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Welsh Government  
**Consultation Document**

**New professional standards for teaching  
and leadership in schools**

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Action required: Responses by 4 May 2017

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

# New professional standards for teaching and leadership in schools

## Overview

This consultation seeks views on proposals to replace existing professional standards for school teachers and leaders.

## How to respond

Responses to this consultation should be e-mailed/posted to the address below to arrive by **4 May 2017** at the latest.

Please insert 'Standards consultation' in the e-mail subject box.

## Further information and related documents

**Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.**

Information on existing professional standards

<http://learning.gov.wales/yourcareer/professionalstandards/?lang=en>

<http://learning.gov.wales/yourcareer/initial-teacher-training/qualified-teacher-status/?lang=en>

The consultation documents can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at [www.gov.wales/consultations](http://www.gov.wales/consultations)

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## Data protection

### **How the views and information you give us will be used**

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

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## **Introduction**

*Taking Wales Forward 2016–2021* (Welsh Government, 2016) sets out the government’s programme to drive improvement in the Welsh economy and public services, delivering a Wales which is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, united and connected. A key priority for education is to incentivise, recognise and promote teaching and leadership excellence so that we raise standards across the board, and develop training and opportunities for teachers, leaders and the broader education workforce.

Professional standards have an important role to play in achieving this priority, by describing the skills, knowledge and behaviours that characterise excellent practice and by supporting professional growth.

## Summary

### What is this consultation about?

This consultation is about proposals to replace the Qualified Teacher Status Standards 2009; Practising Teacher Standards (2011) and Leadership Standards (2011).

The consultation also seeks views on how professional standards can be used more effectively to enable teachers and leaders to reflect on and develop their practice in collaboration with their colleagues and support their professional progression.

Finally, we are seeking views on the proposed timetable for introducing the standards.

### Where are we now?

Existing professional standards for school teachers and leaders comprise:

Qualified Teacher Status Standards 2009 – these standards are met by trainee teachers in order to be awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) at the end of a period of initial teacher education (ITE).

Practising Teacher Standards (2011) – these standards are met by Newly Qualified Teachers in order to successfully complete a statutory period of induction. The standards continue to apply for the remainder of a teacher's career.

Leadership Standards (2011) – these standards are mandatory for headteachers and need to be met by those wishing to hold the National Professional Qualification for Headship. Other practitioners may use them voluntarily to support their leadership development.

The existing professional standards are broadly used in two ways:

1. As a means of assessing suitability for progression through formal career transition points:
  - Trainee teacher to qualified teacher.
  - Qualified teacher to fully registered teacher by completion of statutory induction.
  - Aspiring headteacher to holder of National Professional Qualification for Headship.

In these circumstances a detailed assessment is made against the standards to ensure consistency and rigour.

2. At all other points in the career of a teacher or school leader, the standards act as a backdrop to performance management and professional development to support professional progression. Practitioners are required to continue to meet the standards, affirmed annually as part of the performance management cycle, but this does not require the standards to be used as an assessment checklist.

This consultation does not propose to change the status of the standards in either of the above arrangements, but seeks views on how the standards can be used more effectively in the current context to support career-long professional learning and growth, and extend the use of effective pedagogy.

Responsibility for the pay and conditions of school teachers is not devolved to the Welsh Government, and this consultation does not propose changing existing links between professional standards and pay arrangements.

## **Why are we proposing change?**

A period of six years has passed since the professional standards were last subject to a formal review. Much has changed in education since then and independent reviews undertaken by the OECD<sup>1</sup>, Professors Tabberer<sup>2</sup>, Furlong<sup>3</sup> and Donaldson<sup>4</sup>, respectively, have signalled the need for revised standards that better reflect a vision for teaching and leadership in Wales.

The original standards have served the purpose of their time. They provided a structure that described the professional accountability of teachers and leaders. Those standards set minimum expectations and provide a reference for the performance management cycle. It is now recognised that the system as a whole needs to be more ambitious if it is to meet the expectations it sets itself for children and young people.

This means expecting all teachers and leaders to exercise professionalism and to use the standards as a way to help all involved to be the best that they can be.

In particular, the standards need to better support professional progression by linking more closely to how teachers move through career development pathways. The standards need to support a continuum of professional growth rather than a number of steps that may lack continuity. The limitations of the current standards are evident by requiring entrants to the profession to be assessed against two different sets of standards in quick succession, often within the first two years after entering ITE.

