



Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS)

Structural review into the current offer of Professional Formation leading to QTLS status

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Angela Sanders

Angela Sanders Consulting

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# 1 Background

In November 2014, the legacy of the Institute for Learning (IfL) transferred to the Education and Training Foundation. This legacy includes the opportunity for members to undertake professional formation leading to Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status.

The Foundation has made a commitment to continue to offer QTLS under its stewardship, affirming that QTLS should be a challenging, high-status professional formation route that practitioners will be proud to achieve.

The QTLS Impact Study<sup>1</sup> (February–April 2015) provided an opportunity to evaluate and assess the role of QTLS in a different political context, free of regulation where employers have responsibility for determining the qualifications that their teaching and learning staff should hold, rather than the government.

The aim of the study was to further the Foundation's understanding of the strengths of professional formation and to identify ways in which it could be developed in the future to meet the needs of a broader audience, whilst maintaining its current integrity.

The objectives were to:

- Determine applicants' motivation for undertaking professional formation in the current climate
- Outline the strengths of the process of professional formation and ways in which this could be improved to maximise impact
- Identify the impact of the process of professional formation on teaching and learning, both in terms of teaching and learning practice and learner outcomes
- Suggest ways in which professional formation could be developed in order to achieve greater consistency between QTLS and QTS.

The key questions for the research study were:

- 1) What is the motivation for undertaking professional formation in the current climate?
- 2) What are the strengths of the process and how could it be improved in order to respond to potential changes in demand from the sector and in order to be more consistent with QTS?
- 3) What is the impact of the process of professional formation on teaching and learning?

The views of past professional formation applicants were sought during the study, as well as former IfL consultants and IfL staff involved in the QTLS process. In addition, key stakeholders were consulted on the strengths of QTLS, as well as recommendations for improving the process. Practitioners' views were sought about the impact that the process had made on teaching and learning, both in terms of teaching and learning practice and learner outcomes.

The QTLS Impact Study report and executive summary were produced and headlines from the study were made public on the SET website<sup>1</sup> in June 2015.

Applicants considered that the key strengths of QTLS are that:

- QTLS provides professional status and recognition
- QTLS is excellent CPD and enables practitioners to reflect on their practice
- QTLS has legal parity with QTS

80% consider that the process has improved their practice.

84% say the process has increased their confidence in their teaching practice.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/publications/set-publications/qtls-impact-study/>

Key findings in relation to applicants' work setting, role and motivation can be summarised as follows:

- 42.5% of applicants are working in primary schools (6%), secondary schools (31.5%) or sixth form colleges (5%)
- 79.5% apply to increase their professional status and 66% apply in order to have the flexibility to work in schools

The research provided some clear indications of areas for improvement and these included:

- Increase employers' understanding by providing clearer guidance about the parity of QTLS and QTS (with respect to the legislation) and the benefits of the process in enhancing practitioners' status
- Provide opportunities for more contact with other applicants (trainers or fellow students) to be able to network with others who are going through the process and provide or encourage a system of mentor/peer support either through buddying up with applicants or through peer support provided by employers
- Provide more guidance beforehand for potential applicants, for example through interactive online workshops or face-to-face events, to talk through the professional formation process
- Provide clearer guidance on the website and include an explicit requirement for evidence of formal observation of teaching and learning throughout the professional formation process
- Increase opportunities to demonstrate evidence in support of the 2014 professional standards
- Review the currency of maths and English qualifications
- Develop progression routes from QTLS
- Carry out a review of the REFLECT+ online tool
- Explore further whether there need to be different routes for vocational teachers. Previously, Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS) was available for teachers holding a Level 4 (rather than Level 5) initial teacher education qualification.

