



Principles on teacher appraisal and capability: ASCL, ATL, NAHT and NUT

The DfE has made changes to the appraisal and capability regulations with effect from September 2012. The DfE's optional model policy removes much of the guidance and good practice associated with earlier models and the above teacher and school leader unions (ASCL, ATL, NAHT and NUT) have agreed to discuss model policies which will ensure that school leaders and teachers are fully supported through the appraisal system.

The above unions are currently discussing alternative model appraisal and capability policies. Schools and authorities are, therefore, urged to wait for the agreed policies, since the process of consultation will be more straightforward once the policies are published.

If local authorities or schools open early discussions, the above unions have agreed the following set of principles which should inform these discussions.

- Appraisal is a thorough yet supportive and developmental process which assists teachers in improving their performance by concentrating on key objectives and must include open and honest discussions between the appraiser and the appraisee;
- The above unions believe that schools should have separate appraisal and capability policies in order to facilitate the discussions needed to ensure the effectiveness of the appraisal process in managing performance. Capability procedures would not normally commence until it is clear that it is necessary, following on from the appraisal process;
- All appraisers should be appropriately trained in appraisal procedures. All appraisers who conduct observations of teaching should have QTS;
- Objectives should be set following consultation with teachers and should be clearly defined, with appraisers and appraisees clear what success will look like and how progress will be measured;
- Observation for appraisal should be planned, with sufficient notice given and a clear focus linked to agreed objectives;
- Feedback should be given swiftly after any observation;
- Observation should be kept to the minimum needed to determine that objectives are met and in accordance with local agreements;
- Implication of insufficient progress should be clearly explained to the teacher;
- Where concerns are raised the teacher will receive appropriate support as part of the appraisal process. The support to be offered will be agreed in advance and may include classroom observation alongside other support for example additional training and visits to other classes. The length of any period of support will be subject to locally agreed protocols;
- If after the period of support sufficient progress has not been made, then the school may consider moving to capability. A clear distinction must be made when the teacher moves from the supportive appraisal process to capability;
- The DfE capability model should not be used for capability concerns arising as a result of ill-health (schools must have a separate policy for this).
- Care will be taken to ensure that appraisal and capability procedures are used in such a way as to avoid discrimination, with monitoring for equality purposes