

Excellent Teachers

Guidance for teachers,
headteachers and local
authorities (England)

department for
children, schools and families

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Introduction

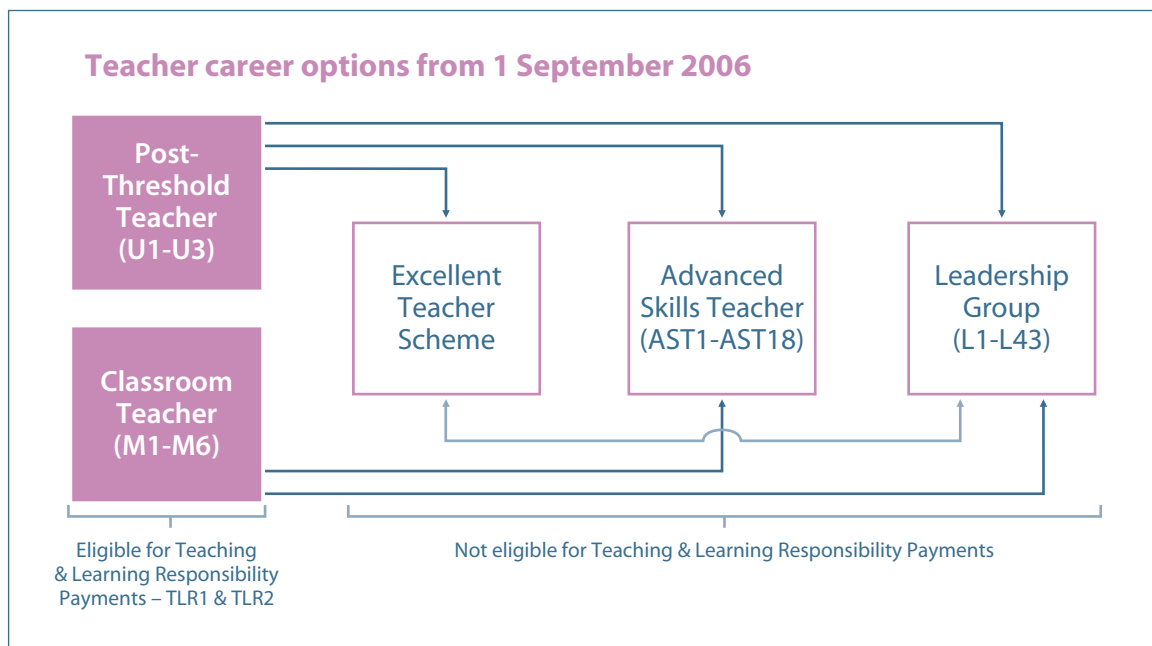
1. This guidance sets out the role, the expectations, the standards, the application process and the assessment/appointment arrangements for Excellent Teachers. An 'at a glance' process flow chart for schools¹ and teachers is set out in **Annex A**.
2. The Excellent Teacher grade commenced on 1 September 2006. The relevant statutory provisions are in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.
3. The introduction of the Excellent Teacher grade was introduced as part of the school workforce reforms and changes in the pay structure that support teachers by freeing them to concentrate on their core tasks of teaching and leading teaching and learning. The new teacher professionalism focuses on helping teachers as professionals to develop themselves and others. *The Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners* (July 2004) proposed that "career progression and financial rewards go to those who are making the biggest contribution to improving pupil attainment, those who are continually developing their own expertise, and those who are helping to develop expertise in others".
4. All teachers should be engaged in effective, sustained and relevant professional development throughout their careers. Some of the most effective professional development involves teachers learning from other teachers. All teachers should be able to benefit from and contribute to coaching and mentoring, underpinned by professionally supported classroom observation, taking into account their levels of skills, expertise and experience, their role within the school, and reflecting their use of up-to-date subject knowledge and pedagogy.

