

Chapter 4

Teacher appraisal

Teacher appraisal in the Netherlands is under the responsibility of the competent authority of each school. Central regulations specify that schools should have regular performance interviews with all staff, but employing authorities are free to develop their own frameworks for teacher appraisal. Many school boards delegate the responsibility for human resource management, including teacher appraisal, to the school leaders, and practices vary from school to school. On a system-wide basis, a register system and a peer review project for teachers have been launched by the Education Cooperative, a teacher professional organisation created in 2011. Improving teaching quality has been a policy priority in the Netherlands in recent years, as evidenced by the introduction of teacher competency requirements, the obligation for school boards to monitor teacher competencies and the Inspectorate's increased focus on monitoring teaching quality in schools. Going further, the teaching profession in the Netherlands could benefit from a revised and refined set of teaching standards; strengthened school-based appraisal processes linked to professional learning opportunities, especially for beginning teachers; and an enhanced registration system that could be linked to teacher career development.

This chapter looks at approaches to teacher appraisal within the Dutch evaluation and assessment framework. Teacher appraisal refers to the evaluation of individual teachers to make a judgement about their performance. Teacher appraisal has typically two major purposes. First, it seeks to improve teachers' own practices by identifying strengths and weaknesses for further professional development – the improvement function. Second, it aims to ensure that teachers perform at their best to enhance student learning – the accountability function (Santiago and Benavides, 2009). An overview of the main features of the teaching profession in the Netherlands is provided in Box 4.1.

Context and features

Teacher appraisal procedures

Teacher appraisal in the Netherlands is under the jurisdiction of the competent authority of each school. National regulations specify that schools should have regular performance interviews with all staff, including teachers, at least once every four years in primary education and once every three years in secondary education (OECD, 2013). The collective agreements between the employers' organisations and the teaching unions also specify that regular teacher appraisal should take place. However, while national requirements state that performance conversations must be implemented, there is little guidance provided nationally on how to evaluate the performance of individual teachers.

As the employing authorities for teachers, school boards are free to establish their own frameworks for teacher appraisal. Many school boards delegate the responsibility for personnel matters, including teacher appraisal, to the school leaders. While practice varies across schools, teacher performance reviews typically take the form of an annual or biannual conversation between the school leader and the individual teacher, in which issues related to teachers' responsibilities, working conditions, career and professional development are discussed. More regular formative observation, feedback and coaching for teachers are typically delegated by the school principal to other members of the school leadership team, department heads or team leaders.

In addition, the Education Professions Act (2006) includes a description of expected teacher competencies and requires school boards to establish human resource policies for their schools and maintain competency files for each teacher. These files should describe the teacher's competencies and how these competencies will be maintained. The intention is to ensure that employers have a clear understanding of the competency mix and professional development needs in their schools. The competency files should also help create greater transparency about each teacher's career development and potential, and ensure that all teachers meet minimum competency requirements. When there are indications that a school's quality of educational provision may be at risk, the Inspectorate examines whether the school board has fulfilled this obligation.

Other forms of feedback for teachers

The Education Cooperative, a teacher professional organisation created in 2011, has recently launched a teacher peer review project, which provides a new form of institutionalised feedback for teachers. Based on the idea that teacher peers are best placed to evaluate teaching practice and provide constructive feedback, the peer review project comprises teams of teachers visiting each other's schools and developing tools to observe and evaluate teaching practice. The intention is to use these collegial visitations to observe teaching practice, discuss issues of concern, draw up an observation report and

provide professional feedback for improvement. The project is subsidised by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (De Bruin et al, 2013).

Teaching quality is also monitored through the ongoing self-evaluation activities conducted by schools and the regular school supervision carried out by the Inspectorate. While schools are not legally obliged to conduct self-evaluations, they are required to report on the progress of their students and to produce public accountability information on the school's educational results, quality of education, financial situation and professional governance. This information is used by the Inspectorate. The schools visited by the OECD review team reported that they monitored and evaluated the quality of their teaching and learning to draw up annual reports and plan for pedagogical improvements. However, schools are free to choose their own methods for self-evaluation, and little information is available nationally about the approaches they use to evaluate teaching practice as part of their self-evaluations.

The Inspectorate evaluates teaching practice as part of its school supervision and national monitoring tasks. In full quality inspections (Chapter 5), inspectors collect direct evidence of teaching quality on the basis of classroom observations. The Inspectorate's classroom observation framework specifies that inspectors should observe at least four lessons per school. However, these evaluations focus on the school's overall teaching quality and are not intended as an appraisal of individual teachers. They help the Inspectors form a judgement about whether the school leadership team is giving accurate descriptions of the school's quality. In schools where risks for educational quality are identified, inspectors examine the school's human resource policies and verify teachers' qualification levels in relation to detected risks (Chapter 5). Inspectors also observe classroom practice during specific inspection activities conducted for the purpose of system monitoring. Based on aggregated information from these inspection activities, the Inspectorate provides an overview of teacher functioning across the country in its annual *State of Education* reports (Chapter 6).

Competencies for appraisal

The key role in teacher appraisal is exercised by members of the school leadership team. Most school leaders are experienced teachers who apply for school leadership through open competitions. There are few national eligibility requirements for school leadership. The only formal requirements for individuals to apply for the position of principal or deputy principal at a school is that they hold a certificate of good conduct and a higher education degree. If the principal or deputy principal position involves teaching duties, candidates must also meet the relevant competency standards. In secondary education, candidates are required to hold a teaching certificate qualifying them to teach one of the subjects taught at the school. Additional competency requirements may be set by the school board.

While it is not mandatory for school leaders to undertake any particular professional training, a wide range of leadership training offers are available in the Netherlands. Professional training and development for school leadership is offered by a variety of institutions, including Higher Vocational Education (HBO), the trade unions, professional organisations and a range of private training providers. Courses are tailored to different target groups, including principals with different levels of experience, middle managers in secondary education, teachers aspiring to move up to leadership and individuals from outside the education sector interested in a career change. The type and length of training varies between the different offers and may range from two to three years (with an

average of one day a week of study time) to one-day courses on a specific topic (Bal and De Jonge, 2007).

The Dutch School Leaders Association (*Algemene Vereniging Schoolleiders, AVS*), which has existed since the mid-1990s, also plays a role in supporting school leaders' competency development. The AVS acts both as a trade union and a professional organisation. In addition to its collective bargaining, lobbying and legal support tasks, it is increasingly involved in professional aspects, such as, developing guidance materials, connecting school leaders through networks, and disseminating good leadership practice. The professional development of school leaders is further supported by the Dutch School Leaders Academy (*Nederlandse Schoolleiders Academie, NSA*), an independent institute created in 2002, which has set itself the task of promoting the professional quality of school leadership. It accredits and certifies professional development offers, disseminates information related to leadership development, initiates research on effective leadership, and organises conferences and meetings. The NSA and the AVS jointly developed professional standards for school leadership, and the NSA maintains a registration system that allows school leaders who meet the professional standards to register with the Academy. While registration is currently voluntary, it is scheduled to become mandatory in 2015.

As the employers of teachers, school boards also have a formal role in teacher appraisal. School boards may be constituted by various different groups and there is little information nationally regarding the qualifications of school board staff. As described in Chapter 1, school governors may be volunteers or professionals. They may be parents of students in the school, citizens from the local community, members of a religious or life philosophy community, or professionals with specific expertise such as law, finance, human resource management or education. Hence, the competencies of school board members vary considerably across schools. The involvement of school board members with teacher appraisal is typically limited.

Using appraisal results

Teacher appraisal in the Netherlands is primarily used for formative purposes. Performance reviews are expected to feed into professional development for the teacher, ideally in close linkage to the needs of the school. Teacher appraisal may also have summative consequences for teacher career or salary advancement, but this depends on the internal regulations and practices of each school and school board. If an underperforming teacher is identified, it is expected that the school leader finds a solution. School boards can dismiss a teacher on the grounds of underperformance, or they may delegate this responsibility to the school leader. However, this tends to happen only in rare cases. In order to dismiss a teacher, the school leader needs to prove that the concerned teacher underperformed consistently and did not respond to opportunities for support, coaching or professional development offered by the school.

