



Department
for Education

A world-class teaching profession

Government consultation

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Respond by 3 February 2015

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Foreword by the Secretary of State for Education and the Minister of State for Schools

One of the first actions taken by the Coalition Government in 2010 was the publication of the education White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*. There, we recognised the vital importance of good quality teachers and teaching, and set out ambitious proposals for reform: our vision was, and remains, for England's schools to be on a par with the best in the world.

Up and down the country, teachers and school leaders are doing truly amazing things every day, transforming the lives of children and young people while constantly working to improve their own professional practice. We are proud to have worked closely with the profession to make significant improvements to the quality of our schools and to the lives of pupils from all backgrounds. We have done this, in part, by recognising that teachers are the experts. By giving them greater control over what they do, and greater responsibility for the leadership and development of their profession, we can help to build a truly world-class teaching profession in England.

We have overhauled initial teacher training. Through School Direct we are giving our best schools, working with top universities, a leading role in designing and delivering high-quality training that prepares new teachers to excel in the classroom from day one. Teach First is consistently rated as one of the top graduate employers, and is now the country's *biggest* graduate recruiter. In 2015, Teach First will place high-calibre graduates in schools in every region of England, outstanding new teachers who will play a vital role in unlocking the potential of pupils from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

Teaching is a career of choice for the best graduates from our top universities – 74 per cent of those entering teaching now have a first or upper-second class degree; more than ever before. And teaching is the single most popular career choice for graduates of Oxford University. These facts speak for themselves; teaching is being accorded the status it deserves.

Together, we have taken the first steps towards enabling the teaching profession to use its own outstanding performers as its most valuable resource for improvement. We have helped schools build an infrastructure that enables school-to-school support and improvement. Many more schools have become accredited as providers of initial teacher training in their own right. And the expanding network of Teaching Schools – of which over 600 have now been accredited – is leading the way in driving forward excellence in teacher training and development, leadership development and use of research and evidence in practice.

This consultation marks our commitment to build on the progress made so far by helping teachers to go even further in raising the standards of their profession.

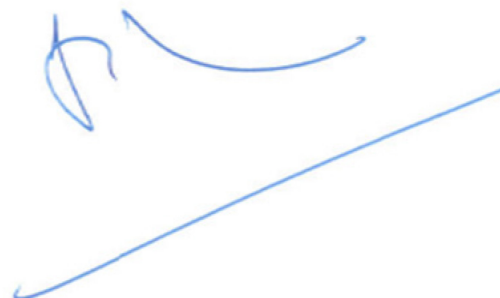
Teaching should rightly enjoy an equally high status as professions such as medicine and law. But in order to achieve that standing, teaching needs strong professional leadership to champion the highest standards of practice and the continuous development and improvement of its members. That is why we are proposing to support the creation of a new, independent body which can support the teaching profession as a whole and act as an advocate for the highest professional standards. The value of a new “College of Teaching” is almost unanimously agreed upon by experts and – although we are very clear that such a body needs to be independent of Government and led by the profession if it is to be truly successful – we are committed to offering the support that is needed to make its establishment a reality.

At the heart of our proposals is a belief that teaching should be a *learning* profession, whose members have access to high-quality, evidence-based development and improvement opportunities throughout their careers and are committed to seizing those opportunities. However, feedback from the profession has consistently indicated that too many of the development opportunities on offer are of variable quality. We are therefore proposing a package of measures designed to improve the quality of teachers’ professional development. At its centre is a new fund which will support high-quality, evidence-based professional development programmes, led by the Teaching Schools network and rigorously evaluated for impact. Not only will this have the immediate effect of spreading good practice more widely – particularly targeting those schools which need the most support to improve – it will also build a lasting legacy by establishing an invaluable knowledge and evidence base about “what works”, which can be shared across the whole profession.

Much of the thinking set out in this consultation paper has taken its initial shape from the many hours of discussion that we and our Ministerial colleagues, as well as the officials in our Department, have shared with teachers, school leaders, governors and parents. This is an invitation to join a debate about the future of the teaching profession in our country. We look forward to engaging with that debate, and responding to those challenges.



