

High entry benchmark will lift profession



Amber Flohm
Senior Vice President
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National academic benchmarks should be set for admissions to initial teacher education degrees, Associate Professor Rachel Wilson advocates in a new report released today.

The report is timely as we begin to witness a dramatic shift in the academic attainment that universities are willing to accept from students entering their teacher education courses. This trend has significant consequences, not only for the profession, but for the wider community.

Dr Wilson, from the Sydney School of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney, highlights the growth in online teacher education degrees, as well as the low completion rates of students. Alarming, the data provided shows that since 2012, only one in two students has completed their degree within a six-year period.

Federation is committed to continuing to pursue the highest standards of entry into the teaching profession and applauds Dr Wilson's

recommendation that Australia should draw its students from the top 30 per cent of graduates, in line with the international best-practice benchmark. This would equate to an ATAR of 80, and would ensure the academic rigour required to teach students in NSW public schools.

A high ATAR, coupled with workforce planning to meet future demand, must also be undertaken to ensure a stable and steady supply of teachers into the NSW public school system.

"While there are many high-achieving Australians entering teaching, the cohort trends suggest that overall [entry] standards are much lower than generations past," she states. "More worrying are the smaller, but significant and growing, numbers of students from the lowest ranks of high school attainment (the bottom 5-10 per cent) that are admitted to initial teacher education programs."

Federation supports the NSW Department of Education's decision to only employ graduates into public schools who have:

- attained three Band 5s (including in English and Mathematics) in their HSC results;
- achieved a minimum credit average during their teacher education studies; and
- met requirements during their professional experience, which include information sharing and assessment standards.

Federation will steadfastly defend the adherence to these standards in the interest of the profession and our



school communities. We will continue to pursue the meeting of these necessary standards for all future teachers entering NSW public schools.

Dr Wilson recommends investment in a campaign to acknowledge the importance of teachers to society and for the National Teacher Workforce Strategy to develop a better plan to recruit Australia's brightest to the profession.

Failure to act immediately to stem the entrance of academically weak students to initial teacher education courses is an "inordinate risk to the profession", she writes.

The report, [The profession at risk — trends in standards for admission to teaching degrees](#), was commissioned by Federation.