

Response ID ANON-8URX-234X-8

Submitted to **Strengthening Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and Improving Career Progression for Teachers**
Submitted on 2018-03-09 09:52:28

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4 Would you like us to keep your responses confidential?

No

Reason for confidentiality:

5 What is your primary role?

List of roles:

Sector Professional/Academic

Text box for Role:

6 What local authority area are you based in?

Please select:

Camden

Strengthening Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and Continuing Professional Development

1 Do you think that QTS should be awarded after a period of sustained professional practice rather than the end of initial teacher training (ITT), as it is currently?

Do not know

Text box for comments:

We have only addressed the consultation questions which relate to Ambition's core mission on school leadership. Responses begin at question six.

2 Do you agree that a core early career content framework and a continuing professional development (CPD) offer for new teachers should be fundamental to a strengthened QTS?

Do not know

Text box for comments:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.

3 What core competencies, knowledge areas or particular skills do you think should be developed in a structured way during the induction period?

Other, please provide below

Text box for comments:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.

4 Do you think we should extend the induction period?

Do not know

Text box for comments:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.

5 We have used the names QTS(P) and QTS throughout this document. Do you think that these terms are appropriate?

Language - QTS (Provisional)/QTS(P) followed by QTS:

Language - Certificate of Completion of ITT followed by QTS:

Language - Associate Teacher Status followed by QTS:

Do not know

Text box for comments:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.

Mentoring and Development Time

6 From the options set out in paragraph 47 of the consultation, which of these proposals do you think would help improve the quality and quantity of mentoring for all new teachers?

Reviewing the existing ITT mentor standards, Adding an additional mentor role into the statutory induction guidance, Development of high-quality mentor training

Text box for comments:

In responding to these questions, Ambition School Leadership draws on the experience and evidence gathered through 10 years of designing and delivering high-impact leadership development at all levels – from aspiring middle leaders to multi-academy trust CEOs – including the National Professional Qualifications. For the purposes of this consultation we have also gathered input from our network of leaders working in schools serving the most disadvantaged communities.

In consultation with our network of school leaders, it is clear to Ambition that a review of the standards and approach to mentoring of early career teachers is timely and needed.

Despite the standards for mentoring being widely known, there is inconsistency in how these are interpreted and applied. A clarification of the responsibilities and expectations would lead to more consistent outcomes for the individual's training and thereby ongoing performance as a teacher.

Within this, the addition of a further mentoring role would add much value. Having one person who both supports and assesses performance can be challenging for the mentor and mentee; but can also lead to inconsistency and bias of outcomes.

If the additional mentor role is made statutory, guidance should be very clear on how and when these mentors communicate with each other. We heard from our leaders that, where early career teachers already have more than one mentor (for example, if they are being trained through a university or Teach First), it is crucial that the mentors set agreed expectations for their approach and progress reporting to consistency of feedback to the teacher. This ensures that action plans are outcomes-focused, and the individual's development pathway is clear. Additionally, if the additional mentor role is statutory, this role should be treated in the same as the induction tutor position (e.g. pay, training, quality assurance, etc).

A key way to ensure this consistency of communication is to create a clear standardised approach to mentor training. A suggested way to embed this could be to include mentor training within a third year of career preparation. This would create a lifecycle of mentoring, setting up a pipeline to support forthcoming generations of incoming teachers. As noted under later questions, mentoring could become an NPQ of its own, focusing on teacher development – ensuring expertise within the system and consistency at a local level.

Our leaders did not believe that mandating additional mentoring time in itself would be useful – the needs of early career teachers vary and, whilst mentoring within a development programme is key, time could also be very usefully spent on other directed tasks such as observing others teach or visits to other schools.

7 How else can we improve the quality and quantity of mentoring for all new teachers?

Text box for comments:

Our network clearly responded that there needs to be a more structured approach to support for early-career teachers, including a mentoring 'curriculum' or knowledge milestones at set points in their development and the school year.

This will help new teachers to manage their learning and development whilst continuing to deliver their classroom responsibilities. Often early-career teachers are overwhelmed and intimidated by the sheer amount of knowledge and practice they are expected to be on top of from a very early point in their development.

Our network reported that time management is a recurring theme at the root of challenges discussed in mentoring conversations with early-career teachers. A mentoring curriculum would prioritise time management as its first module: discussing how teachers can manage their own time, balancing demands of teaching and extra duties (e.g. break time and pre-school duties). A key focus here could be how NQTs can capitalise on non-contact time, before their teaching hours increase in the second year. Addressing this topic and embedding good practice early on could ease early exit rates from early-career teachers who burn out in their first few years.

