

# National Professional Standards

FOR ADVANCED TEACHING AND FOR PRINCIPALS



SECOND CONSULTATION PAPER

MAY 2008



Teaching Australia

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP LIMITED



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## *Purpose of this consultation*

This consultation marks the next step in the development of national professional standards for the Australian teaching profession. In particular it seeks feedback on the:

- capabilities for advanced teaching and for principals
- functions and composition of a national standards body
- development of a national code of ethics.

The specific issues raised for feedback are explained in each part of the Consultation Paper and collated for ease of response in Part III.

# Part I: What's happened so far....

## I. THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Teaching Australia has been working closely with national professional associations over an extended period on the development of national professional standards for advanced teaching and for principals.

By taking responsibility for the development of profession-wide standards, the teaching profession underlines its claim to professional status, its commitment to effective practice and its involvement in quality assurance.

While national professional standards are different from standards that are specific to particular jurisdictions, employing authorities or areas of teaching, the process of developing national professional standards has built on the considerable base of research and platform of work undertaken by professional associations and education jurisdictions.

The milestones in the process so far are set out in Table I. They include national conferences, research studies, publications and national consultations.

A major step in the process was the Forum on national professional standards held in Melbourne in July 2007. At the forum, the profession agreed to take forward the development of a charter for the profession and to set in train a process for drafting capabilities for advanced teaching standards and for principal standards.

**Table 1: Milestones in the development of national professional standards**

Date	Event	Outcome
<b>2005</b>		
21–22 August	Conference – Sharing Experience: ways forward with standards, Melbourne	Highlighted the wide range of experiences, views and perspectives of different professional associations on standards and established the foundation for moving towards a coherent national system. The idea of a charter for the profession as a unifying set of commitments also emerged.
15 November	Forum on School Leadership Standards, Canberra	Was an opportunity to initiate discussion with principals' associations about the purpose, value and nature of national professional school leadership standards.
<b>2006</b>		
April	Consultation brochure on a Charter for the teaching profession*	Initiated a consultation process on the concept of a charter for the teaching profession.
May	Statement by Directors of Teaching Australia, <i>Our Profession – Our Future</i> *	Set out the views of Directors on the value and purpose of national professional standards, to set the scene for engaging in the development of national standards.
August	Release of research reports by Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) – <i>Standards for School Leadership: A Critical Review Of Literature; and Standards for Advanced Teaching: A review of national and international developments</i> *	Provided an overview and analysis of existing school leadership and advanced teaching standards and advised on the purpose, value and nature of standards.
August	Release of report on project undertaken under the auspices of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) – <i>Professional Learning Using the Mathematics Standards</i> *	Established the value of using the Standards for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics in Australian Schools as a frame and language for professional learning.

\*Publication available at [www.teachingaustralia.edu.au](http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au)

Date	Event	Outcome
September	Release of report by Terry Hayes, <i>Professional teaching associations and professional standards: embedding standards in the 'discourse of the profession'</i> *	A review and analysis of the standards developed and under development by professional teaching associations in Australia.
<b>2007</b>		
March	<i>A Consultation Paper on National Professional Standards for Advanced Teaching and School Leadership</i> *	Sought feedback on a model for national professional standards for advanced teaching and school leadership, including the Charter for the Australian teaching profession, and on processes for developing, endorsing and reviewing standards.
29–30 July	Forum on national professional standards, Melbourne	Considered the feedback from the consultation initiated in March 2007 and set the scene for further development of national professional standards.
August	Release of report by Patrick Duignan and Jeremy Hurley, <i>School Leadership Standards: developments in Australia</i> *	Describes developments in relation to school leadership frameworks and standards in Australia.
23–26 November	Standards drafting group workshop, Canberra	A group of teachers and principals produced a first draft of capabilities for advanced teaching and principal standards.
<b>2008</b>		
February 2008	Draft capabilities considered by electronic standards drafting group	A group of teachers and principals provided feedback on the first draft capabilities.
May 2008	National consultation	Seeks feedback on draft capabilities for advanced teaching and for principals as well as on the role, functions and composition of a national standards body and the development of a national code of ethics.
May 2008	Approach to professional associations to commence development of descriptors of accomplishment	Professional associations are invited to begin the process of developing descriptors of accomplishment using the draft capabilities.