Box 4.1 The teaching profession in the Netherlands: Main features

Employment status

Teachers in public schools have civil servant status while teachers in private schools have salaried employee status. Teachers may be employed on open-ended or fixed-term contracts (for a maximum duration of three years). The conditions of service and legal status of all school personnel are determined at a decentralised level in sectoral collective agreements.

Prerequisites to become a teacher and teacher recruitment

The main requirements to apply for a job as a teacher are to hold a certificate of good conduct and a teaching certificate for the relevant level of education. There is also the possibility for individuals who are not fully qualified as teachers to be appointed on a temporary basis for a maximum of two years after passing an aptitude test. During these two years, these lateral entrants are given training to gain a full teaching qualification. The Education Professions Act (2006) regulates that teachers can only be appointed if they hold a higher education certificate indicating that they meet the competency standards. School boards are responsible for recruiting and dismissing teachers, but they may delegate this task to the school principal through a management contract. Since 1995, all teachers are employed by the school board rather than by a particular school, which means that they can be more easily transferred to another school governed by the same board.

Teacher registration

The Education Cooperative (*Onderwijscoöperatie*), a teacher professional organisation created in 2011, maintains a voluntary registration system for teachers. To be registered, teachers need to meet criteria regarding the amount and content of professional development they have undertaken. The registration process includes the requirement for teachers to complete 160 hours of professional development in four years in order to maintain and renew their registration. The Education Cooperative has set itself the target to ensure that 40% of teachers are registered by 2015. It is intended that the system gradually becomes mandatory. In a recent document, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (2013) states that from 2017, all teachers are to be included in the register, which will then have a formal legal status.

Salary and career structure

The Netherlands has a multilevel career structure for teachers, with two levels in primary education and three levels in secondary education. In 2014, there were 15 salary steps in primary education and 12 salary steps in secondary education. Advancement on the salary scale is based on qualifications, experience, performance reviews and responsibility for additional roles and tasks. The government's "functions mix" policy aims at having a balanced mix of teachers at different career levels within each school.

Initial teacher education

Initial teacher education is offered at institutions for higher professional education (HBO) and universities. These institutions are autonomous in determining the teaching and examination regulations for their programmes. Primary school teacher education is part of higher professional education and is provided at both multi-sectoral HBO institutions and colleges specialising in primary teacher education. There are over 30 HBO institutions offering primary school teacher education. Regular primary school teacher education has a study load of 240 ECTS credits or four years of full-time study. Secondary school teacher education is provided at HBO institutions and universities. HBO teacher education institutions cover both subject training and general pedagogy.

Box 4.1 The teaching profession in the Netherlands: Main features (continued)

Two types of qualifications exist for secondary school teachers. Grade two teachers are qualified to teach all years of pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO), but only the first three years of general secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO), whereas grade one teachers are qualified to teach all levels of secondary education. University-based teacher education is offered either as a postgraduate course for university graduates with a Master's degree or as a combination of an educational minor at the Bachelor's level (which leads to a grade two qualification) combined with a Master's degree (which leads to the grade one qualification). There are nine universities providing secondary school teacher education. Practical training is a substantial and compulsory part of teacher education both for the primary and secondary level. Details about the period of teaching practice are set out in the teaching and examination regulations of each teacher education institution. There are no national restrictions or quotas regarding the number of places for teacher education.

Professional development

There are no national regulations regarding the amount and content of professional development to be undertaken by teachers. Schools are autonomous and have their own budget to organise continuous professional development for their teachers. Teacher professional development opportunities are offered by a wide range of public and private institutions including HBO institutions, universities with teacher training departments, school advisory services or experts from within or outside the education system. As part of the so-called Integrated Personnel Policy (*Integraal Personeelsbeleid, IPB*), school leaders are expected to align the competencies and the professional development of teachers to the organisational development and the goals of the school as a whole.

Sources: Scheerens, J., et al. (2012), OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes: Country Background Report for the Netherlands, University of Twente, Netherlands, www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy.

Eurypedia (2013), European Encyclopedia on National Education Systems: Netherlands, <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Netherlands:Overview>

Strengths

Definitions of key competencies for teachers exist

The OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education (OECD, 2013) found that teaching standards or competency frameworks are an important element in any teacher appraisal system, as they provide a clear common reference to make judgements about teacher performance. They support the capacity of school leaders, educational authorities and others to effectively review whether teachers have reached a given level of competency. They also offer the potential to frame and align the organisation of key elements of the teaching profession, such as initial education, registration, professional development, career advancement and teacher appraisal (OECD, 2013).

There has been considerable reflection in the Netherlands around what is considered “quality teaching”. As mentioned above, the Education Professions Act includes a description of teacher competencies, which functions as a professional standard for teachers. The competency requirements comprise seven domains (Box 4.2). For each of these seven domains, the competency requirements provide the following elements:

(i) a description of visible aspects of the competency; (ii) proficiency requirements regarding the type of knowledge and skills a teacher must possess in relation to the competency; (iii) indicators and examples of concrete professional actions that may illustrate this particular competency. The requirements do not describe different levels of performance, but define the minimum level of performance that all teachers should achieve in relation to each competency.

Box 4.2 The seven domains of the Dutch teacher competency requirements

1. Interpersonal competencies.
2. Pedagogical competencies.
3. Subject-specific and didactical competencies.
4. Organisational competencies.
5. Competencies to cooperate with colleagues.
6. Competencies to cooperate with the environment.
7. Self-reflective and developmental competencies.

Source: Website of the Education Cooperation (www.onderwijscooperatie.nl)

The development of these competency requirements began in 2000, when the Association for Professional Quality of Teachers started to engage with teacher groups to articulate what a “good teacher” should know and be able to do. The intention was to develop competency standards of, by and for teachers. The requirements were finalised in 2004 and included in the Education Professions Act in 2006, along with the obligation for the Association for Professional Quality of Teachers (now the Education Cooperative) to review them every six years. In 2012, the Education Cooperative presented a first proposal for revised professional competency standards, suggesting a re-structuring of the competencies along three perspectives: content, pedagogy and didactics. Among the didactical elements, the revised model highlights the importance of continuously observing, evaluating and improving teaching practice.

The minimum competency requirements are mandatory for initial teacher education institutions and appear to influence the design and orientation of their programmes. They are seen as the basic knowledge and skills that all graduates from teacher education should achieve. Hence, the curricula and examinations of initial teacher education institutions are organised around these requirements. The mandatory competencies are typically complemented with additional skills and specialisations defined by each teacher education institution (Eurypedia, 2013). While the competency requirements are used as a common reference for the graduation of teacher students from their initial training, they seem to have less influence on other aspects of teacher policy and practice. There is no obligation for schools to use the competency requirements as a reference for regular teacher appraisal and professional development.

The Inspectorate plays an increasingly important role in defining teaching quality and providing feedback to schools about the strengths and weaknesses of their teacher’s practices. The Inspectorate’s classroom observation framework provides guidance on aspects of good teaching that can be observed as part of a teacher’s practice in the

classroom. The observation framework that is currently used by the Inspectorate comprises fourteen indicators. Inspectors use a classroom observation form on which they indicate whether the teacher's practice in relation to each indicator is sufficient, insufficient or not measurable in the observed lesson. Several of the indicators refer to differentiated instruction and results-based work of teachers, i.e. teachers adapting instruction to different student needs and using adequate instruments to monitor and analyse the progress of their students (Box 4.3). According to interviews with representatives from the Inspectorate, these indicators are in line with the pedagogical and didactical competencies outlined in the teacher competency requirements.

Box 4.3 The Dutch Inspectorate's indicators for lesson observation

1. Teacher makes efficient use of teaching time.
2. Teacher ensures that pupils interact with each other in a respectful way.
3. Teacher explains things clearly.
4. Teacher explains clearly according to didactical principles (e.g. didactics concerning subject matter).
5. Teacher produces a task-related working atmosphere.
6. Pupils are involved in education activities.
7. Teacher checks if pupils understand explanation and/or exercises.
8. Teacher gives pupils feedback on learning and development process.
9. Teacher adapts instruction to differences in development between pupils.
10. Teacher adapts exercises to differences in development between pupils.
11. Teacher adapts teaching time to differences in development between pupils.
12. Teacher uses a coherent system of standardised instruments to monitor progress and development of pupils.
13. Teacher monitors and analyses progress in the development of pupils systematically.
14. Teacher executes care (for children with special needs) according to the plan (of action).

