

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS SURVEY REPORT

IFF RESEARCH – JULY 2019



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and methodology

The Professional Standards were developed by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), in consultation with practitioners and a range of stakeholders from across the Education and Training sector, in 2014.

The purpose of the Professional Standards is to **support teachers and trainers to maintain and improve standards of teaching and learning, resulting in better outcomes for learners.**

In early 2019, five years on from the launch of the Professional Standards, the ETF conducted an online survey to ascertain:

- the extent to which the Standards are used;
- how the Standards and associated resources are being used; and
- what further support or guidance could be provided by the Foundation to increase their use and impact.



The ETF conducted the **online survey between January 10th and February 4th, 2019.** In total, 602 individuals participated: 347 were teaching staff, 123 managers or heads of departments/curriculum. Remaining participants comprised CEOs, directors or heads of service, assessors and support staff.

Further Education Colleges, 6th form colleges/schools, higher education institutions and other providers such as independent training providers, voluntary and community sector organisations, adult and community learning organisations and offender learning were all represented, with the majority of responses from further education colleges (33%), independent training providers (26%) and schools or sixth form colleges (13%).

The users of the Professional Standards

Around three quarters (73%) of the individuals that took part in the online survey **had used the Professional Standards.**

The majority of those that had used the Standards were **teaching staff** (59%). Around a fifth (22%) of users were managers, heads of department or heads of curriculum, six percent of users were CEOs, directors or heads of service and four percent are assessors or verifiers.

In terms of organisation type, the use of Standards was most common amongst individuals that work in General Further Education Colleges (34%) and for Training Providers, such as independent, Local Authority and Third Sector Training Providers (26%).



Respondents first **became aware of the Standards through a range**

of sources, with the ETF website (25%) and their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme (23%) proving the most common.

Most users of the Professional Standards stated that **they would consider using the Standards in the future (90%)**. Among the reasons given for those who are not considering using the Standards in the future, some respondents felt they were no longer practical or relevant, while another reason offered by one respondent was that there were too many Standards, and that the wording could be complicated.

How the Professional Standards are used

There is a considerable range in terms of the extent to which users of the Professional Standards refer to them. **Around two thirds (65%) use the Standards at least once a month, with one in seven (14%) using them on a daily basis.**

The Standards feed into a number of different improvement areas. They were 'most used' during **initial teacher training** (31%; 53% used them at all for this purpose), but are also commonly utilised for **ongoing self-development purposes**: 16% used them most for CPD, and 12% for informing professional development planning.

The Standards were also widely used to support others: 14% used them to help coach and mentor colleagues and 9% used them for performance management purposes (45% and 32% respectively used them at all). There is evidence that the Standards are also being utilised within formal assessments of individuals, for measuring improvements (10%) and informing appraisals (3%; 36% and 22% respectively used the Standards for these purposes at all).

Such figures were reflected in the contexts within which the Standards were used, and were strongly tied to individuals' roles within an institution. **The majority (70%) used the Standards in their own teaching/professional practice** (rising to 78% among teaching staff), while around half used them for their own professional development (55%) or with others in their institution (53%, rising to 81% among managers).

Perceptions of the Professional Standards

Amongst those that have used Professional Standards, **around nine in ten (87%) felt that these had made a difference to their professional practice**, with a quarter (24%) reporting a significant difference. Only 6% reported no difference at all. The proportion that felt the Standards has made a difference ranged from 80% amongst CEOs, Directors and Heads of Services to 94% amongst assessors and verifiers, although there was no significant difference by job role.

Typically where the Standards had made a difference, this related to its value in terms of personal development and the improvement to the delivery of lessons. Furthermore, some said that the Standards had made a difference to their professional practice by helping them to achieve teaching qualifications.

90% intend to use the Professional Standards in future



65% used the Professional Standards at least once a month

Used for:



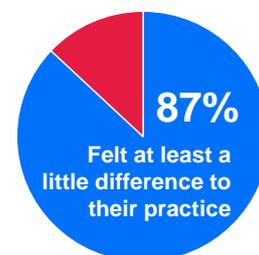
Initial teacher training



CPD



Monitoring



Amongst the minority of users that did not think that Professional Standards had made a difference to their professional practice, most reported that they find them difficult to interpret.

Nearly all users of the Standards (96%) identified at least one benefit of using them. Most users highlighted a number of different benefits; over three quarters (79%) identified three or more and around a third (29%) identified seven or eight.

The two most commonly identified benefits of using the Standards were **setting out clear expectations of effective practice in education and training (79%)** and **enabling teachers and trainers to identify areas of their own professional development (79%)**.

Potentials areas for support and guidance

Nearly all respondents (96%) identified at least one type of support that they would like to receive to help make Professional Standards more useful and/or accessible to them and their colleagues.

More guidance or clearer guidance on how to use Professional Standards was the most common type of support that respondents would like to receive (37%).

Many respondents wanted support that is **tailored towards specific users** of Professional Standards and specific settings for their use.

- A third (34%) would like to receive support for specific roles;
- Around a quarter (27%) would like to receive support for specific contexts or settings; and
- A fifth (21%) would like to receive support for specific programmes or subjects

Many respondents would also welcome more events and programmes to discuss Professional Standards and share tips. A third (31%) reported they would like workshops or face-to-face events to talk through Professional Standards, while a quarter (26%) said they would like more opportunities for networking, mentoring and buddying with other Professional Standards' users.



Tailored support
is crucial to meet
future needs

INTRODUCTION

Background and objectives

The Professional Standards were developed by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), in consultation with practitioners and providers from across the Education and Training sector, in 2014.¹ The consultation and development of these standards was undertaken following the revocation of the 2007 Further Education Workforce Regulations in 2012.²

The purpose of the Professional Standards is to support teachers and trainers to maintain and improve standards of teaching and learning, resulting in better outcomes for learners. In total, there are 20 standards which are grouped into three categories: professional values and attributes; professional knowledge and understanding; and professional skills.³

In January 2019, five years on from the launch of the Professional Standards, the ETF conducted an online survey to ascertain:

- the extent to which the Standards are used;
- how the Standards and associated resources are being used; and
- what further support or guidance could be provided by the Foundation to increase their use and impact.

Methodology

ETF conducted an online survey between January 10th and February 4th, 2019.

The survey was promoted to individuals in the Education and Training sector through various channels. This included a link to the survey on the ETF website and ETF Newsletter; social media publication; and email invitations to members of the Society for Education and Training (SET) and the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) members. Overall, 75,558 email invitations were sent out, of which 23% (17,548) were opened.

In total, 602 individuals participated in the online survey. Of the 602 completes, 97% took part in the capacity of an individual professional. The remaining 3% took part on behalf of a department or an organisation.

Table 1 overleaf presents the profile of respondents in terms of the type of organisation they work for, their job roles and other demographic information.

¹ <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Report.pdf>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/professionalism-in-further-education-final-report-of-the-independent-review-panel>

³ https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/ETF_Professional_Standards_Digital_FINAL.pdf

TABLE 1: THE PROFILE OF SURVEY

Organisation type	Completed interviews	
	<i>n</i>	%
General Further Education College	196	33%
Training Provider	156	26%
6th Form College/School	77	13%
Higher Education Institution	38	6%
Alternative Providers	45	7%
Specialist College	19	3%
Other / Not applicable ⁴	71	12%

Job Role	Completed interviews	
	<i>n</i>	%
Teaching staff	347	58%
Manager/ Head of department/curriculum	123	20%
CEO/Director/Principal/head of Service	28	5%
Assessor/Verifier	26	4%
Support worker/staff	18	3%
Other job roles	64	11%

Age	Completed interviews	
	<i>n</i>	%
20-39	120	20%
40-49	140	23%
50-59	223	37%
60+	90	15%

Gender	Completed interviews	
	<i>n</i>	%
Male	171	28%
Female	397	66%
X / Other	3	0%

⁴ Other types of organisations include Specialist Schools, Military Training Establishments and Emergency Services.

Time spent teaching/training	Completed interviews	
	<i>n</i>	%
1-4 years	75	14%
5-10 years	129	25%
More than 10 years	292	56%

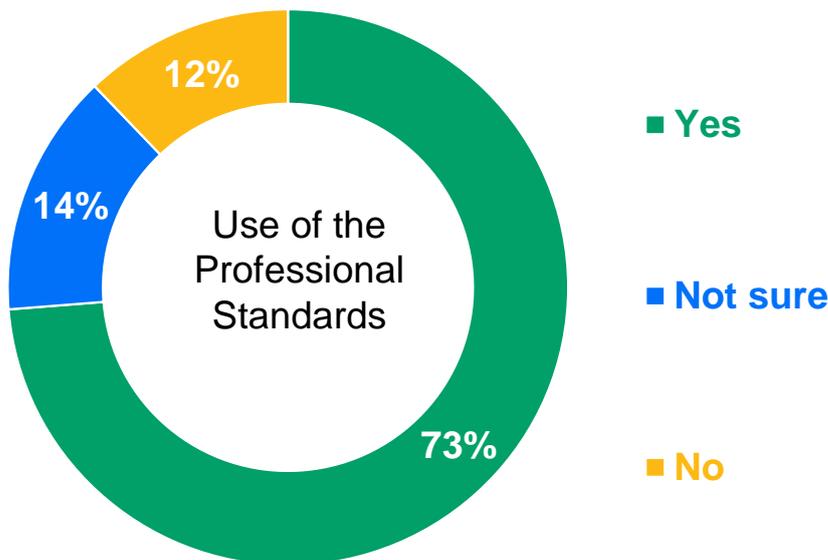
Main subject taught by teachers/trainers	Completed interviews	
	<i>n</i>	%
Teacher Education	110	21%
English (including literacy)	71	14%
Mathematics	54	10%
Health, public services and care	39	7%
Business, administration and law	35	7%
Preparation for life and work	29	6%
Arts, media and publishing	26	5%
Information and communication technology	25	5%

THE EXTENT AND USE OF THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Who the users of Professional Standards are

As shown in **Figure 1** around three quarters (73%) of respondents have used the Professional Standards. Of the remaining quarter of respondents, 12% stated that they have not used them and 14% were not sure if they have used them.

