



DfE Consultation: Strengthening Qualified Teacher Status and Improving Career Progression for Teachers - A response from the National Induction Panel for Teachers (NIPT)

Introduction

The National Induction Panel for Teachers (NIPT) has been in operation since 2013. It was initially set up at the behest of the Department for Education in response to concerns about the huge variability in the quality of the NQT accreditation service offered by LAs nationally. Since its introduction, NIPT has seen a steady year-on-year increase in schools, academy chains and numbers of NQTs seeking to gain QTS through its robust induction process.

In order to provide a detailed response to the consultation, NIPT has discussed the consultation questions in depth with the following groups:

1. The team of quality assurance officers (QAOs)
2. The NIPT Panel (The Appropriate Body)
3. The NIPT Board
4. Professional development leads from some of NIPT's bigger academy chains and teaching schools
5. The wider group of NIPT registered schools and Multi Academy Trusts

Consultation Questions - Part 1:

Q1: Do you think that QTS should be awarded after a period of sustained professional practice rather than the end of ITT?

A two-year period would enable a more structured and supported induction into the profession and allow for a more progressive acquisition of broader professional knowledge and experience and for good quality practices to become thoroughly embedded. That said, for it to succeed, the proposal needs to be carefully costed and appropriate funding must be allocated to schools to take into account the financial implications of an extended period of timetable reduction, a further year of leadership, mentoring support and additional staffing required to service and accredit the second year? Careful thought would also need to be given to potential issues such as:

- How will the quality assurance be built in to the second year without doubling the workload for both the NQT and the mentor/the school?

- How do we ensure that this change has a positive impact on attracting new teachers into the profession and makes teaching more attractive rather than less attractive?

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

This would strengthen the induction process and provide more consistency within the profession. In addition, NQTs should have the opportunity for personalised CPD based on identified need and personal reflection. Independent assessment centres could be used to assess NQT competencies when they first enter the profession and give advice and support to build on strengths and support areas for development.

It is helpful to compare teaching to other professions such as medicine, accountancy and law. Teaching has a much shorter training period and it is extremely difficult for an NQT to deal with everything they may face from the moment they begin their first teaching position. We must ensure that any further professional development is progressive and receives the right amount of support.

NIPT would support some elements of the induction programme potentially being integrated with training for other young professionals in comparative professions, such the more generic 'softer skills' required in the modern work environment. These could include interpersonal skills such as managing people/difficult situations, team working/ team building and how to deal with members of the public.

Q3: What core competencies, knowledge areas or particular skills do you think should be developed in a structured way during the induction period?

The following is not an exhaustive list but does highlight what we consider to be priority competencies, knowledge and skills.

- Curriculum planning and development
- Pedagogy (both generic and subject specific), questioning, differentiation
- Use of data to inform planning
- SEND
- Pupil premium and disadvantaged (linked to the DfE social mobility initiatives)
- Safeguarding
- Behaviour management.
- Wider professional responsibilities
- Managing workload
- Mental health
- The use of digital technology
- Softer skills

The NQT needs to develop a toolkit of strategies to use in different situations, with an exposure to a wide range of knowledge. This could cover generic training, school specific training (taking account of the varying contexts of the schools) and a personalised strand of professional development.

Q4: To achieve these objectives, do you think we should extend the induction period?

If all of the above competencies, areas of knowledge and skills were to be developed to a higher level, an extended induction period would be essential and building these stronger foundations at the start of a teacher's career is likely to help with retention of

staff. One risk is that the 2-year induction will just give weaker NQTs longer to reach the Standards so there needs to be robust monitoring of progress throughout the induction programme, particularly where an NQT is struggling.

Q5: We have used the names QTS(P) and QTS throughout this document. Do you think that these terms are appropriate?

We consider that QTS is a more appropriate term to be awarded at the end of the longer induction period. However, a recognisable qualification is still needed post-ITT, which acknowledges that the teacher is still in training, but none-the less has gained a stand-alone qualification in its' own right. A certificate or a diploma for example would hold a transferrable recognisable value and could count as points towards a Master's Degree.

Although we consider that QTS may be the wrong term to use at the end of the first year, new teachers may feel undermined by saying that for two years they are 'unqualified'. Parents too may perceive that their children are not being taught by a qualified teacher. The profession should reflect on how this is managed in other professions such as the medicine where more obvious supervision is provided by a more senior medic.