Source: Dutch Inspectorate of Education (2012), 5. Lesobservatieformulier: toezicht leraarschap P.O, Dutch Inspectorate of Education, Utrecht.

The Education Council has also emphasised the importance of defining teacher professionalism in order to help teachers deal with the complexity and dynamics of teaching practice. In a 2013 publication entitled *Being a Teacher*, the Council explores the concept of 'personal professionalism', i.e. the attitudes, knowledge and practice of effective teachers as shaped by their daily teaching experiences (Dutch Education Council, 2013). According to the Council, 'personal professionalism' is influenced by collective frameworks, such as the competency requirements, but it is also shaped by teachers' personal values and their conception of the teacher they want to be. The Council's advice provides four considerations for developing teachers' personal professionalism. These relate to: (i) being aware of one's own professional values and goals; (ii) developing 'practical wisdom' and the capacity to make quick judgements in complex situations; (iii) using and creating 'professional space' by understanding social

processes and ways to influence them; (iv) maintaining an inquisitive attitude and continually developing one's own capacities.

There is a clear agenda for improving teaching quality

Improving teaching quality has been a clear policy priority in the Netherlands in recent years. The main purpose of the 2006 Education Professions Act is to enhance teacher professionalism and teaching quality. As described above, the Act sets minimum standards of competency for teachers and other educational staff, and introduces an obligation for school boards to ensure that their staff possess the required competencies and are able to maintain them. The development of each school's competency mix should be monitored through the use of teacher competency files.

Another cornerstone of the teacher professionalism agenda is the government's Action Plan *Teaching 2020: A Strong Profession!*, published in May 2011. The Action Plan highlights the importance of increasing teacher professionalism, in particular with regard to results-based work and differentiated instruction (see Chapter 3). Teacher appraisal forms a key component of this agenda. Regular appraisal interviews and the use of competency files at the school level are emphasised as important strategies to provide feedback to teachers and plan for school-wide professional development. The Action Plan also points to the positive results of peer review projects, and suggests further development of such approaches. In addition, it proposes a range of complementary measures, including teacher registration, enhanced personnel policies, opportunities for career development and an extension of the Inspectorate's remit to monitor teaching quality in schools (Box 4.4).

In October 2013, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science launched a more detailed "Teacher Agenda" (*Lerarenagenda*), outlining key priorities for the period from 2013 to 2020. These include: (i) improving initial teacher education; (ii) offering adequate professional development opportunities; (iii) providing attractive and flexible learning pathways; (iv) ensuring a good start for beginning teachers; (v) developing schools as learning organisations; (vi) helping all teachers maintain and update their competencies; (vii) sustaining a strong professional organisation that represents teachers (Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2013).

Box 4.4 Key elements of the Dutch Action Plan *Teaching 2020: A Strong Profession*

Teacher registration

The Action Plan foresees that within the next few years, all teachers should undergo a professional registration process to ensure that they maintain and develop their competencies. To be able to register, teachers need to complete a defined number of accredited professional development activities. Currently, the expectation is that teachers complete 160 hours of professional development within 4 years in order to maintain their registration status. The register has been launched as a nationwide system in February 2012 by the Education Cooperative (Box 4.1 above). It builds on earlier work by organisations of subject matter teachers and the Association for Professional Quality of Teachers.

Box 4.4 Key elements of the Dutch Action Plan *Teaching 2020: A Strong Profession*
(continued)

Enhanced personnel policies and teacher career development

The Action Plan brings together a number of suggestions to incentivise excellence in individual teacher and team performance. It sets the target of completing the roll-out of the “functions mix” policy by 2020. This policy enables promotion based on differences in teacher competencies and performance. It is expected to support teacher career development and increase the number of teachers in the higher salary scales. The collective labour agreements provide schools with considerable freedom to use their budgets in implementing the functions mix, e.g. to recruit additional teachers or place teachers with specific expertise on a higher salary scale. The government has established performance agreements with the education sector organisations in relation to the performance indicators of the Inspectorate. In a context where school boards are largely autonomous in managing school personnel, this policy aims to ensure that all school boards develop adequate human resource policies.

Extension of the Inspectorate’s remit

Over the past few years, the Inspectorate has paid increasing attention to teacher appraisal and the improvement of teaching quality. The Inspectorate’s responsibilities were extended in 2012 to intensify its focus on teaching quality and teacher professionalism. In line with these extended responsibilities, inspectors are increasingly focussing on how schools safeguard individual teaching skills and enhance teacher professionalism within the school. This includes evaluating the school leader’s quality policy and human resource policy. The Inspectorate is expected to take action if shortcomings in this area are observed, for instance if schools fail to conduct regular appraisal interviews. Further revisions made to the Supervision Framework in 2013 added two additional quality aspects to be evaluated by the Inspectorate: (i) school leaders focussing on teacher development in line with the school’s vision and (ii) teachers using their professional space to deliver good education. At the time of the OECD review visit, the Inspectorate was preparing a thematic review on schools’ human resource and professional development policies.

Source: Dutch Government (2011), *Teaching 2020, A Strong Profession!*, Dutch Government, www.ecbo.nl/ECBO/ReferNet/docs/11-0315_Teacher_2020.pdf.

The teaching profession is taking responsibility for moving the agenda forward

The involvement of teachers and their representative bodies in designing teacher appraisal approaches and wider teacher policy is essential for ensuring that such policies are effective and make sense for the teaching profession. Such participation recognises teachers’ professionalism, the importance of their skills and experience, and the extent of their responsibilities (Hess and West, 2006). If teacher appraisal, and teacher policy more widely, is developed in close cooperation with teachers and their professional organisations, teachers are more likely to feel ownership of the appraisal cycle and be open to receiving feedback and being evaluated.

In the Netherlands, there are a range of teacher representative organisations which have been increasingly involved in shaping teacher policy and the teacher professionalisation agenda. In interviews with the OECD review team, representatives from the main teacher unions reported that the unions have been moving away from an

exclusive focus on labour-related issues towards a stronger content orientation, including a growing emphasis on the professional aspects of teaching. Teachers also shape the educational agenda and professional dialogue through the Education Foundation (*Stichting van het Onderwijs*) which was established jointly by the teachers' unions and employers' organisations in March 2010. The Foundation brings together several organisations from all sectors and levels of education and takes responsibility for the organisation of an annual or semi-annual strategic dialogue between the representatives of the education sector and the government. The foundation provides a platform for structured dialogue with the Ministry of Education regarding broad sectoral issues.

The creation of the Education Cooperative (*Onderwijscoöperatie*) in 2011 epitomises this trend of teacher unions taking increasing responsibility for professional matters. The main focus of the Education Cooperative is on quality and professionalism in education. It has quickly become an important player in the Dutch educational landscape and was given official responsibility to review teacher competency requirements and develop the teacher registration system. In addition, the Cooperative has launched a range of projects contributing to the professional learning of teachers, including the teacher peer review project (see above), a web-based teacher TV with audio-visual materials of teacher practices, an incentive programme to support teacher initiative, and teacher-of-the-year elections intended to boost the image of the teaching profession.

There are formal and informal channels for regular school-based teacher appraisal

Even though there is little national guidance regarding teacher appraisal processes in the Netherlands, there are a range of formal and informal channels through which the majority of teachers receive appraisal and feedback. The mandatory performance interviews provide a structure for teachers to receive occasional feedback from their school leaders. While these conversations are not as yet conducted systematically for all teachers (a challenge that will be addressed below), a 2010 survey among education professionals found that 73% of teachers had participated in performance interviews with their school leader. Key themes addressed in such interviews included observation visits with other teachers, different approaches to keep competencies up to date, participation in coaching, and career and salary development (Bokdam et al., 2011). In the schools visited by the OECD review team, principals typically conducted an annual or biannual performance review with each teacher, and delegated more regular formative observation, feedback and coaching to middle managers, department heads or team leaders.

