



Society for Education and Training (SET) - A new professional body for FE and Training

1. Mission and goals of the Society for Education and Training

Our mission is to build and promote the professionalism and status of those working in our sector, ensuring that our members gain wider recognition for their educational and occupational expertise. We will :

- Bring together our members into dynamic professional communities of practice that share and build knowledge through events and networks.
- Engage our members in the use, creation and dissemination of research into effective teaching and learning practice.
- Provide opportunities for relevant, quality professional development to our members at a reasonable cost.

Our aspirational goals for the first three years of SET are:

- To establish a high-value membership service that creates a strong, positive identity for the Society
- To grow membership numbers to 35,000
- To grow the numbers of holders of QTLS status by 30% to over 20,000.

2. A professional home

Every profession supports a body which embodies its values, creates professional development opportunities for members and sets aspirational standards for new and experienced practitioners. The Society for Education and Training offers a new professional home to all those working across the wide diversity of Further Education and Training.

By joining SET, members are choosing to invest in their own immediate and long-term career, but also to invest in the collective strength and future of our profession.

The Society for Education and Training will embody the confident, expansive approach which typifies our profession, and will work with other membership organisations whose services can complement those of SET, for example around dual-professionalism. SET will adopt the same “partnership principle” followed

by its parent body, the ETF : namely, not to duplicate the role or services of other bodies, but instead to add value to members' individual and collective endeavours, and play a unique role in building the strength and quality of the education and training system.

At the heart of SET's purpose is professional development. We will enable and enhance this for members through :

- Direct and indirect access to quality development opportunities
- Access to valuable educational content, with support to apply it in practice
- Facilitating active face-to-face and online communities to share thoughts and experiences on addressing new policy or teaching practice
- Supporting members' involvement in their own practitioner research to add to the wider knowledge base for the post-16 sector
- Building recognition for ongoing professional development through refreshed membership levels, enhancements to QTLS and higher or specialist statuses for experienced practitioners.

We will evaluate the various aspects of our membership offer as we steadily introduce and develop them, and adapt them in the light of member feedback. All of SET's services will be directly related to teaching, training, managing, leading or otherwise pursuing one's career development. We will not offer unrelated discounts, deals or services.

As well as bringing benefits to members, both tangible and intangible, we will communicate SET benefits to employers and senior managers, demonstrating the benefits of widespread membership to their organisations. We will offer discounted prices for whole-organisation membership subscriptions, both for teaching and non-teaching staff.

3. High-quality professional development

From summer 2015, SET will offer members a growing range of professional development opportunities. Some of these will be included in the membership price, such as our webinars and some events; others will be offered at discounted price to SET members. Many will be available from the wide range of ETF-commissioned provision. Even more broadly, we aim to encompass many others over time offered by our partners from the wider education and training system, so members can benefit from sign-posted access to the full range of existing quality provision that is available.

4. Valuable educational content

The content we provide to members across the different parts of SET's offer – through our website, our courses, our newsletter, and our journal *InTuition* – will aspire to be relevant, engaging, and readily applicable for busy practitioners. It

will involve members in its design and delivery. We are planning initial themes for our content based on priority topic areas identified during the consultation, such as improving teaching and learning skills in English and maths; developing IT skills to be able to improve curriculum delivery; using Professional Standards in practice; and involvement in practitioner research.

We will evolve *InTuition* from summer 2015 onwards to make it as educationally valuable as possible. We will provide more ready-to-use articles on effective practice supported by online toolkits to make these simple to implement and to bring genuine impact. We will also complement content in the journal with online discussions via the community forum. There will be a strong emphasis on research: we want to ensure that members have access to high-quality academic content which is contextualised so that it can be applied to immediate aspects of practice. Members can expect to have more opportunities to contribute to articles and have a new forum for publishing original research.

Our redesigned email newsletters will draw together many of the parts of our content in one convenient place. They will highlight new professional development opportunities, new articles on the website or in *InTuition*, key discussion points from our forums or community events, as well as news items and policy developments impacting practitioners' work. We will invite members to contribute to newsletters through their own writing or blogs.

5. Communities of practice: online and face-to-face

It is integral to our vision for SET that we develop an active, vibrant community of members, keen to share their experience, expertise and development with their peers. This is key to members' professional development: their own self-improvement can feed the collective building and sharing of effective, evidence-based practice, so other colleagues can then develop their skills in turn. Given the breadth and scale of the education and training sector and its workforce, it will also give members the opportunity to consider a variety of development approaches to identify which one is most appropriate for their particular situation.

To achieve this, we are piloting from spring 2015 a new online community as a place for members to come together to discuss and share professional approaches among themselves and with SET around current issues affecting the education and training system – including initially, for example, a forum to discuss teaching English. We will complement our online network by providing opportunities for members to meet locally and build networks in their own regional areas. We will invite close involvement of members in planning and running these local events from autumn 2015, and tie them into the work of the online forums, so they are accessible to all.

