

Proficient Teacher Accreditation Policy

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1 Purpose

The *Proficient Teacher Accreditation Policy* (the Policy) describes the requirements for gaining accreditation to teach in NSW at the Proficient Teacher career stage of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (the Standards).

2 Scope

The Policy applies to:

- teachers with provisional or conditional accreditation
- previously accredited teachers returning to teaching in NSW
- teachers with full and current registration to teach in another Australian state or territory seeking accreditation to teach in NSW.

The Policy describes the roles and responsibilities of teachers working towards accreditation at Proficient Teacher in schools/services and in non-school/non-service-based positions,¹ and the roles and responsibilities of supervisors², principals/service directors³, employers, Teacher Accreditation Authorities (TAAs) and the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) in the Proficient Teacher accreditation process (see Section 10 of the Policy).

3 Context

The Policy gives effect to the relevant provisions in the *Teacher Accreditation Act 2004* (the TA Act) that govern the accreditation of NSW early childhood, primary and secondary teachers (TA Act, Sections 19-33) and the *Education Standards Authority Act 2013* (the NESA Act).

The Policy forms part of the professional teaching standards approved by the Minister (TA Act, Sections 19-20) and constitutes NESA rules (NESA Act, Section 25) including in relation to the conditions that apply to the accreditation of teachers (TA Act, Section 23A).

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- *Teacher Accreditation Act 2004* (the TA Act)
- *Education Standards Authority Act 2013* (the NESA Act)
- *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (the Standards)
- *Accreditation of Teachers by the NSW Education Standards Authority Policy*
- *Guidelines for the Regulation of Teacher Accreditation Authorities for Non-government Schools and Early Childhood Education Centres* (the TAA Guidelines)
- *Interim Revocation, Suspension and Voluntary Cancellation of Accreditation Policy*⁴
- *Leave of Absence Policy*
- *Provisional and Conditional Accreditation Policy*.

¹ Teachers should also refer to their Teacher Accreditation Authority's (TAA's) procedures for the accreditation processes that apply in their school/service or workplace context.

² For the purposes of the Policy, the term supervisor refers to a teacher who has been delegated in line with the TAA's procedures to fulfil the roles and responsibilities described in Section 10.2 of the Policy. Supervisors must be accredited at Proficient Teacher or above.

³ For the purposes of the Policy, where the teacher working towards accreditation at Proficient Teacher is also the principal/service director, or does not have a principal/service director, provision must be made in the TAA's policy in relation to any function required to be performed by the principal/service director under the Policy.

⁴ The *Interim Revocation, Suspension and Voluntary Cancellation of Accreditation Policy* is under review in 2017 and will be replaced by the *Revocation, Suspension and Voluntary Cancellation of Accreditation Policy*.

4 Proficient Teacher Accreditation Requirements

All teachers with provisional or conditional accreditation must achieve accreditation at Proficient Teacher within a specified timeframe to remain eligible to teach in NSW. The requirement to achieve accreditation at Proficient Teacher also applies to principals/service directors.⁵ Achieving accreditation at Proficient Teacher is a workplace-based process which supports teachers to develop their practice and become accredited as full members of the teaching profession.

Provisionally and conditionally accredited teachers begin working towards accreditation at Proficient Teacher from the day they start employment as a teacher in a NSW school/service. TAAs must ensure that all provisionally and conditionally accredited teachers are provided with constructive feedback about their practice in relation to the Standards⁶ for Proficient Teacher throughout their accreditation period.

To achieve Proficient Teacher accreditation, teachers with provisional or conditional accreditation must:

- meet the Standards for Proficient Teacher
- submit evidence that demonstrates they have reflected on their practice against the Standards and that their practice consistently meets the Standards to finalise their accreditation (see Sections 4.2.2, 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 of the Policy)
- if conditionally accredited, provide a certified copy of their transcript as evidence of completion of their teacher education program
- pay the annual accreditation fee
- hold a current NSW Working With Children Check (WWCC) clearance.

TAAs must have internal policies and procedures that describe the processes for teachers who are working towards Proficient Teacher in their school/s/service/s. A TAA's internal processes for teachers working towards Proficient Teacher must be:

- workplace-based
- appropriate for each teacher's context
- flexible to accommodate the individual needs of teachers
- capacity building for teachers and their supervisors.

4.1 Developing practice at Proficient Teacher

Provisionally and conditionally accredited teachers develop their practice at Proficient Teacher by participating in a range of professional activities⁷ while employed as a teacher in a school/s/service/s.

As teachers develop their practice they will produce documentary evidence, have their practice observed by a colleague/s⁸ and/or their supervisor and receive timely and constructive feedback on their practice.⁹

⁵ In line with Section 3A of the TA Act and the second reading speech made in the Legislative Assembly, 12 May 2004.

⁶ Any reference to the Standards in the Policy refers to the seven Standards holistically.

⁷ Professional activities are those that teachers undertake in the course of their teaching practice in relation to the Standards' three domains of teaching: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement.

⁸ For the purposes of finalising accreditation at Proficient Teacher, provisionally or conditionally teachers must have their practice observed by their supervisor and submit a report on the observation.

⁹ Documentary evidence and the observation of practice for principals/service directors and executive teaching staff will reflect the

If a supervisor becomes aware of any issues with a teacher's practice that may negatively impact on the Proficient Teacher accreditation decision, the supervisor must advise the teacher and the principal/service director in writing within 21 calendar days¹⁰ of becoming aware of the issue/s. In cases where the principal/service director is not the TAA and they consider that the issue/s may negatively impact on the accreditation decision, they must inform the TAA within 21 calendar days of being advised by the supervisor, including the specific Proficient Teacher Standard Descriptor/s that the teacher does not meet.

4.2 Finalising accreditation at Proficient Teacher

When a teacher is confident that their practice meets all of the Standard Descriptors for Proficient Teacher they should initiate a discussion with their supervisor about their readiness to finalise their accreditation.

