# The essential secondary school onboarding checklist

cognology

In Australia and across the globe we are in the midst of a teacher retention crisis. The latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics suggest 53 per cent of people who hold a teaching degree do not currently work in education. The Australian Government also estimates that 20 per cent of education graduates do not even register as teachers - meaning they are leaving before they've even started. [1]

Those graduates that do pursue a teaching career bring a great deal of promise: high levels of enthusiasm; optimism; fresh ideas; and contemporary knowledge of current educational theory.   However, research shows that once they embark upon their first teaching position at a school, they often begin to feel overwhelmed by the challenges of the profession. And without access to support - on a professional and personal level - they become disillusioned and start to reconsider their futures.

Did you know?

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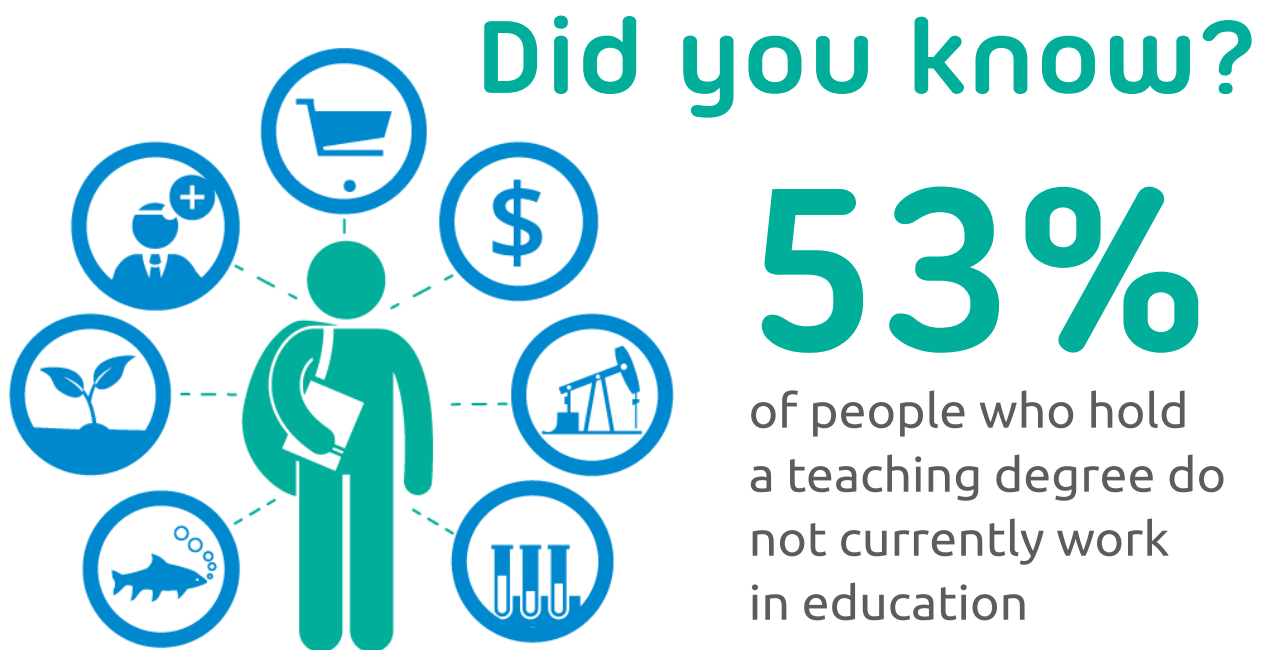
Best practice onboarding in secondary schools

Australian schools are now looking to better onboarding practices in an effort to increase retention rates of graduate teachers and equip them for the multifaceted requirements of their roles. New teachers that are sponsored early in their career with professional learning opportunities, expert mentoring and performance feedback have been shown to be more effective. Onboarding also improves socialisation of staff by connecting them with peers, helping new teachers establish professional networks, and integrating graduates into the school's community and culture more quickly.

In 2016, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) developed a groundbreaking set of guidelines for teacher onboarding, Graduate to Proficient: Australian guidelines for teacher induction into the profession. These guidelines are a significant departure from traditional induction programs and embrace the dynamic principles we have come to associate with modern onboarding.

Encompassing the first two years of a teacher's career, the guidelines promote an onboarding experience that is characterised by:

• supportive professional mentoring practices;
• high levels of leadership contact;
• participation in collaborative networks;
• targeted professional learning;
• observation and reflection; and
• access to lots of useful, practical information and resources.

Not just for new teachers

Onboarding is not just the province of new teachers. It can also be tailored to staff who are:

• transferred
• relieving
• promoted
• returning to work after extended absences

In fact, onboarding can and should be made available to the entire school workforce irrespective of whether they are engaged on a permanent, part-time, temporary, casual or volunteer basis.

Break down your master checklist into smaller ones based on timeframes, tasks, process or communication requirements. See our Onboarding Checklist for information on how you can stay on-track with your onboarding plan.

Onboarding checklist

A checklist is a great tool to map out what you need to cover off over the new teacher's onboarding period. Your checklist should not list absolutely every tiny detail. But a concise checklist like the sample below will make sure that important items don't get overlooked.

