



DfE Consultation 'Proposed changes to allow qualified teachers from further education and from the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to become permanent teachers in English schools'

***Response from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers
December 2011***

ATL, the education union, is an independent, registered trade union and professional association, representing approximately 160,000 teachers, head teachers, lecturers and support staff in maintained and independent nurseries, schools, sixth form, tertiary and further education colleges in the United Kingdom. AMiE is the trade union and professional association for leaders and managers in colleges and schools, and is a distinct section of ATL. We recognise the link between education policy and members' conditions of service.

ATL exists to help members, as their careers develop, through first rate research, advice, information and legal advice. Our evidence-based policy making enables us to campaign and negotiate locally and nationally.

ATL is affiliated to the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) and Education International (EI). ATL is not affiliated to any political party and seeks to work constructively with all the main political parties.

ATL policy

ATL believes that teachers as professionals must be recognised for their knowledge, expertise and judgement, at the level of the individual pupil and in articulating the role of education in increasing social justice. Within light national parameters, development of the education system should take place at a local level, within local authority structures: the curriculum should be developed in partnership with local stakeholders; assessment should be carried out through local professional networks. Schools should be encouraged to work collaboratively to offer excellent teaching and learning, and to support pupils' well-being, across a local area. Accountability mechanisms should be developed so that there is a proper balance of accountability to national government and the local community, which supports collaboration rather than competition.

Executive Summary

ATL welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation, appreciating the government's proposals to recognise QTLS and of overseas teaching qualifications from the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand within schools, and to express concerns about how those groups are to be supported properly within the schools' workforce. ATL's response to the consultation is as follows:

- ◆ ATL supports the proposal to allow QTLS holders to work in schools as qualified teachers, if deemed appropriate to teach subject they are appointed to teach
- ◆ Equivalence of qualifications and duties must be met with parity in terms and conditions, preferably through national pay and conditions arrangements.
- ◆ The funding implications of the QTLS proposals for schools must be recognised by the government and additional funding provided.

- ♦ We agree IfL's role in verifying QTLS status. However, there must be coherence across standards and CPD provision across all teaching staff, whether QTS or QTLS, to ensure consistency and help prevent marginalisation of QTLS holders within schools.
- ♦ We support the proposal that fully qualified teachers from the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are added to list of teachers with QTS and verified through the Teaching Agency, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria. This provision needs to be reviewed regularly to ensure no drift in the equivalence of teacher education and qualification in the countries specified and there must also be careful monitoring of profession supply and demand ratios.
- ♦ ATL believes that induction is an invaluable package of professional development and support for teachers, whether they are new to the profession, to the schools sector or to this country. QTLS holders and overseas trained teachers working in schools should not be exempt from this entitlement and requirement. These groups of teachers should also be subject to the same CPD and performance management arrangements as their QTS school colleagues.

Introduction

ATL welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation which will certainly address some current issues of difficulty which both QTLS and overseas trained teachers from the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, currently face when wishing to work in English schools as qualified teachers. It is time that the expertise that these groups of teachers bring to education is properly recognised. However, it is vital that the needs of schools and of particular groups is balanced against the importance of maintaining the quality of teacher professionalism. ATL believes that induction is a vital step in ensuring that quality, providing a key package of support for those new to the experience of teaching in an English school setting, whether as QTLS or as an overseas teacher.

QTLS holders to teach in schools as qualified teachers

ATL completely supports the proposals to allow QTLS holders to teach in schools as qualified teachers. We have long supported the professionalism of teachers in the FE sector and this change would move this agenda forward. However, that must of course rely on QTLS holders being qualified to teach the subject(s) they are appointed to teach as we are concerned that they should not be asked to teach beyond that/those subject(s).

This equivalence in duties between QTS and QTLS holders must be matched with parity in their terms and conditions. The desire for parity between further education college lecturers and school teachers, who hold QTS, has long been an aim of ATL's as stated in our [The End of Terms](#) (2006) policy document. However, ATL recognises that such parity is not achievable merely by the equivalence of qualifications but parity in terms and conditions as well, including the mechanisms for maintaining such. Further, ATL believes that the most equitable and transparent system for setting the pay and conditions of teachers, lecturers and support staff is through national machinery. ATL is very concerned that academies and non maintained schools would not be subject to these proposals regarding pay and conditions thus perpetuating a two tier approach seen in other aspects of recent legislation which ATL members find divisive and unhelpful in the quest to promote excellence within the profession.

However, it must be recognised that currently, many schools employ QTLS holders as unqualified teachers, paid at a significantly lower rate. To ensure that the expertise that QTLS holders bring to the education offer in maintained schools is not lost due to budget constraints, school funding allocations must increase in order to take account of this pay parity and its impact on current school staffing budgets. This is necessary to ensure that schools will be able to meet their new commitments if this proposal becomes law. Otherwise, there will be a knock-on effect on existing budgets and may become a prohibitive factor for future recruitment.

This proposal also requires further clarification particularly regarding those holding equivalent lecturer status, that is, one qualified to teach in the lifelong learning sector as defined by the Workforce Regulations 2007 but who have not undertaken professional formation since 2007. If this is not addressed, true parity between FE lecturers and school teachers will not be achieved by these proposals.

