

National Tertiary Education Union
Po Box 1323, South Melbourne
Victoria, Australia 3205
Tel 03 9254 1910
Fax 03 9254 1915

NTEU Submission

Standing Committee of Education and Vocational Training

Inquiry into Teacher Education 2005

Contacts: Dr Carolyn Allport
National President
Ph: (03) 9254 1910
Fax: (03) 9254 1915
e-mail: callport@nteu.org.au

Paul Kniest
Policy and Research Officer
Ph: (03) 9254 1910
Fax: (03) 9254 1915
e-mail: pkniest@nteu.org.au

RECOMMENDATIONS

SELECTION OF TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

NTEU recommends:

Alternative selection criteria for entry into Teacher education programs are best used for career-change entrants and Indigenous students. The proposal for selection entry based on a new 'capability' test is not supported without substantial evidence that this would be an effective means of identifying potential new teachers. NTEU notes that the current TER scores for school leavers entering teacher education are high, and very competitive against TER scores for other areas of university study. The interview process is resource intensive, and as such is best targeted at career-change and Indigenous applicants, who might be disadvantaged by the sole reliance on the TER score.

In respect of preparing teachers for teaching Indigenous students, importance needs to be taken of the rich bodies of knowledge embedded in studies of Indigenous customs and practices.

State, Territory and Commonwealth Governments could assist the recruitment of high quality entrants into teacher education through the development of a strong values statement outlining the high value attached to teaching and teacher education by our communities. This would be best supported by a public campaign that promotes teaching as an indispensable, noble and worthy profession

ATTRITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

NTEU recommends:

Attention be focused on the initial years of a teacher's appointment, since this is when the data suggests that we loose recent graduates. Research should be conducted to ascertain the reasons for attrition in the early years, and as a result staff development programs addressing these problems should be developed.

Priority be given to reviewing the transition from university to school or education workplace with the objective of linking university programs and initial school experience. As part of this transition, mentoring and development programs are essential.

SELECTION AND REWARD OF EDUCATION FACULTY MEMBERS

NTEU recommends:

The Commonwealth should offer targeted post-graduate scholarships for people wishing to work as academics in teacher education.

The Commonwealth and States to consider proposals for secondments of teaching staff from schools and other educational institutions which allow them to remain on their existing salaries and conditions while working at the university. This would overcome the current difficulties faced by universities given the salary gap between salaries paid to school teachers and salaries paid to a starting academic.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

NTEU recommends:

The Commonwealth consider giving priority status for education research, and that such research remain within the general university research framework of competitive grants, consultancies, and commissioned work.

The importance of the practicum component of teacher education is a critical part of ensuring that the transition from university to professional practice as a teacher is effective. This should involve both specialist teacher education staff, discipline based staff at university and school levels, and the schools themselves. The practicum is expensive, and it is recommended that additional resources be attached in order to provide incentives for schools and other education institutions to participate in the practicum programs.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

NTEU recommends:

A set of nationally consistent and internationally recognised professional standards be established for teachers, as has been developed in other professions. The relevant professional association, in association with its members, should develop these standards. NTEU does not support the National Institute of Quality Teaching and School Leadership having responsibility for this task, although clearly it might have a relationship with the professional organization.

UNIVERSITY FUNDING ALLOCATION PRACTICES

NTEU recommends:

The internal funding model within universities be reviewed to ensure that teacher education be not penalised in its funding allocations outside the Commonwealth Grant Scheme monies allocated by the Government. Currently fees are capped for teacher education and nursing, with the result that these areas are unable to earn additional revenue from fee increases in common with other university areas. The response should not necessarily be to take off the cap, but rather review the subsidy given by the Commonwealth to these priority areas in order to recognise their national priority status.

Introduction

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) is a professional and industrial organisation representing approximately 27,000 staff in all higher education institutions, as well as others working in the wider tertiary sector. NTEU represents a significant number of members who work in teacher education at Australian universities. NTEU believes that universities must deliver teacher education training courses and programs, the qualification must be degree standard, with postgraduate entry qualifications for professional accreditation. As such we have a strong interest in the outcomes of the current *Review into Teacher Education* in Australia, especially how it impacts on the structure and nature of teacher education at universities.

