

STRENGTHENING QTS: KEY POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper sets out some important considerations that the Department for Education (DfE) should take into account in advancing its ambition to strengthen Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).
2. The paper:
 - acknowledges the Government's intention to strengthen QTS;
 - confirms that teaching is a complex, highly skilled professional activity;
 - identifies challenges related to the professional formation and development of teachers and the principles that should guide policy in this area; and
 - makes a case for moving towards teaching as a Masters-level profession.

STRENGTHENING QTS

3. Since May 2010, Government policy on the qualifications required of teachers has tended to place significantly less emphasis on the importance of QTS than any previous administration. This stance has been evident in, for example, the removal of requirements in place previously that mandated the employment of qualified teachers in maintained schools and academies in all but a very restricted set of circumstances.
4. However, in her recent speech to the inaugural conference of the Chartered College of Teaching, the Secretary of State for Education signalled a shift in policy to strengthening, rather than replacing or abolishing, QTS. The Secretary of State argued:

'I want to strengthen QTS as a first step to ensuring that people entering teaching in the future join a profession that, as well as being truly valued, empowers them with access to the sustained high-quality training and development that every professional needs in the early stages of their career.'

*'My aim is that from September 2019 we will introduce the newly strengthened QTS. And I want to work closely with the profession...to shape what that will look like.'*¹
5. This recasting of Government policy on the future of the teaching profession provides an opportunity to reinstate concern for teacher quality and professionalism in the development of national teacher workforce policy.
6. However, effective action in this area must be based on an acknowledgement of teaching as a demanding, highly skilled activity if the education system is to continue to benefit from a professional workforce able to secure the highest standards of educational provision. These issues are considered in detail below.

THE NATURE OF TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

7. Children and young people learn best when teachers are given the time, resources and scope to make the fullest possible use of their professional talents, knowledge and expertise. An education system that does not give practical effect to this core guiding principle cannot expect to provide pupils with the full range of high-quality learning experiences to which they are entitled. Respect for the professionalism of teachers is a hallmark of an education system that is genuinely committed to raising standards and extending educational opportunities for all learners.²

¹ Department for Education (DfE) (2017). 'Justine Greening's vision for the teaching profession.' (20 February). Available at: (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/justine-greenings-vision-for-the-teaching-profession>), accessed on 28.02.17.

² NASUWT (2013). *Maintaining World Class Schools*. NASUWT; Birmingham.

8. The Government must, therefore, demonstrate its commitment to teachers in words and deeds and by conferring rights on them which affirm their professional status and which are guaranteed across all public education settings.³
9. Critically, public policy constituted on this basis will reflect an understanding of teaching as a complex, multifaceted professional activity which is, simultaneously, an art, a science and a craft. The art of teaching is about being responsive and creative and developing intuitive capabilities. The science of teaching is about using research and other forms of evidence to inform decisions about how to teach. The craft of teaching is about mastering the full range of skills and practices needed by teachers to discharge their professional responsibilities effectively. This broader vision of teaching is central to understanding its status as a profession. Conceptualisations of teacher professionalism that fail to reflect these considerations fully cannot be regarded as a coherent and credible basis upon which to establish an effective national strategy for sustaining teacher quality.⁴
10. It is for this reason that notions of teaching based solely on its craft dimensions, as articulated in the 2010 Schools White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, are inadequate.⁵ It is not disputed that effective practice requires teachers to use and develop further their knowledge and understanding of the subjects and curriculum areas they teach. It is also evident that initial teacher training (ITT) and continuing professional development (CPD) must give teachers the ability to apply their skills and expertise in a range of practical classroom contexts.
11. However, in light of the standing of teaching as a professional activity, these important aspects of teacher formation and teacher professionalism do not describe the totality of fit-for-purpose processes of ITT and CPD. Secure subject knowledge and practical experience, while important, are insufficient to ensure that teachers in training are prepared for the full range of responsibilities that they will have on entry to the profession.
12. Evidence published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) emphasises that other education systems regarded as high performing and fast improving base the development of teacher workforce policy on this broader understanding of the nature of teacher professionalism. Critically, this evidence stresses that these systems adopt approaches to ITT and CPD that balance and integrate practice and theory rather than emphasising one or other aspect to a disproportionate extent.⁶

EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO TEACHER FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