Q6: Which of these proposals do you think would help improve the quality and quantity of mentoring for all new teachers?

The professional development of the NQT would undoubtedly be enhanced by the high quality training of mentors. This would need resourcing both in terms of allowing time for mentors to work effectively and for the mentoring training itself. Schools can have varied approaches to the induction of NQTs and differences in the performance of Tutor/Mentors can mean considerable differences in the NQTs' induction experience. It may be an idea to develop a nationally recognised training standard of mentoring that could be transferred elsewhere, for example, credits towards a Master's Degree.

Mentor training should ensure that in schools where the mentor is also the person judging progress there is an acknowledgement of the difference between the roles. The quality assurance by the Appropriate Body will be important in these contexts.

Q7: How else can we improve the quality and quantity of mentoring for all new teachers?

As mentioned above, allowing sufficient time is essential if the proposed new programme is to be successful and if this is to be seen as a priority, it will require additional funding. Gaining some accreditation for both the training and the practice as suggested above should be optional. Making this accreditation mandatory may discourage some teachers from taking on this additional responsibility.

Q8: How should we ensure that new teachers get sufficient time to focus on their professional development?

The 10% remission time is important for **both** years of the induction period, with those who have completed the first year of their induction still being treated as an NQT within the school and being given extra time to plan and develop.

Q9: Do you agree that the QTS assessment should be conducted internally and be independently verified by an appropriate body?

Assessing against the Teachers' Standards can only be done in the context of the school, and can only be done internally. Therefore, external independent verification **is vital** against an agreed raised standard. Any organisation wishing to become an AB should have to go through an initial accreditation process followed by ongoing periodic quality assurance and should also operate as a not-for-profit organisation.

Q10: How do you think we should strengthen the independent verification of QTS accreditation?

There is currently a huge and concerning variation in the quality, robustness and also the cost charged for this NQT accreditation service. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some Appropriate Bodies will simply not fail an NQT. To strengthen this independent verification, as mentioned above, Appropriate Bodies should be subject to regular quality assurance to ensure that all procedures are in place and that support and training is of a consistently high quality. Within the current arrangements, NQTs who are struggling and failing to meet the teachers standards and choose to resign, could then move on to another school where assessment standards are more lax and so go on to complete their induction and risk failing children. NQTs in this circumstance must be subject to the same robust induction process in their next school. A more standardised curriculum for NQTs could also mean that all Appropriate Bodies would be assessing the same things.

Teaching School's Alliances have relatively recently been able to fulfil the role of an AB. Although a reciprocal cost neutral arrangement between TSAs will undoubtedly be attractive in these very challenging financial times, it begs the question if this can really be seen as truly independent and if this system is therefore as robust as it needs to be?

In the process of driving improved consistency in independent verification, it will be important not to increase related workload and paperwork.

It may be valuable to create an Association of Appropriate Bodies to provide this quality assurance. Such a body could also offer support and develop training materials and share expertise etc.

Q11: What role do you think ITT providers could play in the assessment and accreditation of QTS?

ITT providers should work collaboratively with Appropriate Bodies to ensure there is a logical progression in the early years of professional development. There could also be some joined-up planning in relation to accreditation towards a Master's degree. The profession perhaps needs more input in relation to child development. For example new teachers need some background around intellectual development and educational psychology. In addition there should be more focus on the use of digital technology, not only as a curriculum subject but also as a teaching tool. Input on topics such as these could be offered by ITT providers.

NIPT feels strongly that there must be a clear divide between ITT providers and the Appropriate Bodies that assess QTS, i.e. the ITT providers should not be involved in the assessment of NQTs that they have trained.

Q12: Do you think we should maintain the limitation on how long a teacher can teach on a supply basis without completing QTS?

Ideally yes, but in times of teacher shortages (and the geographical problem of teacher shortages) this may not be practical. It is likely however, that there would be relatively few people teaching for a longer period without being enrolled on an appropriate programme. NIPT does not have a strong view on this. Induction is not currently compulsory in Academies – is it possible that this will change with induction becoming mandatory? Part 1 of the training does have a shelf life and if the training is not consolidated within a reasonable timescale, there is a possibility of losing the learning.

Q13: Considering all of the above, what impact would this model of a strengthened QTS have on post-ITT teachers in terms of teaching practice, retention, and morale?

