

A good induction is important for all new jobs. So why are teachers being left behind?

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Australian schools are struggling to recruit and keep teachers. Low wages, overwork, difficult student behavior, lack of support and stress are some of the [reasons teachers leave](#) the profession or have periods of

sick leave.

More than [half of teachers](#) with a current [teaching](#) qualification are not working in education. States such as [New South Wales](#) are facing major difficulties in employing teachers. This is especially so in the case of [casual teachers](#) who are needed to replace stressed and sick teachers.

Part of the reason for the [teacher](#) shortage is Australia's [lack of support](#) for graduating teachers to successfully transition into the profession.

How does this work?

The transition for graduate teachers into the profession can be very challenging and they need to be supported with a [quality induction program](#). Such programs help new teachers learn more about their roles, gain confidence and refine their teaching skills.

They are especially important for new teachers learning how to effectively manage diverse classrooms and student behavior.

According to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, [induction programs](#) should be:

- school-based
- delivered over two years
- embedded in daily practice
- practice-focused to further develop teaching skills.

From doing research in this area, we know Australian schools have responded to this need and increasingly developed induction programs to support new teachers over the past decade.

But it can take teachers several years to find long-term employment,

which means many new teachers miss out on effective induction programs.

Research from 2019 [shows that, within the first two years](#) of graduating, 60% of new teachers are employed as insecure replacement teachers.

We know

- 30% of new teachers are employed on contracts of less than one year
- 30% of new teachers are employed as casual teachers.

This leaves many new teachers relying on the strategies they develop during their insecure work experience to manage diverse classrooms and difficult student behaviors.

Newly qualified teachers who aren't involved in a good induction [program](#) are [more likely to leave](#) the profession within their first five years of teaching.

No induction affects students too

Teachers employed casually or on short-term contracts know it is important to understand students' strengths, needs and interests, as well as build good relationships with them. But they often don't have the time or opportunity to do this properly.

They know curriculum and pedagogy are important, yet often don't know what the regular teacher had planned. And they haven't always got time to assess and understand the students' learning needs.

Short-term teaching work leads to a reliance on surviving or just getting through the day. Typically, this means managing student behavior using more reactive techniques such as rewards and consequences

(punishments).

On top of this, newly qualified teachers may feel anxiety about their uncertain job prospects and the potential loss of income.

Teachers employed for a short term usually try to perform as well as they can, so they get a subsequent job. This means they are [usually reluctant to let anyone know they need help](#). They are aware they are being scrutinized and it's important they are seen as being capable of managing students' behavior. More controlling approaches can help them achieve this.

Such teaching approaches mean they are not attending to the students' problem behaviors in a way that prevents them from reoccurring. This can lead to an [escalation of these behaviors over time](#) and result in the student being disaffected at school.

Teachers need to develop a broad range of [proactive strategies](#) to build a positive learning environment and prevent [student](#) behavior problems. They must also be able to intervene effectively to de-escalate issues when they arise.

Much of this learning is based on developing and refining classroom management strategies during the induction period with the support of colleagues.

We'll keep losing teachers

Induction programs are focused more on permanent new teachers. But the majority of new teachers are contract or casual staff.

A one-size-fits-all approach to induction programs will not address the specialist needs of casual teaching staff, particularly graduate teachers

who move regularly between diverse school settings as work demands require.

Education departments should support schools, including financially, to include casual and contract teachers in meaningful induction programs. They should also think more creatively about what is possible because this problem rests with them.

If we don't develop meaningful ways for [new teachers](#) to be inducted into the profession, we may keep losing them.

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