In response to the recommendations, the following improvements have already been implemented:

- The 2014 professional standards were explicitly integrated into the professional formation workbook from September 2015<sup>2</sup>
- The eligibility criteria have been clarified<sup>3</sup>
- With respect to introducing a closer alignment of QTLS with the Diploma in Education and Training (DET), a pilot study is being carried out with 45 premium graduates who achieved their initial teacher education (ITE) qualification in June 2015
- Guidance for headteachers has been produced and published on the SET website<sup>4</sup>
- Improved guidance for overseas applicants has been developed<sup>5</sup>
- Promotional material has been developed in the form of an A4 [flyer](#)
- A QTLS forum has been launched that provides a discussion area for professional formation applicants and has over 100 members
- A webinar was delivered by SET in October 2015 entitled 'All you wanted to know about QTLS', which attracted 100 delegates

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<sup>2</sup> [Spring 2016 Professional formation planner](#)

<sup>3</sup> [QTLS eligibility](#)

<sup>4</sup> <https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/professionalism/gaining-qtls/guidance-for-headteachers/>

<sup>5</sup> Recognising overseas qualifications

## 2 Aim and objectives

The aim of the structural review was to consult on recommendations from the QTLS impact study, in order to bring about enhancements to improve the rigour and increase the impact of the QTLS offer on teachers' practice and their learners' outcomes. In parallel, a technical review of the REfLECT+ tool was also conducted.

The objectives were to seek the views of fellows, QTLS reviewers and moderators, and key stakeholders on key recommendations from the impact study. At each event, participants' views were sought on the recommendations for improvement and a different aspect of the changes needed was explored. These included the following:

- How can QTLS be a more developmental process?
- How can the role of the supporter be increased?
- How can professional formation be enhanced so that it can 'mean' something for the employer and the applicant?
- What aspects of the process pre-registration and during review are robust, work well and should be kept; which aspects need to be improved?
- How can we increase the support for applicants during the process in order to help maximise the impact of the process on their practice and learners?
- How current should teachers' maths and English qualifications be?

## 3 Methodology

The structural review has been informed by five consultation events:

- SET fellows in the South East and London regions: 24 July 2015
- QTLS reviewers and moderators evaluation event: 31 July 2015
- SET fellows in the Midlands and North: 6 October 2015
- QTLS reviewers and moderators: 13 October 2015
- FE Advice staff: 19 October 2015
- Stakeholders: 5 November 2015

The consultation methodology was designed as participatory and, for each event, to be an iterative process that enabled topics to be explored in-depth by testing, analysing and refining the insights and ideas to identify recommended improvements to QTLS.

Group participants were presented with the findings from the Impact Study (2014 applicants) and with additional evaluation data from applicants who submitted their workbooks in June 2015.

Two of the events provided an opportunity for participants to review the technical aspect of QTLS. The current system is an online REfLECT+ tool. The feedback from participants has contributed to the technical review report.

## 4 Summary of findings

This section presents the findings from the consultation groups. The findings are presented according to the key objectives of the structural review:

- What are the benefits and the value of holding QTLS? (This is the icebreaker question 'why bother')
- How can QTLS be a more developmental process?
- How can the role of the supporter be increased?
- How can professional formation be enhanced so that it can 'mean' something for the employer and the applicant?
- What is robust about the process before the applicant registers and during the review period? How could it be improved? What aspects of the process pre-registration and during review are robust, work well and should be kept; which aspects need to be improved?
- How can we increase the support for applicants during the process in order to help maximise the impact of the process on their practice and learners?
- How current should teachers' maths and English qualifications be?

### 1.1 What are the benefits and the value of holding QTLS?

Participants of the group were presented with the following quote from a member who had recently been awarded QTLS:

*Since notifying the employment agencies of my new status (QTLS), I have already been offered a maths teaching position for September. It is a great feeling when employers are constantly ringing to check my availability; this is proof that being a qualified teacher with QTLS is really important. (QTLS awarded 2015)*

The group were asked to comment 'How does this mirror their experience of QTLS? What would they say to someone who says 'Why bother undertaking QTLS?' In summary, the responses were as follows:

