

The QCT's response to *Investigating Permission to Teach: Perceptions of Lived Experiences* research

The Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) acknowledges the comprehensive research undertaken by Central Queensland University (CQU) in the report, "Investigating Permission to Teach: Perceptions of Lived Experiences." The QCT commissioned this research to gain an evidence base of the experience of those working under a Permission to Teach (PTT) since the recent rise in PTT applications. As the regulator of the teaching profession in Queensland, the QCT manages the PTT application process: ensuring all information is provided and making decisions to approve or refuse.

This research provides valuable insights from a cross section of preservice teachers who are, or were, engaged in PTT positions in Queensland schools while undertaking initial teacher education (ITE). The report concludes that PTT is an effective pathway into teaching. It offers eight recommendations to improve preservice teachers' experiences, with the aim of strengthening current practices and better supporting preservice teachers.

Most PTT holders are preservice teachers undertaking ITE and are about to embark on their careers as registered teachers. PTT can serve as a bridge for these preservice teachers transitioning into the profession, enhancing their readiness and confidence.

The report highlights the role PTT plays in addressing teacher supply challenges across Queensland, particularly in regional, rural, and remote locations. The QCT recognises that PTT offers a solution for some schools to staff classrooms.

The research has identified several key areas related to the PTT experience, including:

Benefits of PTT: The report acknowledges the positive aspects of PTT, such as providing financial remuneration for preservice teachers, offering authentic classroom experiences, and fostering the development of a teacher identity. Participants also reported gaining enhanced self-confidence and feeling better prepared for a teaching career.

Challenges of PTT: The research also shed light on some challenges faced by PTT research participants, including managing the work/study/life balance, navigating workload issues, and in some instances, experiencing a lack of mentoring and support from their schools. While the QCT grants PTT on the basis that individuals demonstrate knowledge, qualifications, skills or training relevant to a PTT position, some participants reported challenges related to teaching outside of their field of ITE study. Participants also reported a desire for greater recognition of their PTT experience from their Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The perspectives of PTT participants: The QCT recognises the research amplifies the voices of those who have experienced PTT and that this contributes to understanding the ways PTT is perceived as a pathway into teaching. Most PTT research participants view their experience as an effective pathway into the teaching profession.

[B]eing able to step up into a teaching position whilst still in uni gave me so much real-world experience different to being on prac. It made me much more confident in my teaching.

Respondent 607

What is Permission to Teach?

- *The Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005* allows PTT as the only alternative form of approval to teach in a Queensland school, other than registration.
- It allows schools and employers to make a declaration for an individual to apply for PTT and fill a position when an appropriate registered teacher can't be found.
- It is granted with strict parameters for a specific teaching position for a specified period.
- All PTT applicants must adhere to rigorous eligibility criteria.
- Preservice teachers as well as other individuals can be considered for PTT.



Approved Permission to Teach applicant Gabrielle Rafter

“ I believe the PTT load is more manageable in 4th year of university as you have more study and prac experience under your belt, as well as less subjects at uni to focus on. I think nowadays with more spares being afforded to PTT and first year teachers, it is more manageable however, it is very much dependent on the individual and their ability to handle pressure and an increased workload.

Respondent 537

Consideration of recommendations

The report provides eight recommendations for enhancing the PTT experience. These recommendations address a range of issues, including:

- Specialised mentoring support for all PTT holders.
- Improved collaboration between stakeholders including schools, HEIs and the QCT.
- Stronger guidance to employers regarding their roles and responsibilities in supporting PTT holders.
- Preferring PTT occurs in the later years of an ITE program.
- Recognition of a PTT holder as a teacher within the school community.
- An improved communication strategy between HEIs, employing schools and the QCT.
- The establishment of support processes external to the school.
- Continuous evaluation of the manageability of PTT participants' dual roles.

The QCT will consider these recommendations as part of its ongoing evaluation of PTT. The implementation of any changes would require careful consideration of resources, logistics and the need to maintain a flexible approach to address the diverse circumstances of schools across Queensland, in line with our legislation.

As an immediate action, the QCT will launch bespoke communication for PTT holders to ensure they are more informed about PTT requirements and the role of each stakeholder in this process. This will outline the specific circumstances of PTT approval, emphasising what an individual can teach and for the duration, as detailed under their QCT approval notice.

We are working towards fostering greater collaboration between all PTT stakeholders, including HEIs, schools, employing authorities and teacher unions, to help PTT holders feel more supported as they transition to becoming registered teachers.

Ongoing efforts will include communicating that PTT holders must work within the parameters of their approval notice, with consideration of their workload and studies where possible. Employers are encouraged to allocate mentors and include PTT holders in professional development opportunities.

The QCT acknowledges the research focuses on the perspectives of the PTT research participants, and that further research may be beneficial to gain a more comprehensive view of PTT, by exploring the experiences and perspectives of other stakeholders.

The QCT thanks CQU for conducting this research, and the PTT research participants who shared their experiences through the survey and case studies.

Teaching out of field

- The QCT approves the subjects and year levels to be taught by a person under PTT.
- We take into consideration that they have demonstrated the knowledge, qualifications, skills or training for the subjects and year levels.
- This includes considering information that the applicant provides which may be outside their subject specialisation in their ITE program but is able to be relied on for teaching areas nominated by the employer and PTT applicant.
- 80 per cent of the PTT research participants were teaching in their field of study, and those teaching out of field reported being supported by their employer.

Scenario: A former nurse is retraining as a primary teacher. They may be able to teach secondary subjects (for instance, Physical Education or Biology) outside their ITE subject specialisation for teaching under PTT, if they demonstrate in the application process that they have the knowledge, qualifications, skills, or training to do so.

Research drew from:

- PTT data
- 820 PTT participants
- 13 case studies

PTT holders represent a very small proportion of those approved to teach in Queensland: less than 0.7 per cent at any one time in 2023.

82%

of all formerly approved PTT holders from 2019-2023 have since been registered as teachers in Queensland.*

This includes all PTT holders, including those not enrolled in an ITE program.

