

Permission to Teach

POLICY

Permission to Teach

In Queensland, only approved teachers can undertake the duties of a teacher in a prescribed school. The Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) grants registration to those persons who meet the qualifications, suitability and other professional practice requirements for registration specified in the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005* (the Act).

However, it is recognised that occasionally schools are challenged to find an appropriately qualified, registered teacher in certain subject areas and geographical locations. The Act includes a Permission to Teach (PTT) process which enables a person who is not registered to teach to be approved by the QCT to teach in a school under strict limitations.

In what situations does PTT apply?

Under the Act **teacher** is defined as a person who undertakes duties in a school including delivering an educational program, assessing student participation in an educational program, or otherwise administering or providing consistent and substantial educational leadership to an educational program. **Teacher** does not include a teacher's aide, a teacher's assistant or a student teacher.

An application for PTT is required where the following criteria apply:

- the school or employer has a vacant teaching position;
- the school or employer has been unable to find an appropriate registered teacher for the position;
- the school wishes to employ in the position a person who is not eligible for registration as a teacher;
- the person has a confirmed offer of a teaching position;
- the engagement of the person is for the delivery and/or assessment of student participation in an educational program which either:
 - is part of a curriculum that is endorsed by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority; or
 - forms part of the required curriculum for a student in that school; and
- the person has been offered the position because of their knowledge, qualifications, skills or training in a particular subject or discipline as required for the teaching position.

An application for PTT is not required if the person is a student teacher undertaking professional experience or where the duties to be undertaken by the person are those of a teacher's aide or teacher's assistant, or are duties to be undertaken in a co-curricular or extra-curricular program. Sports coaches, instrumental music instructors, and other instructors whose duties relate to co-curricular or extra-curricular programs are not considered to be undertaking the duties of a teacher.

PTT process

A person must be granted PTT by the QCT prior to commencement of teaching duties. PTT applies only to the school, position, teaching areas and time-frame for which it is granted, and cannot be used outside of these specific parameters.

Eligibility

Under section 10(1) of the Act, a person is eligible for PTT if the QCT is reasonably satisfied that the person—

- (a) has been offered a teaching position in a school and the employing authority for, or principal of, the school cannot find an appropriate registered teacher to fill the position;
- (b) has knowledge, qualifications, skills or training reasonably considered by the QCT to be relevant to the teaching position the person has been offered;
- (c) is suitable to teach; and
- (d) meets any other professional practice requirements for permission to teach prescribed under a regulation.

Application

An applicant for PTT must apply on the form approved by the QCT and provide all documentation requested in the form. The application must be accompanied by the required fee. The application form, available from the QCT website, has two sections – an Applicant Section and an Employer Section. It is the responsibility of the applicant and employer to ensure that all sections of the application form are completed correctly, and all required documentation is submitted with the application form to the QCT.

Employer Requirements

The employer must provide full details of the teaching position for which the PTT is being sought. These include the duration of the proposed employment, the school in which the position is located, the subjects and year levels to be taught, whether the position is full-time, and the number of hours per week if the position is part-time. If the vacant position requires the applicant to undertake the duties of a teacher in more than one school this must be stated on the application.

The application must include evidence that the school or employer has first sought to employ a registered teacher. This includes:

- an explanation of how the position became vacant and why a permission to teach is required;
- full details of all steps, including advertising and system processes, that were used to attempt to find an appropriate registered teacher for the position;
- evidence of the employer's attempts to find a registered teacher for the position, such as copies of advertisements, employer database searches;
- details of all persons who applied or were available for the position;
- detailed reasons for considering applicants not suitable for the position;
- a full explanation of why the applicant was considered suitable; and
- a statutory declaration from the school or employing authority that no appropriate registered teacher was available.

Knowledge, qualifications, skills or training

Determination of eligibility for PTT is based on the applicant demonstrating that they have the knowledge, qualifications, skills or training considered by the QCT to be relevant to the teaching position for which the permission is sought. In support of their application for PTT the applicant needs to provide evidence satisfactory to the QCT of any relevant education or training, any relevant experience, and/or expertise in a particular subject or discipline. Evidence includes but is not limited to:

- A brief curriculum vitae
- Evidence and academic transcripts for any higher education or TAFE qualifications
- Evidence of any trade or other qualifications
- Records of relevant employment or statements of service
- Details and evidence where possible of any voluntary

- experience relevant to the position
- Relevant professional references.

Suitability to Teach

The QCT must be satisfied that an applicant is suitable to teach. The factors that the QCT considers in making this determination are set out in sections 11 and 12 of the Act.

English Language Proficiency

A professional practice requirement for eligibility for PTT is the ability to communicate in spoken and written English at a professional level with students, parents, teachers and other persons. Some applicants may be required to undertake a formal English language proficiency assessment, or to provide other evidence of their English language proficiency, before being granted PTT.

