



Department
for Education

Teacher appraisal

Guidance for schools

July 2024

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Introduction

Appraisal arrangements [for schools] are set out in the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Appraisal Regulations).

The Appraisal Regulations set out the principles that apply to teachers in all maintained schools and centrally employed (or unattached) teachers employed by a local authority, in each case where they are employed for one term or more. These regulations do not apply to any teacher undergoing an induction period or are subject to capability procedures. It is also good practice for academies to follow the appraisal regulations, although they are not legally required to do so. Maintained schools and local authorities must stay within the legal framework set out in the Appraisal Regulations, and all schools (including academies) must adhere to any other relevant legislation that affects all employers (for example legislation on equality, employment protection and data protection).

The appraisals process should be intrinsically supportive and developmental, conducted within a school culture that values openness and fairness. Appraisal should be a non-bureaucratic process that recognises, encourages and validates a teacher's commitment to professional development, pedagogical excellence and effective performance. It should offer a supportive and safe environment where individual teachers and their line managers can have open and honest conversations about successes and areas for improvement. It should also address the support that will be provided to enable all teachers to achieve their objectives and continue to meet the teacher's standards. Reducing unnecessary workload should be at the forefront of any considerations around implementing appraisal processes (page 8 provides more advice and guidance on this).

Where there are concerns about aspects of the teacher's work performance, at any point throughout the appraisal process, teachers should receive informal focused support. In most cases this should be separate and come before any capability procedures are considered. This might include mentoring, training, or resources to address specific needs.

Teachers and school leaders should normally only enter capability procedures when there is unsatisfactory progress made with their work performance that the appraisal process, including the informal support mechanisms have been unable to address. See separate [guidance on capability procedures](#).

This appraisal guidance applies only to teachers, including school leaders, but schools are encouraged to adapt it for use with all staff. It has been written in the context of schools, but the same principles apply to centrally employed (or unattached) teachers. Schools should consult staff or their representatives when developing their appraisal policy.

The appraisal model policy should be used as a reference point by schools and others as they review their policies to reflect the Appraisal Regulations. It is important that the appraisal is managed in a way that avoids increased workloads for all parties concerned, for example, reviewing the number and frequency of meetings and observations, and ensuring the process for collecting evidence is always proportionate.

The appraisal cycle

The below sets out the key elements that should be adhered to during the appraisal process, which spans the academic year. In addition to these key elements, teachers will benefit from regular and ongoing dialogue with their line manager throughout the appraisal cycle to support their development, performance and wellbeing. The model policy provided later in this document elaborates on the specific areas that your policy should address.

Autumn term

- All objectives, success criteria, and evidence to be used will be finalised between the appraiser and appraisee. If agreement cannot be reached, they are set by the appraiser. The appraisee can record their disagreement in writing which should then be taken into account at the review stage.

Spring and Summer term

- Performance is reviewed against objectives and standards as set out in the school's appraisal policy (such as through lesson visits and ongoing professional dialogue between the relevant parties and mid-year reviews).

Additional support can be provided to the teacher if a need is identified at any point in the appraisal cycle, and this should be documented. Further information can be found in the informal support section of this guidance document.

Summer and Autumn term

At the end of the appraisal year, teachers must receive an appraisal report which includes (amongst other things) an assessment against their objectives and success criteria and the relevant standards.

In addition to assessing a teacher's achievement of objectives, it is important for line managers to also discuss workload, wellbeing, working hours, flexible working opportunities, and career aspirations in a supportive manner. This can help the teacher identify strategies to effectively manage their workload and wellbeing, as well as provide feedback to management for further improvement and retention.

The appraisals process should be intrinsically supportive and developmental, conducted within a school culture that values openness and fairness. Throughout the appraisal cycle, teachers should receive informal feedback on their performance and development areas. There should be early dialogue with teachers that have emerging performance issues, with prompt support put in place to ensure teachers have the appropriate guidance and opportunity to improve in the relevant areas. Guidance on Informal Support is set out on pages 10 & 14.

