
What Do Employers Ask for in Advertisements for Special Education Positions?

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Although qualified special educators are more likely to provide effective teaching for students with disabilities and special education needs, it seems many teachers in special education and support positions are not qualified for this role. The study reported here provided analysis of 219 job advertisements for special education positions in order to ascertain what employers required of applicants for special education positions. Advertisements represented all states and sectors in Australia, although the sample does not fully reflect the relative numbers of schools in each state. Most positions were for class teachers or for teachers providing support within and across schools. Special education qualifications and experience in special education were not common criteria for employment. The concerns raised by this finding are addressed through suggestions for formal recognition for special educators and accreditation of teacher education programs preparing special educators.

Keywords: special education teachers, qualifications, advertisements

There is general agreement that there is a range of evidence-based strategies that have been shown to improve academic learning and behaviour of students with disabilities and special education needs (Cook, Tankersley, Cook, & Landrum, 2008; Forness, Kavale, Blum, & Lloyd, 1997; Kutash, Duchnowski, & Lynn, 2009; Odom et al., 2005; Westling, 2010). Cook, Tankersley, and Harjusola-Webb (2008) suggested that 'the notion of using educational practices that have been shown to improve students' learning and behavior outcomes through reliable, trustworthy research seems to be both an essential and principled goal for the field of special education' (p. 105). There is also agreement that there is a gap between research and practice as it is typically implemented in schools and that the lack of use of effective strategies is likely to have negative impacts on students (Cook & Schirmer, 2003; Gersten, Morvant, & Brengelman, 1995; Kutash et al., 2009; McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008). In any education system, it would seem to be advisable to ensure that students with disabilities have teachers who know about effective practices and can competently implement them (Mastropieri, Scuggs, & Mills, 2011).

Employing teachers with qualifications in special education from courses that cover effective pedagogy would be one approach that might make it more likely that students with special education needs receive quality teaching. Goe (2006) noted, however, that

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there was very little research in special education that followed the trail from teacher preparation through to observed teacher practice and then to student outcomes. This kind of research is complex because of the variations in teachers, schools, students and curricula that need to be taken into account when judging teacher effectiveness. Teacher qualifications and experience are elements that may contribute to teacher effectiveness (Goe, 2007), but there is little research to establish the effects of teacher preparation for either general or special educators (Sindelar, Brownell, & Billingsley, 2010).

In the context of the general lack of evidence about the effects of teacher education programs on the outcomes of students in schools, there is some evidence that teacher completion of a special education program does result in improved student outcomes. Feng and Sass (2010, 2012), who claimed their study was the first to 'quantify the relationship between teacher training and the achievement of students with disabilities' (2012, p. 23), found that in Florida the amount of special education coursework completed by teachers was positively correlated with the achievement of their students, particularly in reading and to a lesser extent in maths. This study found little effect of inservice professional learning for teachers on outcomes for students with disabilities.

There is more evidence available that special education training has an effect on teacher practice, but these studies have not followed through to examine effects on student outcomes. Sindelar, Daunic, and Rennells (2004) compared teachers who were traditionally trained special educators with two groups of teachers who had received abbreviated alternative training. Based on direct observation in classrooms, the fully trained special educators were judged to have demonstrated better mastery of essential components of effective special education practice, such as monitoring understanding, providing informative feedback and adjusting activities. It is interesting to note that the school principals rated traditionally trained teachers as less effective. Sindelar et al. suggested the lower ratings of traditionally trained teachers may be because many of the alternatively trained teachers were previously paraprofessionals and thus familiar with the operation of schools, and principals rated them on the basis of this procedural knowledge.

Nougaret, Scruggs, and Mastropieri (2005) also compared a group of traditionally trained special educators with a group of teachers who had a degree in an area other than education and had completed a limited amount of education coursework. Teachers were observed in their classroom and their planning documents and students' work were also examined. The teachers with special education training 'significantly (and substantially) outperformed nontraditionally licensed teachers on each of the three measures' (p. 224). The two groups of teachers rated their own competence similarly, but there were few correlations between the observer ratings and the teachers' self-ratings. It is disturbing that the less qualified teachers were unaware of their shortcomings.

