

The School of Education takes pride in the reputation of its graduates, and in particular the graduates of its major course, the Bachelor of Education (Primary).

Our graduates have traditionally enjoyed a high rate of employment and career success, and there has been an abundance of anecdotal evidence collected by lecturing staff over the years that our primary teaching graduates are held in high esteem by the teaching profession, both locally, regionally and nationally.

As part of an ongoing evaluation of its courses, the School last year surveyed principals throughout northern and central Victoria, seeking more specific feedback about the qualities of Bendigo graduates whom they had employed in recent years. Using the recently devised VIT *Standards of Professional Practice for Full Registration* as a checklist, principals were asked to appraise the performance of Bendigo graduates on each of the Characteristics of Effective Teaching, and add relevant comments if necessary.

Results of the survey indicated a strongly positive view of the personal and professional qualities which Bendigo graduates typically bring to their work.

Averaging more than 7 overall on a 9-point scale, our graduates scored particularly highly (av. 7.361) in the area of **professional engagement**, being praised widely for their collegiality, their energy and willingness to contribute to the total life of the school. Colleagues appreciated their “eagerness to learn, to assist, to take on support roles, and to generally help out in key learning areas”

Scores in the area of **professional practice** were only marginally lower, with our students praised in particular for their ability to create positive and stimulating learning environments, for their “obvious commitment to the students, (their) good class management skills, (and) proficiency in planning for individual needs.”

In the area of **professional knowledge**, where newcomers may typically struggle to master the steep learning curve associated with their multi-layered teaching role, Bendigo graduates again scored well overall (6.732), particularly in the areas dealing with their understanding of children’s learning, and their capacity to deal sensitively with children as individuals, and to assist them to engage actively in meaningful learning.

The survey results this year will form the basis for further consultation with principals and senior educators about the perceived strengths of the course, and about those areas which require some refinement in order to meet the changing demands of the teaching profession.