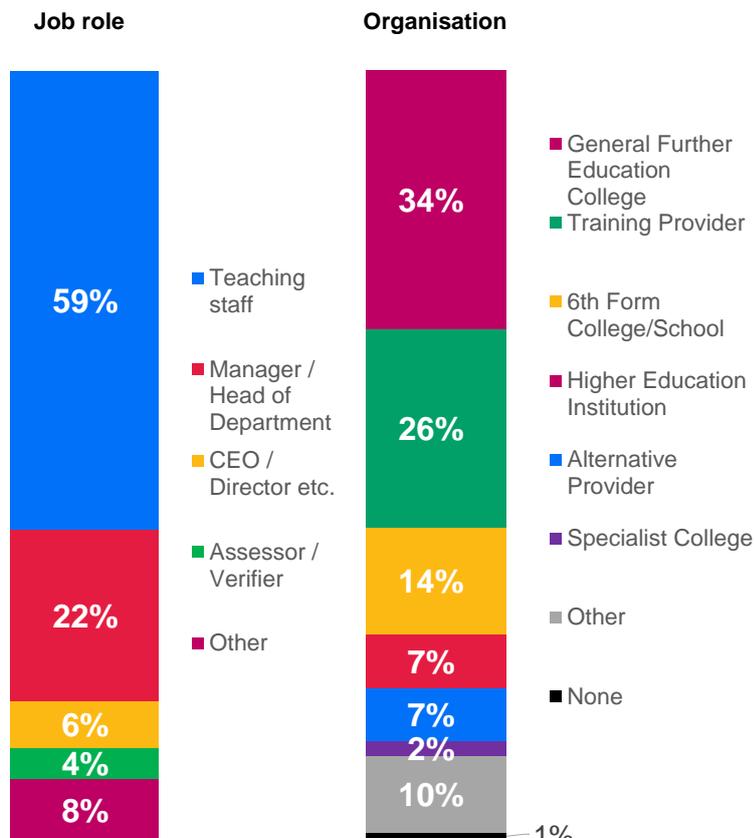
Figure 1: Have you used the Professional Standards? Overall



Base: All (602)

The Professional Standards have been used by individuals from a wide variety of roles. As shown in **Figure 2**, the majority of those that had

used
the



Base: Those that have used Professional Standards (442)

Standards are teaching staff (59%). Around a fifth (22%) of users are managers, heads of department or heads of curriculum. The Standards are also used by senior leaders within organisations: six percent of users are CEOs, directors or heads of service.

Eight percent of users of the Standards occupy other roles. These include support staff, learners, consultants and administrators.

It is important to determine where the Standards are typically being

Figure 2: Have you used the Professional Standards? By job role and organisation

used, to enable the ETF to focus future communications. The majority of users were based either at General Further Education Colleges (34%) or at Training Providers (26%: this includes independent, Local Authority and Third Sector Training Providers). Use was typically lower among 6th form colleges/schools and Higher Education institutions, as Figure 2 illustrates. One in ten users of the Standards (10%) work for 'other' types of organisations. These include National Specialist Colleges, Military Training Establishments and Emergency Services.

Individuals that hold Advanced Teacher Status (ATS)⁵ are more likely than average to use the Professional Standards (89%), while individuals with neither QTLS or ATS were less likely than average to use the Standards (65%). Those that have attended an ETF training course were also more likely to use the Standards (82%).

Positively, the survey provided strong evidence that most users of the Standards were content with them and planned to continue using them in future. Nine tenths (90%) of users of Professional Standards stated that they would consider using the Standards in the future. Of the remainder, only 2% said they would not consider using the Standards in the future, while 7% were unsure.

Among the reasons given for those who were not considering using the Standards in the future, some respondents felt they were no longer practical or relevant, while another reason offered was that there were too many Standards, and that the wording could be complicated.

How users became aware of the Professional Standards⁶

Users of the Professional Standards fell into two broad camps in terms of how they became aware of the Standards; those that first heard of them through ETF sources and those that first heard of them through third parties.

As presented in **Figure 3**, the most commonly cited source of awareness of the Standards was the ETF website (25%). However, the ETF is reliant on other sources to spread awareness of the Standards, with 23% reporting that they first heard of the Standards via their ITE programme, and 11% through word of mouth.

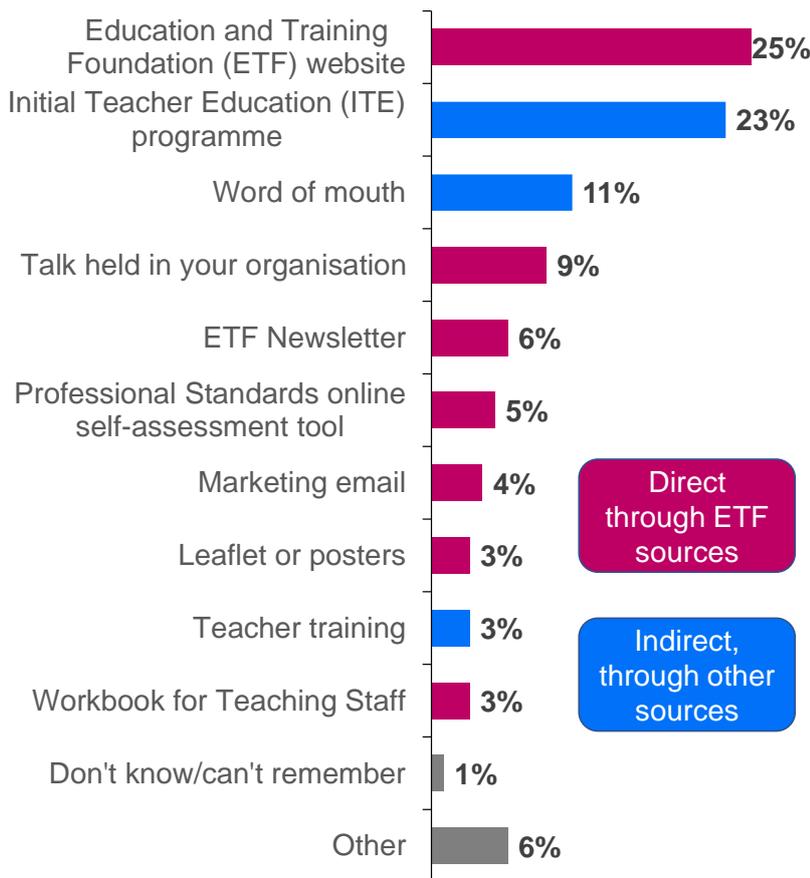
Direct campaigns were helping to boost awareness to a degree, although there was no one clear pathway that contributes to awareness of the Standards: 9% first heard of the Standards through a talk given at their organisation, while between 3% and 6% encountered the Standards through the ETF newsletter, marketing email or leaflets/posters.

A small proportion came across the Standards through other channels (6%). These included the Professional Standards for FE Teachers video, how-to guides, and through involvement in the development of the Standards.

⁵ Number of ATS holders at the time of conducting the research was 28

⁶ Columns in Figure 2 do not sum up to 100%. This is because of rounding.

Figure 3: How did you first hear about the Professional Standards?



Base: All (602)

Considering the two predominant users of the Standards, managers, heads of department or heads of curriculum were typically more likely to have first heard of them through the ETF website (33% compared with 25% average), and understandably less likely to have encountered them through their ITE programme (15%). In contrast, teaching staff were more likely to first hear about the Standards through their ITE programme than the ETF website (27% compared with 23% respectively). Looking at organisation type, it was interesting to note that staff at Alternative Education providers were much more likely than average to have found out about the Standards through a talk held in their organisation (24% compared with 9% overall), while staff at Higher Education institutions were more likely than all to have learned about the Standards via a marketing email (13% compared with 4% overall).

How often the Professional Standards are used

While the majority of respondents (73%) used the Professional Standards, there was considerable variation in the extent to which they are used. The majority tended to refer to the Standards on a regular basis: 29% referred to them once a month, 22% once a week and 14% referred to them daily. Of those that referred to the Standard less often, 18% referred to them once every six months and 5% referred to them

once a year. Six per cent of users said that they almost never refer to the Standards, and a further 6% were unsure how often they referred to them.

Perhaps surprisingly, managers, heads of department or heads of curriculum referred to the Standards on a more regular basis than teaching staff: 73% of managers referred to the Standards at least once a month compared with 61% of teaching staff. Those working in 'other' roles (i.e. support staff, learners, consultants and administrators) were actually most likely to look at the Standards on a regular basis: indeed 57% of these individuals referred to them at least once a week compared with an overall average of 36%.

