



Department  
for Education

# **Teachers' Standards**

**Guidance for school leaders,  
school staff and governing bodies**

**July 2011 (introduction updated June  
2013, latest terminology update December  
2021)**

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# Summary

## About the standards

These are the Teachers' Standards for use in schools in England from September 2012. The standards define the minimum level of practice expected of trainees and teachers from the point of being awarded qualified teacher status (QTS).

The Teachers' Standards are used to assess all trainees working towards QTS, and all those completing their statutory induction period. They are also used to assess the performance of all teachers with QTS who are subject to The Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012, and may additionally be used to assess the performance of teachers who are subject to these regulations and who hold qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS) status.

The standards were introduced following the recommendations in the reports of the independent Review of Teachers' Standards, chaired by Sally Coates. These reports are available from [GOV.UK](http://GOV.UK).

## Expiry or review date

These standards will apply until further notice.

## What legislation do the standards refer to?

[Schedule 2 of The Education \(School Teachers' Qualifications\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)

[The Education \(School Teachers' Appraisal\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

## Who are the standards for?

The Teachers' Standards apply to:

- trainees working towards QTS;
- all teachers completing their statutory induction period (early career teachers [ECTs]); and
- teachers in maintained schools, including maintained special schools, who are covered by the 2012 appraisal regulations.

The Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) will use Part Two of the Teachers' Standards, which relates to personal and professional conduct, when assessing cases of serious misconduct, regardless of the education sector in which the teacher works.

## **What documents do the standards replace?**

These standards replaced the standards for qualified teacher status (QTS) and the core professional standards, published by the former Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA); and the General Teaching Council for England's Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers.

## Introduction, legal standing and interpretation

1. The Teachers' Standards published by the Secretary of State for Education introduced some significant changes in terms of structure, content and application. This document is designed to assist those who will be using the standards to understand those changes and to implement the standards effectively.
2. The Teachers' Standards contained in this document came into effect on 1 September 2012, though the Teaching Agency (now the Teaching Regulation Agency) has used the conduct elements since 1 April 2012 as a reference point when considering whether a teacher's conduct has fallen significantly short of the standard of behaviour expected of a teacher. They replaced the standards for qualified teacher status (QTS) and the core professional standards previously published by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA),<sup>1</sup> as well as the General Teaching Council for England's Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers.
3. **The standards apply to the vast majority of teachers regardless of their career stage.** The Teachers' Standards apply to: trainees working towards QTS; all teachers completing their statutory induction period; and those covered by the new performance appraisal arrangements (subject to the exception described in para. 4 below). Part Two of the Teachers' Standards, which relates to professional and personal conduct, is used to assess cases of serious misconduct, regardless of the sector in which the teacher works.
4. Since 1 April 2012, teachers with qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS) status have been able to teach in schools as fully qualified teachers. This change was made to give schools greater access to experienced teachers of vocational subjects, as recommended in Professor Alison Wolf's Review of Vocational Education. Headteachers have the freedom to decide the standards against which they assess the performance of QTLS holders. They can assess QTLS holders' performance against the Teachers' Standards, against any other set of standards relating to teacher performance issued by the Secretary of State, against any other professional standards that are relevant to their performance, or against any combination of those three. Before, or as soon as practicable after the start of each appraisal period, QTLS teachers (like other teachers) must be informed of the standards against which their performance in that appraisal period will be assessed.

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<sup>1</sup> The standards for qualified teacher status and the core professional standards are available from [The National Archives](#).

5. The standards define the minimum level of practice expected of trainees and teachers from the point of being awarded QTS. The standards set out in this document constitute the 'specified standards' within the meaning given to that phrase in Schedule 2 of The Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003<sup>2</sup>.
6. The standards need to be applied as appropriate to the role and context within which a trainee or teacher is practising. Providers of initial teacher training (ITT) should assess trainees against the standards in a way that is consistent with what could reasonably be expected of a trainee teacher prior to the award of QTS. Providers need to ensure that their programmes are designed and delivered in such a way as to allow all trainees to meet these standards, as set out in the Secretary of State's Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Criteria<sup>3</sup>.
7. Similarly, headteachers (or appraisers) should assess teachers' performance against the standards to a level that is consistent with what should reasonably be expected of a teacher in the relevant role and at the relevant stage of their career (whether they are an early career teacher (ECT), a mid-career teacher, or a more experienced practitioner). The professional judgement of headteachers and appraisers is therefore central to appraisal against these standards.
8. The standards replaced the previous core professional standards, and are used to assess an ECT's performance at the end of their induction period in employment. The standards themselves do not specify any new or different elements to the expectations placed on ECTs beyond those required for the award of QTS. The decision about whether an ECT has met the standards to a satisfactory level at the end of their induction period therefore needs to be made on the basis of what should reasonably be expected of an ECT working in the relevant setting and circumstances, within the framework set out by the standards. That judgement should reflect the expectation that ECTs have effectively consolidated their training, and are demonstrating their ability to meet the standards consistently over a sustained period in their practice.
9. Following the period of induction, the standards continue to define the level of practice at which all qualified teachers are expected to perform. Teachers' performance is assessed against the standards as part of the new appraisal arrangements in maintained schools.

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<sup>2</sup> Schedule 2 of The Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003 is available from [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk).