NTEU would urge the Standing Committee to be conscious of avoiding recommendations that impinge upon universities' autonomy or on the academic freedom of staff employed in teacher education programs. Any recommendations for Australia's teaching education programs must address the need for the provision of comprehensive teacher education and training, and acknowledge this education and training needs to be informed by current research into teacher education.

Research is critical to developing and nurturing effective teaching practices. Much of the research on conceptions of teaching and teaching styles has been generated in the fields of social sciences and, to a certain extent, the humanities. The new pedagogical understandings of teaching and teaching education, and the developmental and learning theories that contribute towards professional development for teachers, form an inseparable part of teaching research relevant to the advancement of teaching as a profession.

NTEU is strongly opposed to any policy changes that would result in the creation of teaching-only positions or teaching-only institutions, as was proposed in the Crossroads review. Such a change would directly affect the quality of teacher-education at Australian universities and the quality of teaching at Australian schools.

Terms of Reference

1. Examine and assess the criteria for selecting students for teacher training courses.

A number of recent State reviews¹ into teacher education have questioned the adequacy of using academic entrance scores, such as Tertiary Education Rankings, as the primary means of gaining entry into teacher education programs at Australian universities. The reports observe that academic entrance scores fail to identify whether students have the appropriate aptitude and commitment to become effective teachers. Concern has also been expressed that too heavy a reliance on academic entrance scores are biased against mature-aged or career-change entrants, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds such as Indigenous Australians. It has been suggested that teacher education programs adopt a more comprehensive selection mechanism.

¹ Parliament of Victoria Education and Training Committee (February 2005) *Step Up, Step in, Step Out: Report on the Inquiry into the Suitability of pre-Service Teacher Training in Victoria* Final Report and Gregor Ramsey (November 2000) *Quality Matters. Revitalising teaching: Critical times, critical choices*. Report of the Review of Teacher Education, NSW

NTEU shares the concerns of the Australian Education Union (AEU)² about the suggestion by the Minister of developing a 'capability score' for students seeking entry into teacher education programs. A 'capability score', it is argued, would not only measure potential students' academic skills and knowledge but also attempt to assess attributes such as aptitude and temperament.

NTEU has two major concerns about such an approach. Firstly, NTEU shares the concerns of the AEU about the use of capability scores. We are strongly opposed to the introduction of any widespread use of psychometric testing without irrefutable proof that it would be an effective means of identifying potentially effective teachers. Before recommending any testing requirements the Committee should give due consideration to the impact this might have on potential applicants and ensure it doesn't discourage applicants from wide and diverse backgrounds.

Secondly, the development and implementation of such a measure will be very resource intensive. Therefore, before contemplating whether this approach is even viable, NTEU would insist that the Government commit to funding any additional costs of implementing any changes to the entrance requirements or tests for teacher education programs.

A more fruitful approach, proposed by the AEU and the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) is that traditional selection processes should be supplemented by interviews or provision of additional information for certain types of entrants. The two groups most likely to benefit most from supplementary interviews would be mature age career change entrants and Indigenous students. Career change students who may not have the necessary academic results may bring a wealth of relevant experience and this should be acknowledged.

Indigenous Australians are the most disadvantaged group in our society in relation to education participation and attainment. If educational outcomes for Indigenous Australians are to improve it is imperative that effective teaching practice requires teachers to have the knowledge, abilities and skills to work effectively with students from Indigenous backgrounds. Both learning outcomes and community-building can be improved if, as part of teacher education, there is a recognition of the rich bodies of knowledge embedded in studies of Indigenous customs and cultures. One of the most effective ways of achieving these outcomes would be to encourage more Indigenous Australians to become teachers. Given that Indigenous students are unlikely to have had the same formal educational experience as non-Indigenous Australians, NTEU believes special consideration should be given to encourage their participation in teacher education programs.

Whether the use of supplementary interviews would add any value to the selection of students entering directly from high school is an empirical question. NTEU is aware that the University of South Australia, which once used interviews for all applicants, has recently ceased using this selection process. According to our members, interviews were stopped because the process was resource intensive and there appears to have been little or no impact on the quality of applicants.

² As outlined in their submission to this inquiry.

