes of experienced teachers, collegial activities, collegial meetings, preparation of documents for the evidence-based process, and undertaking other professional development opportunities etc.

- 4.5 Where an Early Career Teacher undertakes activities required for application for Full Registration in their *second year* of teaching, specific time release should be given over that year to undertake collegial meetings and activities with their Mentor or experienced Colleague, and to support them in other professional development activities.

5. Provisionally Registered Casual/Relief Teachers

- 5.1 Provisionally Registered teachers who are not employed in a permanent position in a school should be supported to achieve Full Registration. This should include Casual/Relief Teachers (CRTs) who undertake work in the school.

In addition to the provision of relevant information outlined in 3.2, schools should as a minimum provide opportunities sufficient for these Provisionally Registered Teachers to undertake the activities required in respect to application for Full Registration, including classroom observation sessions, collegial activities and meetings. Experienced staff should be allocated additional release time to assist these Provisionally Registered CRTs seeking Full Registration.

Wherever possible, Casual/Relief Teachers should have access to professional development opportunities run at the school and be made aware of opportunities available by outside providers.

5.2 Casual Relief Teacher Agencies

Casual Relief Teacher Agencies should support Early Career Teachers with a structured induction program consistent with the principles articulated in this policy, and also provide specific opportunities for Provisionally Registered teachers to undertake training and have support in undertaking the process of applying for Full Registration. This should include liaising with schools to facilitate the teacher's access to opportunities to enable them to undertake the required activities.

6. Mentor Teachers

- 6.1 Experienced teachers who are part of this process, through mentoring and the provision of professional support, should also have their input and skills developed and formally recognised within the profession, rather than the current reliance on goodwill and additional workload.
- 6.2 **Time Release for Mentoring** - The teaching load of a Mentor Teacher should also be reduced to enable them to provide the necessary level of support in the induction process. Mentor Teachers should be allocated at least the equivalent of *one hour per week additional* release in the first year of working with an Early Career Teacher. If an induction program is extended beyond the first year, the

Mentor should be provided with time release adequate to the support required.

- 6.3 Time Release for participation in the Application for Full Registration processes** - In addition to providing ongoing support throughout the induction process, Mentors or other experienced Colleague teachers will need to undertake specific support to the Early Career Teacher in respect to any activities required for application for Full Registration, including activities such as attending mentor training, assisting in the development and implementation of Action Plans (Victoria), joint planning prior to classroom collaboration, observation of classes, collegial interaction with the provisionally registered teacher in their classroom, follow-up collegial discussions, participation in panels etc.

During any period of intense collegial work associated with Full Registration process, Mentor Teachers should be allocated *further additional release time of at least one hour per week*.

Where a Provisionally Registered Teacher undertakes activities required for application for Full Registration in their second year of teaching, specific time release should be given at the relevant time for the Mentor or experienced Colleague Teacher to undertake the necessary collegial meetings and activities, participate in panel or other evaluative processes, and to provide support for the Early Career Teacher in other professional development activities.