<sup>3</sup> The Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Criteria are available from [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

## Presentation of the standards

10. This document is presented in three parts, which together constitute the Teachers' Standards: the **Preamble**, **Part One** and **Part Two**.
11. The Preamble summarises the values and behaviour that all teachers must demonstrate throughout their careers. **Part One** comprises the Standards for Teaching; **Part Two** comprises the Standards for Personal and Professional Conduct.
12. In order to meet the standards, a trainee or teacher will need to demonstrate that their practice is consistent with the definition set out in the **Preamble**, and that they have met the standards in both **Part One** and **Part Two** of this document.
13. The standards are presented as separate headings, numbered from 1 to 8 in **Part One**, each of which is accompanied by a number of bulleted subheadings. The bullets, which are an integral part of the standards, are designed to amplify the scope of each heading. The bulleted subheadings should not be interpreted as separate standards in their own right but should be used by those assessing trainees and teachers to track progress against the standard, to determine areas where additional development might need to be observed, or to identify areas where a trainee or teacher is already demonstrating excellent practice relevant to that standard.

## Progression and professional development

14. The standards have been designed to set out a basic framework within which all teachers should operate from the point of initial qualification. Appropriate self-evaluation, reflection and professional development activity is critical to improving teachers' practice at all career stages. The standards set out clearly the key areas in which a teacher should be able to assess his or her own practice, and receive feedback from colleagues. As their careers progress, teachers will be expected to extend the depth and breadth of knowledge, skill and understanding that they demonstrate in meeting the standards, as is judged to be appropriate to the role they are fulfilling and the context in which they are working.

## Date of introduction of the standards

15. The revised standards came into effect on 1 September 2012, on which date they became the 'specified standards' as defined in Schedule 2 of The Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003. The Regulations require that in order to be recommended for the award of QTS, in most cases<sup>4</sup> a person must meet the specified standards that are in place at the time of assessment. Providers of initial teacher training need to ensure that all trainees who complete their training after 1 September 2012 are assessed against the standards that are in place as at the time of assessment, in accordance with the Regulations.
16. ECTs who qualified under the previous standards but started induction on or after 1 September 2012, or had started but not completed induction by 1 September 2012, need to be assessed against the Teachers' Standards at the end of their induction.
17. Existing teachers who have already passed induction will be expected to use the Teachers' Standards instead of the previous core standards for appraisal, identifying professional development, and other related purposes.
18. When considering new cases of serious misconduct received from 1 April 2012, the Teaching Regulation Agency (formerly the National College for Teaching and Leadership), acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, must have regard to the personal and professional conduct aspects of the Teachers' Standards document instead of the General Teaching Council for England's (GTCE) Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers. The Teaching Regulation Agency is still able to refer to the GTCE's Code of Conduct for any partially completed cases it received from the GTCE at the point of its abolition.

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<sup>4</sup> For some categories QTS can be awarded without undertaking ITT in England and meeting the QTS standards. Those exempt from meeting the QTS standards are individuals who have already successfully completed ITT or are recognised as teachers in another UK country and EEA nationals who are recognised as teachers in another EEA member state. Qualified further education teachers who have qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS) status may also be exempt from meeting the Teachers' Standards.

## Note on terminology used/glossary

Specific terminology used in the standards should be interpreted as having the following meaning:

- **‘Fundamental British values’** is taken from the definition of extremism as articulated in the new Prevent Strategy, which was launched in June 2011. It includes ‘democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs’.
- **‘Parents’** is intended to include carers, guardians and other adults acting *in loco parentis*.
- **‘Pupils’** is used throughout the standards, but should be taken to include references to children of all ages who are taught by qualified teachers, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and those in post-16 education.
- **‘School’** means whatever educational setting the standards are applied in. The standards are required to be used by teachers in maintained schools and non-maintained special schools. Use of the standards in academies and free schools depends on the specific establishment arrangements of those schools. Independent schools are not required to use the standards, but may do so if they wish.
- **‘Special educational needs’**, as defined by the Department for Education’s Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001), refers to children who have a learning difficulty. This means that they either: have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority.
- **‘Statutory frameworks’** includes all legal requirements, including but not limited to the requirement to promote equal opportunities and to provide reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities, as provided for in the Equality Act 2010. The term also covers the professional duties of teachers as set out in the statutory School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document.

# Teachers' Standards

## Preamble

Teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

## Part One: Teaching

### A teacher must:

#### 1. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils

- establish a safe and stimulating environment for pupils, rooted in mutual respect
- set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions
- demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes, values and behaviour which are expected of pupils.

#### 2. Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils

- be accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes
- be aware of pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these
- guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching
- encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.

### **3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge**

- have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings
- demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas, and promote the value of scholarship
- demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject
- if teaching early reading, demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics
- if teaching early mathematics, demonstrate a clear understanding of appropriate teaching strategies.

### **4. Plan and teach well structured lessons**

- impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time
- promote a love of learning and children's intellectual curiosity
- set homework and plan other out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired
- reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching
- contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum within the relevant subject area(s).

### **5. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils**

- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development

- have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

## **6. Make accurate and productive use of assessment**

- know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements
- make use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress
- use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons
- give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.

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

- have clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms, and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
- have high expectations of behaviour, and establish a framework for discipline with a range of strategies, using praise, sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly
- manage classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them
- maintain good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary.

## **8. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities**

- make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the school
- develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support
- deploy support staff effectively
- take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues
- communicate effectively with parents with regard to pupils' achievements and well-being.

## Part Two: Personal and professional conduct

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
  - treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
  - having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
  - showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
  - not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
  - ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.



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