Teachers employed on a casual basis who work in a number of schools/services should approach a school/service or TAA with whom they have an established relationship to finalise their accreditation at Proficient Teacher.

If a principal/service director and/or TAA cannot confidently make a judgement about a casual teacher's practice they may decline a request from a casual teacher to make the accreditation decision (see also Section 6 of the Policy).

Teachers must initiate a discussion about finalising their accreditation no later than three months before the end of their maximum accreditation timeframe (see Section 5 of the Policy).

To finalise a teacher's accreditation the following evidence must be submitted:

- documentary evidence of the teacher's practice that they have selected, annotated and submitted to their supervisor (see 4.2.2 of the Policy)
- a report on an observation of the teacher's practice completed by their supervisor (see 4.2.3 of the Policy);¹¹ and
- the Proficient Teacher Accreditation Report completed by the teacher's supervisor (see 4.2.4 of the Policy).

Collectively, a teacher's evidence must:

- address at least one Proficient Teacher Standard Descriptor from each of the seven Standards
- demonstrate their engagement in a range of professional activities.

Overseas trained teachers who undertook any part of the full four years of required higher education (or qualifications assessed as comparable) in a country where English is not the main language must complete an English Language Proficiency assessment before they can finalise their accreditation at Proficient Teacher.¹²

nature of their role and their responsibility for leading and supporting teaching and learning in their school/service, according to the Standards for Proficient Teacher.

¹⁰ For the purposes of the Policy, any reference to 'calendar days' excludes school holidays and employer/service shutdown periods, as applicable.

¹¹ While a teacher may have their practice observed more than once over the course of their accreditation period, they are only required to submit a report on one observation of practice for the purposes of finalising their accreditation completed by their supervisor.

¹² In line with NESA's *Provisional and Conditional Accreditation Policy* and *English Language Proficiency of Teachers for Provisional or Conditional Accreditation Policy*.

4.2.1 Determining readiness to finalise accreditation

Teachers should determine their readiness to finalise their accreditation in consultation with their supervisor. The supervisor's judgement is holistic and is made on the basis of a range of factors including documentary evidence, observation of the teacher's practice and the supervisor's knowledge of the teacher's practice.

When the teacher and supervisor agree that the teacher's practice meets the Standards for Proficient Teacher, the supervisor must begin the process of finalising the teacher's accreditation to enable a decision to be made (in line with Section 6 of the Policy).

4.2.2 Selecting and annotating documentary evidence of practice

If a supervisor determines that a teacher's practice does not meet all of the Standard Descriptors the supervisor must notify the principal/service director and the teacher in writing within 21 calendar days of the teacher initiating a discussion about finalising accreditation. The supervisor's notification to the principal/service director and teacher must indicate which Standard Descriptors the teacher has yet to demonstrate and must include advice on appropriate strategies and support to assist the teacher in meeting all of the Standard Descriptors. In cases where the principal/service director is not the TAA, and they consider that the issue/s may negatively impact on the accreditation decision, they must inform the TAA within 21 calendar days of being advised by the supervisor. The principal/service director's notification to the TAA must indicate the specific Proficient Teacher Standard Descriptor/s that the teacher does not meet.

To finalise accreditation teachers must select five to eight items of documentary evidence they have collected during their accreditation period to annotate¹³ and submit to their supervisor in their NESAs online account. Teachers should consult their supervisor when selecting items to annotate and submit. Teachers' selection of annotated documentary evidence must demonstrate their engagement in a range of professional activities.

Teachers who have worked in more than one school/service may use documentary evidence of their practice from employment in a number of schools/services when they are finalising accreditation. Teachers who collect evidence from a number of schools/services may choose to have their evidence authenticated¹⁴ by a colleague accredited at Proficient Teacher or above to confirm that the evidence is the teacher's own work.

Each selected item of documentary evidence must:

- illustrate practice at the Proficient Teacher level
- address two to four Standard Descriptors
- be annotated by the teacher, in their NESAs online account, to explain how it demonstrates the teacher's achievement of the identified Standard Descriptors.

A teacher's selection of annotated documentary evidence that they submit to finalise accreditation must not exceed 10MB per item and must not exceed 35 single-sided pages in total.

A teacher's collection of evidence that they submit to finalise accreditation, which includes their annotated documentary evidence and a report on an observation of their practice completed by

¹³ Information and advice for teachers on writing annotations, including examples of annotated evidence, are published on NESAs website.

¹⁴ Confirmation by a teacher's colleague, who is accredited at Proficient Teacher or above, that the documentary evidence is the teacher's own work. Authentication is not confirmation that the teacher's documentary evidence meets the Standards.

their supervisor (see Section 4.2.3 of the Policy), must address at least one Proficient Teacher Standard Descriptor from each of the seven Standards.

While a teacher's practice must meet all of the Standard Descriptors before they can be accredited at Proficient Teacher, teachers are not required to submit evidence that addresses every Standard Descriptor to finalise their accreditation. Nor are teachers required to generate documentary evidence for every Standard Descriptor in preparation for finalising accreditation, or to annotate documentary evidence prior to finalising accreditation. Evidence should be drawn from a teacher's daily practice as this develops over time.

Documentary evidence of practice for re-accredited teachers must include significant work from the re-accreditation period. Previous teaching experience and documentary evidence from the initial accreditation period may also be used for the purposes of finalising accreditation at Proficient Teacher, if it is relevant. Evidence from the initial accreditation period must be authenticated by a supervising teacher from that period.

4.2.3 Observing the teacher's practice

To finalise accreditation teachers must have their practice observed by their supervisor. Supervisors are required to provide teachers with feedback and a report on their observation of the teacher's practice within 14 calendar days of the observation.

