

## **ST0490 Teacher L6 Standard Consultation: Teacher Degree Apprenticeship**

### **Response of the Association of School and College Leaders**

#### **A. Introduction**

1. The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents 25,000 education system leaders, heads, principals, deputies, vice-principals, assistant heads, business managers and other senior staff of state-funded and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. ASCL members are responsible for the education of more than four million children and young people across primary, secondary, post-16 and specialist education. This places the association in a strong position to consider this issue from the viewpoint of the leaders of schools and colleges of all types.
2. ASCL welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this consultation. Our response is based on the views of our members, obtained through discussions at ASCL Council, with relevant advisory groups, and prompted and unprompted emails and messages.
3. When considering the impact of any proposals on different groups, it is ASCL's policy to consider not only the nine protected characteristics included in the Equality Act 2010, but also other groups which might be disproportionately affected, particularly those who are socio-economically disadvantaged. We have answered any equality impact questions on this basis.

#### **B. Key points**

4. ASCL is supportive of apprenticeships as a route into teaching, though we are of the view this will only be the right route for a small number of employers because there are only very marginal gains to be had for them.
5. Our priority is that there is a parity of expectations between the apprenticeship route and other routes into teaching and are supportive of the use of the teacher standards in setting out what is needed to satisfy competence at the end of the apprenticeship.
6. It is important that there is subject knowledge parity. We recognise, however, that there are some issues to unpick here given the variety of first degrees in any one subject that are currently used as a route in to teaching. Getting this right will be crucial to the success of the programme.
7. In order for schools to be able to plan their staffing structures and make room for these roles, there needs to be clarity on their terms and conditions.

#### **C. Answers to specific questions**

**Question 1: Do you think that the occupational profile is clearly written and can be understood by someone not familiar with the occupation?**

8. Yes. The profile is clear and helpfully aligned with the existing teacher standards.

**Question 2: Do you agree that the duties set out the typical activities of the occupation?**

9. Partially. The list of duties is relatively broad and ambiguous and as such is open to interpretation. That may have merits as each school where the apprentice will be will have its own challenges and context, however, it also means that it is open to interpretation and possible misuse. For example, duty 12 'communicate with pupils, parents, and carers' is too open ended and ambiguous and could lead to apprentices doing work which does not require the professional skills and judgement of a teacher.

10. We suggest that the list of duties is tightened up and that within the profile it is made clear that apprentices should not be required to undertake work that does not require the professional skills and judgement of a qualified teacher.

**Question 3: Do you think the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the Standard fully cover what is needed to undertake the occupation competently at the end of the apprenticeship?**

11. Yes, as these are the Teacher Standards and so reflect the same expectation as other routes in to teaching.

**Question 4: Do you think the proposed duration of the standard is appropriate to the level of knowledge, skills and behaviours that need to be acquired?**

12. Yes, we think 45 months typical duration will be appropriate, but only on the basis that the support and available training is to the required standard. We have concerns that there is going to be considerable variation within this apprenticeship because of the significant number of potential employers and large number of subject specialisms as well as the difference in phases.

13. We are concerned about how, within this timeframe, apprentices training to teach secondary subjects will all get an appropriate breadth of their subject knowledge – we think this will be easier for some subjects than others. We are also interested to understand what the proposals are to ensure apprentices have parity in terms of subject knowledge with other routes in to teaching, given the variety of undergraduate degrees that may have been taken for any particular subject.

**Question 5: To the nearest month, how many months of training do you think this apprenticeship should require, excluding the end-point assessment?**

14. There are too many variables to put an exact figure on this. This is not only because of the different types of teaching roles apprentices will be training for (primary KS1, secondary physics teacher, secondary Spanish teacher etc) but also, they may be a young person taking an apprenticeship route rather than university or someone who has experience of a school already such as a former teaching assistant. We would therefore advocate for a degree of flexibility, based on competency, to be built into the apprenticeship length. Additionally, because of how apprenticeships tend to 'arrive' (and the need to encourage recruitment) there needs to be the flexibility for people to start at different points in the year.

**Question 6: If an external qualification is mandated, do you think it adds breadth to the occupation?**

15. Yes, at the end of the apprenticeship it is essential that qualified teacher status is awarded in order for successful participants to be able to teach in maintained schools.

**Question 7: Do you think completion of apprenticeship standard will enable professional registration at a particular level?**

16. Yes, where qualified teacher status is awarded.

**Question 8: Please provide any other comments, if you would like to do so.**

17. In order for the apprenticeship role to be effectively embedded within a school's staffing structure it is essential that there is clarity on the terms and conditions attached to the role. It is ASCL's strong view that these should be incorporated within the school teachers' pay and conditions document, and as such we would expect to see a remit on this issue go to the STRB as soon as possible. We do not think it can wait until the next pay round as this would be too late for schools' planning purposes. Clarity will also be required as to whether these roles will be eligible for the teachers' pension scheme.

18. We remain concerned about the attractiveness of this route to employers. We recognise that there is a pilot but are unconvinced that it will be able to unpick all of the outstanding issues, particularly around the time a school will need to invest in any apprentice against any benefits they will accrue from that investment.

19. The demands across the sector on mentors is growing and we anticipate that the higher demand on mentors this route into teaching will make will add to its unattractiveness to employers.

**D. Conclusion**

20. The apprenticeship route into teaching has the potential to be extremely beneficial for some prospective teachers and employers but given the high demand it will place on employers we anticipate there will only be a small number of places available each year.

21. Making sure these trainees have appropriate support and training is essential if the profession is going to have confidence in employing them once they achieve QTS. Equally, ensuring the profession has the appropriate support both to understand how to assess, but also the significant difference and ongoing support this pathway will require, are incredibly important. We remain concerned that sure schools and colleges are not equipped, in the widest sense of the word, to undertake this in a supportive and effective manner and will require support beyond the pilot themselves to achieve this.

22. I hope that this response is of value to your consultation. ASCL is willing to be further consulted and to assist in any way that it can.

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