13. The more rounded understanding of teacher professionalism set out above has significant implications for the Government's ambitions for strengthening QTS, given that the blend of skills, knowledge and understanding teachers must acquire, maintain and develop are more wide-ranging and complex than can be developed through classroom experience alone.
14. The OECD suggests there are at least four areas that policymakers must attend to in the context of building a teaching profession to meet the challenges of the 21st century and maintain world-class public education systems:
 - By *'making teaching an attractive profession...not just through pay, but by raising the status of teaching, offering real career prospects, and giving teachers responsibility as professionals and leaders of reform. This requires teacher education that helps teachers to become innovators and researchers in education, not just deliverers of the curriculum...'*
 - By taking steps to ensure for all teachers an entitlement and access to *'effective [professional] development...through longer programs that upgrade...qualifications or involve collaborative research into improving teaching effectiveness...'*
 - By ensuring that *'appraisal and feedback is supportive in a way that is welcomed by teachers...lead[ing] to self-improvement and involv[ing] teachers in improving schools'* with systems of teacher compensation that are *'fair, based on multiple measures, and transparently applied in ways that involve the teaching profession...'*

³ Ibid.

⁴ Pollard, A. (ed.) (2010). *Professionalism and Pedagogy: A contemporary opportunity*. Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP); London.

⁵ Department for Education (2010). *The Importance of Teaching*. TSO; London.

⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2011). *Building a High-Quality Teaching Profession: Lessons from Around the World*. OECD; Paris.

- By engaging *'teachers in the planning and implementation of reform...moving beyond consultation to involvement [and] transforming schools into learning organizations, with teaching professionals in the lead'*.⁷
15. In short, policymakers must commit to establishing a system which recognises and develops teachers as professionals. A world-class school system cannot be sustained where there is no guarantee of quality professionals working in every school. A national framework of professional requirements and standards, underpinned by a framework of professional terms and conditions of service, is critical to ensuring quality for all children and young people.
 16. High standards of entry into the teaching profession must be recognised as a necessity in the context of meeting the increasingly challenging, complex and sophisticated demands being placed on all teachers in meeting the challenges of teaching and learning in contemporary schools. Moreover, a clear focus is needed on the quality, breadth and depth of initial teacher education curricula to ensure that these programmes support the development of teacher quality, transition and agency in the context of teaching and learning.⁸
 17. Recruiting highly qualified students into teaching cannot be the end of the matter; the Government must also focus attention on ensuring access to high-quality professional formation and development for all teachers throughout their careers. From this perspective, the Government should make sure that:
 - public education for the 21st century is led by a postgraduate teaching workforce that is educated and professionally accredited to nationally agreed standards;
 - all teachers working in state-funded schools must be in possession of QTS;
 - teacher education equips all teachers to demonstrate deep theoretical and empirical knowledge and high cognitive and intellectual skills to meet the learning needs of children and young people;
 - programmes of initial teacher education provide teachers with the conceptual knowledge and capacity to be reflexive practitioners who will continue to develop, apply and evaluate subject knowledge, theory and teaching methods to meet the developing and differentiated needs and aspirations of pupils;
 - new entrants to the teaching profession benefit from structured programmes of support which enable them to consolidate and extend the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during initial teacher education in the context of their work as qualified practitioners;
 - the leadership of teaching and learning in schools is undertaken by lead professionals who are qualified and accredited as teachers;
 - all teachers and school leaders can commit to participating in their own ongoing professional learning with an entitlement to regular, high-quality CPD that enables them to develop their professional knowledge and expertise, including through their contribution to educational research and development; and
 - teacher collaboration and collegiate working practices are supported and encouraged within classrooms and faculties, and within and across schools.⁹
 18. An overarching consideration is that different institutions and agencies within the education system operate in a way that creates and maintains an infrastructure to support the development of teacher mastery.
 19. Central government has a key role to play in this respect in establishing those national frameworks, expectations and requirements essential to ensure that all children and young people can access their right to be taught by a well-trained and supported qualified teacher. Important areas of policy in this respect include pay and performance management, as well as initial and ongoing teacher formation and development, all of which are central to teacher professionalism.
 20. Local-level entities in their roles as providers and champions of education also have core functions in this respect. In particular, they must ensure that nationally determined policy in this area is applied in a way

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Menter, I., Hulme, M., Elliot, D. and Lewin, J. (2010). *Literature Review on Teacher Education in the 21st Century*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

⁹ NASUWT (2013). *Maintaining World Class Schools*. NASUWT; Birmingham.

tailored to local needs and circumstances, challenging and supporting schools to operate in ways that promote and secure teacher professionalism.

