

# Achieving QTLS Status



Editor: Ann Gravells

# Achieving QTLS Status

A Guide to Demonstrating the  
Professional Standards

Sharron Mansell

Foreword by  
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# I

# Background to QTLS

## Introduction

This chapter will explore the background to Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status.

It will introduce you to the Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training in England (hereinafter called the Professional Standards). As a teacher or trainer, you should demonstrate your commitment to them as part of your professional practice, and whilst working towards QTLS status.

It will also guide you regarding what the further education and skills sector is all about, and how the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) can support you.

### **This chapter will cover the following topics:**

- What QTLS status is
- The Professional Standards
- The further education and skills sector
- The Education and Training Foundation

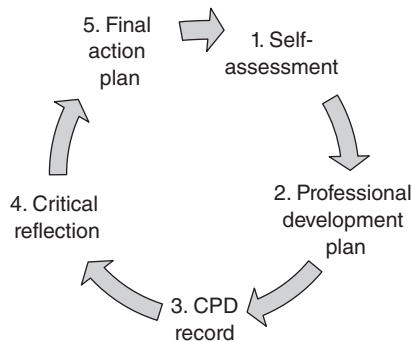
## What QTLS status is

QTLS status is a voluntary process which can help you to advance your career. It demonstrates your expertise and experience to colleagues, employers and learners. Having QTLS status shows you are a professional teacher who is committed to their role, and who will carry out continuing professional development (CPD).

QTLS is gained by successfully completing a process known as *professional formation*, which takes approximately four to six months. This process enables you to demonstrate how you are continuing to develop, and apply the skills and knowledge gained from your initial teacher education (ITE) qualification to your current practice. Access to QTLS status is one of the key benefits of being a member of the Society for Education and Training (SET). Underpinned by the Professional Standards, QTLS status will help you to consolidate your existing practice as well as develop new skills and knowledge. SET is the only body that can confer QTLS status.

Undertaking the process of QTLS is a way to stretch and challenge yourself to develop your practice and your subject knowledge. You will be undertaking the process alongside your usual teaching role, therefore you will need to be dedicated and resilient, and have the time to commit to it.

You could think of the professional formation process as a cycle which is based on a self-assessment of your role and what you need to develop. It continues with a plan for your professional development, relevant CPD activities, a critical reflection of what you have done, and ends with a final action plan, as in Figure 1.1. All these aspects will be explained as you progress through the book. The evidence you will need to provide for each is listed in Appendix 2.



**Figure 1.1** The professional formation cycle

You can only work towards your professional formation once you have achieved a recognised teaching qualification, for example, the Diploma in Education and Training (DET) at Level 5. You need to have been qualified for at least six months. You must currently be teaching learners aged 14 plus (i.e. in years 10, 11 and above) and/or with adults for at least two hours per week. You must be able to evidence your current practice with groups of learners (not just on a one-to-one basis).

**Tip**

*If you teach predominantly on a one-to-one basis, you can still apply for professional formation. However, you must be able to provide current evidence of teaching a group (five or more learners) for at least one of your observed lessons.*

If you are working in a primary school setting, you can't use any evidence of teaching younger learners. However, you may still be eligible if you are involved in a significant amount of family learning activity, i.e. with parents or carers at the school. If you are unsure, contact SET directly; its details are on the website listed at the end of this chapter.

**Activity**

*If you would like to read about SET members' experiences of achieving QTLS status, take a look at the case studies at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/ycy6svbq>*

**The key benefits of QTLS status**

More than 20,000 practitioners have achieved QTLS status since its introduction in 2008.

The key benefits are:

- QTLS status is recognised in law as having parity with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for teaching in a maintained school in England
- career progression: QTLS status demonstrates your commitment, skills and knowledge to employers
- recognition of your status as a professional teacher or trainer (you will be added to SET's online professional register)
- valuable CPD opportunities which can build confidence and enhance your knowledge and skills
- using the letters QTLS as a designation after your name
- taking advantage of certain benefits of being a SET member
- the opportunity to apply for Advanced Teacher Status (ATS) as your career progresses.

