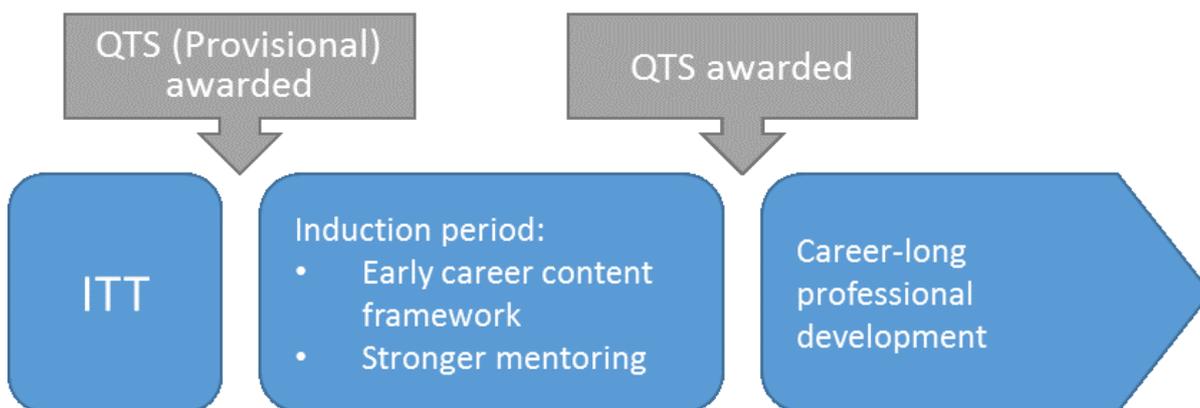


Response from the Royal Society of Biology to the Department for Education's consultation on Strengthening Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and Improving Career Progression for Teachers

STRENGTHENING QTS: PROPOSALS FOR POST-ITT TEACHERS



Strengthening Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and Continuing Professional Development (Q 1 – 5)

Q1: Do you think that QTS should be awarded after a period of sustained professional practice rather than the end of ITT, as it is currently?

Select one:

Yes, I agree without caveats

Yes, I agree, but with caveats.

No, I disagree

Do not know

The Royal Society of Biology is supportive of an extended period of professional practice before award of QTS. All teachers are on a professional learning journey, and completion of ITT shouldn't be considered as the end of training or development.

The proposals set out by government are positive steps towards the education priorities set out by the RSB, and similar positions shared by other learned societies. Raising the professional status of teachers, supporting development of CPD beyond ITT are steps towards improving recruitment and retention of teachers.

RSB Education priorities https://www.rsb.org.uk/images/RSB_Education_Priorities_2017_20.06.pdf

The Association for Science Education, Institute of Physics Royal Society, Royal Society of Biology and Royal Society of Chemistry have jointly commissioned RAND to examine initial teacher education across 12 countries, focusing on subject-specific content and pedagogy components. The research will cover science and mathematics qualifications across primary, lower and upper secondary education.. The aim of the research is to test a hypothesis that England is an outlier in ITE, particularly in the delivery of subject-specific and subject-pedagogical components. We expect to be able to provide further evidence after publication of this data in May

RAND research <https://www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/teaching-qualifications-science-maths.html>

Messages to prospective ITT applicants should be carefully considered. It is important that there is no implication that ITT is "less than" other routes and now takes 3 years rather than 1. A strong step towards this would be to introduce the strengthened QTS for all new teachers, regardless of their initial training route.

Similarly, to ensure recruitment is not adversely affected, it must be made clear to teachers that the extended period before the award of QTS will not impact their pay during those two years.

Q2: Do you agree that a core early career content framework and a continuing professional development (CPD) offer for new teachers should be fundamental to a strengthened QTS?