While a range of colleagues may observe a teacher's practice and provide them with feedback throughout the teacher's accreditation period, the observation submitted by the teacher to finalise their accreditation must have been completed by their supervisor.

The supervisor's report on their observation of the teacher's practice must reflect two to four Standard Descriptors for Proficient Teacher and must include:

- a record of the discussion between the teacher and the supervisor prior to the observation, including details of the negotiated and agreed lesson/teaching and learning experience to be observed
- the two to four Standard Descriptors the teacher and supervisor have agreed will be the focus of the observation
- a written account by the supervisor on the observation of the teacher's practice, referencing the agreed Standard Descriptors
- the teacher's reflection on their teaching practice
- written feedback to the teacher from the supervisor following the observation.

Supervisors may use or refer to NESAs template observation report but are not required to. The supervisor's observation report must not be annotated by the teacher.

The teacher must submit the observation report through their NESAs online account when they are finalising their accreditation, in addition to their selection of five to eight items of annotated documentary evidence (see Section 4.2.2 of the Policy).

Collectively, a teacher's evidence must address at least one Proficient Teacher Standard Descriptor from each of the seven Standards.

4.2.4 Completing the Proficient Teacher Accreditation Report

When the teacher has submitted their annotated documentary evidence and a report on an observation of their practice in their NESAs online account, the teacher's supervisor must

complete the Proficient Teacher Accreditation Report within 21 calendar days of the teacher's submission. The report is completed through the supervisor's NESA online account.

Once the supervisor has completed the report, the teacher must read the report and acknowledge that they have read the report in the teacher's NESA online account.

Teachers should allow up to 28 calendar days from acknowledging that they have read their supervisor's report for the TAA to make the accreditation decision.

5 Proficient Teacher Accreditation Timeframes

Teachers with provisional or conditional accreditation must meet the requirements for accreditation at Proficient Teacher within a set timeframe to remain eligible to teach in NSW. A teacher's accreditation timeframe starts on the day they are provisionally or conditionally accredited.¹⁵

5.1 Minimum timeframes for accreditation at Proficient Teacher

Provisionally and conditionally accredited teachers must be employed for a period long enough to develop and demonstrate their practice at the Standards, and long enough for a TAA to make a valid and reliable judgement about their practice. A minimum of 160 days of teaching would enable a provisionally or conditionally accredited teacher to meet the requirements for accreditation at Proficient Teacher.

For teachers employed on a casual basis, a continuous block of six to ten weeks in a single school/service within the 160 days may assist the TAA in making an accreditation decision. If the continuous block is undertaken on a part-time basis, a longer continuous period may be required for the teacher to demonstrate the Standards. A block of teaching is not a requirement in order for a TAA to make an accreditation decision.

Provisionally and conditionally accredited teachers with previous teaching experience in NSW, interstate or internationally may demonstrate the Standards, and be accredited at Proficient Teacher, in fewer than 160 days.

5.2 Maximum timeframes for accreditation at Proficient Teacher

A teacher's maximum timeframe is determined on the basis of their employment at the time they are provisionally or conditionally accredited.

Provisionally accredited teachers have three years from the date they are accredited to complete all requirements for accreditation at Proficient Teacher if they are employed on a full-time basis, or five years if they are employed on a part-time or casual basis.

Conditionally accredited teachers have four years from the date they are accredited to complete all requirements for accreditation at Proficient Teacher if they are employed on a full-time basis, or six years if they are employed on a part-time or casual basis.

All teachers employed on a part-time or casual basis are subject to the same Standards and accreditation requirements as teachers who are employed on a full-time basis. Teachers employed on a part-time or casual basis have a longer timeframe to achieve accreditation at

¹⁵ See also Sections 7 and 8 of the Policy for timeframes for achieving accreditation at Proficient Teacher for re-accredited teachers and interstate teachers, respectively.

Proficient Teacher in recognition of the nature of their employment.

Teachers should initiate a discussion with their supervisor in relation to finalising their accreditation, in line with Section 4.2 of the Policy, no later than three months before the end of their maximum accreditation timeframe.

5.3 Applying to extend the accreditation timeframe

Teachers who have had limited opportunities to meet the requirements for accreditation at Proficient Teacher during their maximum timeframe may apply to NESAs for an extension in their NESAs online account. Teachers may apply to NESAs for an extension on the following grounds:

- child-rearing responsibilities
- home or carer responsibilities
- illness or misadventure
- undertaking further teaching-related study
- other appropriate professional or individual circumstances, including changing from full-time to part-time or casual employment.

Teachers should apply to NESAs no less than three months before the end of their maximum timeframe.

5.4 Ceasing to be provisionally or conditionally accredited

Teachers who do not achieve Proficient Teacher accreditation by the end of their maximum accreditation timeframe, and do not apply or are not eligible for an extension (see Section 5.3 of the Policy), will cease to be accredited. Teachers whose accreditation has ceased will be notified by NESAs that their accreditation has ceased and that they cannot be employed to teach in a NSW school/service.

Teachers whose provisional or conditional accreditation has ceased may apply for re-accreditation at provisional in line with the *Provisional and Conditional Accreditation Policy*.

6 Proficient Teacher Accreditation Decisions

Proficient Teacher accreditation decisions are made by a teacher's TAA.¹⁶ A TAA may consult with the teacher's previous TAA/s where required and following consent from the teacher.

The TAA can decide that a teacher:

- meets all requirements for accreditation, as set out in Section 4 of the Policy, and accredit the teacher; or
- does not meet one or more of the requirements for accreditation, as set out in Section 4 of the Policy, and refuse to accredit the teacher.

The TAA must make the decision to accredit or to refuse to accredit on the basis of:

- documentary evidence that the teacher has selected, annotated and submitted to their supervisor

¹⁶ In government schools the TAA is the principal. In Catholic systemic schools the TAA is an officer appointed by the Diocese. In most independent schools the TAA is the principal.

