

Teacher registration and accreditation policies: Implications for out-of-field teaching and upgrading teaching qualifications

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Questions

- What are the implications of state/territory teacher registration/accreditation policies, practices and requirements for out-of-field teaching?
- 2. How can a culture of developing, endorsing and credentialling programs for upgrading teacher qualifications in new specialisations be fostered?

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Critical points (and terminology)		
Accreditation	Registration	Certification
of initial teacher education programs	of teachers	of teachers to teach specific subjects
Accreditation requirements may be informed by: Research into what teachers need to know and be able to do Cultural and social assumptions about what it takes to be a good teacher		
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When we talk about registration and accreditation, I will identify three kinds of critical points which are connected to each other. But I know that we don't necessarily have a common language for naming these points.

Accreditation of ITE programs (and teachers, in NSW).

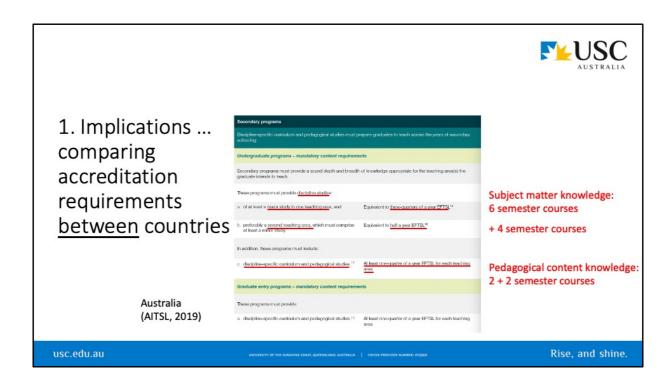
Registration of teachers – name added to the register.

Certification means recording the subjects that a teacher is formally qualified to teach by virtue of having completed an accredited teacher education program. So not only is your name on the register, so too are the subjects you are certified to teach. This process happens in NSW, but is not a practice in other jurisdictions. So straight away we have differences within Australia.

(We've also heard about data that would be useful to have recorded, such as which registered teachers are not currently teaching, and what subjects are currently being taught by teachers compared with the subjects they're qualified to teach).

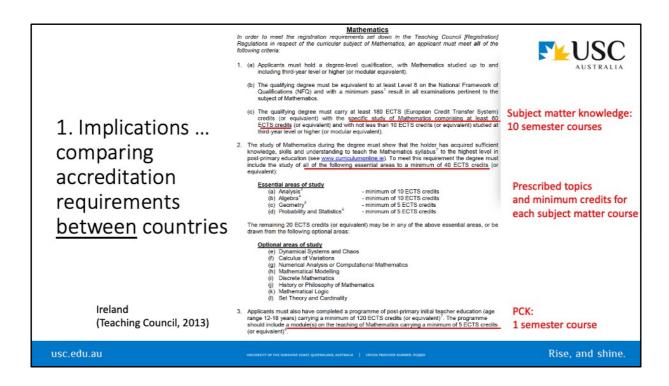
We might like to think that requirements for accrediting and then designing initial teacher education programs are informed by research into what teachers need to know and be able to do, e.g. categories of professional knowledge of the type proposed by Shulman. But there are also cultural and social assumptions about what it takes to be a good teacher.

In some countries, teacher education programs give high emphasis to subject matter knowledge and low emphasis to pedagogical content knowledge, while in other countries the emphasis is the other way around.



To illustrate these differences between and even within countries, I want to compare accreditation requirements in Australia and Ireland, and think about what the implications might be for OOF teachers.

This is an extract from the AITSL standards for accrediting initial teacher education programs.



When I arrived in Ireland in 2017, these Irish Teaching Council accreditation requirements had just come into effect for initial teacher education programs preparing secondary mathematics teachers.

Applies to undergraduate (concurrent) programs and also postgraduate (consecutive) programs. The tightly prescribed subject matter content therefor makes it almost impossible for people to change careers into teaching (e.g., engineers don't have the necessary mathematical qualifications to enrol in a postgraduate teaching program).



These requirements come into force for people applying for teacher registration from January 2023.

Now technically universities can do away with subject-specific teaching methods courses ... which will not only have implications for how well graduates are prepared to teach a subject, but may also affect how out-of-field teaching is defined, how data on the incidence of out-of-field teaching are interpreted, and the eligibility of teachers to participate in programs designed to upgrade the qualifications of out-of-field teachers.

These comparisons not only draw attention to the surface features of accreditation requirements (types of courses, relative emphasis on content and pedagogy), but also should make us think about the underlying question of what does it take to prepare a good teacher?



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Upgrading ... then culture.

2. Upgrading ... to what? How far? With what emphasis?



- Programs conferring a formal qualification:
 - Full upgrade to meet specialism requirements as laid out in program accreditation guidelines (e.g., PDMT)
 - Partial upgrade of subject matter knowledge and/or pedagogical content knowledge (e.g., Graduate Certificate)
- Short term professional development programs/workshops/webinars
- Microcredentials that provide a badge or count as credit towards a formal qualification

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What does it mean to upgrade qualifications? Do we want to upgrade out-of-field teachers' qualifications to the level of fully qualified subject specialist, as that is defined by program accreditation requirements? Do we want to place more emphasis on gaining subject matter knowledge or pedagogical content knowledge, or some combination of these?

I've tried to list some possibilities ranging from most demanding (time and content) to least demanding.

You might think that a full-upgrade program is impossible and unnecessary, but such a program does exist - in Ireland, where a particular set of circumstances and a particular culture made it possible

In Australia, we're more likely to get support for a partial upgrade program such as a Graduate Certificate (e.g. UQ 2 maths + 2 maths education)

2. Upgrading ... fostering a culture of support and endorsement

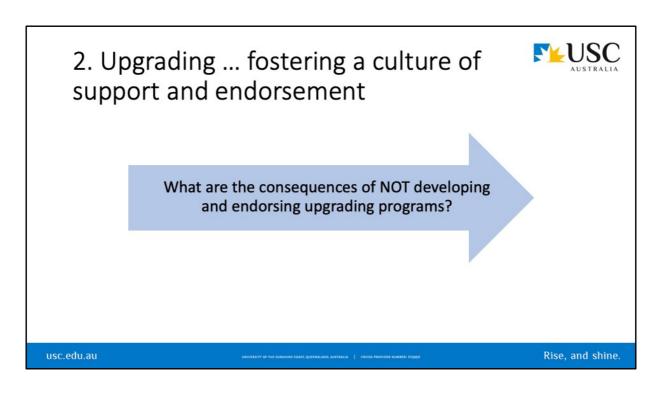


- What motivates teachers to participate in upgrading programs?
 (salary, permanency, confidence, identity)
- What are the costs (funding, time, in-school support)?
- How can upgrading programs be quality assured?
- How should participation in upgrading programs be recognised? (especially if there is no process for recording/certifying subject qualifications)

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Acknowledge a problem exists and turn the question around ...