21. In their inspection and oversight of schools, agencies with statutory powers of intervention, particularly Ofsted, Regional Schools Commissioners and the School Commissioner, should undertake their activities that align with national-level imperatives in respect of teacher professionalism rather than detract from it.
22. Collaboration between schools, both individually and through partnerships such as teaching school alliances, is also critical to ensure that programmes of teacher formation and development reflect effectively the practical and theoretical dimensions of teaching. While there may be justifiable variations in the way in which different partnerships are configured between the schools and higher education sectors, it is a minimum requirement that teachers in training and teachers in practice do not have one dimension of teaching privileged over another.
23. Securing these principles in practice requires that particular attention is given to four key areas of policy:
 - high-quality ITT;
 - career-long CPD;
 - moving towards teaching as a Masters-level profession; and
 - ensuring that teachers are remunerated appropriately.
24. Each of these areas is considered in further detail below.

HIGH-QUALITY ITT

25. A high-quality system of ITT is central to the enhancement and development of a skilled teaching workforce, able to make purposeful use of its professional knowledge, expertise and judgement to secure the full range of pupils' learning entitlements.
26. It is, therefore, imperative that ITT programmes work to support teachers in training to establish the skills and attributes associated with professional practice and to use their professional judgement to select and apply approaches to teaching and learning that best meet the needs of learners.
27. Approaches to ITT must, of necessity, involve trainee teachers being given the opportunity to build on the understanding gained through their degree-level study to develop a secure knowledge of the subjects and curriculum areas in which they intend to practice. It is also clearly established that all routes to QTS must give teachers in training the ability to apply their developing skills and expertise in a range of practical contexts over an extended period. These routes should allow them to work alongside established teachers to observe applied approaches to teaching and learning and thereby consolidate and extend their developing skills and expertise.
28. However, in light of the standing of teaching as a professional activity, these important aspects of teacher formation and teacher professionalism do not describe the totality of an effective process of ITT. Secure subject knowledge and practical experience, while important, are insufficient to ensure that teachers in training are prepared for the full range of responsibilities that they will be required to discharge on entry to the profession.
29. It is important to note in this context that evidence from the OECD emphasises that teacher formation systems in jurisdictions regarded by the OECD as high performing or fast improving seek to balance and integrate practice and theory rather than emphasising one or other aspect to a disproportionate extent.¹⁰
30. Theoretical elements of ITT, secured through the effective engagement of higher education institutions (HEIs), play a critical role in effective programmes of teacher formation by:
 - providing teachers in training with the conceptual means by which they can develop understanding and experience of the ways in which specialist subject or curricular knowledge must be re-contextualised pedagogically to support the provision of engaging and relevant learning experiences that meet the needs and aspirations of learners;

¹⁰ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2011). *Building a High-Quality Teaching Profession: Lessons From Around the World*. Paris; OECD.

- allowing teachers to develop their understanding of key aspects of relevant disciplines that transcend established subject boundaries, including, for example, child development and educational psychology, and that play a critical role in supporting teachers' understanding of the ways in which pupils approach learning and are supported to make progress;
 - supporting the development of teachers in training as reflective professionals by providing them with a framework of evidence and research material within which they can evaluate their practice critically;
 - enabling trainees to understand the important role that teachers can play in contributing to research and developing thinking and understanding about education, teaching and learning; and
 - taking forward the understanding of teachers in training of the broader social, cultural, legal and economic context within which the education system operates and hence securing their acquisition of professional attributes that allow them to recognise the purpose and value of the education system and to engage constructively with policy development processes at national, local and school level, including through the legitimate activities of their trade unions.
31. As noted above, it is clear that conceptualisations of teacher professionalism based solely on its craft-based dimensions will not provide an adequate foundation for effective programmes of teacher formation. A national policy focus on strengthening QTS would permit an examination of current arrangements for ITT to ensure that all routes, including those led by schools and HEIs, reflect the principles set out above.

CAREER-LONG CPD

32. Ensuring that teachers have access to high-quality CPD is a critical element of any effective teacher quality strategy. Evidence continues to confirm that teachers in England are less satisfied with their experience of professional development than teachers in other education systems identified by the OECD as particularly effective.¹¹
33. It is clear that the DfE has an opportunity in developing an alternative approach to teacher workforce policy to address issues related to CPD for teachers. This alternative approach should include ensuring that:
- there is a long-term, planned approach to professional development in schools through which participants are given meaningful opportunities to reflect on their practice;
 - there is a clear focus on the objectives that professional development is intended to secure that is shared by participants, senior leaders and those responsible for leading or supporting activities and programmes;
 - approaches to professional development activities and programmes are relevant to participants and are tailored sufficiently to their individual needs and interests;
 - professional development is led and supported by personnel with appropriate skills and experience from within and beyond participants' schools;
 - professional development is informed by high-quality evidence about effective teaching and learning;
 - programmes and activities take effective account of the existing knowledge and experience of participants; and
 - professional development is subject to meaningful and rigorous evaluation.
34. Currently, responsibilities for the organisation and procurement of CPD rest with individual schools and the employers of teachers. It is, therefore, essential that schools and employers are able to act as informed consumers of professional development products and services if CPD is to provide all teachers with relevant and meaningful opportunities to develop and enhance their skills and expertise.
35. The Government should, consequently, work to provide support to schools on the issues they need to consider when securing CPD-related goods and services from external providers. Schools should also be