- Professional status that shows evidence of development post qualification; QTLS enhances the status of practitioners in the sector
- Valued 'peer' validation for practitioners themselves and as a lead to others
- Confirms commitment to professionalism
- Widens employment opportunities and offers recognition and competitiveness; all agencies ask for QTLS; widening opportunity with parity (even if practitioners do not want to teach in schools); offers flexibility of professionalism across ACL, FE and sixth form colleges; gives FE sector staff legal parity in schools
- Continuing Professional Development: the process of achieving QTLS deepens knowledge; a good example of CPD
- Dual professionalism: QTLS enables people with vocational backgrounds to maintain their teaching skills

Specific quotes that highlight the benefits identified by different types of respondent are as follows:

*Good personally and professionally to move on post ITE and consolidate development and practice as a teacher. (Reviewer and moderators event, 13 October 2015)*

*As a teacher of initial teacher education, I find that students like the process of gaining a teaching qualification through an 'in-service/part-time route' and they have all gone on to do QTLS as a natural progression from the initial qualification. (Fellows event, 6 October 2015)*

*QTLS is a good programme that gives kudos and an enhanced CV and an instrumental badge. (Stakeholders event, 5 November 2015)*

*Useful process and an opportunity to reflect on what you are doing and where you are going. (Fellows event, 6 October 2015)*

*FE is a rocky sector for employability; QTLS offers recognition and competitiveness (Reviewer and moderators event, 13 October 2015)*

There was a consensus within the consultation events that the **value of QTLS** needs to be strengthened. There was a view that employers may be more encouraged to contribute to the cost of QTLS for employees if they saw the value and status improved and could see the impact. There was a suggestion that this could 'snowball'; if the profile of QTLS is raised, then Ofsted will identify QTLS as good practice. Employers will want to encourage teaching staff to undertake it because it is seen as good practice and it will 'spiral'. People in the FE sector will see QTLS as something to aspire to and will want to 'go down the QTLS route'.

## 1.2 How can QTLS be a more developmental process?

**Initial teacher education provision** was considered to be an important avenue to promote QTLS. Firstly, in relation to Ofsted ITE inspection and secondly, as ITE is the 'breeding ground' for new teachers and trainers.

Ofsted have revised the initial teacher education (ITE) inspection process. As of April 2015, ITE inspection is a two-stage process and introduces a process that inspects trainees before and after their ITE training.

During inspection of trainees, Ofsted inspectors advise that it would be helpful to see a pen portrait of each trainee observed for inspection and this would include the record of evidence against the 2014 professional standards for further education (FE) teachers and trainers. (pp. 11-12 Initial Teacher Inspection Handbook)<sup>6</sup>

ITE providers (Higher Education Institutions and FE) have to evidence the extent to which trainees are monitored and supported. One group member considered there was an opportunity to work with FE providers and that QTLS could be 'the lever' or the mechanism to provide additional support to new trainees and offer closer parity with the Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) year.

The view within one group (moderators and reviewers) was that QTLS could be more closely aligned with the Diploma in Education and Training (DET) as a developmental process post qualification. The view was that the value of QTLS for candidates is that it demonstrates how they are continuing to develop their pedagogical knowledge and skills post qualification. There is an opportunity to link with ITE alumni to promote the award and to encourage take up. The pilot with 45 premium graduates who achieved QTLS in June 2015 will provide valuable data on developing this closer alignment.

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<sup>6</sup> [Initial Teacher Education Handbook from September 2015](#)

*A suggestion is to review the structure of the workbook to consider if it is sufficiently supporting a developmental process. (Fellows event, 24 July 2015)*

There was a perception that the self-evaluation element of the process could feature more prominently.

*I think a key activity in the QTLS process is the SWOT analysis against the current Professional Standards. This ensures applicants are familiar with the standards and can generate a professional development plan to address any shortcomings. This activity should be a mandatory requirement for all applicants. (Reviewer, November 2015)*

In addition, the opinion from both fellows and stakeholders was that QTLS is a valuable reflective process and developmental at any stage of teaching was very useful, 'even after 20 years of teaching'.

