

Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
33 Great Smith Street  
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9 March 2018

### Re: Strengthening Qualified Teacher Status and improving career progression for teachers

The Royal Society welcomes the Government's commitment to improving the career structure and progression of teachers in England and, by doing so, enhancing their professional status. A clear career structure and qualifications framework are prerequisite for ensuring a healthy profession.<sup>i,ii,iii</sup> However, more is needed to develop these proposals into a coherent package and they must be considered in the context of existing and growing shortages of teachers and high dropout rates from teacher training, particularly in the STEM subjects. Without great teaching, our education system will not enable young people to thrive or gain the STEM skills our economy needs. Expert teachers can only be developed through high quality, subject-specific training at all stages of their career.

The proposals for a two year induction period and a new career progression framework are important recognition that the journey towards gaining teaching expertise continues well beyond the current year as a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT). Three principles underpin our response:

- The proposals must be developed so that they are consistent with the aim of reducing teacher workload;
- Initial Teacher Training (ITT), Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and the framework for professional development should all be subject- and phase-specific;<sup>iv</sup> and
- Induction and subsequent career progression should nurture teachers' critical evaluation skills and help them develop into research-informed practitioners.

Changes to ITT and QTS should also align with the requirements of ITT systems and expectations of teachers in other high-performing countries, so that England's ITT has comparably high status and enables teacher mobility. Together with the scientific learned societies, the Society has commissioned a set of UK and international ITT comparisons from RAND Europe, due to be completed by May 2018, which we would be delighted to discuss with the Department.

Implementing the proposed longer, enriched induction framework will require NQTs to spend more time away from the classroom, and schools will need to enable their more experienced teachers to spend time on their own professional development, including sabbaticals. Consequently, the Department cannot achieve its aims without making significant additional investment in the workforce. Further, the proposed induction should be piloted and evaluated to ensure that it provides value for money while achieving its aims.



President Sir Venki Ramakrishnan  
Executive Director Dr Julie Maxton

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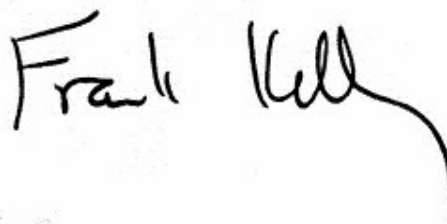
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Detailed comments on the proposed reforms and related areas can be found in the Supporting Appendix. We would be happy to convene focus groups from our Schools' Network and Community of Interest to inform the Department's work in this space. Please contact David Montagu (david.montagu@royalsociety.org) to arrange this.

Yours sincerely



Professor Tom McLeish FRS  
Chair, Royal Society Education Committee



Professor Frank Kelly FRS  
Chair, Royal Society Advisory Committee  
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## Supporting Appendix

Our response has been informed by our previous research and discussions with our Education Committee, Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education (ACME) and stakeholder groups, including teachers.

### 1.0 Extending the induction period

- 1.1. The Royal Society Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education has proposed a structured three year professional development programme, which runs during ITT and continues two years after.<sup>v</sup> The proposals recognise that NQTs need longer to develop essential new knowledge and skills that they cannot acquire during ITT, and provide a useful basis for the Department to review ITT provision.
- 1.2. There are some further aspects that the Department should consider:
  - NQTs may lose out on pay increases they may have expected to gain after completing a single year's induction, with consequences for retention;
  - it is possible that prospective trainees may be deterred from applying if the length of training is extended. While the Society supports the idea of an extended induction period, should the Government proceed, it should closely monitor ITT entry, drop-out during and after ITT, and the stated reasons for drop-out;
  - there is a prevalence of short-term contracts, and it is important to consider the needs of teachers who are recruited on these contracts and may wish, or need, to move schools during their induction;
  - it may be hard for schools to resource the reduced timetable that will be needed to enable NQTs to complete their induction; and
  - the 10% reduction in teaching time must be maintained for NQTs throughout the induction period, although this will put considerable strains on schools. Effective monitoring will need to be undertaken to ensure schools are meeting this requirement.