Conditions of professional status for QTLS holders

ATL strongly supports an entitlement for all teachers to high-quality and relevant continuing professional development (CPD) as part of their professional status. However, there are some key difficulties in the expectation that QTLS holders continue to meet the conditions of QTLS status in order to be qualified to teach in schools. Some of those difficulties relate to the ongoing difference in standards and CPD requirements between QTS and QTLS teachers. The difference in language between QTS entitlement and QTLS requirement needs to be addressed with onus on schools to ensure that all teachers have access to CPD opportunities. The proposal also fails to recognise the practicality of schools' leadership teams 'checking' that two sets of teaching staff are reaching two different sets of professional standards and requirements. If this proposal is implemented, it is vital that guidance is issued to schools on QTLS requirements and good practice.

There is much emphasis on the role of the Institute for Learning (IfL) as a separate professional body of QTLS teachers in these consultation proposals which is ironic at a time when the QTS profession is losing its independent professional body, with the imminent demise of the GTCE. We support the role of IfL as part of the framework to continually develop the professional status and skills within the FE/vocational teaching profession. It is another point of difference between QTS and QTLS, the latter having to pay a fee of professional membership while QTS will not. IfL have not achieved full acceptance with their potential member base and this risks being seen as a move to bolster IfL from a prescriptive perspective rather than by first building its acceptance from the profession itself. Disparity between QTS and QTLS on this issue will not help this acceptance.

We are particularly concerned that QTLS holders should not be marginalised within the teaching workforce in schools. ATL believes that if the importation of QTLS teachers into schools is to be effective then adequate experiences, opportunities and support must be in place in order to legitimise their central participation in the life of the school. Otherwise, they could well remain in marginal participation and become an adjunct to the central focus of the school, as can happen with BTEC instructors currently.

We welcome the proposal that QTLS will be appropriately valued professionally and that QTLS holders will not be asked for written confirmation that they hold QTS. IfL, as the body which assesses and awards QTLS, is the reasonable conduit for that professional confirmation. The centrality of the IfL's role in this must be met with their continuing development of excellent professional support, development of key educational and professional research, and proponent of high-quality and relevant CPD. They need to be the voice of the profession, thus ensuring their own service and reputation adds to the status of QTLS holders.

Qualified teachers from the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand

ATL agrees with the proposal that fully qualified teachers from the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are added to the list of teachers with QTS and verified through the Teaching Agency, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria regarding the training routes and qualification-type taken. However, we believe that this will need to be reviewed regularly to ensure that there is no 'drift' between equivalence of teacher education and qualifications.

As we stated in our response to the recent government consultation on induction, issues of supply and demand require careful monitoring to avoid unequal distribution of candidates for available positions. We believe that this needs regular central review of candidate sources, informed by local authorities' oversight of training providers, applications to IfL by schools for confirmation of QTLS status, the Teaching Agency's verification figures for overseas teachers, and available teaching positions, at NQT or other levels.

The Teaching Agency will need to be resourced sufficiently to ensure that the verification process is timely and efficient and does not become a delaying factor in the appointments of appropriate and high-quality overseas qualified candidates. We hope that they will also play a part in providing accurate data in order to inform patterns of recruitment and supply across the country.

Induction/CPD/Performance management arrangements

ATL is highly committed to the early professional development of teachers and to the principle and practice of induction as a package of vital support and development for teachers in the first stage of their careers. This also applies to teachers who may be highly experienced within different contexts but who would benefit from a framework of professional support and development within new contexts and settings.

We believe that overseas trained teachers should receive the induction package of support to ensure that they are sufficiently supported during their first teaching position in this country. Research has shown that there are elements of difference in their preparedness for practice within this national context, particularly in curriculum knowledge and classroom management.¹ Making overseas trained teachers exempt from induction both wrongly treats induction as a hurdle rather than a valuable stage of professional development support but also denies these teachers a valuable resource not only to support their professional practice but to embed them within the school workforce.

We acknowledge the IfL assessment stage prior to the award of QTLS and its guarantee of professional experience within the FE sector, but we do not believe that this replaces the need for induction for QTLS teachers working within schools. As with overseas trained teachers, there will be differences of approach and context to take into account and induction will ensure that QTLS teachers get the support and professional development they need and will help prevent their marginalisation within the broader teaching workforce. The need for very particular professional development to facilitate transition between the school and FE sectors is already acknowledged with the IfL's requirement that those coming to work in further education who already have QTS have to complete Professional Formation and gain QTLS status within two years. Therefore we believe that induction, as an invaluable development opportunity and a guarantee of early support, is an appropriate step for QTLS holders to take, if they wish to work in schools.

ATL believes that QTLS teachers should be paid as qualified teachers in accordance with the STPCD. Therefore it is appropriate for them to be subject to same CPD, performance management regulations and pay and conditions arrangements. Their objectives should be linked to the school objectives and to those of other teachers. This will obviously require close co-operation between IfL and the Teaching Agency and it is vital that their organisational goals reflect this. The same principle applies for overseas trained teachers; they are undertaking the same duties as are expected of UK qualified teachers and therefore should be subject to the same arrangements.

Conclusion

The proposals within this consultation are welcome where they bring parity and equity of treatment between QTS teachers and other valuable groups of staff such as QTLS holders and overseas qualified teachers from the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. However, this parity of recognition must be equalled in terms and conditions and the funding impact of this on schools recognised by government and funded accordingly. There needs to be some standardisation of early and continuing professional development entitlements and requirements, and this includes properly resourced induction which is a valuable source of professional development and support for all teachers. Professional quality must never be sacrificed on the altar of quick fixes. This is particularly important as in a few years, there is likely to be a crisis in teacher recruitment as the cost of teacher training and the hit on teacher pay and pensions will deter many from taking up the training, whether to gain QTS or QTLS.

¹ McNamara, Lewis (Univ of Manchester), Howson (Education Data Surveys), [The Recruitment of Overseas Trained Teachers](#), NASUWT, 2004.