Activities the Professional Standards are used for

Respondents described a range of ways in which they have used the Professional Standards in the past. It was most common for the Standards to have been used to inform Continued Professional Development (CPD), with around two thirds (63%) having used them for this purpose.

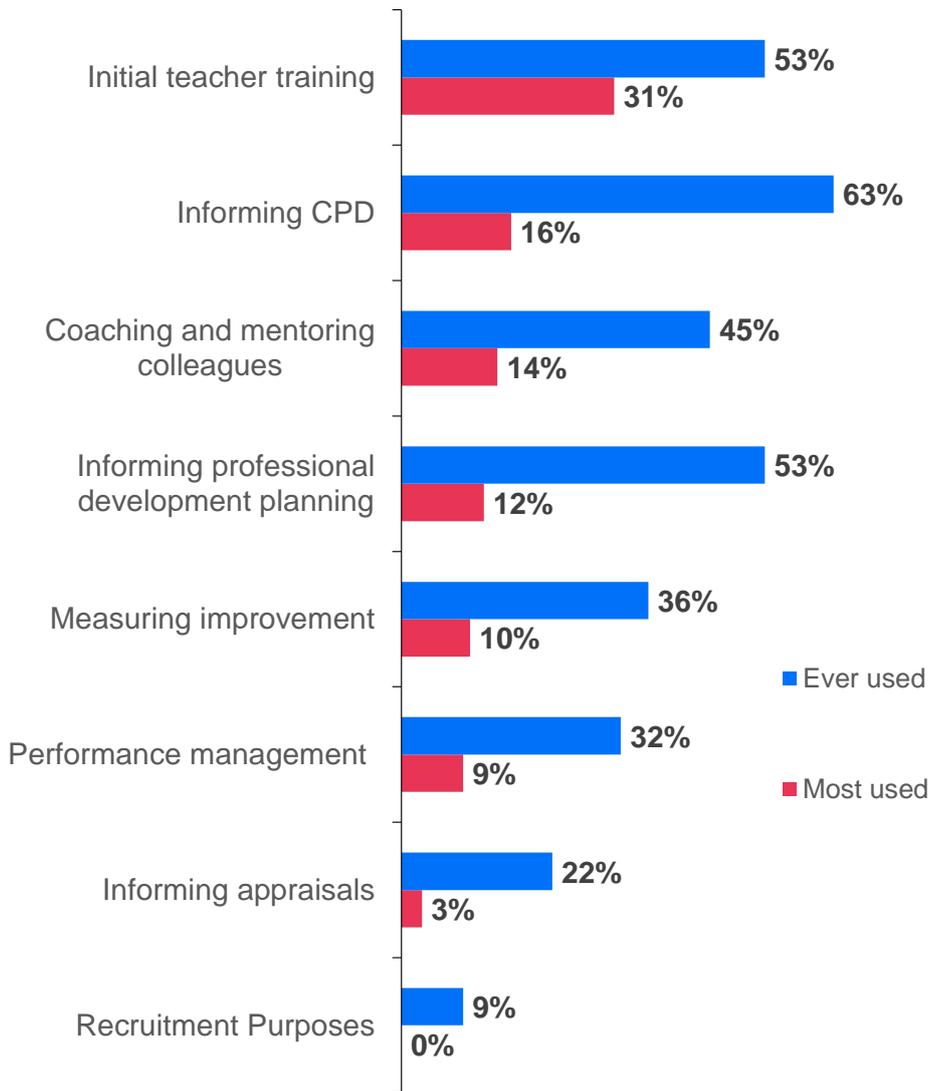
As presented in **Figure 4**, other prominent activities the Standards have been used for include professional development planning (53%), initial teacher training (53%) and the coaching and mentoring of colleagues (45%).

Despite the Standards being used by two thirds (63%) of respondents to inform CPD and by over half (53%) for professional development planning, only a third (36%) had used them to measure improvement. A relatively low proportion of users had used the Standards to inform appraisals (22%) or for recruitment purposes (9%).

Other activities that the Standards were used for that are not presented in **Figure 4** included generally informing professional practice (1%) and as part of QTLS (1%).

In addition to being asked what activities the Professional Standards had been used for in the past, users were also asked what activities they used the Standards for most. Interestingly, while the Standards were used by the largest proportion of users to inform CPD, only 16% said that it was the activity they have used the Standards for most. The activity where the Standards were used most was initial teacher training (31%).

Figure 4: In which of the following activities have you used the Professional Standards? Overall



Base: Those that have used Professional Standards (442)

Figure 5 presents the activities the Professional Standards were used for most by job role, showcasing the different needs for different users of the Standards have. Findings of note include:

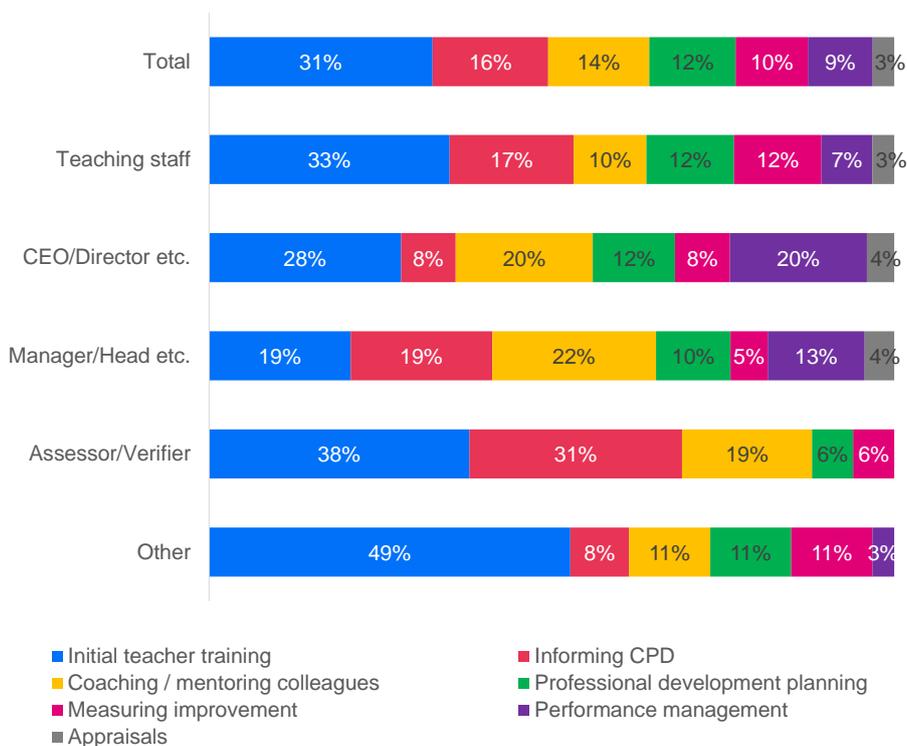
- As teaching staff comprised the majority of interviews conducted, their responses were similar to the average, with initial teacher training being the most common activity (33%).
- CEOs and directors were more than twice as likely as average to use the Standards for performance management purposes (20% compared with 9% average); while using the Standards for informing CPD was less common (8% compared with 16% overall).
- Managers, heads of department or heads of curriculum were just

as likely to use the Standards for initial teacher training (19%) as they are for informing CPD (19%) and coaching and mentoring colleagues (22%).

- Assessors and verifiers were much more likely to use the Standards for initial teacher training (38%) and informing CPD (31%) than for any other purpose.
- Around half (49%) of those in 'Other' roles, which includes students, consultants, support staff and administrators used the Standards for their initial teacher training, the highest proportion across all job roles.

While the data showed variation in use, it is worth noting that the Standards were used in different ways across all job roles, as certain activities were more pronounced among some job roles than others.

Figure 5: In which of the following activities have you used the Professional Standards most? By job role

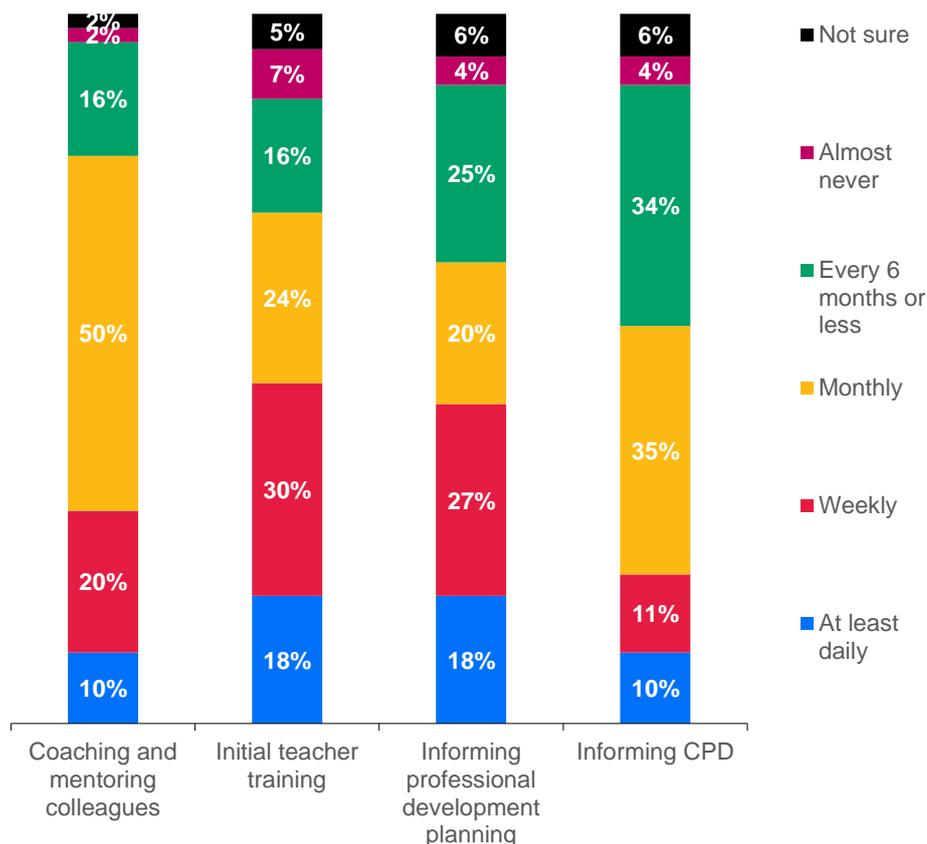


Base: Those that have used Professional Standards (442)