The organisation of teaching staff in teams and departments provides further opportunities for exchange and peer learning among teachers within a school. The schools visited by the OECD review team all had systems giving team leaders or department heads responsibility for conducting regular classroom observations and performance conversations with teachers, using school-based criteria. The target frequency for such classroom visitations varied from several times a year to once every two years, even though team leaders reported that they often lacked the time to conduct observations systematically for all the teachers in their team or department. These informal observations and feedback sessions were typically intended for formative purposes. Some schools used professional development plans or portfolios to monitor teacher development and several schools also had internal coaching systems, where an experienced teacher or mentor would be available to work with teachers facing difficulties.

In the interviews with the OECD review team, several stakeholders indicated that informal collaboration and feedback within schools was becoming increasingly common in the Netherlands. While Dutch education is characterised by a strong tradition of teacher autonomy, according to the Education Council, there has been a trend in the last few years of teachers collaborating and working in teams more, which provides opportunities for peer review and feedback. Many of the practitioners interviewed by the review team saw student feedback as important information for their self-appraisal and improvement of their practice. The national student organisation (*Landelijk Aktie Komitee Scholieren, LAKS*) indicated that it was common practice in many schools for teachers to request formative feedback from their students through questionnaires.

Challenges

Lack of clarity around teaching standards

While the competency requirements are a mandatory element of initial teacher education, the OECD review team formed the impression that these standards were not systematically carried forward into the practice, appraisal and professional development planning of teachers in schools. It is not mandatory for schools to use the competency requirements in their appraisal processes or planning of continuing professional development, and school-level records of appraisal interviews typically do not provide evidence on whether teachers are meeting the requirements. This risks weakening the alignment between initial teacher education, registration, teacher appraisal, professional development and career development that the common reference standards seek to achieve.

The Education Council have criticised the competency requirements for being too vague, abstract and unspecific to be used for effective teacher appraisal. Several commercial groups have developed simplified web-based instruments to help school leaders assess teacher performance in relation to the competency requirements. But a range of stakeholders interviewed by the OECD review team voiced criticism regarding the use of these instruments by school leaders. According to the Education Cooperative, in the absence of appraisal capacity at the school level, these instruments may lead to appraisal processes based on box-ticking rather than attentive observation and constructive dialogue on teaching practices.

Most reviewers (team leaders, department heads, principals) involved in teacher appraisal have not received any specific training to appraise teachers in relation to the competency requirements, and the requirements provide only limited guidance for appraisal processes. Hence, the point of reference for teacher appraisal tends to be the reviewers' own teaching experience rather than a deep understanding of the level of performance that can be achieved by the most effective teachers in relation to the dimensions set out in the competency requirements. With the competency requirements focusing on minimum standards, there has been less attention nationally to discuss the characteristics of excellent teaching.

The co-existence of several different sets of teaching standards (the competency requirements, the Inspectorate's classroom observation framework, the Education Council's definition of 'personal professionalism'), risks creating confusion and sending conflicting messages about what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. The Inspectorate does not use the competency requirements as a reference for its evaluation of teaching quality in a given school as they are considered too broad to be monitored

through an inspection visit. Within schools, there was often a lack of clarity about what standards are used in teacher appraisal and performance reviews. Some schools have developed their own appraisal criteria, sometimes drawing from the competency requirements, the Inspectorate's observation framework or a mix of both.

The lack of a common framework of references for evaluating teaching quality in the Netherlands is likely to weaken the capacity of schools to appraise teachers effectively. While some schools have developed their own references based on local practice, for teacher appraisal to be effective across the system it would be important that all reviewers have a shared understanding of high quality teaching.

Not all teachers are receiving regular appraisal and feedback

There is an expectation in the Netherlands that all teachers go through processes of regular performance appraisal. However, while most teachers seem to benefit from regular appraisal conversations, there are concerns that not all teachers have opportunities to receive appropriate professional feedback and have their competencies recognised. Inevitably, since school governing boards have flexibility in the design of performance appraisal systems, there is potential for wide variation in the extent and quality of teacher appraisal. According to the Dutch Government (2011), the frequency of appraisal conversations in the education sector is lower than in other public sectors in the Netherlands.

The existing teacher appraisal practices are often the initiative of individual schools (in some cases in the context of requirements established by the school governing board) and largely depend on the leadership style of the principal and the evaluation culture of the school. As mentioned earlier, in some schools teachers receive extensive feedback and support from their immediate supervisors and school leaders, but there is no mechanism in the Netherlands to ensure minimum standards for teacher appraisal in schools and there are no guarantees that every teacher receives proper professional feedback. The Dutch Inspectorate of Education (2013a) found that weaker teachers were often insufficiently aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, possibly due to a lack of professional feedback from colleagues and supervisors. This also means that in those schools where teacher appraisal processes are weak, it might be difficult to identify and address underperformance.

There is also evidence that the use of competency files to monitor teacher competencies has not been widely adopted. Bokdam et al. (2011) found that in 2010 only about 20-30% of teachers were familiar with the new competency regulations and 25% of teachers reported having a competency file. In primary schools, about two-thirds of principals were aware of the competency demands. Many of the stakeholders interviewed by the OECD review team saw the competency files as a mere bureaucratic requirement with little impact on actual practice in schools. A 2010 evaluation of the Education Professions Act confirmed that the use of competency files had not generally become a part of schools' personnel policies or evaluation approaches (Dutch Inspectorate of Education, 2010a). In an exploratory study on the quality of school governance, the Dutch Inspectorate of Education (2013b) found that the mechanisms put in place by school boards to monitor school leader and teacher competencies were often insufficient.

The extent and quality of guidance for beginning teachers varies across schools

While frequent observation, evaluation and feedback can help improve the practice of all teachers, it is particularly important for beginning teachers who have limited

experience in the classroom. In the Netherlands, there is currently no mandatory induction period for new teachers. Schools are expected to organise their own procedures for induction, mentoring and coaching of new teachers, but there is no guarantee that such structures exist in all schools. According to the Dutch Government (2011), 10% of teachers leave the profession after their first year of teaching. This indicates that teachers are facing difficulties in the transition from initial teacher education to actual classroom teaching.

While it is likely that a combination of factors influence beginning teachers' decision to continue in their jobs after the first year, research points to the importance of providing a well-supported working environment, including frequent feedback and mentoring for beginning teachers (OECD, 2010; Jensen et al., 2012). According to the Dutch Education Career Monitor, only 42% of new teachers reported that they were satisfied with the level of guidance they received in schools (Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2009). The Dutch Inspectorate of Education (2010b) evaluated training partnerships in the Netherlands and concluded that a system of regular lesson observation and feedback could help improve the guidance provided to beginning teachers.

Concerns about responsibilities and competencies for teacher appraisal

In the complex governance framework of the Dutch education system, it is important to clearly identify who is responsible for teacher appraisal and whether those in charge possess the required competencies. In the Netherlands, the national authorities monitor teaching quality at the system level but they are not considered responsible for quality at the level of individual professionals. Hence, while the government can provide guidance and reference documents regarding excellence in teaching and effective appraisal practice, it does not have the remit to introduce a centralised teacher appraisal system or to develop a national teacher registration or licencing system. This highlights the important role of teacher professional organisations to take initiatives in this field.

School boards, as the employers of teachers, clearly have a role to play in teacher appraisal, but representatives of the Primary and Secondary Education Councils indicated that many school boards are not taking responsibility for the appraisal for teachers. There are large variations across school boards in terms of the background and competencies of school governors. While school boards should provide feedback to the school leader and ensure that school leaders have functioning personnel and appraisal policies in place, board members often do not have a background in education and may not have the capacity to conduct quality control in a systematic manner. Where this is the case, school governors may lack legitimacy as evaluators in the eyes of teachers and/or they may be reluctant to get involved with the school's approaches to teacher appraisal and feedback.

As mentioned above, most school boards delegate responsibility for the appraisal of teachers to the school leaders. However, given the importance of teacher autonomy in the Netherlands, principals do not typically take a strong role with regard to directly influencing the day-to-day professional practice in their colleagues' classrooms and teachers are generally left to their own devices unless any problems arise. Research by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education (2014) found that school leaders use information on teachers primarily for staff decisions, but less so for planning improvements to the quality of teaching and learning.

