



Department
for Education

Reducing workload: supporting teachers in the early stages of their career

**Advice for school leaders, mentors and
appropriate bodies**

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Introduction

Excessive workload is the most commonly cited driver for teachers leaving the profession¹ and 33%² of teachers leave the profession within the first five years. The [Teacher Workload Survey 2016](#) identified that teachers with less than six years' experience have higher workload than more experienced colleagues.

School leaders, induction tutors, mentors, appropriate bodies and teachers themselves can use this advice to help remove the burdens that might be associated with the first five years of a teacher's career. This should build from the support and advice early career teachers have received from their ITE provider during their training period, [statutory induction](#), wider advice in the [workload reduction toolkit](#) and the three independent workload reports on [marking](#), [planning](#) and [data management](#).

This guidance has been developed by the sector and will continue to evolve as further evidence, case studies and advice becomes available, including the outcomes from the strengthening QTS consultation.

¹ Smithers and Robinson (2003); Teachers' Analysis Compendium (2017)

² Department for Education, School Workforce in England (2017)

Key themes that might affect workload of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and teachers in the early stages of their career

The following have been identified as factors that can impact on the workload of teachers in the early stages of their career.

Marking and Planning

- Lesson planning, including medium and long term planning, for the first time
- Resourcing of lessons, including how to evaluate resources and adapt
- Developing efficient strategies for marking and feedback

Non-teaching tasks

- Setting up classroom for the first time
- Managing behaviour
- Getting to grips with school policies and procedures
- Using NQT non-contact time and planning, preparation and assessment time effectively

External factors

- Monitoring, support and assessment including during induction
- Management and cumulative effect of other activities not directly relating to teaching, such as extra-curricular activities and communicating with parents
- Managing of priorities and competing demands
- Managing of own time outside of school and finding the balance between work and home
- High quality mentoring and support (and capacity of school to provide it)
- Outside factors affecting workload, such as moving to a new area, childcare, etc.

Experience

- Being realistic about and managing own expectations
- Learning how to manage and prioritise tasks
- Understanding school culture and practices, and learning what can/should be challenged
- Feeling a part of the school community

Subject and sector knowledge

- Getting to grips with the curriculum, qualifications and exam syllabuses
- Subject knowledge particularly relating to areas not previously taught and the need to upskill

Questions for school leaders to consider

Reviewing your current support structures

What good practice in your school/MAT supports NQTs and early career teachers to remove unnecessary workload whilst maintaining standards? Could this practice be spread across the whole school/wider?

- How do you provide opportunities for teachers to tell you what would help them in relation to their workload and wellbeing, in particular those in the early stages of their career?
- Do you give different forms of support to teachers dependent on their experience?

Providing additional support

How have you considered the key themes identified above?

To what extent have you considered the three workload reports ([marking](#), [planning](#) and [data management](#)) in relation to the specific needs of NQTs and early career teachers? Does the practice you ask of your early career teachers adhere to the workload reports' principles?

What key advice / support do you provide for NQTs / early career teachers?

- How is this advice / support reflected locally in policies, practice and expectations?
- How are you ensuring that mentors / induction tutors have the time, capacity, expertise, knowledge, experience and personal qualities required to undertake the role effectively?
- What do you consider when appointing members of staff to mentor positions?
- What additional opportunities do you offer the early career teachers to collaborate and learn from their peers?
- Are time management tools such as an 'urgent/important matrix' considered?
- Do you encourage practices to be challenged when they lead to additional workload?

How have you embedded tailored professional development opportunities to support NQTs / early career teachers to remove unnecessary workload in relation to feedback, data and planning?

How do you build in time for teachers to collaborate? How well is this time protected?

- How do you support NQTs to use their additional non-teaching time effectively?
- How do you support all early career teachers to use non-teaching time, including PPA, effectively?

Managing time and balancing commitments

How do you manage NQT / early career teacher expectations of themselves and their teaching experience?

