



NALDIC response to the consultation on the review of professional standards for teachers

a) Do the standards encapsulate appropriately the attributes, knowledge and skills of teachers at each career stage?

NALDIC believes that whilst it is essential that any standards help teachers to plan their careers, the primary purpose of teaching standards should be to improve practice for the benefit of learners. Of particular concern to the Association is how well such standards will ensure that teachers are increasingly able to meet the distinctive needs of bilingual learners and those learning English as an additional language in our schools. Of particular concern to the association is an amendment which has been made to the key EAL standard for QTS (Q16) which now reads '*Know how to make effective **personalised** provision for those they teach **in so far as this is practicable**, including those for whom English is an additional language, and how to take practical account of diversity and promote equality and inclusion in their teaching*'. NALDIC considers that this amendment represents a significantly retrograde step as it fails to assert sufficiently strongly the need for all teachers to be prepared to meet and respond appropriately to linguistic diversity within the mainstream classroom. Past and present migration patterns to the UK mean that linguistic diversity is well established in many areas and has become, and will continue to be a significant feature of the pupil population in the majority of schools in England. The phrase 'as far as this is practicable' is particularly concerning as the implication is that making provision for EAL learners is somehow both additional and burdensome. In reality, pupils learning EAL are an obvious manifestation of 'diversity' and any standard which notes that their needs be met only in so far as this is 'practicable' is clearly failing to promote either equality or inclusion.

b) Do the standards provide a reference point for discussions about professional development?

Yes

c) Is there appropriate progression both within individual standards and across the standards as a whole?

No. NALDIC is disappointed to note that the expectations of post-threshold, excellent teachers, and advanced skills teachers' competency and understanding in relation to EAL have been reduced in the current version of the draft professional standards. Standard 2.2 PEA originally read '*Have the knowledge to provide practical advice on matters concerning equality, inclusion and diversity in teaching, and to guide colleagues on making effective provision for all those they teach, including those learners for whom English is an additional language or who have special educational needs*'. We welcomed this standard which recognised the key role that many experienced EAL and EMAG teachers play in staff development and support and are very disappointed that it has been removed entirely and there are no additional expectations regarding EAL understanding expected of post threshold teachers. In contrast, recognition of the advisory role of many experienced teachers is maintained within many other standards. Excellent and advanced skills teachers are now expected simply to '*Have an extensive knowledge on matters concerning equality, inclusion and diversity in teaching*' (E6).

NALDIC's objection to these changes is two-fold. Firstly, the standards no longer provide for appropriate progression. We would argue that as England is a pluricultural and plurilingual community, no teacher should be considered to have reached a more experienced level (such as performance threshold or senior teacher) if they cannot demonstrate that they can guide colleagues on making effective provision for EAL learners. Secondly the revised standard for excellent and advanced skills teachers is too general to help teachers identify their professional development needs and makes **no** explicit mention of bilingual learners and those learning English as an additional language in our schools.

d) To aid coherence and avoid fragmentation, are the standards grouped together appropriately?

Yes, however we are disappointed to note that whereas achievement and diversity originally underpinned all the following professional knowledge and understanding standards, it is now one of the final standards within this section.

e) Do the standards reflect the changing nature of the school workforce following workforce reform and the role of the teacher working with a wider team where many team members are making a contribution to pupils' learning?

No, see c) above. We have argued strongly in the past that the standards will need to be able to be applied to all teaching and learning situation and not only those which conform to dominant current working conventions, for example, class teachers in the primary phase and NC subject teachers in the secondary phase. If the draft standards are to apply universally, they must fully encompass the needs of professionals in 'non-standard settings', for example EAL specialist teachers, community language teachers, specialist teachers of the deaf, professionals working with learners with a range of special educational needs and learning difficulties and disabilities etc. In our field it is essential that the skills of experienced professionals are fully recognised to ensure that expertise is retained within the field for the benefit of bilingual pupils. The current situation is that professionals are leaving the field because the skills they have developed are not fully recognised and rewarded within the current system of career development. So despite the fact that most EAL specialists are highly qualified and experienced, as well as already having a full range of 'general' teaching skills, their expertise is not considered to be on a par with other teaching professionals. The draft professional standards have failed to redress this by removing the expectation of advisory EAL expertise in post threshold and senior teachers.

f) Do the standards reflect the distinctive contribution of the teacher within multi-disciplinary teams, possibly in settings other than schools?

No, see above. We are also disappointed to see that the wording related to the understanding of EAL specialist teacher roles has disappeared.

g) Are the standards accessible, succinct, clear, precise, challenging and realistic?
See below

i) Are there any essential omissions in the revised standards?
See below

h) The TDA plans to develop, in conjunction with social partners, guidance and exemplification to help teachers and head teachers to understand and use the standards. What sort of guidance and support would teachers and head teachers find most helpful?

Whilst the standards are coherent, their extremely general nature means that without considerable interpretation and explanation they are insufficiently clear. Even then the lack of precision may lead to the standards being interpreted in such a way that a wide variation in the quality and range of actual practice may result. Whilst teachers and headteachers with considerable experience of working in linguistically, culturally and socially diverse settings may be able to interpret *'Know how to make effective personalised provision for those they teach, including those for whom English is an additional language'* appropriately, it will not necessarily be clear to all practitioners. Evidence gathered by the Association over the past 15 years has indicated the lack of a statutory framework for professional development and progression relating to EAL learners has meant that few teachers have been able to identify their needs effectively. As an association, we have many years experience of working to develop teachers' ability to make effective provision for EAL learners and we would welcome the opportunity to work closely with the TDA to develop a suitable framework. We would urge the TDA to eschew 'guidance' in favour of a nationally recognised high quality professional development qualification of the kind that is available to most teaching professionals in other English speaking countries. In particular, we would wish to see the return of the requirement for all post threshold teachers to *'Have the knowledge to provide practical advice on matters concerning equality, inclusion and diversity in teaching, and to guide colleagues on making effective provision for all those they teach, including those learners for whom English is an additional language or who have special educational needs'* and would wish to see this accompanied by a nationally recognised EAL qualification.

NALDIC
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