As there is no mandatory school leadership training for principals, the preparation and competencies of principals vary across schools. Even though examples of school leaders exemplifying strong pedagogical leadership and human resource management certainly

exist, there is a challenge for the Dutch system in building up the role and capacity of their full cohort of school leaders. Representatives from the Education Cooperation voiced concerns that many school leaders lacked the expertise and tools to identify causes of underperformance and to develop potential remedies, or actions for dismissal where necessary. A recent evaluation of the Education Professions Act confirmed the need for greater clarity regarding the competency requirements for principals and for more consistent professional development for all school leaders in this area (Dutch Government, 2011).

Professional development is not sufficiently informed by teacher appraisal results

For teacher appraisal to have an impact on learning outcomes in the school, it needs to be closely connected to professional development and school development. Without such a link to professional development opportunities the impact of teacher appraisal on teacher performance will be relatively limited (Goe et al., 2012). As a result, the appraisal process may not be taken seriously or encounter mistrust or apathy by the teachers being appraised (Danielson, 2001; Milanowski and Kimball, 2003; Margo et al., 2008). Ideally, teacher appraisal should allow teachers to receive tailored feedback, and such feedback should be followed with opportunities for continuous learning in identified areas through professional development, mentoring and other means (Hill and Herlihy, 2011).

The importance of professional development is clearly recognised in Netherlands and the introduction of the registration system further emphasises the expectation that all teachers engage in ongoing professional learning. Informal mentoring arrangements within schools also appeared to be common practice. However, it was the impression of the OECD review team that teachers' choice of formal professional development was only rarely linked to a thorough evaluation of their strengths and areas for development. The Dutch Inspectorate of Education (2013a) found that schools vary widely regarding the support they provide teachers to facilitate their professional development. The Inspectorate also indicates that training is often too discretionary and lacking in focus on the actual teaching and learning process.

There is scope to better link teacher professional development to school development and improvement. In the interview with the OECD review team, the Education Council voiced concerns about the limited focus on teachers' broader role in school development. The relatively weak linkage between teacher appraisal, teacher professional development and school development is likely related to the fact that individual teacher appraisal is currently not considered a key element of the Dutch evaluation and assessment framework (Chapter 2).

Weak links between teacher appraisal and career development

Providing attractive career pathways for teachers is a challenge in teacher policy around the world. Findings from the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) show that in most countries, the link between teacher appraisal and career advancement remains weak. Across TALIS countries, only 16.2% of teachers indicated that the appraisal and/or feedback they received led to a moderate or large change in the likelihood of their career advancement. Only 26.7% reported that it led to changes in work responsibilities that made their job more attractive (OECD, 2009).

In the Netherlands, there does not seem to be a formalised career path for teachers. The competency requirements do not specify skills and competencies required at different

stages of the career in association with roles and responsibilities of teachers in schools. There are some opportunities for teachers to take on more responsibility, including roles such as team leader or head of department. Teachers taking on such responsibilities are typically promoted to ‘senior teacher’ positions, which are connected to a higher salary scale. However, there are few such posts and teachers interviewed by the OECD review team reported frustrations about many teachers waiting for a vacancy to be able to apply for senior teacher positions.

The award of senior teacher positions is not typically linked to an appraisal of teachers’ performance in relation to the competency requirements. School leaders may promote teachers to such positions based on criteria defined at the school level. Criteria typically include length of service, formal qualifications and professional development undertaken, coupled with engagement in improvement activities, positive reviews from peers, students and parents and/or the exercise of leadership responsibilities. School leaders may also use the senior positions to attract and retain teachers in subject areas where the school is facing shortages. It was the impression of the review team that decisions about promotions were disconnected from regular teacher appraisal processes. The teacher performance conversations and reviews were widely seen a routine cycle to validate satisfactory performance of teachers, rather than as a motivating and rewarding system.

At the national level, there is no clearly designed career structure beyond the career step of senior teacher and there are few opportunities for promotion and greater recognition. The organisational structure in schools is typically flat with few promoted posts and few explicit means of giving teachers significant whole-school lead responsibilities. As a result, two major functions of teacher appraisal processes are undermined: *(i)* granting effective teachers opportunities to diversify their careers in response to the roles and tasks performed in schools; *(ii)* providing a means to formally reward teachers for the gained competencies and skills to take on higher responsibilities. This is likely to undermine the potentially powerful links between teacher appraisal, professional development and career development.

The absence of career development opportunities for teachers may be one of the factors contributing to the challenges in attracting young people to the teaching profession in the Netherlands. The Dutch education system is facing difficulties in recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of effective teachers. It is faced with high drop-out rates in initial teacher training as well as high attrition rates among teachers within the first five years on the job. While the decision to complete initial teacher education and stay on the job is influenced by many factors, well-defined career development opportunities could contribute making the profession more attractive.

In some countries, teacher career advancement is linked to teacher registration and registration renewal. The registration system in the Netherlands is still in the early stages of development and its role in the teacher career has not yet been clearly defined. Currently, registration and registration renewal do not grant teachers access to a higher career step. Teacher registration is contingent on the requirement for teachers to provide proof of professional development undertaken through in-service training courses, but it does not include an appraisal of teachers’ actual practice. The further development of the teacher register may provide valuable opportunities to further develop the teacher career in the Netherlands.

Policy recommendations

This section presents a set of policy options that aim to draw on current strengths in teacher appraisal policies and to address identified challenges:

- Review and refine teaching standards.
- Strengthen school-based appraisal for professional development.
- Focus in particular on beginning teachers.
- Further develop the teacher career structure.
- Build a more elaborate registration system linked to career development.

Review and refine teaching standards

A framework of teaching standards is an important reference point for teacher appraisal. While competency requirements for teachers exist in the Netherlands and are widely used in initial teacher education, their use for regular appraisal and professional development in schools appears limited. To ensure coherence between initial teacher education, registration, appraisal and professional development, it is essential to promote the wider use of the competency requirements as a working document in schools underlying all of these processes.

To this end, further revisions to the competency requirements appear necessary. The current co-existence of several types of references for the evaluation of teaching, in particular the competency requirements and the Inspectorate's classroom observation framework, call for their consolidation into a single set of standards to develop a clear shared understanding of what counts as accomplished teaching in the Netherlands. The consolidated standards should be based on the latest research on teacher effectiveness and give due importance to the links with the student learning objectives that schools are aiming to achieve. This could be done, for example, by including a focus on results-oriented work in the competency requirements, thereby strengthening the coherence of different elements of the Dutch evaluation and assessment framework. It would be important to keep a focus on improving student learning objectives for all students, particularly for groups where there is evidence of underperformance.

The consolidated standards should also build on the practice-based expertise. To this end, it would be helpful to conduct a thematic review on the use of teacher appraisal standards and criteria by schools. Such a review would help to understand how the competency requirements are currently viewed and used, what are seen as most powerful and productive elements, what issues it raises for effective teacher appraisal, what additional checklists and criteria schools have developed themselves, and how the competency requirements might be further developed. The Inspectorate appears well placed to collect such information from schools. It would then be the role of the Education Cooperative to use the results of the review to inform further revisions to the competency requirements in close collaboration with stakeholders in schools.

Another important adjustment could be to develop clearer descriptions of competency requirements for different roles and career steps of teachers, with appraisal criteria specific to distinct career levels. Such a revision of the competency requirements would help recognise the variety of responsibilities in today's schools and the expertise developed while on the job. Defining different competency levels within the requirements

would also help to guide teachers' improvement of skills and competencies, and steer their aspirations to new responsibilities. The description of competencies should be complemented by criteria and illustrations of effective practice, to help make the standards operational for regular use in school-based teacher appraisal. An important contribution in this area is Danielson's Framework for Teaching (1996, 2007), which provides "a road map to guide novice teachers through their initial classroom experiences, a structure to help experienced professionals more effective, and a means to focus improvement efforts".

Strengthen school-based appraisal for teacher professional development

As described above, school-based formative teacher appraisal takes place in many schools across the Netherlands, typically with senior teachers, team leaders or department heads conducting classroom observations, and principals holding performance conversations with their teachers. However, further steps are necessary to ensure that all teachers across the country benefit from meaningful appraisal and feedback, pursue relevant professional development, and are able to implement improvements in the classroom. To make developmental appraisal processes more effective and consistent across the country, the OECD review team recommends that it should be: *(i)* school-based but underpinned by common reference standards; *(ii)* firmly rooted in classroom practice; *(iii)* carried out by qualified internal evaluators; *(iv)* externally validated by school governing boards and the Inspectorate.