**Who is it for?**

- Teachers, trainers and professionals working in the further education and training sector.

- Qualified Further Education (FE) teachers working as teaching assistants, tutors or instructors in academies, schools or sixth form colleges.
- Teachers or trainers who have recently completed their initial teacher training, as well as those who already have experience of teaching.

## The Professional Standards

The Education and Training Foundation's (ETF) Professional Standards were developed in 2014 in consultation with representatives from the FE and skills sector. They are aimed at teachers and trainers working in the sector (excluding sixth form colleges), who work in a voluntary or a paid capacity. This includes offender institutions, the armed forces, charitable, commercial and any other public sector body and their employees.

*Teachers and trainers are 'dual professionals'; they are both subject and/or vocational specialists and experts in teaching and learning. They are committed to maintaining and developing their expertise in both aspects of their role to ensure the best outcomes for their learners. These expectations of teachers and trainers underpin the 2014 Professional Standards, with their overall purpose being to support teachers and trainers to maintain and improve standards of teaching and learning, and outcomes for learners.*

<https://tinyurl.com/y7x7b5j2> (date accessed 16 July 2018)

The Professional Standards:

- set out clear expectations of effective practice in education and training
- enable teachers and trainers to identify areas for their own professional development
- support initial teacher education
- provide a national reference point that organisations can use to support the development of their staff.

<https://tinyurl.com/o2cv9fs>

### Activity

*Take a look at the Professional Standards in Appendix 1 to familiarise yourself with them. You will need to refer to them as you progress through the professional formation process.*

The Professional Standards were designed to:

- motivate and enthuse teachers and trainers to take ownership of their own professional development and to perform at their optimum

- demonstrate professionalism through outstanding practice whilst striving to ensure all learners reach their full potential.

There are 20 Professional Standards which relate to three areas:

- *professional values and attributes* – six standards aimed at developing judgement of what works and does not work in your teaching and training
- *professional knowledge and understanding* – six standards aimed at developing deep and critically informed knowledge and understanding in theory and practice
- *professional skills* – eight standards aimed at developing your expertise and skills to ensure the best outcomes for learners.

The Professional Standards are based on fundamental values, attributes, skills, knowledge and understanding. They will enable you to systematically, safely and consistently self-evaluate your own performance, identify your own training needs and contribute to your organisation's quality assurance processes. The Professional Standards will be explained further in Chapter 5.

## The further education and skills sector

The FE and skills sector is comprised of those aged 14 and above. It includes a wide range of vocational and academic practitioners who share their skills and expertise with learners in different environments and contexts, for example:

- adult education
- armed, emergency and uniformed services
- charitable organisations
- community education
- further education colleges
- health authorities
- higher education institutions and universities
- immigration and detention centres
- laboratories
- local authorities
- on site learning centres
- prisoner and offender centres
- private sector learning
- probation services
- public and private training organisations
- schools and academies
- sixth form colleges
- technical colleges
- voluntary sector learning
- work-based learning.

## Activity

Consider the following questions and make a few notes in response to them.

- *Why am I a teacher/trainer?*
- *In what environment or context do I teach?*
- *How did I move into the profession?*
- *What is motivating me to be the best I can be?*

Keep your notes, as you will need to refer back to them as you progress through the professional formation process.

## Funding in the sector

Funding in the sector can be quite complex. Colleges and sixth form institutes (in England) are funded directly from the government via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). A private training provider might deliver education and training by subcontracting from a FE college and may also have a direct contract with the ESFA. Alternatively, some training organisations will charge their learners a fee.

The ESFA is sponsored by the Department of Education, and funding streams include:

- 16–18 Study Programme
- 19+ Loans
- Adult Education Budget (AEB)
- Adult Learning Support (ALS) encompassing Care to Learn and specialist college placement funding for Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDD)
- Community Provision Learning
- European Social Fund (ESF)
- Job Centre Plus (JCP)
- levy and non-levy apprenticeships
- Offender Learning
- Prince's Trust
- Traineeship
- work-based learning (WBL).