Figure 6 illustrates how often users of the Standards referred to them and the activity they used them for most. While this does not highlight the exact frequency with which users conducted these activities, it does offer a more detailed indication of how the Standards were being used.

Those that mostly used the Standards for initial teacher training and professional development planning were more likely to use the Standards at least weekly (48% and 45%, respectively). Meanwhile, those that mostly used the Standards to inform CPD were more likely to use them every six months or less (38%). Those that mostly used the Standards for coaching and mentoring colleagues were more likely to use them on a monthly basis (50%).

Figure 6: In which of the following activities have you used the Professional Standards? By extent of use



Base: Those that have used Professional Standards (442)

Context for using the Professional Standards

The Professional Standards were most likely to be used in the context of teaching or professional practice (70%). The second most common context in which the Standards were used is professional development (55%), while a similar proportion (53%) used the Standards with others in their organisation. The least common context in which the Standards were used is with others from different organisations (23%).

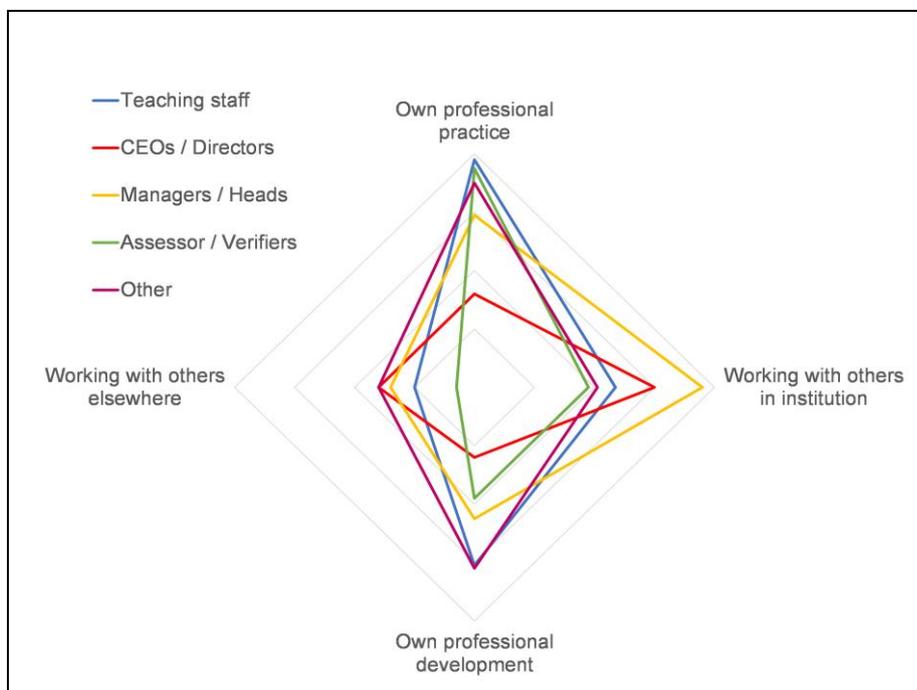
Figure 7 illustrates how the contexts in which Professional Standards were used varied by different job roles. As this illustrates, CEOs and directors used the Standards in the narrowest of contexts, being far less likely to use them for their own professional practice or development. They were generally however just as likely to use the Standards with others, either in their institution or elsewhere. Similar to CEOs,

managers and heads of departments or curriculum were most likely to use the Standards when working with others in their institution. This contrasted with teaching staff who predominantly used the Standards for their own professional practice, and their own professional development. Such findings emphasise the role more senior members of organisations have to play in encouraging others to make use of the Standards.

Figure 7: In what context have you used the Professional Standards? By job role

Context	Own professional practice	Own professional development	Working with others in institution	Working with others elsewhere
Overall	70%	55%	53%	23%
Teaching staff	78%	61%	47%	20%
CEOs/Directors	32%	24%	60%	32%
Managers Heads	59%	45%	76%	28%
Assessor/Verifiers	75%	38%	38%	6%
Other	70%	62%	41%	32%

Base: Those that have used Professional Standards



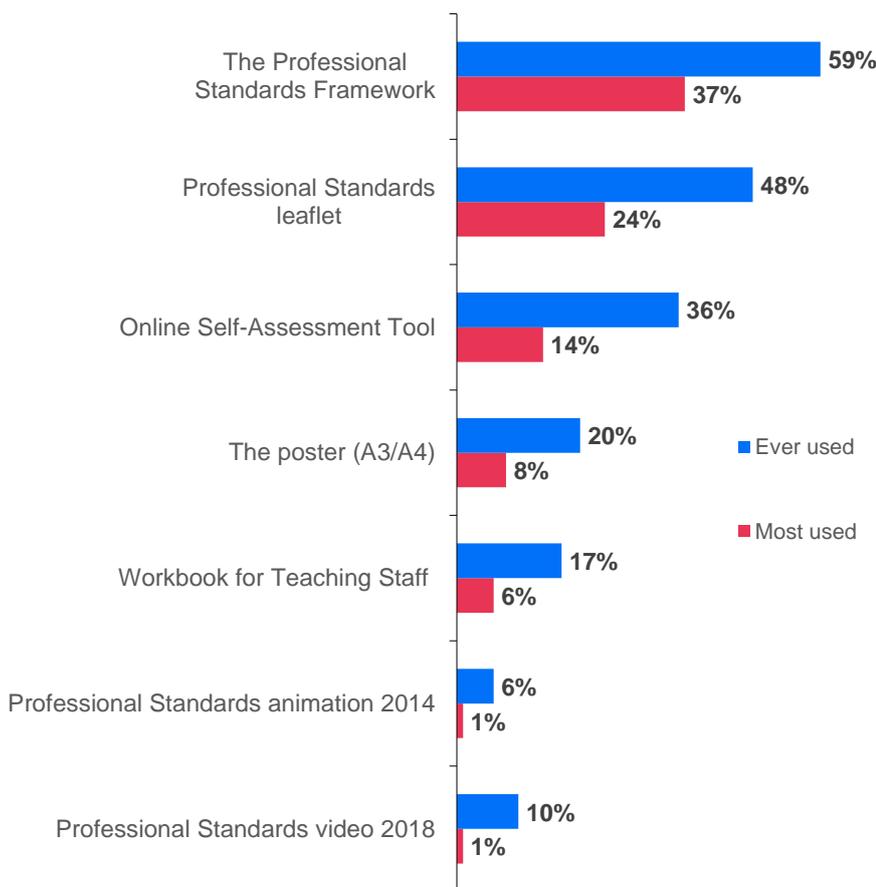
Professional Standards resources

Nearly all users of the Professional Standards (91%) have used ETF resources before. As presented in **Figure 8**, the most commonly used resource is the Professional Standards framework (59%). Around half (48%) have used the Professional Standards leaflet, while over a third (36%) have used the Online Self-Assessment Tool.

Around a fifth have used the Professional Standards poster (20%) and the Workbook for Teaching Staff (17%), while around one in ten or fewer have viewed the 2018 Professional Standards video or the 2014 Professional Standards animation (10% and 6%, respectively).

In addition to being asked what Professional Standards resources they had used in the past, users of the Professional Standards were also asked what Professional Standards resources they made use of most. As shown in **Figure 8**, this followed a similar pattern. The Professional Standards framework is used most by around two fifths of users (37%), followed by the Professional Standards leaflet (24%) and the Online the Assessment Tool (14%).

Figure 8: Which Professional Standards resources have you used?



Base: Those that have used Professional Standards (442)

In terms of the job roles of users of Professional Standards, teaching staff were more likely than average to use the Online Self-Assessment Tool most (17% vs 14%) and managers, heads of department or heads of curriculum were more likely than average to use the Professional Standards framework most (45% vs 37%).

How the professional standards resources were used

Respondents were asked how they use the ETF resource they engage with most and what difference it makes to their professional practice. This section focuses on the three most widely used professional standards resources; the Professional Standards framework, the Professional Standards Leaflet and the Online Self-Assessment Tool.