Teacher appraisal for improvement purposes is likely to benefit from a non-threatening evaluation context, simple evaluation instruments and close linkages to school self-evaluation. There are many advantages to having colleagues of the teacher as the evaluators, given their familiarity with the context in which teachers work, their awareness of the school needs, and their ability to provide quick and informed feedback to the teacher. Therefore, developmental appraisal should remain an internal process carried out by line managers, senior peers and the school leader, with a focus on teachers' practices in the classroom. While the process for developmental appraisal should remain school-based, it could be enhanced by a clearer link to common reference standards of "good teaching" (the revised competency requirements, see above). This would allow all school leaders to develop a shared understanding of expected teaching standards and of the level of performance that can be achieved by the most effective teachers.

The competency requirements should also inform the offer of professional development available to teachers. This could be achieved by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and/or the Education Cooperative reviewing professional development offers, and, with the competency framework in mind, providing guidance for schools on relevant training offers. For an example from Memphis, Tennessee in the United States, see Box 4.5.

Box 4.5 Memphis, Tennessee, United States: Linking teacher appraisal to professional development

The city of Memphis, Tennessee in the United States has developed a system that explicitly links professional learning to teacher appraisal. In Memphis City Schools, appraisal is based on teaching standards, and professional development is linked to teachers' competence on the standards. Thus, a teacher who has poor performance on a specific indicator on a teaching standard can find professional growth opportunities related to that indicator. Memphis City Schools publishes a professional development guide each year that lists the professional growth offerings by standard and indicator. In addition, most of the professional development courses are taught by Memphis City School teachers, ensuring that the course offerings will be relevant to the contexts in which these teachers work.

Source: Memphis City Schools, www.mcsk12.net.

Effective teacher appraisal should give teachers a choice from a wide range of possible professional learning activities that meet their individual needs in relation to the priorities of the school's overall development plan. In Korea, for example, results of the teacher peer review processes not only feed into teachers' individual professional development plans, but are also used to inform a synthetic report on professional development for the whole school bringing together the results of all appraised teachers (without identifying individual teachers) (Kim et al., 2010).

School-based developmental teacher appraisal can be low-key and low-cost and include a mix of methods appropriate to the school. Some of the elements should be individual goal-setting linked to school goals, self-appraisal, peer appraisal, classroom observation, and structured conversations with the school leader and peers (Santiago and Benavides, 2009). Among these approaches, classroom observation is likely to be the most relevant source of information about professional performance, as most key aspects of teaching are displayed when teachers interact with their students in the classroom. Other proxies of teaching quality, such as lesson plans, are also important pieces of information, but they do not hold the same central position as the observation of classroom teaching. Research suggests that high-quality observations are related to increases in student learning outcome, even though this relationship is highly dependent on having excellent instruments and well-trained observers (Kane and Staiger, 2012; Kane et al., 2010; Milanowski, 2004). Hence, for classroom observations to be useful for professional improvement, each school must have the internal capacity to conduct these accurately.

As described above, effective teacher appraisal depends to a large extent on school leadership capacities within the school. While there are a wide range of offers for Dutch school leaders to develop their capacities, there is no mandatory formal training for school leadership and not all principals have participated in professional learning on pedagogical leadership, human resource management and teacher appraisal. If school leaders are to drive up the quality of outcomes for learners they need to develop the skills, competence and authority to influence practice in this way, and this needs to happen consistently across the system. The following elements could be part of a comprehensive strategy to build capacity in this area: (i) considering the implementation of a mandatory training for school leadership (for an example from Norway, see Box 4.5); (ii) disseminating resources and training for the direct evaluation of pedagogical practice

including the observation of classroom practice and providing effective feedback for improvement; (iii) ensuring that school leaders themselves receive adequate appraisal and feedback and building the capacities of employers to undertake effective performance review of school leaders; (iv) allowing greater access for school leaders to participate in external reviews and development work with other schools in their areas or elsewhere, for example through school leaders' participation in inspection visits (for an example from Northern Ireland, see Box 4.6)

Box 4.6 Building school leader capacity for teacher appraisal and evaluation in Norway and Northern Ireland, United Kingdom

In **Norway**, where there is little tradition for regular classroom observation by principals, a new national education programme for principals was introduced in 2009. The education programme was initially targeted at newly employed principals who had been in the position for less than two years. It was then extended for more long-standing principals who had not received such an education. The overall aim of this initiative is to better equip principals for their role as leaders, and in particular for taking a stronger role in guiding the teaching and learning processes at school. It is expected that as principals become better prepared for pedagogical leadership, they will also become more confident in appraising and providing feedback to their teaching staff. It is hoped that this will help increase the acceptance among teachers of school leaders observing classrooms and appraising teaching performance. Among the skills and attitudes principals should be able to master in this area, there are several aspects that relate to appraising and guiding teachers' practices: (1) Setting goals for teaching work; (2) Setting standards for quality in working processes and being able to enforce these; (3) Following up on and giving feedback to individual co-workers; (4) Creating pride, aspirations and a desire to achieve results in teachers; (5) Guiding and giving feedback to teachers; (6) Challenging teachers and setting definite demands on quality.

In **Northern Ireland** (United Kingdom), the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) recruits "associate assessors" from among senior staff in schools (e.g. school principals, deputy principals or senior teachers) to participate in the external evaluation of individual schools. ETI recruits associate assessors via public advertisement and an interview process. Selected individuals join a pool of associate assessors and can be invited to join an external school evaluation team on an individual school inspection. Normally an individual will not be involved in more than two external school evaluations each year. Associate assessors receive training from the ETI and are introduced to the procedures and performance indicators used in external school evaluation. This strategy has two objectives: first, it is hoped that the experience of involvement in assessing quality in another educational establishment will help to develop the individual's capacity to monitor, evaluate and improve the provision in his/her own school; second, the presence in the team of someone coming directly from the school context adds a dimension which can help to develop the ETI's awareness of the current perspective of schools.

Sources: Nusche, D., L. Earl, W. Maxwell, C. Shewbridge (2011), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Norway 2011*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264117006->.

Department of Education, Northern Ireland (2013), *OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes: Country Background Report for Northern Ireland*, www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy.

At the same time, it is also important to recognise that given their wide range of other budgetary, administrative and human resource management tasks, it is challenging for school leaders to make time for the thorough appraisal of each teacher in the school. Therefore, capacity for teacher appraisal and evaluation should be developed not only

among school principals and deputies, but also among other members of school leadership and senior teachers who undertake specific appraisal and evaluation functions in the school. This means that the provision of training opportunities regarding appraisal and evaluation should be scaled up for a wider group of school staff including middle leaders. Such training should include teachers as well, since it is critical for them to understand how their performance will be appraised.

Finally, to ensure that school-based developmental appraisal is systematic and coherent across Dutch schools, it would be important that an external body provides a validation of school level processes for teacher appraisal, holding the school leader accountable as necessary. The school governing boards should ensure that schools develop appraisal processes and could encourage schools to document their practices as part of school self-evaluation.

In addition, the Inspectorate of Education, in its evaluation of the quality of teaching in schools, should also include a review of each school's teacher appraisal processes, holding both the school leader and the governing board accountable. This would help ensure that minimum standards for development teacher appraisal are met and that every teacher receives regular professional feedback, without imposing one particular model of appraisal.

Focus in particular on beginning teachers

The Dutch education system could benefit from the introduction of more systematic induction and feedback systems for new teachers. Research from different countries points to the importance of ensuring that beginning teachers receive adequate guidance (OECD, 2010; Jensen et al., 2012). At this early stage of teachers' career, it is particularly important to ensure teachers can work in a well-supported environment and receive frequent feedback and mentoring. Most high-performing education systems require their beginning teachers to undertake a mandatory period of probation or induction, during which they receive regular support and can confirm their competence to move on to the next stage of the teaching career (OECD, 2010). Box 4.7 provides an example from Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom.