Other early topics could be:

- Values and culture – Reminding teachers why they joined the profession, prioritising the moral imperative of teaching. This is often assumed but not discussed and should be embedded early and revisited to maintain morale and support retention.
- Pupil engagement – Often one of the key challenges faced by early teachers, especially those working in school in challenging contexts. Specialist support to

address engagement and behavioural challenges will enable teachers to manage their classroom, create greater impact for pupils and build their confidence.

To support this, a further suggestion is to create a clear and accessible evidence base for mentors to access – so mentors keep abreast of the latest professional learning to develop their expertise as mentors and support better their mentees.

8 How should we ensure that new teachers get sufficient time to focus on their professional development?

Do not know

Text box for comments:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.

Assessment and Accreditation

9 Do you agree that the QTS assessment should be conducted internally and be independently verified by an appropriate body?

Do not know

Text box for comments:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.

10 How do you think we should strengthen the independent verification of QTS accreditation?

Do not know

Text box for comments:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.

11 What role do you think ITT providers could play in the assessment and accreditation of QTS?

Text box for comments:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.

Supply Teaching and Additional Considerations

12 Do you think we should maintain the limitation on how long a teacher can teach on a supply basis without completing QTS?

Do not know

Text box for time limitation:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.

13 What impact do you think this model of a strengthened QTS would have on post-ITT teachers in terms of teaching practice, retention, and morale?

impact - Teaching practice:

Do not know

impact - Retention:

Do not know

impact - Morale:

Do not know

Text box for comments:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.

14 What impact would the proposed model of a strengthened QTS have on the wider school system?

Text box for comments:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.

15 Are there any other implications that we should consider that have not been addressed above, and what are your suggestions for addressing them?

Text box for comments:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.

Post-QTS: Professional Qualifications

16 Do you think that there is a market for specialist National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) – or similar – for teachers who aspire to other forms of leadership within the school system?

Yes, for specialist NPQs

Text box for comments:

We know that, especially at the middle/senior end of the hierarchy, there is a greater specialisation within roles and within the needs for CPD provision. The closer accountability placed on middle and senior leaders (especially but not exclusively on leaders of core subjects) means that those roles have become more specialised and the needs of the roles more focussed.

Additionally, the number and range of more specialised leadership roles is growing rapidly – from roles like the more traditional SENCo, to emerging executive middle-leadership positions across a number of schools within a MAT. Topics such as assessment, curriculum design and the leadership of pedagogy are areas of difference between roles and so allowing for specialised training dedicated to these will allow for more accelerated development of leaders and therefore swifter impact on pupils.

However, we believe that these needs are most likely to be met in a rounded way by allowing for greater specialisation within broad development programmes: in this instance, embedding specialisation options within the recently reformed NPQs. Even within specialist roles, there is a need for school leaders at all levels to have a broad understanding of leadership and to be able to effect change and improve outcomes on a whole-school level.

Additionally, the existing NPQs have a wide recognition and currency with a clear framework of assessment, programme expectations and outcomes, which would mean the specialised pathways are transferable and equivalent.

17 If you answered 'yes' to question 16, what specialisms should be prioritised for these NPQs (or similar)?

Teacher development, Assessment, Curriculum design, Other, please provide your comments in the box below

Text box for comments:

Any of the above options – and more besides – would be worth exploring; however, supporting and recognising expertise in the development of other teachers would seem timely.

In line with other areas of this consultation, having evidence-based leadership of teacher development locally would increase the quality of CPD and mentoring within schools. This in turn could increase the retention both of those specialising in this area – through recognition of their contribution – but also the wider teaching body through increased development and higher-quality provision.

18 Do you think there is a market for non-leadership NPQs – or similar – aimed at further developing subject expertise? How should they differ between primary and secondary?

Yes, there is a market for further subject specialist qualifications

Text box for comments:

Overall, we agree that this would be a positive move. However, as with all provision, specialist qualifications should be high-quality, recognised and part of a clear pathway. CTeach is mentioned here, but there is already a range of strong provision in this space, for example from subject associations and the Institute for Teaching. The intention to extend the QTS period is sensible, but this also increases the risk that the early career landscape becomes cluttered and incoherent.

19 What additional support should be offered for teachers who work in more challenging schools to undertake further professional qualifications?

Text box for comments:

The first answer is to continue (and increase/extend) funding for existing and emerging professional qualifications for schools in challenging contexts. The TLIF and NPQ scholarships' focus on opportunity areas and category 5&6 areas is welcomed as funding can be a barrier to engagement for schools in these areas. This should also act as an incentive to work in these schools, as transferable robust qualifications can be gained alongside experience of working in the most challenging contexts. However, care should be taken that the focus on specific geographical areas is not at the detriment of other areas. Though there is evidence that the challenge is higher in the category 5&6 areas there remains a large number of challenging schools outside of these local authority districts that equally need support.

