



ATL Consultation Response

Teacher Education in a Climate of Change

The Way Forward

The closing date for this consultation is 8 November 2010

June 2010

Teacher Education in a Climate of Change - The Way Forward

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers, as a leading education union, recognises the link between education policy and our members conditions of employment. Our evidence based policy making enables us to campaign and negotiate from a position of strength. We champion good practice and achieve better working lives for our members. We help our members as their careers develop through first rate research, advice, information and legal support. Our 160,000 members across the United Kingdom – teachers, lecturers, head-teachers and support staff – are empowered to get active locally and nationally. We are affiliated to the T.U.C. and the I.C.T.U and work with government and employers by lobbying and through social partnership.

ATL's Policy

ATL's comments within this consultation response are set within the context of our 2005 policy on "New Professionalism" which states:

"Teaching is an intellectual profession, based on a high degree of general and systematised knowledge. This includes in-depth knowledge of :

- 1) Learning: how pupils learn, potential obstacles to learning, pre-conditions and dispositions to learning; how learning develops and*
- 2) Curriculum Content: knowledge of subjects and the relationships between them, understanding of wider content such as development of thinking skills, problem solving, questioning and group working and a knowledge of how pupils understanding of particular content grows and develops.*

The teaching profession is also practical, and has a wide range of practices and methods. Teaching has a basis in care and responsibility for pupils' learning, leading to the need for knowledge and understanding of particular pupils as individuals, their interests, needs and potential; obstacles to learning, knowledge developed through assessment and through relationships with pupils, families, communities and other professionals.

The teaching profession needs knowledge about the complex and compelling forces that influence daily living in a changing world, including the political, economic, technological, social and environmental, in order to know what pupils need to learn both in the present and for the future.

Finally, teachers have the ability to adapt teaching practices and methods to particular pupils, drawing on their theoretical understanding of learning, their knowledge of curriculum content and their knowledge of what pupils need. This professional knowledge and understanding is not static; it changes and develops over time. Some of the change happens external to the profession: knowledge of how the brain works or developments in subject knowledge; changes in political, social and cultural attitudes affect the way that subjects are taught, or ways that children are perceived. Professionalism therefore implies a responsibility to continued professional development of practical knowledge through reflection and interaction, to review the nature and effectiveness of practice, and to continue to increase understanding of the purposes and content of education, individually and collectively."

ATL considers that the current balance between professional autonomy and prescription by government and managers is inappropriate, and it is within this context that we respond to the consultation "Teacher Education in a Climate of Change – the way Forward.

Consultation Point 1 - Vision and Key Aims

(Reference: paragraph 4.2 of the policy framework document)

1. Do you agree with the vision and key aim for Teacher Education? (please tick)

Agree	Largely Agree	Don't know	Largely Disagree	Disagree
	√			

Any other comments:

ATL accepts the vision as set out – ie

“The vision for teacher education in Northern Ireland is to nurture and sustain a high quality teaching profession that has the values, attributes, knowledge and competences necessary to enable all our young people to develop their full potential.”

Consultation Point 2 – Role of the Department of Education

(Reference: paragraph 4.4)

2. Do you agree with the proposed role of the Department of Education?

Agree	Largely Agree	Don't know	Largely Disagree	Disagree
	√			

Any other comments:

The role envisaged for the Department of Education is uncontentious. The Department's overarching policy development role, however, needs to be strengthened. It is essential that DE takes the lead in terms of policy development rather than “*de facto*” delegating this to the Boards, or ESA (should political consensus allow it to be set up).

ATL is concerned that, at present, many young beginning teachers are not able to properly finish their EPD (Early Professional Development) due to the lack of stable employment opportunities. In many cases, teaching careers are starting off with episodic employment over the first 5 years. ATL would like DE to keep a ‘handle’ on policy on EPD and would wish to retain ‘rigour’ within the EPD phase, whilst taking account of disrupted employment opportunity.

The Department will need to retain sufficient policy ‘capacity’ and expertise on teacher education to enable it to discharge its responsibilities. Moreover, within the context of the Entitlement Framework – statutory from 2013 - greater opportunities should be sought for DE and DEL to work together.