Research indicates that beginning teachers benefit from systematic mentoring programmes as long as mentors are carefully selected, well prepared for their tasks and given adequate time to carry out their mentoring role (Hobson et al., 2009; OECD, 2010; Santiago et al., 2013). However, it is important to note that among TALIS countries there is no quantitatively important relationship between the existence of a formal induction/mentoring process and the frequency of appraisal and teachers in their first two years at school (OECD, 2009). Hence, if the purpose of induction periods is to strengthen observation and feedback mechanisms for beginning teachers, it is important to make such elements an explicit and expected part of the programme.

Box 4.7 Support for beginning teachers in Northern Ireland, United Kingdom

In Northern Ireland, a “career entry profile” is established for each beginning teacher upon completion of initial teacher education. This profile outlines the teacher’s strengths and areas for further development in relation to the Northern Ireland competence model. When taking on a first teaching position, there is a formal one-year induction period to help teachers address the personal and professional needs and objectives identified in their career entry profile. The induction period involves a programme of both centre-based and school-based professional support. The Board of Governors, upon recommendation of the school principal, approves the teacher’s completion of the induction period and the teacher professional organisation (GTCNI) holds a record of completion of induction.

As part of the induction process, teachers then prepare a personal action plan, which forms the basis for a two-year period of Early Professional Development (EPD). This phase involves within-school support by a “teacher tutor” and by the regionally-based Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS). It is aimed at helping beginner teachers further develop and consolidate their competencies. When the beginning teacher and teacher-tutor agree that all the criteria for EPD have been met, they will seek confirmation by the school principal. The Board of Governors approves the completion of EPD, based on the recommendation of the principal and a final reflection document produced by the teacher concerned.

The early teacher education and development phases are further strengthened through the *Teacher Education Partnership Handbook*, which provides guidance to all those involved in the process, including student teachers, beginning teachers, teacher tutors, Education and Library Boards and higher education institutions.

The availability of teacher tutors in each school is an important element in facilitating the transition of teachers from initial education into full-time teaching at a school. Teacher tutors are responsible for placement and care of student teachers in a school. They are typically senior teachers who can draw on their own experience to support beginning teachers through their first years of teaching. The tutors are expected to hold regular meetings with beginning teachers, draw up action plans, assist in lesson planning, observe classroom practice, review progress and provide general support to help the beginning teacher reflect upon his or her practice and improve classroom teaching. Tutors can play a key role in helping beginning teachers understand existing standards, self-appraise their practice and use feedback from others to review and improve their practice.

Source: Shewbridge, C., et al. (2014), (2014), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Northern Ireland, United Kingdom*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264207707-en>.

Further develop the teacher career structure

There is room to further develop the teacher career structure in the Netherlands in order to recognise and reward teaching excellence and allow teachers to diversify their careers. Schools and teachers are likely to benefit from a more elaborate career structure for teachers, which could comprise a number of key stages. Access to each of the key stages could be associated with a more formal appraisal process, which could potentially be organised through the teacher registration system (more on this below). An important policy objective should be to match the career structure for teachers with the different types and levels of expertise described in the revised teacher competence standards. This would strengthen the incentive for teachers to improve their competences and reinforce

the matching between teachers' competences and the roles that need to be performed in schools to improve student learning.

In the Netherlands, besides the career step of senior teacher, the only possibility for promotion is for teachers to move up to a principal position. But, besides the fact that only few such positions are available, a promotion of outstanding teachers to school leader positions may not respond well to the needs of the teaching profession, for two main reasons. First, a good teacher is not necessarily a good manager or leader and the skills required for teaching a classroom and managing a school are not the same. Second, this practice may have adverse effects on teaching quality within a school because, paradoxically, the best teachers are rewarded by being removed from classroom teaching.

To resolve this dilemma, some education systems have attempted to build career options for excellent teachers who wish to remain in the classroom (Box 4.8 provides examples from Singapore and Australia). When designing a career structure for teachers, education authorities should make sure that career pathways are varied with some teachers moving into leadership roles while others remain predominantly teaching in the classroom.

Box 4.8 Teacher career structures in Australia and Singapore

Australia: Advanced Skills Teaching positions

Teachers in Australia undergo appraisal, on a voluntary basis, to gain promotion positions in schools in recognition of quality teaching performance by applying for Advanced Skills Teaching positions (ASTs). These positions are linked to higher pay and are generally associated with further responsibilities and specific roles in schools. In most cases, teachers do not have to be at the top of the salary scale to apply for these positions which entails a thorough assessment of their performance. Advanced Skills Teaching positions, which exist in almost all educational jurisdictions, for the most part accomplish two important functions: the recognition of advanced teaching skills with a formal position and additional pay; and a better match between teachers' skills and the roles and responsibilities needed in schools through competitions to gain the positions. These have the benefit of rewarding teachers who choose to remain in the classroom rather than to move into management positions.

AST positions embody two key concepts in the teaching profession in Australia. First, they recognise the need to introduce career diversification as a result of the greater variety of roles in schools – e.g. departmental head, team leader, and manager of curriculum development and/or personnel development. Second, they reflect the need to reward teachers for their developing skills, performance and responsibilities, in what constitutes a competency-based professional career ladder. Teachers, as they access AST positions, are expected to have deeper levels of knowledge, demonstrate more sophisticated and effective teaching, take on responsibility for co-curricular aspects of the school, assist colleagues and so on. Access to AST positions involves formal appraisal processes which are more summative in nature.

- New South Wales introduced the Highly Accomplished Teacher (HAT) position in July 2009. The HAT position is an initiative of the Smarter Schools National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality. A HAT is an excellent teacher who models high-quality teaching for his/her colleagues across the school and leads other teachers in the development and refinement of their teaching practice to improve student learning outcomes. HAT positions are classroom-based positions with a reduced teaching allocation to enable them to mentor other teachers, including student teachers, beginning

Box 4.8 Teacher career structures in Australia and Singapore *(continued)*

and more experienced teachers, work with university partners and take a role in the school's leadership team. HATs are appointed through a merit selection process which requires, as a prerequisite, application to the New South Wales Institute of Teachers for consideration of accreditation at Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership. These positions are two-year appointments and are limited to 100 positions over the life of the National Partnerships.

- The **Northern Territory's** Accomplished Teacher status requires applicants to participate in an "inquiry process" over 12 months, based on the Northern Territory Teacher Registration Board Accomplished Standards of Professional Practice for Teaching. The assessment of performance is undertaken by assessment panels and moderation committees and includes the appraisal of teaching modelling and role in curriculum and professional learning. This process was being reviewed in 2011.
- In **Tasmania**, the Advanced Skills Teacher position recognises outstanding classroom teachers and leading staff members. It is targeted at teachers recognised as exemplary practitioners, who are accorded additional responsibilities within their school. It is a promotion available to any permanent teacher who satisfies the application process, operating in a similar way to a salary increment. Positions are advertised by individual schools on a needs basis.
- The **Victorian** school system includes one promotional appointment for those teachers who want to remain in the classroom: Leading Teacher. The programme is intended to serve the dual purpose of recognising outstanding classroom teachers; and providing schools with a human resource to lead various in-school programmes and projects. Schools advertise for Leading Teacher positions on a needs basis – the position is usually associated with a specific anticipated responsibility. The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development aims to maintain a Leading Teacher profile of 10 to 15% of full-time teaching staff.

Singapore: Linking teacher appraisal to career pathways

The Education Service Professional Development and Career Plan (Edu-Pac) in Singapore recognises that teachers have different interests and aspirations and provides three different career tracks for teachers:

- The **Teaching Track** allows teachers to remain in the classroom and advance to the levels of Senior Teacher, Lead Teacher or Master Teacher. This provides an opportunity for teachers to focus on classroom teaching while obtaining a leadership role along with a senior-level salary.
- The **Leadership Track** provides opportunity for teachers to take on leadership positions within the school or at the Ministry of Education.
- The **Senior Specialist Track** allows teachers to join the Ministry of Education's headquarters and as specialists with particular expertise in specific aspects of education.