- a report on an observation of the teacher’s practice;¹⁷ and
- the Proficient Teacher Accreditation Report completed by the teacher’s supervisor.

The TAA must make a judgement about the teacher’s practice within 28 calendar days of the teacher acknowledging that they have read their supervisor’s report in their NESA online account (see Section 4.2.4 of the Policy). The TAA must ensure that the principal/service director completes the attestation in sufficient time within the 28 day period to allow the TAA to make a judgement by the end of the 28 day period.

6.1 Decision to accredit

If a TAA’s judgement is that a teacher meets all requirements for accreditation at Proficient Teacher, the TAA must accredit the teacher at Proficient Teacher and record the decision in the TAA’s NESA online account within 28 calendar days of the teacher’s acknowledgment of their supervisor’s report, notifying the teacher and NESA of the decision. The teacher will start their first maintenance of accreditation period on the day the accreditation decision is made.

6.2 Decision to not accredit

If a TAA’s judgement is that a teacher does not meet one or more of the requirements for accreditation at Proficient Teacher, the TAA may refuse to accredit the teacher or decide that they are not able to make an accreditation decision for the teacher.

A TAA can only refuse to accredit a teacher at Proficient Teacher if:

- the teacher has completed at least 160 days of teaching;¹⁸
- the supervisor has complied with the requirements established in the TAA’s internal policies and procedures¹⁹, including:
 - providing the teacher with adequate supervision, feedback and support during their accreditation period; and
 - informing the teacher of Standard Descriptors they are not meeting and providing the teacher with advice on how to address them;
- the TAA has contacted other TAAs, where relevant and following consent from the teacher, to assist them in making the accreditation decision;
- the teacher has failed to amend or provide additional supporting documentary evidence that demonstrates they satisfy the requirements for accreditation at Proficient Teacher;
- the teacher is unable to meet the requirements for accreditation at Proficient Teacher; and
- the teacher has been given 28 calendar days written warning of the refusal of their accreditation.²⁰

If a TAA decides to refuse to accredit a teacher, the TAA must advise the teacher and NESA that they are refusing the teacher’s accreditation at Proficient Teacher at the end of the 28 calendar day warning period, including the reasons for the decision. The TAA must also advise the teacher of their right to request an internal review of the decision to refuse their accreditation

¹⁷ While a teacher may have their practice observed more than once over the course of their accreditation period, they are only required to submit a report on one observation of practice for the purposes of finalising their accreditation completed by their supervisor.

¹⁸ This requirement does not apply to a decision to refuse to immediately accredit a returning teacher at Proficient Teacher (see Section 7 of the Policy).

¹⁹ TAAs for non-government schools must refer to NESA’s *Guidelines for the Regulation of Teacher Accreditation Authorities for Non-government Schools and Early Childhood Education Centres* (the TAA Guidelines) for requirements in relation to internal policies and procedures.

²⁰ The warning must be issued within 28 calendar days of the teacher acknowledging their supervisor’s report.

within 28 days of being notified of the decision, in line with the TAA's internal procedures.

A TAA can decide that they are not able to make an accreditation decision for a teacher under the following circumstances:

- the teacher has not completed at least 160 days of teaching during their accreditation period (in line with Section 5.1 of the Policy)
- the teacher has not worked in the school/service for long enough to allow the TAA to make a judgement about the teacher's practice, including following consultation with the teacher's previous TAA/s, following consent from the teacher, where applicable.

If a TAA decides that they are not able to make an accreditation decision for a teacher, they must record that they are not able to make a decision in the TAA's NESA online account, within 28 calendar days of the teacher's acknowledgment of their supervisor's report, including the reasons.

6.2.1 Implications of a decision to not accredit

If a TAA decides not to accredit a teacher at Proficient Teacher and the teacher has not reached the end of their maximum timeframe, the teacher will remain provisionally or conditionally accredited.

In cases where a TAA decides not to accredit a teacher, the teacher:

- will remain eligible for employment as a teacher until the end of their maximum accreditation timeframe
- may continue to work towards achieving Proficient Teacher with any TAA with whom they have employment as a teacher
- may request an accreditation decision from any TAA with whom they have employment as a teacher.

6.3 Requesting an internal review of a TAA's accreditation decision

A teacher can submit a written request for an internal review of a decision by a TAA to not accredit them at Proficient Teacher, in line with the TAA's internal review process, within 28 days of being notified of the accreditation decision. If a teacher is dissatisfied with the outcome of an internal review the TAA must advise the teacher of their right to request an external review of the decision by the *NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT)*.

7 Accreditation of Returning Teachers

A returning teacher is a person who does not have current accreditation to teach in NSW and has previously been:

- accredited at Proficient, Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher; or
- eligible to be accredited at Proficient Teacher and has had more than five years away from teaching in NSW.²¹

Returning teachers who want to resume teaching in NSW may apply to NESA for accreditation.

²¹ Teachers eligible to be accredited at Proficient Teacher include those employed as a teacher in a NSW school before 1 October 2004 and those employed as a teacher in a NSW approved centre-based early childhood education service before 1 October 2016. Teachers eligible to be accredited at Proficient Teacher who have had fewer than five years away from teaching should refer to the *Policy on the Accreditation of Non-Accredited Teachers or Accreditation of Early Childhood Teachers Policy* (as applicable).

7.1 Returning after revocation

Where a person is returning to teaching after the revocation of their Proficient Teacher accreditation,²² NESAs may operate as a TAA²³ and:

- accredit the person at Proficient Teacher or above, as applicable²⁴ (see 7.1.1); or
- re-accredit the person at provisional (see 7.1.2); or
- refuse to accredit the person at any level (see 7.3).

