
The Afgt Consortium acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples who are the traditional custodians of the ancestral lands on which our member institutions are located. We respect and value their past, present and ongoing connection to the land and their cultural beliefs, and as we share our own knowledge practices within the Consortium, we pay respect to the deep knowledge embedded within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their ownership of Country. The Afgt Consortium is committed to building better relationships and fostering greater understanding between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Policy and Context

The Australian Government’s response to the TEMAG (2014) recommendations addressed five themes: stronger quality assurance of teacher education courses; rigorous selection for entry to teacher education courses; improved and structured practical experience for teacher education students; robust assessment of graduates to ensure classroom readiness; and national research and workforce planning capabilities (Department of Education, Skills & Employment, 2015).

Teaching performance assessments were introduced into Australian initial teacher education as a consequence of a review into the quality of Australia’s teachers by the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG, 2014). One of TEMAG’s recommendations was that pre-service teachers (PSTs) demonstrate that they are ‘classroom ready’ and that this be achieved in their final year of study by successfully completing a teaching performance assessment (TPA) prior to graduation (AITSL, 2017; 2019).

Early in 2021, the Minister for Education reiterated the ambition agreed at the Alice Springs Mparntwe Declaration (Education Council, 2019) for Australia’s education system to be world class. To achieve this, the Minister announced a review that will build on TEMAG reforms and which will focus on three areas: “quality teaching, particularly initial teacher education, curriculum and assessment” (Tudge, 2021).

As new or additional requirements become known, these will be discussed by the Consortium and added to this document as required.

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Background to the development of the AfGT Consortium and instrument

Consortium

The AfGT Consortium was established in response to an invitation from AITSL for higher education institutions to submit expressions of interest to develop a TPA, specifying that a minimum of five ITE providers was required in a consortium (AITSL, 2016).

The AfGT Consortium was subsequently formed and represented a range of types of programs (undergraduate/postgraduate), modes of delivery (face-to-face, blended and online), sectors (early-childhood, primary and secondary schooling), as well as geographic locations (urban, regional, rural and remote). Since 2017, the Consortium has grown in size as well as in the mix of institutions, with other higher education providers joining the Consortium as licensees.

Composition of the AfGT Consortium	
2017 Composition	Composition as at September 2021
The University of Melbourne (lead institution)	The University of Melbourne (lead institution)
Charles Darwin University	Charles Darwin University
Curtin University	Curtin University
Federation University Australia	Federation University Australia
The University of Canberra	The University of Canberra
The University of Newcastle	-
The University of Sydney	The University of Sydney
The University of Western Australia	The University of Western Australia
University of Technology Sydney	University of Technology Sydney
Victoria University	Victoria University
	Excelsia College (licensee since 2020)
	Melbourne Polytechnic (licensee since 2021)
	Montessori World Educational Institute (licensee since 2019)
	University of Adelaide (licensee since 2021)

The purpose of this document is to articulate the priorities of the Consortium; that is, what we believe as a group of teacher educators.

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Instrument

In May 2018, AITSL's Expert Advisory Group advised that the AfGT instrument is a valid instrument for assessing whether a pre-service teacher's performance meets the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APSTs) at the Graduate Teacher level. The Expert Advisory Group reiterated this advice in July 2019, following the provision of data based on a larger data set.

The AfGT is reflected in a well thought out and thorough TPA that demonstrates a valid and reliable method for assessing whether a teacher's performance meets the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at the Graduate Teacher level. — AITSL Expert Advisory Group

One of the core design principles of the AfGT instrument is to be flexible and adaptable to cater to the specificities of each context where it is implemented. Throughout the implementation across the various jurisdictions, the AfGT has maintained its fidelity as a valid and reliable assessment of pre-service teachers' classroom readiness. Even during the challenging COVID-19 pandemic, the AfGT instrument is implemented with consistency and rigour - a testament to its flexibility and to the adaptability and innovativeness of Consortium institutions.

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Core Values and Principles

Consortium

While the governance, operation and membership of the Consortium has adapted to suit its context, the underpinning shared values on which the Consortium was founded have not.