¹¹ Mickelwright, J.; Jerrim, J.; Vignoles, A.; Jenkins, A.; Allen, R.; Ilie, S.; Bellarbre, E.; Barrera, F.; and Hein, C. (2014). *Teachers in England's Secondary Schools: Evidence from TALIS 2013*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322896/RB302_-_TALIS_report.pdf, accessed on 6.10.15.

helped to engage with providers in ways that ensure that teachers can access tailored professional development programmes and activities. The use of generic packages that are unable to address the individual needs of teachers and of the settings within which they work should be avoided.

36. It is important that schools demonstrate an active understanding of the need to ensure that all teachers can access professional development opportunities on an equitable basis and in ways that do not result in excessive workload burdens or undermine their ability to secure a reasonable work/life balance.
37. In this context, consideration should be given to allowing teachers to access sabbaticals on the basis of one year for every seven served. This provision would allow teachers to take greater control and responsibility for their own CPD and give them time within which to embark on relatively substantial training and development projects.
38. Schools must give specific attention to the barriers to participation that the provision of programmes and activities outside school hours can create for teachers, particularly those with significant family or caring responsibilities. Evidence from the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Study (TALIS) confirms, for example, that teachers in England with young children are less able to access professional development opportunities than their peers.¹²
39. It is important to recognise that supply teachers also face significant barriers to accessing professional development encountered by supply teachers. A survey of supply teachers undertaken by the NASUWT in 2016 found that more than four in ten (43%) of respondents have no access to professional development. Of those supply teachers with such access, over half (53%) indicated that they were required to participate in activities and programmes during evenings, at their own expense or on an unpaid basis.
40. These issues must be addressed as a matter of urgency by the Government if it is to take forward its ambition to improve professional development opportunities for teachers and thereby sustain and enhance teacher quality.

REMUNERATING TEACHERS APPROPRIATELY

41. In addition to the reconsideration of current approaches to ITT and CPD, the strengthening of QTS requires the establishment of minimum, system-wide arrangements for teachers' remuneration.
42. These arrangements should include:
 - ensuring that there is a fair, transparent and consistent pay policy that recognises and rewards teachers as highly skilled professionals in every school;
 - levels of pay that will contribute towards the maintenance of teacher supply by supporting the recruitment and retention of highly skilled professionals;
 - pay and performance management arrangements that promote effective career and pay progression for teachers; and
 - pay and reward structures that accord sufficient status to those career progression routes focused on classroom practice as well as those related to leadership and management responsibilities.

TOWARDS A MASTERS-LEVEL TEACHING PROFESSION

43. Clearly, moving towards a model of teacher professionalism, formation and development will require a multi-faceted policy response and recognition that no single policy intervention will be sufficient to secure this objective.
44. However, there is a compelling case for moving towards a Masters-level teaching profession as part of an overall strategy for strengthening QTS. A Masters-level teaching profession should be the Government's goal for all teachers working within public education, provided this is underpinned by guaranteed access and entitlement to high-quality initial teacher preparation, career-long CPD¹³ and appropriate remuneration, established on the principles set out above. Such recalibration would remove

¹² Mickelwright, J. et.al. (2014). *op.cit.*

¹³ Sahlberg, P. (2012) *Finnish Lessons: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?* New York: Teachers College Press.

the unnecessary mandatory requirement for ITT prequalification skills tests and meet the aspiration that only the most successful graduates enter the profession.