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¹ The Excellent Teacher Scheme applies in schools and in all other settings where teachers are employed under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. In this document the term 'school' should be taken as including all such settings. Teachers not working in schools should substitute 'service manager' or 'line manager' wherever 'headteacher' is used.

5. The Excellent Teacher Scheme (ETS) provides a new career pathway for experienced teachers. It recognises and rewards the expertise they have built up and the distinctive contribution they can make to improving teaching and learning by sharing their skills with other classroom teachers, and which go beyond what would normally be expected of all classroom teachers. The career options available to teachers are set out in the diagram below.



The role of Excellent Teachers

Purpose

6. The ETS offers the most experienced classroom teachers a rewarding career route which is an alternative to posts that attract Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payments, the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) grade or a leadership group post.
7. Excellent Teachers have length, breadth and depth of experience, pedagogic excellence and coaching and mentoring skills of a high order. Their high quality teaching skills make them a role model for less experienced classroom teachers.
8. In addition to their normal duties in the classroom, Excellent Teachers have a distinctive role in helping other teachers improve their effectiveness and have a major impact on improving pupil attainment across the whole school.
9. Such a role would be particularly suitable for teachers who are motivated by supporting and helping their colleagues to improve their effectiveness, and to address their developmental needs and other issues arising out of the performance management process.

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Features

- 10.** The ETS enables schools to create posts for teachers that provide them with new roles that focus on whole school teaching and learning issues. Unlike ASTs, Excellent Teacher posts do not have an outreach function. The ETS applies in schools in England and Wales where teachers are employed under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.
- 11.** Excellent Teachers are not eligible for TLR payments. This is because they should not be accountable for leading, managing and developing a subject or curriculum area, nor should they have line management responsibility for a significant number of people.
- 12.** The decision to create Excellent Teacher posts rests with schools. Schools can create Excellent Teacher posts at any time, after appropriate consultation.

Duties

- 13.** Once in post, Excellent Teachers should continue to:
 - maintain high standards;
 - demonstrate a commitment to develop themselves professionally; and
 - provide an exemplary role model for staff through their professional expertise.
- 14.** Excellent Teachers should have a distinctive role in achieving improvements in teaching and learning across the school. In addition to the normal professional duties of a classroom teacher the specific expectations of an Excellent Teacher should be:
 - participating in the induction of newly qualified teachers;
 - participating in the professional mentoring of other teachers;
 - sharing good practice through demonstration lessons;
 - helping other teachers to develop their expertise in planning, preparation and assessment;
 - helping other teachers to evaluate the impact of their teaching on pupils;
 - undertaking classroom observations to assist and support the performance management process; and
 - helping other teachers improve their teaching practice including those on capability procedures.
- 15.** The Excellent Teacher should have substantial involvement and specific responsibilities in each of these areas. In practice, the relative loading of these should be determined by the needs of the school.

Excellent Teacher posts in schools

- 16.** Excellent Teachers should make a significant contribution to improving pupil attainment by raising the quality of teaching across the school. No two Excellent Teacher posts will be the same. They may be specialist subject teachers, but Excellent Teachers will be able to share their expertise with all teachers in the school. It will be for schools to decide how best to employ Excellent Teachers and draw up appropriate job descriptions based on the professional duties.
- 17.** Whilst the Excellent Teacher's prime focus is on teachers, it is expected that they will also have an impact on the whole school workforce. Posts may be filled by internal or external appointment.

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Excellent Teacher posts in local authorities

- 18.** An Excellent Teacher post might be established, in accordance with the criteria and expectations described above, in any central local authority service that is focused on the provision of teaching and learning to pupils. A key element of such a role might be to provide peer support within the service.

Creating Excellent Teacher posts

Context

19. Individual schools decide the number of Excellent Teacher posts required to meet the school's needs, and this must be consistent with the school's staffing structure.
20. If a school decides to create an Excellent Teacher post and the post is filled by an internal candidate, the teacher appointed will have to relinquish their current post and any Teaching and Learning Responsibility payment attached to it. It is important, therefore, that when establishing a new Excellent Teacher post, the school recognises the distinctive role of an Excellent Teacher and the implications this may have for the rest of the staffing structure.