The arrangement of the current standards also encourages perceptions of leadership as a distinctly different professional activity from teaching, something which is not reflected in day-to-day professional practice within effective schools.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.oecd.org/edu/Improving-schools-in-Wales.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/edu/Improving-schools-in-Wales.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/wagreviews/review-of-initial-teacher-training-in-wales/?lang=en](http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/wagreviews/review-of-initial-teacher-training-in-wales/?lang=en)

<sup>3</sup> [gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/wagreviews/teaching-tomorrows-teachers/?lang=en](http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/wagreviews/teaching-tomorrows-teachers/?lang=en)

<sup>4</sup> [gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculum-for-wales-curriculum-for-life/why-we-are-changing/successful-futures/?lang=en](http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculum-for-wales-curriculum-for-life/why-we-are-changing/successful-futures/?lang=en)

## **Vision for teaching and leadership**

Wales' vision for teaching and leadership places the learner at the centre of everything we do, ensuring all learners benefit from excellent teaching and learning.

The vision sees children and young people being inspired to have a desire to learn and to take increasing control of their own learning. It builds on the powerful evidence of the central importance of good teaching to support effective learning, which requires the considered selection of teaching methods in relation to the purposes of the curriculum, and the needs and developmental stages of all learners.

The importance of effective leadership at all levels is key to this vision by ensuring leadership practices shape the internal processes, establish effective pedagogy and drive wider collaboration, with necessary innovation, all of which result in improved learner outcomes. The expectation of continuing professional learning and the growing of leadership capacity in all teachers, from the point of entry to the profession, and supporting career-long development, forms a critical part of the vision.

Achieving this vision requires significant change to the education system in Wales. ITE is undergoing extensive reform and a new curriculum is being developed through an unprecedented collaboration with teachers, ably supported by expertise from Wales and beyond. The qualifications framework is undergoing a rolling programme of change to align it to the best models, fit for the age in which we live. Together with the development of effective professional learning experiences for all practitioners, this represents a far-reaching programme that is being developed to ensure that we have an able and confident, highly trained and respected, collaborative teaching community delivering the best for all our learners.

This vision for the teaching community is based on the notion of practitioners as true professionals who constantly strive to develop and grow. They take pride in their efforts and earn the respect of fellow professionals and the learners they serve. They take responsibility for themselves and extend that responsibility to colleagues in a global network, seeking better ways to achieve their goals.

Teachers have the opportunity to affect positively the life chances of children and young people and develop a healthier community, stronger society and better world. Teachers influence the future while working with the present.

Professional teachers earn the respect of their colleagues and the wider world by going the distance for their learners, engaging with research and developing their practice. These outlooks and activities begin on the first day of their training and continue throughout their career, whether that be as a classroom teacher or in formal roles of leadership, including headship.

By entering the teaching community in Wales, new entrants to the profession commit to extending themselves in order to best serve the learners in all of the country's schools. As professionals, they recognise the need to seek the highest standards in themselves in order to secure the best life chances for all learners.



## Developing new professional teaching and leadership standards with the profession

To achieve our vision, all teachers in Wales need to know what the best pedagogy looks like and, with confidence, select and utilise methods effectively and be able to offer innovative, collaborative leadership to all learners and to each other. The role of the professional standards is to highlight the necessary dispositions, knowledge and skills and to exemplify how these can be further developed and sustained. They also need to focus on the range of skills and behaviours to enable teachers to prepare for their role in the new curriculum and to reflect the key features of the ITE reform programme.

The proposed new professional standards for teaching and leadership have been developed with this in mind to reconceptualise the standards as a tool to stimulate professional dialogue and support all practitioners in the quest for sustained highly effective practice. It is important that practitioners feel a strong and genuine sense of ownership of the standards within their individual and collective practice. Each teacher needs to own their professional standards; they are personal reference points to enable growth and development.

The new model has therefore been designed **with** the profession **for** the profession, benefitting from extensive involvement of schools, ITE institutions, regional consortia and other key stakeholders. This has enabled the draft standards to be regularly shared and refined as they have developed. Since January 2016 this engagement has been facilitated by Professor Mick Waters, building on earlier preparatory work carried out with school practitioners and other stakeholders.

Draft standards have also been trialled by the profession. Schools, drawn mainly from the Pioneer Network, and ITE institutions, have worked with the draft standards and engaged in structured lines of enquiry to support further refinement of the standards, explore how they may best be used with teachers at different career stages and the materials required to support their effective use. The feedback from trialling has informed further development and forms part of the consultation process alongside this formal consultation and further planned engagement with the sector.