Rt. Hon Nicky Morgan MP
Secretary of State for Education



Rt. Hon David Laws MP
Minister of State for Schools

1. Introduction: the vision for a world-class teaching profession

- 1.1 Evidence from around the world consistently arrives at the same simple conclusion: the quality of teaching is the single most important school-based factor determining how well children achieve¹.
- 1.2 The most successful countries clearly recognise the fundamental truth that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. In Singapore and South Korea, in Shanghai and in Finland, entry to teaching is fiercely competitive and the profession remains the choice of the very best graduates. Teachers are trusted and autonomous professionals, rewarded accordingly, who respond by taking responsibility for their own career-long development and improvement. They work together as a professional community, engaging in cutting-edge research and basing their own practice on the best available evidence of what works. They are accountable for the impact they have on their pupils, and they constantly strive to better their own knowledge, skills and expertise. As a result, the voice of the teaching profession is a powerful and respected one.
- 1.3 These are the characteristics that we believe should, and can, come to define the teaching profession in England. There is much to celebrate in the quality of our teachers; but there is still more to do to bolster the professional standing of teachers in England. This document sets out the steps that we propose to take next in support of the teaching profession's journey of improvement.
- 1.4 Our 2010 White Paper, [The Importance of Teaching](#), set out the initial steps that Government proposed to take to make teaching an attractive profession for the brightest and the best, and to support schools and teachers to help each other in the quest for improvement – whether in the context of initial teacher training, setting standards for the profession, or building capacity for leadership and improvement across networks of schools. Together we have made good progress.
- 1.5 In this next phase we need to focus more squarely on the professional leadership and development of teaching. So we are now proposing to take further steps with the single overarching aim of promoting the quality of teaching. We believe that we can move a significant way towards that goal by putting more powers in the hands of an increasingly self-improving teaching profession, whilst continuing to support and nurture our teachers' commitment

¹ See, for instance, Barber, M. and Mourshed, M., *How the world's best performing schools systems come out on top* (McKinsey, 2007).

to their own continuous improvement and development. This document therefore sets out proposals which will:

- Support the establishment of a new, independent professional body for teaching; and,
- Raise the quality of professional development experienced by teachers, using the best schools to design and deliver programmes that are rigorously evaluated for impact, and which build a clear evidence base that will be beneficial to the whole profession.

1.6 Taken together, these proposals represent the next phase of a key strand of the Government's plan for education: putting the teaching profession in England on a par with the best in the world. None of the proposals set out here is about Government telling teachers what to do or how to do it; our role is to create the conditions for teachers to take the lead. Our commitment is to listen carefully and take action in response to what they tell us.

1.7 This document is intended to stimulate discussion across the profession; the consultation period will provide teachers with an opportunity to give us their views on the proposed direction of travel, and tell us what more we can do to support further improvements in teaching standards. Although the focus of the proposals here is teachers working in schools, primarily with compulsory school age children, we also recognise that high-quality teaching is vitally important in both the early years and the post-16 phases of education. Early Years Teachers are a critical part of the early education workforce, with many working in and around schools. Working with the FE sector, the Government has developed a workforce strategy, and the sector now benefits from an independent professional body, the Education and Training Foundation. Teacher professionalism is vital to education in all phases; our proposals will help to ensure that a more coherent approach can be taken across the piece, with the single goal of improving the quality of teaching.

1.8 Teachers have already played an important role in shaping some of our early thinking about these proposals; we are interested in opening up the debate more widely, consulting with teachers and their representatives, school leaders and governors, parents, education experts and other interested parties. We invite all to contribute to this important debate.

