

# THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF BEGINNING TEACHERS: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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# THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF BEGINNING TEACHERS: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## General

### 1. What changes have there been in teacher education?

The main change in the teacher education programme occurred in 1996. The changes were outlined in the paper, "Arrangements for Initial Teacher Education in Northern Ireland from 1 September 1996". The paper set out 5 areas of competence which underpinned the 3 stages of teacher education from the start of the 1996/97 academic year. The Induction stage was introduced at the start of the 1997/98 academic year and the arrangements for early professional development (EPD) commenced at the start of the 1998/99 academic year.

In 2007, the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) revised the competences and published them in "Teaching: the Reflective Profession". These competences now underpin the teacher education programme in Northern Ireland.

### 2. What are the 3 stages of teacher education?

The 3 main stages of teacher education are:

- Initial;
- Induction - the first year of teaching;
- Early Professional Development 1 and 2 – normally the second and third years of teaching.

### 3. Why have the 3 stages of teacher education been integrated?

An integrated approach to teacher education has been developed to provide a more holistic experience for beginning teachers in order that they may continue to develop as critical reflective practitioners, improve their teaching and the quality of pupil learning, and may see their ongoing professional development as part of a lifelong learning process. The integrated approach also enhances the collaboration between the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and the schools. The GTCNI competences which underpin all three stages are framed to encourage teachers to focus appropriately on aspects of their practice.

### 4. What does the 'partnership approach' mean?

A professional partnership exists between the schools, the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) of the ELBs, the HEIs and, where appropriate, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). All partners contribute, in a flexible and collaborative way, to the provision of an integrated programme of teacher education with the aim of providing professional support to beginning teachers. While all partners are involved at each of the 3 stages, the HEIs are *the lead body* at the initial stage, the ELBs' CASS are *the lead body* at the Induction stage and the schools are *the lead body* at the EPD stage.

### 5. What is the 'teacher competence model'?

The teacher competence model, described in the GTCNI's publication, 'Teaching: The Reflective Profession', underpins all 3 stages of teacher education and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This document sets out the competences which student teachers and qualified teachers develop throughout their careers under 5 areas of professional practice:

1. Professional Values and Practices;

2. Professional Knowledge and Understanding;
3. Professional Skills and Application in Planning and Leading;
4. Professional Skills and Application in Teaching and Learning; and
5. Professional Skills and Application in Assessment.

#### **6. What is the Career-Entry Profile (CEP)?**

Since 1997, every beginning teacher who qualified through the PGCE route, and those who have qualified since 1998 through the PGCE and BEd routes, has developed a Career-Entry Profile (CEP). The CEP is a professional portfolio profiling the strengths and developmental needs of the student teacher and involves:

- identifying needs;
- selecting goals;
- setting targets which will help to meet goals;
- agreeing action;
- reviewing action; and
- recording progress and achievement.

The CEP serves to encourage beginning teachers to develop a reflective approach to their professional development as well as acting as a vehicle of communication from the initial stage, to Induction, through to EPD. The CEP was updated in 2009.

#### **7. Who has access to the CEP?**

The CEP is a professional document designed to profile the strengths and developmental needs of the beginning teacher and, as such, the school principal and Board of Governors may require to see the appointed teacher's CEP. The principal, or the teacher-tutor on behalf of the principal, will discuss the CEP with the beginning teacher and assist him/her in its updating during Induction and EPD. However, the CEP does not play a part in the appointment process.

#### **8. Does the 'probationary year' still apply?**

No. From the 1 September 1997 there has no longer been a requirement for a teacher to successfully serve a probationary period before being fully recognised by the Department of Education (DE) as eligible to teach. At the end of the initial stage of teacher education the successful teacher is qualified to teach. Schools are no longer required to submit regular reports to DE on the teacher in his/her first year of teaching. The end of the initial stage of teacher education is followed by two support programmes – 1 year of Induction followed by 2 years of early professional development (EPD 1 and 2).