As the new model of standards has developed, there have also been opportunities to share this more widely in Pioneer School conferences, in regional school conferences and workshops beyond the Pioneer School network, and in meetings with stakeholder groups. This has provided further opportunities to test principles and approaches, to gather feedback and to refine the model further. In all, over 1000 professionals have so far been engaged in the development and consideration of the new professional standards and offered views, suggestions and insights.

## A new model of professional teaching and leadership standards

Outstanding practitioners successfully combine talents of pedagogy, leadership, professional learning, innovation and collaboration with high levels of intellect, skill, knowledge and expertise. They show a deep understanding of the learning process, a passion for learner success and well-being and have a career-long commitment to the professional growth of themselves and their colleagues. They hold firmly to their professional behaviours and commit to growing effectiveness.

That is why the proposed new standards place the onus on the process rather than the product; the standards and their descriptors are intended to support teachers and leaders in reviewing their practice and striving to serve better their learners and their schools.

The new standards identify clearly the requirements for entry into the profession and set expectations for development throughout a professional career. They are intended to create professional opportunity as well as acting as a gatekeeper for entry to the profession and to headship.

The skill of leadership in managing this process is a refined one. It is not a perfunctory process of judging evidence against a checklist. It is the creation of a picture over time which informs the teacher's perspective, so they can reflect on their practice with their manager or mentor with a view to professional improvement and development.

The proposed new standards have been informed by **principles and purposes** that include:

- providing inspiration, sign-posting and a vision of highly effective practice that impacts positively on all learners' experiences
- fulfilling a gatekeeping role to ensure that all new entrants into the profession are of a high calibre
- resonating with all teachers and contributing to raising the status of the profession
- supporting career-long professional development that enables and inspires individuals to lead their own professional learning, and that of others
- building leadership capacity at all levels by embedding leadership throughout
- forming part of the change programme to support teachers to prepare for their role in the new curriculum and supporting the key features of ITE reform
- facilitating progression and pointing to a clear continuum of improvement, providing teachers with the tools to effectively manage their own performance and promote effective accountability and performance management
- being portable within and across all schools in Wales, and providing portability beyond Wales
- linking effectively with other key developmental tools such as performance management and school development planning
- being accessible through the Professional Learning Passport to support individual review and development planning
- being subject to periodic review and minor amendment to ensure the standards remain fit for purpose.

## What specific changes are we proposing?

The new professional standards bring together standards for teaching and leadership to reflect better the career pathways from entry to the profession onwards and in a way that provides clarity of expectations. This includes both those who choose to focus solely on their classroom practice and those who choose to move into formal leadership roles up to and including headship.

This will be achieved by having an integrated set of professional teaching and leadership standards.

For entry to the profession the standard describes the expectations that teachers must meet by the end of their statutory induction. The entry standard also describes the expected progress and evidence required for the award of QTS at the end of ITE. As now, these will be subject to formal assessment at these points but the entry standard will more closely link these stages so that ITE and induction are a process rather than two separate and distinct phases and so that continuity and progression of professional experience is enabled.

The specification of evidence and progress for QTS will perform the function of the professional standards referred to in new accreditation arrangements being introduced for all ITE programmes in Wales.

For teachers who successfully complete induction, the standards also exemplify sustained highly effective practice. It is not intended that these should be formally assessed but will provide the opportunity to develop the aspirational focus that fuels career-long development.

Additional descriptors exemplify a formal leadership standard for those teachers who choose to move to formal leadership roles up to and including headship. The leadership standard is expressed through pairs of descriptors which exemplify early practice in a formal leadership role and sustained highly effective leadership practice. The descriptors for formal leadership roles are not linear and do not relate to tiers of leadership. They are designed to be used to inform progressive development in all formal leadership roles from head of phase or department to senior leadership or headship.

The requirements for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) programme will specify how the descriptors will be used to determine the award of the NPQH.

As teachers progress through their careers, they will acquire new, better or more sophisticated sets of skills and this may include taking on new posts or promotions with additional leadership responsibilities. This might require embracing additional responsibility but, in doing so, they do not entirely leave behind previous responsibilities. A formal leadership role will have a wider scope of responsibility but the commitment to excellent teaching remains. The insight into pedagogy is refined and sharpened and the influence on colleagues to enhance pedagogy is exerted through the role.

All teachers, irrespective of career stage, will be able to readily engage with the complete range of professional teaching and leadership standards, and see how they link together to provide a coherent framework to support professional progression from career entry onwards.