In addition, some learners choose to fund themselves (known as *full cost*) and don't access any ESFA funding. Learners in the sector can access FE from the age of 14, i.e. they could

work towards a vocational programme in an organisation other than a school. Further information regarding full-time enrolment of 14–16 year-olds in further education and sixth form colleges can be found at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/y866wt2w>

There have been many reforms to the FE sector, including the 2013 raising of participation age (RPA) to enable young people to stay in education until their 18th birthday. Each government change tends to bring further modification of the education system. If you are interested in this, further reading regarding the history and reforms in education can be found at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/yc348lq9> and key dates can be found at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/ya7ojfcs>

### Activity

*Find out which funding streams (if any) your learners are accessing and what impact this might have on your organisation – for example, if any learners leave the programme early or if they do not achieve the required qualification.*

## Historical perspective of QTLS

The Institute for Learning (IfL) was the first UK professional body for FE and was incorporated in 2002 as a not for profit body. It was established to maintain quality; standards; and the practice of teaching and learning. Until 2006, membership was voluntary. However, it became compulsory in 2007 as part of the Further Education Teachers' Regulations in England. At this point, the government paid the membership fees and for practitioners to undertake QTLS status. The IfL was recognised as the acting regulatory body for those delivering on behalf of providers who were in receipt of government education funding.

In 2012, the Lingfield Inquiry *Professionalism in Further Education Interim Report* recommended the deregulation of the 2007 Further Education Teachers' Regulations. They were therefore revoked in September 2013, and the IfL repealed the mandatory membership registration to its original voluntary position. QTLS status remained, but on a voluntary basis, and from October 2013 members had to fund it themselves.

In 2014, it was decided to close the IfL and pass all assets to the newly formed Education and Training Foundation (ETF).

### Activity

*If you are interested in the history of IfL, ETF and SET, take a look at these links: <https://tinyurl.com/yb8zeaj3> and <https://tinyurl.com/ycr2glhk>*

The ETF launched its own professional membership service called the Society for Education and Training (SET) in March 2015, where professional practitioners can still apply

for QTLS status. Members have legal parity regarding pay and conditions with QTS if they work in a school setting. This is on the condition that they remain a member of SET.

*If you have QTLS status and membership with the Society for Education and Training, you will be eligible to work as a qualified teacher in schools in England.*

*It will be up to schools and local authorities to decide whether you are suitable for a post and to teach a particular subject. You will be exempt from serving a statutory induction period in schools.*

*<https://tinyurl.com/o9xnzfx> (date accessed 16 June 2018)*

QTLS status is therefore a recognised professional status which is highly regarded within the sector.

### Activity

*Take a look at the differences between QTS and QTLS at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/yb6trzow>*

The process of achieving QTLS status was reformed by SET in 2016 in order to:

- be more forward-looking with opportunities to plan and record CPD activities, and to demonstrate progression
- encourage collaborative working with a supporter and other colleagues throughout the process
- give applicants the opportunity to critically reflect on the difference their development activities have had on their practice and their learners
- inspire applicants to continue developing their skills and knowledge after completing the professional formation process.

### Tip

*Throughout the book, there are many links to pages on the ETF and SET websites. These links might change, therefore if a link does not work, just search for the topic via the search box on the SET website.*

*<https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/>*

## The Education and Training Foundation

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) was established in October 2013 as a registered charity. It is the government-backed, sector-owned national support body for the FE and skills sector and is the guardian of the Professional Standards.



The ETF's role is to support the continuing transformation of the technical and vocational education system by ensuring the sector has world-class leaders, teachers and trainers. In turn, this leads to ever-improving learner outcomes, provides a better skilled workforce for employers and creates a stronger economy, country and society.

The ETF do this by improving, driving and championing the quality of the sector's leadership, teaching and training through:

- setting and promoting the Professional Standards
- supporting sector change
- leading workforce development for leaders, governors and practitioners
- providing key workforce data and research.