#### **9. What help is available to beginning teachers and teacher-tutors?**

A full programme of professional development is provided for beginning teachers and teacher-tutors at the Induction and EPD stages. Professional development resources to support the work of teacher-tutors and the development of beginning teachers are available from the ELBs. Information and electronic resources are available online from ELB websites.

#### **10. Will the teacher continue to be observed teaching?**

Classroom observation is an integral part of the continuing support for beginning teachers. It is the principal's continuing responsibility to monitor the quality of learning and teaching in the school. In some schools this responsibility is delegated to others, such as the teacher-tutor, a head of department, a key stage co-ordinator. Observation is an effective means of establishing shared experience which will inform the identification of needs,

targets and achievements, and as a means of supporting the process of reflective practice in all years of Induction and EPD.

**11. What is the responsibility of teachers who take on a teacher-tutor role of support to beginning teachers?**

There are different and distinct tutorial roles for teachers to play in the professional development of student and beginning teachers at all stages of teacher education: initial, Induction and EPD. The Induction/EPD support officers from ELBs' CASS in cooperation with school representatives have jointly produced a teacher-tutor handbook which describes and explains the roles, and the different requirements at each stage.

**12. Where can I find out more?**

The Induction/EPD officers of the ELBs will be able to provide further details and advice.

**13. Has a beginning teacher any right of appeal against adverse reports on his/her work?**

Yes, where a difficulty arises, the support of the ELB Induction and EPD officers should be sought. The beginning teacher (as for any teacher) should be advised in writing by the principal where the procedure for dealing with teachers whose work is unsatisfactory is being initiated.

## **Induction**

**14. What is the Induction stage and how does the beginning teacher (BT) engage with the Induction programme?**

The Induction stage is the first year of a teacher's professional development in school – full details of the process are outlined in the Teacher Education Partnership Handbook (August 2010 edition). All BTs must register with the appropriate ELB for Induction.

**15. What help is available for the Induction stage?**

The CASS in each ELB provides a programme of centre and school-based professional support for beginning teachers in the Induction stage aimed at helping them to address the personal needs and targets they have identified in their career-entry profiles and to prepare the personal action plan which is a foundation for early professional development. Beginning teachers take part in this programme to ensure continuity and progression in their professional development from initial teacher education to Induction. While all partners are involved at each of the 3 stages, the ELBs' CASS are *in the lead* at the Induction stage.

**16. When is the Induction stage completed?**

The Teacher Education Partnership Handbook, available from the DE and ELB websites, lists criteria to assist the Board of Governors of a school to confirm, on the recommendation of the principal, when the beginning teacher has completed Induction and may commence Early Professional Development.

**17. What is the position for a person who was awarded a teaching qualification prior to the introduction of competence based teacher education in 1996 and who does not enter the teaching profession until a number of years later?**

The teacher should engage in and successfully complete a programme based on an Induction action plan drawn up in collaboration with CASS and the school. The terms and conditions of employment of a teacher include participation in arrangements for his/her further training and professional development.

**18. How would a school know that Induction has been completed, especially if some time elapses between the periods of employment?**

The principal should refer to the **Induction Action Plan** and check that the ‘**Completion of Induction**’ certificate has been signed by the previous Board of Governors; the principal can seek confirmation from Teachers’ Salaries and Administration Branch at Waterside House, Londonderry and, from September 2009, the GTCNI, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Albany House, 73-75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast.

**19. What arrangements should apply to beginning teachers who have not completed Induction in the last country in which employed?**

The teacher’s performance should be measured against the Induction competences and, if appropriate, be allowed to proceed to EPD.

**20. Will there be a central record of teachers who have satisfactorily completed Induction?**

Yes, prior to September 2009 a central record was held by the Teachers’ Salaries and Administration Branch of the Department of Education, Waterside House, 75 Duke Street, Londonderry, BT47 6FP. From September 2009 this record has been held by the GTCNI, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Albany House, 73-75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AF.