Consultation Point 3 - Role of the Department for Employment and Learning

(Reference: paragraphs 4.5)

3. Do you agree with the proposed role of the Department for Employment and Learning?

Agree	Largely Agree	Don't know	Largely Disagree	Disagree
√				

Any other comments:

Consultation Point 4 - Education and Training Inspectorate

(Reference: paragraph 4.6)

4. Do you agree with the proposed role of the Education and Training Inspectorate?

Agree	Largely Agree	Don't know	Largely Disagree	Disagree
√				

Any other comments: ATL considers the ETI to be both professional and one of the most reflective parts of the education 'landscape'. ETI input in providing evidence-based objective evaluations of teacher education is crucial to ensuring quality and high standards of provision. Schools and teachers as 'recipients' of teacher education provision, would endorse the role envisaged for the ETI.

ATL would like to see the Inspectorate becoming more active in, for instance, monitoring the effectiveness of delivery of the Entitlement Framework (the "24/27"), as well as the effectiveness of schools in delivering PPA (Preparation, Planning and Assessment) in line with TNC 2009/8

http://www.deni.gov.uk/microsoft_word_-_tnc_2009-8_ppa_policy_statement-2.pdf

Consultation point 5 - Role of the Education and Skills Authority¹

(Reference: paragraph 4.8)

5. Do you agree with the proposed role of the Education and Skills Authority?

Agree	Largely Agree	Don't know	Largely Disagree	Disagree
		√		

Any other comments:

There was concern about the potential role of the ESA, particularly as set out in 4.8 of the consultation document. It is fair to say that ATL members views may have been coloured by a view of ESA which assumed that ESA would be a largely “administrative” rather than “educational” or “professional”.

It is unclear as to whether the Education & Skills Authority will ever be agreed and, as such, we should not make the assumption that ESA will be part of the educational ‘landscape’. Amongst the specific concerns raised my members were:

4.8 a) It is unclear how ESA would ensure that the provision and delivery of teacher education focussed on what best meets the needs of schools. The a success criteria was not defined. Normally this should be within the context of the School Development Plan. In ATL’s experience, there is patchy (sometimes non existent) consultation with teaching staff in drafting the S.D.P.

4.8 b) The definition of Special Needs and Additional Needs require definition – notably in regard to the distinctions made about these terms within Classroom Assistant’s Job Evaluations.

4.8 c) The theory of being reflective practitioners needs to be continually emphasized and closely monitored in practice. There are doubts as to whether ESA, as a primarily administrative body, is best placed to do this;

4.8 g) There must be more collaboration with schools and teachers representatives, with Higher Education institutions (HEIs) in regard to student teacher placements. It remains unclear how this will be quality assured.

4.8 i, j & k) Providing advice to DE on the academic accreditation of teachers work during Induction and CPD should closely involve the GTCNI

4.8 m) ATL consider that CPD is of such importance to our members that we could not agree this role for ESA without teacher union representatives being an integral part of the stakeholder group (with HEIs, ETI, GTCNI and schools) to determine the CPD framework;

4.8 n) ATL supports an appropriate framework for CPD, but would consider the current P.R.S.D framework, properly implemented, to be capable of evolution;

4.8 o) The “mixed economy” model – in theory – is currently in place. What undermines it is the very patchy implementation of School Development Planning (SDP). In particular, School Development Plans are rarely based on meaningful consultation with teachers and support staff. As a consequence, CPD choice is often severely subscribed by narrowly focussed school development planning processes.

4.8 q) ATL’s experience of online learning, and most of the pedagogic research focussed on e-Learning has shown that some personal contact, well moderated tutor groups, and access to good online tutoring are critical to success – more so, even, than the virtual learning environment and content. E-Learning is a tool, an option, but one of many.

4.8 s) ESA advice to DE should be tempered by consultation and collaboration with teachers, through their representative trade unions and their professionally registry body, the GTC NI.

Consultation Point 6 - The establishment of the Teacher Education Committee

(Reference: paragraph 4.9)

6. Do you agree with the proposals relating to the establishment of the Teacher Education Committee?

Agree	Largely Agree	Don't know	Largely Disagree	Disagree
			√	

Any other comments:

ATL accepts that a committee structure will have to be established in light of proposed work programme identified. The establishment ESA has been significantly delayed and a significant political chasm appears to have developed in respect of its inauguration.

Nonetheless, the consultation document states at paragraph 4.9 that:

‘The Teacher Education Committee will be chaired by ESA which will draw up its terms of reference, and the ETI will act as assessors’.

Without further details about the composition of this committee, as envisaged, it will not facilitate an effective education partnership with a ‘buy in’ from all stake holders. It is also unclear if this committee will develop into a policy making forum. If the proposed Education Committee is to be primarily concerned with teacher education policy then it should operate at DE level and be chaired by a senior DE official.

