Accreditation and maintenance at Proficient for casual and temporary teachers

Accreditation

Who is required to be accredited?
From 1 January 2018, all teachers employed in NSW schools or working in an approved early childhood education and care service are required to be accredited with the NSW Education Standards Authority.

Payment of the NESA fee
As a teacher undergoing the accreditation process you are required by law to pay an annual fee. Non-payment of the fee will result in the suspension and consequently the loss of a teacher's approval to teach with the Department.

If you are having trouble paying the fee it is possible to work out a payment plan with NESA.

The Federation believes the fee should be paid by the employer and continues to campaign to achieve this.

As a casual/temporary teacher what are the service requirements to become accredited?
Casual and temporary teachers are required to know the date when their period of accreditation will end and what accreditation action they are required to undertake in the relevant period. This information is available from NESA. Casual teachers must successfully complete required accreditation actions before the date of expiry of their relevant accreditation period is reached.

Casual teachers:
- have a minimum of two years and a maximum of five years to complete their accreditation at Proficient Teacher
- need to complete at least 160-180 full time equivalent days of teaching (this may include days teaching in non-Department schools) and
- complete a block of continuous teaching in the same five-year time frame. The block of continuous teaching (either full time or part time) should be the equivalent of at least six to eight weeks. This allows the principal to determine over a period of time that a casual teacher consistently meets the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. In relation to service requirements for casual teachers, the Department’s Accreditation at Proficient Teacher Procedures (November 16, 2017) states: “The period of time for developing skills and practice may not always occur through full time or continuous employment. Initially, it may be through very short employment at a number of schools. However, a continuous period of 6–8 weeks should become a component of this employment to provide the casual teacher the opportunity to demonstrate the full range of standard descriptors. A longer period may be necessary if working part-time.”
- NESA specifies the maximum time frame for casual and temporary teachers to achieve accreditation at Proficient Teacher as five years for provisionally accredited teachers and six years for conditionally accredited teachers.

Casual and temporary teachers need to be aware that gaining a permanent teaching appointment does not mean that their timeframe to achieve accreditation is extended.
How does the principal know I am seeking accreditation with NESA?
At the commencement of the block of teaching or a temporary engagement, casual and temporary teachers should discuss with the principal their wish to use this time for the purposes of finalising their accreditation. Principals should support casual and temporary teachers engaged in a block of teaching or temporary engagement to access the formal accreditation process. Casual and temporary teachers are required to maintain their own employment records as evidence of completion of the minimum teaching requirement of 160-180 days. These records may include original or certified copies of pay advice.

Taking leave of absence from accreditation
Casual and temporary teachers who do not teach due to illness or work outside of teaching within a specified period may apply to NESA for leave of absence.

A teacher who stops teaching in NSW for a period of six months to five years may take a leave of absence from accreditation. Leave of absence can include time away from teaching due to:

- maternity leave
- sickness
- moving out of NSW
- changing industries.

If the teacher does not return to teaching within five years, her/his accreditation will cease and the teacher will need to apply for re-accreditation if returning to teaching after this time.

If a teacher takes leave for a continuous period of more than six months in the current calendar year and does not return to teaching before 1 October of that year NESA may waive the annual fee.

To be eligible to have the fee waived, the teacher must notify NESA of the intended leave of absence:

- before 29 January of the calendar year in which the leave is to occur
- within three months of the teacher’s initial accreditation date, for newly accredited teachers, or
- up to three months after the expiry of the teacher’s previous leave of absence.

Returning from leave
The teacher must reactivate accreditation with NESA upon return from extended leave.

Teachers who reactivate their accreditation (following a leave of absence) from 1 January to 30 September (inclusive) must pay the current calendar year’s accreditation fee.

Teachers who reactivate their accreditation (following a leave of absence) from 1 October to 31 December (inclusive) are not required to pay that calendar year’s accreditation fee.

Teachers cannot apply for a retrospective leave of absence online. To backdate a leave of absence the teacher will need to complete an online form and provide evidence for the reason for taking leave (for example, to obtain a child’s birth certificate, passport etc). Casual and temporary teachers will need to provide the last date that they taught in NSW and the date they returned or plan to return to teaching. See: nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/current-teachers/taking-a-break-from-teaching-in-nsw/leave-of-absence/.

Casual and temporary teachers involved in the process of accreditation at Proficient Teacher should:

- ensure that the principal TAA (PT), and supervisor at any school at which the teacher works is made aware that the teacher is seeking accreditation
- ensure that the principal TAA (PT), and supervisor are aware of the stage of accreditation and the end date of the teacher’s current accreditation period (refer to NESA if unsure)
- provide the principal TAA (PT) with a copy of the teacher’s Approval to Teach letter and NESA accreditation number
- pay the annual fee to NESA and advise them of any change to contact details or employment status, if applicable
- request that a supervisor (this can be the principal (TAA PT) be allocated to assist in the accreditation procedures and communicate regularly with the teacher about support needs and professional practice (casual teachers should have access to the same professional support for accreditation as teachers employed permanently. Casual teachers should be encouraged to seek out and participate in professional support at their school)
- identify accreditation requirements on the annual PDP and participate in teaching observations and feedback discussions with the teacher supervising the accreditation procedures
- document ongoing development against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers with
the help of the supervisor
• keep pay advice as documentary proof of teaching service
• collect and appropriately annotate evidence, which could fit into an A4 plastic sleeve, to support the application for accreditation
• ensure that each piece of supporting evidence has been authenticated by an accredited teacher
• acknowledge that they have read the Supervisors Accreditation at Proficient Teacher Report
• keep copies of documentation including supporting evidence throughout the accreditation process
• become familiar with the internal review process if there is a need to seek an internal review if there is a decision not accredit.