It is likely to have a positive impact on all these areas. Practice invariably improves over time. Hopefully morale and recruitment would also benefit. Members of the profession are always likely to value opportunities for training.

Q14: What impact would this model of a strengthened QTS have on the wider school system?

It is likely to impact more positively on recruitment and retention, create a stronger culture of professional learning and provide teachers with opportunities for keeping up-to-date in their area of specialism. It needs to have a proper framework, be properly administered, personalised and quality checked to have the desired impact.

Q15: Are there any other implications that we should consider, and what are your suggestions for addressing them?

It is important that professional development does not simply focus on promotion to positions of leadership and management. Although courses such as NPQML and NPQSL are valuable within the system, NIPT believes there should be high quality training and development in key stage, subject or other direct teaching specialism such as SEND and these should have equal status and equality in relation to accreditation.

Clarification would be needed over whether an NQT would need to pass Year 1 before proceeding with Year 2.

Opportunities later in the career of the teacher for a sabbatical could be a significant move to support teacher retention.

Q16: Do you think that there is a market for specialist NPQs – or similar – for teachers who aspire to other forms of leadership within the school system?

Professions often look at a linear progression from trainee to Management. Within the teaching profession there needs to be appropriately respected status for the 'career teacher' who wants to continue to develop and specialise in good quality teaching rather than aspiring to leadership positions, as not everyone wants to be a manager.

CPD needs to be mandatory, more consistent in both quantity and quality across the sector and critically, properly funded.

Part 2:

Q17: What specialisms should be prioritised?

There is a need for subject related specialisms along with professional training related to specific areas such as SEND or E2L.

Q18: Do you think there is a market for non-leadership NPQs or similar at further developing subject expertise? How should they differ between primary and secondary phases?

There is a strong market for non-leadership NPQs. As above, the subject based NPQ linked to extending subject knowledge or subject based pedagogy would add to the quality of teaching within the profession. The obvious benefits that a relevant specialist degree can bring in terms of breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding should however not be underestimated. There could be an important role for subject associations in this process. The Geographical Association, for example has developed such courses that are likely to be modelled by other subject associations. Such organisations may be very valuable contributors to such professional training.

Q19: What additional support should be offered for teachers who work in more challenging schools to undertake further professional qualifications?

Specialist training in support strategies including differentiation and strategies for supporting disadvantaged students should be offered. Opportunities for 'buddying' with more experienced teachers in other challenging schools should be made available. If this is to work, there first needs to be an agreed national understanding of the definition of a 'challenging school'.

Q20: Do you agree that a CPD badging scheme is something that should be developed? What organisations might be best placed to deliver this service?

This would be a good approach and would require further investigation. This form of recognised accreditation could be awarded by HEIs, subject associations and organisations such as NIPT.

Q21: How should government incentivise effective professional development for teachers, particularly in the areas and schools where it is most needed?

Ongoing funding will be essential if this system is to have parity with other professions such as medicine and law. It needs to be perceived as something worthwhile. It also needs to link to teacher performance management and Teacher Standards. There needs to be time and resources for CPD and the opportunity to put what has been learned into action.

Q22: How can government best support the development of a genuine culture of mentoring in schools?

As previously mentioned accreditation for mentors should be offered following

appropriate training and CPD leads should be considered part of school senior leadership.

Q23: Do you think that a fund to pilot sabbaticals would be a positive step for the profession?

The main problem is encouraging people into the teaching profession however this is a step in the right direction to help the situation and encourage people to remain within the profession.

Q24: What would the impact be for teachers and schools of enabling more teachers to take sabbaticals, providing they are related to their teaching practice?

This, we believe takes place in other countries and is likely to be something that supports recruitment and retention in the profession. Has enough consideration been given to research into the practice in other countries where teaching has a higher status?

Summary comment

NIPT is clearly supportive of any improvements to induction and on-going professional development for teachers that may help recruitment, retention and in raising the standard of teaching and the status of the profession. The movement to a two-year induction process will help in this respect but we strongly believe that this should be just one part of a wider, more cohesive approach to on-going professional development in teaching which incorporates high quality training in subject, phase, educational specialism and school leadership. It is vital that this new initiative and any wider reform is properly resourced otherwise it may have unintended detrimental consequences on teachers and schools.

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