



Standards for the Certification of Special Educators

These standards are to provide guidance for the certification of educators who apply to be accredited as special educators. An additional set of standards will be developed for current special education courses.

As the InSpEd standards apply to educators working in a wide range of settings including early intervention, pre-schools, schools and post-school settings, they are intended to reflect the universal competencies of a special educator without being overly specific to a particular setting or disability group. These standards may need to be further refined for specific settings and people with different disability types.

Accredited special educators will possess most of the competencies in the table below. Special educators within schools will operate within the formal curriculum providing individualised adjustments, and in other settings individual planning will provide an individual curriculum. These competencies will be developed through an initial special education course and ongoing professional learning. Successful applicants will have completed a post-graduate qualification (at least one year full time), after an initial qualification in a relevant area such as education, psychology, or speech therapy or an undergraduate degree that provides the equivalent of one year full time in special education that prepares them for the competencies described below. Some competencies address course content (such as the principles and practices of ABA) and others address competencies that will be developed in practice, based on course content (such as collaborative planning).

It would be expected that an accredited qualification would address most competencies, depending on the date when the qualification was awarded.

AREA	COMPETENCIES
ASSESSMENT, PLANNING, EFFECTIVE AND EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION, MONITORING EVALUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan, document, monitor and evaluate individualised learning plans and adjustments, including measurable goals and objectives, based on individual student needs (including knowledge of disability), in collaboration with students, parents/care-givers, other teachers, paraprofessionals and other professionals • knowledge of the principles and practices of applied behaviour analysis • develop (informal) and use curriculum-based (formal and informal) assessment and other technically adequate assessment tools for assessing student learning and program evaluation • select, adapt, use and model research-based teaching and/or motivational strategies, including data-based decision making, curriculum-based assessment, and explicit, systematic and direct instruction for both curriculum content and for cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies • use research-based practice in the teaching of literacy including explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and reading comprehension • use research-based practice in teaching mathematics including explicit and systematic instruction in number sense and numeracy • develop, implement and evaluate research-based programs relating to early communication skills for students with high support needs who are pre-intentional, non-symbolic or early symbolic • develop systematic sequences of learning content based on assessment of student’s current attainment and on-going progress monitoring • make adjustments to teaching sequences and teaching strategies based on analysis of student data • provide immediate and specific feedback and error correction to students through the use of verbal, physical and modelled prompts and/or prompt hierarchies and effective correction procedures • accurately document individual programs and adjustments, and keep accurate records of student performance • make effective use of assistive technology (such as speech-generating devices and apps that have been shown to be effective for students with a disability) • use effective research-based behaviourally-based assessment and tiered intervention and support strategies to promote positive behavior and self-determination • carry out a functional behavioural assessment and develop, monitor and evaluate function-based behavioural interventions for individuals and small groups • use appropriate crisis management procedures • develop, implement, monitor and evaluate social skills programs for students with a disability • develop, implement, monitor and evaluate transition plans for students entering school, transitioning within schools and moving from school to post-school settings

AREA	COMPETENCIES
WORKING WITH OTHERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborate with, co-teach with, advise, and provide other support to regular educators in preschool, school, and post-school settings • collaborate with, guide, support and coach paraprofessionals (educator assistants) in pre-school, school and post-school settings • work with people with a disability, their families/care-givers, paraprofessionals, and other professionals and outside agencies to plan and implement effective transition strategies for individuals with disability moving into school, between schools and from school to post-school settings • work collaboratively using family/person-centred planning processes with parents/caregivers in individual planning and in making adjustments (including curriculum adjustments in school settings) for individuals with a disability • provide accurate reports on individual progress to parents and other professionals • collaborate with families/care-givers, other teachers, and paraprofessionals and other professionals and paraprofessionals to support and develop positive behavior in individuals with disability/other special education needs • work with families who home-school and those whose children are receiving private tutoring to provide advice and support on research-based programs and practices
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have detailed and current knowledge and understanding of relevant laws and policies, especially the Disability Standards for Education • for special educators in school settings, have a sound knowledge of the Australian curriculum and the ability to make appropriate adjustments • explain and support the use of relevant laws and policies, especially the Disability Standards for Education. • use professional ethical principles to guide practice • source, read and evaluate research relevant to individuals with special education needs to identify, implement and evaluate new and emerging effective practices • deliver research-based professional learning related to research-based practice for individuals with a disability to groups and individuals such as other teachers, paraprofessionals, and other professionals • provide parent education using accurate information relevant to individuals with a disability • identify disproven and unproven practices in special/inclusive education and provide appropriate advice to other teachers, professionals, paraprofessionals and parents/care-givers • coach and mentor others in the use of research-based practices and provide relevant feedback

AREA	COMPETENCIES
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE CONTINUED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborate with outside agencies • participate in professional networks through membership of an organisation dedicated to the education of individuals with a disability/other special needs
KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider the potential impact of disability on learning and development when assessing, planning, programming, teaching and evaluating • take into account the backgrounds of learners such as family and culture when planning programs, curriculum and adjustments • take into account the medical and health needs of persons with a disability when planning programs, curriculum and adjustments • take into account the receptive and expressive communication abilities of persons with a disability when planning programs, curriculum and adjustments • take into account the transitions needs of persons with a disability when planning programs, curriculum and adjustments