How do you support your teachers to know their limits and not overcommit, both in terms of their teaching commitments/responsibilities and their extra-curricular commitments outside of the classroom or school day?

Monitoring, induction and appraisal

Have you considered the demands you make on trainees, NQTs and teachers in the early stages of their career around the evidence required / reporting mechanisms relating to the monitoring, support and induction / appraisal cycle?

- Are your procedures sufficiently streamlined to remove unnecessary bureaucracy and workload burdens for both the appraiser / induction tutor and the NQT / early career teacher?
- To what extent does your policy reflect the [DfE advice](#) that any 'collection of evidence should be proportionate and not increase workload for teachers (for example, teachers should not be asked to produce written evidence against each of the Teachers' Standards).'

Transition points

- How do you support your NQTs who are making the transition from trainee to qualified teacher and the potential increase in workload?
- How is this reflected in policy, structures and practice?
- What support do you put in place for teachers in the early stages of their career who may have taken on additional responsibilities OR who have expressed an interest in taking on additional responsibilities?
- Do you provide opportunities for teachers in the early stages of their career to shadow subject / department leads?

How can induction tutors and mentors support the workload of their mentees?

Mentors and induction tutors can support NQTs and teachers in the early stages of their career by using the principles and recommendations in the three workload reports on [marking](#), [planning](#) and [data management](#), to review and challenge unnecessarily burdensome practice in their schools. Research reports and the accompanying summary from 12 school-based projects set out examples of how schools have removed unnecessary workload related to marking, planning and data management and provide useful evidence about what has worked to remove unnecessary workload.

In addition, mentors and induction tutors should also assess the needs of the mentee and deliver support on an individual basis depending on the teacher's development needs, applying their knowledge and experience to address any other workload issues. The [Teacher Workload Survey 2016](#) provides useful evidence about other tasks that teachers find burdensome.

Principles for effective mentoring and coaching

When considering how to support early career teachers, mentors may find useful the [National standards for school based ITT mentors](#) developed by the Teaching Schools Council. These standards promote the importance of the role of a mentor in supporting less experienced teachers. Although these have been developed with a focus on mentors for trainee teachers, the standards make clear that mentors have a crucial role to play in supporting teachers 'beyond the early stages of their careers'. Headteachers may also find the standards helpful when deciding who to select and appoint as mentors in their schools.

Questions for Induction Tutors and Mentors to consider:

- How have you considered the key themes identified above in relation to the workload of your mentee?
- Have you discussed the three independent workload reports with your mentee and how these relate to them?
- Have you discussed with your mentee [Ofsted's myth-busting document](#) concerning inspections and what Ofsted do and do not expect?
- How often do you check on the workload and well-being of your mentee?
 - What mechanisms are in place in your school / MAT to provide additional tailored support?
 - What are the formal mechanisms in your school / MAT for you to feed back to senior leaders on any issues relating to workload burdens for NQTs and teachers in the early stages of their career?
- What practical strategies do you discuss with your mentee to support with their workload?
- What resources do you draw upon to support your mentee with their workload?
- Is your policy for the monitoring, support and induction / appraisal cycle sufficiently streamlined to remove unnecessary bureaucracy and workload burdens for both the appraiser / induction tutor and the NQT / early career teacher?

How can Appropriate Bodies support the workload of NQTs?

The [Statutory Guidance](#) for the induction of NQTs outlines the roles and responsibilities for all parties involved in the induction process; including Appropriate Bodies. In relation to workload, Appropriate Bodies are responsible for:

- ensuring that the monitoring, support and assessment processes and procedures for NQTs are appropriate. Appropriate Bodies should give serious consideration to ensuring that any processes are proportionate and do not increase workload burdens for both the NQT and the induction tutor. The process should avoid NQTs collating folders of evidence – some Appropriate Bodies instead opt for the use of an evidence tracker which is used and updated on an on-going basis to summarise and signpost to evidence against the Standards. NQTs should not need to copy or duplicate examples of evidence;
- ensuring that the school is providing the NQT with their statutory entitlement to a reduced timetable in addition to PPA time;
- having robust quality assurance mechanisms to determine whether headteachers (and governing bodies where appropriate) are aware of and have the capacity to meet their responsibilities for the monitoring, support and assessment of the NQT. This includes ensuring that a personalised induction programme is in place and that designated induction tutor support is provided;
- ensuring that induction tutors receive training and also that their school provides them with support and capacity to undertake their role – including giving them sufficient time to carry out their role effectively.