6. QTLS and professional status

Our vision is of QTLS as a high-status, high-value professional designation, which signals advanced practitioner status and brings tangible benefits. It will be associated with enhanced labour-market value for QTLS holders, educational value for their learners, and business benefit for their employers. It will be awarded after a demanding assessment process, and will yield significant return on investment for the practitioner and her/his employer.

We wish to see QTLS sought after by managers when they recruit; we wish to see it acknowledged by employers when setting remuneration. This culture-change will enhance the status of our profession, and must be evidence-based. It will be achieved when the value-added impact for learners of QTLS holders is evidenced by research. We will work with partners to commission independent research to establish and then track the “QTLS effect”, so that its value is transparent.

The evidence from our consultation suggests that the professional formation process and QTLS status are already highly valued as a way to develop and demonstrate professionalism. But it also confirms that there is potential to take this further. As a core benefit of SET membership, we will nourish and grow QTLS so that increasing numbers of new teachers and trainers choose to use it to signal their on-the-job expertise, as well as to develop their skills further through the support of their peers and reflective practice. We aim to award 5,000 practitioners with QTLS status over the next 3 years, subject to their ability to successfully complete the rigorous assessment process.

Parity in law with QTS has been established in the past thanks to the IfL, and has been reconfirmed by the ETF in updated DfE Regulations.¹

7. Governance

SET is supported and hosted by the Education and Training Foundation. The membership service aims to be self-sustainable rather than supported by other sources; to this end our medium to long-term aim is for membership subscriptions to fully fund the provision of member benefits.

To help build a strong new community within the Society for Education and Training, we invite members to get involved in its governance and shape its services, should they wish. Members will be at the heart of everything we do; direct consultation and member feedback and evaluation will guide the evolution of our Society at every step.

SET will have its own dedicated Management Board, which will feed directly into the main board of trustees of the Education and Training Foundation. The Management Board will define and recommend SET’s strategic direction for the main board’s approval, and be responsible for shaping its services to meet

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/qualified-teacher-status-qts#qualified-teacher-learning-and-skills-qtls>

members' needs. It will comprise four practitioner members, two ETF trustees (one of whom will be chair), and two members of the ETF Senior Management team.

The practitioner members will be appointed from a separate Practitioner Advisory Group (PAG), which will meet through the year to discuss how the benefits of SET should evolve or be improved. This will involve members across all parts of the sector and in a variety of roles. We have already convened a similar group during our consultation, which has been instrumental in testing and advising on this forward strategy. The new board and PAG will become operational during summer 2015.

Appendix : Consultation and evidence base

Since the close of the Institute for Learning (IfL) in November last year and the transfer of its members to the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), we have undertaken a wide consultation with the post-16 education and training sector around what practitioners want and need from a professional membership organisation. We are committed to ensuring that what we provide for members now and in the future is clearly based on what is valued by the whole range of professionals who deliver, and enable, excellent teaching and learning.

The purpose of this research has been to provide an evidential base for our work to shape the new membership offer. We were delighted to receive strong engagement from practitioners across the sector. The findings from our online survey of 2,837 professionals provided a strong body of data to inform our thinking. We also interviewed representative stakeholders, and worked with a 25-strong practitioner advisory group and two focus groups from Learning South West and Manchester College to test and refine the guidance offered by the survey.

The evidence from this research has informed our preparation of the vision, strategy and delivery plans for the Foundation's new professional membership service. The output from this piece of work has been a full research report (available at <https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/about-us/consultation>) outlining what the sector considers important from their professional membership, which is available on our website.

Key findings

Our research provided clear evidence of what was valuable from the IFL legacy and what practitioners across the sector want from a new membership offer.

Highlights of this include:

- Membership should remain voluntary
- The importance of membership in representing and increasing members' professionalism and the recognition this provides them in their career,
- The need for a service that provides demonstrable value given cost pressures

within the sector,

- Ongoing recognition for members' professional development through different levels of membership, professional formation and a professional register,
- Providing the ability to gain Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status and ensuring its genuine parity with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for teaching in schools – and exploring ways to improve this process
- Giving access to a range of high-quality CPD or training programmes to support progression in professional knowledge and expertise, in partnership with other organisations in the sector
- Providing valuable learning content – including academic literature, and a dedicated journal that highlights effective practice,
- Having an active practitioner community to discuss the application of effective teaching and learning practice, in areas of specialist and general interest
- Having the ability to shape, lead and contribute to the membership organisation, with the views of practitioners represented to government.

Some of these requirements are new but many have long been important to teachers and trainers. Inevitably given the breadth and diversity of the sector, there are many differing views which we are seeking to accommodate. We now want to build a new professional membership offer which demonstrates clear value in each of these areas of demand, but which combines as an integrated whole to be an essential choice for members to demonstrate their commitment to their own career and to the future of the sector.

During the consultation survey and focus groups we discussed what name would be best for the new membership. There was a clear message that teachers and trainers want to belong to an organisation whose name reflects the industry in which they work; whose name reflects the professionalism, expertise and evidence-based practice that members aspire to; and whose name also expresses a sense of community. For all these reasons we have chosen the name of “Society for Education and Training”, which was enthusiastically received by our focus group and we feel will give membership a strong and unique identity in the education and training system alongside other representative bodies.