

“ACCOMPLISHED TEACHER” SCHEMES – WHICH WAY FORWARD FOR THE ACT?
It’s time to think about this issue for the next EBA round.

In the next round of EBA negotiations, the AEU – ACT Branch will need to address the issue of “accomplished teacher” provision.

The ACT system no longer has an Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) provision, and the classification of Master Teacher ceased long ago. The Leading Teacher provision under the last two Certified Agreements (2000-2003 and 2004-2006) has been the only mechanism that looks at reward and recognition for extra duties or specific roles. Under both Agreements it has been a project-based add-on in a school with a maximum tenure of 12 months at a time. The payment for a Leading Teacher has come from within the resources of the school proposing to establish such a position, rather than from any central pool of funds. There has not been a high take-up rate of Leading Teacher positions across the ACT public education system, and the time is now right to examine what other options may exist to reward accomplished practice apart from the traditional route of promotion into the administrative stream of school operations.

What is the history of this issue?

There have been a number of attempts at various times in various systems across Australia to reward “classroom teaching excellence”. One of the early attempts in the ACT was the Master Teacher classification, which was jointly developed by the old Commonwealth Teaching Service and the ACTTF. On its abolition A Master Teacher Mark 2 was created. Much like the present-day Leading Teacher provision it enjoyed limited success because it required school funding of the position.

The next incarnation of such a reward & recognition system was the Advanced Skills Teacher, which came into the national framework in the early 1990s. Most States and Territories achieved an AST classification at the time as part of a national strategy. For different reasons in each jurisdiction the AST classification has had its share of problems; in a number of jurisdictions the position has been rolled into the incremental salary scale as an additional step. While such decisions were strategic at the time they were made, the outcome is that few public education systems in Australia currently offer a system of recognition for excellence in teaching that does not take the teacher into a promotions position and therefore arguably away from their strength in exemplary classroom practice. In the ACT, CIT retains an AST provision but the schools sector rolled it into salary at the top of the scale in the 2000-2003 Certified Agreement. The CIT AST is not without its issues; part of the work of the Promotions Positions Review Working Party arising from the current CIT Certified Agreement is to examine what duties are actually being undertaken by ASTs, Senior Teaching Posts and other promotions positions as opposed to what might be described in a duty statement, or undertaken through custom and practice. The success or otherwise of the AST provision at CIT is largely a function of the Performance Management System, and with both the AEU and the CIT keen to retain the provision, any “kinks” in the CIT AST will be ironed out rather than the provision discarded.

Why revisit this issue now?

In each bargaining round the AEU-ACT Branch has sought to explore means to recognise additional expertise, roles, or qualifications. Recognition of additional qualifications is currently provided in two ways: those who commence service with an additional qualification enjoy a starting salary one increment higher than the base provision; those who achieve an additional qualification prior to reaching the top of the incremental scale are rewarded with early progression to the next increment. There is currently no reward for teachers at the top of the classroom teacher pay scale who complete an additional qualification; in the next EBA round the AEU will continue to pursue such provision

with the caveat that any provision would not be used to discount the achievement of competitive salary outcomes across all salary levels and against our competitors in the education sector.

Despite the short-lived existence of the Master Teacher and AST classifications in most systems, teachers and their unions have long held a belief that there needs to be a system that recognises and rewards excellence in classroom practice. Alongside this belief is a complementary belief that indicates such reward systems should specify what is being rewarded, and recognises that while such a reward system might include describing additional duties undertaken by an excellent classroom practitioner this would probably simply formalise of the “extra” duties already being undertaken by such teacher. This debate has shied away in the past from expressing itself as part of a discussion of performance pay issues, but that agenda is not one that can be sidestepped any longer. There are pressures from among teachers themselves to develop systems that recognise and reward those who demonstrate excellence in their practice and/or undertake a range of other tasks that most teachers add to their individual worklists as they gain experience and expertise, and as issues arise which capture their interest. Examples of such tasks would include co-ordination supervision of student teachers, mentoring new teachers, other co-ordination functions and other activities. As well, the teaching profession cannot ignore the continuing debate outside its ranks which calls for recognition of excellence and for some system of performance pay to reward it. The most recent characterisation of this debate is reflected in Brendan Nelson’s comments regarding Federal funding for education and performance pay.