7.1.1 Accreditation at Proficient Teacher or above after revocation

A person returning after the revocation of their Proficient Teacher accreditation may be accredited by NESAs at the level of accreditation they held at the time of revocation if:

- the grounds for the revocation no longer apply; and
- the person:
 - has had less than five years away from teaching in NSW at the time of applying for accreditation after revocation; and
 - has paid the re-accreditation application fee; and
 - has no outstanding accreditation fees; and
 - holds a current WWCC clearance.

Returning teachers who are accredited at Proficient, Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher by NESAs following revocation will have their previous maintenance of accreditation timeframe adjusted in line with the *Leave of Absence Policy*.

7.1.2 Re-accreditation at provisional after revocation

Where a person who is returning after revocation is not accredited by NESAs at the level of accreditation they held at the time of revocation, in line with Section 7.1.1 of the Policy, their application will be considered by a re-accreditation after revocation panel, in line with the *Provisional and Conditional Accreditation Policy*.²⁵

7.2 Returning after voluntary cancellation

Where a person is returning after the voluntary cancellation of their Proficient, Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher accreditation, NESAs may operate as a TAA²⁶ and:

- accredit the person at Proficient Teacher or above, as applicable (see 7.2.1)²⁷; or
- re-accredit the person at provisional (see 7.2.2); or
- refuse to accredit the person at any level (see 7.3).

²² If a teacher is accredited at Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher at the time that a decision to revoke their accreditation is made, their accreditation at Proficient Teacher is revoked which also serves to revoke their accreditation at the higher level.

²³ In line with Section 4 (4) of the TA Act, NESAs may operate as the TAA for the purposes of the decision about accreditation after revocation only. NESAs will not operate as the ongoing TAA for the purposes of maintenance of accreditation for those teachers, except in the case of non-school/service based teachers and early childhood teachers whose TAA is NESAs.

²⁴ Teachers who were accredited at Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher at the time of revocation may be accredited by NESAs at the higher level. Teachers in these cases may request to return at Proficient Teacher or their previous higher level of accreditation.

²⁵ Refer to Section 6.2 of the *Provisional and Conditional Accreditation Policy*.

²⁶ In line with Section 4 (4) of the TA Act, NESAs may operate as the TAA for the purposes of the decision about accreditation after cancellation only. NESAs will not operate as the ongoing TAA for the purposes of maintenance of accreditation for those teachers, except in the case of non-school/service based teachers and early childhood teachers whose TAA is NESAs.

²⁷ Teachers who were accredited at Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher at the time of cancellation may be accredited by NESAs at the higher level. Teachers in these cases may request to return at Proficient Teacher or at their previous higher-level of accreditation.

7.2.1 Accreditation at Proficient Teacher or above after cancellation

A person returning after the voluntary cancellation of their Proficient, Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher accreditation may be accredited by NESA at the level of accreditation that was cancelled if they:

- voluntarily cancelled their accreditation before their maintenance period end date; and
- have had less than five years away from teaching in NSW at the time of applying for accreditation after cancellation; and
- has paid the re-accreditation application fee; and
- has no outstanding accreditation fees;
- hold a current WWCC clearance.

Returning teachers who are accredited at Proficient, Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher by NESA following voluntary cancellation will have their previous maintenance of accreditation timeframe adjusted in line with the *Leave of Absence Policy*.

7.2.2 Re-accreditation at provisional after cancellation

Where a person who is returning after cancellation is not accredited by NESA at the level of accreditation they held at the time of cancellation, in line with Section 7.2.1 of the Policy, they may be re-accredited at provisional by NESA, in line with the *Provisional and Conditional Accreditation Policy*.²⁸

7.3 Refusal to accredit after revocation or cancellation

NESA will refuse to accredit a person at any level after revocation or cancellation if they do not meet the requirements for accreditation.²⁹

A person may request an internal review of a decision by NESA to refuse to accredit them, in line with NESA's internal review procedures.

7.4 Applying for immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher

Returning teachers who are not accredited at their previous level of accreditation in line with Section 7.1.1 or 7.2.1 may be provisionally accredited by NESA and may be eligible to apply to the TAA for their school/service for immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher.³⁰

Provisionally accredited returning teachers may apply to their TAA for immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher level only through their NESA online account at any time after they are provisionally accredited and before the end of their maximum accreditation timeframe.

The minimum timeframe for accreditation at Proficient Teacher (see Section 5.1 of the Policy) does not apply to returning teachers.

NESA may place conditions on a teacher's provisional re-accreditation in relation to their eligibility to apply for immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher as a returning teacher.³¹ Any

²⁸ Refer to Section 7 of the *Provisional and Conditional Accreditation Policy*.

²⁹ In line with the TA Act, Sections 32 (2), 33 (2) (b) and 40 (b).

³⁰ Returning teachers who are provisionally accredited and who were accredited at Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher at the time of revocation or voluntary cancellation may re-apply for accreditation at the higher level in line with the *Policy for Accreditation at Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher*.

³¹ Returning teachers who are provisionally accredited by NESA and who are ineligible to apply to their TAA for immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher must complete the requirements set out in Section 4 and 5 of the Policy.

such conditions will be determined when the provisional accreditation or re-accreditation decision is made, in line with the *Provisional and Conditional Accreditation Policy*.³²

Teachers who are re-accredited at provisional after the revocation of their Proficient Teacher accreditation for misconduct may be eligible to apply for immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher.

Returning teachers who are re-accredited at provisional after the revocation or cancellation of their Proficient Teacher accreditation are not eligible to apply to their TAA for immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher if their accreditation at Proficient Teacher was:

- revoked for failure to maintain their accreditation;³³ or
- cancelled after the end of their maintenance of accreditation timeframe.