**21. What checks can be made to ensure that only a teacher who has successfully completed Induction can enter the EPD programme?**

A teacher will have a certificate to confirm successful completion of Induction, signed by the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the school in which he/she was serving when Induction was completed. Confirmation of completion prior to September 2009 can also be sought from Teachers’ Salaries and Administration Branch of the Department of Education, Waterside House, 75 Duke Street, Londonderry, BT47 6FP and, from September 2009, the GTCNI, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Albany House, 73-75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AF.

**22. Who tells whom that Induction has been successfully completed?**

The Board of Governors of a school certifies completion of Induction on the professional advice and recommendation of the principal and teacher-tutor. The Board of Governors returns the certificate of completion to the principal who then informs the teacher of the outcome. A copy of the certificate of completion (detailing the teacher’s full name and TR number) is sent by the school to the GTCNI, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Albany House, 73-75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AF.

**23. What is the procedure if a beginning teacher does not satisfactorily complete Induction?**

The beginning teacher will be offered a further period of additional support. His/her progress will then be reviewed. If no improvement is evident, the beginning teacher (as for any teacher) should be advised in writing by the principal that the procedure for dealing with teachers whose work is unsatisfactory is being initiated.

**24. If a beginning teacher on a temporary contract does not satisfactorily complete Induction in a school and the school is not prepared to sign him/her off as having successfully completed Induction at the end of his/her period in the school, what does the school do and what happens when the teacher goes to another school?**

The first school carries out the Induction process and completes the interim review report(s) and where appropriate a summative report recommending that the beginning teacher should have a further period of Induction, i.e. a term. The next school picks this up and makes a decision based on the following:

a) if it deems sufficient progress to have been made it will complete a summative report and sign off the beginning teacher as having successfully completed Induction;

**or**

b) if it deems insufficient progress to have been made, it will complete a summative report, highlighting the areas of concern alongside any areas of strength and recommend a further period of Induction with support from external agencies. If no improvement is evident, the beginning teacher (as for any teacher) should be advised in writing by the principal that the procedure for dealing with teachers whose work is unsatisfactory is being initiated.

**25. How will a school know that a previous school has not been able to sign off a beginning teacher as having successfully completed Induction and that it is required to complete the process?**

A school should ask the teacher for sight of his/her certificate of completion, and may also seek confirmation from Teachers Salaries and Administration Branch, Department of Education, Waterside House, 75 Duke Street, Londonderry, BT47 6FP or, from September 2009, the GTCNI, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Albany House, 73-75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AF. If confirmation is not available then the school should ask to see the teacher's interim and/or summative reports to establish what support it will be required to provide.

**26. Can a teacher who trains in NI, and whose first year of teaching is in GB, complete Induction there during that year?**

Yes, as England, Scotland and Wales operate similar arrangements for Induction.

**27. Can a teacher who trains in NI, and whose first year of teaching is not in NI or GB, complete Induction during that year?**

In situations where a beginning teacher will be teaching in a recognised school, makes prior arrangements with CASS before leaving NI and maintains a portfolio of evidence while employed outside the UK, CASS will then be able to help the NI school, in which the beginning teacher will be later employed, decide whether or not it is appropriate for him/her to proceed to EPD.

**28. Can a beginning teacher who is teaching in a Homework Centre complete Induction there?**

Where such a beginning teacher (employed as a teacher) makes a prior arrangement and maintains regular contact with CASS and develops a portfolio of evidence while employed in the centre, CASS will then be able to advise on whether or not it is appropriate for the beginning teacher to be 'signed off'. Where appropriate, CASS can assess the teacher and sign off Induction.

**29. Can a beginning teacher who is teaching in education other than a school (EOTAS) complete Induction there?**

Where such a beginning teacher makes an arrangement with CASS on appointment to the post and maintains a portfolio of evidence while employed in the EOTAS service, CASS will then be able to help advise on whether or not it is appropriate for the beginning teacher to be 'signed off'. Where appropriate, CASS can assess the teacher and sign off Induction.

**Early Professional Development (EPD)**

**30. Who takes part in EPD?**

All teachers who have successfully completed their Induction are required to take part in EPD. The arrangements apply to teachers from the PGCE route who qualified from 1997 and to all teachers who qualified from 1998.