2. Examine the extent to which teacher training courses can attract high quality students, including students from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

NTEU is concerned that this term of reference is based on a common misconception that teacher education courses at universities are incapable of attracting high calibre students. According to the ACDE's submission to this inquiry, the entry scores for teacher education programs in recent years has been higher than most arts (BA) and business courses and equal to those in engineering. Anecdotal evidence the NTEU has received from our members in teacher education faculties would support this view.

Further evidence that teacher education is not out of step with other university courses in terms of attracting high quality applicants can be gauged by examining the proportion of potential student applicants who miss out on a university place as provided in Table 1. The data show that in 2000, 22% of applicants applying for a place in an education program missed out on a place which is the same as the average for all disciplines but higher than Arts, Business/Administration, Science and Engineering to name a few.

While the evidence presented above suggests that some of the current concerns about the quality of students entering teacher education programs might be misplaced, NTEU would advocate that the Standing Committee continue to consider policies that ensure the calibre of students entering teacher education remains relatively high and continues to improve. Special attention needs to be given to ensuring students from diverse backgrounds or disadvantaged groups, especially Indigenous students, are not disadvantaged by the entry requirements.

Table 1: Applications to Australian Universities by Broad Field of Study

Broad Field of Study	Applicants 2000		
	Total	Not Receiving Offer	
		No.	%
Agriculture	2,728	235	9
Architecture	5,382	1,751	33
Arts/Humanities	52,038	8,902	17
Business/Admin	44,454	9,801	22
Education	19,601	4,761	24
Engineering	13,124	1,407	11
Dentistry	1,133	597	53
Nursing	9,096	1,473	16
Medicine	8,076	4,768	59
Health Other	14,114	4,038	29
Health (b)	32,419	10,876	34
Law	8,657	3,478	40
Legal Studies	4,887	1,266	26
Law/Legal Studies (c)	13,544	4,744	35
Science	29,200	2,774	10
Veterinary Science	1,742	1,119	64
Total	214,232	46,370	22

Source: AVCC Survey of University Applications 2004 (Appendix Tables)

NTEU members involved in teacher education programs are strongly of the view that one of the major disincentives faced by students in making the choice of teaching as a future career relates to the public perception of teaching. Public statements that are critical of teachers and the performance of Australian school students, even where the evidence does not support these conclusions, provide no or little incentive for students to enter teaching. The recent experience in Queensland where the Government has undertaken a positive campaign to promote the virtues and value of teaching appears to have had an effect on both increasing the number and calibre of students applying to enter into teacher education programs in that State. NTEU would strongly recommend that:

- The development of a strong values statement that clearly states the contribution teachers and teacher education make to Australian society, and
- Undertaking a public campaign that promotes teaching as an indispensable, noble and worthy profession.

3. Examine attrition rates from teaching courses and reasons for that attrition.

NTEU is unaware of any evidence that suggests the attrition rates for students enrolled in teacher education courses at Australian universities is any higher than for other university courses. According to both the AEU and the ACDE, the problem of attrition seems to occur in first five years after teachers enter the profession.

NTEU supports the AEU's call for the Committee to further investigate why a relatively high proportion of teachers appear to be leaving the profession in the first few years. As suggested in other parts of this submission special consideration should be given to

how to best facilitate the transition from student to teacher in the early years of a teacher's careers.

4. Examine and assess the criteria for selecting and rewarding education faculty members.

Evidence from a number of teacher education faculties around Australia suggest that universities are experiencing difficulties filling vacancies with continuing or permanent staff. At the University of Tasmania in Launceston, it was estimated that as few as 20% of vacancies have been filled with continuing appointments over the last 5 years.

There may be a number of factors that are contributing to this problem. Universities require potential candidates to have postgraduate research qualifications, with a PhD preferred and minimum of two years recent teaching experience before they are considered eligible for an ongoing appointment. This combination of educational qualifications and experience is difficult to find. Teachers who might be interested in entering an academic career often lack the appropriate qualifications and may not be in a position to undertake such studies at their own expense. The Committee might consider offering specifically targeted postgraduate scholarships for people wishing to enter an academic career in teacher education.

The salary paid to entry-level academics is normally well below that which an experienced and successful teacher with appropriate postgraduate qualifications is likely to be earning as a teacher and there is little incentive for such people to apply for academic positions.