Further information on how the standards should be used is provided in the next section.

## A new architecture for professional standards

The new professional standards have an over-arching set of **professional entitlements, values and dispositions** that should drive everyone who works with learners. These apply across the professional standards framework and include commitments to literacy, numeracy, digital competency; to promoting the culture and language of Wales and to the rights of all learners. These form an integral part of the professional standards and are career-long.

The teaching and leadership standards are based on five **dimensions** of practice; pedagogy, innovation, collaboration, leadership and professional learning (Figure 1). These five dimensions are common to all teaching and formal leadership roles. This signifies that leadership should grow from teaching where extended skills and insights are employed and not be considered as a replacement for teaching. Promotion to formal leadership roles means the accumulation of further responsibility and an adjustment of professional focus.



Figure 1

Each dimension of practice is divided into a number of **elements** which summarise the main focus of the dimension. These elements have been selected to focus on the key features of reform of the curriculum and on the characteristics of professional practice that are evident from the start of ITE onwards.

In turn, each element is expressed through two **descriptors**. These first describe the professional practice required on entry to the profession or to a formal leadership role, and then go on to exemplify sustained highly effective practice.

Schools are complex places and teaching is a complicated role. For this reason, some of the descriptors are complex. The science, craft and art of teaching cannot be atomised or watered down to a few simple phrases and sentences. It is a professional compliment that the descriptors encourage thought, consideration and conversation about the complexity of the processes of teaching and school leadership.

A professional standards slide pack has been developed that sets out the requirements at formal career points, provides descriptors of highly effective teaching and leadership

practice and enables exploration of the relationship between dimensions, elements and descriptors.

The slide pack can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at [www.gov.wales/consultations](http://www.gov.wales/consultations).

## Working with the standards

The standards can be used effectively in a number of ways, some of which will depend on career point, role or aspirations.

Best practice will see teachers working in a well-led school where the headteacher and senior leaders build a developing dialogue around the standards to grow, spread, deepen and innovate effective pedagogy.

In ITE programmes, the descriptors for QTS will inform the design of the ITE curriculum and, as such, will have a key role in the accreditation of ITE programmes. ITE providers will ensure trainee teachers have opportunities to demonstrate evidence across the full range of descriptors for the award of QTS and so initiate progression towards meeting the entry standard by the end of statutory induction.

The standards should be used in tandem with the Professional Learning Passport as a tool to support personal reflection, to identify strengths and provide insight into areas for developing practice. Ongoing development of the Professional Learning Passport, hosted by the Education Workforce Council, will explore how it can provide enhanced opportunities to interact with the standards, to gather practical examples of the standards in action and to share these with colleagues.

Personal reflection is made more incisive when a colleague acts as a sounding board so, at times during the school year, the teacher might reflect on aspects of the standards with one or more colleagues. It might be that a group of colleagues agree to focus upon a selection of descriptors to delve further into their shared practice.

At times, and at least annually, a mentor or line manager should consider effectiveness of practice with the teacher to help build a profile of development over time. As well as supporting the individual it gives the team leader the opportunity to look at the strengths and needs of the team as a whole and consider how best to use complementary strengths or support from elsewhere.

The descriptors of standards are not linear or incremental. Some aspects of the descriptors for highly effective practice will be practised by a newly qualified teacher and a head of department or phase leader might already be proficient in some aspects of leadership expected of headteachers. This is how effective leadership becomes realised at every level and is why the standards and their descriptors are not presented in a list or chart format. It is recognised that teaching is multi-faceted and professional development is not a straight line. It involves identifying and solving problems, taking on challenge, at times being challenged by complexity but finding a way forward. As such, the standards are presented as positive and expansive professional aspirations rather than reductive fragments of a complex role.

This is why there is just one further range of descriptors, exemplifying sustained highly effective practice, beyond the formal entry levels in teaching and leadership. The conventional model of professional standards presents descriptors as stepping stones in which the teacher or leader leaves one level of competence and steps to the next, often linked to the level of seniority. In Wales, our aim is to enable every teacher to develop rounded practice through a focus on the five dimensions.

Areas for growth are highlighted by discussing progress along a range of descriptors where some connect naturally with others, and identifying those important steps and changes in practice which help a practitioner to demonstrate professional growth. It is less about gathering the evidence to prove competence and more about opening up the subtle art and science of teaching to supportive and constructive scrutiny. This illuminates aspects of practice that could be further developed to improve teaching and leadership.