In this context, a debate within the AEU-ACT Branch about “accomplished teacher” is very timely and would contribute to the framework within which the AEU Claim for the next EBA will be developed. Members should also note the 2003 AEU Federal Conference *Policy Professional Teaching Standards – AEU position* which includes the following statements relevant to this issue:

- Seeking certification of advanced standards should be made voluntary, be accessed on the basis of peer assessment based on criteria, not quota.
- They must be linked to employment arrangements which encourage, resource, and facilitate employer funded professional development in areas identified as important or desirable by teachers.
- The advanced standards may be linked to post-graduate study and qualifications. Where this is the case the involvement of Teacher Education faculties and practising teachers in the development and awarding of standards should ensure the development of relevant partnerships combining theory and practice.
- Given that a number of subject associations is already leading in the development of accomplished standards, the AEU should participate in their development, and encourage a diversity of similar projects based on both subjects and age levels (especially pre-secondary), with a view to encouraging the identification of a generic core.
- The AEU reaffirms its position that teachers should be paid on a common scale. Any rewards arising from the acquisition of advanced teaching standards should be accessible to all teachers and be subject to agreement between Branches and Associated Bodies and the respective employers.

The full text of the AEU position can be found at <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Debates/AEUpositionPTS.html>.

What systems currently exist from which the ACT might draw information?

The table below outlines the schemes which currently exist in public education systems across the country. Not all State/Territory public education systems have such schemes in place; those without a scheme under negotiation or in place have not been included in the table.

State or Territory	Name of Scheme	Who is Eligible	How is scheme accessed?	Maintenance of access	Monetary value (@ May 2005)
Northern Territory	Teacher Of Exemplary Practice 1 (TEP 1)	Permanent Officers with at least 4 years full-time teaching experience (at least 1 yr with DEET)	Using criteria & benchmark descriptors for the TEP level, a panel of 3 assesses (a) statement of context (b) veracity of applicant claims (c) teacher evidence against 7 criteria for which the teacher provides 3 examples of action and results. Subsequent moderation of panels to ensure consistency & quality.	Subject to satisfactory performance of Negotiated Duties. Relinquished voluntarily, or by appointment to substantive promotions position.	\$64,536 in 2003 EBA. (Current rates not available. Formula is Salary = CRT top-of-scale + 7.5% up to max of 96% of ET2)
	TEP 2	TEP 1 for at least 12 months	As above	As above	\$67,225 in 2003 EBA. (Current rates not available. Formula is Salary = CRT top-of-scale + 12% up to max of ET2)

	TEP 3	TEP 2 for at least 12 months	As above	As above	\$74,782 in 2003 EBA. (Current rates not available. Formula is Salary = CRT top-of-scale + 20% up to max of ET4)
Tasmania	Previous AST1 provision rolled into incremental scale about 4 years ago. No replacement at this stage.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Queensland	Senior Teacher, but looking to roll this into salary scale as extra step. Next Claim to include allowance for teachers with responsibility (e.g. Yr Advisor, subject co-ordinator etc)	Permanent teachers with nine years of full-time service (or equivalent) and on top of 4Yt or 3YT scale for at least 312 months.	Teacher must sign an Undertaking that s/he is prepared to undertake higher level duties on request. Duties outlined in Personal Action Plan completed after signing undertaking. No quotas.	Continued compliance with Undertaking (i.e. continuing to perform the higher duties as agreed)	4YT = \$61,591p.a. (\$64,002p.a. from 1 July 2005) 3YT = allowance on top of salary \$2,463p.a. (\$2,805p.a. from 1 July 2005)
Western Australia	Senior Teacher 1	Permanent 4YT teachers with minimum 24 months service at top-of-scale	Completion through Professional Learning Institute of accredited PD modules during 24 mths on top-of-scale still in development	Continued satisfactory performance of duties as per Schedule D of Certified Agreement.	\$61,089p.a. (\$62,922 from Feb 2006)
	Senior Teacher 2	ST1	Annual progression from ST1 subject to satisfactory performance.	Continued satisfactory performance of duties as per Schedule D of Certified Agreement.	\$62,311p.a. (\$64,180 from Feb 2006)