Anderson and Hendrickson (2007) examined the practices of 12 qualified early-career special education teachers working with students with emotional and behavioural disorders. Although they found no relationship between teacher knowledge, ratings of strategy usefulness and teacher use of three competency clusters, there was a positive relationship between knowledge and providing individualised supports. Content relating to the provision of individual supports such as functional assessment and positive behaviour support were important components of the teacher education course all these teachers had completed. All teachers had retained knowledge of behaviour management and explicit instruction from their course. In addition, all teachers were rated from at least satisfactory to excellent on explicit instruction, and all implemented positive behaviour management strategies.

Studies that rely on teacher self-report rather than actual observation have described teacher perceptions of positive effects of preparation for special education. Grisham-Brown, Collins, and Baird (2000) reported the results of a survey of practising teachers who had completed or were completing a special education qualification with an emphasis on applied behaviour analysis and research-based decision-making. Most teachers reported use of research-based practices as a result of completing coursework, whereas less than half reported using them before completing coursework. They reported sharing the practices with colleagues, and some reported system-level change as a result of their courses. Bell, Cihak, and Judge (2010) found, for teachers participating in an alternative special education teacher training program, a strong relationship between teacher knowledge of assistive technology, confidence in using assistive technology and reported use in their classrooms. Boe, Shin, and Cook (2007) reported that beginning special educators with extensive preparation, which was likely to be special education preparation, reported they felt better prepared to teach.

Overall, then, both the emerging research base and logic would suggest that qualified special educators are more likely to know about and implement effective practices for students with special education needs. It follows from this that it would be prudent for education systems to employ qualified special educators in special education and support positions. The limited information available (Principals' Association for Specialist School [PASS], n.d.; Thomas, 2009) about the qualifications of teachers employed in special schools suggests that employers do not always employ qualified special educators to fill special education positions. The aim of the study reported here was to explore how special education positions are filled by investigating what kinds of special education teaching jobs were advertised across states and sectors, and which attributes of teachers were seen by employers as important, as reflected in the position criteria in advertisements for special education jobs in Australian schools.

Method

An initial Google search was made for websites in Australia that carried advertisements for special education positions, including teachers, teacher assistants, support and administration positions. This paper reports on the data relating to teaching and administration positions. Positions in schools, preschools and long day care were of interest. Fifty-four sites were located across all Australian states and included all state and territory government department of education sites, Catholic and independent sites and commercial websites advertising teachers' jobs. A complete list of the sites searched may be obtained from the authors. All advertisements for special education positions from these websites were downloaded at three different times: November 2009, January 2010, and February 2010.

After downloading, duplicate advertisements were removed and the contents of each advertisement were entered into a FileMaker Pro[®] database (Version 9.0v3) designed for this project. The title of the position as it appeared in the advertisement was used as the job title. The geographical location of the position was coded as the relevant Australian state or territory. School sectors were coded as state or territory government, independent, Catholic systemic, private preschool, government preschool or long day care. The level of schooling was coded as preschool, day care centre, primary, secondary, or kindergarten to Year 12.

The location of the position was coded as regular class (where the special educator would teach a typical class), support class (a special class enrolling students with disabilities

and/or special education needs), special school (a school enrolling only students with disabilities), tutorial or support centre (a centre or class within a school or region that provides support and where students may attend on a part-time basis), early intervention, a position that provided support across classes within a school or a position that provided support across schools, or unspecified.

The type of position advertised was coded as teacher aide or assistant, special education class teacher, special education support teacher (providing support across classes within a school), special education support teacher (providing support across schools), school principal, other executive (such as assistant principal, deputy principal, head teacher) or a position related to administration of special education services within an area, region or state, or unspecified. The terms of employment were coded as full-time, or part-time, and then casual or permanent or unspecified. Contract types were classified as permanent or fixed term or unspecified.