\*Publication available at [www.teachingaustralia.edu.au](http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au)

## 2. WHY NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS ARE VALUABLE

Teaching Australia has taken the position that standards for advanced teaching and for principals, developed and defined by the profession, serve three important purposes.

They:

1. provide inspiration to aspiring teachers and principals and clarify the expectations of the profession about accomplished practice
2. offer guidance to members of the profession seeking to improve their professional practice through self-reflection, professional learning and other methods of personal development
3. increase public recognition of the quality of the profession and understanding of the complexity and rigour of the work of teachers and principals.

The value of standards lies not just in their existence, but in the engagement of teachers and principals with them, as a tool for reflection and a frame for professional learning.

Standards make professional knowledge and skills more accessible and usable and therefore better valued. They provide a common language among teachers for discussing professional practice and are a foundation for public confidence.

The process of developing national standards is a unique opportunity for the Australian teaching profession to come together as a single profession – irrespective of sector, level of schooling, area of specialisation or jurisdiction – and make knowledge of professional practice accessible, usable and meaningful to others.

In the current education environment, there is considerable standards activity, driven by the particular needs of government, employers and regulators as well as the profession. By engaging in the process of standards development, the teaching profession has the opportunity to shape and develop standards that are meaningful and useful to teachers and principals and are grounded in a deep understanding of what constitutes quality in teaching and school leadership.

Teaching Australia has acknowledged that at some time in the future, the teaching profession may decide to develop accreditation or certification processes based on standards, noting that some teaching associations already use their standards in this way.

Given the widespread interest in recognising and rewarding accomplished teaching, in terms of both status and remuneration, the profession needs to be aware of the potential for advanced teaching standards to be used as a way of identifying accomplished professional performance.

### 3. THE STANDARDS MODEL

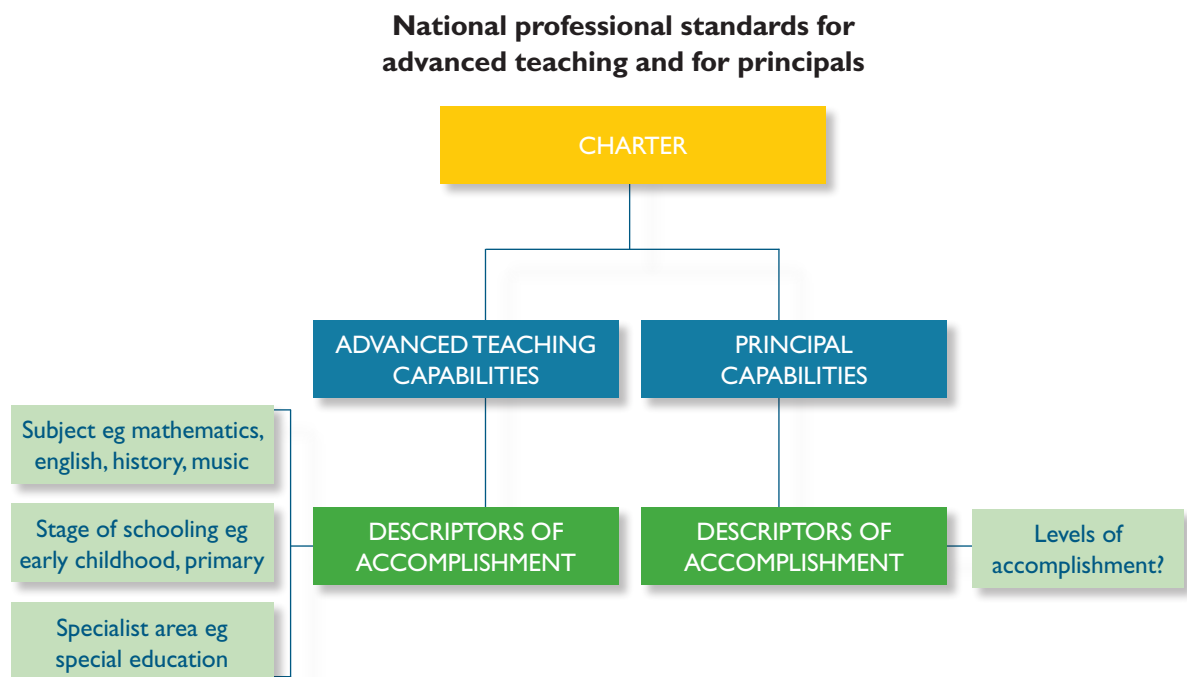
Following the Forum held in Melbourne in July 2007, the teaching profession accepted a model for national professional standards as a basis for taking the development of standards forward.