45. The form and content of any Masters programme would be central to the contribution it could make in this context. Traditionally, Masters-level study has been secured through extramural study undertaken in teachers' own time. While such programmes can be extremely worthwhile, they are also subject to some important limitations, including:
 - requirements to participate in evening, weekend or holiday-time learning sessions, placing significant barriers to access for those teachers with family or carer commitments;
 - managing study in the context of current high teacher workloads;
 - difficulties in finding programmes that cohere effectively with teachers' work in the classroom; and
 - the often prohibitive costs of course entry and materials.
46. The Government should, therefore, explore the scope for developing a Masters programme which takes place in the classroom, in school, in real time – enabling it to be genuinely accessible to all.
47. Such a qualification should:¹⁴
 - be practice-based, at Masters level, focused on effective teaching and learning so that children and young people achieve their potential, regardless of their age, gender, abilities and background;
 - be centred in practice-based learning, with the range of professional learning opportunities agreed by the teacher with their coach and tutor, to meet their personal, professional, career and school needs;
 - be built on ITT or previous professional learning, and take account of the newly qualified teacher's (NQT's) route into teaching, or the more experienced teacher's previous professional development;
 - be undertaken post-induction so that NQTs can concentrate on meeting the required standards for induction;
 - be underpinned by supportive and development-focused approaches to performance management;
 - be a personalised professional learning journey, providing a coherent learning experience that progressively develops, broadens and deepens each teacher's professional attributes, knowledge, skills and understanding;
 - draw on the rich evidence base of effective pedagogical practice and interventions;
 - provide opportunities for participants to try out new ideas and approaches, reflecting on evidence about impact on pupil outcomes to shape the next phase of learning, and drawing on coaching and tutoring contributions;
 - provide each teacher with opportunities to develop the skills of enquiry, together with diagnostic skills to identify children's and young people's needs, and to develop the understanding of the nature and use of evidence so that they continuously develop and improve their professional practice;
 - secure for all participants a high-status, accredited qualification at Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) Level 7 that has currency and portability both within and beyond the teaching profession;
 - provide each teacher with opportunities to develop their use of technology in their professional learning to impact effectively on their practice, as well as to support them in their research activity; and
 - provide a basis for each teacher's next stage in professional and career development.
48. An effective Masters programme should be delivered:
 - by schools and HEIs working collaboratively, as equal partners with joint responsibility for the delivery and the quality of the programme;
 - through in-school coaches and tutors from HEIs who support and challenge each teacher in their professional learning;

¹⁴ Training and Development Agency for Schools (2009). *The National Framework for Masters in Teaching and Learning*. Available at: (http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090810100203/http://tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/pdf/m/mtl_national_framework_and_glossary.pdf), accessed on 15.03.17.

- in a range of ways that will enable all teachers to access personalised learning opportunities and support them in broadening and deepening their professional attributes, knowledge, skills and understanding;
 - on the basis of a clear understanding of the need to remove any barriers to participation that may arise as a result of teachers' protected characteristics;
 - through the use of technology to provide online resources and ways of communication between teachers, coaches and tutors;
 - in a manner that complements efforts to exert sustained downward pressure on teacher workload and working hours and that allows teachers and school leaders to concentrate on their core responsibilities for teaching and leading teaching and learning;
 - using a practice-based curriculum model in which professional practice is built into curricular structures and where relevant skills, knowledge and expertise are developed through, and demonstrated in, practical workplace contexts that relate to participants' current employment; and
 - through means that avoid the barriers to participation associated with many traditional Masters programmes, noted above.
49. Schools employing teachers participating in Masters programmes will:
- give teachers the time and support necessary to participate fully in programmes, including those elements that take place off-site;
 - ensure that in-school coaches can access initial and continuing training that enables them to support the learning of Masters-programme participants;
 - allow in-school coaches to undertake their responsibilities in ways that do not impact adversely on their workload and their entitlement to a work/life balance; and
 - make sure that the additional responsibilities associated with in-school coaching are recognised through the award of a Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payment or appropriate equivalent.
50. Teachers' achievements in the programme should be assessed:
- against clear learning outcomes, reflecting the Quality Assurance Agency M-level descriptors;
 - in ways that are personalised, with the teacher, coach and tutor needing to decide which forms of assessment are most suited to meeting the needs of the teacher, while providing secure evidence of achievement of standards and benchmarks;
 - in ways that are flexible, with the teacher, coach and tutor deciding when the teacher is ready to present evidence for assessment purposes, and which forms of assessments will be used as being most fit for purpose;
 - in ways that reflect the practice-based nature of programmes, noted above, with teachers demonstrating their professional learning; and
 - in ways that take full account of the other demands on the teacher's time, with the coach and tutor matching the timing and forms of assessment to the teacher's professional responsibilities in the school and her/his personal life.
51. Programmes would need to be resourced to enable each teacher to:
- engage in an appropriate and accessible range of professional learning opportunities;
 - be supported by a coach who has been well trained through a nationally recognised and accredited training programme and who has been allocated the time to undertake the role; and
 - be supported by coaching and tutoring contributions, as appropriate, at each stage in the programme.