For the essential criteria we coded registration as a teacher, experience in special education, the nature of the special education qualification required (bachelor degree, postgraduate diploma, masters or unspecified special education qualification) and whether the job required a qualification in education or early childhood education. We also collected other criteria relevant to special education that specified skills or knowledge, but not a specific qualification, and further criteria that were not specific to special education. We also coded Technical and Further Education (TAFE) certificate qualifications. Qualifications had to be described as a formal education qualification, thus a statement such as 'knowledge of' would not be considered a qualification. Criteria were coded as 'essential' if the wording included terms such as 'must have', 'will need to', 'be required to', 'prerequisite' in relation to any job requirements. Criteria coming under headings such as 'who may apply', 'essential' or 'required' were regarded as essential. A similar set of codes was used for desirable criteria and for criteria that were not specified as essential or desirable. Desirable criteria were those that were described by terms such as 'should', 'would be an advantage' or 'ideally', or were listed under the heading 'desirable'. Unspecified criteria were those where no indication of desirability was given and included terms such as 'applications are invited from' or 'we seek'. Other essential, desirable, or unspecified criteria were also entered into the database. In addition to the set codes, for each category allowance was made to enter 'not specified' as appropriate.

The coding for one third of the positions across the entire sample was completed by two independent coders to allow calculation of interrater reliability. Interrater reliability, as calculated by agreements divided by agreements plus disagreements and multiplying by 100, was 84.5%.

Results

A total of 219 advertisements were located for special education teachers or administrators. Most of these advertisements were for a single position, but there were some that were recruiting for more than one position, thus the data refer to the advertisements rather than to specific positions. Jobs were advertised in all states, but there was only one advertisement for special education teachers in both Tasmania (Tas.) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). As shown in [Table 1](#), New South Wales (NSW) was the state with the most teacher advertisements, and there were more advertisements from the government sectors.

[Table 2](#) shows that most jobs were in primary schools, with very few jobs for special educators advertised in early childhood settings.

TABLE 1
Geographical and Sector Location of Special Education Job Advertisements

	NSW	Qld	Vic.	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Total
State/territory government school	65	11	17	10	2	1	7	0	113
Independent school	2	1	12	3	2	0	0	0	38
Catholic systemic	43	4	7	2	4	0	0	1	61
Preschool (private)	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
Preschool government/territory	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Long day care	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	115	16	38	15	8	1	7	1	219

Note. NSW = New South Wales; Qld = Queensland; Vic. = Victoria; SA = South Australia; WA = Western Australia; Tas. = Tasmania; NT = Northern Territory; ACT = Australian Capital Territory.

TABLE 2
Special Education Teacher Jobs at Each Level of Education Settings in Each State

	NSW	Qld	Vic.	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Total
Preschool	5	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	7
Day care centre	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Primary	64	11	8	7	2	0	2	0	94
Secondary	39	1	9	3	4	1	0	1	59
Kindergarten–Year 12	12	1	19	4	1	0	0	0	37
Unspecified	5	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	7
Other	8	1	0	1	1	0	4	0	15

Note. NSW = New South Wales; Qld = Queensland; Vic. = Victoria; SA = South Australia; WA = Western Australia; Tas. = Tasmania; NT = Northern Territory; ACT = Australian Capital Territory.

TABLE 3
Location of Teacher Positions in Advertisements in Each State

	NSW	Qld	Vic.	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Total
Regular class	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Support class	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24
Special school	26	2	18	10	0	0	1	0	57
Tutorial or support centre	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Early intervention	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	8
Provide support across classes within a school	57	3	15	4	6	0	0	0	85
Provide support across schools	7	5	1	0	1	0	2	0	16
Unspecified	3	6	2	1	1	1	4	0	18
Other	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4

Note. NSW = New South Wales; Qld = Queensland; Vic. = Victoria; SA = South Australia; WA = Western Australia; Tas. = Tasmania; NT = Northern Territory; ACT = Australian Capital Territory.

Advertisements for jobs providing support across a school and positions in special schools were the most commonly advertised (see Table 3).

Table 4 presents the special education position types advertised in each state. The types of positions were most commonly support positions within schools or special education class teachers.

