



Study in Teacher Quality

**Report on
Study in scaling-up solutions, the implementation of teacher professional Profiles**

**Ministry of Education and Training, Vietnam
School Education Quality Assurance Project**

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Executive summary

This report reflects an analysis of information that has been obtained from focus group interviews, surveys of teachers and document analysis. It begins with a review of competency based assessment and then introduces results of the survey on teacher awareness and understanding of the teacher standards. The results of the focus group interviews on linking the teacher standards with professional development, the use of media in implementing the teacher standards nation wide, consistency between teacher standards across educational levels and the links between the teacher standards and professional titles, are also presented. The report concludes with comments on the findings.

Findings related to awareness about the teacher standards

Finding 1: The overall level of reported awareness of the teacher standards is high;

- all of the teachers surveyed have heard of the standards
- approximately 87-89% of teachers have been trained to use them
- more than 98% teachers understand how the standards work
- 90% teachers have been trained in self-assessment and know how to use them or will feel confident to use the standards
- almost all principals have been in-serviced about the standards.
- more then 95% of principals claimed to have trained their teachers in the use of the standards.

Finding 2: There is not much difference in the levels of awareness of the standards between those provinces involved in the teacher development project and those who were not involved in this project.

Findings related to teacher assessment against the teacher standards

Finding 3: Current use of the standards shows that:

- There were more teachers from urban schools or economic level 1 who do not know the level they were assessed at.
- Approximately 78% of the teachers have been assessed as good or excellent teachers against the teacher standards.
- Success against the standards was enjoyed more in the rural or small town schools.

Finding 4: Assessments against the standards may reflect locally applied assessments rather than systematically graded assessments based on a set of criteria. The data show that:

- Almost everyone agreed that the assessment was accurate.
- There is a mismatch between teacher's statements that they understand the teacher standards and their self- assessment results.
- These assessments may reflect locally applied assessments rather than systematically graded assessments based on a set of criteria.

Recommendations

Labelling of the developmental levels of teacher standards

Recommendation 1: The developmental nature of the standards should be reinforced through a clear link to the framework that defines the career path of teachers. The labelling of the developmental levels of teacher standards in Vietnam as ‘Bad’, ‘Average’, ‘Good’ and ‘Excellent’ should be discontinued as this process fails to recognise a the professional progression of teachers in the teaching profession and may cause confusion in the application of the standards to professional development.

Recommendation 2: MOET should continue to act to separate the teaching profession from the general public servant titles. This will free the teaching profession from the need to use the labels (‘bad’, ‘average’, ‘good’ and ‘excellent’) to measure the level of performance of teachers and permit the use of the teacher standards to more effectively assess and guide teacher professional development.

Implementation of the Primary School Teacher Standards

Recommendation 3: MOET should create a senior position of Program Director (Teacher Assessment) in the Ministry of Education and Training to be responsible for teacher assessment on a national basis. The appointed officer should be accountable for establishing the infrastructure (budget, people) for national monitoring of teacher assessment and needs based Professional Development.

Recommendation 3a: The appointed officer should attend a training seminar at the University of Melbourne on teacher standards and teacher assessment.

Recommendation 3b: The senior officers from secondary teacher development project who came to Melbourne to be trained in development and use of the teacher standards are already trained in the concepts and use of the data. They should be regarded as a resource for the new position of teacher assessment at MOET.

Recommendation 4: Establish teacher assessment offices in each province. The provincial teacher assessment office should be accountable for training principals in assessing and training teachers.

Recommendation 4a: The provincial assessment office should collect the school assessment data and analyse them to inform needs based Professional Development (NBPD) and workforce planning.

Recommendation 5: A training project should be developed for provincial Teacher Assessment (TA) officers. It should provide them with skills in using the standards and in training school principals to use the standards.

Recommendation 5a: Provincial TA officers should be accountable for the successful training of principals to incorporate the Standards TA in an annual

appraisal of teachers and in providing TA and NBPD data to the provincial TA office.

Recommendation 5b: Provincial TA officers should be accountable for the maintenance and analysis of the TA data in identifying the Professional Development needs at a provincial level and in advising the National TA office in MoET of the data in formulating and implementing a national TA and Professional Development Policy. They would be accountable for providing advice on NBPD that aligns with and supports the implementation of national policy in primary education.

Recommendation 6: Principals will be accountable for the teachers understanding and acceptance of the teacher standards. Principals assess teachers as part of annual assessment and in identifying the needs based professional development needs of the school. The Principal will also be responsible for aligning the school goals and NBPD program with the goals and priorities of the province and ultimately with the national MoET agenda.

Recommendation 7: The provincial TA officer should be accountable for maintaining the TA data on assessment results and should be responsible for making the data available for various purposes and to meet the needs of schools and the national MoET agenda.