Assessment criteria

21. ***Teachers can only apply for assessment against the ET standards in relation to a vacancy for an ET post in their own school.*** When considering applying for assessment teachers will need to be able show that they:
 - have continued to develop themselves professionally; and
 - have provided regular coaching and mentoring; and
 - have evidence of work that identified and addressed the needs of a particular group or groups of pupils, involved a searching analysis, and was of sufficient substance to have a positive impact beyond their assigned pupils. This evidence should normally come from the 2 year period leading up to their application; and
 - meet the standards for post-threshold teachers; and
 - are likely to meet the Excellent Teacher standards.
22. When considering evidence for the searching analysis, teachers who have been absent from school for a significant proportion of the two years leading up to the date of application may draw on evidence from a longer period, although not more than five years. Where the evidence period has been extended to take account of such absence the headteacher should comment on this in the application form.

- 23.** If a teacher is unable to meet any of the assessment criteria they may wish to discuss how this might be addressed with their headteacher. Such discussions should link effectively to the school's performance management arrangements and should enable the teacher and their headteacher to identify clear priorities for future professional development. Once a teacher meets the Excellent Teacher assessment criteria they can apply for assessment against the Excellent Teacher standards in relation to an Excellent Teacher post in their school.

Appointment criteria

- 24.** To be eligible to be appointed to an Excellent Teacher post, teachers must:
- have been assessed as meeting the Excellent Teacher standards; and
 - have been first placed on point 3 of the pay scale for post-threshold teachers at least two years before the date they take up post.²

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² For example, if, in January 2005, it was decided that a teacher should be placed on point 3 of the pay scale for post-threshold teachers and that this should be backdated to 1 September 2004, then the earliest date that teacher could be appointed to an ET post would be 1 September 2006.

The assessment/application process

The teacher's role

25. Applying for an Excellent Teacher post is voluntary. Teachers who have not yet passed the assessment process are restricted to applying for Excellent Teacher posts in their own school.
26. When applying for an Excellent Teacher post, a teacher who has not already met the Excellent Teacher standards must submit a completed Excellent Teacher Application Form (ETS1) to their headteacher:
 - summarising the evidence that shows they meet all of the Excellent Teacher standards;
 - demonstrating that they meet the prerequisites and assessment criteria; and
 - providing any other information requested in the job vacancy notice.
27. Candidates will need to satisfy the assessor through the information they provide in their application form, their performance on the day and relevant documentation, that they meet all the standards for Excellent Teachers. These are set out in **Annex B**.

The headteacher's role

28. The specific duties placed on headteachers in relation to Excellent Teacher applications are described in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.
29. As provided in Annex 1 of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, revised standards for Excellent Teachers come into effect for pay purposes from 1 September 2007. For teachers in England these standards are part of a framework of professional standards which also contains standards for the award of QTS, standards for teachers on the main pay scale who have successfully completed their induction (the core standards) and standards for post-threshold teachers. Within the framework the standards are designed to be cumulative and progressive. As a result there are some standards which are only defined at one career stage but which continue to apply at all subsequent career stages.
30. Whilst the framework as a whole applies in England only, the standards for Excellent Teachers are pay standards and as such apply in England and Wales. Responsibility for setting non-pay standards for Wales rests with the Welsh Assembly Government.

