

PERMISSION TO TEACH POLICY 2011: FAQs for principals



Changes to the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (the Act) and the Institute's Permission to Teach Policy will operate from 1 January 2011. For further details read the policy at:

http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/PDF/PTT%20Policy%202011/PTT_Policy_2011.pdf

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1. When is an application for permission to teach required?

Registration with permission to teach is intended only for individuals who are not qualified and offered employment to undertake the duties of a teacher in delivering and/or assessing students' participation in the school's curriculum program.

An application for permission to teach (PTT) is required where:

1. a person is being engaged for the delivery and/or assessment of student participation in an educational program; and
2. the educational program is part of a curriculum that is
 - authorised by the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (e.g. VELS, VCE, VCAL); or
 - authorised by the International Baccalaureate Organisation, or
 - in a non-government school, is authorised and reviewed by the VRQA and is approved as the educational program of the school by the school's governing body; and
3. the educational program forms part of the required curriculum for a student in that school; and
4. the person is being engaged because of their specific skills and experience in a particular subject or discipline and is required to deliver and/or assess student participation in the required curriculum for a student; and
5. the educational program is to be conducted at a school (*as defined under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006*).

Extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, supplementary instruction and support programs outside of the required curriculum generally require an instructor who does not undertake the duties of a teacher as defined above. These positions may be staffed using direct supervision by registered teachers or in other arrangements under the *Working with Children Act 2005*.

It is important in deciding appropriate supervision arrangements that schools consider the requirements of industrial agreements and their obligations under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* and *Working with Children Act 2005* to ensure student safety.

2. Does everyone I employ to work with students need permission to teach?

No. Registration (for qualified teachers) and registration with permission to teach are required only where a person is undertaking the duties of a teacher and engaged for the delivery and/or assessment of student participation in the required school curriculum.

Integration aides and special needs support officers, chaplains and faith community leaders, guidance officers and careers advisors who do not have the responsibility for delivery and assessment of student participation in an educational program are generally not considered to be undertaking the duties of a teacher and would not be required to hold permission to teach.

However, where these people also deliver a component of the curriculum for groups of students (for example in a work education or VCAL work skills program or in teaching a religious education program or VCE Texts and Traditions study), they may be undertaking the duties of a teacher and would be expected to hold permission to teach or be directly supervised by a registered teacher.

Similarly sports coaches, instrumental music and other instructors engaged to instruct students in extra-curricular or co-curricular programs are generally not considered to be undertaking the duties of a teacher.

Where the program for which they are engaged forms part of the required curriculum for students in the school (for example in a music experience program undertaken by all students in year 3 or 4 as their Music program for the term or semester, or as part of the VCE Music or Dance program), they will be undertaking the duties of a teacher and will be expected to hold registration or permission to teach.

Specialist presenters, guest speakers and resident artists engaged to work with classroom teachers and support the educational program can be employed without permission to teach and be directly supervised by a registered teacher.

3. Does the position for which permission to teach is being sought need to be advertised?

Yes, in most cases. Wherever there is a vacancy for a position for the delivery and/or assessment of student participation in the required curriculum at the school which requires the skills and experience of a teacher, registered teachers should be sought to fill the vacancy.

It is now a requirement under the Act that, in an application for permission to teach, evidence is provided that the school has first sought to employ a qualified and suitable registered teacher and that no such teacher was available to fill the vacancy.

In a small number of cases, where it is either highly impractical to advertise or where a person other than a registered teacher is being sought, the Institute will exempt an applicant for permission to teach from providing this evidence.

Exemptions are granted for:

- VET subjects requiring industry professionals with recent industry experience
- community languages offered by the Victorian School of Languages and community language schools, where the school is registered as a senior secondary provider
- specialist access and equity programs requiring other professional expertise e.g. community service or youth work expertise, higher education expertise for specialist university programs
- recognised supply and demand initiatives— e.g. DEECD Career Change Program
- teaching exchange programs

- short-term and replacement positions of 6 months or less
- employment of three-year qualified teachers in casual relief or emergency positions.