Select one:

Yes, I strongly agree

Yes, I agree

No, I disagree

No, I strongly disagree

Do not know

Any framework and CPD offer must be able to be personalised to the needs of the teacher and therefore should be adaptable while also covering key competencies including disciplinary expertise. It should be recognised that new teachers have experience of developing their own learning through, usually, an undergraduate and post graduate degree. A degree of autonomy should be given to the teachers in defining their own CPD priorities

The Royal Society of Biology can award CSciTeach to teachers that demonstrate required professional competencies. The first step on this journey is membership (MRSB) and teachers can be supported on the route to chartership through the Society. The RSB provides an exemplar for Secondary Teacher CSciTeach status on its website. This can assist new applicants by providing an example what assessors are looking for in completing competencies. CSciTeach registrants are expected to maintain a CPD record in order to stay registered on an annual basis. A core early career content framework and CPD offer for teachers could help teacher's progress on this journey to chartership.

RSB CSciTeach <https://www.rsb.org.uk/careers-and-cpd/registers/chartered/csciteach>

RSB Secondary School Teacher CSciTeach exemplar

https://www.rsb.org.uk/images/pdf/RSB_School_teacher_exemplar_material_UPDATED.pdf

Q3: What core competencies, knowledge areas or particular skills do you think should be developed in a structured way during the induction period?

Select multiple options:

Subject and curriculum knowledge

Evidence-based pedagogy, including subject-specific pedagogy

Use of and engagement with evidence

Behaviour management

Use and understanding of assessment

Supporting pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND)

Other, please provide below

In the Royal Society of Biology's education priorities 2017 – 2022 we commit to supporting the teaching workforce, and enabling all teachers to develop their subject knowledge is a route to improved retention and increased professional status

RSB Education Priorities https://www.rsb.org.uk/images/RSB_Education_Priorities_2017_20.06.pdf

Subject and curriculum knowledge

Development of, and opportunity to demonstrate, disciplinary expertise. Credentials to teach a given topic to a given age group could be awarded to teachers, during ITT and as a result of development during induction and beyond. This is particularly important for those with a STEM background, and primary teachers, who are often expected to teach outside of their own discipline.

Evidence-based pedagogy, including subject-specific pedagogy

Confidence in carrying out practical work and awareness of the varying purposes of practical work.

Trainees in all routes have very little time to develop these areas. Gatsby's *Good Practical Science* sets out ten benchmarks for schools, including the importance of frequent and varied, planned and purposeful practical science delivered by expert teachers.

Gatsby Good Practical Science <http://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/good-practical-science-report.pdf>

Q4: To achieve these objectives, do you think we should extend the induction period?

Select one:

Yes, extend to two years

Yes, another amount of time. Please provide your comments in the box below

No, keep it at one year

Do not know

The Royal Society of Biology is supportive of a two year induction period for all new teachers. Assessment should be at the end of a two year period, regardless of training route or type of school. The aim should be to raise the professional status and expertise of all teachers.

A flexible timeline for award of QTS should be avoided as it will lead to inconsistency in the NQT experience, with school time and budget pressures leading to a reduction in the development and mentoring time available to NQTs.

Entitlement to a 10% reduced timetable should be maintained for all NQTs in both years, with that time protected from cover and pastoral duties. This may require funding for schools to cover the costs involved in an extended period of reduced NQT timetables.

Q5: We have used the names QTS(P) and QTS throughout this document. Do you think that these terms are appropriate?

Select one for each row:

QTS (Provisional)/QTS(P)	Strongly agree / Agree / Do not mind / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
Certificate of Completion of ITT	Strongly agree / Agree / Do not mind / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
Associate Teacher Status	Strongly agree / Agree / Do not mind / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Select one:

I would like to suggest another name for the award at the end of ITT instead of QTS(P). Please provide your suggestion(s) below

We should not change the name of QTS at all

Do not know

It is important that achievement is recognised at the end of ITT, as well as at award of QTS after two years. Implication that the award signifies something less than a qualified teacher should be avoided, we therefore suggest QTS (Initial). This provides consistency from ITT and supports the idea that a new teacher is a professional in training through a sustained period of practice and deeper professional development.

