Building teaching capability through pre-service and in-service training is central to making schools more inclusive and improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

As part of the Special Needs Plan, the Government is committed to supporting teachers in Victoria to build their capability to provide inclusive education settings for all students, by requiring them to engage in professional learning activities that focus on teaching students with disabilities.

# Pre-service teacher training

Pre-service training that includes a focus on teaching students with disabilities will enable the next generation of teachers to be better prepared for the classroom. To support undergraduate teachers to develop the skills they need to teach in an inclusive environment, education providers seeking Victorian Institute of Teaching (Institute) accreditation of their programs will be required to detail how their training prepares future teachers to teach students with disabilities.

# From provisional to proficient teacher

New teachers need time, support and professional learning opportunities to build their capabilities, including how to teach students with disabilities. To reflect this, the Institute’s information about gathering evidence of practice to apply for (full) teacher registration will include specific requirements relating to teaching students with disabilities.

# In-service teacher training

Professional learning is ongoing and teachers require support to access opportunities to update their knowledge and skills. To help teachers build their capability to make learning environments more inclusive, all registered teachers should complete professional learning activities relevant to teaching students with disabilities in preparation for the renewal of registration process in September 2016. At the 2016 renewal, teachers will be required to declare that they have either undertaken relevant professional development in the previous two years or will undertake it prior to renewal of registration in September 2017.
This means that within the 20 hour minimum requirement of standards referenced professional development activities, every teacher should undertake professional learning activities that can be referenced to the following descriptors within the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers:

* Develop teaching activities that incorporate differentiated strategies to meet the specific learning needs of learners across the full range of abilities. (Descriptor 1.5)
* Design and implement teaching activities that support the learning and participation of learners with disability and address relevant policy and legislative requirements. (Descriptor 1.6)
* Establish and implement inclusive and positive interactions to engage and support all learners in classroom activities. (Descriptor 4.1)

Teachers will need to keep records of the relevant professional development activities they undertake.

# Professional learning options to meet this requirement

As with the current registration renewal requirements, professional development may involve a variety of professional learning activities such as courses and programs, workplace-based learning, online learning, coaching and mentoring, lectures and conferences.

To support teachers to access professional learning relevant to teaching students with disabilities the Department currently offers the following options to Victorian teachers in schools:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Professional learning option** | **Description** | **Access and availability** |
| *The following options are available for government, Catholic and independent schools:* |
| Disability Standards for Education (DSE) eLearning | Free online resources about legal obligations under the DSE and Disability Discrimination Act. | Ongoing availability through the Department’s website to be accessed independently by teachers at:[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/legislation.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/legislation.aspx) |
| Victorian Deaf Education Institute (VDEI) Professional Learning Program | A range of professional learning activities catering to all Victorian education professionals supporting deaf and hard of hearing children and young people aged 0 to 18 years, across a range of educational settings. | Available through the VDEI website at:[www.deafeducation.vic.edu.au](http://www.deafeducation.vic.edu.au)  |
| Managing Challenging Behaviours | Online course to support teachers to limit the incidence and impact of complex behaviours in the classroom. | Ongoing availability through the Department’s website to be accessed independently by teachers at:[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/profdev/Pages/managebehaviours.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/profdev/Pages/managebehaviours.aspx)  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Professional learning option** | **Description** | **Access and availability** |
| *The following option is also available for government and Catholic schools:* |
| Inclusion Online | Free blended professional learning focusing on understanding, assessment and classroom support of students with disabilities and learning difficulties in four courses:* Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders;
* Inclusion of Students with Speech, Language and Communication needs;
* Understanding Dyslexia and Significant Difficulties in Reading; and
* Understanding Hearing Loss.
 | Each of the four courses is delivered each term through a combination of online and face-to-face delivery as part of a small network of participants, accessed through an expression of interest process advertised in the School Update newsletter, with further information at:[www.oltaustralia.net/courses\_victoria.asp?stateid=9&schooltype=1](http://www.oltaustralia.net/courses_victoria.asp?stateid=9&schooltype=1)  |
| ABLES Online Professional Learning | Free online professional learning portal on using the ABLES assessment tools to personalise learning for students who have a disability. | Ongoing availability through the Department’s website to be accessed independently by teachers at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/diversity/Pages/ablesproflearn.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/diversity/Pages/ablesproflearn.aspx) |

Teachers may also choose to explore other opportunities to meet this requirement, including options available through the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria or relevant Catholic Regional Office or their employer if appropriate, and external organisations and associations offering professional learning activities relevant to students with disabilities.

The Institute is working with education stakeholders and the Department to provide further guidance for teachers, leaders and professional development providers on what professional learning activities are suitable to meet this requirement. Further information will be provided in 2015 and early 2016.

For more information visit: [www.vit.vic.edu.au/registered-teacher/special-needs-plan](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/registered-teacher/special-needs-plan)