2. Support for a “College of Teaching”

- 2.1 We share teachers’ ambition to be part of a profession with world-leading standards which commands high esteem across society. Leadership for realising this ambition should rightly sit with the profession itself, and not with Government. As has long been the case with other top professions such as law and medicine, we believe that teaching professionals themselves – rather than politicians or Government regulators – should have primary responsibility for the standards and development of their profession.
- 2.2 There has been considerable recent interest in a new professional body for teaching. A number of pieces of work have been undertaken – independently of Government – to explore the appetite for, and possible functions of, such a body².
- 2.3 We welcome this work, and recognise that a prestigious, profession-led organisation that takes responsibility for standards and improvements in teaching could be an integral part of an increasingly independent and self-improving profession. A new “College of Teaching” has significant potential to drive forward the culture change which is already starting to make teaching a more evidence-based profession which confidently grounds its practice in robust research and evaluation.
- 2.4 Critical to the success of a new College of Teaching would be its independence from Government – a College should provide effective support for the teaching profession as a whole. As such, it must be free of political influence; indeed it should have the confidence and authority to speak independently of Government, and with real credibility.
- 2.5 While fully understanding and respecting this need for independence, we are persuaded that Government can play an initial role in supporting and enabling the establishment of a professional body, facilitating the efforts of those who are leading from within the sector. We are therefore proposing to take concrete action in support of further work – which must be led by teachers – to make the College of Teaching a reality within a clearly defined timeframe, with the aim of it opening for business in 2016.

² See, for example:

- <http://www.princes-ti.org.uk/CollegeofTeaching/>
- <http://tdtrust.org/rcot/>
- http://www.collegeofteachers.ac.uk/educationtoday63_1/declaration

- 2.6 Provided that a body can be established successfully and secure credibility and broad representation within the profession, we expect that it should, over time, take greater responsibility for areas such as Teachers' Standards, induction training and continuous professional development. In terms of immediate action, however, we believe that it would be appropriate for Government to do one or more of the following three things in support of a new body becoming established.
- 2.7 **Start-up funding.** We are proposing to make public funding available to support a strong and workable business model, possibly on a match-funded basis. We are inviting interested organisations and groups with appropriate experience to present initial proposals for taking forward the establishment of a new body, drawing on the offer of public funding as the stimulus for an innovative approach that would secure widespread support from across the teaching profession.
- 2.8 There should not be a long-term role for Government in terms of funding a new body beyond its initial establishment. Any proposal will, therefore, need to set out a clear plan for ensuring that a College can become financially sustainable through its membership and activities. There may be opportunities for a College to establish revenue streams from the activities it carries out, including through the receipt of membership fees. An endowment approach might also offer part of the solution, ensuring that the new organisation does not require any further funding from Government beyond an initial contribution towards set-up costs.
- 2.9 **Initial Functions.** A fully-operational professional body can, in time, lead the way on teacher standards and provide a focal point for teachers' professional development. We believe that this could involve carrying out some functions relating to teachers and teaching that are currently fulfilled by Government. This might include functions that are presently exercised by the Secretary of State, or other roles undertaken by the Department for Education or the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) in relation to teacher training and development.
- 2.10 Clearly not all such functions could be devolved to a new body with immediate effect; some might require legislation or careful transition to ensure quality and continuity of service. But we will expect interested parties proposing a business model to outline a range of functions that they would suggest a new College fulfils in both the shorter and longer terms. The model should also set out how the proposed governance and accountability structures would accommodate these functions, as well as being both fully representative of the teaching profession and independent of Government.

2.11 **Non-financial support.** We would be happy to offer support and resources to those within the education sector who are committed to taking forward the set-up of a new body. We recognise that there are significant logistical and organisational challenges to be faced before a new body can be set up; we therefore propose to offer a facilitating role, in combination with our commitment to initial public funding and the devolution of functions, to the proposers of a credible business plan. This might involve providing access to expertise and other resources (including staff support) from the Department and its Agencies, although of course in doing so we would be fully sensitive to the need for the new body to have clear independence from Government.

Expressions of Interest

2.12 We invite the submission of initial proposals from interested parties by the close of this consultation period (i.e. 5pm on 3 February 2015). For the avoidance of doubt, this is not a formal call to tender. We ask that initial proposals be summarised in approximately ten pages, and would expect them to describe:

- How a new professional body would have a positive impact on improving standards of teachers and teaching;
- The functions that a College should expect to perform, including proposals for functions that a College might, over time, take from Government;
- The benefits of membership of a new body for individual teachers;
- A governance and membership model that ensures the College can be fully representative of the teaching profession, and fully independent of Government;
- A funding model that would allow the College to become self-sustaining over time, without reliance on continued financial support from the public purse; and
- Details of the proposing organisation and its expertise in the education sector and/or running a professional association.

