

Teachers' Standards England 2012

Protecting Teachers Preventing Misuse



Tick-box nightmare?

Endless evidence gathering?

Complicated matrices?

How to make sense of the new Teachers' Standards...



What's changed?

New Teachers' Standards came into force in September 2012. Although the Government says the new Standards must be used as part of the national appraisal system, applied inappropriately they could be hugely damaging to teachers. NUT representatives can play a big role in protecting members by securing decent arrangements. Speak to your division secretary about whether a local authority policy has been agreed in your area. Teachers' Standards will also be relevant in academies that decide to follow the national model.

Remember that appraisal forms part of the 'action short of strike action' instructions. Our joint action with NASUWT allows members to reject the idea of teachers having to produce evidence of compliance with each standard which would generate excessive workload.

The NUT has produced a protocol (see back page) to help you secure a good procedure in your school (this protocol complements the NUT classroom observation protocol which can be found at www.teachers.org.uk/appraisal). As the Teachers' Standards are part of appraisal, in order to fully protect members go to www.teachers.org.uk/appraisal and check your school's arrangements against our appraisal checklist and model policy.

What's wrong with these Standards?

Unscrupulous employers will abuse the new system to increase the burdens on teachers and in some cases fast track to capability. We are worried in particular that:

- the Standards will come to be seen as a completely new set of hoops to jump through;

- the bulleted sub-headings within each Standard will be developed into separate standards, thus multiplying the overall number;
- a tick-box culture will develop around the Standards;
- any Standards which aren't met will be turned into additional objectives;
- additional lesson observations will be imposed where Standards are not met;
- separate evidence will be demanded, beyond materials already available; and
- some schools will adopt simplistic career stage matrices presenting problems for appraisees and appraisers.

Is there an alternative?

Yes, there is a simpler and fairer way to approach the Standards. Call a meeting of NUT members to agree a demand that your school adopts the NUT Teachers' Standards protocol overleaf.

As well as adopting the NUT Teachers' Standards protocol, see also our more detailed guidance, available at www.teachers.org.uk/appraisal.

If, despite putting forward a sensible alternative to your head teacher, your school is determined to adopt an over-bureaucratic workload-intensive approach to the Standards, call another meeting of NUT members to consider your response. Where representations to management are unsuccessful, escalation to strike action may be the best option, where this is the wish of members. Our aim must be a decent appraisal policy for every school. More detailed guidance is available at www.teachers.org.uk/appraisal



NUT Teachers' Standards (England) protocol

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring a fair and transparent appraisal process. The appraisal policy for _____ School/Academy complies fully with the NUT/NASUWT appraisal checklist.

The Governing Body recognises that the Teachers' Standards do not create any new duties for teachers; rather they represent what has always been expected of teachers, and reflect how they have always worked.

The aim is to encourage a process which allows for assessment against the Standards in a way which does not place new expectations or burdens on teachers, or those who appraise them.

The Teachers' Standards are incorporated into the appraisal process in the following ways:

1. The starting point will be that teachers are meeting the Standards unless clear written evidence to the contrary is produced.
2. The Teachers' Standards will be the focus of discussion when objectives are being agreed.
3. As advised by the DfE, detailed assessments against each of the Teachers' Standards and bullets are not necessary and will not, therefore, take place.
4. A matrix approach promoting artificial and highly subjective distinctions between different career stages will not be used.
5. Teachers will not be asked to provide evidence that they are meeting the Standards.
6. Where the head teacher believes that a teacher is not meeting one or more of the Standards, the head teacher will raise this with the teacher.
7. In such circumstances teachers may wish to provide materials to counter the views of the head teacher and in such cases they will be encouraged to refer to documentation already in place, so as not to increase workload.
8. Teachers will not be directed to compile files of new evidence beyond that which is already available.