Recommendation 7a: The MoET TA officer would be accountable for training Provincial TA staff in data management and basic data analyses needed at school, province and national levels.

Recommendation 7b: At all levels of MOET administrative system (Ministry, provincial, district and school), there should be staff that are trained in using the data base of teacher assessment to inform PD planning and other teacher policies.

Recommendation 8: MOET should be the lead agent to disseminate information about changed conditions for employment, assessment and the registration of teachers. Television, radio and newspapers could be used to inform teachers of the work on the development of standards for classroom teachers. These duties should be part of the responsibilities of the MoET TA officer.

Recommendation 9: Statutory Authority for teacher registration should be developed to regulate the registration of teachers, the professional requirements for progression against the standards and accreditation of teacher education programs and professional development courses (where this is considered necessary by the MoET TA officer).

Recommendation 10: The National MoET TA Office should be responsible initially to work with the TTI organisations to link the professional standards for teaching to teacher preparation courses.

Recommendation 10a: Initial teacher registration should be possible only after two years post graduation employment as a teacher.

Recommendation 10b: Throughout a teacher's career, (every five years) the Teacher registration authority should require renewal of registration by demonstration of competency against the standards. The National TA officer will be accountable for establishing this process in conjunction with the Teacher registration Board when it is initiated, and the National TA office will be solely responsible for this process in the absence of the teacher registration authority. The purpose is to create greater consistency in the implementation of the teacher standards and identity of the teaching profession as well as implementing a national quality assurance process for the teaching profession.

Consistency between the Teacher Standards of different Educational levels in Vietnam

Recommendation 11: A consistent approach should be applied to the development and structure of standards for all school education sectors to ensure the process of professional development and assessment against the standards and the implementation procedures is consistent across sectors.

Recommendation 12: The national MoET TA office should be accountable for the consistency of approach and for its implementation.

Recommendation 13: To ensure the consistency of teacher standards those constructing standards should follow substantially the same methodology for developing and implementing the teacher standards.

Further Developments

Recommendation 14: The National TA office of MoET should explore the relationship between student achievement and ratings of teacher performance against the teacher standards.

Recommendation 15: The National TA office of MoET should be accountable for the periodic review, improvement and dissemination of the standards across all sectors and for the maintenance of training for provincial offices against the standards over time.

Introduction to competency-based assessment and teacher the development of the teacher standards in Vietnam

Background

Competency-based education and training (CBET) had its roots in the field of teacher training (Burke et al, 1975; Elam, 1971). As early as the 1920s in the USA, a movement for reform of teacher training systems looked to developments in the manufacturing industry and business for models that could be transferred to education. The mechanisation and organisation of work in manufacturing plants and administrative offices gave rise to concepts such as ‘productivity’ and standards. It assumed that the expected performance of individuals or groups could be expressed in terms of the number of products or processes to be achieved or produced within a specified period. The concurrent development of behaviourism in psychology, with its focus on the objective study of observable behaviours, appeared to offer avenues for studying and assessing performance in fields such as teaching. Whilst the products from teaching were much less tangible than those from work in manufacturing plants and offices, specific aspects of teachers’ performances could be identified and observed. However, it did suggest that the discrete competencies identified in the workplace were an artefact of the industrial manufacturing process and not necessarily a feature of a knowledge or information industry.

Despite this, workplace assessment studies guided by psychological theory and aimed at assessing worker effectiveness became an important area for research into teacher effectiveness through the middle decades of the twentieth century (Gage, 1986). In the USA in the 1960s there was heightened public concern about the quality of its school systems and teaching. A desire to find a research base for designing teacher training programs and assessing teacher performance meant that the teacher effectiveness work was influential in American schools. This emphasis soon flowed on to other countries and education systems. The studies tried to find elements of teaching behaviour that correlated with student achievement on standardised tests. Where behaviour appeared to be associated with improved and superior student achievement, it was identified as a desirable competency for teachers. Specific items of teaching behaviour or competencies that could be directly observed were identified. The behaviours became items in observers’ and assessors’ checklists. They then became the core content in pre-service teacher education programs. However, because it was based on a checklist of observable, discrete and apparently disconnected sets of behaviours, the resulting curriculum was based on a narrow and flawed premise. The underlying constructs in teaching and traits of teachers were not identified and hence not focused on in teacher education programs. By the end of the 1970s the reaction against competency-based education was strong, primarily because it was recognised as reflecting a trivialisation of the curriculum and it failed to meet the requirements for effective teaching - the coherence of the skills and tasks.

The professional standards developed for Vietnam

The teacher competencies have been defined in Vietnam as having three broad domains:

- Pedagogical expertise
- Discipline knowledge
- Professional commitment (ideology and personality)

In various teacher standards around the world, these are presented in different ways and, in some cases, the domains are sub-divided. For example, pedagogical expertise at times is sub-divided into *assessment*, *classroom management* and *instructional design*. Discipline knowledge is at times divided into *curriculum skills* and *content knowledge*. Professional commitment is at times sub-divided into *values and ethics* and *developing as a professional*.