ATL would view a key role of the Teacher Education Committee to ensure that INSET choices and programmes are robust and relevant to the needs of teachers, in particular those focussed on Information, Communication and Technology.

Consultation Point 7 - Role of the General Teaching Council for NI

(Reference: paragraph 4.12)

7. Do you agree with the proposed role of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland?

Agree	Largely Agree	Don't know	Largely Disagree	Disagree
√				

Any other comments:

The future remit of the GTCNI is acknowledged in paragraph 4.12 (a to f). The role of the Council as a registration body has been fully recognised.

Furthermore, the Councils remit with regard to the approval of qualifications leading to registration is acknowledged.

ATL would stress the importance and value placed on 4.12(f) – to “*track and record the progress of student and beginning teachers as they complete ITE, Induction and EPD.*” We would accord the GTC more autonomy in undertaking these tasks.

Consultation Point 8 – Role of the Higher Education Institutions

(Reference: paragraph 4.13)

8. Do you agree with the proposed role of the Higher Education Institutions?

Agree	Largely Agree	Don't know	Largely Disagree	Disagree
	√			

Any other comments:

Most areas outlined in paragraph 4.13 (a to t) appropriately fall within the remit of the HEIs. The consultation proposals, as they stand, miss an opportunity to strengthen the role of the HEI's in the wider teacher education partnership.

Recent inspection reports on the HEIs clearly demonstrate the substantial reservoir of professional expertise that exists in HEIs and the current proposals do not adequately capitalise upon this expertise.

The use of a formal tendering procedure as envisaged in (j) is inappropriate within the small HEI sector that exists in Northern Ireland. Rather a funding mechanism that promotes collaborative working, in practice will work to the benefit of all stakeholders. The current competitive tendering process to allocate resources to the HEIs will be dysfunctional and have serious consequences for the effectiveness of any future partnership arrangements.

Key concerns for ATL members on Teacher Training includes

- a high level of workload faced by students on placement
- high levels of paperwork required by Principals already facing an excessive accountability regime
- Students and NQTs regularly report being insufficiently prepared in the areas of Behaviour Management, Coping with Special Educational Needs, coping with pupils for whom English is their Second Language

We receive frequent reports of ill-preparedness and, as a union, are placed in the position of setting up and running a range of practice course, the most popular of which are:

- Coping with Violence in Schools
- Managing Difficult behaviour
- Coping with SEN
- Coping with pupils for whom English is a second language
- Health and Safety in Schools

We receive frequent complaints that placements in schools are unsuitable, that mentors are not as supportive (often due to their own time pressures) as they need to be, that placements can be logistically difficult with students travelling long distances

Consultation Point 9 - Role of the School Governors and Leadership Team

(Reference: paragraph 4.14)

9. Do you agree with the proposed role of the School Governors and Leadership Team?

Agree	Largely Agree	Don't know	Largely Disagree	Disagree
			√	

Any other comments:

ATL considers the role for school governors and leadership teams as appropriate, only if the capacity and quality is there. In most cases, we doubt whether this is the case, and are unconvinced that any amount of Training and capacity building can provide it. The assumption in favour of “*maximised autonomy*” of schools is, in ATL’s view, misguided. We endorse the importance attached to the GTC Northern Ireland Teacher Competences in reviewing professional development opportunities for all teachers. To this end, DE and the ESA (if/when established) need to raise awareness of the teacher competences with governors.

However, the GTC Competences may be undermined by a measurement of pupil achievement (and the quality of teaching) through narrow pupil achievement targets undermines many of standards of appropriate teacher professionalism

Consultation Point 10 - Role of Teacher Tutors

(Reference: paragraph 4.15)

10. Do you agree with the proposed role of Teacher Tutors?

Agree	Largely Agree	Don't know	Largely Disagree	Disagree
			√	

Any other comments:

ATL considers the restrictive role envisaged for the teacher tutor is a missed opportunity in terms of bringing about a strategic overhaul of teachers' continuing professional development. In its 2005 Review, the General Teaching Council articulated its arguments for the need to establish a new role of Professional Learning and Development Co-ordinator: As far as the Council is concerned, the case made for such a role is still valid and it therefore calls on DE to revisit its recommendation of 2005 which stated:

'Schools should, either individually or collectively, develop a role, at an appropriately senior level, of a Professional Learning and Development Co-ordinator who would help to establish a professional community of teachers and effectively manage professional learning for all teaching staff, from student teachers on placement, and beginning teachers undertaking Induction and EPD to those embarking on programmes leading to Chartered Teacher and Advanced Chartered Teacher Status'.