- 31.** For this reason a revised procedure applies in relation to Excellent Teacher assessment from 1 September 2007. The headteacher must first be satisfied that the applicant meets the standards for post-threshold teachers before they can be put forward for assessment against the Excellent Teacher standards.
- 32.** If the headteacher is not satisfied that the teacher meets the standards for post-threshold teachers they must reject the application and provide the teacher with a written explanation for the rejection. This should be done within 20 working days of receiving the application. In such cases no external assessment will be carried out.
- 33.** If the headteacher is satisfied that the teacher meets the standards for post-threshold teachers they must then decide whether they will support the application for assessment against the Excellent Teacher standards. If so the headteacher should complete the relevant sections of the application form and submit the completed form to the assessment agency within 20 working days of receiving it from the applicant. The headteacher must carry out this procedure for each internal candidate.
- 34.** If the headteacher decides that they cannot support an application for assessment, they should provide feedback to the applicant. An applicant who is dissatisfied with the headteacher's judgement may seek a review through the school's grievance procedure.
- 35.** If a candidate is simultaneously employed at more than one school the headteachers of the schools concerned should agree which one of them is to act as the designated headteacher. If they cannot agree, then the designated headteacher should be either the headteacher of the school at which he is employed for the greatest number of hours or, if there is no difference, the headteacher of the school at which he has been employed for longest.
- 36.** The designated headteacher should consult all the other headteachers before completing the application form.
- 37.** The appointment of Excellent Teachers is subject to the normal processes and procedures that apply to the school.

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Assessment

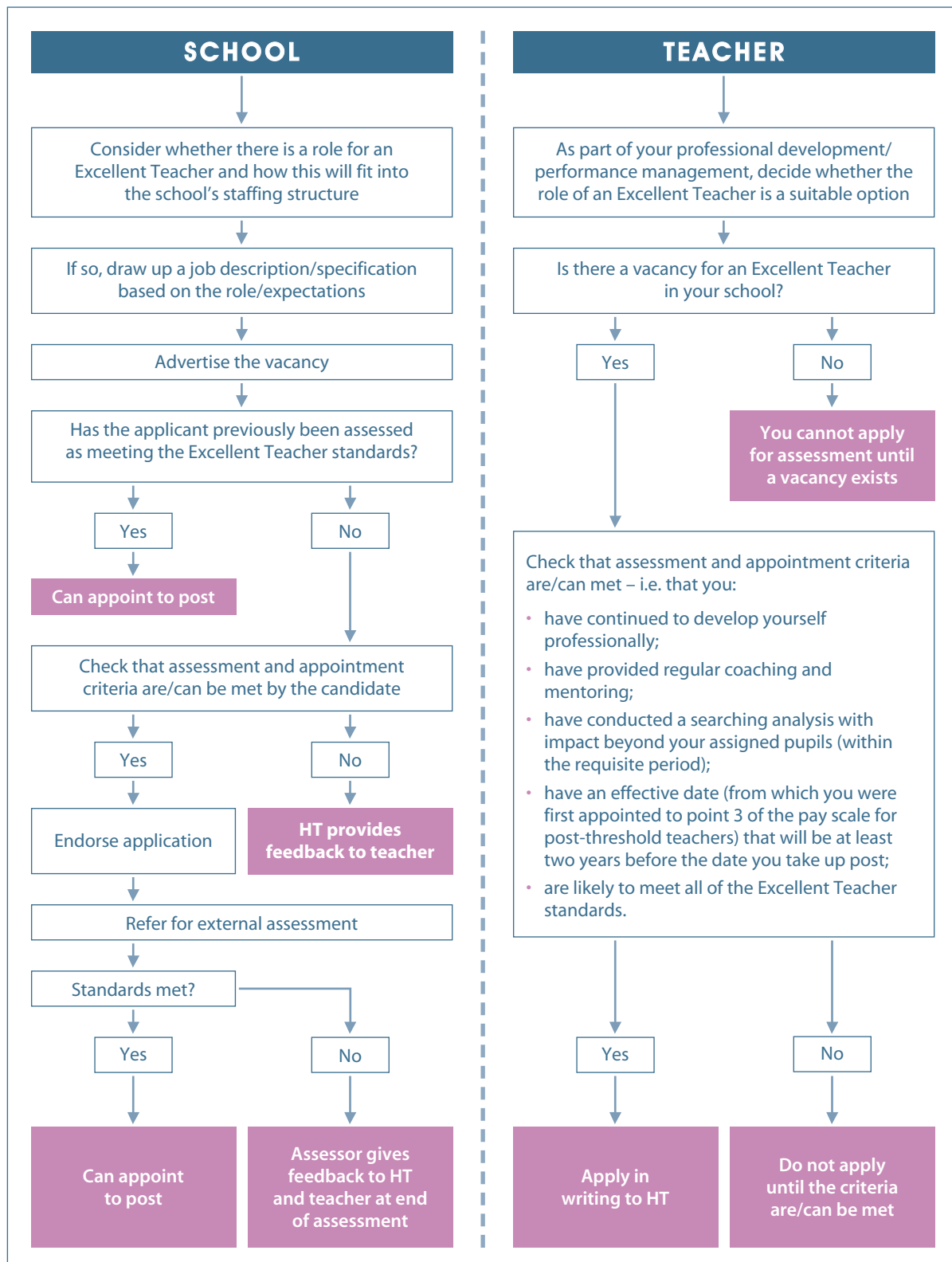
- 38.** Headteachers can only put a teacher forward for assessment against the Excellent Teacher standards if there is an Excellent Teacher post available. This 'post-related' approach is a practical and sensible way of managing the scheme whilst allowing schools to include Excellent Teacher posts when planning or reviewing their staffing structures. A post-related approach will be maintained for at least the first two years of the scheme.
- 39.** External assessors make the final determination about whether a teacher meets the Excellent Teacher standards. The role of the external assessor is to ensure consistency in the assessment process across England and Wales and rigour in the application of the Excellent Teacher standards. The DCSF will meet the cost of assessment in both England and Wales.
- 40.** The national assessment agency arranges for each candidate to be assessed against the Excellent Teacher standards in his or her own school. The assessor will contact the school in advance of the assessment day to agree a programme for the day with the headteacher.
- 41.** Each assessment takes place over the course of half a day. It entails classroom observation of the candidate; interview with the candidate; review of relevant documentation and discussion with the candidate's headteacher and/or deputy headteacher or head of department.
- 42.** The assessor decides whether or not the candidate is of the required standard for Excellent Teacher status, and writes a report summarising their view of the candidate's performance against each of the national Excellent Teacher standards.