The Professional Standards Framework (59% have used)

Amongst those that use the Professional Standards framework more than any other ETF resource, many explained that it is used to inform CPD and professional development. The resource was widely felt to be key to informing CPD and professional development as it provided a framework through which they could measure their progress, the progress of others and identify areas for improvement.

“After every single lesson, I decided to reflect on what works best in my teaching and learning to meet the diverse needs of learners. This strategy works really well as it helped me to decide what strategies were necessary to meet my learners' needs and when I applied this strategy, the difference was clearly seen in the achievement of my learners.”

Support worker/staff, Primary School

Many respondents also saw the Professional Standards framework as a resource that can be referred to as a reminder of best practice. It was often seen to be a useful source of guidance when planning lessons and creating teaching resources.

“It's easy to refer to when you just need a quick reminder of the Professional Standards and how we should implement them in our roles as teachers.”

Teaching Staff, General FE College

Some of the individuals that use the Professional Standards framework reported that they engage with it when training or mentoring and when observing the practice of colleagues. It was also often referenced as a tool used when obtaining qualifications like QTLS and ATS.

“I used the framework extensively throughout the teaching cycle (lesson planning, delivery and assessment) as a PGCE student. I used it as a benchmark for my lessons: highlighting specific areas of it that I wanted to improve on. It also informed my work during my QTLS year and is now something that I subconsciously bear in mind as a practitioner.”

Trainer/Lecturer, Independent Training Provider

The Professional Standards leaflet (48% have used)

Amongst those that use the Professional Standards leaflet more than any other Professional Standards resource, many reported using it when training or mentoring others. The leaflet was felt to be a valuable resource in this context as it outlines the Standards clearly and succinctly.

“The leaflet is an excellent start[ing] point for this and makes for a

good discussion document and assignment resource. Level 4 & 5 learners might then also become familiar with the workbook or self-assessment tool.”

Teaching staff, General FE College

Furthermore, the leaflet was considered to be a valuable resource when planning lessons and creating teaching resources. The reasons given for this were similar to those given for using the resource for training or mentoring; the leaflet outlines the Standards clearly and succinctly.

“I keep a copy in my working folder and refer to it when planning. It helps ensure that I am being inclusive, that my planning is creative and diverse, and allows [me] to reflect on ways to include the British Core Values in my lessons.

Teaching staff, Academy

The Online Self-Assessment Tool (36% have used)

As to be expected, the Online Self-Assessment Tool is used by individuals to inform their CPD and professional development. Most users of this resource commented it was useful in this regard as it provides a quick and simple method to reflect on their performance with clear links to the Professional Standards framework.

“When checking through my own action plans for CPD I used the online self-assessment tool as a diagnostic. This helped me to plan a rigorous and highly appropriate development plan for myself.”

Teaching staff, Higher Education Institution

“The reasons why I use this tool is because it provides clear links to professional standards and is a good starting point for trainee teachers to self-assess with a clear framework. I am able to use it to inform my planning and delivery. For my personal development, I have been able to identify my own professional learning needs”

Teaching staff, General FE College

The Online Self-Assessment Tool was also used by some as part of their ITE programmes, for example PGCE, DET or Certificate in Education programme. It was also used by teachers undertaking professional formation leading to QTLS or ATS.

“I used it when I started the QTLS professional formation process. It really makes you think and look at where you are professionally and areas you need improvement. This process really helped me to build my development plan.”

Teaching staff, Local Authority training provider

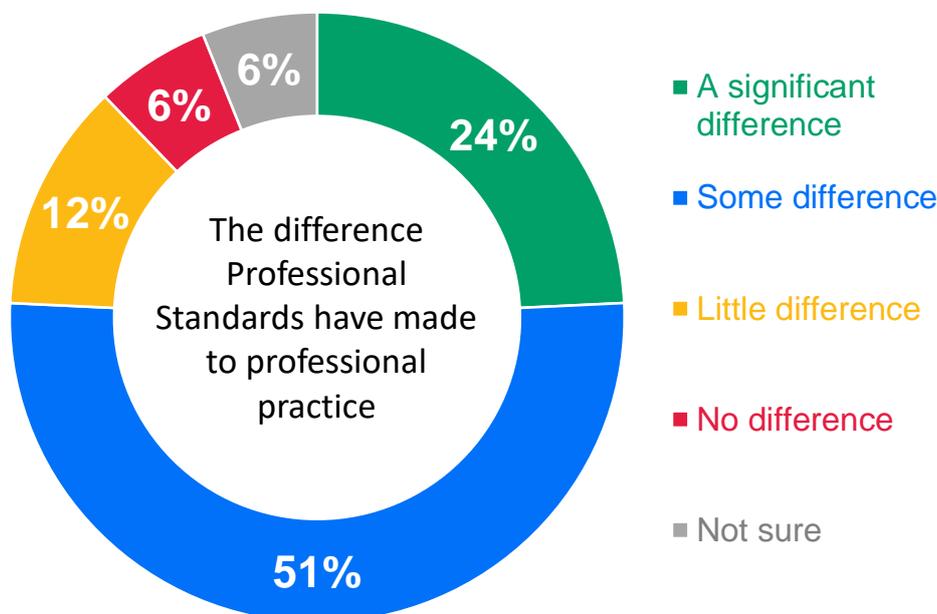
THE PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND RELATED TOOLS

The difference Professional Standards have made to professional practice

Amongst those that have used the Professional Standards, around nine in ten (87%) felt that they had made a difference to their professional practice.

As presented in **Figure 9**, a quarter (24%) of users said that the Standards had made a significant difference, half (51%) said they had made some difference and 12% said they had made little difference. Only 6% of users said that the Standards had not made any difference to their professional practice.

Figure 9: Please rate the difference that using the Professional

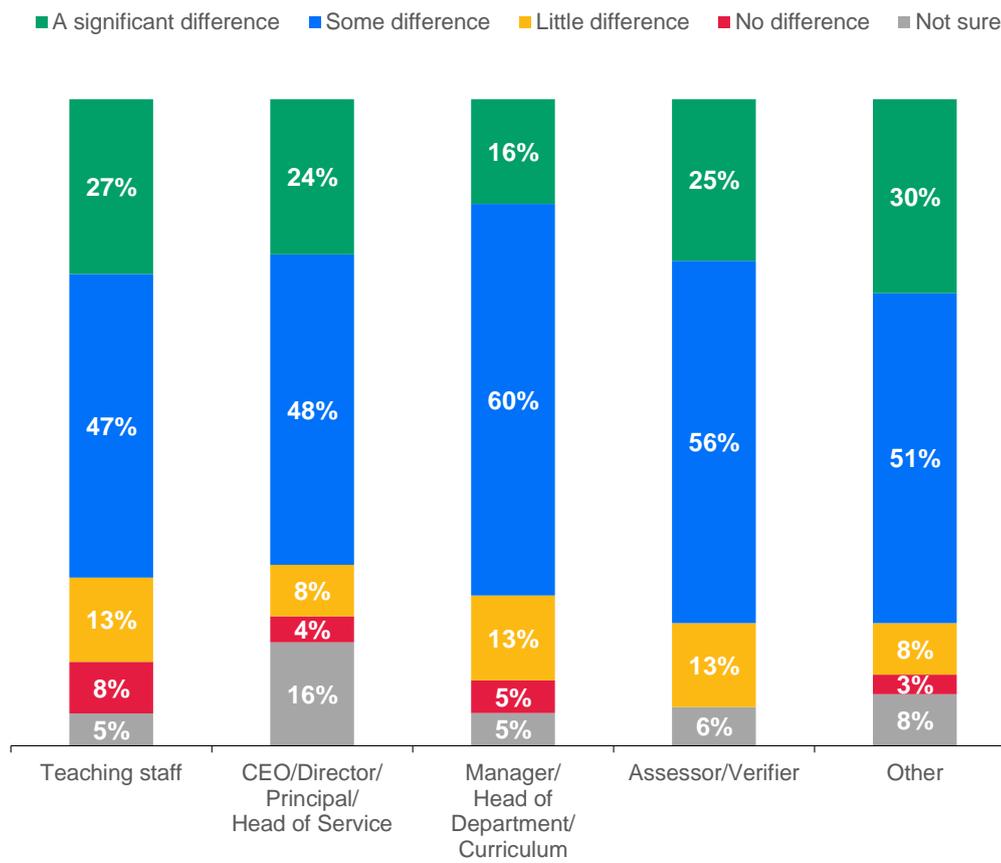


Base: Those that have used Professional Standards (442)

Standards has made to your professional practice

As presented in **Figure 10**, there were slight differences between job roles in terms of the *extent* to which the Standards had made a difference. Teaching staff and those in 'other' roles were most likely to detect a significant difference to their professional practice as a result of using the Standards (27% and 30% respectively). Meanwhile managers and heads of department or curriculum were the least likely to report a significant difference (16%).

Figure 10: Please rate the difference that using the Professional Standards has made to your professional practice



Base: Those that have used Professional Standards (442)

In terms of organisation type, users of the Professional Standards that worked for Sixth Form Colleges and Schools stood out as holding the most varied views on the difference the Standards had had on professional practice. These two groups were more likely than average to report that the Standards had made a significant difference (35% vs 24%), but also more likely than average to report that the Standards had made no difference (13% vs 6%).