Questions for Appropriate Bodies to consider:

- How does your quality assurance processes ensure that any monitoring and assessment procedures are applied consistently and are not overly burdensome for the NQT or induction tutor?
- How do you routinely seek the views of NQTs and induction tutors regarding their workload in association with the monitoring, support and assessment expectations?
- How do you liaise with school leaders to ensure that induction tutors have both the capacity and time to undertake their important role?
- What packages of support, including continuing professional development, do you provide as part of your induction programme in relation to workload?
- How do you ensure that any good practice concerning supporting NQTs is shared with other schools?
- How do you share relevant research relating to workload, transition and the quality of mentoring and professional development with schools?

Support for teachers

The Department for Education has published a range of [case studies, resources and practical solutions](#) from schools around the country to help you to reduce unnecessary workload.

The [Education Support Partnership](#) has a range of useful advice and resources to help you manage your workload.

[Ofsted](#) has produced some useful guidance to confirm facts about the requirements of Ofsted and to dispel myths that can result in unnecessary workloads in schools.

Michael Green, Head of Strategic Partnerships Education at the University of Greenwich, shares some guidance in his article '[supporting your workload as an early career teacher](#)' in the Chartered College of Teaching's annual publication for early career teachers; The Profession.

Background and research

[Hudson's research \(2012\)](#) found that newly qualified teachers required more support in the induction process, particularly around the school context, networking, managing people, and creating work-life balances. It also found that these teachers required more support in school culture and infrastructure with stronger consideration of developing teaching practices, such as: pedagogical knowledge development and behaviour management. It highlighted willing and capable assigned mentors who can model practices and provide feedback on the beginning teachers' practices as pivotal to induction and mentoring processes. You may find the illustration below useful to conceptualise this:

What does the Newly Qualified Teacher Survey (2016) tell us about workload and transition from trainee to NQT?

The NQT survey, which was completed by just over 1,900 NQTs in 2015, reported a number of themes from the open responses:

Workload: large workloads were reported by a number of respondents and this contributed towards stress:

“Throughout my induction year I have worked from 8am-5:30pm Monday to Friday. I have also worked 8-10 hours at weekends during my first term, 6-8 during my second term and 4-6 during my third term. I also work 20-30 hours at home during school holidays. If my workload was reduced I wouldn't have needed to do so much work at home”

Mentors and Induction Tutors: NQTs provided feedback about the quality of support and guidance provided by mentors and induction tutors and their perceptions about how this impacted on their NQT year:

“NQT tutors need to know how to speak to and support NQTs. This means that they ought to know how to give two targets and a strength (for example), just as we expect students to do when reflecting on their own learning. My tutor will support me if I ask a specific question but, aside from that, I feel largely like I have been on my own during this period and, if not for my family, I would have already left”

Training, Entitlement and Transition: Open response comments identified the importance of NQTs receiving their statutory entitlement for their NQT time and the significance of this in relation to their on-going professional development; the need for employers to plan and identify internal support mechanisms; and the importance of employers being able to build upon, rather than repeat the training that the NQTs received as part of their initial teacher training

“My school has often not provided NQT time during the week, making it difficult for continuous professional development and observing other teachers”

“I have been placed in a position where I do not have a head of department or a subject specialist to help me learn my subject skills”

“Some of the training as an NQT can simply re-hash PGCE training as they can be combined sessions for UQT's as well as NQT's”



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