43. Excellent Teacher assessments are normally carried out within six weeks of the assessment agency receiving the application form. If an assessment is needed more quickly it may be possible to arrange this. Please contact the assessment agency (telephone: **01372 834282**, e-mail: **ET@vtpic.com**) to discuss.
44. Teachers who are successfully assessed as meeting the Excellent Teacher standards will receive a letter of certification.
45. Teachers who are not certified as eligible for appointment to an Excellent Teacher post will be given feedback on the reason(s) why they did not meet the standards. If the applicant is not satisfied with the decision they may be entitled to apply for an independent review of the external assessment (**see Annex C**).

Appointment

46. Once the assessment procedure, including any independent review, has been completed in relation to all relevant applications, the school should make an appointment to the Excellent Teacher post using its normal appointment procedures and processes.
47. Once a teacher has met the Excellent Teacher standards they are eligible to apply for any Excellent Teacher post.
48. Once appointed to a post, an Excellent Teacher's performance objectives and training/development needs should be agreed/set in light of their new duties. Their overall performance should be assessed in that context and in accordance with the school's performance management policy.
49. A teacher who has met the Excellent Teacher standards may only be paid as an Excellent Teacher whilst they hold an Excellent Teacher post.
50. Teachers who have been successfully assessed against the Excellent Teacher standards but who have not been appointed to a post should not be expected to perform the professional duties of an Excellent Teacher.
51. On appointment to an Excellent Teacher post the teacher must be placed on the Excellent Teacher pay point.