Aside from Sixth Form Colleges and Schools, users that worked for Training Providers were less likely than average to feel as though the Standards had made a significant difference to their professional practice (16% vs 24%).

The type of Professional Standards resources that users of Professional Standards engaged with had a notable impact on the perceived difference the Standards have had on professional practice. Those that used the Online Self-Assessment Tool or viewed the Professional Standards Video 2018 were more likely than average to report that the Standards had made a difference (94% and 98% vs 87%). Furthermore, those that used the Workbook for Teaching Staff were more likely to report a significant difference (36% vs 24%).

Amongst those that thought the Standards had made a difference to their professional practice, it was widely felt that the Standards were valuable in terms of personal development. Many teaching staff explained that the Standards acted as a framework through which they could measure their own development and identify areas for improvement. Meanwhile CEOs, managers and heads of departments or curriculum emphasised their value in training and measuring the development of others.

“Professional Standards regulate the activities of teaching professionals; It prescribes the yardstick for measuring progress in learning”

Teaching staff, General Further Education College

“They provide an excellent framework for trainees and also are a useful resource for experienced teachers to help maintain professionalism”

Head of Service, Third sector training provider

Furthermore, many users felt that Professional Standards had made a difference to their professional practice by helping them to improve the delivery of lessons. These users, particularly teaching staff, said that by reflecting on the Standards they were able to plan lessons that were more structured and more inclusive.

“These Professional Standards help me to continuously improve my teaching and meet the diverse needs of my learners”

Support Staff, Primary School

Some users said that Professional Standards had made a difference to their professional practice by helping them to achieve QTLS and ATS or their ITE qualification. It was felt that these achievements had played an important role in improving the quality of their teaching and, for some, had helped with career progression. Many of those that mentioned using the Standards to achieve QTLS, ATS or their ITE qualification said that they continue to refer to them.

“I have achieved ATS which was structured around the use of the Professional Standards. I still refer to the Standards now”

Teaching staff, General Further Education College

Amongst the minority of users that did not think that the Professional Standards had made a difference to their professional practice, most said that they find them difficult to interpret. Meanwhile, a few were critical of how applicable the Standards were in their day-to-day role.

“They are too vague and can mean too many different things.”

Teaching staff, General Further Education College

“They are irrelevant to my current role as a manager. As a tutor I

found them to be far too unwieldy to be of any practical use”

Manager, Local Authority Training Provider

The benefits of Professional Standards

When asked what the benefits of using the Professional Standards were, nearly all users (96%) identified at least one. Furthermore, most users highlighted a variety of different benefits; over three quarters (79%) identified three or more and around a third (29%) identified seven or eight.

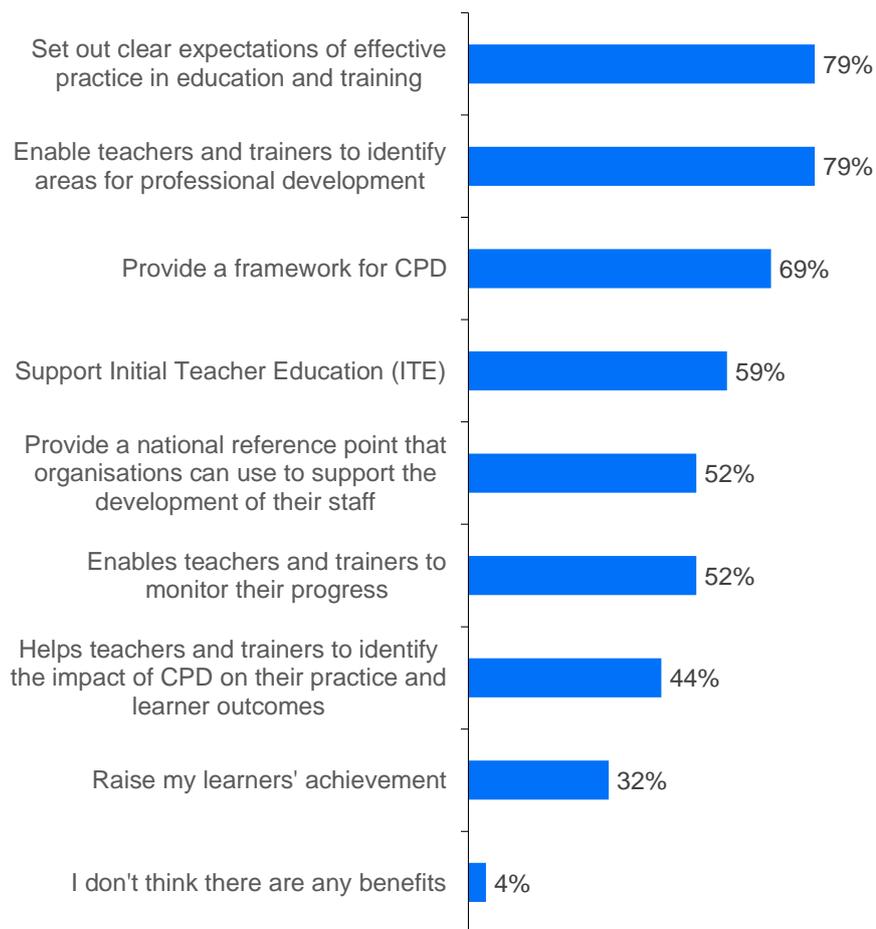
Perhaps unsurprisingly, the types of benefits identified by users of the Standards closely aligned with the areas of professional practice where Standards were felt to have made the most difference; personal development and training, the delivery of lessons and the achievement of teaching qualifications.

As presented in **Figure 11**, the two most commonly identified benefits of using the Standards were setting out clear expectations of effective practice in education and training (79%) and enabling teachers and trainers to identify areas of their own professional development (79%).

Seven in ten (69%) said that providing a framework for CPD was a benefit of using the Professional Standards. 52% of respondents considered that a benefit of the standards was that they enabled teachers and trainers to monitor their progress and 44% felt that the standards supported them in helping to identify the impact of CPD on their practice and learner outcomes.

A further benefit cited by 32% of respondents was that the Standards were contributing to raising the achievement of learners (32%). This was more likely for this to be identified as a benefit by users that work for sixth form colleges and schools (44%).

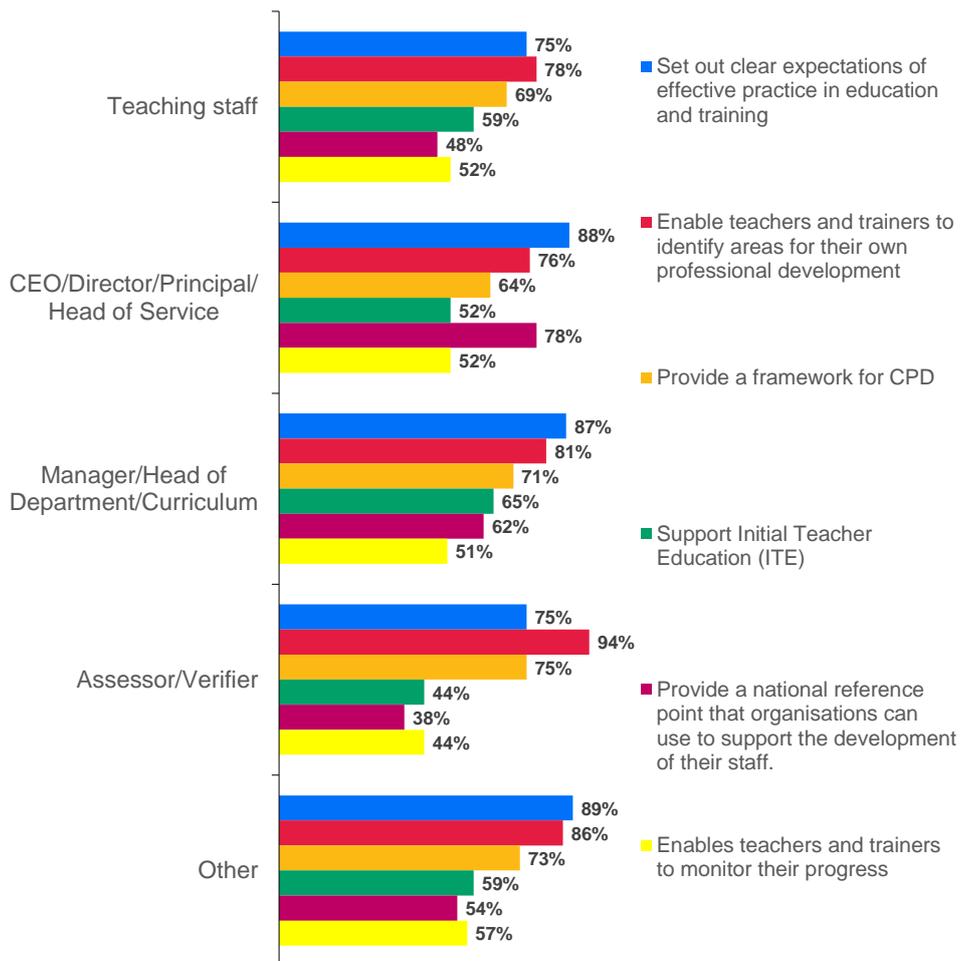
Figure 11: What do you think are the benefits of using the Professional Standards?



