



20 April 2016

The Review Panel  
Review of the NSW Board of Studies  
Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES)

By email: [bostes.review@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:bostes.review@det.nsw.edu.au)

Dear Review Panel

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Review of the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES).

### ***Role of ACECQA***

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is the independent national authority established under the *Education and Care Services National Law* to guide the implementation of the National Quality Framework (NQF).

The NQF is the national system for regulating education and care services, setting levels of safety and quality that aim to ensure all children who attend long day care, preschool/kindergarten, outside school hours care and family day care have the best start in life.

ACECQA has two legislated functions related to the formal qualifications that are generally mandated across the education and care workforce. These functions are to approve and publish lists of higher education and vocational level qualifications, and to determine equivalence of individual qualifications that are not on these approved lists – typically these are qualifications gained outside Australia.

### ***Discussion Question 3: Effectiveness and efficiency of processes and practices***

ACECQA considers the above discussion question of the issues paper for this Review to be most relevant to ACECQA's role within the NQF qualifications context.

## Accreditation of early childhood teachers

ACECQA welcomes the accreditation of early childhood teachers (ECTs) and views this development as well-aligned with the professionalisation of the sector under the NQF, including through strengthened qualification requirements. ACECQA supports national coherence in accreditation/registration standards so as to minimise regulatory burden for education and care providers across jurisdictions, and consequential impacts on the supply of ECTs.

ACECQA notes the proactive stakeholder and sector engagement undertaken by BOSTES in preparation for the accreditation of ECTs in 2016, and clear communications and guidance to the sector. ACECQA has had positive engagement with BOSTES through this process, both through its working party and via regular meetings with teacher accreditation staff.

ACECQA recognises the challenge of extending the teacher accreditation process to early childhood teachers, noting that there are more than 3,600 eligible long day care and preschool services and 5,000 early childhood teachers in NSW. As noted in the Issues Paper, expansion of accreditation will likely place significant demand on existing structures and practices, with the structure of the early childhood sector being very diverse and notably different to the primary and secondary school sectors. For example, it is estimated that around half of the eligible long day care and preschool services in NSW employ only one or two ECTs, meaning that the peer and mentoring support that is often readily available in the primary and secondary school sectors can be absent in the early childhood sector.

## Opportunities to streamline existing processes and practices

### *ECT qualifications: age focus*

ACECQA's qualification assessment guidelines state that ECT qualifications must include curriculum and professional experience that covers at least the birth to five years age range. Qualifications that cover the age range from birth to eight years are preferred, as this typically provides graduates with continuity of learning.

Qualifications that span the age range of birth to twelve years cover a wide span of children's development. Feedback to ACECQA from providers of education and care services and course providers is that this age range does not allow sufficient focus on the early years. This is because higher education institutes can be significantly challenged in terms of the early childhood content that they can provide, while also meeting Australian curriculum content requirements for primary school aged children.

ACECQA suggests that this review may offer the opportunity for BOSTES to review the requirement for NSW initial teacher education courses to span the age range of birth to twelve years and consider whether the benefits of the wide age span outweigh the concerns raised, particularly in the context of, and giving reference to, the processes and experiences of other jurisdictions.

### *ECT qualifications: age range requirement for supervised teaching component*

ACECQA requires that a significant proportion of the professional experience component of ECT qualifications must be undertaken with children in the birth to five age range, including a minimum of 10 days with children aged under three years.

Skilled migration criteria, as set by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), currently requires 45 days supervised teaching practice with children across the ages of three to eight years in education programs prior to and in the early years of primary school.

Feedback from higher education institutes indicates this requirement has been implemented more prescriptively in some jurisdictions. Some stakeholders have interpreted that students in NSW are required to concentrate their professional experience in the three to eight years age range, and have at least 20 days with children aged eight to twelve. Stakeholders in some other jurisdictions have been able to meet both ACECQA's and AITSL's professional experience requirements more flexibly. For example, by maintaining or reducing the age focus to birth to eight years, and/or implementing observation days with primary students, rather than supervised practicum.

ACECQA suggests that this review may offer the opportunity for BOSTES to review the supervised teaching age range requirement for initial teacher education courses, particularly in the context of, and giving reference to, the processes and experiences of other jurisdictions.

### *Recognition of providers of professional development*

As part of its functions, ACECQA provides structured learning and development to the sector and employees of regulatory authorities under the NQF. The online learning and face to face workshops provided by ACECQA are tailored to the NQF context and have been well received by stakeholders. ACECQA is considering applying to BOSTES to become an endorsed professional development provider to deliver Quality Teaching Council registered professional development.

The approach for recognising professional development is more prescriptive in NSW compared to other jurisdictions. For example, NSW is the only jurisdiction with the requirement of endorsed professional development. Other jurisdictions allow teachers to independently source appropriate professional development. With the introduction of ECT accreditation in NSW later this year, there may be a challenge for ECTs to identify sufficient appropriate opportunities for professional development that are recognised and endorsed by BOSTES.

ACECQA suggests that this review may offer BOSTES the opportunity to review its requirements in relation to professional development recognition, particularly in the context of, and giving reference to, the processes and experiences of other jurisdictions.

***Further information***

If you would like to discuss our responses to the discussion paper, or would like further information, please contact Michael Petrie, General Manager Strategy, Communications and Consistency, on 02 8240 4230.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Curtis', written in a cursive style.

Karen Curtis  
**Chief Executive Officer**