### 2.0 Induction framework

- 2.1. We broadly agree with the content of the proposed induction framework, provided the content is provisioned consistently and its quality closely monitored and assured. It will be challenging to cover all the ground within the two year period. The more detailed model ACME established for mathematics may be useful to consider as it could be equally applicable to other subjects.<sup>vi</sup>
- 2.2. The impact of the extended induction period on the system will be significant. Piloting would help determine how it can best be implemented to ensure the needs of NQTs are met, and those of their more experienced colleagues equally supported.
- 2.3. Particular weighting should be placed on developing subject content, pedagogy and curriculum knowledge, including links with and across other subjects and the notion of teaching being a collegiate profession within which practitioners co-develop and use high-quality lessons. Other key areas include ensuring that teachers learn how to critically evaluate research materials and develop enquiry skills so that they become confident, independent-thinking practitioners.<sup>vii</sup>

### 3.0 Strengthening QTS

- 3.1. **Provisional Qualified Teacher Status (QTS(P)):** There is value in a tangible marker upon successful completion of ITT. This could attract trainees, and at the same time usefully signal a requirement for further development during the induction period. We are not convinced that the proposed QTS(P) designation is appropriate. QTS status should only be conferred once a teacher has successfully completed the induction programme.
- 3.2. **Subject-specific QTS:** ITT, QTS and the framework for professional development should all be subject- and, ideally, phase-specific. This is a necessary requirement for the award of QTS to become the publicly recognised standard of teaching competence, and for the career progression ladder to be meaningful.
- 3.3. **The role of QTS as a staging post:** QTS should be, and be perceived as, a stepping stone for advancing to:
  - other professional qualifications, such as Chartered Teacher Status;
  - further academic studies leading to Masters or PhD qualifications;
  - specialist subject and skills development, such as developing critical reflective practice skills; or
  - undertaking quality-assured and accredited Teacher Subject Specialist Training (TSST) courses, for those wishing to augment or develop additional subject expertise.
- 3.4. **Challenges of achieving QTS for supply teachers:** All supply teachers should be required to complete QTS within 5 years of being awarded a teaching qualification, and this should be written into the new commercial agreement for supply teachers the Department is currently developing.<sup>viii</sup> However, the peripatetic nature of supply teaching will mean that supply teachers will struggle to achieve this target.
- 3.5. **Mentoring:** The National Foundation for Education Research found that mentoring support had a positive impact on science and mathematics teacher trainees' personal, professional and career development.<sup>ix</sup> This is a time-consuming investment for schools, but research in the UK and internationally has shown that it is beneficial for teachers,<sup>x</sup> and that it could help nurture an essential inclusive culture of collaborative professional learning within schools.<sup>xi</sup>

To achieve a high quality learning environment, it is important that classroom teaching time is reduced for NQTs to allow sufficient time for mentoring. In addition, more experienced teachers who may host teacher trainees during their classes should also be mentored, or otherwise trained and supported to do this and provide feedback that has consistency in form and function.

Mentors should be experienced teachers, sharing the subject specialism of the mentee and fully trained in mentoring. They should not be the mentee's line manager. There should be clear roles and responsibilities for mentors and these should be recognised in career progression frameworks.<sup>xiii</sup> A review of existing mentor standards is needed and the Chartered College of Teaching should play an important role in developing and accrediting high-quality mentoring programmes. Piloting initiatives would provide useful evidence for how mentoring can help to improve retention of teachers across all career stages.

#### 4.0 Post-QTS teacher career progression and leadership

- 4.1. **The funding model:** The school funding model needs to include sufficient resource to provide adequate professional development opportunities. Schools should be encouraged to consider ring-fencing money for such purposes.
- 4.2. **Career-long learning:** Teachers should be able to access professional development throughout their careers, a component of which should be subject-specific. The Chartered College of Teaching could have a role in informing practitioners about evidence and insights from research, though this would require a funding stream to support it. In addition, teachers should have a critical awareness of key debates and perspectives, and be able to form their own view of these or contribute to them based on their teaching experience and the expertise they develop.
- 4.3. **Professional development plans:** All teachers should have a personalised professional learning plan matched by frequent access to high quality professional development opportunities.<sup>xiii</sup>
- 4.4. **CPD badging:** Continuing Professional Development should include teachers engaging in a wide range of activities including courses, conferences, reading and mentoring. There is currently a large range of CPD course provision of varying quality. All CPD course provision should be appropriately quality-assured and evaluated to signal high-quality provision to schools and teachers. Badging organisations should not be providers of CPD courses, they should apply meaningful criteria to inform their judgements and have subject-specific expertise. An unintended consequence of badging could be reduced engagement with other CPD activities.
- 4.5. **Challenges of introducing a new qualification route:** National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) are unlikely to gain traction unless there is a strong pull from teacher recruitment. This is a challenge shared by Chartered Teacher status. NPQs in shortage subjects may prove particularly difficult to market, given the often rapid promotion of shortage subject specialist teachers into middle management positions.
- 4.6. **Sabbaticals:** The Society supports the Department's proposal to fund pilot sabbaticals, so long as these do not add to teacher participants' workloads and their impact is properly evaluated. Piloting will be necessary to evaluate the impact on recruitment and retention as well as the impact on returnees' subject knowledge and enthusiasm.