Additionally though, greater focus could be given to ensuring that professional development is relevant to challenging contexts – allowing for the sharing of best practice through placements and visits, as well as focussing training on what works with the particular challenges faced in these schools. A key step could be to further build the evidence base – we know that leaders in schools in challenging contexts need to prioritise different leadership approaches. Building a clear research bank of evidenced approaches specifically for the most challenging schools would not only support increased pupil outcomes but also support the professional development of the workforce of those schools.

Logistically, and in line with the recent TLIF aims, looking to build greater blended approaches would allow for more people in more disparate areas to engage with development as well as ensuring that workload is not a barrier to that engagement.

Post-QTS: Continuing Professional Development and Mentoring

20 Do you agree that a CPD badging scheme is something that should be developed? What organisations might be best placed to deliver this service?

Yes, I agree

Text box for comments:

To a large extent the current CPD market is unregulated – whilst there are many very good providers and provision, it can be very difficult for school leaders to make informed decisions about who and what provision is right for them and their schools.

Whilst funding for development programmes in disadvantaged areas (through NPQ scholarships, TLIF, etc) is welcomed, this increases the range of provision which will be on offer locally. Helping school leaders navigate the market and make decisions based on evidence of effectiveness in their context will increase value for money for schools and the government as well as increase impact on pupil outcomes.

Therefore, a badging scheme or kite mark for proven high-quality professional development would be welcomed.

In terms of who would be well placed to administer this service, organisations such as the Chartered College for Teaching could be well placed through a focus on evidence and being sector-led. Alongside this, our Ambition NPQ Alliance has shown how a collation of like-minded school leaders can share and ensure a collective view of quality, and we would be happy to share our learning.

However, it should be noted that we would consider it most transparent if any regulator of a badging scheme were not also a provider of development programmes, to prevent any conflict of interest.

21 How should government incentivise effective professional development for teachers, particularly in the areas and schools where it is most needed?

Other, please provide your comments in the box below

Text box for comments:

There are a number of steps which could be taken – many of which are referenced in this consultation. However, we should recognise that many (indeed, most) teachers are already engaged in developing themselves professionally; but we need to do more to ensure that this development is recognised, supported and evidence-led within particular contexts. This could be achieved through:

- A clearer pathway from trainee onwards – building from the extended QTS through to early choices about a classroom or leadership focus (or blend of these), and then ensuring genuine evidenced development at each stage. There is a clearer path through leadership – through Ambition’s programmes and elsewhere – although this could be even more structured (for examples, leaders moving through each NPQ at the relevant stage of their career). But an even greater focus needs to be given to supporting those who choose to develop themselves as expert classroom practitioners – for example building on the work of the Institute for Teaching.
- Removing barriers to engagement – whether this be through funding (as mentioned earlier) or through a greater use of blended learning to ensure workload/travel are not a barrier to engagement.
- Building from this consultation, a clearer suite of recognised and transferable qualifications – with an expectation of re-assessment throughout a teacher’s career, as in other professions such as law and medicine, to maintain the highest standards.
- Clearer shared evidence about what constitutes high-quality and effective CPD, and a mechanism for teachers and schools leader to hold providers to account for provision which doesn’t meet that evidence.
- Continued movement towards school leaders and teachers taking greater ownership of professional development in their schools – upskilling them to design and deliver their own professional development programmes based on their knowledge of their own pupils and staff. In this way school-led professional development will have a greater impact on pupil outcomes but greater sharing of the evidence base is needed.

22 How can government best support the development of a genuine culture of mentoring in schools?

Other, please provide your comments in the box below

Text box for comments:

Again, it should be recognised that many schools already have highly effective cultures of mentoring and coaching. This can often cross ITE/NQT mentoring, instructional coaching for teachers through leadership coaching for senior leaders.

Case studies from schools that have fully engaged with these approaches could be usefully shared, although further real evidence of effectiveness would also need to be researched or cited.

Further to this – and building from this consultation – clearer evidence of best practice in coaching and mentoring in schools needs to be established, interrogated and shared in order to ensure that schools are using these approaches effectively and with a focus on pupil outcomes.

A further way to support this development would be to recognise – through pay scales and/or transferable qualification – the roles of coach and mentor, as doing these well takes time and effort.

Post-QTS: Sabbaticals

23 Do you think that a fund to pilot sabbaticals would be a positive step for the profession?

Do not know

Text box for comments:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.

24 What would the impact be for teachers and schools of enabling more teachers to take sabbaticals, providing they are related to their teaching practice?

Text box for comments:

Ambition does not have an organisational view on this question.