Advice on the main roles and responsibilities in appraisal¹

School leaders, governing bodies and teachers all have a role to minimise burdens on their staff, including in relation to paperwork and evidence collection.

School leaders	Governing body	Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, develop and streamline appraisal policy, consulting staff and union representatives as appropriate. Submit the policy to the governing body for approval. Ensure that all teachers are made aware of the policy and that they have the knowledge and skills to apply procedures fairly and effectively. Ensure that teachers are appraised in accordance with the school's appraisal policy and the relevant regulations. Moderate appraisal outcomes. Keep records of the decisions and recommendations in order to demonstrate that all judgements have been made objectively, and in compliance with the school's policy and equalities legislation. Ensure that teachers are notified in writing of any recommendations made and decisions reached. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, streamline, consider and adopt appraisal policies. Ensure robust appraisal policy is in place which has been workload impact assessed, to minimise impact on teacher and school leader workload. Agree the extent to which specific functions relating to the appraisal process will be delegated to others, such as the school leader. Monitor the outcome of appraisal decisions and check that processes operate fairly. Be responsible for ensuring appeals are managed in line with the school appraisal policy. Ensure eligible governors receive relevant training on the appraisal process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in arrangements for their own appraisal in line with their school's appraisal policy and ensure that they understand their responsibilities and the arrangements within their school. Keep records of their objectives and identify evidence as part of review throughout the appraisal process. Where applicable, appraise the performance of other teachers (as delegated by the school leader, and in accordance with the provisions of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) on the payment of Teaching and Learning Responsibility payments (TLRs) for such duties that are

¹ Structures in MATs might differ. This table illustrates the arrangements for maintained schools, which MATs can adapt to fit their own structures.

School leaders	Governing body	Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure appraisers received suitable training and development to undertake this role. • Ensure that appraisers alongside appraisees identify relevant sources of evidence, at the point of objective setting, including those that will routinely be gathered as part of normal school activity, including monitoring the quality of provision. 		<p>allocated to teachers not part of the leadership group). In addition, full training to carry out this task will be provided, and it is expected that the teacher participates fully in the training.</p>

Reducing workload throughout the appraisal process

“Governing bodies and headteachers, in carrying out their duties, must have regard to the need for the headteacher and teachers at the school to be able to achieve a satisfactory balance between the time required to discharge their professional duties... and the time required to pursue their personal interests outside work. In having regard to this, governance bodies and headteachers should ensure that they adhere to the working limits set out in the Working Time Regulations 1998(20).” (School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document, Work/life balance, paragraph 52.4)

A fundamental principle that schools should take into account when developing, implementing and reviewing pay and appraisal policies is the need to minimise the impact on workload for individual teachers, line managers and school leaders. Schools could consider using the workload reduction toolkit.² Schools should always seek to approve policies and processes that avoid unnecessary bureaucracy for all parties concerned; for example, reviewing the process for collecting evidence for appraisal purposes. Policies and processes should be proportionate and use evidence in appraisal decisions that is readily available from day-to-day practice in school. It should not be necessary for staff to collate large portfolios of evidence for appraisal purposes. Schools should consider the benefits of using online or electronic performance management solutions to help provide a streamlined approach which can not only reduce workload and save time for leaders and teachers, but can also assist with identifying and targeting CPD needs, empowering staff to take control of their professional growth and allowing leaders to track impact on school priorities. Schools should ensure that all teachers are treated fairly, including those teachers who have different working patterns or those with particular protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Teacher objectives should be aspirational yet achievable, and based on success criteria which are in their control.

Governing bodies and school leaders also have a duty of care to protect the health, safety and welfare of their staff under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and should ensure staff wellbeing is routinely considered in setting appraisal objectives and making pay decisions.