## The Society for Education and Training (SET)

The Society for Education and Training (SET) is the membership service for the Education and Training Foundation (ETF).

*SET is the largest professional membership organisation for teachers and trainers in the UK. SET membership makes you part of a large network of experienced teaching professionals. It offers you professional recognition, unlocks your career potential and helps you to become the best teacher or trainer you can be.*

<https://tinyurl.com/ya45at7z> (date accessed 16 July 2018)

The ETF (through SET) remains the only body which confers Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status and Advanced Teacher Status (ATS). ATS will be explained in Chapter 10.

### *The key benefits of becoming a member of SET*

Joining SET will give you benefits such as:

- accessing and using the online research library of CPD content and resources
- becoming a mentor or mentee through the ETF's mentoring service
- being a member of the largest professional network of teachers and trainers in the UK
- being listed in the online professional SET register (after gaining QTLS status)
- career advice
- career progression: QTLS status demonstrates your commitment, skills and knowledge to employers; ATS demonstrates you are an experienced professional
- eligibility for discounts on the latest professional development workshops, webinars and courses offered by the ETF

- free confidential legal advice
- meeting with like-minded professionals via local events, an annual conference and/or online communities
- receiving the quarterly copy of *inTuition*, the most widely read journal for those working in post-16 education (digital and hard copy)
- using the letters SET as a designation after your name.

### *Corporate Partner status*

SET introduced Corporate Partner status in May 2017. This is a status which serves as a badge of recognition to organisations. It shows that an organisation is committed to investing in staff development, progression and high-quality recruitment.

Corporate Partner status enables colleges and independent training providers (ITP) to access the entire suite of services offered by the ETF. This covers a vast range of CPD, practical advice, support and networking opportunities. Alongside this, Corporate Partners are encouraged to motivate their teachers and trainers to achieve QTLS status and ATS.

Benefits include:

- SET partner logo for use on the organisation's website and marketing materials
- discounted SET membership for staff
- use of SET CPD tools and support to integrate into performance development review processes
- access to ETF training courses at discounted rates
- complementary SET membership for one member of the management team, and three copies of SET's journal: *inTuition*
- staff workshops to get maximum value from SET.

The aim of the partnership status is to offer bespoke solutions for colleges and ITPs, and to keep teachers connected to their practice. This ongoing professional development offer for staff can benefit the whole organisation alongside its learners, partners and local employers.

## **Activity**

*Find out if your organisation is a Corporate Partner to the ETF as there may be help within your organisation to work towards QTLS status.*

## Summary

This chapter has explored the background to QTLS status.

It has introduced you to the Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training in England. As a professional teacher or trainer, you should demonstrate your commitment to them as part of your professional practice and whilst working towards QTLS status.

You might like to carry out further research by accessing the books and websites listed at the end of this chapter.

This chapter has covered the following topics:

- What QTLS status is
- The Professional Standards
- The further education and skills sector
- The Education and Training Foundation

## References and further information

ETF (2014) *Initial Guidance for Users of the Professional Standards*.

Gravells, J. and Wallace, S. (2013) *An A–Z Guide to Working in Further Education*. Northwich: Critical.

Tummons, J. (2014) *A to Z of Lifelong Learning*. Berkshire: OU Press.

Tummons, J. (2010) *Becoming a Professional Tutor* (2nd edition). Exeter: Learning Matters.

## Websites

Advanced Teacher Status (ATS) – <https://tinyurl.com/ydhtcjyo>

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) – <https://tinyurl.com/mdrltn8>

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) – [www.et-foundation.co.uk](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk)

ETF (2014) Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers – <https://tinyurl.com/o2cv9fs>

FE Advice – [www.feadvice.org.uk](http://www.feadvice.org.uk)

Key dates in education – <https://tinyurl.com/ya7ojfcs>

QTLS status – <https://tinyurl.com/y86vc3f8>

QTLS status case studies – <https://tinyurl.com/y9bo2arw>

Society for Education and Training (SET) – <https://set.et-foundation.co.uk>