3. Improving teachers' professional development

- 3.1 It is vital that serving teachers have access to on-going, high-quality opportunities to update and refresh their skills and knowledge, and to keep abreast of the very latest developments that can help them to improve their own practice and the outcomes of their pupils.
- 3.2 Fundamentally, teaching must be seen as a “learning profession”, as it already is in countries which have high-performing schools systems. In these countries teachers are highly-respected professionals who take responsibility for their own development and improvement. Professional development is not something that ends after one, two or even five years in the classroom; it must be sustained throughout a career, as the teacher consolidates their experience and possibly takes on leadership responsibilities. Evidence-driven, career-long learning is the hallmark of top professions like medicine and must therefore rightly become the norm in supporting a world-class teaching profession.
- 3.3 Teachers report that far too much professional development is currently of poor quality and has little or no impact on improving the quality of their teaching. Too often “CPD” is viewed narrowly as attending courses or listening to stale talks accompanied by endless slides, padded out to fill INSET days. Teacher development is not always adequately focused on the specific needs of pupils, nor is it always sustained and practice-based. Teachers do not, at present, have ready access to a clear evidence base on “what works” to allow them to make informed decisions about their own professional development.
- 3.4 A new College of Teaching would be ideally placed to provide leadership of professional development so that excellence becomes the norm rather than the exception. However, this will need time to become established. In the meantime, we are proposing a clear package of measures that will both support teachers now and lay the foundations for future success, helping to create a landscape that will enable a new professional body to have a major impact from the very start.

High-quality professional development fund and robust evaluation

- 3.5 We propose to establish a new high-profile fund to drive the delivery of high-quality, evidence-based professional development for teachers. This will be delivered in a way that has the broadest possible impact, reaching schools across the country, particularly those most in need of support. This additional funding will be a real catalyst for change in the culture and practice of professional development across the teaching profession.

- 3.6 Although the network is relatively young and still expanding, Teaching Schools are the natural conduit for delivering more outstanding practice and disseminating the outcomes of their work widely. We will therefore invite Teaching Schools to bid for this additional funding both to support the development of new initiatives and to extend the reach of excellent existing programmes so that many more teachers, working in a wide variety of different schools, have access to high-quality professional development.
- 3.7 Evidence will be put at the heart of this initiative. Evaluation of impact will be hard-wired into these professional development projects from the outset to build a clear evidence base around “what works”. This is hugely significant; there is currently too little robust evidence on the impact of different types of professional development for teachers, making it more difficult for schools to take informed decisions about what they do³. New funding will therefore be contingent on strong evaluation plans and we will work with partners, such as the Education Endowment Foundation, to ensure quality, rigour and co-ordination of the evaluations. Teaching Schools in receipt of funding will also be expected to work widely with partners – including other Teaching Schools and the schools already in their alliances, but also bringing in more outlying schools, particularly those requiring improvement – to ensure that they have the broadest possible impact, with support reaching where it is most needed.
- 3.8 This proposed approach will not only have an immediate, tangible impact for the many teachers participating in funded programmes, it will also build a long-term legacy by ensuring that the knowledge base about effective professional development practice is significantly improved and made widely accessible.

Online platform to present evidence-based best practice

- 3.9 In order to secure this legacy, it is vital that all teachers and school leaders have access to the best evidence in relation to professional development. To this end, we propose to work with leading organisations to **develop an effective online platform for knowledge sharing**, drawing on the robust evaluation of the Teaching School-led programmes outlined above. This might draw on existing models such as the “What Works Clearinghouse”⁴ that has been established by the United States Department of Education to review research on different educational interventions, the new Evidence4Impact website from the Institute for Effective Education, or the excellent Teaching

³ See the DfE research priorities and questions document:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-priorities-and-questions-teachers-and-teaching>

⁴ <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

and Learning Toolkit from the Education Endowment Foundation. The key purpose of the new platform will be to provide teachers with the information they need to take evidence-based approaches to developing their practice.