The application form will include a section for an applicant and their endorsing school to request this exemption.

4. What evidence is required that the school has sought to employ a qualified and registered teacher?

The application must include evidence that the position has been advertised in the statewide media (print or electronic) for a period of at least one week that includes at least one weekend.

Supporting documents should include:

- a certified copy of the school's advertisement placed with a statewide print or electronic media outlet;
- evidence of the date of placement and closing date for applications; and
- wording that makes clear that registered and qualified teachers are sought for the position.

The application form will require a statement from the endorsing school that no qualified and suitable registered teacher was available to fill the position.

5. What kinds of skills and experience are expected for an initial application for permission to teach?

All applicants for permission to teach are required to meet the suitability requirements for registration as a teacher. This includes being a person of suitable character, having the mental and physical ability to undertake the duties of a teacher and being competent in communicating in the English language.

Four additional capacities are seen as fundamental to being able to undertake the duties of a teacher. Applicants should provide evidence of skills and experience that demonstrate that they have these capacities.

- **appropriate knowledge of the subject/discipline they will teach** may be demonstrated by formal qualifications or years of experience in a specialist field (as a graduate with a languages degree, a qualified tradesperson or industry professional, an ordained or recognised leader in a faith community).
- **having strategies to build positive relationships with students** may be demonstrated through experiences working with young people or youth-based organisations (training of apprentices or trainees in TAFE or community RTOs, youth community group or outdoor experience leadership, previous work in school settings, professional engagement with students and parents as an instructor or tutor).
- **being able to maintain a safe learning environment** may be demonstrated through experiences where knowledge of people and safe practices are important (such as worksite safety procedures, knowledge of first aid, successful record of managing conflict or customer complaints, experience in running a safe and co-operative workshop/business/organisation).
- **being able to use a range of teaching practices and resources to engage students in effective learning** might be seen in experiences where group leadership or instruction of others has been involved (use of practical activities, training of apprentices and new staff, using a range of technologies and tools for learning, having developed training or teaching materials, planning and running workshop or activity sessions).

Applicants are expected to provide documentary evidence from third party sources to support their claims in relation to their skills and experience to teach. This might include academic transcripts, trade or other qualifications, records of employment or statements of service, voluntary experience and relevant references.

6. What additional requirements are there for a second or subsequent application for permission to teach?

An applicant for a second or subsequent period of permission to teach is required to demonstrate that they have the appropriate skills and experience to teach relevant to the position for which the permission is sought and a commitment to becoming a member of the teaching profession.

It is expected that such an applicant will have evidence to demonstrate that they

- continue to meet and have extended their skills and experience to teach beyond that of their initial application; and
- have made appropriate progress toward attaining an approved initial teacher education qualification

during the period of a previous period of permission to teach or in the interim, if any time has passed between applications.

Appropriate progress toward attaining an approved initial teacher education qualification will be determined by the Institute and may vary for different categories of permission granted.

For most applicants the required evidence will include evidence of education or training toward becoming a teacher.

For a small number of applicants the evidence may take the form of participation in standards referenced professional development activities and professional engagement or evidence of appropriate improvement in English language competence to be eligible for enrolment in an approved initial teacher education qualification.

The Institute will inform applicants during their initial period of permission to teach of the requirements for progress toward registration as a teacher, should they seek a second or subsequent period of permission.

Schools are encouraged to support all applicants for permission to teach to undertake an approved initial teacher education qualification and to achieve registration as a teacher.

7. Will permission to teach be granted where a person does not meet the standard required for English language competence?

Only for Languages other than English (LOTE).

Applicants for registration with permission to teach are expected to participate fully and conduct themselves appropriately as members of the teaching profession and are expected by the Victorian community to have met the same suitability requirements as those required for registration as a teacher.

This includes being a person of suitable character, having the mental and physical ability to undertake the duties of a teacher and being competent in communicating in the English language.

The only exception to these requirements is in the case of teachers of Languages other than English (LOTE) whose proficiency in another language is considered as important as their capacity to communicate at a professional standard in English.

