

Teacher Degree Apprenticeship Pay Survey

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 between the apprenticeship route and other salaried routes into teaching. If there is not a nationally set pay and conditions framework for apprentices embedded within the STPCD then the programme will be seen, from the outset, as inferior to the other routes. Apprentices may be denied full access to some unions and the professional support and CPD they can provide, and we are concerned about their access to the teachers' pension scheme. In school, they will be categorised as 'support staff' and again this will differentiate them from the other trainee teachers on different salaried routes.
6. Our strong preference is for the STRB to be given a remit to develop a new range for teacher apprentices and to make recommendations for amending the STPCD to accommodate them and give clarity over the conditions of service.

C. Answers to specific questions

Question 1: Is your institution planning to deliver or recruit for the Teacher Degree Apprenticeship in 2025?

7. No. As a trade union this question is not applicable.

Question 2: Do you currently offer the Postgraduate Teacher Apprenticeship (PGTA)?

8. Not applicable.

Question 3: Have you previously heard about the TDA?

9. Yes.

Question 4: How interested are you in offering the TDA?

10. Not applicable.

Question 5: When considering whether to offer the TDA, how important is the rate an apprentice will be paid in your decision making process?

11. Quite important.

12. We believe that the rate of pay an apprentice will be paid will be a key consideration for schools when they are considering their overall staffing structure, including what trainee teacher opportunities they will be able to offer. It will not however be the only one. They will also want to understand what they can expect from the trainee teacher and the amount of support they will need.

Question 6: Should teacher apprentices on the Teacher Degree Apprenticeship receive pay that is: equivalent to that for unqualified teachers; set at the discretion of the employer; unsure?

13. Of the options available we would choose 'equivalent to that for unqualified teachers'.

14. We strongly advise against pay being set at the discretion of the employer as this would give no certainty for apprentices and could cause problems for those may need to change employers part way through their apprenticeship.

15. We are also concerned that not having apprentices attached to a pay range that is in the STPCD sends the message that this route into teaching is inferior to the other routes, as it would mean apprentices would not be classed as 'teachers' whilst training in the same way as others. We are concerned that it would mean they would not be eligible for the teachers' pension scheme, unlike other trainee teachers on salaried routes, and that their wider conditions of service would be different. Any pay arrangement that does not see apprentices paid through the STPCD would mean the TDA is an inferior route into teaching, and we do not think is helpful or acceptable.

16. Our preference would be for a new pay range in the STPCD specifically for apprentices, rather than using the unqualified range, and we are disappointed that this was not an option.

Question 7: If schools could set their own pay for apprentices, which benchmark would you expect to use to determine pay: National Joint Council/Local Government Association pay spine; National Living Wage; Apprenticeships Minimum Wage; The unqualified teacher pay as a benchmark; other?

17. The unqualified teacher pay range, as this will most closely mirror the salaried routes into teaching, making adjustments for the fact the other routes are post graduate.

However, see our response to the previous question for our broader concerns about this.

Question 8: When do you need to know final pay arrangements for apprentices by: before recruitment for apprentices opens (October 2024); before financial planning for the school year in which they start (April-May before trainees start in September); before trainees start (before September of their first year); other?

18. We believe the optimum time is before financial planning for the school year in which they start (April-May before trainees start in September). We think this would give the DfE time to give the STRB a remit to recommend a suitable pay range for apprentices to be included in the STPCD, and to recommend suitable additions to the document so that there is clarity over their conditions of service. Clarity will also be required as to whether these roles will be eligible for the teachers' pension scheme.

Question 9: Should schools be able to set their own conditions of employment for teacher apprentices?

19. No. As stated above we think the STRB should be given a remit to review what changes are needed to ensure apprentices have clarity over their conditions of service. As with pay, it is important for the integrity of the route that these are set nationally and that they have parity with other salaried routes into teaching if the TDA is not to be seen as inferior.

D. Conclusion

20. The apprenticeship route into teaching has the potential to be extremely beneficial for some prospective teachers and employers but it needs to be attractive and not seen as an inferior route. It is therefore imperative that there are nationally set pay and conditions for this route that are linked to the STPCD.

21. 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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