### 1.3 How can the role of the supporter be increased?

One group respondent (Fellows event, 24 July 2015) commented from their experience as reviewer that the guidance on who is eligible to be a supporter is a little vague, since the supporter can be 'just a colleague'. The suggestion was that the supporter role needed to be 'firmed up' and should at least be a line manager and/or someone with QTLS.

The suggestion from the reviewers and moderator group was to revise the supporter role so that there is evidence that the supporter has discussed the application and that there is sufficient guidance for supporters on the website to ensure robustness and consistency.

There was a suggestion (Fellows event, 24 July 2014) that the supporter role could be developed into a mentor role and this could be further enhanced with online training for mentors. In this way, the professional formation process could provide a framework for supporting newly qualified teachers, underpinning the Ofsted inspection criteria in relation to support by 'experienced and expert mentors' in the Initial Teacher Education Handbook, September 2015 (pp. 39–40).

The pilot with the premium graduates will be of benefit in this respect, particularly in terms of highlighting the impact of ongoing support from teaching practice mentors throughout the process, since all premium graduates are being closely supported by qualified mentors in their first year of teaching.

### 1.4 How can professional formation be enhanced so that it can 'mean' something for the employer and the applicant?

One consistent theme from the consultation events was that those working in the FE and skills sector are not hearing about QTLS and do not fully understand it. This was borne out by examples from one of the reviewers who stated 'I am the only one in my department with QTLS' and that in her view there was not enough understanding of it within employing organisations. The consensus of opinion was that the adoption, take up of and demand for QTLS was low in comparison to schools where everybody gains QTS, as it is a statutory requirement as a license to teach.

This was evidenced within the Lingfield review<sup>7</sup> that was critical of the take up of QTLS:

*'According to research conducted for the government by GHK Consulting, only about 15 per cent of lecturers have attained 'fully qualified' status or have committed themselves to the programme of post-qualification study and supervised practice required to achieve it. QTLS/ATLS has not become a universal full licence to practise and a driver of teaching excellence. (p. 16 Interim report)*

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/professionalism-in-further-education-independent-review-panel-interim-report>



The current climate of deregulation presents both a challenge and an opportunity. One group (Fellows event, 24 July 2015) acknowledged that there is not enough awareness about the Society for Education and Training (SET) and about QTLS. Since deregulation there is a view from fellows that managers think it is no longer needed. One group member asked if the Foundation sends a promotional pack to all providers and in particular to the staff development managers.

The stakeholder group considered that QTLS is a stand-alone professional formation process and has no connection with a regulated system. The changing landscape in schools with schools becoming academies as the dominant model represents a 'tidal wave of change' and within academy schools headteachers have the freedom to employ unqualified staff<sup>8</sup>. Within schools, it is still expected that the vast majority of teachers employed in academies will continue to have QTS. In the same way, the achievement of QTLS is an enhancement to a person's CV and offers employers in the FE sector a quality mark for engaging staff.

There was a suggestion from the Fellows event that an effective strategy would be to 'target from the top' and to engage with college principals, heads of service and chief executives to view QTLS 'as essential to gain within two years' and that QTLS could be used to manage the probationary framework, i.e. QTLS is the probationary framework for the first two years working in FE.

A key aspect to engaging employers would be to show the correlation between teachers holding QTLS and improvements in learner success rates. One respondent (Reviewer and moderator event) reported that their organisation wanted to withdraw funding for ITE and professional development, and undertook research (about five years ago) to look at trends of success rates of qualified teachers and those who had gained QTLS (as the organisation had supported this) and the grades teachers were getting. Management acknowledged from the data the impact that ITE/CPD had on learners' success rates and the funding was not withdrawn. The Foundation might want to consider a similar piece of research.

There was a suggestion that an area of growth would be independent consultants/sessional workers/zero hours contract/agency workers who were typically working 'portfolio' careers and not within one institution. There was a suggestion that many are not applying for QTLS as they do not see that it fits for them as they are not full-time in one organisation. Within this segment of the workforce there was also a need for mentor support and particularly for support post ITE qualification.