Maintenance of accreditation

It is a mandatory requirement for teachers, including casual and temporary teachers who are accredited at Proficient Teacher, to maintain their accreditation.

To maintain their accreditation teachers must:
• pay their annual accreditation fee to NESA
• continue to demonstrate their practice against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at Proficient Teacher
• participate in and complete a mandatory minimum of 100 hours of professional development over the required timeframe

Casual teachers must maintain up-to-date online records and regularly inform NESA of the schools in which they are working and have undertaken professional development. This enables NESA to update online records and ensure the teacher’s record is linked to the school’s record.

It is the responsibility of casual teachers to ensure that their online record with NESA is current and able to be accessed by a TAA (PT).

Timeframes for the maintenance of accreditation at Proficient Teacher

Casual and part time teachers who are accredited at Proficient Teacher have seven years to complete each maintenance of accreditation at Proficient Teacher phase.

In cases where a break in teaching service may lead to a teacher accredited at Proficient Teacher being unable to meet the requirements for maintenance of accreditation, these teachers are able to apply for a leave of absence from maintenance of accreditation through NESA.

For details on grounds for leave of absence requirements go to NESA — Reason for Leave of Absence.

What does 100 hours of professional development comprise?

The 100 hours professional development comprises:
• at least 50 hours of NESA-Registered Professional Development which comprises of designated courses delivered by providers endorsed by NESA (All Trade Union Training Courses and CPL courses attract registered professional hours for the purpose of maintenance of accreditation at Proficient Teacher) and
• a balance of Teacher-Identified Professional Development that could include courses and programs that are not registered through NESA, attendance at conferences, workshops, professional reading, observations, research, delivery of professional development, preparation of articles published in professional journals, working with industry and reflection activities.

Details of NESA Registered courses and programs provided by the Department are available at MyPL@Edu.

Accredited teachers are required to maintain their own written and online records of professional development. Teachers need to complete an online evaluation of NESA-registered professional development within three months of the end of the course. Once this evaluation is completed teachers will be registered as having finished the course.

Teachers should record their Teacher Identified Professional Development online through the NESA website, eTAMS, promptly after completing any professional development activities.

As a minimum, the 100 hours of professional development completed by teachers accredited at Proficient Teacher must relate to the Standards at or above their accreditation level.

All teachers are responsible for identifying their professional development needs and for planning their learning throughout the maintenance period.

Teachers undertaking postgraduate study, and in some circumstances additional undergraduate study, during the maintenance period will be deemed as meeting professional development requirements. Refer to NESA for information about postgraduate studies and undergraduate studies that may meet NESA requirements: nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/.
Accredited casual and temporary teachers involved in the process of maintenance of accreditation at Proficient Teacher should:

- pay the annual fee to NESA
- ask to be assigned a supervisor who will support the casual and temporary teacher through the maintenance process (can be principal TAA (PT))
- demonstrate ongoing teaching practice continues to meet the Standards at Proficient Teacher throughout the maintenance period as identified on their PDP
- develop an understanding of Professional Development and the difference between NESA-Registered Professional Development and Teacher Identified Professional Development
- document the 100 hours of professional development that relates to the Standards using the online Professional Development Participation Log
- evaluate NESA-Registered Professional Development activities within three months of completion of each activity using the online Professional Development Participation Log
- In the final three months of the teacher's maintenance period the teacher must declare that they have maintained their practice at the Standards for Proficient Teacher and completed all requirements for maintenance of accreditation in their NESA online account
- receive a copy of the final decision to maintain accreditation from the TAA (PT) and
- if successful, begin the next maintenance cycle.

I am a casual teacher and have to fund my own professional development and often miss a day’s work to attend a course.

Completing some courses, conferences and seminars conducted by Federation will contribute hours towards NESA Registered PD addressing standards from the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers towards maintaining Proficient Teacher Accreditation in NSW. Such training may be available via Federation’s Trade Union Training Program or the Centre for Professional Learning. Federation recognises that some casual teachers may have to refuse a day’s work to attend training: if you have turned down a day’s work to attend a Federation Trade Union Training course, you may be eligible to receive payment from Federation to compensate for the loss of a day’s work.

The Department has created an online space which provides courses that can be completed online and provides participants with registered hours of professional development. This program can be accessed through education.nsw.gov.au/mypl.

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