There are three related components:

The **Charter for the Australian teaching profession**, a statement of the core values and commitments of teachers and principals.

**Advanced teaching and principal capabilities**, generic high level statements of the discrete elements of the knowledge and skills expected of teachers and principals operating appropriately and effectively at a high level of expertise in the different settings in which they work.

**Descriptors of accomplishment**, elaborations of observable professional practice.



This model differs from that proposed in the March 2007 consultation process, in two ways.

**First**, the initial model included a fourth component, common **organising categories**.

The July 2007 Forum considered the use of agreed organising categories such as *professional knowledge, professional practice, professional commitment, professional engagement and professional relationships* as the broad headings for capturing the capabilities of advanced teaching and principal standards.

The value of organising categories lies in their usefulness for arranging and presenting capability statements in an orderly and meaningful way. While recognising benefits in using common organisers for both advanced teaching and principal standards, the Forum acknowledged that there was no guarantee that this would work and agreed to leave decisions about the most appropriate organisers to be tested in the process of drafting capabilities.

**Second**, the initial model used the terminology “school leadership capabilities” rather than **“principal capabilities”**.

Feedback in the March 2007 consultation pointed out that use of the term “school leadership” in the context of standards development was imprecise and ambiguous. At the same time, the Council of Australian Governments made a commitment to developing standards for principals.

The profession therefore accepted that the standards model should encompass two generic sets of capabilities:

- one specific to advanced teaching, to capture the leadership exercised by teachers within schools; and
- one specific to principals, to capture the essence of the principal's role.

## 4. PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS

The process of developing national professional standards has been guided by a set of principles initially suggested in the research conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research and published in August 2006.

These principles, which ground the standards in the professional work of teachers and principals, call for the standards development process to:

1. Be guided by a commitment to quality in teaching and school leadership, so that the standards are developed with a view to improving, informing and supporting the professional learning of both teachers and principals.
2. Be grounded in a deep understanding of the work of teachers and principals and a shared understanding of what constitutes quality in teaching and school leadership.
3. Be conducted by accomplished practitioners, with many teachers and principals engaged in the process and a diversity of professional opinions sought, captured and disseminated.
4. Include consultation with a range of stakeholders in the education community.
5. Adopt a common language based on agreed meanings for key concepts.
6. Build in provision for quality assurance, sharing, revision and renewal.

## 5. CHARTER FOR THE AUSTRALIAN TEACHING PROFESSION

The Charter is based on a simple idea: any profession, any purposeful human activity depends on the commitment of people, on their values and on what drives them to keep going. The Charter captures the commitment of teachers to high levels of professional knowledge, expertise and ethical commitment.

It is both a touchstone for the profession, and a compact with the community. It is a commitment by the teaching profession to act responsibly and to use knowledge and expertise well, in the interests of students.

The Charter for the Australian teaching profession was launched by over 30 professional associations and Teaching Australia in events around Australia in the week of 31 March to 4 April 2008.

It sets out the values and commitments shared by members of the teaching profession. In a diverse profession, with many areas of particular expertise and specialisation related to levels of schooling, areas of teaching and roles in schools, it serves as a unifying statement, drawing the different elements of the profession together and affirming the high ideals and principles that underpin teaching and leadership in all areas of professional practice and in all teaching contexts.

As a statement of values, moral purpose and social commitment, the Charter is a stand-alone document. It is also an integral component of national professional standards. It is the foundation for more detailed statements, in capabilities and descriptors of accomplishment, about the knowledge and skills of teachers and principals.

Copies of the Charter are available at [www.teachingaustralia.edu.au](http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au)

# Charter

for the  
Australian teaching profession

## A statement of values and commitments

Teachers believe in the power of education to make a difference to the lives of individuals and to society. As teachers and principals we are committed to giving students the best education possible for them to lead fulfilling, purposeful and productive lives. We bring to the role high levels of professional knowledge, expertise and ethical commitment.

