



1 December 2025

Teaching assistants recognised as essential to educational success

The AITSL Guidelines for the [***Optimal Deployment of Teaching Assistants in Australian Classrooms***](#) (the Guidelines) released this week, underscore the crucial role of teaching assistants in enhancing student outcomes and reducing teacher workload.

The AITSL Guidelines follow an extensive research and consultation process undertaken since their announcement in the [National Teacher Workforce Action Plan](#).

The [Guidelines outline strategies](#) for school leaders to maximise the impact of teaching assistants. These include adopting a school-wide approach to deployment, establishing clear role expectations, creating regular opportunities for collaboration, ensuring access to professional learning, implementing evidence-based interventions, promoting a shared understanding of teaching and learning approaches, and enabling teachers to focus on their core work by identifying administrative, operational and supervisory tasks that can be undertaken by teaching assistants.

In the development phase of the Guidelines, the [IEU held two forums](#) for teachers and support staff, enabling direct feedback to AITSL on the challenges facing both teachers and assistants. Members emphasised the vital role of teaching assistants in supporting students with complex needs and in reducing teacher workload by taking on administrative tasks that pull teachers away from core tasks.

Feedback from the IEU forums included detailed descriptions of the barriers to effective collaboration between assistants and teachers, including the absence of school-wide strategies and dedicated meeting time to develop and evaluate student plans. The lack of regular professional development for teaching assistants was also highlighted as critically important.

The Guidelines note that effective implementation can be supported through industrial frameworks. The IEU has negotiated many collective agreements that provide for such collaboration, as well as additional supervisory duties and professional learning proposed in the Guidelines. These rely on employer buy-in and must include genuine consultation with teachers and teaching assistants on the most efficient allocation of time and funds in each school's context.

The Guidelines emphasise the potential benefits of effectively utilising teaching assistants - a principle long championed by IEU members. The Guidelines will help renew focus on the vital role of teaching assistants and encourage a review of the changes needed to reduce teacher workload.

Such improvements are essential for enhancing educational outcomes and ensuring every student receives a world-class education.