7.4.1 Accreditation decisions for provisionally accredited returning teachers

Proficient Teacher accreditation decisions for provisionally accredited returning teachers are made by a teacher's TAA. Where a returning teacher is provisionally accredited and applies for immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher, the TAA can decide that:

- the teacher's practice meets all of the Standards at Proficient Teacher and immediately accredit the teacher at Proficient Teacher (see Section 7.4.2); or
- the teacher's practice does not meet all of the Standards at Proficient Teacher and refuse to immediately accredit the teacher at Proficient Teacher (see Section 7.4.3).

TAA's must consider the following when making a decision about immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher for a returning teacher:

- the teacher's previous level of accreditation
- the length of time away from teaching
- the length of employment as a teacher before their absence
- the nature of any employment undertaken during their absence from teaching in NSW, including employment as a teacher
- any relevant further tertiary study completed during their absence
- other appropriate professional or personal circumstances.

Documentary evidence, a report on an observation of the teacher's practice and a Proficient Teacher Accreditation Report are not required by NESAs for immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher.

A TAA may request documentation from the returning teacher to inform the TAA's decision. Any request for documentation must be made by the TAA within 14 days of receiving the teacher's request. A TAA must make a decision about immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher (see Section 7.4.2 of the Policy) within 28 calendar days of the teacher submitting their request or any additional documentation requested by the TAA, whichever occurs first, and record the decision in the TAA's NESAs online account.

7.4.2 Decision to immediately accredit at Proficient Teacher

Where a TAA decides to immediately accredit an eligible returning teacher at Proficient Teacher, the TAA will accredit the teacher at Proficient Teacher and record the decision in the

³² Refer to Section 6 of the *Provisional and Conditional Accreditation Policy*.

³³ Under Section 24 (1) (g) of the TA Act.

TAA's NESAs online account within 28 calendar days of the teacher submitting their request.

The teacher will begin a new maintenance period on the day the accreditation decision is made.³⁴

7.4.3 Refusal to immediately accredit at Proficient Teacher

If a TAA refuses to immediately accredit a returning teacher at Proficient Teacher, they must advise the teacher and NESAs in writing within 21 calendar days of making the decision, including the grounds for the decision, and inform the teacher of their right to submit a written request for an internal review of the decision within 28 days of being notified of the decision.

Provisionally accredited teachers who are not immediately accredited at Proficient Teacher must work towards accreditation at Proficient Teacher in line with the requirements in Sections 4 and 5 of the Policy.

7.4.4 Requesting an internal review of a TAA's immediate accreditation decision

A teacher can submit a written request for an internal review of a decision by a TAA to refuse their immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher in line with the TAA's internal review process within 28 days of being notified of the decision. If a teacher is dissatisfied with the outcome of an internal review the TAA must advise the teacher of their right to request an external review of the decision by the *NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal* (NCAT).

8 Accreditation of Interstate Teachers

Teachers who hold full and current registration in another state or territory are eligible for Proficient Teacher accreditation in NSW.

Interstate teachers must apply to NESAs for accreditation to be eligible to teach in a NSW school/service. Teachers must provide evidence of their full and current interstate registration to NESAs when they apply for accreditation in NSW. Interstate teachers who gain accreditation at Proficient Teacher in NSW begin maintaining their accreditation on the day they are accredited at Proficient Teacher in NSW.

9 Leave of Absence

Accredited teachers can take a leave of absence from accreditation to put their provisional or conditional accreditation timeframe on hold for a period where they are not teaching.³⁵ Teachers can advise NESAs in advance of their leave of absence, or apply to NESAs for a leave of absence retrospectively.

Teachers who are on a leave of absence are not permitted to teach in a NSW school/service for the duration of the leave of absence.

A leave of absence can be approved for a minimum of six months and a maximum of five years.

³⁴ Requirements for maintaining Proficient Teacher accreditation are set out in the *Maintenance of Teacher Accreditation Policy*.

³⁵ Provisionally and conditionally accredited teachers who are employed in a non-school/non-service based role may choose to take a leave of absence from accreditation for up to five years, or continue to work towards accreditation at Proficient Teacher in their non-school/non-service based role in line with their TAA's procedures for accreditation at Proficient Teacher.

10 Roles and Responsibilities

10.1 Role of the teacher working towards Proficient Teacher

Teachers are responsible for:

- understanding and completing the requirements for accreditation/re-accreditation within their maximum timeframe
- maintaining current employment and contact details in their NESAs online account
- participating in a range of professional activities to develop and demonstrate their practice during their accreditation/re-accreditation period
- seeking advice from colleagues and supervisors regarding their practice and achievement of the Standard Descriptors
- collecting documentary evidence of their practice and reflecting on their practice throughout their accreditation period
- initiating a discussion with their supervisor about finalising accreditation at Proficient Teacher
- selecting, annotating and submitting documentary evidence when finalising their accreditation
- submitting a report on an observation of their practice, completed by their supervisor, when finalising their accreditation paying the annual accreditation fee
- maintaining a current NSW Working With Children Check (WWCC) clearance.

Teachers who work in more than one school/service are responsible for seeking the support of one school/service to assist them with finalising their accreditation at Proficient Teacher.

10.2 Role of the supervisor

Supervisors are responsible for:

- providing advice and feedback to teachers to support them in meeting the Standards for Proficient Teacher
- determining when a valid and reliable decision can be made about a teacher's practice against the Standards, in consultation with the teacher and the TAA
- advising the teacher and the principal/service director in writing of any issue/s with a teacher's practice that may negatively impact on the Proficient Teacher accreditation decision within 21 calendar days of either becoming aware of the issue, or the teacher initiating the discussion about finalising their accreditation, as applicable
- observing the teacher's practice, including providing timely and constructive feedback to the teacher, and providing documentation to the teacher as evidence of the observation/s for the purposes of finalising accreditation
- assisting the teacher to select appropriate evidence to annotate and submit, and confirming that the teacher's annotated documentary evidence addresses the identified Standard Descriptors
- completing the Proficient Teacher Accreditation Report in their NESAs online account.