**The Foundation's Research Development Fellowship (RDF) Programme** was seen as an opportunity that could be harnessed to promote findings from the Foundation's research programme in a way that promotes a large body of evidence based research. There is an opportunity to develop a connection with the research programme and QTLS. (See differentiation below).

A further suggestion was to develop **differentiation and progression** within QTLS and offer QTLS status as a starting point and a 'mark of excellence', but then build on this to offer a model that gives progression within the system.

There was a suggestion to look at the Higher Education Academy (HEA) model<sup>9</sup>. Within the HEA model there are three levels of 'fellowship'; first level reflect on own impact; second level reflect on impact on the employing organisation and third level impact at a national/international level. Within the HEA system applicants are supported by mentors who act as a 'sounding board' and who validate the applicant's submission. Referees, who are experienced colleagues familiar with the UKPSF (The UK Professional Standards Framework) and ideally holding fellowship, provide informed peer review and engage with statements in an application.

When the question was asked of stakeholders 'should ATLS be resurrected?' there was a resounding NO. They conveyed a strong message that instead QTLS could be developed to give status and recognition to all sectors if it was seen as more than just entry level and that it is a mark of excellence for 'their excellence'. One suggestion was to offer 'an excellence for work based learning (WBL) assessors' after they have achieved QTLS, with the need to build on their dual professionalism including their use of maths and English in their assessor role. Additionally, it could be used for industrial updating of vocational expertise. There was a strong desire to see an award that would build on and give recognition and value to a teacher/assessor dual professionalism (vocational teachers have earned their status in the workplace and the experience is very valuable).

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/academies-to-have-same-freedom-as-free-schools-over-teachers>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/professional-recognition/hea-fellowships/become-fellow-hea>

*There is a need to build up the narrative of the model of professional formation and that QTLS can demonstrate 'professionalism' through 'a professional developing'. (Stakeholders event, 5 November 2015)*

One of the stakeholder group members asked 'what is the purpose of QTLS?' They felt that discussion was treating it as part of an academic teacher qualification that is seen as working from the profile of the 'teacher in the classroom' and with QTS as 'our model' and this could become a problem for the sector as it is not recognising the skills found in the workplace, and that vocational expertise can be the basis of the professional formation. There was a plea to take into account the vocational expertise and the dual professionalism expertise. The suggestion was made 'should we be referring to teachers as "vocational educators" as a more inclusive term?'

*There is a need to move away from the graduate model and recognise the vocational professional trainer. (Stakeholders event, 5 November 2015)*

There was one view, within the stakeholder group, that any development to link QTLS with employers needed to ensure that QTLS was 'disentangled from performance management' (which is the model in schools for QTS).

At the first consultation group (Fellows event, 24 July 2015), members were asked to look at how the 2014 Professional Standards (England) could be embedded and made more explicit in the QTLS process. There was overwhelming support for this suggestion, and recognition that the standards are a framework to provide evidence.

*The 2014 Professional Standards are making a statement about what professionalism means. If you get that statement absolutely nailed, that this is about you being self-accountable, then people will want to do QTLS. The standards are part of building the culture of 'this is how teachers should behave' and if you get the message across accurately teachers will come and there will always be some that don't.' (Fellows event, 24 July 2015)*

There is a suggestion that there is a need to encourage employers to see that **QTLS indicates a commitment to professionalism and standards and quality**. This could be the main message and one that can be communicated to people in the sector.

## 1.5 What is robust about the process before the applicant registers and during the review period? How could it be improved?

The question about what is robust about the process before the applicant registers and during the review period was considered by the fellows group in July and further discussed at the moderator and reviewer group. QTLS was seen to be a robust process with clear guidance and requirements for candidates and a rigorous moderation process.

