

How to write a good Assessment



Well written assessments come in a variety of forms, there is no perfect template. Many of the better ones are relatively succinct. When writing assessments, we need to be secure that the NQT has met each Teacher Standard but we also need to be mindful of having realistic expectations for teachers new to the profession. Both the two-year induction and the Early Career Framework (ECF) provide the NQT with opportunities for an extended period to master identified areas for development, experience wider professional training and to reflect on priorities and plans for their longer-term career. This period should be experienced within the context of a realistic work-life balance. The following ideas may be helpful in constructing a good assessment:

The Evaluative Statement

Each of the Teachers' Standards has space for you to write an evaluative statement. This should include a qualitative statement along with something that is being judged, the extent to which it occurs and an example that helps to demonstrate the circumstances in which this was perceived or observed. This could be described as an **ESEE** statement where:

E = Evaluation

S = Subject

Ext = Extent

Exa = Example

Three of the Teachers' Standards are shown below with examples of evaluative statements. One example in each Standard shows how the ESEE statement can be referenced.

Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge

'Widespread (Ext) and effective use (E) of visual aids (S) encourages learners to discuss and define technical terms and use them appropriately (Exa)'

'The use of open questioning is frequent and contributes very effectively to the deeper understanding of concepts'

'Pupils were clearly engaged by the communication of strong subject knowledge in the observed Year 6 lesson. This subsequently led to some good quality creative writing from most members of the group.'

Make accurate and productive use of assessment

'Book scrutiny (S) suggests that the school assessment policy is not being followed (E) regularly enough (Ext) and so learners cannot see their own progress. (Exa)'

'Examination questions are often used effectively to track student progress and inform future lesson planning.'

'Departmental/Year Team marking policies are always followed. After each assessment, students are guided in the setting of further targets. In term two therefore, the progress students are making can be quantified.'

'Question and answer sessions are well-planned and always form part of plenary activities. Pupils have fed back to say that they find this very helpful in summarising learning.'

Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment.

'Continued (Ext) failure (E) to follow school policies (S) regarding classroom management allows learning to become disruptive for many. (Exa)'

'The warm welcome pupils always receive when entering the classroom provides a positive introduction to lessons and encourages good behaviour from the pupils.'

'In all lessons observed varied activities have been planned that have engaged learners in a positive way resulting in good learning behaviours being demonstrated.'

In short -

The evaluative statement section needn't be long. Two or three (certainly no more than four) such statements for each Standard would be adequate. The above sections are a fairly good guide on the amount to write.

Really well-written evaluative statements (in assessments 2 and 3) will make reference to any progress or otherwise made against a target set in the previous assessment. This can provide strong evidence of the progress being made by the NQT.

Evidence used to form these judgements

Avoid copying and pasting long lists of evidence. Use evidence that is relevant to the standard. The formal lesson observation is rightly often utilised but try not to overuse this as evidence.

The following are good examples of the types of evidence you might use for the following Standards. A bullet point format provides clarity.

Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils

- Learning walks on _____ and _____
- Book scrutiny focussing on extended essay writing in Year 10 History.

- *Well-designed homework activities in the Planning File for Year 7.*
- *Written feedback from each mentor session.*

Plan and teach well-structured lessons

- *Lesson observations on _____ and _____.*
- *Co-planning in tutor meetings.*
- *Good quality reflective comments in the learning journal.*
- *Feedback from Student Voice.*
- *Daily informal meeting with the mentor and other teachers in the team.*

Adapt teaching to respond to the needs of all pupils

- *The increasing number of differentiated resources prepared for Year 5 maths.*
- *The challenge provided by deep questioning to more able students in the Year 9 Geography lesson observed on _____.*
- *The use of selected sections of text to develop deeper knowledge for more able pupils.*
- *Effective communication in regular meetings with Learning Support.*

