

## Developing Teachers' Knowledge and Skills Pointers for policy development

### DEVELOP TEACHER PROFILES TO ANCHOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

- Develop a clear and concise statement or profile of what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. Use these teacher profiles as a framework to guide initial teacher education, teacher certification, teachers' ongoing professional development and career advancement.
- Base the profile of teacher competencies on a clear statement of objectives for student learning.
- Ensure that the teacher profile encompasses strong subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, the capacity to work effectively with a wide range of students and colleagues, contribution to the school and the wider profession and capacity to continue developing.
- Make the profile evidence-based and build on active involvement by the teaching profession in identifying teacher competencies and standards of performance.

### VIEW TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AS A CONTINUUM

- View teachers' development as a lifelong learning experience in order to cater for the rapid changes in schools, the potentially long careers of many teachers and the need for updating skills.
- Improve the interconnection of initial teacher education, induction and professional development to create a more coherent learning and development system for teachers.
- Consider using additional resources to improve induction and teacher development throughout the career rather than increasing the length of pre-service education.

### MAKE INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION MORE FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE

- Provide consecutive or post-graduate programmes of teacher education to give opportunities to train as a teacher after having completed studies in another field.
- Provide curriculum structures that enable people to enrol part-time or via distance education and to combine teacher education with work or family responsibilities.
- Increase the common components of teacher preparation for different types of school and levels of education to increase opportunities for working in different schools.
- Provide alternative routes into teaching for mid-career changers that combine formal study and on-the-job support with reduced teaching loads.
- Grant credits for qualifications and experience gained outside education to reduce course length and costs.
- Provide retraining and upgrading programmes that enable existing teachers to gain new qualifications to teach in other types of schools or take on high-demand subject areas.
- Develop close relationships with schools, teacher employers and the teaching profession.
- Focus research activities within the teacher education system on the issues facing schools and teachers.
- Provide feedback and evaluation mechanisms to monitor the outcomes of teacher education.

### IMPROVE SELECTION INTO TEACHER EDUCATION

- Provide more information and counselling to prospective teacher trainees so that they make better informed enrolment decisions.
- Establish procedures to assess whether individuals wanting to become teachers have the necessary motivation, skills, knowledge, and personal qualities.
- Provide incentive schemes to recruit candidates with high-level competencies.
- Provide flexible programme structures that provide students with school experience early in the course.

- Offer opportunities to move into other courses if trainee teachers' motivation towards teaching changes.
- In countries facing teacher shortages, raise awareness of the attractiveness of teaching as a career choice and use selection criteria that ensure the best possible candidates enter teacher education.

### CHANGE THE EMPHASIS IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

- Ensure that initial teacher education combines strong content knowledge with skills for reflective practice and research on the job.
- View initial teacher education as the entry point for the profession and the platform for teachers' development.
- Improve partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools in order to provide teacher trainees with a more integrated experience.
- Ensure that students' field experiences and academic studies reinforce and complement each other.
- Ensure that mentor teachers receive appropriate training and support, including time allowances.

### ACCREDIT TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND CERTIFY NEW TEACHERS

- Consider accreditation by an independent agency to assure quality in teacher education.
- Ensure that accreditation criteria focus on the outcomes of programmes rather than on their inputs, curriculum and processes.
- Ensure that certification of teachers includes subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, communication skills, experience and personal qualities.
- Establish a mandatory probationary period of one to two years of teaching before full teaching certification or a permanent teaching post is awarded.

### STRENGTHEN INDUCTION PROGRAMMES

- Ensure that mentor teachers in schools provide guidance and supervision to new teachers in close collaboration with the initial teacher education institution.
- Monitor carefully the resources dedicated to induction and mentoring programmes and the quality of mentor training.

### INTEGRATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE CAREER

- Encourage an approach to professional development encompassing all following three strategies:
  - entitlement-based, providing teachers with agreed levels of time release and/or financial support
  - incentive-based, recognising participation in professional development as a requirement for salary increases or taking on new roles
  - school-based, linking individual teacher development with school improvement needs
- Find ways for teachers to share their expertise and experience more systematically.

### FURTHER READING

These general pointers for policy development are drawn from the Thematic Review on Teacher Policy and the findings are presented in *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*, published in 2005. Country background reports prepared by 25 countries, country reviews of 10 countries and other documents are on the OECD website [www.oecd.org/edu/teacherpolicy](http://www.oecd.org/edu/teacherpolicy).