There were suggestions on how the process could be improved:

*Could self-assessment come more usefully at the beginning – benchmarking, then look back at a later stage, post-QTLS, to measure distance travelled. (Fellows event, 24 July 2015)*

*There is a need to increase networking opportunities as an important aspect of CPD to meet other professionals who you may then choose to stay in touch with. (Fellows event, 24 July 2015)*

Further suggestions included:

- A need to rationalise the number of questions within each section of the professional formation planner (Spring 2016 version)
- The critical reflection section is repetitious and that consideration should be given to asking applicants to give a short reflective evaluative account of how their experience of completing the process of professional formation has contributed to their ongoing professional development. In this way, responses could also provide a source of useful feedback about applicants' perceptions of professional formation.
- Consideration of online tools, e.g. Pearltrees (a tool for bookmarking online materials); MOOT as a way of collecting supporting documents and materials from multiple sources; Is there a way that the forums can be used more effectively? Could the Foundation Online Learning environment<sup>10</sup> be utilised to support this?
- Consideration of an online module with online tutor support available, with links to up-to-date documents and theories, and with phone and web support? This could enhance the value of the QTLS fee. Develop greater use of social media: provide support groups.

## 1.6 How can we increase the support for applicants during the process in order to help maximise the impact of the process on their practice and learners?

Feedback from respondents to the Impact Study survey, in relation to support, demonstrated that there was an even split between those who considered that they had enough support from their institution to undertake the process, and those who did not.

Feedback from summer 2015 applicants was that:

- 45% of respondents anticipate that professional formation will have little or no impact on their practice
- 25% anticipate that undertaking professional formation will have no impact on raising their learners' achievements

*It hasn't impacted because it was just evidencing what I already do.*

*Reflection can only improve your teaching so much before other methods are required.*

This suggests that there is a need to develop the process so that it provides an opportunity to develop the candidates' practice and crucially to demonstrate an impact not only on applicants' knowledge and skills but on their learners' outcomes.

In response to this data, within the consultation events, there was considerable support given to the value of developing and strengthening mentor support as part of the process of gaining QTLS status and to helping applicants realise the impact of the process on their practice and learners.

Respondents saw mentoring as a practical way to support people to reflect, not just on their practice in relation to themselves but on the impact that their practice will have on their learners. Some people may need additional support in this area and an offer of mentoring/modelling could provide this. Encouraging people who have gained QTLS to support and mentor others would also lead to the mentors developing their skills. This in turn would increase the status of QTLS.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.foundationonline.org.uk/>

The feedback from the events suggests that if the support was to come from the candidate's supporter within their organisation then for some institutions this would require a cultural change as there is variable practice across organisations as to whether teachers in FE have mentor support post initial teacher training (ITT).

Within the school QTS process there is a mentor assigned in the induction process and this reinforces the professionalism of the mentor role and process at the beginning of their career, and introduces a support system that a teacher may value and continue to draw on throughout their career.

One group member (Stakeholders event) was able to report that since Ofsted had introduced the new ITE two-stage inspection process there had been a change in organisations offering increased support to newly qualified teachers in FE. One noticeable change was that newly qualified teachers were being observed earlier i.e. by the end of September. The context being that Ofsted would as a matter of course expect to see observation of newly qualified teachers in FE at an early stage in their process to support, focus and provide target setting matched to the context of the learners' needs.

One respondent suggested that the Foundation may want to consider a similar system that is used in the Engineering Technician (EngTech) professional registration with the IET professional body<sup>11</sup>, offering mentoring support 'by members for members' when they cannot identify a mentor in their own organisation:

'E-mentoring gives mentees the chance to receive guidance and support from an IET volunteer mentor, when there are no mentors available within their local network and they do not have the support of a workplace mentor.'

There was enthusiasm about the EngTech model and a suggestion that the Society for Education and Training (SET) could provide a mentor register with guidelines and online training for mentors. The concept of 'choosing a mentor' resonated with one respondent who commented that technology enables you to continue the relationship with a mentor. The group considered that part of 'professional behaviour' was accounting for oneself, choosing a mentor, and as a professional being happy to work as a mentor for others and *'this [mentoring other] should be part of the role of what is considered to be a professional teacher'*.

From a small minority there was caution about how to implement a consistent level of support and that the options to consider might include:

- Using some of the QTLS fee to pay for mentor support to ensure standardisation and consistency.
- Developing volunteer mentors and providing training.