**31. To which teachers who enter teaching in NI after a period of teaching elsewhere do the EPD arrangements apply?**

The arrangements apply to teachers from the PGCE route qualifying from 1997 and to all who qualified from 1998.

**32. If a teacher completes Induction (either in NI or outside NI) and also has some further teaching experience outside NI, how long is it before he/she will fall outside the EPD process?**

If he/she has completed Induction and has taught for at least two further years, he/she should not normally be required to take part in EPD on coming to teach in NI. However, the school may require the teacher to engage in a short 'Induction programme' to familiarise him/her with school procedures and the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

**33. What are the aims of EPD?**

The aims of the EPD programme are to assist the beginning teacher to develop, expand and consolidate his/her capability as a reflective practitioner and to develop their professional competences. Details of the process are outlined in the Teacher Education Partnership Handbook (August 2010 edition). All beginning teachers are required to register with the appropriate ELB for EPD1 and EPD2.

**34. What support is available for the beginning teacher during EPD?**

Support is available to beginning teachers from colleagues within schools, particularly the teacher-tutor whose role it is to support beginning teachers. Support is also available through a developing professional network comprising staff from the curriculum advisory and support service (CASS) in the education and library boards. Each ELB has a section of their website which provides information about the EPD process. While all partners are involved at each of the 3 stages, the beginning teacher and the school take the lead at the EPD stage.

**35. How does EPD relate to Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD)?**

The Career-Entry Profile and developmental needs highlighted at the Induction stage form the basis for an EPD teacher's development. Induction and EPD are the first steps in career-long professional development and support the teacher with the process of target setting, drawing up action plans and reviewing and reflecting on their work. These skills should become a career-long habit throughout the teacher's professional life. Engaging fully in Induction and in EPD will be a sound foundation for engaging in PRSD which the teacher enters on completion of EPD.

**36. Who tells whom that EPD has been successfully completed?**

The Board of Governors of the school certifies completion of EPD on the professional advice of the principal and the teacher-tutor. The Board of Governors returns a certificate of completion of EPD to the principal who then informs the teacher of the outcome. A copy of the certificate of completion (detailing the teacher's full name and TR number) is sent by the school to the GTCNI, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Albany House, 73-75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast, BT2 7AF.

**37. How and when will the beginning teacher know that EPD is successfully completed?**

When the beginning teacher and teacher-tutor are satisfied that all criteria for EPD have been met and that the work is authentic, they will seek formal endorsement by the principal of the school. It will be for the Board of Governors to confirm completion, on the recommendation of the principal and on sight of the teacher's final reflection, produced at the end of EPD. If need be, the principal may seek guidance from CASS.

**38. How has the standard and quality of work done by teachers in EPD been evaluated and assured?**

The school is responsible for quality assuring the EPD process. Observations and discussions with the EPD teacher will have been undertaken throughout the process and the Principal and the teacher-tutor will complete a quality assurance profile at the end of each PDA.

**39. What will be the workload for the beginning teacher and the school?**

Over the course of 2 years, EPD should involve the beginning teacher in directed reading, reflective thinking, planning and, following a period of teaching, in monitoring, reviewing, evaluating, discussing and presenting completed work in a portfolio of evidence. It must be meaningful and manageable. The teacher is required to undertake one PDA each year of the EPD process.

**40. What are the benefits of the arrangements?**

The benefits of the arrangements are to provide a structured programme of professional development for teachers in their second and third year of teaching in order to facilitate their transition into PRSD and further Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The programme also supports the reciprocal exchange of good practice between the beginning teacher and other members of staff for the benefit of learning and teaching in the school.

**41. What happens to beginning teachers who are in short-term and part-time employment?**

All beginning teachers who have successfully completed Induction and who are not in regular employment can register for and engage in EPD. The ELB will be able to provide further specific advice and support to teachers who do not have full-time/long-term employment on how best to engage in the EPD process.

**42. If a teacher qualified before 1997 and did not teach for any significant period, and therefore did not complete probation, is he/she required to complete Induction and EPD?**

Yes.