The Royal Society of Biology recommends that the new end of ITT award title includes discipline, e.g. Science – Biology. The introduction of disciplinary expertise at this stage will help with workforce planning and deployment of teachers.

Mentoring and Development Time (Q6 – 8)

Q6: From the options set out in paragraph 47 of the consultation, which of these proposals do you think would help improve the quality and quantity of mentoring for all new teachers?

Select multiple options:

Reviewing the existing ITT mentor standards

Adding an additional mentor role into the statutory induction guidance

Strengthening statutory guidance to require schools to provide more frequent mentoring sessions

Development of high-quality mentor training

Do not know

Reviewing the existing ITT mentor standards

Expectations of mentors should be clearly set, with guidance for mentees on what they can expect from their mentor and school, including the opportunity to be reassigned to another mentor. The Royal Society of Biology and other learned societies frequently receive anecdotal evidence suggesting there is huge variation in the quality of mentoring, while effective mentoring has been well researched by Andrew Hobson and others and their recommendations should be considered.

Strengthening statutory guidance to require schools to provide more frequent mentoring sessions

Statutory requirements for reduced timetable must be an entitlement for all during NQT induction, and protected time for mentoring should be an entitlement of both the mentor and mentee. Ensuring mentors and mentees are provided with an appropriate amount of protected time will require school-level discussion about appropriate deployment of teachers and matched timetabling, taking into consideration disciplinary expertise and personal development goals.

Development of high-quality mentor training

Training for mentors is essential, and could involve ITT providers to better bridge the gap between ITT, NQT and post-QTS. ITT providers have experience in mentoring, tutoring and developing and assessing teachers. For mentoring to be effective it should be regular, supportive, non-judgemental and discipline specific.

Q7: How else can we improve the quality and quantity of mentoring for all new teachers?

Mentoring should be personalised and realistic, and where a school is unable to provide a mentor within the same discipline, relationships should be developed with other local schools.

Supportive and non-judgmental mentoring could be achieved through decoupling of final QTS assessment and line management from the mentor role. Hobson (2017) details a framework for ONSIDE mentoring, suggesting positive impact of mentoring early career teachers is maximised where mentoring is separated from line-management, non-judgmental and non-evaluative, supportive of mentee's wellbeing, individualised, empowering and development and growth orientated.

Mentors

Mentors should be selected against appropriate criteria, and should have the opportunity to opt out.

Mentoring should be seen as part of a career route rather than a burden, a CPD opportunity for development of staff themselves as well as mentees.

Additional responsibility points for mentors should be considered.

Time for mentoring, observing and team teaching should be protected from cover duty and pastoral duties.

Mentors should be able to demonstrate discipline expertise through, for example, CSciTeach, CBiol or other subject credentials.

Mentees

Mentees should have timetabled opportunities for team teaching or observation.

NQTs teaching STEM subjects require additional time to develop their practical skills e.g. practicing with school equipment, trialling experiments and working with technicians.

Peer and near-peer support for NQTs can take some burden off other teaching staff, if provision is made for in school and local networks of NQTs and NQT +1/2/3.

Hobson, A.J. (2017) The Terrors of Judgmenting and the Case for ONSIDE Mentoring for ECTs

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315005997_The_Terrors_of_Judgementing_and_the_Case_for_ONSIDE_Mentoring_for_Early_Career_Teachers

Q8: How should we ensure that new teachers get sufficient time to focus on their professional development?

Select multiple options:

10% reduction in teaching timetable in the second year as well as the first year

Different teaching timetable reduction. Please provide your comments in the box below

Release new teachers from non-teaching tasks

Other, please provide your comments in the box below

Do not know

Support should continue beyond QTS, at no point should teachers reach a cliff edge beyond which they have little or no access to further professional development.