TABLE 4
Teacher Position Types in Each State

	NSW	Qld	Vic.	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Total
Special education class teacher	30	1	17	11	0	0	0	0	59
Support teacher (provide support across classes)	64	2	11	0	3	0	0	0	80
Support teacher (provide support across schools)	7	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	10
Executive – School principal	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Executive – Other	21	2	6	3	2	0	1	0	35
Administration of special education services within an area/region/state	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Unspecified	6	10	4	1	1	1	4	0	27
Other	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2

Note. NSW = New South Wales; Qld = Queensland; Vic. = Victoria; SA = South Australia; WA = Western Australia; Tas. = Tasmania; NT = Northern Territory; ACT = Australian Capital Territory.

TABLE 5
Summary of Numbers of Advertisements Listing Experience, Formal Qualifications or Special-Education-Related Skills as Essential, Desirable or Unspecified as Essential or Desirable Across States

	NSW	Qld	Vic.	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Total
Experience in special education									
– essential	13	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	15 (6.9%)
– desirable	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5 (2.3%)
– unspecified	50	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	51 (23.3%)
Total	67	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	71 (32.4%)
Formal qualification in special education									
– essential	11	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	12 (5.5%)
– desirable	4	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	9 (4.1%)
– unspecified	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7 (3.2%)
Special-education-related skills									
– essential	6	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	11 (5.0%)
– desirable	2	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	9 (4.1%)
– unspecified	8	2	6	1	3	0	0	6	26 (11.9%)

Note. NSW = New South Wales; Qld = Queensland; Vic. = Victoria; SA = South Australia; WA = Western Australia; Tas. = Tasmania; NT = Northern Territory; ACT = Australian Capital Territory.

Most advertisements were for full-time positions (128), with 61 part-time and 30 unspecified or other. Almost half were permanent positions (101), with 50 fixed-term and 68 unspecified or other.

Table 5 shows that experience in special education was a criterion in almost one third of the advertisements, but all except four were from NSW, and most of these NSW advertisements were for government schools. Advertisements infrequently included formal special education qualifications as essential or desirable or unspecified criteria. Advertisements mentioning specific special-education-related skills, for example, ‘knowledge of a range of strategies to support students with disabilities’, were more common. The 28

advertisements where qualifications in special education were a criterion (essential, desirable or unspecified) came from NSW (21), Queensland (Qld; four) and Victoria (Vic.; three) with two from state systems, 13 from Catholic systemic schools and 10 from independent schools.

There were many more advertisements that specified criteria, excluding an initial qualification in education, that were not related to special education, as essential (27.4%), desirable (6.9%) or not specified as essential or desirable (17.4%). These often included criteria relevant to a particular sector or ethos (e.g., 'strong commitment to Catholic education') or more general education criteria (e.g., 'leadership skills').

There were only four advertisements for principal's positions, all from NSW, and neither qualifications nor experience in special education were criteria for these jobs. There were 35 advertisements for executive positions (21 in NSW, and none in Tas. or the ACT), other than principals, with three having qualifications as a criterion and 14 having experience as a criterion.

Discussion

Although 219 advertisements were located from all states and sectors, the distribution by state and sector indicates that they do not accurately reflect the distribution of schools in Australia. By necessity, the sample was also limited to jobs advertised on publicly accessible sites. The distribution of advertisements across states does reflect the order of states by the proportion of schools, but NSW is overrepresented and other states are all underrepresented. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS; 2012) figures in 2011, 33% of schools were in NSW, 24% in Vic., 18% in Qld, 19% in South Australia (SA) and Western Australia (WA) combined and 6% in Tas., the Northern Territory (NT) and ACT combined. The proportions of advertisements in this study are 60.7% from NSW, 17.4% from Vic., 7.3% from Qld, 10.5% from SA and WA combined and 4.1% from ACT, NT and Tas. combined. One reason for the mismatch between these figures is likely to be that in some states (Qld, SA, NT, ACT) not all vacancies in government schools are publicly advertised. Teachers may apply for employment rather than for a specific position, and, after being found suitable, be offered employment in an available vacancy without that job ever being publicly advertised. Jobs are filled from the pool of suitable applicants, rather than being advertised, and when advertisements are placed they may be generic rather than relating to a specific position.