In keeping with the AITSL guidelines, the onboarding process should include:

Teacher Welcome Pack - including welcome messages, preboarding information, provisioning tasks and employment documentation

Professional Identity and Wellbeing - Steps for introducing your new teacher to their colleagues, the school leaders and the facilities. Initiatives to help them adapt to the way the school operates, the working arrangements, timetables, and how you communicate. And linking new staff to people and resources they can turn to for help and advice.

Professional Practice - Sharing the ethos of your school including your guiding principles, vision, values and standards you uphold. Establishing expectations and setting goals early with the new teacher to help focus their energies and fine tune their professional development.

Orientation (Compliance) - Covering off regulatory items and policy and process that govern the ways staff work.

Teacher Welcome Pack

Preboarding welcome
- [ ] Welcome message
- [ ] Confirm start date and time, parking and dress code
- [ ] Staffing announcement

Employment Checks and Documentation
- [ ] Employment contract
- [ ] Bank account details
- [ ] Tax File Number Declaration

Employment Checks and Documentation (continued)

- [ ] Choosing a Super Fund Form
- [ ] Working with children check
- [ ] Immunisations
- [ ] Educational Qualifications

Provisioning

- [ ] System access
- [ ] Keys/security passes
- [ ] Staff handbook
- [ ] School booklet
- [ ] Campus map

Professional Identity and Wellbeing

Introductions

- [ ] Meeting with school leadership
- [ ] Introductions to faculty staff
- [ ] Tour of the facilities
- [ ] Intranet profile

Working Arrangements

- [ ] Classes and timetables
- [ ] Breaks
- [ ] Absences and relief teachers
- [ ] Timesheets/Sign-in and Sign-out procedures
- [ ] Resources and general supplies

Support Mechanisms

- [ ] Buddy system
- [ ] Professional mentoring program
- [ ] Peer support networks
- [ ] Online resources

Social

- [ ] Social club activities
- [ ] Birthdays and anniversaries

Social (continued)

- [ ] Special events
- [ ] School theme days
- [ ] Industry events/groups
- [ ] Staff morning teas and dinners

Communication

- [ ] Weekly notices
- [ ] Emails
- [ ] Intranet
- [ ] Online collaboration
- [ ] Peer networks and collaboration
- [ ] Faculty meetings
- [ ] Assemblies
- [ ] Pigeon holes
- [ ] Staff directory and phone numbers
- [ ] Parent newsletter
- [ ] Parent communication and meetings
- [ ] Parent contact information
- [ ] Parent/teacher nights
- [ ] Surveys

Professional Practice

Onboarding plan

- [ ] Review and refine onboarding plan with supervisor
- [ ] Set check-in dates
- [ ] Leadership contact

Strategic Framework

- [ ] School vision
- [ ] Values
- [ ] Core philosophies
- [ ] Code of conduct

Performance Management

- ☐ Clarification of expectations and responsibilities (teaching commitments, playground duties and extra-curricular)
- ☐ Goal setting
- ☐ Probation review
- ☐ Ongoing performance management
- ☐ Professional registration
- ☐ Career discussion
- ☐ Disciplinary procedures

Training

- ☐ Computer based modules
- ☐ Curriculum program and templates
- ☐ Lesson observation
- ☐ Professional development opportunities
- ☐ External training/seminars

Orientation (Compliance)

National Legislative Framework

- ☐ Australian Education Act 2013
- ☐ State based laws

National Learning Frameworks

- ☐ Australian curriculum
- ☐ State based framework

Health & Safety Framework

- ☐ Work health and safety policy
- ☐ Work health and safety system
- ☐ Health and safety committee
- ☐ Health and safety representative
- ☐ First aid officers
- ☐ Fire/emergency wardens

Health and Safety Reporting Requirements

- ☐ Risk assessments
- ☐ Accident and incident reports

Health and Safety Reporting Requirements continued

- ☐ Non-conformance reports
- ☐ Notification of communicable diseases
- ☐ Hazard reporting
- ☐ Workers compensation claims

Location of Emergency Facilities and Equipment

- ☐ Fire extinguishers, hoses and blankets
- ☐ First aid facilities - first aid kit and room

Hazard Specific Safety Training

- ☐ Manual handling techniques
- ☐ Use of fire equipment

Policies and Procedures

- ☐ Smoke-free workplace
- ☐ Alcohol and other drugs
- ☐ Prevention of workplace bullying and harassment
- ☐ Use of information and communication technology (including mobile phones)
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Discrimination and sexual harassment
- ☐ Diversity
- ☐ Workplace rehabilitation
- ☐ Risk assessment procedures
- ☐ Emergency plan including assembly points, exits and procedures
- ☐ Provision of first aid
- ☐ Student behaviour management
- ☐ Student use of technology
- ☐ Student attendance
- ☐ Uniforms
- ☐ Homework
- ☐ Student assessment and reporting
- ☐ Sun safety
- ☐ Excursions
- ☐ Medical management plans and administration of medications
- ☐ Child protection and security
- ☐ Serious incidents and life threatening medical emergencies
- ☐ Use and control of hazardous substances
- ☐ Staff grievance procedures
- ☐ Responding to parent complaints and concerns
- ☐ School enrolments and administration

**Fast track your graduate & new teachers.
Streamline your onboarding today.**

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