The lack of time to focus on personal development, or the development of others needs to be addressed across the school system as a whole. Teachers plan lessons and mark after school, time for CPD and mentoring must be allocated during timetabled hours to ensure that marking and planning doesn't move even further into evenings and weekends

10% reduction in teaching timetable in the second year as well as the first year

A second year of reduced timetable will provide time for continued professional development and improved mentoring.

Different teaching timetable reduction

School-level discussions about appropriate deployment of staff and should take into consideration their disciplinary expertise and personal development goals. Appropriate deployment of teachers, through matched timetabling taking into consideration disciplinary expertise.

Release new teachers from non-teaching tasks

NQTs could be teamed with existing teachers for pastoral duties, enabling the NQT to develop these skills at an appropriate pace with a phased increase in their pastoral contact time.

Other

Schools need financial support to ensure teachers get the time they need – reduction of non-teaching tasks for mentors would free up more time for support of NQTs.

Non-teaching staff roles need to be better supported financially (including HR and science technicians).

Assessment and accreditation (Q9 – 11)

Q9: Do you agree that the QTS assessment should be conducted internally and be independently verified by an appropriate body?

Select one:

Yes, it should be conducted internally and independently verified by an appropriate body

Yes, it should be conducted internally, but we do not need any independent verification

No, QTS assessment should be conducted by an external, independent body

Do not know

Q10: How do you think we should strengthen the independent verification of QTS accreditation?

Select multiple options:

Developing more detailed guidance with the Teaching Schools Council and the Local Government Association on what the appropriate body role entails

Setting up a national network for appropriate bodies to provide support and a forum for working through issues that arise

Introducing a quality assurance mechanism that might include an accreditation process, whereby appropriate bodies have to apply to take on the role, demonstrating that they understand the requirements

Other, please provide your comments in the box below

Do not know

Q11: What role do you think ITT providers could play in the assessment and accreditation of QTS?

Higher Education Institutions are well placed to support mentoring and assessment of QTS, and they already have quality control processes in place.

Supply teaching and Additional Considerations (Q12 – 15)

Q12: Do you think we should maintain the limitation on how long a teacher can teach on a supply basis without completing QTS?

Select one:

Yes, keep it as a five year limit

Yes, but shorten the time in which a teacher can teach on a supply basis without completing induction

Yes, but lengthen the time limit

There should be no limitation

Do not know

All teachers should be required to complete an induction period and QTS, regardless of the route they have taken for initial training or their destination after. Therefore, a route to QTS through supply teaching should be developed. A teacher who has completed initial training may have many reasons for teaching on a supply basis – lack of job availability in an area, caring responsibilities, incompatible requirements in terms of flexible working or location, illness etc.

Q13: What impact would this model of a strengthened QTS have on post-ITT teachers in terms of teaching practice, retention, and morale?

Teaching practice: Positive impact overall / Balanced impact overall: some positive, some negative / Negative impact overall / Do not know

Retention: Positive impact overall / Balanced impact overall: some positive, some negative / Negative impact overall / Do not know

Morale: Positive impact overall / Balanced impact overall: some positive, some negative / Negative impact overall / Do not know

If implemented correctly, with support for schools and teachers, strengthened QTS that supports NQTs and mentors should have a positive impact teaching practice, retention and morale

Recruitment to ITT courses could be affected if it appears that teaching now requires a three year qualification. It is vital that teachers' sense of professional expertise and competence is not undermined during the first two years, and that they are treated as qualified teachers in terms of pay and rights

Q14: What impact would this model of a strengthened QTS have on the wider school system?

Changing the culture in schools will take time and may be difficult. A strengthened QTS this is a positive step but government will need to commit to the required time, effort and funding to make it work in all schools, with a longer term aim of improving teaching practice and retention of teachers.

A 10% reduction in timetable for a second year, and protected time for mentors and mentees will have timetable and financial implications for schools and put more pressure on existing staff initially.