### TEACHING

Teachers set high standards for every student and respond to individual needs. We challenge students to be all that they can be, to set demanding goals for themselves and to make a contribution to others.

We provide a stimulating learning environment. We create schools that welcome students and foster the development of values, so that all students, whatever their personal circumstances, can participate and thrive. We provide experiences that engage each student's capacity to learn.

We inspire students to discover the joy of learning, drawing them into a world of knowledge, ideas and creativity. Our ambition for all is a lifelong engagement with learning.

### THE PROFESSION

Our practice reflects the essential balance between conserving and renewing what is, and anticipating and building what can be. We work in partnership with colleagues, families, other professionals and the wider community.

We take responsibility for the development and renewal of our profession. We act to advance the quality and reputation of teaching through professional learning and reflection.

We are specialists in teaching and learning. We have expertise in student development, including how young people gain knowledge, learn to think critically and develop creativity.

The teaching profession sets itself demanding standards. We act with judgement, integrity and respect to build the trust and confidence necessary for successful learning.

## Part II: What happens next....

### 6. CAPABILITIES

In this consultation, your feedback is sought on the draft capabilities for advanced teaching and for principals.

#### **Defining capabilities**

The “capabilities” component of national professional standards is a set of generic, high level statements of the discrete elements of the knowledge and skills expected of teachers and principals operating appropriately and effectively at a high level of expertise in the different settings in which they work.

In the spirit of shaping standards around a common language and agreed meanings, the term “capabilities” is used in preference to “competencies”. In the educational discourse, the word “competencies” is interpreted as describing more specific, narrow skills rather than broad professional abilities.

Capability statements are inherently aspirational and future-looking, and universal in the sense that they are applicable in all contexts.

#### **Drafting the capabilities**

An initial draft of the capabilities for advanced teaching and for principals was prepared by teachers and principals from around Australia in a workshop held in Canberra from 23 to 26 November 2007.

During the workshop, the teachers and principals worked in groups,

- first**, to identify the essential work of advanced teaching and principals;
- second**, to draft this essential work as capabilities; and
- third**, to consider appropriate ways of organising the capabilities.

The drafting group had access to relevant research papers, consultation papers and reports as well as sets of existing standards, both from Australia and overseas.

The first draft of the capabilities produced at the workshop was refined to achieve consistency in language, style and coherence between the advanced teaching and principal capabilities and following comment from a group of teachers and principals working electronically.

## Feedback

Your feedback is sought on both the content and language of the capabilities.

The issues of particular interest are:

### Content

- whether the **capabilities essential** for advanced teaching and for principals have been captured
- whether there is any **duplication** of ideas
- whether the capabilities capture the **essence** of good practice
- whether the capabilities are consistent with and **complement the Charter**

### Language

- how the **expression** of capabilities might be improved
- whether the language is **clear, concise** and **accessible**

### How they are organised

- whether the **arrangement of the capabilities** is appropriate:
  - for advanced teaching under the headings *professional knowledge, professional practice and professional leadership*; and
  - for principals under the headings *professional knowledge, leadership of learning and leadership of the organisation*.

## ADVANCED TEACHING CAPABILITIES

Advanced teaching is evident when teachers consistently demonstrate capability in the areas of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional leadership.

Contemporary and authoritative **PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE** and understanding of:

- 1.1 students and the factors that influence learning and development
- 1.2 effective pedagogies, assessment and reporting
- 1.3 areas of specialisation and expertise
- 1.4 a wide range of resources, including emerging technologies, and their use in teaching and learning.

Exemplary **PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**, applying contemporary and authoritative professional knowledge to:

- 2.1 build effective relationships and manage complex interactions
- 2.2 create and maintain intellectually challenging learning environments
- 2.3 design, implement and evaluate rigorous and inclusive learning programs
- 2.4 use purposeful assessment and feedback to inform teaching and learning
- 2.5 communicate effectively with different audiences using a repertoire of strategies

Inspiring and influential **PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP** to:

- 3.1 initiate, evaluate and respond to change
- 3.2 engage in critical reflection to improve their own and their colleagues' practice
- 3.3 work collegially, valuing the contribution of others, fostering strategic partnerships and stimulating professional discussion
- 3.4 encourage an environment of confidence and resilience
- 3.5 take responsibility for the development and renewal of the profession

## PRINCIPAL CAPABILITIES

Principals are committed to leading schools that give students the best education possible. Effective principals demonstrate capability in the areas of professional knowledge, leadership of learning and leadership of the organisation.