Base: Those that have used Professional Standards (442)

As illustrated in **Figure 12**, perceptions of the main benefits of the Professional Standards varies by job role. For teaching staff and assessors and verifiers, the most commonly identified benefit is helping to identify areas for their own professional development (78% and 94% respectively). Meanwhile, amongst CEOs, managers and heads of department or curriculum the most commonly identified benefit is setting out clear expectations of effective practice (88% and 87% respectively).

Figure 12: What do you think are the benefits of using the Professional Standards? By job role



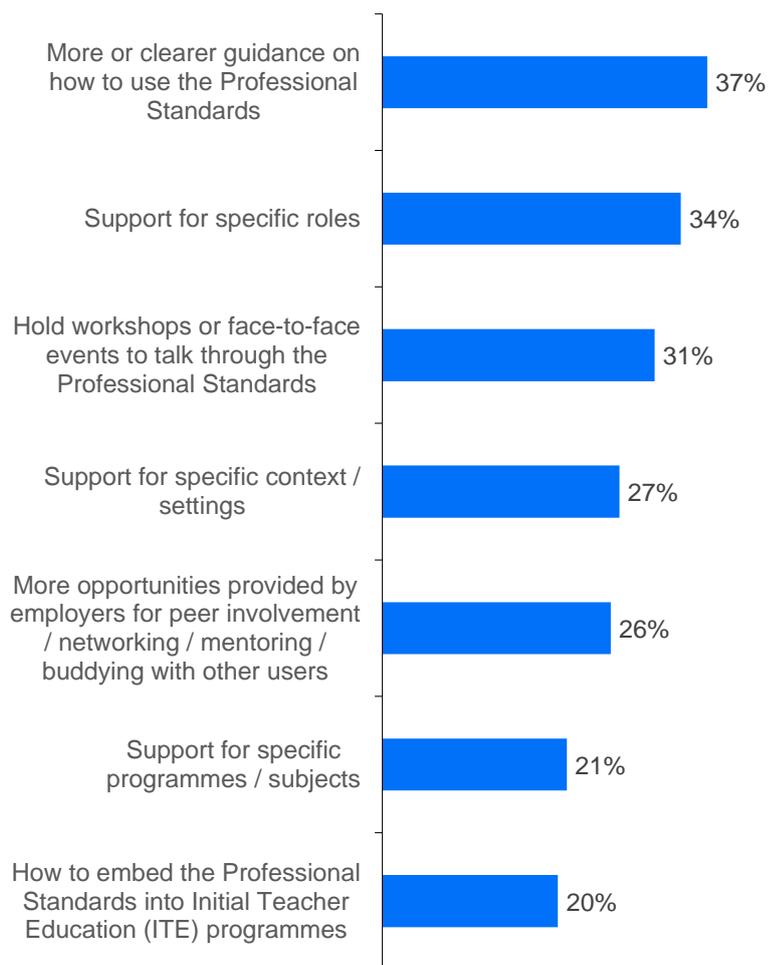
Base: Those that have used Professional Standards (442)

Types of support that would make Professional Standards more useful

Nearly all respondents (96%) identified at least one type of support that they would like to receive in order to help make the Professional Standards more useful and/or accessible to them and their colleagues.

As presented in **Figure 13**, more guidance or clearer guidance on how to use the Professional Standards was the most common type of support that respondents would like to receive (37%). Managers, heads of department or heads of curriculum and respondents that work for Alternative Providers were more likely to want this type of support than average (45% and 58% vs 37%). Furthermore, this type of support was more likely to be identified by those that do not use Professional Standards resources (46% vs 34%).

Figure 13: What specific support would you like to receive to make the Professional Standards more useful/accessible to you or your team?



Base: All respondents (602)

Many respondents said that they would like to receive support that is tailored towards specific users of the Professional Standards and reflects specific settings.

A third of respondents (34%) said that they would like to receive support for specific roles. Amongst these respondents, the most common role cited was teachers (77%). Other roles that were commonly mentioned included trainers (57%); curriculum managers (40%); quality managers (33%); and senior managers (32%).

Around a quarter of respondents (27%) said that they would like to receive support for specific contexts or settings (27%). This support was less likely to be wanted by teaching staff (23%). The context or setting most commonly mentioned by these respondents was work-based learning (63%). Other commonly mentioned contexts or settings were SEND (45%); online or blended learning (41%); community learning (34%); voluntary and community sector (23%); and offender learning (19%).

A fifth of respondents (21%) said they would like to receive support for

specific programmes or subjects. These respondents identified a wide variety of programmes or subjects that they felt would benefit from such support. The most prominent were mathematics (13%); arts, media and publishing (10%); education and training, including ITE (10%); and English (10%).

In addition to the improvement of guidance and the provision of support that is tailored towards specific users and settings, many respondents said that they would like more events and programmes to discuss the Professional Standards and share tips.

A third of respondents said they would like workshops or face-to-face events to talk through the Professional Standards (31%), while a quarter said they would like more opportunities for networking, mentoring and buddying with other Professional Standards' users (26%).

CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1: Peter⁷ is an individual in a senior management position at a specialist designated college, answering on behalf of his organisation.

Use of the Standards

The college uses the Professional Standards on a monthly basis for a wide variety of activities, most often to inform professional development planning.

Other activities the Standards are used for include coaching and mentoring colleagues, informing CPD and recruitment purposes. The Standards also help ensure teaching and learning practice is aligned with standards of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA). They have also been used to support practitioners undertaking the Outstanding Teaching and Learning Assessment (OTLA) programme.

A number of Professional Standards resources have been used by this college including the Professional Standards leaflet, framework, poster and animation. The Professional Standards leaflet was cited as the resource that is most frequently used in the organisation, often utilised as a guide for training and as a point of reference.

“[The Professional Standards leaflet is] used as a guide to reflect expectations in teaching and learning through quality approaches, guidance and training offer, for example Tutor Guide, observations, WEA Approach to Education, tutor training programme, including Tutor Induction.”

Benefits of the Standards

The Professional Standards have made a difference to the college, specifically in setting out clear expectations of effective practice in education and training, enabling staff to identify areas for development or monitor their progress, and more generally as a reference point to support staff development.

“The Standards are helpful in discussions and expectations of what is good practice and are embedded in the quality cycle.”

While the college will continue to use the Standards in the future, they did identify some further support that could help them use the Standards even more effectively. Further support for specific roles, settings and subjects, as well as workshops on how to use the Standards and embed them into their ITE programmes would be welcome.

⁷ Names have been changed for anonymity purposes.

Case Study 2: Ana has been in the teaching profession for over 10 years. She is now a manager at a Local Authority training provider specialising in education and training, answering this survey as an individual professional.

Use of the Standards

Ana refers to the Standards every six months, but reported using them for a multitude of activities, including teacher training, informing professional development planning and CPD, and performance management. However, she most commonly used the Standards for coaching and mentoring colleagues.

Ana is using the Professional Standards leaflet, as a reference tool when reflecting on her own performance and to ensure the Standards were understood and adhered to consistently across the training provider.

“I used the leaflet to refer to the descriptors to use in my own evaluation and when working with others to be clear and consistent so that professional standards can be shared.”

Benefits of the Standards

The Standards have made a difference to Ana’s professional practice by setting out clear expectations of effective practice in education and training.

“They make me more conscious of expectations, and ensuring consistency when working with colleagues: having a shared vision and standards.”

Ana suggested that provision of support for specific roles across the organisation, from teachers and trainers to managers and senior leaders could maximise the use of the Standards. Furthermore, Ana believes that some further support for using the Standards in specific settings, such as offender and community learning, SEND, and work based and blended learning will be useful.

Case Study 3: Eli is head of department at a higher education institution who was answering as an individual professional. He is an experienced teacher experience, and his main subject is Education and training.

Use of the Standards

Eli used the Standards on a daily basis, most commonly when delivering ITE, but also for coaching and mentoring colleagues, and performance management.

He had made use of several Professional Standards resources, and he places most of his emphasis on the Professional Standards framework, which trainees are encouraged to use for a number of activities:

“It is a constant reference item for trainees to use to underpin and theorise their practice. We strongly encourage trainees to make reference to the Professional Standards as well as any relevant theory whilst planning and evaluating lessons as well as their reflective development planning. Moreover, we ask them to reference where possible in their academic components as well.”

He had also frequently used the Online Self-Assessment Tool as a training resource and to inform his own professional development.

“We use it as an initial diagnostic, a mid-point update, and end point summary. It is used as part of a trainee’s ongoing professional development and reflective action plans whilst on course. Finally, it forms part of the graduating trainees action plan for their first year of teaching.”

Benefits of the Standards

The Standards have made a significant difference to Eli’s professional practice. In particular, they had helped him improve the support and guidance he delivers to trainees.

“It gives a clear set of standards that trainees can be signposted to and thus they can use them to develop their practice.”

He did highlight some support that would allow the Standards to be more useful. This included employers offering more networking opportunities for Professional Standards’ users; workshops or events to talk through the Standards and how they can be embedded into ITE programmes.

Case Study 4: Susan has 5 to 6 years of teaching experience. She is currently in a part-time teacher training role at a General FE College, answering on behalf of her own experience of using the Standards.

Use of the Standards

Susan reported referring to the Standards on a daily basis, using the Standards for activities that would be associated with teacher training (i.e. ITE and coaching and mentoring colleagues), but also to inform professional development planning, appraisals, and performance management.