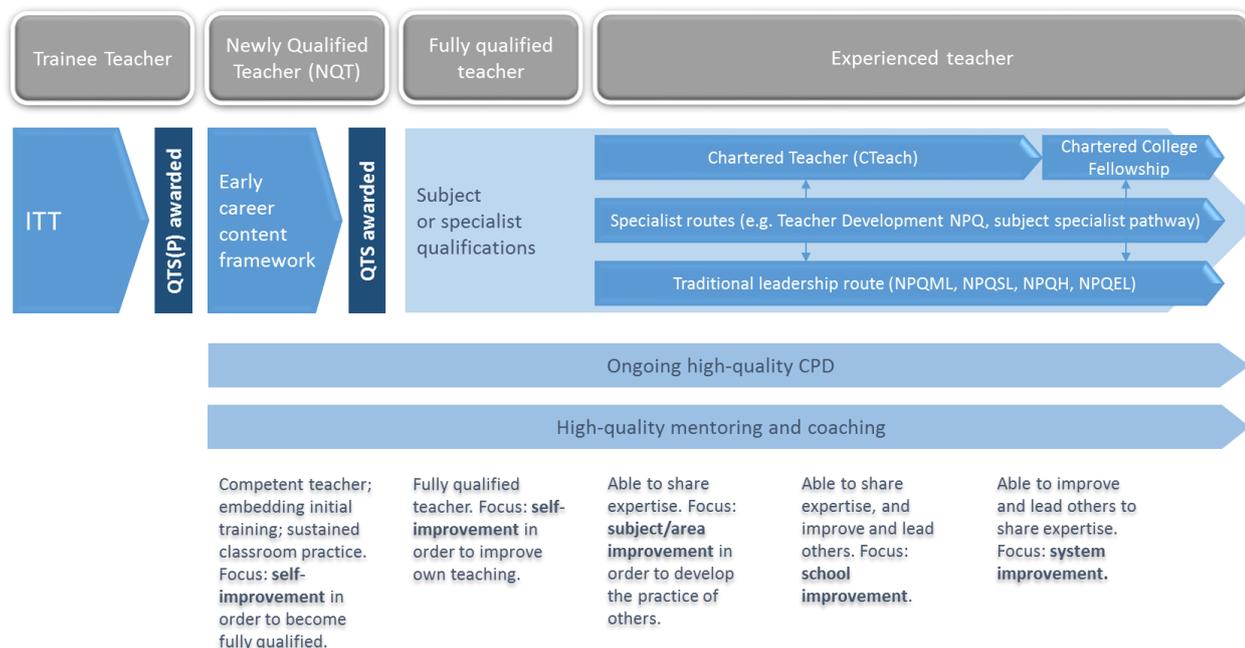
Opportunities for reducing all the workload for all teachers, and increasing opportunities for professional development should be carefully considered. Non-teaching and pastoral duties should be reconsidered school-wide as part of this, to increase opportunities for professional development and reduce workload for all.

Q15: Are there any other implications that we should consider, and what are your suggestions for addressing them?

If all new teachers, through all routes, are expected to go through a strengthened QTS there could be a hugely positive effect on retention, confidence and resilience

Induction and early career content framework must be transferrable between schools, and support put in place for teachers on one year NQT contracts, for example maternity cover, or teachers that move schools between year 1 and year 2.

POST-QTS TEACHER CAREER PROGRESSION AND LEADERSHIP



Professional Qualifications (Q16 – 19)

Q16: Do you think that there is a market for specialist NPQs – or similar – for teachers who aspire to other forms of leadership within the school system?

Select one:

Yes, for specialist NPQs

Yes, but NPQs are not the right vehicle

No, there is no need for any additional qualifications

Do not know

Yes but NPQs should not be the only vehicle. Other levels of qualifications should be considered and any new qualifications should be designed to be aligned with existing provision, and could help teachers work together towards CTeach or CSciTeach.

Working towards management roles should not be the only mark of achievement in a teacher's career development. Leadership is not the end goal for all teachers – being an excellent classroom teacher should be a highly respected career path, or one that engages with curriculum development, pedagogic research, discipline research etc.