Contemporary and authoritative **PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE** and understanding of:

- 1.1 the principles and practice of leading learning in a school
- 1.2 theories and approaches to developing and managing people
- 1.3 strategies for using resources to achieve educational outcomes

Authoritative **LEADERSHIP OF LEARNING** that:

- 2.1 inspires excellent teaching and learning
- 2.2 builds capacity of teachers as effective and influential educators and leaders
- 2.3 grows a dynamic culture of care, respect, high expectations and success
- 2.4 takes responsibility for managing personal and professional growth
- 2.5 empowers parents and families as first educators of their children
- 2.6 takes responsibility for the development and renewal of the profession

Effective **LEADERSHIP OF THE ORGANISATION** that:

- 3.1 shapes shared futures through being intentional, strategic and entrepreneurial
- 3.2 is based on an understanding and awareness of the school and its dynamics
- 3.3 uses professional judgement to balance competing priorities
- 3.4 cultivates productive relationships and partnerships within and beyond the school
- 3.5 develops and manages effective school governance
- 3.6 manages school systems and resources to achieve educational outcomes

## 7. DESCRIPTORS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

The third component of the standards model is the descriptors of accomplishment, intended to reflect the specific and unique requirements of different areas of specialisation, whether this be a teaching discipline, a stage of schooling or a professional context.

### **Defining descriptors**

Descriptors are the elaborations of observable professional practice associated with each capability. They enable teachers and principals to assess their own performance against the standards or allow an informed observer to see the capabilities manifested in a teacher's or principal's work.

In most existing standards for professional specialisations, descriptors are pitched at a high level of achievement, thus distinguishing advanced teaching capabilities from what is expected of graduate or beginning teachers.

For principal standards, descriptors may need to be developed at two levels, to recognise the degree of accomplishment of principals. This will be a matter for principals and their professional associations to consider.

### **Drafting the descriptors**

Once the profession has agreed on the capabilities component of the standards, Teaching Australia proposes to support national professional associations to draft detailed descriptors of accomplishment for specialised fields.

In order to test the validity and usefulness of the draft capabilities, Teaching Australia is also interested in supporting a few professional associations to develop descriptors for area of specialisation, using the draft capabilities.

This initial drafting process will begin during the consultation on the draft capabilities. It is likely to continue well beyond the proposed deadline of end August 2008 set for feedback on the capabilities. The feedback may lead to adaptation of the capabilities used by the professional associations to draft descriptors.

This work will be framed by the principles underlying the development of standards, set out in Part I of this Consultation Paper; and by guidelines for drafting descriptors.

## 8. GOVERNING A NATIONAL STANDARDS SYSTEM

Once standards are drafted by the profession, a mechanism for their acceptance, endorsement and review is essential. Standards are dynamic, and require review and adjustment in the light of change.

Teaching Australia is proposing to establish a Standards Council, formally as a standing committee of the Teaching Australia Board of Directors, with membership based on expertise in standards and professional practice.

### **Role and functions of Standards Council**

The Council's role would be to act as guardian of the standards, assuring the profession and the public of the consistent quality and rigour of national professional standards.

The functions of the Council would be to:

- manage the system of professional standards for advanced teaching and for principals
- review and provide advice on capabilities and descriptors of accomplishment developed by professional associations
- oversee the process for validating, reviewing and endorsing standards
- ensure that the standards reflect quality teaching and school leadership
- promote public awareness and understanding of national professional standards.

### **Composition of Standards Council**

Initial views of the profession put forward in the March 2007 consultation process were that the national professional standards system needed to be developed and managed "by the profession for the profession", and that the Council membership should reflect the breadth of the profession.

Given the functions envisaged for the Council, expertise in quality standards and the practice of teaching will be essential prerequisites for membership.

In order to undertake its functions effectively, the Council will need to operate closely with stakeholders with a close interest in the development and use of professional standards, including unions, employers, education policy makers and regulatory bodies. The views of these stakeholders will need to be incorporated in the operation of the Council, either through membership of Council or through associated mechanisms.