The Consortium is committed to the following key principles:

- Evidence-based approaches to collaboration and joint decision-making,
- Productive and purposeful cross-institutional collegiality,
- Accountability to each other via governance structures and moderation activities,
- Professionalism,
- Flexibility,
- Distributed leadership,
- Collective efficacy,
- Recognition of individual expertise and experiences,
- Transparency of processes and governance, and
- Sustainability as the landscape of Initial Teacher Education changes over time.

Instrument

The key features of the AfGT instrument are that:

- It is a holistic, measurable, research informed national summative assessment to demonstrate classroom readiness at point of graduation (i.e., ready to begin a teaching career),
- It is intended to drive and maintain high standards across pre-service teachers and the wider profession to advance knowledge and skills in an educative manner, while promoting individuality and flexibility across contexts, and
- The AfGT has been collaboratively created, is nationally synergistic and aligns with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and National Program Standards.

These features are underpinned by the following principles:

- It is genuinely nationally applicable,
- It is responsiveness to individual contexts at a national level,
- It has fidelity when implemented as intended,
- Its implementation is informed by evidence, and
- It is subject to continuous review and evaluation.

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Operating Principles

The benefits for AfGT Consortium members at the institution and individual level extends beyond access to a robust TPA instrument that satisfies governance requirements. The Consortium as a professional group provides opportunities for members to contribute to collegial practices in an important nationally-based initiative that gives voice to initial teacher educators. Engagement with the Consortium builds leadership capacity for individual members and supports the work of institutions in their aims of providing a meaningful and valuable assessment that is a critical part of their programs and graduate preparation. Individuals also have opportunities to engage in research with other Consortium members.

The realisation of all of the benefits of Consortium membership and the continuing sustainability of the Consortium relies on the capacity and willingness of institutions to commit to the level of resourcing required to achieve them. Those resources will be direct financial contributions as well as in-kind human resources.

The following statements guide the strategic direction and sustainability of the AfGT.

1 – Stakeholder Engagement

Key stakeholders - governments, regulatory bodies, peak bodies, schools and teachers - are consulted to ensure that professional knowledge, expertise and values are considered during the continual refinement of the AfGT. This consultation process provides the additional reciprocal benefit of the Consortium both learning from, and contributing to, the profession as the AfGT progresses to scale.

2 – Collegiality, Capacity Building and Community of Practice

The Consortium believes that the value and impact of the AfGT is built and sustained through a commitment to inclusive and collegiate practices. Membership of the Consortium encompasses an active involvement in the work of the Consortium, which is enabled and supported by the Consortium's terms of reference and governance structures.

Through inclusive and collegial ways of working the AfGT Consortium operates as a Community of Practice, with synergistic approaches that draw on individuals' diverse experiences, expertise and broad-based understandings, and which also benefit both individuals and the institutions from which they come. The AfGT's Community of Practice processes enable members to develop personal capacity and contribute to the sharing of good practices to ensure the sustainable and future-oriented implementation of the AfGT.

3 – Cyclical Review Process

The Consortium is committed to a five-year review process prior to the start of each new collaboration agreement to ensure practices and operations of the Consortium are appropriate to the current and emerging contexts. Cyclical reviews will be led by the Executive Group with the support of the AfGT Management Team and Committees, with any emergent recommendations for improvement taken to Consortium Collaborators for endorsement.

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4 – Continuous Testing and Validation of the Instrument

The AfGT Consortium is committed to an embedded framework for inquiry (De Voto et al., 2021) and to the quality assurance and on-going continuous improvement of the AfGT instrument, whilst maintaining its fidelity. The American Education Research Association (2014) and International Testing standards (Bartram & Hambleton, 2016) are employed in the continual review of the instrument to ensure its construct validity and that it continues to meet the requirements of the Australian National Program Standard 1.2 (AITSL, 2017).