Q17: If you answered "yes" to question 16, what specialisms should be prioritised?

Select multiple options:

Teacher development

Assessment

Curriculum design

Other, please provide your comments in the box below

Do not know

Discipline based and pedagogic research

Q18: Do you think there is a market for non-leadership NPQs – or similar – aimed at further developing subject expertise? How should they differ between primary and secondary?

Select one:

Yes, there is a market for further subject specialist qualifications

No, there is no need for any additional subject specialist qualifications

Do not know

Discipline specific NPQs, or other level qualifications that credential teachers' disciplinary expertise, would be useful especially in science where teachers are expected to cross-discipline and in primary where few teachers have a STEM undergraduate degree.

Q19: What additional support should be offered for teachers who work in more challenging schools to undertake further professional qualifications?

As with teachers in all schools, time is the main barrier to teachers undertaking further professional development or qualifications. Would not recommend special incentives for individual teachers in challenging schools – improvements should be made for all.

Cultural change is discussed – to raise the status of CPD and the need for dedicated teacher time, changes/incentives should be introduced across all schools.

Continuing Professional Development (Q20 – 21)

Q20: Do you agree that a CPD badging scheme is something that should be developed? What organisations might be best placed to deliver this service?

Select one:

Yes, I strongly agree

Yes, I agree

No, I disagree

No, I strongly disagree

Do not know

We are supportive of the Chartered College of Teaching's Chartered Teacher programme and would suggest that they are best placed to deliver a CPD badging scheme. We would expect that subject bodies would be involved in badging discipline specific CPD. The Royal Society of Biology offers a CPD approval service where more points can be awarded for courses which meet certain criteria.

RSB CPD event approval service <https://www.rsb.org.uk/careers-and-cpd/cpd/cpd-event-approval>

The quality of current CPD provision varies widely, and we welcome any steps towards enabling teachers have access to efficient and relevant CPD.

Currently CPD is tightly linked to improvements in student outcomes. School leaders should be considering not only the quality of the CPD provision, but that the CPD is of value to the individual teacher and their personal development goals, as opposed to impersonal whole school CPD sessions.

The Royal Society of Biology's education priorities 2017 – 2022 include enabling all teachers to have access throughout their careers to support and professional development opportunities, including subject specific CPD to ensure subject knowledge is up to date and targeted support for primary school teachers to increase their confidence and skills as teachers of science.

RSB Education priorities https://www.rsb.org.uk/images/RSB_Education_Priorities_2017_20.06.pdf

The Royal Society of Biology can award CSciTeach to teachers that demonstrate required professional competencies and can demonstrate CPD as part of maintaining their registration of CSciTeach status.

Teachers must pass annual requirements for CPD each year through a CPD system used for all members of RSB.

RSB CSciTeach <https://www.rsb.org.uk/careers-and-cpd/registers/chartered/csciteach>

Q21: How should government incentivise effective professional development for teachers, particularly in the areas and schools where it is most needed?

Select multiple options:

Clearer entitlements to CPD, including a minimum number of hours of relevant CPD

The development of a national CPD framework for early career teachers (post-QTS), similar to that proposed for NQTs

Ring-fenced funding for CPD in schools where it is most needed

The introduction of a personal CPD record

Other, please provide your comments in the box below

Do not know

Effective professional development for teachers, should be encouraged in all schools, for all teachers and not prioritised by area. Although a framework or guidance could be produced, CPD should be tailored to the personal development goals of the individual

Alternative formats of CPD should be considered for example short placements, such as STEM Insight, that give teachers an opportunity to experience life in a modern industry or leading university, and can use their experience to support both their subject teaching and in bringing careers advice into the classroom.

Evaluation of STEM Insight (2017) <https://www.stem.org.uk/resources/elibrary/resource/421319/evaluation-stem-insight-programme-final-report-november-2017>

Clearer entitlements to CPD, including a minimum number of hours of relevant CPD

A minimum number of hours for relevant CPD, is important in ensuring all teachers can access appropriate, personalised CPD to meet their individual development goals. This time should be protected and teachers should be released whether their training is in person or remote via online courses.