The joint trade union, DE, ESA(IT) visit to view and consider the education system of Montgomery County, Maryland, USA also saw a positive "Professional Growth System" which harnessed the developing talents of newly qualified teachers as well as supporting the professional development of existing teachers. For a fuller account, please see "Leading for Equity – the pursuit of excellence in the Montgomery County Public Schools" Childress, Doyle & Thomas, Harvard Educational Press ISBN-13: 978-1-934742-22-8, Jul 2009

Consultation Point 11 - Role of Teachers

(Reference: paragraph 4.16)

11. Do you agree with the proposed role of Teachers?

Agree	Largely Agree	Don't know	Largely Disagree	Disagree
	√			

Any other comments:

The role as described for teachers is appropriate. The reference to the GTC Code of Values and Professional Practice and the commitments enshrined in it is welcomed. Moreover, ATL considers that the **Teacher e-portfolio** project may have merit and looks forward to the future developments in this crucial area of work.

Teachers should have regular access to Higher Education level courses to enhance their CPD.

Other issues: ATL is fully cognisant of the issues raised in part 5 of the consultation and it has earlier made comments on areas such as teacher supply/demands, the employment challenges facing beginning teachers including a request of a review of the recommendation for a guaranteed induction year.

It is, therefore, crucial that the final policy out-workings of this consultation assists in the achievement of this goal.

ATL, as part of the Northern Ireland Teachers Council, has proposed a variant of the Scottish “1st guaranteed year” for all newly qualified teachers. Under the NITC proposal, a pilot cadre of 200 NQTs would be employed, similar to the Scottish model, and applied predominantly to facilitate existing teachers PPA (10% timetabled Preparation, Planning and Assessment time) thereby achieving significant productivity gains in schools. The experience of the “1st Guaranteed year” implemented under the McCrone Report in Scotland has been positively evaluated in professional and financial/V4M terms – see Teaching Scotland’s Children, HM Inspectorate of Education, ISBN 0-7053-1107-4 and A Mid-Term Report for Audit Scotland, May 2006, ISBN 1-905634-18-8

ATL also welcomes the decision to establish a Research Forum but is concerned with the delay in setting it up. This policy initiative is not dependant on the detailed out workings of the consultation and there should be no further delay in establishing such a forum.

Additional Comments:

If you have any additional comments you wish to make about the proposals please use the box below.

The Department of Education should set teacher professionalism at the heart of “Teacher Education in a climate of Change”, particularly if we wish the pupils of today and tomorrow to become active citizens, equipped with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to participate positively in society, in work, in their communities and families. These young people need to be sufficiently flexible in an unstable employment market which, due to technological advance and financial circumstance, requires that ability to learn, adapt and often innovate. From that perspective, we must develop Teacher Training, Teacher CPD and a school accountability culture which allows the growth of professionalism within a supportive and critical framework

Finally, on a practical note, ATL acknowledges the extensive work that has been undertaken to get out to the consultation stage of the review of teacher education. Unfortunately, many of the practicalities surrounding the out

working of the various recommendations depend on the establishment of the ESA. However, even when established there will be a time lag as the ESA works towards developing operational capacity. In the interim, DE and DEL should jointly ensure that structures are in place to drive forward this specific teacher education agenda.

Teacher Education in a Climate of Change - The Way Forward

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Organisation on whose behalf you are replying (if applicable):
The Association of Teachers and Lecturers

Does your response represent the collective view of your organisation (if appropriate)?

Yes

Your position within that organisation (if appropriate)

Director (Northern Ireland)

Responses can be sent by email or post

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This consultation response booklet should be read alongside the policy framework document: 'Teacher Education in a Climate of Change - The Way Forward' in order to understand the context of the proposals.

The proposals for the future direction of Teacher Education are set out in Section 2 of the above document.

As the document does not contain specific policy actions, an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is not deemed to be appropriate at this time. However, any specific policy actions which flow from the outcome of this consultation exercise will, as appropriate, be consulted on and subjected to an EQIA.

We welcome views on all aspects of these proposals. You are asked to consider each of the consultation points. Space is provided to allow additional comment on each of the questions posed.

Opportunity is provided at the end of this response booklet for any additional comments you would care to make. If, however, you have a particular interest in one area and do not wish to comment on the whole document, feel free to complete only those sections that are of interest to you. In line with the Freedom of Information Act, we may publish the information you provide.

You can read and download the Policy Framework Document and this Response Booklet from our website at www.deni.gov.uk

If you need extra copies of the documents contact us in the following ways.

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