



Appendix two – About the audit

Audit objective

This audit assessed the effectiveness of the Department of Education's workforce plans and strategies in responding to the demand for secondary teachers in STEM-related disciplines.

Audit criteria

We addressed the audit objective with the following lines of enquiry:

1. How well does the Department track the supply of, and demand for, secondary teachers in STEM-related disciplines across NSW?
 - The Department has accurate data on the supply of, and demand for secondary teachers and the extent of out-of-field teaching in STEM-related disciplines.
 - The Department uses a robust workforce planning model to understand future needs.
 - The Department reports on current, and predicted shortages of secondary teachers in STEM-related disciplines.
2. Does the Department have effective strategies to attract and retain secondary teachers in STEM-related disciplines?
 - Strategies are informed by predicted needs, stakeholder consultation, research and evidence.
 - The Department has established clear objectives and appropriate key performance indicators to monitor the effectiveness of its strategies, incentives and programs.
 - Incentives and programs are targeted to areas of need and are clearly communicated to maximise participation.
 - The Department regularly reviews the effectiveness of its incentives and programs and makes improvements to programs.

Audit scope and focus

In assessing the criteria, we examined the Department's:

- workforce planning models, plans and strategies
- processes to collect information to inform, and conduct, its workforce planning
- incentive, and support programs, offered to university students and qualified teachers to encourage teachers to practice in high-need areas and disciplines
- support programs for early career teachers in STEM-related disciplines.

Audit exclusions

The audit did not:

- assess the current, or future, supply of special education teachers, primary school teachers, vocational education and training teachers, or school counsellors
- assess student participation and results in STEM-related subjects
- examine accreditation of Initial Teacher Education or professional development courses
- question the merits of government policy objectives.

Audit approach

Our procedures included:

1. Interviewing:
 - staff from the Department involved in:
 - the approval and placement of qualified teachers
 - workforce planning
 - the development of scholarship and sponsorship programs
 - the allocation of scholarship and sponsorship places
 - promoting the scholarship and sponsorship programs
 - 9 school principals from central and secondary schools across the state
 - staff from nine universities responsible for co-ordinating secondary teaching degrees and practicum placements.
2. Distributing a survey to secondary school teachers eligible for early career funding (those in their first five years of a permanent position). We received 466 responses to this survey.
3. Examining:
 - the Department's workforce planning models, underlying data and assumptions
 - documentation detailing the Department's strategies to attract teachers to practise in hard to staff locations and disciplines
 - any relevant reports on the supply and demand for secondary teachers.

The audit approach was complemented by quality assurance processes within the Audit Office to ensure compliance with professional standards.

Audit methodology

Our performance audit methodology is designed to satisfy Australian Audit Standard ASAE 3500 Performance Engagements and other professional standards. The standards require the audit team to comply with relevant ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance and draw a conclusion on the audit objective. Our processes have also been designed to comply with requirements specified in the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation and assistance provided by the Department of Education. In particular, we wish to thank our liaison officers and staff who participated in interview and provided material for the audit.

We would also like to thank other stakeholders that spoke to us and provided material during the audit.

Audit cost

Including staff costs, travel and overheads, the estimated cost of the audit is \$296,000.