

ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS AND LECTURERS

7 NORTHUMBERLAND STREET, LONDON WC2N 5RD TEL: 020-7930-6441 FAX: 020-7930-1359
e-mail: info@atl.org.uk web site: http://www.atl.org.uk VAT REG NO 539 0866 17
GENERAL SECRETARY Dr MARY BOUSTED B.A.(Hons) PhD



Approving the development of new Teacher Apprenticeship Standards, October 2016

Response from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)

About ATL

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's education policy is underpinned by the professionalism of teachers. Teachers should be recognised for their knowledge, expertise and judgement, at the level of the individual pupil and in articulating the role of education in promoting social justice. Development of the education system should take place at a local level: the curriculum should be developed in partnership with local stakeholders and assessment should be carried out through local professional networks. Schools should work collaboratively to provide excellent teaching and learning with a broad and balanced curriculum, and to support pupils' well-being, across a local area. This means that mechanisms must be developed that ensure a proper balance of accountability to national government and the local community, and which supports collaboration rather than competition.

Executive Summary

ATL welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. This response includes the following key points:

- The proposed length of time for the non-graduate and graduate options is highly unrealistic, particularly as they are set at Master's level.
- It's vital that the apprenticeship meets the needs and aspirations of individuals/learners as well as the needs of employers.

- More information is needed about the range of providers involved in this apprenticeship bid and the extent of their experience and expertise in initial and continuing teacher education and development.
- We support a strong role for higher education institutions (HEIs) within any teacher apprenticeship development and delivery.
- Any presumption that this teacher apprenticeship route will plug skills gaps, particularly in areas like Maths and Science should be avoided, as evidence suggests that this gap results, not from the lack of supply of entrants with the relevant skills to the labour market but because of higher incentives, in terms of pay rewards or prospects, in other sectors.
- The graduate level of the profession is key to the portability of the qualification internationally; particularly as many high-performing countries have a Master's level teaching profession, with strong input and support from higher education.

Consultation Questions

Q1 Do you support the development of the Apprenticeship Standard set out in the Expression of Interest?

ATL has key questions and concerns about this proposal as set out in the Expression of Interest. Due to these, and the unresolved decision regarding the availability of the apprenticeship at undergraduate or postgraduate levels within the bid, we cannot give a straightforward answer to this question at this time. However, we welcome this opportunity to share our questions and concerns on behalf of our members and the settings within which they work.

Financially, teacher apprenticeships may be attractive to schools who will be liable for the 0.5% apprenticeship levy, as a way for them to recoup some/all of that money on training. This financial imperative is particularly acute currently due to the increasing financial challenges facing schools with dwindling reserves.

This likely enthusiasm, most probably based on financial reasons rather than a particular commitment to, or structural/workforce readiness for, this form of professional training means that a teacher apprenticeship must be robust. However, we have queries about the assertions around level, length and starting time made within the Expression of Interest that challenge the strength and viability of the apprenticeship as it's currently proposed.

The starting time of September 2017 seems to reflect the financial imperative for schools to have apprenticeships due to the pressures around the levy, rather than the amount of time that developing a strong and high-quality apprenticeship should take. It also takes little account of a process of development and approval that can be subject to delays. In addition to this, the current lack of clarity around the role and structure of the Institute of Apprenticeships, its overly wide remit as a result of the Skills Plan and delays due to senior personnel changes, which make it unlikely that structures will be in place before the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April 2017, will impact on timelines. We have seen,

in other areas of education policy, the negative consequences of haste in planning and implementation; we urge a more realistic timeframe.

The Expression of Interest gives a brief outline of a 'possibly' 4-year non-graduate apprenticeship and a 1-year post graduate apprenticeship. Around the former, we question how it will be ensured that the teacher apprentice would have adequate subject knowledge as well as pedagogical training, particularly as the apprenticeship is pitched to be to Level 7, which is equivalent to Master's level. That the apprenticeship route is expected to take no longer than a full-time Bachelor's degree followed by a full-time Master's, is questionable; even the resource-intensive Teach First route aimed at top graduates, takes two years with an optional Master's element. This also calls in to question the proposed 1-year timeline for the postgraduate route, particularly questionable at a time when the White Paper's proposed accreditation route (which does not offer a Master's) suggests a timeline of more than one year.

ATL has made clear in earlier evidence regarding apprenticeship reforms that apprenticeships should meet the needs and aspirations of individuals, as well as employers. It is unclear from this bid, that this apprenticeship would ensure this. However, from a practical perspective, in light of the current critical teacher shortage, if the apprenticeship can't offer the portability, professional value, workforce support and funding needed, then it is very unlikely to be more successful in attracting would-be teachers than current routes. There is insufficient evidence that this apprenticeship, as it is currently outlined, would provide this assurance.

Q2 An Apprenticeship Standard must involve rigorous and substantial training of over a year to achieve full competence. Do you think this Apprenticeship Standard would take at least 12 months to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviour required for sufficient competence in this occupation? If no please give details.

ATL believes that this Apprenticeship Standard would not only take at least 12 months to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviour required for sufficient competence in teaching, it would take considerably longer. As noted above, contrasting the proposed apprenticeship length to full-time Bachelor's/Master's degree timelines and to existing postgraduate 2-year routes like Teach First, which combine academic input with direct teaching experience for high-performing graduates, makes the former highly questionable. Indeed, if we compare the four-year non-graduate proposed apprenticeship to the German Meister/'Master' qualification, (which is a level 6 and therefore one level below that proposed here), which takes 6-8 years of work practice plus 600 hours of study, the timelines for both graduate and non-graduate options seem to be very short of the mark.

