

**LONDON BOROUGH
OF
BARKING AND DAGENHAM**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
ARTS AND LIBRARIES**

**COMPETENCY PROCEDURE FOR
NEWLY QUALIFIED
TEACHERS**

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This procedure relates exclusively to issues of the professional competence and performance of Newly Qualified Teachers. It does not relate to matters of discipline or ill-health.

In the case of a newly qualified teacher's classroom practice being well below an appropriate standard, despite support and guidance, further action may prove appropriate. In monitoring the professional development of newly qualified teachers, it is important that the senior management team of the school forms a view by the end of the first term of teaching. The competency procedures, written for experienced teachers, do not take account of the experience level of newly qualified teachers and can take a significant period of time to pursue, thus leaving the teacher to struggle for too long. The arrangements set out below are based on the DfEE Administrative Memorandum 1/90 and the locally agreed competency procedures but take account of the context within which newly qualified teachers are operating.

In cases where a teacher is absent for any reason (including sickness) the Headteacher may, after consulting the Chief Education Officer decide whether it is appropriate to retain the original end-date or extend the number of days for the review period.

Informal Advice

Before taking procedures to a formal stage, the newly qualified teacher should be given an appropriate level of structured advice, guidance and support from the school and LEA. The support that an NQT should reasonably expect to receive from the school and LEA may include.

- (a) Regular classroom observation from the mentor with both oral and written feedback.
- (b) Observation by the newly qualified teacher of the classroom practice of more experienced colleagues.
- (c) Regular discussion and guidance from the nominated mentor.
- (d) Access to appropriate induction and training arrangements, provided by the LEA.
- (e) Classroom support from an LEA Advisory Teacher.
- (f) Preferential treatment when applying for appropriate in-service training opportunities.

During this period of informal support and guidance, the Headteacher should discuss, in detail, the inadequacies of the NQT's classroom practice and set out strategies which, if pursued, could lead to an improvement in performance. In secondary schools the relevant Head of Department should participate in these discussions. Guidance issued by the school or LEA should be written up for future reference. The NQT should be advised by the Headteacher to contact his/her professional association.

In making judgements about classroom performance, Headteachers should use the criteria set out below and ensure that the NQT is familiar with them.

When making judgements about the classroom practice of a newly qualified teacher, the Headteacher should expect to see:

- (a) A classroom which is organised to meet the needs of the whole curriculum, with the emphasis placed on creating an exciting and stimulating environment and which enables a wide range of teaching and learning styles.
- (b) An ability to relate to children, creating an atmosphere appropriate to engender learning.
- (c) An ability to establish the individual needs of children through appropriate forms of assessment and to match their work to these needs.
- (d) A systematic method of recording assessments.
- (e) A working knowledge of National Curriculum attainment targets and programmes of study.
- (f) A broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum.
- (g) Learning which is extended through appropriate strategies for intervention at individual, group or class level.
- (h) Work which is planned to take into account the National Curriculum programmes of study and the school's curriculum documentation as well as identified needs of the children.
- (i) An ability to relate professionally to colleagues and to play a positive role in the life of the school.

A simple record sheet for schools to use can be found in Appendix A. These reports should be completed regularly with a view to identifying progress in one or more areas. The newly qualified teacher should be given a copy and its contents discussed in detail. Where under-performance is significant in a number of areas, the newly qualified teacher should be encouraged to focus on two or three particularly important areas for improvement, before moving on to further aspects of classroom practice. Observations made and advice given by the mentor should, in the first instance, focus on these agreed areas.

If significant improvement has been made, the informal stages of these procedures and the related support arrangements should normally be concluded or extended to allow for further development. If, however, no significant improvement has been achieved, formal stages of competency should be pursued.

Formal Stages

Except in extreme cases where the education of pupils is jeopardised, in order to ensure that sufficient time has elapsed for the informal advice and guidance to make an impact on classroom performance, formal stages should not normally be pursued until the newly qualified teacher has received support for at least 50 working days. The Inspection and Advisory Service should be contacted at this point to provide additional support for the newly qualified teachers and external monitoring of classroom performance. These two roles should be undertaken by different members of the IAS.

When arranging the meeting at which the formal stages of NQT competency procedures will be discussed, the Headteacher should inform the newly qualified teacher that he/she could be accompanied by a friend or professional association representative. The key issues discussed during the meeting should be recorded in writing and should include:

- (a) The areas of classroom practice in need of improvement and those areas which are satisfactory or better and, therefore in need of consolidation.
- (b) The criteria, which directly relate to (a) above, against which future improvement will be judged.
- (c) The programme of advice and support to be provided by the School and LEA and the time to be allowed for this programme to make an impact on classroom performance.

The teacher and his/her professional association representative should be fully involved in the discussions. The fact that an oral warning has been issued and that formal procedures are now in place should be recorded in writing. In extreme cases where the education of pupils is jeopardised, this warning or those given at any stage thereafter may be given as a final warning. In such cases the period given for improvement will be no more than twenty working days.

Structured support should already be in place as part of the informal arrangements. This support should be reviewed and, if necessary, increased or modified. In particular, the support arrangements should be focused upon those areas of classroom practice in which improvement is needed.

It is important that the newly qualified teacher can speak in absolute confidence to his/her mentor without fear of his/her remarks being used in future formal discussions. Notes made by the mentor should not be used and the mentor's view should not be sought by the Headteacher or LEA when forming judgements about the professional performance of the newly qualified teacher. Formal progress reports should be written by a member of the senior management team after carrying out classroom observations. The role of the LEA should continue to be structurally split between providing support and monitoring performance. Notes taken and advice given by the member of the IAS responsible for providing on-going support should remain confidential and should not be used as part of the monitoring process.

Before the end of the designated period, the Headteacher should arrange a second meeting with the newly qualified teacher, who should be advised again to bring to the meeting a representative of his/her professional association. The member of the IAS responsible for monitoring progress should also be present. At the meeting, the Headteacher should:

- inform the newly qualified teacher that he/she has met the criteria for improvement, procedures are therefore at an end and all records will be immediately destroyed;

or

- explain that the period allocated for improvement will be extended because whilst progress has been made against some criteria, improvement is needed in other areas;

or

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- issue a formal warning.

The procedures following a formal warning are the same as those set out from point 4.0 in 'Competency Procedures for Teaching Staff'.

The major differences which should be observed when applying competency procedures to newly qualified teachers include:

- Concerted advice, guidance and support from both schools and the LEA, should be triggered as early as possible during the informal stages.
- Significant progress towards meeting the agreed criteria and targets should be sufficient to end competency procedures.
- Advice, guidance and support should normally continue if competency procedures are concluded.