10.3 Role of the principal/service director

Principals/service directors are responsible for attesting that the teacher's Proficient Teacher Accreditation Report is an accurate reflection of the teacher's practice.

In cases where the principal/service director is not the TAA, the principal/service director must inform the TAA of any issues with a teacher's practice that may impact on the Proficient Teacher accreditation decision as and when they arise during the teacher's accreditation period.

10.4 Role of the employer

Employers are responsible for ensuring that any individual employed as a teacher is accredited to teach in NSW.³⁶

10.5 Role of the Teacher Accreditation Authority (TAA)

TAA's are responsible for deciding whether or not a teacher meets the requirements for accreditation at Proficient Teacher.

TAA's must have internal policies and procedures that comply with all NESA requirements for teacher accreditation and reflect the principles for developing practice at Proficient Teacher set out in Section 4.1 of the Policy. A TAA's internal policies and procedures must include processes to:

- ensure that all teachers, regardless of their employment, are provided with feedback about their practice in relation to the Standards for Proficient Teacher at intervals appropriate to the length of their employment
- ensure that teachers are allocated an appropriate supervisor and are adequately supervised throughout the accreditation period
- address issues related to a teacher's practice not meeting the Standards at Proficient Teacher including, but not limited to, the provision of timely advice to teachers who are at risk of not meeting the requirements for accreditation by the end of their maximum timeframe
- enable accreditation decisions to be made in line with this Policy, including in relation to immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher for eligible returning teachers.

A TAA must:

- provide an orientation to teachers within the first three months of starting employment as a teacher with the TAA
- make a decision in relation to accreditation at Proficient Teacher for a teacher within 28 calendar days of the teacher acknowledging their accreditation report and record the decision in the TAA's NESA online account
- make a decision in relation to immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher for returning teachers within 28 calendar days of the teacher submitting their request and record the decision in the TAA's NESA online account
- have a documented internal review process and provide teachers for whom they are the TAA with a copy of the internal review process during their orientation
- in the event of an audit, provide any records requested by NESA within 28 calendar days.

Where a teacher changes TAA's during their provisional or conditional accreditation period it is the responsibility of the teacher's current TAA to make the accreditation decision, which may involve consulting the teacher's previous TAA/s (following consent from the teacher), in line with Section 6 of the Policy. TAA's must provide any information requested about a teacher's practice to another

³⁶ From 1 January 2018, this includes ensuring all pre-2004 teachers' accreditation.

TAA within 14 calendar days of receiving a request.

NESA is the TAA for any non-school/non-service based teachers or early childhood teachers whose employer does not have a nominated TAA and has nominated NESA as their TAA. NESA's requirements in relation to its function as a TAA are set out in the *Accreditation of Teachers by the NSW Education Standards Authority Policy* and related procedures.

10.6 Role of NESA

NESA oversees the system of accreditation and recognition of teachers' professional capacity against the Standards, which includes the requirements and processes for achieving accreditation at Proficient Teacher. NESA's oversight of teacher accreditation involves conducting risk-based and periodic audits of the regulatory processes for accreditation and evaluating policy for ongoing quality assurance purposes.

NESA may prescribe particular Standard Descriptors to be addressed in teachers' documentary evidence and/or observation of practice from time-to-time, on the basis of factors including but not limited to the outcome of a NESA Thematic Review.

NESA may accredit a teacher at their previous level following the revocation or cancellation of their Proficient, Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher accreditation.

NESA:

- issues guidelines, procedures and rules in relation to meeting the professional teaching standards and in relation to the operation of TAAs
- approves TAAs for non-government schools and early childhood education centres
- advises and assists TAAs to accredit teachers
- monitors accreditation decisions and the application of policy across schools/services and TAAs to support the consistent and fair application of the Standards for all teachers
- records a TAA's decision that a teacher has achieved accreditation at Proficient Teacher in the teacher's NESA online account
- assesses applications from, and makes the accreditation decision for, teachers returning to teaching after the revocation or cancellation of their accreditation
- convenes panels, as necessary, to review applications from teachers returning after the revocation or cancellation of their accreditation and make a recommendation in relation to the teacher's accreditation, including conditions
- audits school/service and TAA processes, decisions and records relating to accreditation
- audits teachers' accreditation records
- evaluates the implementation and impact of teacher accreditation policies and processes.

11 Quality Assurance

NESA evaluates teacher accreditation requirements and TAA processes through:

- a regular cycle of evaluation and review of NESA policies
- periodic and risk-based audits of Proficient Teacher accreditation records and TAA accreditation decisions.

11.1 NESAs policy evaluation

NESA's policy evaluation process aims to determine whether policy is being implemented as intended and whether the objectives are being achieved.

The intended outcomes of the Policy are to:

- ensure that teachers are supported to achieve Proficient Teacher within their maximum timeframe
- simplify and streamline Proficient Teacher accreditation processes
- improve transparency and achieve consistency in relation to policy implementation and impact.

Indicators for determining the success of the Policy include:

- fewer teachers whose accreditation ceases
- fewer teacher queries about accreditation requirements
- fewer issues around Proficient Teacher accreditation being referred to NESA by TAAs, sectors and unions
- improved teacher satisfaction levels based on outcomes of teacher satisfaction surveys
- higher teacher retention rates due to improved supervision.

11.2 Auditing Proficient Teacher accreditation records

NESA conducts audits of teachers' and TAAs' Proficient Teacher accreditation records and decisions for ongoing quality assurance purposes. Where applicable, NESA may request access to de-identified accreditation records from TAAs for auditing purposes.

Proficient Teacher accreditation records will be audited to determine whether the requirements, roles and responsibilities in relation to accreditation are being met, including that:

- teachers' practice meets the Standards for Proficient Teacher
- TAAs are making valid and consistent accreditation decisions on the basis of requirements set out in the Policy
- teaching practice that is not consistent with the Standards is addressed before the end of the accreditation timeframe.