Q3 Are you aware of any other existing or proposed Apprenticeship Standards that may overlap with this one? If Yes please give details.

No

However, the similarity of the graduate apprenticeship route as outlined with existing school-led routes into teaching like School Direct and School Direct (Salaried) raise a question about duplication, and suggests primary

motivation is not to meet particular skills gaps but to enable larger schools to recoup the levy.

Q4 (if applicable) Would you potentially take on Apprentices using a Standard developed in this occupation? If Yes, can you say roughly how many you might take on in each year?

N/A

Q5 If this Standard is approved for development, would you be happy for us to contact you as part of wider consultation? If Yes, what is the best way to contact you?

Yes. As a union which represents 160,000 members in education, we believe that it's vital that their voices and experiences inform development of a teacher apprenticeship standard, contacted via policy@atl.org.uk. ATL are in a strong position to contribute to future work around teacher apprenticeships:

- Our workforce has considerable expertise, knowledge and skills of what is needed in teacher training, what works well, and what doesn't. We can also provide a school leadership perspective through our leadership section, AMiE.
- We have good working relationships with HEIs and believe in evidence-informed policy and practice.
- We provide an excellent CPD programme and our General Secretary has chaired the unionlearn board from 2009 to date and has just become president of the TUC.
- Serving our range of membership from students to leaders, we will ensure that the individual (ie not just the employer) is central to the apprenticeship development. We need to ensure that apprentices have a training plan and that they know where to get support to ensure it is adhered to. The apprenticeship must be portable between schools, sectors and countries – through the inclusion of a recognised qualification.
- We have a strong membership in Further Education, where the workforce has developed working relationships with local employers to deliver apprenticeships over decades. The consultation on the FE teacher standards was minimal; ATL believes that this opportunity to ensure that development of an apprenticeship standard is informed by evidence is vital and should not be missed again. The Expression of Interest indicates that the group is willing to work with colleagues from other sectors where the standards are closely related, so we would urge involvement of FE workforce with the caveat that there are issues of equality with the FE teacher apprenticeship standards.

Q6 Do you have any other comments?

Providers: This Expression of Interest is rather limited in detail, and what detail is available, ie around timeline/length, is a significant cause for concern. However, there are big questions about the range of providers

involved; who they are, and the extent and quality of their teacher training experience. We need further information around the off-the-job training element, which trailblazers require should be a minimum of 20% of the apprenticeship; who will deliver it, what will be covered, what will be the workload impact?

Key role of HEIs: We welcome the group's invitation to HEIs and SCITTS to play a role within the group, although concerned regarding the extent to which it is limited to being a supporting role. HEIs must remain part of initial teacher education and indeed key to the continuum of teacher professional development. Weakening their role and ultimately their capacity to support that continuum, from initial to mature stages, will lead to deskilling and narrowing of the profession.

Maths/Science teacher skills gap: This apprenticeship proposal is within a context of teacher shortages, particularly in subjects such as Maths and Science, where there is a lack of applicants with the suitable subject-specific skills/knowledge. These shortages are not limited to teaching; a recent CBI/Pearson survey¹ reported that businesses are experiencing widespread difficulties in recruiting staff with the necessary science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills, with half (52%) of firms experiencing (or expecting within three years) a shortfall of adequately qualified staff.

As we reported in our evidence to Public Accounts Committee², research shows that the 'gap' results, not from the lack of supply of entrants with STEM skills to the labour market, but because of higher incentives, in terms of pay rewards or prospects, in other sectors.³ We therefore need to avoid any presumption that that this apprenticeship will meet this skills gap; indeed we need to acknowledge the risk that this system will encourage employers, in this case, schools, to invest solely in levy funded programmes at the expense of other, often more relevant and appropriate, forms of training as the Confederation of British Industry has observed, has happened in countries such as Ireland, France and Greece.⁴

Non-graduate path: We need significantly more detail on the extent of teaching responsibilities which would be undertaken by non-graduate teacher apprentices at different stages of this pathway, and specifically before they obtain an undergraduate degree as part of the programme of training.

Impact on status of teaching: The graduate level of the profession is key to the portability of the qualification internationally and indeed the international standing of the education system as a whole, particularly in an international context where many high-performing countries have a Master's level teaching profession, with strong input and support from higher education. We also question the impact of an apprenticeship, if it is not rigorous enough or long enough to ensure a robust standard, on the perception of teaching amongst the public and amongst prospective entrants to the profession.

¹ [CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2015: Inspiring Growth](#)

² [ATL submission to Public Accounts Committee inquiry into apprenticeships](#)

³ [The Skills Gap: Is it a myth?, Social Market Foundation and University of Warwick,](#)

⁴ [The Path Ahead, CBI/Accenture Employment Trends Survey, 2015](#)

In the education context, employers' needs will only be met through meeting learners' needs, by making teaching a highly attractive and competitive profession, with routes providing a qualification and skills that lead to valuable opportunities for progression. This needs to be key to the development of a teacher apprenticeship standard and is far too important to allow for short cuts, particularly those that impact on quality.