Teaching: Prospects and Jobs for the Future.

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John is a sociologist. He has held various leadership positions as dean, head of school, and research director over the past 20 years. There are three key drivers to his work: (1) opening up access to, and successful participation in, tertiary education for students from regional areas and low socio-economic backgrounds; (2) establishing collaborative research programs that are deeply engaged with partner organisations; and (3) community-university engagement.

Over recent years, the teaching profession has been subject to increasingly stringent accreditation regimes, politicisation of the curriculum, global benchmarking of students’ academic performance, and negative media coverage. Despite these pressures, the national student load in teacher education remains strong. So, what are the employment prospects for today’s graduates?

Employment rates for teaching graduates are excellent.

Australia’s schools workforce comprises the nation’s largest profession, with over 400,000 members (Australian Government, 2014). Employment rates for graduates are excellent. Some four months after graduating, around 45% of initial teacher education graduates were employed full-time in schools (AITSL, 2016: 7).

At a glance
Around four months after graduating, about 46% of ITE graduates were employed full-time in schools in 2014. Another 25% were employed part-time in schools.

Figure 1
Employment status of bachelor graduates in teacher education, 2013 and 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Teacher Education: Early Childhood</th>
<th>Teacher Education: Primary</th>
<th>Teacher Education: Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Working full-time in schools: 35%</td>
<td>Working full-time in schools: 47%</td>
<td>Working full-time in schools: 44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Working part-time in schools: 34%</td>
<td>Working part-time in schools: 45%</td>
<td>Working part-time in schools: 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Working full-time not in schools: 19%</td>
<td>Working full-time not in schools: 15%</td>
<td>Working full-time not in schools: 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Working part-time not in schools: 18%</td>
<td>Working part-time not in schools: 22%</td>
<td>Working part-time not in schools: 21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Not in employment: 24%</td>
<td>Not in employment: 8%</td>
<td>Not in employment: 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Eighty-seven percent of Australian lower secondary teachers reported that they were permanently employed, with a further 4% on contracts of more than one year (Freeman, O’Malley and Eveleigh, 2014).

The demand for primary and secondary teachers will continue to rise.

The demand for teachers is increasing and will continue to rise.

Key factors affecting teacher demand include the number of school-aged children, the ratio of students to teachers, and the demand for specific teaching skills (Centre for International Research on Educational Systems and the Mitchell Institute, 2015).

There is a sharp rise occurring in the number of primary students, with increases in secondary students flowing through from 2018 (Weldon, 2015). Between 2011 and 2020, the number of primary school aged children in Victoria is projected to increase by over 107,000, equating to an additional 448 classes each year over that period (Weldon, 2015). Projected growth in Primary F-6 classes from 2011-2020 is strong and consistent across all Australian states and territories (Weldon, 2015: 2).

Key factors affecting teacher supply include the number and profile of students graduating as teachers, the skill base of teachers to meet the specific needs of their school communities, the ageing workforce of teachers, and teacher attrition and retention, including retention in particular schools and locations (Centre for International Research on Educational Systems and the Mitchell Institute, 2015).

The Victorian Department of Education and Training (2017) reported that the total number of teaching staff on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis was 67,745 at Victorian schools in 2015. This was an increase of 1,070 teaching staff from 2014. In 2015, the number of teaching staff in Victorian primary schools on a FTE basis was 33,913, while there were 33,832 employed at Victorian secondary schools. Between 2005 and 2015, teaching staff numbers in Victorian schools increased by 1.2% per year, with a net increase of 14% over that period.
One of the other changes resulting in an increased demand for new teachers is the ageing demographic of the current teacher workforce.

A 2013 survey of Australian lower secondary teachers revealed an ageing workforce. Over one-third (37%) of teachers were aged 50+ years (Freeman, O’Malley and Eveleigh, 2014). This indicates that from around 2020 onwards, there will be increasing numbers of secondary teachers retiring.

The Victorian teacher workforce is experiencing rejuvenation. There is a ‘bulge’ of teachers aged 50+ years; 23% of teachers at Victorian government secondary schools are aged 55 years or above.

However, 20% of the government teaching workforce is aged 29 years or less, and the age band with the greatest proportion of teachers is aged 30-34 years (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2017).
There is strong projected demand for primary and secondary teachers in Victoria

There is strong, continued demand for primary teachers in Victoria projected over the next five years (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2017).

From 2017/18, there is a forecast significant increase in secondary school enrolments in Victoria (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2017).
This increase in student enrolments will feed a strong, continued demand for secondary teachers across Victoria.

**Areas of high demand for teaching graduates**

The local government areas with the largest number of teachers are in the rapidly growing areas on the peri-urban fringe of Melbourne.

In regional Victoria, Greater Geelong and Bendigo employed the most teachers, highlighting that opportunities exist for graduates across the regions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Highest</th>
<th>Lowest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Casey (2,960)</td>
<td>Melbourne (305)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wyndham (1,940)</td>
<td>Stonnington (335)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional City</td>
<td>Greater Geelong (2,011)</td>
<td>Horsham (201)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater Bendigo (1,027)</td>
<td>Wangaratta (233)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Baw Baw (497)</td>
<td>Queenscliffe (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Macedon Ranges (463)</td>
<td>Pyrenees (64)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Within the teaching profession, some discipline areas faced a greater shortage of teachers. Twenty-one percent of Victorian graduate teachers employed in 2015 studied a STEM (Science, Teaching, Engineering and Maths) subject specialisation during their initial teacher education course. There were 6,596 teaching service vacancies available in 2015. LOTE (Languages Other Than English) was the subject area with the most difficult to fill vacancies at Victorian government schools in 2015, with 26% of difficult to fill vacancies falling under this subject area (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2017).

The percentage of teachers in out-of-field teaching in selected secondary subjects across Australia gives some indication of areas of unmet demand (Weldon, 2015: 9).

Generalist primary teaching and mathematics secondary teaching comprise the greatest number of unfilled teacher positions (Willett, Segal and Walford, (Ernst Young) (2014: 95). These statistics highlight the demand for teachers across a range of subject areas and signal the possibilities that exist for new graduates to gain employment across Victoria and Australia.

Given the changing demographic of our schools and society, we continue to need graduate teachers across both primary and secondary contexts to support the learning of students in all sectors. The employment prospects for teachers remain strong across discipline areas and across various regions of Victoria and Australia.
References