She had used a number of different professional standards resources such as the Professional Standards framework and poster, and the Workbook for teaching staff. She had also used the Online Self-Assessment Tool for her own professional development and found it to be a key resource in her professional practice. The tool is used to aid self-reflection on her practice and identify strengths and areas for improvement.

“The Self-Assessment tool simplifies the process of self-reflection and how to assess oneself against the standards. As a mentor to trainee teachers and to colleagues, being self-aware puts me in a better position to support others. Considering one's position against the standards has allowed me to consider my practice by:

- 1. Looking at what I know and deciding if I need more knowledge or need to update my knowledge*
- 2. Looking at what skills I have and considering how I can gain new skills to meet the changing landscape of the sector*
- 3. Looking at my attitude to learners, colleagues and consider if I am doing enough to meet their changing needs.”*

Susan typically used the Professional Standards leaflet, stating that it was an excellent resource and recommends all her trainees use it in every training session, while she also used it within her own practice for lesson-planning and appraisals.

“I ensure that all trainee teachers have a copy and have it to hand in every session to be able to identify professional standards relevant to the topic/discussion. On a personal level, it is my go to handy resource to be able to have to hand when planning my lessons as well as reflecting or carrying out appraisals.”

Benefits of the Standards

The Standards had made a significant difference to her professional practice, principally by simplifying the process of self-evaluation.

“It has simplified the process of self-evaluation. The twenty standards are divided into three areas: what I know; what I can do; and what I am.”

She suggested that the Standards should be installed as the Ofsted

benchmark.

Case Study 5: Heather, a Social Sciences teacher at a Sixth Form College, answering as an individual professional. She has been a teacher for 1 to 2 years.

Use of the Standards

Heather referred to the Standards once a year. She used the Standards most in her ITE and had continued to use them to inform CPD and professional development planning.

She had used two Professional Standards resources – the Online Self-Assessment Tool and the Professional Standards framework. She had not used the Online Self-Assessment Tool since the ITE programme but would consider using it again as she found it useful in identifying improvements in her professional practice.

“I used the self-assessment tool when I first started my initial teacher training. It was a requirement on the course but it also gave me an understanding of the Standards and their use in a professional environment. It made me aware of areas that I could improve in. I haven't used it since as I had forgotten that it existed but I would be really interested to see how I have developed in these areas.”

Heather used the Professional Standards framework most frequently, particularly in her QTLS and in CPD, activities in which the resource was crucial.

“When completing my QTLS, the professional standards were the backbone. All CPD had to be centred around these standards. As such, I really saw what I was doing in the classroom as professionally regulated and supported.”

She commented that the framework had allowed her to identify areas for development, gather student feedback, and try out new strategies in her practice.

“The framework gave me ideas for how to improve my teaching practice and understand my responsibilities as a teacher. It gave me confidence to try out new techniques and strategies, as well as getting feedback from my students about my lessons.”

Benefits of the Standards

The Standards made a significant difference to her professional practice. This was particularly because of the role the Standards played in her attainment of QTLS.

However, she does think that there could be more guidance on how to use the Standards and that there could be more support to make the Standards more useful to teachers like her. She also highlighted SEND as a setting within which more support could be offered for the use of the Standards.

Case Study 6: Andrea is a supply teacher at a Higher Education Institution with more than 10 years of experience, specialising in the areas of Business, administration, and law. She is responding to the survey based on her own experiences as an individual professional.

Use of the Standards

Andrea used the Standards on a monthly basis for informing her own professional development. Furthermore, she used a number of the Professional Standards resources, most commonly the Professional Standards framework, specifically for lesson planning and delivery. Andrea noticed that using the Professional Standards framework offered clarity on her position when there were distractions.

“Many organisational and structural changes are arising within the school I work at, but the framework keeps you grounded and reminds you of the aim of teaching amidst the chaos.”

Other professional standards resources she has used included the Professional Standards leaflet, the Workbook for teaching staff, and the Online Self-Assessment Tool. She found the Self-Assessment Tool simplified the self-assessment process into a singular, easily accessible resource that can effectively inform her practice.

“It enables you to review your assessment in one place, and think about issues which need to be addressed. It’s at your fingertips, and it reminds me of the importance to include the Standards in planning and delivery as well as facilitation in the classroom and roles around the faculty”

Benefits of the Standards

The Standards had made a difference to Andrea’s practice, specifically in terms of offering a reminder of teaching objectives and best practice that can be overlooked in a busy teaching environment.

“You have to maintain the Standards and knowledge to keep you motivated and functional during turbulent times within and around the classroom.”

She suggested that greater support in settings such as SEND, offender and community learning, and work-based and blended learning would help her in using the Standards more effectively. She also cited that more opportunities for peer involvement, networking, mentoring or buddying up with other users of the Standards would allow her to make better use of them.

CONCLUSIONS

Summary of findings

The survey was undertaken by a total of 602 individuals. The majority were in teaching roles (347), with the remainder comprising managers or heads of department/curriculum, CEOs, directors or heads of service, assessors and support staff. The majority either worked at a General FE College, or another training provider. While there was a spread of age ranges of individuals participating, just over half were aged 50+, and the vast majority had at least 5 years' experience of teaching. Around two-thirds of respondents were female.

Respondents became aware of the Standards through a variety of channels, with the ETF website (25%) and their ITE programme (23%) proving the most common. Around three quarters (73%) of respondents had used the Professional Standards. Positively, of these, nine in ten (90%) reported that they would consider using the Standards in future. Those not considering future use typically felt the Standards were no longer relevant to them.

The majority (65%) of users refer to the Standards at least once a month, with one in seven (14%) using them on a daily basis. Use ranged from teacher training (the most common activity) to self-development, supporting others and conducting formal assessments. Reflecting this, the majority (70%) used the Standards for their own teaching/professional practice, while around half used them for their own professional development (55%) or with others in their institution (53%). Typically, users harnessed the Professional Standards framework to support their development, with 59% making use of this resource. The Professional Standards leaflet (48%) and the online self-assessment tool (36%) were also common resources among users.

The vast majority considered that the Standards had made a difference to their professional practice, with a quarter (24%) reporting a significant difference. The most common benefits to using the Standards were that they set out clear expectations or effective practice in education and training, and enabled teachers and trainers to identify areas of their own professional development. Most users identified further support they would like to make the Standards more accessible to them. Most commonly this was clearer guidance on how to use them, with an emphasis as well on more tailored support for certain roles (particularly teachers) or contexts (particularly work based learning).

Exploring these findings by job role, those in teaching positions were most likely to have made use of the Standards (59% of users were teaching staff, 22% managers, 6% CEOs and 4% assessors or verifiers). As would be expected, type of use of the Standards varied by job role: at least a third of teaching staff and assessors used the Standards for initial teacher training purposes (33% and 38% respectively), and their focus was typically on their own professional

practice. Among CEOs and managers, the Standards were used for a greater variety of activities, including coaching and mentoring colleagues, and for performance management purposes, with the focus applied beyond themselves, to others in the institution or elsewhere. Teaching staff typically noticed a greater impact as a result of the Standards, with 27% noting a significant difference compared with 24% overall.

Limitations

In this short subsection we identify some of the limitations that might affect the quality of the research. For instance, this report is based on one survey, consequently it only provides the view of respondents at one point of time. In addition to this, given that the participants were not followed up in an interview format, we did not have the opportunity to dig deeper on why participants from the FE chose to use or not to use the Standards. Finally, the participants taking part on this survey were self-selected, as a result there is a chance that the sample represents the views of those who were already more aware of the Professional Standards than the broader population of staff in the FE sector.

Conclusions

On the basis of the responses to this survey, it is clear that current users of the Professional Standards generally appreciate them and the benefits the Standards bring to their role.

Among users of the Standards, the majority (65%) use them at least once a month, indicating the value with which they hold the Standards, and the extent to which they rely on them to support their job. An even higher proportion (87%) of users reported that the Standards have made some difference to their own professional practice (although only 24% reported a significant difference), while a similar proportion (90%) reported that they would consider using the Professional Standards in future. Ensuring users continue to have positive experiences when using the Standards is paramount to its success.

As well as maintaining engagement from current users there is a need to focus on promoting the Standards to prospective users. While a number of respondents became aware of the Standards through the ETF website or ETF marketing collateral such as leaflets and emails, a sizeable proportion first learned of the Standards indirectly, via their ITE programme or through word of mouth.

By job role, teaching staff appear most likely to make use of the Standards, typically for their own professional practice and professional development. Overall, fewer managers and CEOs used the Standards and when they did, they used the Standards mainly when working with others, either in their institution or elsewhere. Consequently, they were less likely to notice a difference to their professional practice as a result of using the Standards.

Finally, it is important to reflect on how the Standards are being used,

and whether they are delivering on their aims. A number reported using them in their initial training and during continual professional development purposes, however in the future more focus could be placed on promoting the use of Standards to help practitioners identify areas of their practice they wish to improve and then monitor their progress. The new Professional Standards self assessment tool is an ideal resource to help teachers and trainers benchmark their starting point. ETF in the future could focus more on providing tailored guidance in order to help users in certain scenarios, that will consequently increase the impact the Standards have on learner outcomes, and this is under consideration.