Fulfil wider professional responsibilities

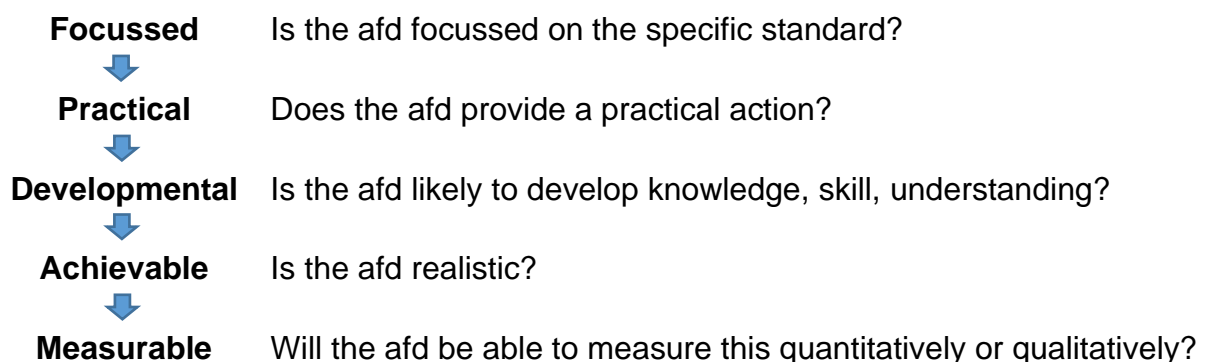
- *Observation of positive handling of parents at the Year 10 Parents' Evening.*
- *The observation of good collaborative contributions in year team meetings.*
- *Effective contributions to the professional learning activities on the two training days (could make reference to specific themes/topics).*

Again, the above is an indication of the number of pieces of evidence that could be used for each Standard.

Areas for development and targets

It is not necessary to set an area(s) for development for every Standard although it would be expected that a new teacher in term one should have something to focus on in most of the Standards. You may, on occasions wish to set more than one area for development for a Standard. Areas for development may reduce proportionately in Assessments 2 and 3. There should, however be some set in assessment 3. Nobody is perfect! Development is something that should be seen as a career-long process.

When designing areas for development there should be a clear line of sight with the evaluative statement. Consider the following:



Some examples are provided:

Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils

Use tracking data and/or formal assessments to make judgements about which Year 4 pupils need additional guidance in phonics.

Observe and note approaches to questioning used by Ms X following practical sessions in A level Chemistry. Replicate these with your A level Biology group.

More AfL techniques are needed in key stage 3 to quickly check understanding. The use of mini white boards is an option.

Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge

Reflect on how you will increase the independent reading pupils are given and use the guidelines provided in the department meeting about how to check this has been completed by pupils.

Design a presentation on the key influences on rates of coastal erosion that ensures pupils have a knowledge of all the necessary terminology for this topic.

Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment

Be absolutely consistent with how you greet and settle your key stage 3 classes in line with the school behaviour policy. Use the rewards system a little more frequently, particularly with Year 7.

Use some more varied classroom layouts and groupings with the Year 5 class and ensure that the three identified pupils are kept separate.

Final section written by the NQT:

There is separate more detailed guidance you should refer to. A good 'self-evaluation' would include:

- is the NQT broadly in agreement with the content of the assessment this should have been discussed and agreed prior to writing). Thanking your mentor is a nice touch.
- reference(s) to areas of strength/skills that have been developed through professional learning
- things you have enjoyed during the term
- a focus in on two or three of the identified areas for development reflecting, with examples on what is going to be done to address the identified targets. These should be **prioritised** following discussion between the tutor/mentor and NQT and the reading of the completed assessment form. It's about looking back and looking forward.

It is not necessary to comment on every Teacher Standard in the reflective statement. Again, we would encourage NQTs **prioritise**. This section can usually be appropriately covered in about half to three quarters of a page.

Summary:

It is important that the overall picture of the assessment is congruent with the grade that is given. Please reflect on the grade to ensure it aligns with the written comments. Assessments should reflect the development of the NQT from Assessment one, to two, to three.