Universities have adopted a number of strategies to overcome the difficulties they have experienced in recruiting staff in teacher education programs. In Tasmania, vacancies are often filled by secondments from the Department of Education. Under this arrangement practicing teachers are appointed for a fixed term of between one to three years, and while being paid by the University continue to receive their teachers salaries and conditions. It was however noted that in areas of teacher shortage, such as maths, science or IT, the Department is reluctant to release teachers for secondments.

Both financial constraints and the difficulty of attracting appropriately qualified staff has seen a rapid increase in the use of casual staff in education programs across Australia. The data in Table 2 shows that while the number of full-time and fractional staff has remained reasonably constant since 1998, the number of casual staff has increased by more than 50%. The proportion of casual staff has risen from 14% in 1998 to 21% in 2003. These figures are well above the current sector average for casual employment. The implications of this shift in staffing patterns needs to be examined in relation to the impact it will have on the quality of teacher education programs.

Table 2. Full Time Equivalent Teaching and Research Staff in Education

Year	Full-Time and Fractional	Actual Casuals	Total	Casuals % of Total
1998	2,482	402	2,884	13.9%
1999	2,260	438	2,698	16.2%
2000	2,568	449	3,017	14.9%
2001	2,438	657	3,095	21.2%
2002	2,475	636	3,111	20.4%
2003	2,421	644	3,065	21.0%

Source: DEST Selected Higher Education Statistics Appendix Tables 1.11 and 1.12 (2004)

5. Examine the educational philosophy underpinning the teacher training courses (including the teaching methods used, course structure and materials, and methods for assessment and evaluation) and assess the extent to which it is informed by research.

From NTEU's perspective, the important issue in relation to this question is that educational philosophy and pedagogy is informed by research. This is why it is critical that all universities continue to be funded to undertake education-related research. Research is an essential prerequisite for academic discourse and debate that addresses critical issues. Any attempts to rationalise research funding to create teaching-only education faculties would not only infringe upon the academic professional rights of staff engaged in teacher education, but also be detrimental to ensuring that the design and delivery of education meets world's best practice.

NTEU would advocate that additional funding be provided for research specifically in the field of education. Given education's importance for the economic and social welfare of Australia we would also support giving education research priority status. Education research funding however should be distributed on the same basis as other research funding, including through competitive research grants administered by the Australian Research Council. NTEU is strongly opposed to any centralisation of education research into a body such as the National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership (NIQTSL). It is important that education research is seen in the same light and expected to meet the same standards as all other research conducted at Australia's universities, and therefore must be treated on an equal basis.

One of the major difficulties in designing the structure of teacher education programs is achieving the appropriate balance between the theoretical and practical components of the course. The recent Victorian Parliament Report³ into teacher education in that State found that:

the perceived gaps in pre-service teacher education programs are generally practical in nature

A recent study conducted for the Victorian Institute of Teachers, which involved a survey of over 1,000 recent graduates who commenced teaching in 2002, as well as

³ Parliament of Victoria Education and Training Committee (February 2005) *op cit*, p 100.

Victorian school principles,⁴ found that in relation to effectiveness of various components of pre-service teacher education programs, that for recent graduates:

School experience was rated higher than other elements of teacher education programs, but teachers from most courses made frequent mention of unsatisfactory arrangements, including the selection and preparation of teachers supervising the practicum experience in schools.

The importance of the teaching practicum or professional experience is not only considered an essential and highly valued part of pre-service teacher education programs it also appears to be the part which requires the most attention. Some of the issues related to professional experience and the transition from university to teaching are addressed in more detail below. At this point NTEU would like to emphasise the point made by many of our members and by the ACDE and AEU submissions - a teacher education program that concentrates on curriculum and pedagogy only, will not meet the requirements of students, teachers or the community. Teacher education programs must also cover areas such as the social and historical context of education and teaching as well as an understanding of how students learn and how teachers can effectively communicate with students. The design and content of teacher education programs offered by Australian universities is ultimately the responsibility of each university.