² <https://improve-workload-and-wellbeing-for-school-staff.education.gov.uk/workload-reduction-toolkit/>

Professional development

The quality of teaching is the single most important in-school factor for improving pupil outcomes – and it is particularly important for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Effective professional development is an integral part of ensuring high-quality teaching that enables teachers to manage teaching and learning effectively. Schools should consider how they establish strong professional development cultures which elevate the quality of teaching and ultimately improve pupil outcomes. Professional development should form a key component of teacher objectives, ensuring their professional practice remains up to date with the latest methodologies, technologies, and educational research.

Professional development is a shared responsibility between the individual teacher and their school. It is good practice for staff and leaders to consider the personal development needs of teachers alongside school improvement needs. The removal of the requirement for performance related pay is to allow schools to have a greater opportunity to focus on professional development in objectives and appraisals.

Schools should identify sufficient resources and support to meet teachers' and the school's professional development needs. When they do so, teachers have a responsibility to be proactive in identifying their own needs and utilising all resources and opportunities open to them to meet them (such as collaborating, observing and making use of research). Schools should consider how a teacher is supported to implement learning in their school, and how professional development opportunities taken build on and complement each-other.

As part of facilitating high-quality professional development for teachers and school leaders, schools should consider how National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) can support an individual and school's development needs. NPQs are part of a wider set of teacher development reforms, running from Initial Teacher Training (ITT) through to school leadership, which root teacher and school leader development in the best available evidence. NPQs provide training and support for education professionals at all levels, from those who want to develop expertise in specialist areas of teaching practice to those leading multiple schools across trusts.

Informal support

Except in the most serious cases of persistent failures to meet job expectations and teaching standards, resulting in negative consequences on the pupils and organisation, teachers should not ordinarily be placed in capability procedures without first undergoing a period of informal support as part of the appraisal process. It should be made clear to the teacher that they are receiving informal support due to performance concerns. At the heart of informal support should be the principle that all teachers are expected to achieve satisfactory performance if the support offered is followed. It should be a supportive process, where the facility to talk openly and honestly is central to the process, for both the individual teacher and their line manager. The teacher may only require focused informal support in a particular area that is aligned with their professional development needs.

This support should have clear, achievable objectives and timelines. The line manager/appraiser should partner with the teacher in a collaborative manner to establish objectives and timelines, taking into account the teacher's circumstances. This may include any medical conditions, working pattern, well-being support needs, or disabilities protected by equality legislation. The line manager/appraiser is responsible for providing specific feedback, with examples of where standards have not been met, and identifying the appropriate support to help the teacher improve. There should be a clear relationship between the issue, the objectives set, and the planned programme of support put in place. The consequences of not meeting the required improvements should be communicated to the teacher and confirmed in writing.

Informal support should be provided for a reasonable period (for example a minimum of 6 weeks) to allow for performance improvement. However, the duration should be determined based on the specific circumstances, with appropriate support in place to facilitate improvement. The line manager should meet with the teacher regularly to assess progress and ensure the agreed-upon support is being provided.

When progress is reviewed after the defined period, if the appraiser is satisfied that the teacher has made, or is making, sufficient improvement, the appraisal process will continue as normal, with any remaining issues continuing to be addressed through that process. If the teacher has not made sufficient improvement, then they should be moved into capability procedures.

Model policy for appraising teacher performance

All maintained schools are required to have an appraisal policy. The rest of this document outlines a model policy that schools can use as a template for developing and seeking feedback on their own policies. It covers the mandatory areas that maintained schools must include in their policies, while also highlighting areas considered best practice.

Text in speech marks “” indicates statutory requirements contained in the Appraisal Regulations.

For the purposes of this model policy the term governing body should be considered to include reference to governing bodies.

The governing body of _____ School adopted this policy on _____

It will review it in *(insert date or number of years)*

Purpose

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of teachers, including school leaders, and for supporting their development within the context of the school's plan for improving educational provision and performance, and the standards expected of teachers.