Ring-fenced funding for CPD in schools where it is most needed

Financial support is key and ring fencing the funding is essential. Teachers need to be released, and all schools must have funds to pay for appropriate training.

The introduction of a personal CPD record

This should be established and transfer from school to school with the individual teacher; CPD points could be accumulated and contribute to CTeach/CSciTeach. Access to the CSciTeach register provides access to a CPD scheme. Any other CPD scheme developed should bear in mind the requirements of other CPD schemes offered so the effort in producing CPD records does not require duplication.

Mentoring (Q22)

Q22: How can government best support the development of a genuine culture of mentoring in schools?

Select multiple options:

Creation of specialist NPQs that includes focus on mentoring and coaching

Provide guidance on what effective mentoring looks like

Collaborate with the Chartered College of Teaching in their work to identify and accredit high-quality mentor programmes

Fund the provision of high-quality mentor training

Work with teaching schools to identify how they can help build capacity for mentor development among school leaders

Build mentoring leadership into the existing NPQ curriculum

Other, please provide your comments in the box below

Development of a genuine culture of mentoring is best supported by implementing the above suggestions in Q6-8. This includes:

Clear guidance for mentors and mentees

Reduced timetables and protected time for both mentors and mentees

Matched timetabling to support disciplinary expertise and personal development goals

High quality mentor training and selection of mentors, including an expectation that mentors demonstrate discipline expertise through, for example, CSciTeach, disciplinary credentials, CBiol or an active CPD record.

Ensuring mentoring is non-judgemental and non-evaluative, i.e. decoupled from line management.

Near-peer mentoring

Reducing the administrative and non-teaching burden on mentors and mentees

Responsibility points for mentors and acknowledgement that mentoring is a career development CPD activity in itself.

Establishing mentor coordinator role in school to support mentors and mentees

Sabbaticals (Q23 – 24)

Q23: Do you think that a fund to pilot sabbaticals would be a positive step for the profession?

Select one:

Yes, I strongly agree

Yes, I agree

No, I disagree

No, I strongly disagree

Do not know

Funding for, and the mechanism to enable, sabbaticals would be very positive, and give reassurance to both school and teacher. This should be implemented fully, not just piloted. There is value in granting teachers a planned absence and could be treated no different to arrangement of maternity cover.

Q24: What would the impact be for teachers and schools of enabling more teachers to take sabbaticals, providing they are related to their teaching practice?

The Royal Society of Biology's education priorities 2017 – 2022 set out our commitment to encouraging best practice based on education research, and support the proposal of sabbatical funds as a route to embedding research in practice.

RSB Education priorities https://www.rsb.org.uk/images/RSB_Education_Priorities_2017_20.06.pdf

Sabbaticals would allow an opportunity for teachers to reconnect with subjects and research, or continue studies and can lead to innovative practice and improved learning. Teachers, given time to revitalise and develop outside of teaching expectations, will bring skills back into school in their pedagogy practice, curriculum development, discipline expertise, whole school development, or pastoral duties.

Sabbaticals need not be directly related to teaching practice; disciplinary or pedagogic should be considered as well as opportunities to work in industry. Such sabbaticals need not be funded by a teacher sabbatical fund, as the industry employer or research fund could pay the teacher's salary for that year.

Alternative sabbatical models, such as SAPS school teacher fellowships, lasting between 3 months and a year, offer an opportunity for teachers to undertake science education research, reflect on their own practice, and put research conducted into practice. Such programmes have led to novel curriculum developments, such as the immobilised alga photosynthesis practical developed by Dr Debbie Eldridge which is now a core practical in GCSE biology.

SAPS photosynthesis <http://www.saps.org.uk/secondary/teaching-resources/123-investigating-photosynthesis-with-the-saps-ncbe-photosynthesis-kit>