6. Examine the interaction and relationships between teacher training courses and other university faculty disciplines.

According to the ACDE submission to this inquiry, between 25% and 50% of the courses undertaken by a typical education student are in courses offered by teacher education faculties. The ACDE recommends that staff in other discipline faculties, especially those that have a high proportion of students enrolled in teacher education degree programs should be encouraged to incorporate aspects of the pedagogy of teaching their disciplines into their courses. They also suggest that staff from other faculties might be directly involved in the supervision of school-based placements for students taking classes in their specific discipline areas.

NTEU supports the ACDE proposition in principle. However, before introducing such a policy, NTEU would recommend that a fully funded research project including trials and an assessment of outcomes be undertaken at a number of Australian universities before deciding on its widespread adoption. NTEU would also highlight that additional professional development may be required in building these partnerships between teacher education staff and discipline based staff. It is important to ensure that such development is targeted to the expressed needs of the discipline based staff, and then linked to programs in teacher education that provide meaningful feedback to students undertaking professional experience programs at schools. Participation of non-education faculty staff should be on a strictly voluntary basis and appropriate professional development and training must be provided and paid for by the university before the introduction of any such scheme.

⁴ Lawrence Ingvarson, Adrian Beavis and Elizabeth Kleinhenz (August 2004) *Teacher Education Courses in Victoria: Perceptions of their Effectiveness and Factors Affecting their Impact*. Australian Council for Educational Research p 81

7. **Examine the preparation of primary and secondary teaching graduates to:**
- (i) teach literacy and numeracy;**
 - (ii) teach vocational education courses;**
 - (iii) effectively manage classrooms;**
 - (iv) successfully use information technology;**
 - (v) deal with bullying and disruptive students and dysfunctional families;**
 - (vi) deal with children with special needs and/or disabilities;**
 - (vii) achieve accreditation; and**
 - (viii) deal with senior staff, fellow teachers, school boards, education authorities, parents, community groups and other related government departments.**

A number of recent reviews into teacher education programs, especially the recent Victorian Parliament Report has been critical of university programs for failing to produce graduates that are not 'teacher ready'. In particular, they have highlighted problems commencing teachers face in relation to classroom management and dealing with students with particular needs or problems. The AEU submission to this review notes that many seasoned teachers also have difficulty in dealing with some of the issues listed above.

This term of reference covers a number of important aspects of teacher education programs that need to be addressed including:

- ensuring that the expectations of governments, schools and the broader community about what constitutes a graduate being 'teacher ready' are realistic,
- examining the role of professional development programs especially in the early years of a teacher's career,
- developing a set of nationally consistent professional standards for the purposes of teacher registration and determine who should be responsible for developing these standards, and
- ensuring teacher education programs are appropriately resourced to allow them to produce graduates that meet community expectations.

NTEU would caution that it would be highly unrealistic to expect a new graduate to step into a classroom on day one and have all the necessary skills and experience to know how to effectively cope with bullying or disruptive students and/or students from dysfunctional families and/or communicate with government departments. While it might be realistic to expect a new teacher to be able to identify students experiencing problems or difficulties, NTEU would question to what extent they should be expected to be able to 'deal' with such issues in the immediate period following initial appointment.

Dealing with these issues would seem to be a school community responsibility and not just that of the individual teacher, especially where that teacher is just starting their career. Schools need to be in a position that allows teachers (new or experienced) to refer problematic students for the necessary advice and support including professional counselling if that is deemed necessary. Issues associated in dealing with students with particular difficulties or problems should be part of all teachers' ongoing professional development throughout their careers.

In a similar vein, NTEU considers that teaching VET courses and/or teaching students with special needs or disabilities are specialised areas of education. Graduates who have specialised in these areas or serving teachers who have undergone appropriate professional development programs should be engaged to teach these students.

Effective classroom management is something that can only be learned from learning-by-doing through exposure to real classroom situations. Therefore, the amount of time and nature of supervision, mentoring, and feedback students receive as part of the professional experience component of their education program and the induction and professional development of teachers in their early years are critical. However, it needs to be acknowledged that the professional experience component of teacher education programs is expensive and resource intensive. Strengthening the professional experience component of teacher education programs will not only require additional funding, it will also need schools and teachers to be involved in and committed to the process.