5 – Financial Viability

Fundamentally, the AfGT Consortium incorporates a collaborative and embedded framework for inquiry (De Voto et al., 2021). An embedded framework for inquiry represents a significant point of difference to other Australian TPAs, however it is resource intensive, considering the amount of time that individuals commit. To ensure the ongoing financial security and viability of the AfGT, the Consortium requires ongoing investment and commitment from all members to be financially self-sustaining.

The Executive of the Consortium constantly monitors, debates and plans for the financial viability of its operations, whilst adhering to the following guiding principles:

- the Consortium intends to be self-sustaining and capable of meeting its operating costs, without being reliant on external sources of funding,
- the level of membership fees must be applied equitably and reflect the true costs associated with the number of final year pre-service teachers at member institutions, and
- as far as is reasonably possible, adapt to individual institutions' changing circumstances.

Consortium membership fees - beyond reasonable levels of in-kind institutional support - are determined by the Executive and are invoiced annually to allow institutions to manage budgets. The investment by each institution represents a sound economic decision that provides assurance of a proven robust, flexible tool and access to the collective expertise within the diverse higher education institutions in the Consortium. The annual fees are set at a level that will be attractive to institutions as an alternative to resourcing their individual development and maintenance of a TPA.

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AfGT governance structure & membership 2019-2024

The *Assessment for Graduate Teachers (AfGT)* is a Teaching Performance Assessment instrument evaluated and approved by AITSL’s Expert Advisory Group (May 17, 2018), developed and implemented by our Consortium of Australian universities and licensees. The instrument is designed to capture the sophisticated intellectual work of teaching and enable pre-service teachers to demonstrate the various ways in which they can meet with *Australian Professional Standards for Graduate Teachers*. The AfGT is the result of collegial and collaborative actions of Consortium members, who worked together on every step in developing, implementing and evaluating the instrument for continuous improvement. The AfGT is a summative, capstone teaching performance assessment and a national research activity.

For the period of the Collaboration Agreement (2019 to 2024), the focus of the AfGT structure is on stability, building on the current format with minimal changes amongst the current collaborators, whilst enabling future scaling up of the AfGT in a sustainable and transparent manner.

The AfGT structure which was approved and adopted in 2018 will remain unchanged as follows:

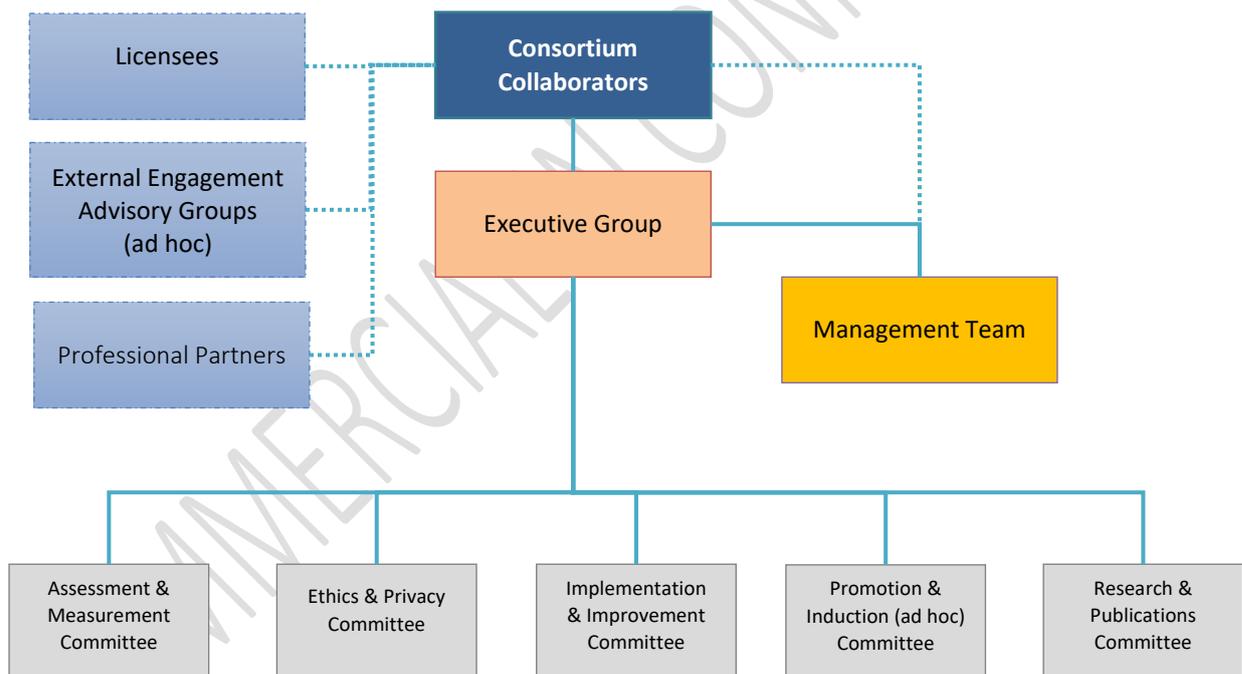


Figure 1: Governance structure of the AfGT Consortium

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AfGT membership categories

Table 1: Membership Definitions

Membership	Definition
Consortium Collaborators	Signatories of the AfGT Collaboration Agreement which carry the rights and responsibilities contained in the Collaboration Agreement. Currently, Consortium Collaborators comprise of institutions that have been, and continue to be, members of the AfGT Consortium from the commencement of the project.
Licensees	Members who are licensed to implement the AfGT instrument. Licensees agree with the terms and conditions of the AfGT instrument by entering into a formal Licensing Agreement with the Consortium.
Professional Partners	Individuals and institutions that are not Consortium Collaborators or Licensees, but which interact professionally with the Consortium and other individuals and institutions to contribute to a National TPA Community of Practice. Professional Partners are not bound by any contractual obligations with the Consortium.

Membership entitlements

Table 2: Membership Entitlements

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES	Consortium Collaborators	Licensees	Professional Partners
ENTITLEMENTS			
License to Intellectual Property (IP) of the project	✓	✗	N/A
Access to Consortium research data	✓	✓ (from commencement of membership)	N/A
Support and management of ethics approval for AfGT	✓	✓	N/A
Able to publish based on Consortium data (as per the protocols of the AfGT Publication Plan)	✓	✓	By invitation
Able to publish based on institution's own data (as per the protocols of the AfGT Publication Plan)	✓	✓	N/A
Input into finessing the design of the AfGT	✓	✓	N/A
Participation in moderation & process evaluations	✓	✓	N/A
Participate in Consortium-wide meetings	✓	✓	N/A
Participate in public Consortium forums, summits and dialogues	✓	✓	By invitation

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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES	Consortium Collaborators	Licensees	Professional Partners
LEVEL OF MEMBERSHIP			
Executive Group	✓	✗	N/A
Committees	✓	✓ (after 1 st 12 months as observer)	By invitation
Management Team	✓	Subject to negotiation & movement to Collaborator status	N/A

Table 3: Proposed Annual Cost Structure

	Category I [10 PSTs or less]	Category II [11 - 50 PSTs]	Category III [51 - 200 PSTs]	Category IV [more than 200 PSTs]
Base Fee [A]	\$700 pa	\$2,000 pa	\$5,000 pa	\$10,000 pa
Per PST [B]	\$25pp	\$25pp	\$25pp	\$25pp
Total Annual Cost	[A] + [B]	[A] + [B]	[A] + [B]	[A] + [B]

Notes:

- pa denotes 'per annum'
- pp denotes 'per PST'
- all amounts are excluding GST
- **For all licensee categories above, special consideration may be applicable**

For 2021-2023, the following caps will be applicable:

No. of PSTs	2021 and 2022	2023	2024
> 200 PSTs	\$12,000 pa	\$16,000 pa	No cap/pay-for-service
51 - 200 PSTs	\$8,500 pa	\$12,000 pa	No cap/pay-for-service
<50 PSTs	\$3,250 pa	\$3,250 pa	No cap/pay-for-service

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