



TICZA

TEACHER INTERNSHIP
COLLABORATION SOUTH AFRICA

Integrating and using the Common Competency Framework in ESTI Models

TICZA Community of Practice (CoP) Series
CoP #17 Summary Report:

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The Teacher Internship Collaboration South Africa (TICZA) – Key Features

- TICZA is a collective impact collaboration project.
- It is a partnership initiative made up of government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academic institutions and private sector organisations.
- TICZA is governed by a representative Steering Committee.
- The aim of TICZA is to demonstrate the extent to and conditions under which extended student teacher internships (ESTIs) can be an effective, efficient and widely used model for teacher work-integrated learning (WIL), embedded within teacher policy and practice as part of a broader goal of institutionalisation of the model.

The TICZA Community of Practice (CoP) is a programme element intended to enhance sector-wide collaboration through which implementers share knowledge and practice, discuss key initial teacher education (ITE) WIL issues and expand the evidence base on ESTIs.

1 CoP 17 Overview

Key Takeaways

- Extended student teacher internships (ESTIs) include what TICZA calls essential wraparound support (EWAS).
- TICZA's collective journey has resulted in the pre-validated version of the [Common Competency Framework \(CCF\)](#), now available on the TICZA Webpage. While the CCF is aligned with the SACE high-level professional teaching standards, its main role is to serve as a set of practice standards embedded in observable classroom competence and behaviours in student teacher interns.
- The CCF will be used as a tool during the prototyping phase of TICZA to monitor the progression of student teacher interns during their WIL sessions.
- The validation process for the CCF, due to take place in 2026, will be integrated into the TICZA research and agreements reached on the proposed standardised ESTI model, which sets out the cost, timeframes and EWAS components.
- Planning for the CCF validation and standardised ESTI model prototype process is still underway. The aim of the prototype is to show evidence that the ESTI standardised model for distance learning students produces teachers who:
 - are more competent
 - whose studies are more cost-affordable to the public fiscus
 - stay in the teaching profession longer; and
 - qualify more quickly.¹
- TICZA will submit a prototyping proposal to the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Funder Working Group. Once funding is secured, implementing partners (IPs) and higher education institutions (HEIs) will be required to partner, and thereafter will be invited to apply to be part of the 2026 prototype process and opt in to the ESTI standardised model.

¹ The prototype concept note has since been refined to show evidence of teacher competence and affordability for the public fiscus.

- Discussions on implementing the CCF in ESTIs highlighted the following:
 - The CCF may be seen as overly long and complex and will need to be mediated and presented in various ways to ESTI project managers, mentor teachers and students if it is to be used effectively. There were various suggestions on how this could be done, and a reminder that adoption of the CCF will be progressive.
 - The CCF has a role to play as a high-level reference document for the standardised ESTI model and will guide alignment amongst ESTIs, as well as technical collaborations between various stakeholders in ITE.
 - The current format of cards which can be used in offline contexts was appreciated.

2. The CCF Status Briefing – Process and Product [James Keevy, JET]

CCF Development

James Keevy summarised the journey leading to the development of the CCF, speaking to key concepts in the process. View the [presentation](#) here.

James located the CCF in the current system:

- Within the cycle of schooling and the teacher's journey (slide 2), ESTIs form part of the WIL component of ITE. Variation in WIL practices and time-frames across HEIs contributes to uneven ITE quality. ESTIs provide extended school-based experience and enriched support for students studying through distance education. These offerings have informed the development of the standardised ESTI model.
- While the CCF aligns with the South African Council For Educators (SACE) Professional Teaching Standards (PTS), there is a difference in purpose (slide 3). The SACE PTS are high-level standards relating to professional identity, while the TICZA CCF presents practice standards which are embedded in the PTS and linked to observable classroom behaviours. Other practice standards in South Africa include those developed by the Primary Teacher Education (PrimTED) Project and the draft Early Childhood Development Practitioner standards.
- A teacher's formal identity is defined by three key elements: their qualifications status, their employment status and their professional status. The CCF links to professional identity as it defines the stages of a competent student teacher intern, and is also linked to employment status in relation to employment expectations and the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) competencies (slide 4).


