



The Hon Dan Tehan MP
Minister for Education

Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Telephone: 02 6277 7350

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Ms Julie Dyson AM
Chair
National Advocates for Arts Education
contact@naae.org.au

Dear Ms Dyson

Julie,

Thank you for your letter of 4 November 2019 regarding arts education in schools. I appreciate the time you have taken to bring these matters to my attention.

The Australian Government recognises that there are significant benefits for students through participation in the arts during their schooling. The arts have the capacity to engage students in their learning, inspire them to look beyond the obvious and to critically examine what is before them. These important skills are why the Australian Curriculum, endorsed by all education ministers in September 2015, includes the arts as one of the eight key learning areas for Australian school students.

While the Government plays a national leadership role in curriculum development, it is the state and territory governments and non-government education authorities that are responsible for the implementation of the curriculum. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) works closely with the states and territories on the production of nationally consistent resources that guide teachers in teaching the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts*. For example, the *Primary Matters* publication prepared by ACARA's arts specialists for October 2019 provides detailed instructions for teachers on how they may incorporate practices for the five arts forms to build confidence, creativity and critical thinking skills in students.

Education ministers have agreed a regular review of the Australian Curriculum should occur every six years. The last review of the Australian Curriculum occurred in 2014. The next review is foreshadowed for 2020. A decision to revise the Australian Curriculum will require the agreement of all education ministers. ACARA provided advice to education ministers at Education Council on 11 December 2019 on the potential scope for refinements of the Australian Curriculum that may occur as part of any review work.

In relation for initial teacher education courses, universities are fundamentally autonomous entities established under state and territory legislation, and course offerings are a decision for universities. There are 48 initial teacher education providers offering around 340 programs nationally.

While the Government provides substantial funding each year on the delivery of initial teacher education through higher education funding, universities maintain significant influence over teaching courses and course content. Recent reforms to initial teacher education have been possible through the agreement of Education Council and given effect through a national approach to the accreditation of initial teacher education programs. The accreditation process is undertaken by state and territory teacher regulatory authorities against national standards and procedures.

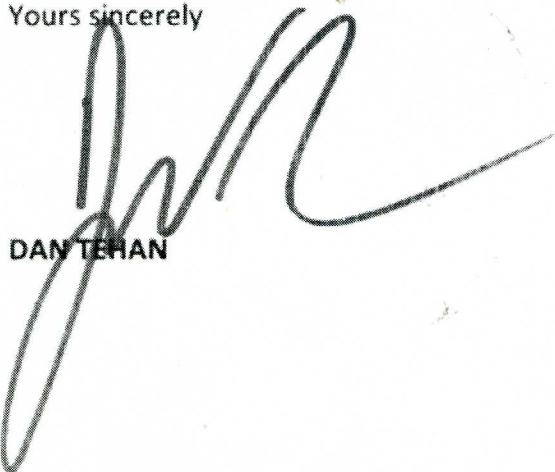
The national approach, the *Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures*, requires higher education providers to show how they ensure students develop the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in the classroom. Central to these requirements are the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* and the expectation that teacher training will produce teachers that meet the Graduate level of the Teacher Standards.

At the Graduate level, the Teacher Standards articulate how initial teacher education graduates are expected to demonstrate knowledge and skills across the domains of teaching and apply them in the classroom. The Teacher Standards are applicable to all subject areas and cover all student demographics and learning needs.

The Accreditation and Teacher Standards together set robust quality standards while allowing universities and schools the flexibility to design and deliver courses in ways that meet local needs and circumstances. The Accreditation Standards also require all providers to account for key factors in producing 'classroom ready' graduates.

Thank you for writing to me to raise these matters. I would encourage you to maintain an open dialogue with Ms Catherine Orchard, Director, Curriculum Policy, who can be contacted at (02) 6240 9033 or by email at catherine.orchard@education.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



DAN TEAHAN