Application of the policy

“The policy covers appraisal, applies to all teachers and school leaders employed by the school, trust or local authority, except those on contracts of less than one term, those undergoing induction (i.e. ECTs) and those who are subject to capability procedures.”

The policy should always be applied in a way that is robust whilst minimising the impact on workload for teachers, line managers, school leaders and governing bodies.

The policy also applies to ... (insert any other staff, if appropriate, or delete).

Appraisal

Appraisal in this school will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all teachers have or fully develop the skills and access to support they need to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that teachers are able to continue to improve their professional practice and to develop as teachers.

The appraisal period

“The appraisal period will run for twelve months” from _____ to _____ (insert dates: setting out any differences that exist for different categories of staff).

Teachers who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. “The length of the period will be determined by the duration of their contract and an individual teacher’s objectives should take account of the length of contract.”

There is flexibility to have a longer or shorter appraisal period when teachers begin or end employment with a school or local authority or when unattached teachers change post within the same authority.

Appointing appraisers

“The headteacher”/CEO of trust “will be appraised by the governing body, supported by a” suitably skilled and/or experienced “external adviser who has been appointed by the governing body for that purpose.”

In this school the task of appraising the school leader, including the setting of objectives, will be delegated to a sub-group consisting of two/three (delete as appropriate) members of the governing body.

The school leader will decide who will appraise other teachers.

Setting objectives

“The headteacher/CEO of trust’s objectives will be set by the governing body after consultation with the external adviser”. The governing body has a duty to have regard to the work-life balance of the school leader and objectives will reflect this.

“Objectives for each teacher will be set before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period”. The school leader has a duty to have regard to the work-life balance of the teacher and objectives will reflect this. The objectives set for each teacher will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and will be appropriate to the teacher’s role and level of experience. Objectives and appraisal

discussions will not be based on teacher generated data and predictions, or solely on the assessment data for a single group of pupils. The appraiser and teacher will seek to agree the objectives but, if that is not possible, the appraiser will determine the objectives. The appraisee can record their disagreement on the appraisal statement and this will be taken into account at the appraisal review. Objectives should be revised if circumstances change, such as but not limited to a teacher going on maternity leave, or undergoing surgery/medical treatment, to take account of the anticipated absence and to allow the teacher to meet reduced and attainable targets.

“The objectives set for each teacher will, if achieved, contribute to the school’s plans for improving the school’s educational provision and performance and improving the education of pupils at that school”. Objectives should also have a strong focus on effective professional development to ensure that teachers stay up to date with the latest methodologies, technologies, and educational research.

“Before, or as soon as practicable after, the start of each appraisal period, each teacher will be informed of the standards against which that teacher’s performance in that appraisal period will be assessed. With the exception of those who are qualified teachers by virtue of holding and maintaining Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status, all teachers must be assessed against the set of standards contained in the document called “Teachers’ Standards” published in July 2011”.

“For teachers who are qualified teachers by virtue of holding QTLS status, it is for the governing body or school leader to decide which standards are most appropriate”.

Teachers’ performance is assessed against their objectives, and the relevant standards. The appraiser will need to set out what they will take into account when making judgements as to whether teachers have met their objectives and the relevant standards. Evidence used in the performance management process must relate directly to objectives and should be agreed in advance and be readily available from day-to-day practice. Numerical targets should not be set if it is beyond the teacher’s control to achieve them.

This might but does not have to include:

- improvements in specific elements of practice, such as behaviour management, development of pedagogy or providing feedback,
- impact on effectiveness of teachers or other staff,
- wider contribution to the work of the school.

Reviewing performance

The school will set out what evidence they will take into account when making judgements about a teachers’ performance and whether they have met the relevant

standards and their individual objectives. This evidence will be decided upon when the objectives are being set at the beginning of the appraisal process.

This school believes that a range of different methods should be utilised, in a supportive fashion, to assess teachers' performance.

It is important to our school that methods of assessing teacher performance do not add to teacher workload.