Annex A: Excellent Teacher assessment process flow chart



Annex B: Excellent Teacher standards (from September 2007)

Professional attributes

- E1.** Be willing to take a leading role in developing workplace policies and practice and in promoting collective responsibility for their implementation.
- E2.** Research and evaluate innovative curricular practices and draw on research outcomes and other sources of external evidence to inform their own practice and that of colleagues.

Professional knowledge and understanding

- E3.** Have a critical understanding of the most effective teaching, learning and behaviour management strategies, including how to select and use approaches that personalise learning to provide opportunities for all learners to achieve their potential.
- E4.** Know how to improve the effectiveness of assessment practice in the workplace, including how to analyse statistical information to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning across the school.
- E5.** Have an extensive and deep knowledge and understanding of their subjects/curriculum areas and related pedagogy gained for example through involvement in wider professional networks associated with their subjects/curriculum areas.
- E6.** Have an extensive knowledge on matters concerning equality, inclusion and diversity in teaching.

Professional skills

- E7.** Take a lead in planning collaboratively with colleagues in order to promote effective practice, and identify and explore links within and between subjects/curriculum areas in their planning.
- E8.** Have teaching skills which lead to excellent results and outcomes.
- E9.** Demonstrate excellent and innovative pedagogical practice.
- E10.** Demonstrate excellent ability to assess and evaluate.

- E11.** Have an excellent ability to provide learners, colleagues, parents and carers with timely, accurate and constructive feedback on learners' attainment, progress and areas for development that promotes pupil progress.
- E12.** Use local and national statistical data and other information, in order to provide (a) a comparative baseline for evaluating learners' progress and attainment, (b) a means of judging the effectiveness of their teaching, and (c) a basis for improving teaching and learning.
- E13.** Work closely with leadership teams, taking a leading role in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and practice that contribute to school improvement.
- E14.** Contribute to the professional development of colleagues using a broad range of techniques and skills appropriate to their needs so that they demonstrate enhanced and effective practice.
- E15.** Make well-founded appraisals of situations upon which they are asked to advise, applying high level skills in classroom observation to evaluate and advise colleagues on their work and devising and implementing effective strategies to meet the learning needs of children and young people leading to improvements in pupil outcomes.

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Annex C: Review of Excellent Teacher assessments

An applicant who is assessed as not fully meeting the Excellent Teacher standards is entitled to apply for an independent review of the assessment upon the following (but no other) grounds:

- i) that proper account was not taken of relevant evidence;
- ii) that account was taken of irrelevant or inaccurate evidence;
- iii) that the assessment was biased; or
- iv) that the assessment was conducted in a manner that unlawfully discriminated against the applicant.

To have the assessment reviewed the candidate should apply in writing to:

National Assessment Agency for ASTs and ETs
VT Education and Skills
OPUS 1
Bay Tree Avenue
Kingston Road
Leatherhead
Surrey KT22 7UE

Applications for review must be received within 40 working days of receiving the assessor's decision. Candidates should explain why they think their assessment should be reviewed, and should indicate what evidence they have that at least one of the grounds for review applies to their case.

The Review Coordinator will give the original assessor an opportunity to comment on the application for review, and will pass the case to the Review Officer.

The Review Officer will consider all the available evidence. He/she may ask to see the original assessor's records of the assessment. He/she may ask for comments from the candidate, headteacher or line manager, or from the original assessor. The Review Officer may repeat any of the steps the original assessor took, such as conducting a classroom observation or interviewing the headteacher. He/she may also look at other evidence, including interviewing the candidate's colleagues, which the original assessor may not have considered.

If the Review Officer is satisfied that the candidate would have been certified as an Excellent Teacher had the original assessment been properly conducted, he/she will certify the candidate as an Excellent Teacher. Otherwise, the original decision will stand. The Review Officer will notify both the candidate and the assessor of his/her decision, giving reasons, within 40 working days of receiving the application for a review. The Review Officer will also inform the candidate's headteacher of his/her decision.

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Please quote ref: 00648-2007FLR-EN

ISBN: 978-1-84775-022-8

PPSLS/D35/0807/23

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