NTEU supports the establishment of a set of nationally consistent, and internationally recognised, professional standards for teachers, as is the case in many other professions including medicine, engineering, law and accounting. The question however, arises as to who should be responsible for setting these standards. In other professions, standards are set by professional societies that are fully owned and controlled by members of the profession. In teaching however, bodies such as the Victorian Institute of Teachers (VIT) and the National Institute of Quality Teaching and School Leadership (NIQTSL) have been established by Government policy and part of their mission appears to be the development of standards for the teaching profession. It should also be noted that the composition of the governing boards of these institutes is also determined by Government policy. A number of NTEU members have expressed concern that some of the governing boards of these Institutes might not be truly representative of the teaching profession, and have little or no representation of teacher educators.

The setting of standards that the profession requires students to achieve for registration as a teacher should not be confused with the process of accreditation of university courses. Universities are by definition self accrediting organisations and they are required to meet National Protocols for Australian Universities established by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in order to achieve this status. It is the responsibility of universities to ensure that their courses equip their graduates with the necessary skills to meet registration standards.

NTEU would be strongly opposed to any proposed policy changes to teacher registration and/or the accreditation of courses that might impact upon institutional autonomy or academic freedom of universities.

8. Examine the role and input of schools and their staff to the preparation of trainee teachers.

The role of the professional experience component of pre-service teacher education programs is critical not only for potential students' educational experience but also in terms of preparing students to enter the profession. This means that the student must spend time in real classroom situations and be provided with appropriate supervision, mentoring and feedback. This professional experience therefore requires the input of university lecturers, schools and teachers prepared to act as mentors.

Given the increasing number of students entering teacher education programs in recent years, all university teacher education faculties are finding it increasingly difficult to find sufficient professional experience placements for their students. This is especially true for universities located in regional areas where the number of potential placements is limited. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find enough placements

and a number of our members have expressed concerns about the quality of some of these placements.

While universities are obliged to find their students professional experience placements, no such obligation is placed on schools to offer these placements or on individual teachers to act as mentors. Many schools willingly participate in professional experience out of a sense of duty to furthering the teaching profession however there seems to be very few real incentives for either schools or individual teachers to do so. Ramsey⁵ noted in his report, in relation to NSW, the role and standing of schools in the professional experience component of pre-service teacher education needs to be more significant.

Therefore, NTEU would recommend that the Committee closely examine policy alternatives that would encourage both schools and individual teachers to be involved in professional experience programs, which might include:

- providing schools with the necessary resources to participate in these programs,
- encouraging schools and universities to form partnerships in relation to offering professional experience programs for students, and
- providing existing teachers with the necessary education and professional recognition as qualified mentor teachers, which should be negotiated with the appropriate staff representative bodies including the AEU and the Independent Education Union (IEU).

9. Investigate the appropriateness of the current split between primary and secondary education training.

All forms of teacher education including primary, secondary and special education must maintain their professional recognition and therefore must continue to be offered by universities. How universities structure their particular course offerings is a matter for each university to determine in consultation with appropriate employer and professional bodies across both the public and private sectors.

10. Examine the construction, delivery and resourcing of ongoing professional learning for teachers already in the workforce.