Applicants for LOTE positions may seek consideration of their application for permission to teach on the basis of the exceptional circumstance for English language. They must provide the following evidence in support of their request:

- evidence of the level achieved in an approved English language test (these test results must be no older than 12 months at the date of application);
- the reasons why an exceptional circumstance applies to the permission to teach application;
- evidence of what they are prepared to do to improve their English language competence over the period of time requested for the permission; and
- a statement from the endorsing principal outlining the support the school will provide to help improve the applicant's English language competence during the period of time requested for the permission.

To be considered under this provision, applicants must have achieved a level of English language competence to be able to meet the standard required for registration as a teacher in three years, with consistent improvement.

As a general rule an applicant with an ISLPR rating of 2+ in all skill areas or an IELTS level of 5.5 in all skill areas may be considered to be able to make sufficient progress to meet the standard required for registration as a teacher in three years.

Schools are encouraged to provide support to all applicants for permission to teach using this provision to improve their English language competence to meet the standard required for registration as a teacher as soon as possible.

8. I have employed instrumental music teachers with permission to teach in past years. What should I do now?

You will need to consider the nature of the school's Instrumental Music program against the criteria included in response to question 1 (above) to determine if an application for permission to teach is required.

Where the music program forms part of the required curriculum for students in the school (for example in a music experience program undertaken by all students in year 3 or 4 as their Music program for the term or semester, or as part of the VCE Music or Dance program), the individual will be undertaking the duties of a teacher and will be expected to hold registration or permission to teach.

Where the position is one where the duties of a teacher are being undertaken, the position will need to be advertised and registered teachers sought before an application for permission to teach is made. If the program is to be ongoing, the school and the instrumental music instructor involved should consider the qualification pathways available for achieving registration as a teacher.

Where the program is an extra-curricular or co-curricular program offered optionally to students and is in addition to the required curriculum, instrumental music instructors will not be considered to be undertaking the duties of a teacher and permission to teach is not required. The music instructor can be engaged under the provisions of the *Working with Children Act 2005*.

This advice also applies to other forms of extra-curricular or co-curricular music programs where instructors for Voice Production, Choral Music and Speech and Drama have been engaged.

9. Do our sports coaches need permission to teach?

Most probably not. Before you decide, you should consider the nature of the school's Sports program against the criteria included in response to question 1 (above) to determine if an application for permission to teach is required.

Where the program for which the sports coach will be engaged forms part of the required curriculum for students in the school (for example in a sports experience program undertaken by all students in year 3 or 4 as their PE curriculum for the term or semester), they will be undertaking the duties of a teacher and will be expected to hold registration or permission to teach. If the program is to be ongoing, the school and the coaches involved should consider the qualification pathways available for achieving registration as a teacher.

Where the program is an extra-curricular or co-curricular program, offered to students in addition to their required curriculum, sports coaches will not be considered to be undertaking the duties of a teacher and permission to teach is not required. The sports coach can be engaged under the provisions of the *Working with Children Act 2005*.

10. How long can permission to teach be held?

The Act now specifies that a grant of permission to teach may be approved for a period of up to, but not exceeding, 3 years.

Schools may endorse an application for any period up to the maximum period of three years.

Each application for permission to teach is considered individually and the period of permission granted is determined by the Institute. It is important to note that in some instances a shorter period of time than that requested may be granted.

If a school continues to have a vacancy for the same position at the end of the period of permission to teach, the school will be required to advertise the position and again seek a qualified and registered teacher.

A second or subsequent application for permission to teach can be made, but the applicant will be required to provide evidence of commitment to the profession and appropriate progress toward registration as teacher.

11. How long does it take for an application decision to be made?

The Victorian Institute of Teaching will consider all applications for permission to teach where the application form is complete and payment of the required fees is received. A complete application must include all supporting documentation required of the applicant, a complete school endorsement and, where not exempted, evidence that the school has advertised and sought a registered teacher for the vacancy.

