

## **Additional guidance to support the qualification framework for the full teaching qualification for the further education and skills sector**

### **Context**

This new qualification framework represents a substantial change in the nature and design of the FE & Skills teaching qualifications. This is to reflect the extent to which the context of the FE & Skills sector has developed since previous versions of the qualification were developed. It may therefore be helpful to provide some additional elaboration of the thinking behind these qualifications as they are not simply updates on the previous iterations, rather are utilising some slightly different perspectives and starting from different points. The following two sections are provided to give firstly an overview of the rationale for the new structure, and also some references for further support. As always, we are happy to receive any queries: please send to [howard.pilott@etfoundation.co.uk](mailto:howard.pilott@etfoundation.co.uk)

### **Section 1: elaborated content of core units**

The specific detail of what should be in the Core is for AOs to determine but the framework sets out some expectations. The following gives a rationale for the Core Units and an overview to explain how they cohere. The overarching approach in this new qualification framework is that it is essential to promote three key starting points:

- The trainee is teaching *this* subject
- a good appreciation of who the learners are, and their needs
- a strong sense of what being a teacher means and how that implies professionalism

Hence the course is designed to start with the first three units in parallel to provide a good understanding of what is being taught, the needs to be met, alongside a strong sense of the importance of having a clear idea of what being 'a good teacher' is. Moreover that being a good teacher requires an on-going commitment to both supporting learners as well as reviewing and updating one's practice.

Teaching My Subject starts with their reflections on their subject, particularly whether they have any gaps, what they found easy or challenging to learn, and possibly what other trainees they recall found similarly. They might consider what it was that made it easy for them, or how they overcame the challenges. They might start to consider "what would you start with and why?" This leads on to beginning to look at curriculum

sequencing and more specific subject pedagogy. This unit runs throughout the course providing a constant requirement to consider whatever they are learning and relate it back to the teaching of their subject

'Who my learners are' is intended to give a good idea about the breadth of FE learners and their journeys into FE. It is predicated on the idea that if you are aware of where your learners are coming from, you are more able to adapt your teaching to their needs. Additionally FE is a very broad sector and this is a generic qualification: some undertaking teacher training in a 14-16 context may end up working with unemployed adults and we should endeavour to alert trainees to the scope of the potential role in FE.

The focus on *the role of a teacher* and *what makes a good teacher* is intended to create a reflective framework for progress. Trainees are encouraged to consider who they thought were good teachers and why; what it is about being a teacher which sends out conducive messages – gets the learners 'on your side'. The need for approachability and understanding, rather than an efficient delivery machine. Whilst there are those learners who can cope perfectly well with the latter approach to presentation, there are those who may not, and it is the task of the teacher in FE to meet the needs of all learners. It is suggested that the programme incorporate some reflection on 'who they think were good teachers in their experience and why?' and also some process whereby members of the tutor group comment on each other's teaching/teacher personality.

The progressive rationale is that consideration of who my learners are, feeds into how they learn, and similarly, discussion of makes good teaching runs into *how do I choose to teach?* The intention is that learners inform the decision the trainee makes as to how to determine how they plan to teach, and how they choose to adapt that teaching in actual delivery. This thereby inculcates a sense of the responsibility for making decisions as to what takes place in the classroom/workshop. This will be built upon in the Professional Practice unit which follows.

Looking at learning involves unpacking the various psychological theories surrounding learning so that the trainees have an appreciation of the parameters of human learning: what is actually happening beneath the skin as it were. Teacher trainees are expected to have a familiarity with Piaget, Vygotsky, Skinner/Watson, Guilford, etc, and some sense of the relevant critiques. Likewise, in terms of teaching, they are expected to explore pedagogy and to engage with current work in the area: Thomas, O'Leary, Hattie, etc [for more sources, see references]. Trainees should have a good sense of the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches: they should be aware that none is a formula and all approaches have nuances. It is an aspect of professionalism that you are making decisions about those nuances.

The emphasis on professionalism is made because once in the workplace, new teachers will spend a large proportion of their time alone with learners making decisions about how to proceed and how to respond to emergent matters. It is critical that such

decisions are made in a professional and reflective manner; the teacher has taken into account the particular learners concerned, and made a judgement about what is the most appropriate means of address. Moreover that the teacher thereafter reflects on the decisions made as to whether there could be any improvement: none of us is perfect but we can all aspire to getting better, and as teaching is such a challenging profession, we must all foster such a disposition.

Reflecting on what went on is more likely to lead to consideration of CPD or other further discussions which may serve to inform better practice going forward. It is noteworthy that school teachers are able to benefit from a 2 year post qualification early career framework, which indicates the development needs of newly qualified teachers. FE teachers cannot avail themselves of such and so must be more self-reliant in terms of determining their development needs. Hence the stress on professionalism: the sense of responsibility for one's actions, the need to reflect and to consider one's own development. The framework as proposed herein means that any such consideration is framed within an awareness of the learners, and what it means to be a teacher.

The professionalism unit starts with looking at micro teaches. Traditionally one of these is done at this stage where the trainee acts as teacher to other class members, and the class teacher trainer gives feedback. The model proposed here seeks to enhance that, within the context of *what kind of teacher to I want to be?*, by having extra micro teaches which receive feedback from group members additionally focused on *how did I come across/was I welcoming/engaging?* This is to underline the importance of that projected teacher personality in the classroom/workshop. Teaching should be seen not simply as an information and/or skills transaction, where I am just passing things not in a neutral manner, but as a way where I as teacher have a personal interaction with learners that they find positive. The key is that learners who feel positive are more likely to engage and benefit from the delivery. Additionally that the trainees themselves bear responsibility for how they come across and they have a professional responsibility to seek to promote a perception of themselves which is most conducive to their learners' progress.

