



The Australian, state and territory Education Ministers have agreed to changes to the National Quality Framework (NQF).

This fact sheet supports providers to understand changes affecting staffing and record keeping requirements when an educator or early childhood teacher is ill or absent.

SHORT TERM RELIEF OF EDUCATORS AT CENTRE-BASED SERVICES



WHEN DO THE CHANGES START?

Changes to the NQF will come into effect 1 July 2023.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION?

Visit nqfreview.com.au

Contact your [regulatory authority](#)

Centre-based services with children preschool age or under

REPLACING CERTIFICATE III OR DIPLOMA LEVEL EDUCATORS

From 1 July 2023, approved providers will have more flexibility to meet ratio and qualification requirements when a certificate III or diploma level educator is absent for a short period of time.

An educator who holds (or is actively working towards) an approved certificate III or diploma level qualification may be replaced by a person who holds a qualification in primary teaching, when the educator is absent because of short-term illness, leave, resignation, or because they are attending supervised professional experience placements for an approved qualification (regulation 126A).

The person who holds the primary teaching qualification should be counted as the same level as the role they are replacing. For example, if the diploma level educator is absent, the person with the primary teaching qualification is counted as the diploma level educator.

TIMEFRAMES FOR REPLACING EDUCATORS

Certificate III or diploma level roles may each be replaced for a total of no more than 30 days in any 12-month period, while still satisfying the qualification requirements in regulation 126 (noting this is per certificate III or diploma role and not per individual educator).

If the role being replaced works part time, the 30 days should be calculated on a pro rata basis.

The 12-month period does not have a set commencement date and is not based on a calendar year. Instead, it is determined by looking at the 12-month period immediately prior to the day the specific educator role is being replaced and calculating whether the 30-day maximum has been exceeded during that period. If the service has not exceeded the 30-day limit, it can replace the educator role with a person who holds a qualification in primary teaching.

For example, Timo, a full time certificate III level educator, has taken a leave of absence due to illness on 8 August 2023 and his role has been covered by Erica, a primary school teacher during this period of absence. To determine whether this arrangement meets requirements under regulation 126A, the service would look back 12 months to 7 August 2022 and calculate the total amount of days that Timo's role had been replaced by a primary school teacher in that period. If the combined total between 7 August 2022 and 8 August 2023 exceeds 30 days, then the service will not comply with regulation 126.

See the [Guide to the NQF](#) – section 4 Operational Requirements: 4.2 Educator qualifications for more information.

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER AND SUITABLY QUALIFIED PERSON ILLNESS OR ABSENCE

An early childhood teacher (ECT), second ECT or suitably qualified person (SQP) who is absent due to illness or short-term leave, can be replaced by a person who holds an approved diploma level qualification or a qualification in primary teaching (regulation 135). In NSW, the same requirement applies to an ECT that is absent due to short-term illness or leave (regulation 272(6)).

From 1 July 2023, this flexibility to cover short-term absences will be extended to include scenarios where the ECT, second ECT or SQP is absent due to resignation or because they are attending supervised professional experience placements for approved qualifications.

In NSW, regulation 272(6) will be extended to include when an ECT is absent due to resignation, however, as ECTs must be fully qualified in NSW, it will not be extended to include attendance at supervised professional experience placements.

NEW RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENTS

Approved providers are required to keep records of when educators and ECTs are replaced (regulations 152A and 152B).

From 1 July 2023, approved providers will need to record when:

- an educator who holds (or is actively working towards) an approved certificate III or diploma level qualification is replaced by a person who holds a primary teaching qualification (as described above)
- an ECT or SQP is absent because of short-term illness, leave, resignation or because they are attending supervised professional experience placements for an approved qualification, and replaced by a person who holds an approved diploma level or primary teaching qualification (regulation 135; regulation 272 in NSW).

The record will need to include the following details:

- name of the person being replaced
- the role (certificate III or diploma level educator, ECT or SQP) being replaced
- the qualification of the person replacing the role
- the dates the person was replaced
- reason for the absence, which must state one of the following:
 - » short-term illness
 - » leave
 - » resignation
 - » attendance at a supervised professional experience placement for an approved qualification.

Approved providers are not required to record any other details about the reason for absence.

This will help approved providers to keep track of the number of days for which each role is replaced, to ensure the maximum is not exceeded:

- 30 days for certificate III and diploma level educators
- 60 days for ECTs or SQPs.

EDUCATORS WHO ARE 'ACTIVELY WORKING TOWARDS' A QUALIFICATION

Additional guidance has been developed to support providers to ensure staff who are 'actively working towards' qualifications are making satisfactory progress, and to explain changes for family day care educators undertaking their approved certificate III level (or higher) qualification.

See Educators who are [actively working towards qualification](#) fact sheet for more information.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)

For information on short term relief of educators at centre-based services, contact your [regulatory authority](#)

- [National Law and National Regulations](#)
- The [NQF Review website](#)

Acknowledgment: The information in this publication is accurate pending the Australian, state and territory Education Ministers' agreement to amended regulations.