An audit of a TAA's Proficient Teacher decisions may be random or risk-based. Risk will be determined by factors including, but not limited to:

- concerns or complaints raised by teachers, school/service leaders, teacher representative organisations, parents or other relevant stakeholders
- an identified pattern of accreditation decisions that may place fairness, validity or reliability at risk
- issues raised as a consequence of an inspection undertaken by NESA.

The outcome of any audit of a TAA will not impact on the accreditation status of individual teachers.

12 Glossary

annotation (of documentary evidence)	A written description by the teacher that explains how an item of documentary evidence relates to the two to four Standard Descriptors identified, and how the teacher has successfully integrated the identified Standard Descriptors in their teaching practice.
authentication (of documentary evidence)	Confirmation by a teacher's colleague, who is accredited at Proficient Teacher or above, that the documentary evidence is the teacher's own work. The teacher's colleague is not confirming whether or not the teacher's documentary evidence meets the Standards. Teachers should ensure that any authentication of their evidence is completed within a reasonable time of the evidence being collected. A teacher's evidence may be authenticated electronically through their NESAs online account or in hardcopy. Evidence authenticated in hardcopy must be signed, dated and include the NESAs account number of the authenticator. Authentication of documentary evidence occurs throughout a teacher's accreditation period and before annotation.
calendar days	For the purposes of this Policy, any reference to calendar days excludes school holidays and shutdown periods, as applicable. If the last day of a specified number of calendar days is a Saturday, Sunday or Public Holiday, the last day is calculated as the first day following. Any timeframes in this policy that are referred to as days, rather than calendar days, or months are not exclusive of school holidays or shutdown periods.
casual teacher	A teacher engaged on an hourly or daily rate of pay who works full-time for less than four weeks, or part-time for less than two terms, on any single engagement.
documentary evidence	Primary evidence of the teacher's practice that they produce in the course of their work that illustrates practice at the Standard Descriptors for Proficient Teacher.
domains of teaching	The three domains that the seven Standards are grouped into: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement
executive teaching staff	A member of the executive staff of a school who holds a degree or teaching qualification recognised by NESAs. Executive teaching staff may or may not be engaged in the delivery of curriculum and assessment.
immediate accreditation at Proficient Teacher	The accreditation at Proficient Teacher of a 'returning teacher' at any point during their provisional (re-)accreditation timeframe without the requirement to submit documentation set out in Section 4.2 of the Policy to NESAs.
interstate teacher	A qualified teacher who holds full and current registration with another Australian state or territory teacher registration authority.
leave of absence	An approved period of leave away from teaching which puts a teacher's accreditation timeframe on hold. A leave of absence from accreditation is distinct from any leave granted by an employer.
the NESAs Act	<i>Education Standards Authority Act 2013</i>
non-school/service-based teacher	An accredited teacher who is not teaching in a school/service but has taught in a school/service, and who is employed to undertake duties related to: curriculum development or implementation; early childhood or school teaching and learning; lecturing/tutoring teacher education students in a university or other higher education institution in NSW; education consultancy in a school/service.
orientation	A process for the provision of information about the TAA's accreditation processes and expectations for teachers who are seeking accreditation.
principal	The most senior member of the teaching staff of a school, with responsibility for the effective and efficient day-to-day operations of the school, including compliance with the <i>Education Act 1990</i> .
professional activities	The activities that teachers undertake in the course of their teaching practice in relation to the Standards' three domains of Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement.

re-accredited teacher	A teacher whose provisional or conditional accreditation ceased because they did not achieve accreditation at Proficient Teacher within their maximum timeframe and who is granted a single provisional re-accreditation period in which to meet all requirements for accreditation at Proficient Teacher.
returning teacher	A teacher who has previously been accredited at Proficient, Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher, or is eligible to be accredited at Proficient Teacher and has had more than five years away from teaching in NSW.
revocation	The removal of a teacher's accreditation in line with Section 24 of the <i>Teacher Accreditation Act 2004</i> .
service	A centre-based early childhood education service, approved under the <i>Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW</i> or the <i>Children (Education and Care Services) Supplementary Provisions Act 2011</i> .
service director	For the purposes of this Policy, service director refers to an accredited teacher who holds an ACECQA approved or recognised early childhood qualification and meets all other requirements as set out in the <i>Accreditation of Early Childhood Teachers Policy</i> .
Standard Descriptors	The organisers within the Standards that describe professional knowledge, practice and engagement at four career stages – Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead.
the Standards	the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
supervisor	For the purposes of this Policy, the term supervisor refers to a teacher who has been delegated in line with the TAA's procedures to support a provisionally/conditionally accredited teacher develop their practice against the Standards and to fulfil the roles and responsibilities described in Section 10.2 of the Policy. Supervisors must be accredited at Proficient Teacher or above. It is not required that a teacher undertaking the supervision as described in this Policy hold a formal supervisory or management role.
the TA Act	<i>Teacher Accreditation Act 2004</i>
Teacher Accreditation Authority (TAA)	A person or body authorised to accredit teachers at specified levels of accreditation, in accordance with Part 4 of the <i>Teacher Accreditation Act 2004</i> . In government schools the TAA is the principal. In Catholic systemic schools the TAA is an officer appointed by the Diocese. In most independent schools the TAA is the principal.
verification (of documentary evidence)	Confirmation by the supervisor that the teacher's annotated documentary evidence addresses the Standard Descriptor/s identified. Verification of evidence serves also to confirm that the evidence is the teacher's own work. Evidence may not need to be authenticated in order to be verified. Verification is an end-point process that occurs when the teacher is finalising their accreditation.
voluntary cancellation	The removal of a teacher's accreditation in line with Section 24E of the <i>Teacher Accreditation Act 2004</i> .