- 3.10 In the longer term, a new professional body for teaching would provide the natural home for such a function, collating and disseminating educational research in readily usable formats and providing a focal point for best practice. Building the evidence base now and making it readily available to teachers is an important foundation on which a future College of Teaching can be built.

Standard for Teachers' Professional Development

- 3.11 Underpinning the culture change in professional development that we want to catalyse through Teaching Schools and the sharing of evidence, there needs to be a clear set of expectations and an articulation of what good practice can look like. Alongside this consultation, we will establish an expert group of outstanding teachers and heads to create a new **Standard for Teachers' Professional Development**.
- 3.12 The new standard will complement the existing Teachers' Standards to set out a crisp and succinct description of effective practice in professional development. This will help teachers and training providers to understand what good-quality professional development can look like, and will debunk some common myths. Schools will, of course, be able to tailor their approach to professional development according to their own needs. The new standard will not be mandatory or statutory; rather it will provide a helpful point of reference for those schools which need a little extra support in identifying and understanding good practice, and thinking about how they can apply lessons learned by others in their own environments.
- 3.13 Teachers' professional development is not only crucially important for improving the quality of teaching and helping pupils achieve their full potential, it has wider benefits for empowering teachers as professionals. But we know that it is difficult to get it right. As such, in addition to hearing views on the specific proposals outlined in this document, we are keen to hear new ideas, particularly about what more Government could do to support the best schools in their mission to lead and spread outstanding practice.

Questions for consultation

This consultation document asks the following questions:

Q1. What are the greatest impediments teachers and schools face in regularly undertaking high-quality professional development?

Q2. To what extent, and how, do teachers currently evaluate their professional development? What would support more rigorous evaluation?

Q3. Where should the balance of responsibility lie between teachers, schools and Government for ensuring that appropriate professional development is undertaken? How, in the longer term, might responsibility sit with a new independent professional body?

Q4. Despite the growing reach of the Teaching Schools network, are there areas where coverage of schools would remain a concern? How could any gaps be addressed?

Q5. What should the funding criteria be for Teaching Schools wishing to draw on the new funding pot for professional development? Should there, for example, be a requirement for Teaching Schools to work with a predetermined proportion of schools which are not already “good” or “outstanding”?

Q6. Will teachers benefit from an online platform that collates and presents evidence-based best practice?

Q7. In addition to the proposals outlined here, what other approaches would help schools to remove barriers and incentivise effective professional development for teachers?

We would like to hear your views on our proposals.

Who this is for

- Academies
- Colleges
- Early years setting
- Free school
- Further education college
- Headteachers
- Higher education institution
- Independent school
- Local authorities

- Local-authority maintained
- School governors
- Schools
- Sixth-form college
- Special school
- Studio school
- Subject associations
- Teachers
- UTC
- Organisations representing school teachers and lecturers.

Consultation events

During this period, consultation events will be organised to allow interested parties to contribute to the discussion. Details of these events will be publicised via DfE social media channels.

Twitter

We would also like to stimulate a debate through social media channels, and would encourage use of the Twitter hashtag **#worldclassteachers**. This hashtag will be monitored, and a digest of relevant posts will be included in the evidence summary.

Establishment of a College of Teaching

Expressions of interest in the establishment of a College of Teaching should also be submitted by 5pm on 3 February 2015. Submissions, as well as queries, can be made electronically to CollegeTeaching.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk or by post to the above address. Proposers should ensure that their submission covers the points outlined in paragraph 2.12 of this document.

Issue date

The consultation was issued on 9 December 2014

Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the team at World-ClassTeachers.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk.

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

The response

The results of the consultation and the Department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) in 2015.

Respond online

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit www.education.gov.uk/consultations to submit your response.

Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may download a word document version of the form and email it or post it.

By email

World-ClassTeachers.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk

By post

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Deadline

The consultation period closes on Tuesday 3 February 2015.



Department
for Education

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