Similarly, the results do not accurately reflect the overall proportions of school types in Australia. Approximately 70% of the schools in Australia are government schools (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2011), employing 64% of teachers (ABS, 2012), but only 51.6% of the advertisements came from the state sector. Again, this may be because not all states advertise each position available and use both generic advertisements and appointment from pools of applicants. These differences between school distributions and advertisement distributions should be kept in mind when considering the results.

Only a few jobs were identified in early childhood settings, so limited conclusions can be drawn about the involvement of special educators in this sector, and these jobs will be excluded from further discussion. Overall, there were more positions in primary schools than in high schools, and fewest positions in kindergarten to Year 12 settings. There were fewer advertisements for positions in segregated school settings (special schools or support classes; 81) compared to positions providing support within or across schools (106). Similarly, there were fewer special education class teacher advertisements (59) than

for teachers to provide support across classes within a school or across schools (90). This likely reflects the growing numbers of students with special education needs identified in regular classes and the need for schools to provide support to those students.

Of some concern is the lack of a requirement in most advertisements for people filling special education positions to have a formal special education qualification, with only 12.8% of advertisements including qualifications as a criterion. None of the four principal's positions advertised had a formal qualification as a criterion, and only three (10.7%) of the other executive positions mentioned a formal qualification as a criterion. There were only two advertisements for government schools (from NSW) that included qualifications as a criterion; 80% of the jobs including qualifications as a criterion were from independent or Catholic systemic schools. There were no advertisements from SA, WA, Tas., NT or ACT that included qualifications as a criterion. Some states (such as Vic. and WA) that reportedly previously required special education qualifications for those in special education positions no longer implement such policies (Australian Special Education Principals' Association [ASEPA], n.d.).

Similarly, only 32.4% of positions included experience in special education as a criterion. Most of these advertisements (70%) came from the NSW government sector. Many NSW government job advertisements that did not require qualifications in special education stated that applicants should have experience and/or have approval to teach students with disabilities. It appears that approval to teach in a special education position does not necessarily require qualifications in special education (NSW Government Department of Education and Communities [NSW DEC], n.d.), and such approval may be based on experience, presumably obtained via casual employment. Once again, experience in special education was not a criterion for any of the principal's positions and was a criterion for only 19.7% of other executive positions. Even if criteria related to qualifications were always unrelated to criteria related to experience, just over half of all advertisements included neither as a criterion.

The lack of requirements for qualifications and/or experience are mitigated to some extent by the inclusion of criteria relating to more specific special education expertise in 48.4% of the advertisements. It is uncertain, however, how people would develop more specific skills such as abilities to implement quality programs for students with disabilities, to develop individualised programs, to implement evidence-based practices or to use adaptive technologies without completing a formal qualification or having some experience in special education. Perhaps advertisers use these more specific criteria in place of a more generic requirement for a special education qualification and/or experience.

It is hard to ascertain which factors might be influencing the reluctance of employers to ask for qualifications and experience, and the sequence in which these factors operate. One reason employers may be reluctant to specify a special education qualification as a criterion may be that there is an ongoing shortage of appropriately qualified teachers. If it is not possible to recruit qualified staff, there is little point in making qualifications an essential or desirable qualification. In 2004 the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs reported difficulties in recruiting specialists in special education, and this concern about the shortage of appropriately qualified people was echoed by Owen, Kos, and McKenzie in 2008. The 2012 review of the Disability Standards for Education (Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2012) found that there is a shortage of qualified professionals that limits the access of students with a disability to education. It was also noted that specialist support can enhance the outcomes for students with disabilities, and the report highlighted the need for more teachers who are competent in developing