### **Feedback**

Your views are invited about the functions and composition of the Standards Council, including the most appropriate ways to involve important stakeholders.

## 9. DEVELOPING A NATIONAL CODE OF ETHICS

Responses to the consultation process initiated in March 2007 on national professional standards supported the development of a national code of ethics for the teaching profession, as an important touchstone for teachers and principals, to sit alongside the standards.

### Defining a code of ethics

A code of ethics is a set of statements about appropriate and expected behaviour of members of a professional group. Having a code of ethics is often seen as a cornerstone of being or becoming a profession, as the following definition from Professions Australia, a national organisation of professional bodies, suggests:

*“A profession is a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as, and are accepted by the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others. It is inherent in the definition of a profession that a code of ethics governs the activities of each profession. Such codes require behaviour and practice beyond the moral obligations of an individual. They define and demand high standards of behaviour in respect to the services provided to the public and in dealing with professional colleagues. Further, these codes are enforced by the profession and are acknowledged and accepted by the community.”*  
(Professions Australia, [www.professions.com.au](http://www.professions.com.au)).

There are many examples of codes of ethics relevant to members of the teaching profession, developed by employers, professional associations and regulatory bodies. There is however no overarching code of ethics which applies to teachers and principals in their professional capacity, wherever they are employed.

### Drafting a code of ethics

Teaching Australia will initiate the development of a national code of ethics once further progress has been made with the development of standards. This would build on existing codes, be pitched at the national level and would complement the standards.

One approach would be to collect all the relevant existing ethical codes and, using a working group from the profession, develop a draft national Code of Ethics for the teaching profession as a basis for wide consultation.