	Level 3 Classroom Teacher	Permanent teachers; temp teachers working > 0.4; promotions positions (note Level 3 will supersede promotion status)	Stage 1: Teaching Portfolio of written statements & supporting evidence addressing Level 3 Classroom Teacher Competencies; Stage 2: 45-minute session of oral presentation, facilitation of group discussion & interaction with colleagues AND participation & contribution to group discussions led by other applicants.	Satisfactory performance of duties from agreed list in Schedule D of C.A. plus 0.1 time allowance provided for Level 3's use.	\$67,197p.a. (\$69,414 from Feb 2006)
South Australia	AST1	Permanent teachers on incremental step 10, 11 or 12.	Based on seven criteria: seven page written application, maximum of three performance statements/references, an extended observation, a panel process (Principal, EO Rep and Peer Evaluator) including panel observation, presentation and discussion	Reassessed against all seven AST1 criteria after each 5 years at AST1 classification. Reassessment process conducted by Principal. Where Principal believes that the AST1 no longer meets all the criteria, the AST1 may request a review of the Principal's decision (review conducted by Peer Evaluator and Executive Director, Human Resources).	\$61,409 (current AEU claim \$72,248 by Jul 2007; gov't offer \$68,767 by Oct 2007)

	AST2 Currently developing criteria and assessment process with DECS, salary rate stated in CA2002 but no-one currently paid at this rate. Should be in place for 2006 school year.	Currently negotiating	Currently negotiating	Currently negotiating	\$64,282 (current AEU claim \$75,628 by Jul 2007; gov't offer \$71,986 by Oct 2007)
	AST3 Current claim includes clause to develop criteria and assessment process for AST3.				

Further details of the Northern Territory scheme for *Teacher of Exemplary Practice* can be sourced from http://www.teaching.nt.gov.au/docs/tep_handbook.pdf

Information on the Western Australian model can be sourced from <http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au/cpr/SeniorTeacherClassification.pdf>

The ACT Branch membership will need to consider this issue and determine what, if any, proposal should be tabled as part of the next round of EBA negotiations. To that end, it is expected that the June 18 Branch Council Agenda will include a specific item with the opportunity for Councillors to break into groups and discuss the general issues. To develop the discussion among the membership, the AEU Office is planning to conduct some discussion forums among the membership in Term 3.

The fundamental question for members to address is “Do we want an ‘accomplished teacher’ provision?”

If the answer to this question is “No”, then members will need to think about how to address the issues of reward & recognition, and performance pay.

If the answer is “Yes”, there are a range of questions that members will need to consider, including:

- At what level should teachers be able to seek recognition as an “accomplished teacher”? (e.g. top-of-the-classroom-teacher salary scale only, at other points on the salary scale, after x number of years experience as a full-time teacher ...etc)
- What will be the process to determine who is an “accomplished teacher”?
- How would a process to determine “accomplished teacher” fit into the Professional Pathways processes?
- Should any process include peer assessment?

- Should any process include external assessment?
- Should any process include classroom observation?
- How long should a determination of “accomplished teacher” last? (e.g. how many years before a new determination must be made?)
- What salary relativities should be considered? (e.g. should accomplished teacher always fall below promotions position salary levels? Are there a range of options to be considered?)
- Should there be more than one level of “accomplished teacher”?

There are probably many other issues that would be canvassed in such a debate within the ACT Branch membership. Your contributions to the discussion in the Branch on this issue are welcome. Apart from contributing through the forum (when details are announced) members can also email contributions to priority1@aeuact.asn.au

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