The CCF journey was led by the Bertha Institute, with inputs from the Working Group and TICZA CoPs, leading to the production of the current version of the [pre-validated CCF](#). Some features of the CCF were noted as follows:

- The standards are set out in a 3X3 matrix, with 9 cells and 3 domains and 3 levels relating to each. The relationship to the SACE standards is also mapped out (see slide 13).
- The rubric is currently in static form, but there will be options for digital use.
- Based on a common understanding of 'competence' as comprising integrated knowledge, skills and attitudes applied in context, the CCF uses three domains of 'know it', 'do it' and 'live it'.
- Most teaching standards across the globe differentiate levels of competence, from the beginner to intermediate, to experienced (or other terms). In the CCF, the teacher intern's progress is characterised according to 'spark', 'ignite' and 'flame'.
- The CCF has been laid out in a card format so that these can be used offline with ESTI project managers, teacher mentors and student interns in various settings, along with the assessment rubric.

Validation, EWAS model and next steps

The delay in validating the CCF has been due to the ethics process required by the Council on Higher Education, which meets at set intervals. The validation process has therefore been positioned as work to be undertaken in 2026. Some key points to note include:

- The overall aim of the validation process is to ‘... test applicability and practical relevance’ of the CCF to ESTIs, as well as its face and construct validity. See slides 14-16 for more detail on the approach, noting that this is still in the planning stages. School phases and years of study for the process have not yet been determined.
- The validation will take place in the context of the standardised ESTI model (including EWAS) which has been developed through the TICZA process. TICZA has found it difficult to provide empirical evidence of the ESTI value-add, partly because the implementers’ programmes and models varied greatly. TICZA has now settled on a standardised model as outlined in the slide below, which will aim to demonstrate that students in ESTIs – crucially, in comparison to students qualifying through other distance education models, not through full-time face-to-face programmes – become teachers who are more competent, more cost-affordable to the public fiscus, stay in the teaching profession longer, and qualify more quickly.²
- Once the validation methodology for the CCF has been refined, the prototyping process can be implemented. As is standard practice in validation testing, there will be a control group as well as a test group. The test group will be drawn from four IP/ HEI partnerships, to be determined via an organic sign-in/opt-in process. The slide below illustrates the proposed process, as well as features of the standardised ESTI model:



Looking to the prototyping process 2026-2027

	Number of interns for a period of 18 months			
	IP1 & HEI1	IP2 & HEI2	IP3 & HEI3	IP4 & HEI4
ESTI standardised model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R25,000 per student teacher per year to provide EWAS (2025 costs to be adjusted annually for inflation) • Supervision and mentoring of student teachers by school-based mentors on a 1:25 ratio for 21 days per year on-site • Professional development of student teachers for 28 full days per year • Lesson observation assessment of student teachers, 7 per year • Assessment against common competencies as defined in the CCF • Year x to y of the BEd degree 	50	50	50	50
	HEI1	HEI2	HEI3	HEI4
Control group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No EWAS beyond standard HEI offerings from the floor; James noted the following: limited to standard HEI policies • Lesson observation assessment of student teachers limited to standard HEI policies • Assessment against common competencies as defined in the CCF • Year x to y of the BEd degree 	50	50	50	50

In answer to questions from the floor, James noted the following:

- Details of costs included in EWAS still need to be clarified: for example, the Funza Lushaka bursary pays for accommodation for face-to-face students but not for distance education students, so how is this factored in?; and some IP wraparound support includes travel and data costs as well as stipends.
- There are strong links between EWAS and the CCF, and how this is integrated into the standardised ESTI model prototype will form part of the collaborative work on gathering evidence of ESTI benefits over the next two years. There will be a presentation on progress and plans submitted to the ITE Funder Group

² The prototype concept note has since been refined to show evidence of teacher competence and affordability for the public fiscus.

at the end of August. There was a suggestion from the floor that practical budget items such as costs for the CCF cards to be used in training are taken into account in budget discussions.

3. From the Drawing Board: Working Group Reflections

Individuals involved in the CCF Working Groups shared brief reflections, focusing on key learnings from the process.