This extends the sense of professionalism outlined above: that the trainee teacher is questioning of their choices; they should be reflective about them. This naturally leads into considerations of *how I can improve* and *what CPD I might benefit from* – exactly the behaviours we wish to encourage for them to take forward into employment. It also overlaps with *how I can collaborate with colleagues* to achieve better effect. Throughout, a mindset of continuous improvement is being embedded: a teaching career is a journey, but you never actually get to a final point – you're always working towards being better. And this leads naturally to consideration of the ETF Professional Standards, and Professional Status.

No teacher training course can be sufficient without some consideration of the wider FE context and the professionalism unit encompasses some appreciation of the breadth of the sector: after all, our trainees may end up not where they initially planned.

Nevertheless, the structure of the course allows some flexibility here to enable particular trainees/courses to focus more on certain sectors eg what are the particulars of eg Prison Education? This would enable the course to have a more direct relevance for a trainee so deployed or inclined. Conversely it is perhaps a little oblique to ask a trainee in eg ACL to gain detailed understanding of the apprenticeship sector.

Perhaps the tradition of FE ITE has reflected the needs to provide a generic teacher training programme and consequently subject specific teaching has been delegated to the placement/teaching venue. In the new qualification the raising of subject specific teaching to a Core Unit is intended to signify an appreciation of its importance: this is not a local add-on but something which is key to being a good teacher. Some consideration of what is important in teaching my subject - what are the key points and potential stumbling blocks – must feature in good teaching preparation. The problem as always has been the existence of 6000+ FE subjects and the difficulty of servicing such a wide variety of specific pedagogies. However, we cannot simply sidestep this, and the inclusion of this as a Core unit means that the provider must take some account of who is teaching what on this programme and must make suitable provision for addressing the subject needs of all trainees.

The implications of this are that the trainee should be completing work looking at the particularities of delivering their subject: the common stumbling blocks and how best to overcome them. Plainly this will require input from a subject specialist and it may that the provider will need recourse to such a specialist during any assessment. The Awarding Organisation may wish to give guidance on how best to address this.

In the previous two iterations of the full FE & Skills teaching qualification, the relevant content re digital skills and now educational technology was provided by means of the Minimum Core. The latest version of this borrows from ETF's Digital Skills Framework to provide a set of benchmarks for a minimum standard of digital competence for completing trainees. The current qualification instead makes this area a discrete core unit to emphasise its expanded importance, not least in the context of the sector's increased reliance on this technology during lockdown, which may be seen as setting a likely trend for the future. It should be borne in mind that these qualifications are preparing trainees for possible a 40+ year career in teaching during which it is almost inconceivable that the impact of digital technology on FE teaching and the world more generally will not increase dramatically. It is therefore essential that this area is front and centre in any qualification which adequately prepares trainees. As this is and will continue to be a fast moving area, delivery must encompass not only the need to keep relatively up to date [eg in the packages covered] but also the needs for trainees, once in the workplace, to take responsibility for their own updating/refreshing. As a useful reference point, ETF's digital skills framework will be maintained so that it is suitably reflective of the current range available.

Throughout the programme, it is important that the delivery reflects the messages that are being transmitted via the programme itself. As the content talks about 'putting the

learners first', the delivery of this programme should do exactly that: there should be some start that examines where everyone is coming from and how they see things developing, alongside what their needs are. Gone are the days when trainees are lectured about student centred learning; rather this programmes seeks to 'walk the talk'. This means that the delivery should encompass a good display of Ed Tech with which the staff should be familiar; that the teachers on the programme should welcome discussion and feedback [within reasonable limits] about their delivery; that the provider's address of particular learner needs are appropriate and good; in short that nothing happens on the delivery of this programme which does not align with the lessons being taught [albeit within the context that this is HE and not FE]. Teacher training should be exemplary and providers should be mindful of the responsibility to ensure they actually are.

## **Section 2: some suggested references**

As this is a framework for the qualification, and as the specifics of qualifications may vary between AOs, we are reticent to provide specific references as these may be taken to be prescriptive, and moreover may be of variable application to the specific programmes created by AOs. We are however aware of a duty to provide some reference points to those who otherwise might not have ready access and so the following are simply suggestions and in no way does their inclusion imply any measure of direction. Ultimately the provider is responsible for the choice of materials which contribute to their programmes.

### **General:**

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF):

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/>

The EEF is responsible for a variety of educational contributions and their website provides a range of research and evidence from the world of education, some of which is specifically FE focused.

The Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-itt-core-content-framework>

This is a schools' focused document but its reference section has a spread of resources, some of which are applicable to the FE sector.

Teaching in Lifelong Learning: <https://www.teachinginlifelonglearning.org.uk/>

A peer reviewed journal including items of relevance for the FE & Skills sector particularly aimed at ITE

Teacher welfare:

Holmes, E. (2019) A Practical Guide to Teacher Wellbeing. London: Learning Matters.

Stones, S. (2020) Staying Mentally Healthy During Your Teaching Career. [e-book]

Northwich; Critical Publishing.

ESD & EDI:

The Minimum Core [2022]:

<https://www.feadvice.org.uk/i-am-ite-provider-etf-guidance-documents/minimum-core>

ETF ESD resources:

<https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/resources/esd/>

Inclusivity:

<https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/resources/inclusivefe/>

**Useful general websites:**

<http://geoffpetty.com/>

<http://phil-race.co.uk/>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work>

Journals:

The Assessment, Learning and Teaching Journal, Leeds Metropolitan University  
FE Now

The Journal of Teaching in Further and Higher Education  
Research in Post-compulsory Education