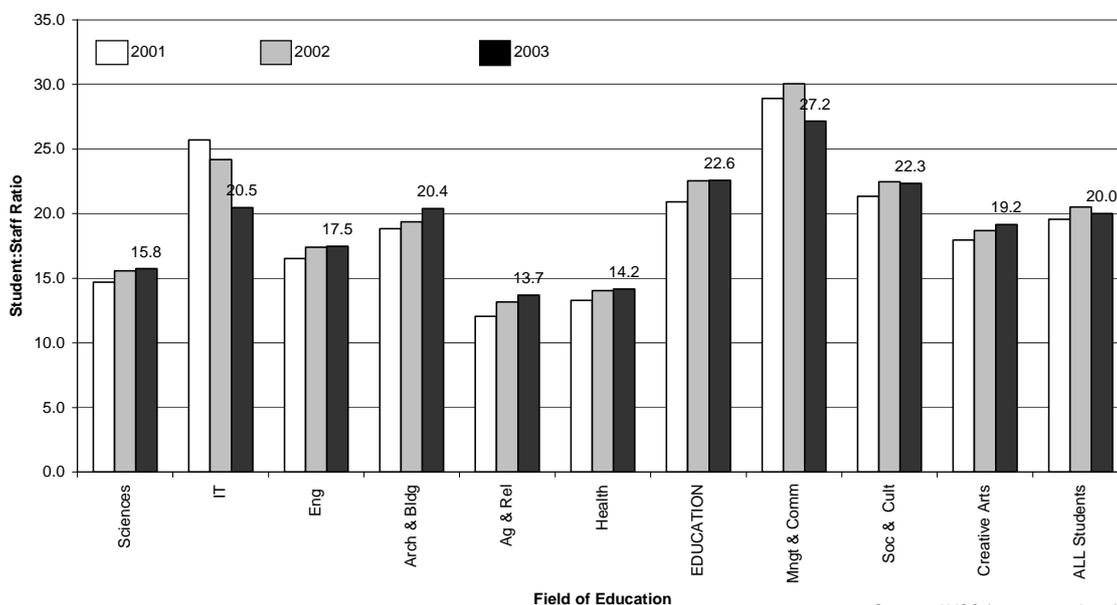
This is largely a question that involves staff directly involved in teaching, who are represented by the AEU and the IEU. NTEU however, would be strongly supportive of more rigorous induction and professional development programs for teachers in their early years of education. It is clear that many of the problems that early teachers face happen in their early years, including high attrition rates from the profession. While it might be a wish of employing bodies that all graduates are 'teacher ready' on graduation and are able to function as highly effective teachers from day one, this is not a realistic expectation. A teacher's first year on the job should not only be considered as a period of probation but as an opportunity to further their skills. First year induction and professional development programs should be designed and implemented through the cooperation of schools, teacher unions and, where appropriate, in consultation with universities.

⁵ Gregor Ramsey (2000) *op cit* p 56

11. Examine the adequacy of the funding of teacher training courses by university administrations.

There is one important issue that the terms of reference do not directly address, and that is, the level of resourcing required if teacher education programs at Australian universities are to meet Government and community expectations. At present teacher education faculties at Australian universities are constrained by available resources. As Figure 1 clearly demonstrates, teacher education had the second highest student:staff ratios of all disciplines taught at Australian universities in 2003 (only surpassed by Management and Commerce). It is also worth noting that this ratio has increased significantly in recent years. NTEU would be critical of any recommendations that impose unrealistic expectations on teacher education programs and the staff involved in them without a commensurate increase in funding or resourcing.

Figure 1
Student Staff Ratios by Field of Education 2001 to 2003



Source: AVCC (www.avcc.edu.au)

In terms of university funding of teacher education programs, there are a number of issues that the Committee should investigate. First, a large number of universities adopt the general practice of allocating total non-CGS revenues earned by particular discipline areas to different functions within the university. Under this model, faculties responsible for delivering courses to students typically receive between 40 and 50% of their earned non-CGS revenue. These funding models might be problematic for teacher education faculties because the new Commonwealth Grants Scheme (CGS) identifies teacher education and nursing as national priority areas. This means that universities cannot increase HECS fees for students enrolled in these programs, whereas in other disciplines HECS fees can be increased by up to 25%. While other discipline areas can expect to receive their share of additional earned revenue, teacher education and nursing are not in the same position. This is compounded by the fact that under the CGS the Commonwealth contribution to teaching and nursing were increased in order to cover additional costs associated with professional experience programs and clinical training. An analysis by Phillips-Curran⁶ estimated that the value

⁶ Phillips – Curran (June 2003) *INDEPENDENT STUDY OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW: STAGE 2 REPORT Volume 2 . Potential Impact of the Higher Education Review p 44*

of these additional payments was between \$620 and \$630 per full-time student per annum. Under a revenue allocation funding model only 40% to 50% of this additional funding for professional experience would find its way to the faculty. NTEU recommends that under the CGS, the payment associated with professional experience be explicitly identified and earmarked for use by faculties to facilitate the professional experience component of their courses.

Another more worrying aspect of the new funding arrangements that the Committee should investigate is whether universities will change the nature of courses they offer. It might be that universities start encouraging students to enrol in a non-teacher education program and do their teaching qualification as an add on program at the end (such as a Diploma in Education), rather than enrol in education or teaching degree programs. This could only be justified on the grounds that it provides the most effective education program for future teachers, but the Committee should be concerned if universities were restructuring their courses simply to maximise the revenue received by the university.