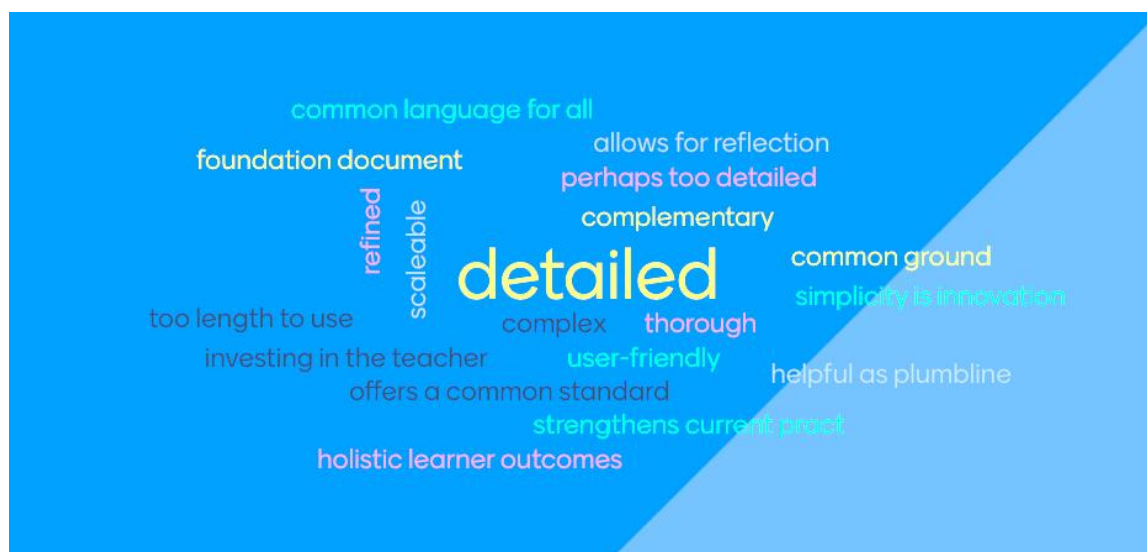
- René Levinge-Lang (IP, St Peter's Intern Programme) commented that working group members sometimes had different perspectives, but that the CCF development process helped define their common goals. The CCF needs to be viewed as an aspirational framework which can serve as a North Star for these shared goals, understanding that we now have a common language for teaching practice: the next steps are to consider how the CCF relates to end user experience.
- David Oliphant (IP, Teach the Nation) reflected on how different stakeholders in TICZA have long discussed a range of views on elements of ESTI models and their cost-effectiveness. The CCF can help remind IPs that they are not working in isolation, but have a tool that will help everyone align across the sector and accelerate towards better outcomes in teacher development. He looks forward to seeing what the process of engagement with the CCF will look like, taking into account existing systems when it's being used as a platform for collaboration with partners at a technical level. He highlighted how the CCF's connections to the classroom but also to higher professional standards can help strengthen a number of systems in IP organisations (for example, what a qualified teacher should like and mentorship training).
- Tshogofatso Mashaphu (Convening Group, JET Education Services) used her own experiences as a student teacher with mentors and peers at different schools to highlight the importance of supporting student teachers to reflect deeply on their own practices and learning. The CCF (especially the 'live it' competence element) will help students work as team members, participate in school life and start conversations with their mentors and peers on different aspects of teaching competence. It also provides a way in which students and mentors can track progression from 'spark' to 'flame' and live their growth in the different years of their studies. In these ways, it will help TICZA towards the goal of creating knowledgeable teachers for quality education.

4. Participant Perspectives: From the Mentimeter

Three questions were posed on the relationship between the CCF and forms of assessment used by IPs. The main themes that emerged from the responses are:

- There are many commonalities, most especially in terms of alignment with the SACE PTS and the close relationships between knowledge, skills and values, which lead to an emphasis on holistic competence.
- Major differences related to the high degree of detail in the CCF and the simpler and easier-to-use assessment rubrics of IPs.
- Asked whether differences related to skills, knowledge or attitudes, more respondents chose skills, with an equal distribution between knowledge and attitudes.

Question four asked participants for a word or phrase that captured participants' views on the CCF in relation to their own standards and assessment tools:



4. Discussion: Integration of the CCF with ESTI Programmes

Questions for framing the discussion were as follows:

1. How will the CCF influence the design of your ESTI programmes?
2. What would the implementation of the CCF look like within your programme?
3. The CCF competency domains ask for demonstrated evidence of 'know it' (knowledge), 'do it' (skills) and 'live it' (attributes). Can you give examples of assessable evidence for each of these categories?
4. Are there ways in which the CCF can be used to trigger dialogue and cooperation for entering into partnerships, for example, between HEIs and NGO implementers around WIL?; with the DBE?; with funders?