Two group members considered that identifying any evidence of whether people who had gained QTLS had taken on roles of mentors or coaches in their organisations would be useful as an indicator of satisfaction and retention in the sector. One group member reported that they did develop coaches/mentors to support new teachers, in a college (previously worked in), and people embraced it as professional development.

The stakeholder group also considered networking important and suggested that the Foundation could offer development days for those taking QTLS that would enable people to come together with others to share their reflection and look at impact of learning. This would enhance the message that QTLS is not something to be done in isolation and would demonstrate the belonging to a professional collective; a community of practice. Within one group there was a debate as to whether this should be kept separate from employers or whether to work with employers at their 'inset' days, and that QTLS could provide a validated route for 'in-house' CPD programmes.

## 1.7 How current should teachers' maths and English and qualifications be?

A recommendation in the impact study was that, in order for QTLS to have further parity with QTS in relation to the need to evidence Level 2 maths and English skills, the Foundation could consider introducing a requirement that these Level 2 awards must have been gained in the last five years. This has been explored further in the structural review and the supporting evidence indicates the need to explore this further.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.theiet.org/membership/profreg/engtech/>

The data from the last two cohorts achieving QTLS shows that only 20% have gained maths and English in the last five years.

The view from the consultation groups was that there were two learner types:

- 1) Those who do not have maths and English qualifications and need support to self-assess, develop skills and take a formal test to demonstrate that they can meet the professional standard '*Address the mathematical and English needs of learners and work creatively to overcome individual barriers to learning*'
- 2) Those who had achieved maths and English qualifications more than five years ago and who need to update their maths and English skills

A range of comments and suggestions were made:

This could be creating barriers for vocational tutors taking QTLS if there was a requirement to have L2 maths and English. The Foundation is developing online modules and this need to be publicised more.

If there are requirements for L2 maths and English, then guidelines need to be specific about what 'counts as relevant' and also 'not to put barriers in the way'. Are there ways that people can take the functional maths test without having to go on a course?

Whilst ITE candidates might do the minimum core they do not necessarily have the skills to 'embed English and maths in their teaching'. It would be useful to have maths skills relevant to your subject. Is enough support available for teachers to address this if it is a developmental need?

One participant reported that new teachers who do need to develop maths are shown the Growth Mindset Maths<sup>12</sup> materials. (Fellows event, 6 October 2015)

It is not necessarily that the need is about getting maths and English qualifications, and potentially throwing barriers in the way, but the need is about having the skills and a measure to show teacher can embed maths and English.

The suggestion was that there was some good practice being developed in the sector in embedding maths and English skills and it would be good to do some 'joined up thinking' to see whether this is an issue picked up by Ofsted. Testing is not the answer.

The experience within one WBL organisation was that five year currency is not appropriate when someone is teaching a maths based subject. Within the WBL organisation the company is making it compulsory for delivery staff to have and do at least L2 functional skills. Experience has shown that even with L2 functional skills they still do not feel confident or able to develop and support learners in maths. This has caused the company to have a rethink.

If trainee teachers need support with their maths and English, this should be made available to them; difficulty is not in having the qualification; it is about being able to put it into practice in their teaching. (Stakeholders event, 5 November 2015)

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.growthmindsetmaths.com/>

Finally, there was a strong message from the stakeholder group that the improvements to QTLS need to be able to demonstrate a clearly defined model that enables QTLS to be promoted across the whole of the FE and skills sector. The elements of the model would be defined by:

- QTLS being a developmental process and not a 'tick box' approach' and a 'snapshot'; 'a moment in time'. Instead, taking this opportunity from the structural review to develop a model where QTLS is also about identifying areas for development and taking it forward.
- Creating space and time to network both inside and outside of the workplace and to share professional learning with colleagues or employers as part of a networked approach to professional learning
- Supporting individuals to be able to reflect on the impact of their teaching and learning on learners
- A differentiated model that also offers progression opportunities to those who might want this
- Creating an opportunity once more to record continuing professional development.