Most complete applications are resolved within 20 days. Where permission to teach applications require consideration by the Institute's Registration Committee, the process can take from 4 to 6 weeks. The Registration Committee meets monthly.

12. When will these changes be applied?

The Permission to Teach Policy 2011 will be implemented from 1 January 2011.

The new requirements of schools and applicants will be applied to all applications received by the Institute on or after 1 January 2011.

A revised *Form D - Application for Permission to Teach* will be available on the VIT website from 1 December 2010. Applications for permission to teach can be lodged using the current Form D until 31 December 2011.

Only complete applications received by the Institute prior to 1 January 2011 will be assessed under the current Permission to Teach Policy.

13. How will existing permissions to teach be affected?

All current permissions to teach have been granted for a specific period of time of up to 5 years and have a confirmed expiry date.

All permissions granted prior to 1 January 2011 will continue until the expiry date listed on the approval letter. A person granted permission to teach will continue to be a registered teacher for the period of the permission provided they pay the required registration fees.

14. What if a permission to teach is due to expire before 1 January 2011?

Where a teaching position currently being filled by a person holding permission to teach continues to be vacant at the end of the period of permission, the school should advertise the position and seek to employ a qualified and registered teacher.

Where no qualified and suitable registered teacher is available for the position, an application for permission to teach can be made with a school endorsement.

If a complete application is received by the Institute prior to 1 January 2011, the current policy and the existing requirements as outlined in *Form D - Application for Permission to Teach* will apply.

If the application is received by the Institute on, or after, 1 January 2011, the new requirements of schools and applicants will be applied.

15. What if the permission expires after 1 January 2011?

Where a teaching position currently being filled by a person holding permission to teach continues to be vacant at the end of the period of permission, the school should advertise the position and again seek to employ a qualified and registered teacher. Where no qualified and suitable registered teacher is available for the position, an application for permission to teach can be made with a school endorsement.

If the application is received by the Institute on, or after, 1 January 2011, the requirements of schools and applicants under the *Permission to Teach Policy 2011* will be applied. The application will then be considered as a second or subsequent application and information will be sought regarding the progress the applicant has made toward registration as a teacher during the previous period of permission.

Conditions may be applied to any further grant of permission to teach where appropriate progress is not demonstrated.

16. What if the permission is for sports coaching or instrumental music?

All current permissions will continue unchanged until the expiry date listed on the approval letter. A person granted permission to teach will continue to be a registered teacher for the period of the permission unless they choose to leave the profession prior to that date.

Schools should consider the nature of their instrumental music programs and sports programs and discuss the implications of the expectation for progress toward registration as teacher for those holding permission to teach.

Where a school considers the program to meet the criteria for a teaching position, then the general advice for any teaching position will apply:

- Where a teaching position currently being filled by a person holding permission to teach continues to be vacant at the end of the period of permission, the school should advertise the position and seek to employ a qualified and registered teacher.
- If no qualified and suitable registered teacher is available for the position, an application for permission to teach can be made with a school endorsement.
- If the application is made prior to 1 January 2011, the current policy will apply and the existing requirements as outlined in Form D will apply.
- If the application is received by the Institute on, or after, 1 January 2011, the new requirements of schools and applicants will be applied.
- Second and/or subsequent applications will require evidence of advertising again and of the applicant's appropriate progress toward attaining an approved teacher education qualification or registration as a teacher.

Where a school considers the program does not meet the criteria for a teaching position and they intend to employ instructors or coaches in the future without requiring them to hold permission to teach, the person may either choose to continue to hold the permission until the expiry date or elect to leave the profession and ensure they meet the specific requirements for their ongoing employment at the school. This will include conducting an appropriate Working with Children check.

If a person holding permission to teach wishes to leave the profession, they must notify the Institute in writing that they wish to do so. A form for this purpose is sent to every registered teacher with the registration fee invoice each year.

All instrumental music instructors and sports coaches are encouraged, where they wish to be a member of the teaching profession, to continue their education and attain an approved initial teacher education qualification and seek registration as teacher.