Development and support

Appraisal is a supportive process which will be used to inform continuing professional development. The school wishes to encourage a culture in which all teachers take responsibility for improving their teaching through appropriate professional development. Professional development will be linked to school improvement priorities and to the ongoing professional development needs and priorities of individual teachers.

Feedback

Teachers will receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year and as soon as practicable after observation has taken place or other evidence has come to light. Feedback will highlight particular areas of strength as well as any areas that require further development.

Assessment against Teachers' Standards

Teachers' performance will be assessed against the relevant teacher standards to a level that is consistent with what should reasonably be expected of a teacher in the relevant role and at the relevant stage of their career. School leaders and other appraisers should use their professional judgement when appraising teachers' performance. It is not necessary for schools to adopt rigid models that seek to set out exactly what the relevant standards mean for teachers at different stages in their careers and teachers should not be expected routinely to provide evidence that they meet all the standards.

Informal Support

Except in the most serious cases of persistent failures to meet job expectations and teaching standards, resulting in negative consequences on the pupils and organisation, teachers should not ordinarily be placed in capability procedures without first undergoing a period of informal support as part of the appraisal process. Where there are concerns about any aspects of the teacher's performance the appraiser will meet the teacher to:

- inform the teacher that they are going to be receiving informal support due to performance concerns;

- give clear and specific feedback to the teacher about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- give the teacher the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
- set clear objectives and timescales for required improvement;
- agree any support (e.g. coaching, mentoring, structured observations), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;
- make clear how, and by when, the appraiser will review progress (it may be appropriate to revise objectives, and it will be necessary to allow sufficient time for improvement. The amount of time is up to the school but should reflect the seriousness of the concerns);
- explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made – e.g. commencement of capability procedure.

There should be a clear relationship between the issue, the objectives set, and the planned documented programme of support put in place. The line manager/appraiser should partner with the teacher in a collaborative manner to establish objectives and timelines, taking into account the teacher's circumstances. This may include any medical conditions, well-being support needs, or disabilities protected by equality legislation.

Informal support should be provided for a reasonable period to allow for performance improvement. Schools could decide this is a minimum of 6 weeks. However, the duration will be determined based on the specific circumstances, with appropriate support in place to facilitate improvement. The appraiser should meet with the teacher regularly to assess progress and ensure the agreed-upon support is being provided.

When progress is reviewed, after the agreed upon period, if the appraiser is satisfied that the teacher has made, or is making, sufficient improvement, the appraisal process will continue as normal, with any remaining issues continuing to be addressed through that process.

Transition to capability

If a teacher demonstrates serious underperformance or has not responded to support provided within the informal support process, the teacher will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the capability procedure and will be invited to a formal capability meeting. Advice should be sought as appropriate from a HR provider.

Disciplinary procedures will only be triggered by factors related to misconduct or breach of professional standards. Schools should be careful not to conflate these procedures but, if appropriate to the circumstances, they can run concurrently.

Annual assessment

“Each teacher's performance will be assessed in respect of each appraisal period. In assessing the performance of the headteacher/ CEO, the governing body must consult the external adviser”.

This assessment is the end point to the annual appraisal process, but performance and development priorities will be reviewed and addressed on a regular basis throughout the year in interim meetings which will take place (*e.g. once a term*).

“The teacher will receive as soon as practicable following the end of each appraisal period” – and have the opportunity to comment on – “an appraisal report” (in practice the report could be produced using online performance management systems, which can help to reduce workload). “The appraisal report will include”:

- details of the teacher’s objectives for the appraisal period in question;
- “an assessment of the teacher’s performance of their role and responsibilities against their objectives and the relevant standards”;
- “an assessment of the teacher’s professional development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them”;
- details of a discussion on wellbeing and workload and career progression/aspirations;
- “a recommendation on pay where that is relevant”;
- (schools to say here what else, if anything, their appraisal reports will include).

The assessment of performance and of professional development needs will inform the planning process for the following appraisal period.



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