To reflect the dynamic nature of the standards, they will be interactive and hosted online, linked to the Professional Learning Passport and provide a resource for career-long professional growth. The professional standards will be made available on the Learning Wales website and illustrate how descriptors from one element link with others. This reflects how one facet of teaching influences and is influenced by another. It is here that, over time, examples of practice from schools will be added to offer insight to professional conversations about effectiveness.

The standards should stimulate professional curiosity and facilitate teachers and leaders to collect and share examples of their developing work as a natural part of their role. This will be a planned and purposeful process that is enriched and supported by collaboration with colleagues.

At professional gateway points such as the award of QTS, the end of induction, or entry into headship (NPQH), the descriptors will identify a minimum expectation. Assessment arrangements will provide the necessary assurance that the standards have, or have not, been met in full.

The new standards will continue to be used as a backdrop to the performance management process but they are not the only stimulus for informed discussion. The descriptors can provide the focus for professional dialogue and be used to help establish an appropriate and manageable set of targets, together with an agreement about the support necessary to enable development. However, it will not be appropriate to use the standards and their descriptors as an annual checklist of competence or professional growth and to treat each descriptor in an 'achieved or not achieved' approach.

Similarly, the standards have not primarily been designed to drive capability or competency procedures. For the very small proportion of teachers and leaders who fail to work effectively, action needs to be taken to uphold the rights of the learner and preserve professional integrity. However, while the teacher or headteacher who is the subject of capability procedures may be required to have their performance and progress judged against the standards in specific circumstances, the standards themselves are not a series of competencies that teachers need to be routinely judged against.

In summary, the new professional standards are intended to be:

- a focus for individual professional development
- a description of the complex roles of teaching and leadership
- a vehicle for career-long growth
- the basis for an on-going professional conversation in the pursuit of positive impact upon learning
- a means to better outcomes in learning for all learners, the school and the nation.

They are **not** intended to be:

- an annual event
- the sole instrument of performance management interviews
- a fragmented battery of skills that reduces the status of professionalism
- a control mechanism to enable leadership and governance
- an institutional management process.



## Timescale for introduction of the new standards

It is intended that the finalised new standards will be published in the summer term following consideration of the consultation responses. They will be made available for use from 1 September 2017 with all serving teachers being required to move to the new standards by September 2018.

Because it is intended for the standards to be owned by the individual teacher, it is proposed the decision about when to move to the new standards within this period will rest with the individual. With certain exceptions, all teachers and headteachers can elect to move to the new standards at an appropriate point before 1 September 2018.

The exceptions will include:

- Newly Qualified Teachers commencing induction on or after 1 September 2017 who will start their induction working to the new standards. This will avoid new entrants to the profession needing to work to a set of standards that will immediately become obsolete on completion of their induction period. We will work with regional consortia to ensure that appropriate support is in place.
- Newly Qualified Teachers who commenced induction prior to 1 September 2017 who will continue using the existing standards to complete their induction. This means these Newly Qualified Teachers will work with the same standards that applied at the start of their induction period and so avoid a change of standards during their induction period.
- Teachers and headteachers who are the subject of disciplinary, capability or competence procedures where the formal process will run its course before transfer to the new standards.

Most teachers and headteachers will elect to transfer to the new standards immediately but there may be good reason to time the transfer to fit with, for instance, a new role, promotion or change of school. Alternatively, the individual may decide to transfer to the new standards at the most appropriate point in the performance management cycle to ensure clarity of focus.

In the case of ITE providers the new standards will form part of the new accreditation arrangements for ITE. These are due to take effect in new ITE programmes commencing from September 2019. In the meantime, ITE providers will be invited to consider working to the new standards from September 2018. ITE providers will be expected to ensure prospective teachers undergoing training prior to September 2018 have opportunities to familiarise themselves with the standards in advance of working to the new standards as part of their statutory induction.

## Timescale summary

### 2017

May Consultation responses published.

September Standards available for use in schools.  
Newly Qualified Teachers commencing induction on or after  
1 September move immediately to the new standards.  
Other individuals elect when to move to the new standards.

### 2018

September Standards adopted by all serving teachers and headteachers<sup>5</sup>.  
Standards available for use in ITE programmes.

### 2019

September Standards apply to all new ITE programmes.

## Responses

Specific questions are listed in the separate response form and you are invited to provide answers to these questions, or to comment in more general terms. This may be submitted electronically or in hard copy, using the contact details on page 2 of this document.

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<sup>5</sup> Exceptions outlined above