The Enhanced Performance Management System (EPMS) serves to support teachers' professional and career development and its results inform promotion decisions as part of Edu-Pac. The EPMS process involves performance planning, performance coaching and performance appraisal. Performance planning involves a teacher self-appraisal and a discussion with the teachers' reporting officer (typically a Head of Department) about target setting and performance benchmarking. Performance coaching is ongoing and includes a formal mid-year review

Box 4.8 Teacher career structures in Australia and Singapore (continued)

between the teacher and the reporting officer. Finally, the performance appraisal at the end of the year includes an appraisal interview and a rating of actual performance against planned performance. Teachers are appraised based on actual achievement as well as potential for future performance. Decisions on the teacher's "current estimated potential" are made in consultation with senior colleagues of the teacher based on observation, dialogue, portfolio evidence and the teacher's contributions to the school and its environment. The final performance grade affects the annual performance bonus received for the year's work as well as promotions to the next level of the career pathway.

Sources: Santiago, P., et al. (2011), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Australia 2011*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264116672-en>.

Lee, C.K. and M.Y. Tan (2010), *Rating Teachers and Rewarding Teacher Performance: The Context of Singapore*, Paper presented at APEC Conference on Replicating Exemplary Practices in Mathematics Education, Koh Samui, Thailand, 7-12 March 2010.

Weinstein, T. L. and K. S. Struthers (2012), "Similar Demands, Different Responses: Teacher Evaluation in the United Kingdom and Singapore", *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, Vol. 7, No. 1, International Association of Educators, Urbana, IL.

Build a more elaborate registration system linked to career development

Currently, the registration process appears to serve a limited purpose, as registration is disconnected from teachers' actual classroom practice and performance. Registration does not involve a professional appraisal or attestation of teachers' competencies, and it does not correspond to a step within the teacher career. While this approach has the advantage of emphasising the importance of continuous professional development, it does not make the link between the completion of such courses and actual improvements in classroom practice. Hence, the registration system focuses on recognising formal qualifications more than excellence and improvements in teachers' actual work.

To make registration more meaningful for teachers, its main purpose could be to hold teachers accountable for their practice and determine advancement in the teacher career. This redefinition of teacher registration would convey the message that reaching and demonstrating high standards of competence is the main road to career advancement in the profession. Registration processes that are linked to career development could help provide incentives for teachers to perform at their best, bring recognition to effective teachers, support professional learning, and help recognise and spread good practice more widely. Registration and registration renewal processes could also provide useful information for accountability, hiring and tenure decisions, professional development and promotion opportunities, or, in particular circumstances, responses to underperformance.

One way of re-organising teacher registration along these lines would be to require graduates from initial teacher education to apply to be 'provisionally registered' with the Education Cooperative in order to seek employment as a teacher. Provisionally registered teachers could then apply for full registration upon completion of an induction period, based on an appraisal in relation to the teacher competency requirements. Access to a promotion/higher level of registration could be through a voluntary application process

and teachers should be required to periodically maintain their registration status when not applying to a promotion. See Box 4.9 for an example from Australia.

Box 4.9 Teacher registration in Australia

Registration is a requirement for teachers to teach in Australian schools, regardless of school sector. All states and territories have existing statutory teacher registration authorities responsible for registering teachers as competent for practice. The levels of teaching registration vary according to the jurisdiction. In most jurisdictions, teachers reach the first level of registration from the relevant authority upon graduation from an approved initial teacher education programme. Currently, each teacher registration authority has its own distinct set of standards for registration; however, from 2013 jurisdictions will be progressively introducing the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) which will provide a national measure for teachers' professional practice and knowledge. Advancement to full registration (or professional competence) is achieved after a period of employed teaching practice and, from 2013, an appraisal against the Standards at Proficient level.

In all states and territories, after teachers have initially become registered within their jurisdiction, they must renew their registration. The period of registration varies but is most commonly five years. The main function of the registration process is that of certifying teachers as fit for the profession mainly through the mandatory process of accessing or maintaining "Full/Competence" status – as such, these processes ensure minimum requirements for teaching are met by practising teachers. Registration processes constitute a powerful quality assurance mechanism to ensure that every school in Australia is staffed with teachers with suitable qualifications who meet prescribed standards for teaching practice. At their initial level (provisional/graduate registration), they also provide a policy lever for setting entrance criteria for the teaching profession and, through the accreditation of initial teacher education programmes, strengthen the alignment between initial teacher education and the needs of schools.

Source: Santiago, P., et al. (2011), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Australia 2011*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264116672-en>.

Such appraisal for registration/career advancement would be more summative in nature than the regular appraisal for professional development, and it would need to be ensured that processes are fair and the same standards are applied across schools. While the process should be mostly school-based, led by the school leadership team, there would need to be a stronger component external to the school to validate the process and ensure that practices are consistent across the Netherlands. This element of externality could be introduced via an accredited external evaluator, typically a teacher from another school with expertise in the same area as the teacher being appraised. To this end, the system could build on experience gained from the teacher peer review projects. For example, teachers having participated in the peer review project could be encouraged to apply for the role of external evaluator. External evaluators would need to be accredited by the relevant organisation (possibly the Education Cooperative). They should receive specific training for this function, in particular in standards-based methods for assessing evidence of teacher performance. It would also be desirable to establish moderation processes to ensure consistency of judgements in registration processes.

Given the stakes attached to appraisal for registration, decisions should draw on several types of evidence and encompass the full scope of the work of the teacher. Teacher appraisal for registration could continue to set requirements for continuous

professional development, but should complement this with other instruments to evaluate teacher performance, such as classroom observation and documentation of practices in a simplified portfolio. A portfolio would allow teachers to mention specific ways in which they consider their professional practices are promoting student learning. It could include elements such as: lesson plans and teaching materials, samples of student work and comments on student assessment examples, teachers' self-reported questionnaires and reflection sheets (Isoré, 2009).

Such portfolios could replace the current use of competency files, which are widely considered as a bureaucratic process with little bearing on schools' actual practice. To make teacher portfolios valuable to teachers and schools, it is important that the requirements of a portfolio are closely related to teachers' day-to-day work; the elements required should be a "natural harvest" of teachers' real work rather than something produced in addition to their regular work. In the United States, for example, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) offers recognition to teachers who satisfy requirements for a portfolio submission. It is a demanding process for teachers, but those who participate find it to be a rewarding experience because the natural harvest makes the process less burdensome (for more information on the NBPTS, see Box 4.10).

Such a revised system of teacher registration would provide opportunities to recognise and reward teaching competence and performance, which is essential for retaining effective teachers in schools and for making teaching an attractive career choice (OECD, 2005). It would not directly link appraisal results with teacher pay, but instead to career progression (therefore establishing an indirect link with salaries). This is a desirable option as direct links between teacher performance and pay have produced mixed results, according to the research literature (Harvey-Beavis, 2003; OECD, 2005). As such, teacher registration would fulfil the function of recognising formally the knowledge, skills sets and experience acquired in the profession, which presupposes that teachers have access to the related professional development opportunities.

Box 4.10 The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the United States

When applying to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) (www.nbpts.org), teachers in the United States enter an extensive application process which consists of two major parts: the portfolio of their work including a videotape of a lesson they have taught; and the assessment centre exercises where teachers address a set of questions that relate to the specific content of their field. The assessment is undertaken against detailed teaching standards established by NBPTS. These are based on NBPTS' five core propositions: (i) teachers are committed to students and their learning; (ii) teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students; (iii) teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning; (iv) teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; (v) teachers are members of learning communities. The standards are developed and reviewed by teachers and other experts.

The NBPTS is designed to consider a wide range of teacher competencies, using videos submitted by the teachers to appraise classroom practice and along with portfolio entries focused on teaching practice and constructed response assessments of content knowledge. Submitted materials are reviewed by trained teachers who are experts in the teachers' content areas. In the United States, the NBPTS has been the chief means of certifying that classroom teachers are performing at high levels. It has been considered as a model for other countries who are interested in standards-based certification systems for teachers (Harris and MacKenzie, 2007; Ingvarson and Hattie, 2008). Nearly all states in the United States allow teachers to take the NBPTS examination as a mechanism for increasing their salary, by tying National Board

Box 4.10 The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the United States *(continued)*

Certification to higher salaries. As of October 2012, the National Board had certified 97 000 teachers nationwide, and more than 6 000 became National Board certified in 2011. The Certification is good for ten years and then the teacher must reapply.

Sources: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards website, www.nbpts.org.

Santiago, P., et al. (2011), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Australia 2011*, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264116672-en>.

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