individual education plans, adjusting teaching, assessment and curriculum, managing challenging behaviour and meeting the needs of children with complex and multiple disabilities. Although there is limited research on the effectiveness of teacher education as a means of providing teachers with these skills, logic would suggest that teachers who have never learned about these strategies would be unable to implement them effectively. Thomas (2009) presented an Australia-wide survey of special schools, where levels of qualified staff might be expected to be highest, and reported that in 2006 only 70.4% of teachers in special schools held a special education qualification. There was considerable variation across states, with SA having only 54.8% of its teachers qualified and WA having 86.6% qualified. A follow-up survey in 2010 in Victorian special schools (PASS, n.d.) found an increase in the number of teachers in specialist schools and an increase in the percentage of teachers without special education qualifications (from 31.1% in 2006 to 39.1% in 2010). Some metropolitan schools reported that less than 24% of their staff had special education qualifications. A recent survey of support teachers (behaviour) in three Sydney regions found that only 53% of these teachers had additional special education qualifications (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2009). On the other hand, there may be relatively few qualified teachers in special education positions because the qualifications are not a prerequisite for these jobs.

At present, none of the states have a registration procedure for approving or registering teachers as special educators (DEEWR, n.d.). Although the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) has developed standards for generalist teachers (AITSL, 2012a) and school leaders (AITSL, 2012b), and accreditation standards for initial teacher education programs (AITSL, 2012c), there are not yet national registration procedures for specialist teachers nor accreditation for specialist teacher education programs. If qualifications are not recognised, are not required by employing authorities, and there is no financial incentive to gain additional postgraduate specialist qualifications, it is not surprising shortages remain.

The lack of qualified special educators is not peculiar to Australia, and has been a concern in the US for some time, although the proportion of unqualified teachers in special education positions in the US was only 12.4% in figures given for 2002–2003 (McLesky & Billingsley, 2008). Boe and Cook (2006) suggested the lack of special educators may be a function of declining numbers of special education graduates combined with the increased demand for special educators as the number of children with identified disabilities increase. Commentators in Australia have also suggested that the number of special education courses is declining, and this may contribute to a decline in numbers of qualified people (ASEPA, n.d.). Teacher attrition in special education has been noted as a factor in the US, with new special educators and those without qualifications being most likely to move to general education or to leave teaching altogether (McLesky & Billingsley, 2008).

Thomas (2009) reported that in special schools 18.2% of unqualified teachers were undertaking special education courses. PASS (n.d.) reported that in 2011, 37.8% of teachers in special schools in Victoria who were unqualified in special education would consider gaining a qualification. It seems many teachers may be prepared to complete an additional qualification with some support. The NSW DEC, for example, supports teachers wishing to gain qualifications in special education through cadetships and part-time study scholarship schemes. It is likely, however, that while special education qualifications do not bring any financial reward and while qualifications are not mandatory for special education positions, there will be no increase in the number of qualified special educators available.

There is a clear need for further, more detailed research on the issues raised in this paper. Further studies of larger samples of advertisements are required to establish if this sample is representative. Although there is emerging evidence that teachers with special education qualifications do have competencies that are lacking in untrained teachers (Feng & Sass, 2010, 2012), there is no Australian research exploring this issue. The level of competence in research-based practices for students with disabilities and special education needs of teachers without qualifications compared to those with specialist qualifications needs more observational research with careful measures of both teacher knowledge and behaviour and student outcomes. In addition, further exploration related to the expectations of education authorities placing advertisements to determine the reasons for the lack of specifications for specialist qualifications and relevant experience would be most informative. It would be interesting to know if this is related to pragmatic reasons, or a belief that specialist knowledge and experience are not required to meet the needs of students.

Given the emerging evidence base that qualified special educators are more effective than teachers without special education training in catering for students with disabilities and special education needs, and the logical argument that teachers cannot implement strategies that they do not know about, we would recommend that steps be taken to promote recognition of special education qualifications as a prerequisite for employment in special education and support positions. The need for specific skills in special education is often tacitly recognised by employers as shown by the inclusion of specific special education skills as selection criteria, even though formal qualifications were not required. There needs to be a multifaceted approach in that the pool of qualified special educators needs to be increased so that employers are likely to be able to find qualified special educators. AITSL should develop standards for special educators and move to accrediting programs to prepare special educators as a matter of priority. Tertiary education providers need to be encouraged to introduce specialist courses or to increase enrolments in existing courses. Employers then need to include special education qualifications as a necessary criterion for teachers in special education positions.

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