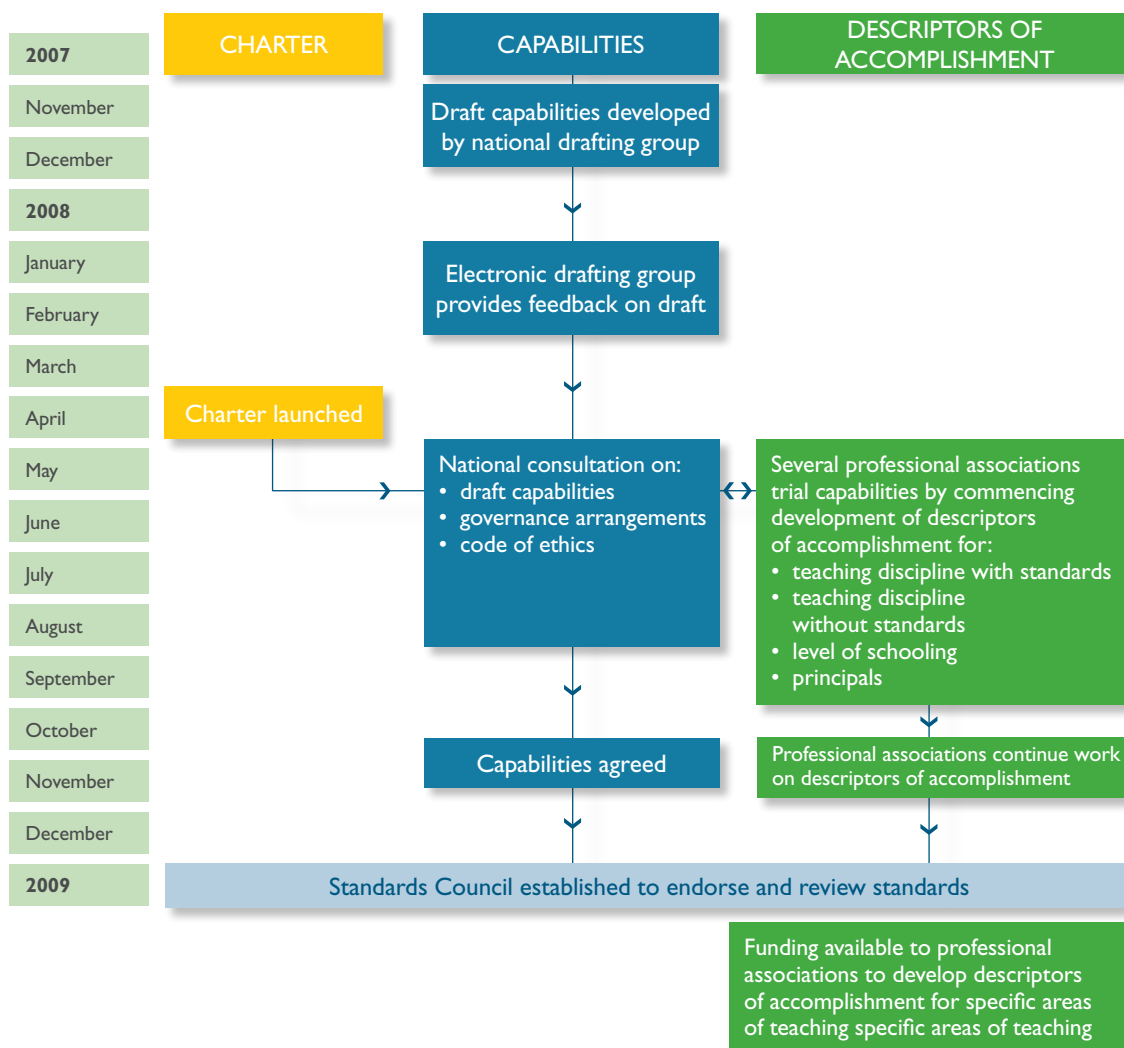
### Feedback

In this consultation, initial ideas are sought about the best way to develop a national code of ethics for the teaching profession.

## Part III: Giving feedback....

We invite teachers, principals and professional associations to discuss this paper and provide written feedback. Responses can be provided online at [www.teachingaustralia.edu.au](http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au) or by submitting a response by email or mail. Please send feedback by 31 August 2008 to [standards@teachingaustralia.edu.au](mailto:standards@teachingaustralia.edu.au) or 5 Liversidge Street, ACTON ACT 0200.

The consultation process and the next steps in the development of standards are illustrated below.



## ISSUES FOR RESPONSE

Feedback is invited on the issues set out below.

### I. Capabilities

Your views are sought on the following aspects of the **ADVANCED TEACHING CAPABILITIES**.

#### Content

- whether the **capabilities essential** for advanced teaching have been captured
- whether there is any **duplication** of ideas
- whether the capabilities capture the **essence** of good practice
- whether the standards are consistent with and **complement the Charter**

#### Language

- how the **expression** of capabilities might be improved
- whether the language is **clear, concise** and **accessible**

#### How they are organised

- whether the **arrangement of the capabilities** under the headings *professional knowledge, professional practice and professional leadership* is appropriate.

Your views are sought on the following aspects of the **PRINCIPAL CAPABILITIES**.

#### Content

- whether the **capabilities essential** for principals have been captured
- whether there is any **duplication** of ideas
- whether the capabilities capture the **essence** of good practice
- whether the standards are consistent with and **complement the Charter**

#### Language

- how the **expression** of capabilities might be improved
- whether the language is **clear, concise** and **accessible**

#### How they are organised

- whether the **arrangement of the capabilities** under the headings *professional knowledge, leadership of learning and leadership of the organisation* is appropriate.

## 2. Governing a national standards system

Your views are sought about whether the **functions** proposed for the Standards Council are appropriate and comprehensive.

The proposed functions are:

- manage the system of professional standards for advanced teaching and for principals
- review and provide advice on capabilities and descriptors of accomplishment developed by professional associations
- oversee the process for validating, reviewing and endorsing standards
- ensure that the standards reflect quality teaching and school leadership
- promote public awareness and understanding of national professional standards

Your views are also sought about the **size and composition** of the Standards Council, noting:

- the importance of ownership by the profession of standards
- the need for expertise to undertake the proposed functions
- the importance of involving stakeholders with a close interest in the development and use of professional standards.

## 3. Developing a national code of ethics

Your ideas about the development of a national code of ethics are invited:

- noting the importance to a profession of having a code of ethics as a set of statements about appropriate and expected behaviours
- taking into account the existence of many codes of ethics relevant to sections of the teaching profession.

Please respond by **31 August 2008** to Teaching Australia by email or post.

Email: [standards@teachingaustralia.edu.au](mailto:standards@teachingaustralia.edu.au)

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