## 5 Conclusions

Through the process of talking to people in the education and training field, important insights have emerged about how QTLS is viewed and how it could be developed to strengthen the brand. There was a clear message, from all those who contributed, that QTLS is of value and there is a need to develop a clear message that QTLS indicates a commitment to professionalism, standards and quality.

The consultation process has provided insights from across the sector that serve to highlight the steps that are needed to strengthen QTLS, in order to increase its value and extend its reach more broadly across the sector.

To draw together the findings of this structural review and to support further development to QTLS, the next section offers suggestions for key areas for improvement and recommendations.

## 6 Recommendations

### a) Increase employers' understanding of the benefits and parity with QTS

- Investigate ways in which QTLS can align with the new ITE inspection requirements.
- Undertake research to show the correlation with QTLS and learners' success rates.
- Investigate ways in which employers are supporting teachers' access to QTLS.

### b) Improve the rigour of QTLS to improve its parity with QTS

- Extend the period of time to complete professional formation in order that QTLS is a developmental process, rather than a snapshot of an applicant's practice.
- Include a mandatory requirement for applicants to self-assess their knowledge and skills against the 2014 professional standards at the start of the professional formation process.
- Introduce the requirement for applicants to demonstrate the impact of improvements in their practice on their learners' outcomes, since 25% of applicants anticipate that the process will have no impact on raising their learners' achievement.
- Introduce more emphasis on industrial updating and dual professionalism.
- Develop the 'brand' of QTLS as a strong recognition and indicator of professional status. Review the branding materials to ensure that it is clear who can apply and the benefits of gaining QTLS.
- Investigate ways to ensure that QTLS is not used, by teachers working in schools as an alternative to achieving QTS through the 'school route'.
- Evaluate the review and moderation process to identify ways in which the rigour of the process can be improved.

### c) Encourage peer support and mentoring throughout the process

- Encourage peer support and mentoring throughout the process, since 50% of applicants considered they did not have enough support during the process.
- Explore the suggestion to revise the supporter role so that there is evidence that the supporter has discussed the application and that there is sufficient guidance for supporters on the website to ensure robustness.
- Develop an online mentoring programme for supporters who are mentoring newly qualified teachers that will align with Ofsted inspection criteria.
- Consider developing and brokering a mentoring system within SET, i.e. a register of mentors.
- Explore the feasibility of developing and brokering a mentoring system within SET and QTLS similar to the system operating within the Engineering Technician professional body.

**d) Review the currency of maths and English qualifications**

- Undertake further investigations in relation to recommendations for the evidence of current skills in maths and English.
- Consider whether maths and English skills requirements should focus on how to embed these skills, as well as the development of teachers' personal maths and English skills.
- Investigate ways to facilitate taking a maths or English test, without the need to register for a course (e.g. Functional Skills); also, investigate ways to help applicants update/brush up existing maths and English qualifications.
- Introduce the requirement that teachers of Functional English, Maths and SEND should have achieved the relevant Level 5 Specialist Diploma prior to registering for QTLS.

**e) Extend the reach of QTLS to other settings, e.g. work based learning**

- Review the evidence requirements and language of the online workbook in order to broaden the reach of QTLS to other settings, for example work based learning; consider whether we should be referring to teachers as 'vocational educators' as a more inclusive term.

**f) Develop CPD opportunities for progression for those with QTLS**

- Develop a QTLS 'Stage 2' that recognises progression from QTLS, e.g. to evidence advanced practitioner status.
- Provide CPD opportunities for those with QTLS, for example signposting to existing modules, e.g. Level 5 GCSE modules in Maths and English, SEND, etc.
- Provide opportunities for recording CPD, to include tools for self-assessment, professional development planning, action planning CPD undertaken, all underpinned by the 2014 professional standards.

**g) Develop opportunities to provide practitioners with space, either in or out of their work setting, to have professional conversations**

- Review the support provided in order to offer practitioners with space (either in or out of their work settings) to discuss issues in relation to their professionalism/teaching and learning issues.