

ACU welcomes National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

ACU has issued its support for the practical and targeted measures contained in the Federal Government's blueprint for the future of the nation's teaching workforce.

Faculty of Education and Arts Executive Dean Professor Mary Ryan said as Australia's largest provider of teachers, ACU was committed to implementing and supporting the reforms designed to attract more teaching students and overcome critical workforce shortages.

"At ACU, we have a history of using evidence-based practices to attract, train, support, and retain teachers in our range of undergraduate and postgraduate initial teacher education (ITE) programs," she said.

"This national plan provides clear direction that strengthening and broadening this approach is the way forward.

"However, a plan is only as good as its implementation, so we need to ensure the funding, resources and partnerships required to make this work are established and well supported."

Professor Ryan strongly supported the announcement of an additional 4036 Commonwealth Supported Places in education courses but cautioned against the idea of limiting places to the 'right subjects and specialisations' given current shortages were so widespread.

She said plans to strengthen the link between performance and ITE funding also needed to be carefully considered to ensure a level playing field, as if attrition rates were used as a performance indicator, universities doing the bulk of meeting the teacher shortage could be unfairly penalised against those providing small postgraduate programs.

Professor Ryan welcomed the commitment to explore paid internships and other employment-based pathways into teaching for career changers, and said significant mentoring and support, as well as appropriate time for study and degree completion, was necessary.

"We also need to ensure we have the resources available to meet the plan's aim of improving the quality of professional experience placements by providing supervising teachers with release time and professional development," she said.

Moves to increase the number of permanent teachers to provide greater workforce stability and plans to develop a consistent measure to recognise the previous work and life experience of career changers that were transferable to teaching were also supported.

"Overall, this plan contains a mix of practical and responsive measures designed to support our teaching workforce to overcome the challenges that have faced it for some time," Professor Ryan said.

"As Australia's largest provider of teachers, we are committed to continuing to do our part to help this vital profession thrive."