



# Victorian Principals Association

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## VPA Position Paper

### Pre-service Teacher Placements

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA) recognises the important role of pre-service teacher placements in Victorian Government School workplaces. Our Association is supportive of the training in the real-world-application of teaching, and of the necessity to ensure that potential teacher graduates experience the widest possible range of school experiences with the highest quality supervisory staff available.

The VPA also appreciates the limited resources often available to students-in-training and the desire to participate in school experience placements near to where they reside. Some of our members report an unsustainable demand for placements in schools that they lead – especially in rural towns.

#### **Purpose**

The VPA believes that with some improved coordination and process the implementation of school-experience programs can be improved.

#### **Background to the VPA Position**

The VPA position has been determined in the following context:

- Where student-teachers are responsible for arranging their own placements it has been noted that the demand for places often places unreasonable pressure on some schools or geographic areas.
- Online course requirements present specific issues for some schools. There is not the same “quality assurance” with regard to the potential suitability of a student for a future role as a teacher, as there often is with a more traditional training pathway where students are personally known to Institutional staff.
- Online courses are valued by Principals who have been able to refer known high performing, education support staff to a specific program to achieve a teaching qualification – this situation occurs more often in large metropolitan schools with wider workforces.
- Variability and uncertainty about funding arrangements accompanying school-based experience frequently causes confusion about the nature and extent of reimbursements – and sometimes leads to a reluctance to participate in placements at all.
- The VPA is supportive of any incentive program that will ensure an adequate number of teacher trainees who achieve the highest possible academic achievement ATAR scores.

#### **VPA Position**

The VPA advocates for:

- The VPA is committed to assisting in the best possible teacher training experience placements for Victorian students-in-training.

- The VPA recommends a “residency-based” or longer-term “internship” early in the training program to allow students and those concerned with assessing suitability to be mutually assured that the chosen vocational pathway is, in fact, suited to the aspirations of the student-teacher. Such provision allows for an early change if there is a mismatch between aspiration and capability.
- Schools that are prepared to contribute to teacher-training at higher than normal levels should have access to a process to be accredited as “centres of excellence”. Supervisors in such schools should be able to attract a per-capita, premium in terms of supervisory payments.
- Protocols for placement procedures should be agreed upon between Training Institutions and “placement-schools”, to avoid disproportionate demand on either time or placement numbers, and/or ad-hoc placement requests.
- VPA recommends that Training Institutions identify specific contact personnel whose role it is to liaise with schools regarding teacher placements.

### **References**

VPA (2013), *Raising the Quality of Pre-service Training for Entry into the Teaching Profession Position Paper*,

[http://www.vpa.org.au/app/webroot/uploaded\\_files/media/Teaching%20Training%20&%20Qualifications%20Position%20Paper\\_6.pdf](http://www.vpa.org.au/app/webroot/uploaded_files/media/Teaching%20Training%20&%20Qualifications%20Position%20Paper_6.pdf)