There are a number of caveats:

- access to a sabbatical could attract people to a career in teaching, but it could also provide an avenue for teachers to leave the profession. When setting the requirements for the pilot, the Department might consider the target cohorts' existing likelihoods of leaving and returning to the profession (including length of time taken to return);
- there should be a fairly broad interpretation of where teachers can source STEM insight, for example within industry or academia;
- senior leaders may be less likely to release science, mathematics and computing teachers due to the existing shortages of specialist teachers in these subjects. This approach would be counterproductive and must be guarded against; and
- such a scheme could be offered to schools in Opportunity Areas in the first instance, providing an incentive to teach in these areas.

## 5.0 Routes into teaching

- 5.1. The Society believes that there is a need to evidence the effectiveness of different ITT routes and to ensure each is properly quality-assured. There are underused routes into teaching, for instance PhD and postdoctoral, that need opening up.
- 5.2. The Carter Review emphasised the importance of Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) courses in addressing gaps in trainees' core subject knowledge. The content and delivery of SKE, and TSST, courses must be regulated and should be quality-assured and accredited.<sup>xiv</sup>
- 5.3. Finally, ITT and early stage professional development should be a continuous, coordinated journey with clear stages for progression. Recent reports have shown that dropout rates for trainee and early career teachers are high, particularly for science, mathematics and language teachers, though varying greatly according to the route,<sup>xv</sup> with research suggesting reasons for the high turnover are desire for greater pay, job satisfaction, reduced working hours and more opportunities for flexible working. The Department needs to ensure the reforms address this wastage.<sup>xvi</sup> Although this consultation does not cover ITT *per se*, the proposal to extend the induction period raises questions about the length, content and consistency of ITT delivery that also need addressing, with a view to ensuring that training programmes really focus on teaching delivery.

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<sup>i</sup> Royal Society 2014 [Vision for science and mathematics education](#). London: Royal Society.

<sup>ii</sup> ACME 2015 [Beginning teaching: best in class? High-quality initial teacher education for all teachers of mathematics in England](#). London: ACME.

<sup>iii</sup> ACME 2016 [Professional learning for all teachers of mathematics. Principles for teachers, senior leaders and those who commission and provide professional learning](#). London: ACME.

<sup>iv</sup> The Society accepts that this would represent a significant and challenging undertaking. However, QTS should not enable teachers to teach any subject as is currently the case: a teacher should be qualified to teach the subject(s) they have trained to teach. Additionally, the NCTL's [own research](#) has shown that individuals often have strong preferences for teaching a particular phase.

<sup>v</sup> Op. cit., note ii, p. 9.

<sup>vi</sup> Op. cit., note iii, p. 8.

<sup>vii</sup> Op. cit., note ii, p. 17.

<sup>viii</sup> See <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2018-02-06.126817.h&s=speaker%3A10225#g126817.r0>, accessed 21 February 2018.

<sup>ix</sup> Macleod, S, Walker, M, Durbin, B, Jeffes, J & Straw, S 2011 [Evaluation of Starting Out](#). Final report for the TDA. Slough: NFER.

<sup>x</sup> Hobson, A J, Castanheira, P, Doyle, K, Csigás, Z & Clutterbuck, D 2016 [The mentoring across professions \(MaP\) project: what can teacher mentoring learn from international good practice in employee mentoring and coaching?](#) London: Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

<sup>xi</sup> Op. cit., note iii, p. 10.

<sup>xii</sup> Op. cit., note ii, p. 19.

<sup>xiii</sup> Op. cit., note iii, p. 5.

<sup>xiv</sup> The Society acknowledges that mechanisms have been established to quality assure and accredit TSST courses.

<sup>xv</sup> Bamford, S & Worth, J 2017 [Teacher training and turnover research. Research update 3: Is the grass greener beyond teaching?](#) Slough: NFER.

<sup>xvi</sup> Allen, R, Bibby D, Parameshwaran, M & Nye, P 2016 [Linking ITT and workforce data: \(Initial Teacher Training Performance Profiles and School Workforce Census\) Research report](#). Education Datalab, FFT.