To meet the English language proficiency requirements for PTT, an applicant is required to provide evidence that they meet one of the following:

- have completed a higher education qualification at an Australian institution, or in English from one of the following countries:
 - New Zealand
 - United Kingdom
 - United States of America
 - Canada
 - Republic of Ireland
 - South Africa
- have undertaken one of the following English language tests and achieved the required standard, as follows:
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) – Academic Module – A score of at least 7.0 in each of the four skill areas of Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing
- International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR) – only if conducted by an approved test centre (see QCT website) – A rating of at least 4 in each of Speaking, Listening and Reading, and at least 3+ in Writing.
- The date of the English language test must be no more than two years prior to the date of applying for PTT.
- have the skills, training or experience, including references, that satisfies the QCT that they have operated in English at a proficient level for a significant period of time.

English Language Proficiency – Special Consideration

Where the vacant position is for teaching of languages other than English (LOTE), in exceptional circumstances, a PTT may be granted to an applicant with a lesser level of English language competence. For special consideration, the applicant needs to provide:

- evidence of results in IELTS or ISLPR in one of the English language tests specified in the previous section;
- the reasons why an exceptional circumstance applies to the PTT;
- evidence the applicant is prepared to work towards improving their English language competence over the period of time requested for the permission, and how they

plan to do this; and

- a statement of support from the principal who is endorsing the application as to the assistance the school will provide to help improve the applicant's English language competence during the period of time requested for the permission.

Provided these requirements are met, and all other aspects of eligibility have been satisfied, the applicant may be granted PTT with a condition. The condition may vary according to individual situations, but would generally include a requirement for the holder of PTT to demonstrate improvement in English language proficiency within a specified time-frame such as further English testing.

Conditions

Section 20 of the Act makes provision for PTT to be granted with or without conditions, but stipulates that the QCT may grant PTT with a condition only if the QCT is reasonably satisfied the condition is necessary to ensure the applicant meets the eligibility requirements.

Examples of conditions the QCT might impose are:

- a condition requiring the person to undertake one of the English language tests that is recognised by the QCT within a specified time and provide results to the QCT that meet a specified level
- a condition requiring the person to provide evidence of improvement in English language proficiency at a stipulated time.
- a condition requiring the person to complete additional studies
- a condition requiring submission of a report from a principal at a specified time.

The QCT may cancel a condition imposed on a PTT if the QCT is reasonably satisfied the condition has been fulfilled or is no longer necessary for the person to meet eligibility requirements.

Approval period

Under section 27 of the Act, PTT may be granted for up to two years. The period of the PTT is the period stated in the certificate and approval notice issued to the holder of the permission. The permission may be renewed for further periods of no more than two years provided the holder has held the permission continuously for at least two years.

Time Extension

In certain unforeseen circumstances, a school or employing authority may find that they require a PTT to continue beyond the period for which it was initially granted. Provided the PTT has initially been granted for less than the two year maximum period, in the interests of reducing regulatory burden and cost for the applicant and employer, the QCT may reconsider the period for which the PTT is granted. Any period that may result from that re-consideration will be limited to the subjects previously approved, with the total PTT period not to exceed two years

from the original approval date.

To request a re-consideration of a PTT period, the school or employing authority must provide to the QCT in writing:

- reasons for the request for a time extension;
- confirmation that there are no major changes to the original PTT in relation to subjects to be taught, year levels and teaching load;
- full details of all additional steps, including advertising and system processes, that were used to attempt to find an appropriate registered teacher for the position;
- confirmation that no appropriate registered teacher was available for the position.

The holder of the permission to teach must:

- confirm in writing that they are willing to accept the adjusted PTT period;
- if enrolled in a preservice teacher education program or other additional studies, provide an up-to-date academic transcript for their studies;
- provide evidence that they are complying with any conditions attached to their PTT.

If the QCT approves the request, an amended approval notice and certificate showing the amended PTT period will be issued.

Renewal

The Act provides for renewal of PTT where a holder has held the permission continuously for at least two years. An application must be made before the PTT ends but not earlier than three months before the PTT end date. An application for renewal of PTT requires:

- completion of an application form approved by the QCT;
- confirmation that there are no major changes to the original PTT in relation to subjects to be taught, year levels and teaching load;
- full details of all additional steps, including advertising and system processes, that were used by the employer to attempt to find an appropriate registered teacher for the position;
- a statutory declaration from the school or employing authority that there is still no appropriate registered teacher available for the position;
- disclosure of the applicant's police information;
- evidence that the applicant has complied or is complying with any conditions attached to their PTT; and
- payment of the required fee.

The QCT may renew a PTT if the QCT is reasonably satisfied that the person is suitable to teach and that each condition of the person's PTT has been fulfilled or is being complied with at the time the application for renewal is considered.

Policy review

The QCT will keep its policies, processes and regulatory responses under continuous review to ensure that teaching in Queensland schools is performed by appropriately qualified, competent and ethical people in the best interests of students, the profession and the public. This policy will be reviewed by the QCT every two years.

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