As not all questions were able to be fully covered, key points are given below.

Implementing the CCF in ESTIs

- There was a general feeling that mentors might be resistant to the CCF, seeing it as too long and complex to understand and apply with their students. To mitigate this, various suggestions on how to mediate the CCF were made:
 - Build it into mentorship training, using section worksheets, assessment exemplars and gamification for learning.
 - Use CoPs or Professional Learning Communities (PLCS) to discuss and engage with the CCF (with mentor teachers alone, with student teachers alone, and/ or with mentors and students together).
 - With students, develop ways in which they can use the CCF as a self-reflection tool to formulate their own goals as they progress in their studies.
- Use the CCF as a high-level baseline or overall reference document, consulted on a quarterly basis and used as a guideline for alignment against which to check simpler 'everyday' assessment tools. Aspects of the CCF can be used as checkpoints at different points in time.
- Project managers and mentor teachers should use the CCF as they use the CAPS documents, for example: Do their observation templates speak to the CCF? Are they working with students in alignment with this type of coverage and these values?

- A mindset shift is needed in both schools and HEIs in relation to moving away from a marks-based, percentage-oriented view of assessment. It also happens that there is sometimes misalignment between the WIL marks given by the school-based teacher and the lecturer's assessment of a student. Students, as well as mentors and lecturers, need a deeper understanding of 'competence' as opposed to marks, and the domains and levels of the CCF will be helpful in this regard.

The CCF and other stakeholders

- In relation to cooperation and partnership, the CCF could be a tool for defining the kinds of qualified teachers that emerge from the HEIs working with the ESTI model. This could also help at the district and provincial levels, providing a standard for officials to understand what is happening with mentor teachers and WIL in their schools.
- The role of student recruitment (which will not have to be uniform when using the standardised ESTI model) was briefly touched on. In under-served communities, the criteria for student recruitment should not be based on the CCF, as this could limit the candidate pool. There may be ways in which the CCF can help assess potential in students who might battle to meet B. Ed entry criteria, which, in any case, vary across HEIs.

The meeting closed with James reminding participants that TICZA has journeyed far in four years, and that to achieve change in ITE is a long game. The process is close to taking on a life of its own thanks to the collective effort of all participants. The critical evidence needed to show value-add for ESTIs – teacher competence, reduced cost, efficient time taken to qualify, and retention in the profession – will be gathered through the prototype process. Once funding is secured, IPs and HEIs will be asked to partner and to apply for 2026, opting into the standardised ESTI model, including EWAS and the CCF.

The National Association of Social Change Entities in Education (NASCEE) will be convening an open webinar on 2 September to share the CCF work more widely. The final TICZA CoP in its current format will take place on 15 October 2025.

Participant List

Facilitator: Patience Voller, National Association of Social Change Entities in Education (NASCEE)

	Name	Organisation
1	Sujata Pillay	Back to Basics, Quality Teaching and Learning For ALL
2	Hassiena Marriott	Global Teachers Institute
3	Zaahedah Vally	JET Education Services
4	James Keevy	JET Education Services
5	Tshegofatso Mashaphu	JET Education Services
6	Flick Holmes	Khanyisa Inanda Seminary Community Projects
7	Glenn Harpur	Khanyisa Inanda Seminary Community Projects
8	Robyn McQueen	Khanyisa Inanda Seminary Community Projects
9	Sinoxolo Ndlovu	Khanyisa Inanda Seminary Community Projects
10	Judy Tate	Khanyisa Inanda Seminary Community Projects
11	Senzo Ngcobo	Khanyisa Inanda Seminary Community Projects
12	Marcia Ndlovu	Khanyisa Inanda Seminary Community Projects
13	Melissa King	NASCEE
14	Giles Gillett	NASCEE
15	Luvuyo Notshokovu	Numeric
16	Carisma Nel	North West University
17	Zorina Dharsey	Primary Science Programme
18	Dr Nkosiphile Bhebhe	St John's College
19	Rene Levinge-Lang	St Peter's Intern Programme
20	David Oliphant	Teach the Nation