The essential teacher requirements for each domain have also been identified and the indicators of evidence have been distilled. A teacher development framework needs to describe not only *what* a teacher is expected to do but *how well* the teacher demonstrates that requirement. Standards have to incorporate an element of quality of performance and the pursuit of and reward for excellence. The data suggests that this seems to have been interpreted in practice as the use of the term ‘excellent’ rather than linking the term to descriptions of the performance of requirements. Without this link to the performance requirements, the standards regress to become simply a job description. Standards have to apply to current and also, in a limited fashion, to future requirements of a school system. It is also expected that the standards will need revision after a few years to cater for changes that teaching undergoes. The shelf life of an assessment against the standards is indeterminate, but it needs to be taken into account and policy decisions made in this regard. Revision may be an imminent need.

Implementation of primary school teacher standards in Vietnam

The major finding that we can report from the data on the Vietnamese primary teacher standards is that teachers have a positive disposition towards the use of teacher standards. The level of awareness of teacher standards is high. The overall level of awareness is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Teacher awareness of standards across sub groups.

Class	Have you heard about the Teacher Standards?		Have you been trained to use Teacher Standards?		Do you know how Teacher Standards work?		Have you been trained in self-assessment against the Teacher		Do you know how to use them ?		Do you feel confident to use the Teacher Standards?	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
FDC	99.6	0.13	87	1.63	98.2	0.49	86.1	1.68	90.1	1.26	89.6	1.1
HDC	99.8	0.11	87.1	1.66	98.5	0.36	86.7	1.54	90.1	1.23	89.5	1.33
Total	99.7	0.08	87.1	1.22	98.4	0.32	86.3	1.23	90.1	0.94	89.6	0.93
School												
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
FDS	99.7	0.13	87	2.01	98	0.67	86.6	2.08	90.2	1.56	91	1.37
HDS	99.7	0.15	86.8	2.34	98.4	0.43	86.8	2.09	90.2	1.64	90.4	1.68
Mixed	99.7	0.15	87.4	1.98	98.7	0.41	85.6	2.06	89.8	1.65	87.1	1.82
Total	99.7	0.08	87.1	1.22	98.4	0.32	86.3	1.23	90.1	0.94	89.6	0.93
Regions												
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Urban	99.7	0.17	85.4	2.47	97.4	1	84.4	2.58	87.6	2.21	85.3	2.05
Small town	99.7	0.34	92.7	2.33	99	0.56	94.6	1.88	96	1.33	89	3.77
Rural	99.7	0.12	87.2	1.85	98.8	0.34	87.2	1.74	91.9	1.21	92.3	1.19
Remote/Isolated	99.7	0.19	87	2.67	98.3	0.55	83.2	3.04	86.2	2.49	88.4	2.31
Total	99.7	0.08	87.1	1.22	98.4	0.32	86.3	1.23	90.1	0.94	89.6	0.93
Economic level												
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Economic level 1	99.7	0.15	87.3	1.83	97.6	0.73	85.5	2.02	88.7	1.7	86.8	1.64
Economic level 2	100	0	89	2.47	99.3	0.28	90.4	2.31	94.2	1.42	93.2	1.56
Economic level 3	99.8	0.15	82.4	4.17	98	0.9	86.1	3.35	91.4	2.28	91.6	1.83
Economic level 4	99.2	0.38	88.6	3.06	98.8	0.42	84.1	3.5	88.4	2.82	89.5	3
Economic level 5	99.6	0.31	87.4	2.86	98.9	0.45	82.8	3.92	85.5	3.31	87.9	3.39
N	4111		4083		4097		4081		4066		4080	
Province with Teacher profiles												
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Yes	99.9	0.08	89.6	1.56	98.3	0.41	89.2	1.47	90.5	1.28	87.9	1.41
No	99.6	0.14	84.7	1.85	98.4	0.49	83.6	1.91	89.7	1.38	91.1	1.22
Total	99.7	0.08	87.1	1.22	98.4	0.32	86.3	1.23	90.1	0.94	89.6	0.93

In Table 1 it can be seen that almost all of the teachers surveyed have heard of the standards, slightly less than 90% have been trained to use them, more than 98% understand how the standards work and 90% have been trained in self-assessment and know how to use them or will feel confident to use the standards. It is interesting to note the percentage of teachers that have been trained to use the standards is slightly lower than those of the teachers who know how the teacher standards work.

It is also evident from the table that there is little difference in understanding the teacher standards between full-day schooling and half-day schooling or between full-day classes and half-day classes.

In terms of the size of the towns, a larger proportion of teachers in rural settings claim to be aware of the standards and their implications. This is surprising in that teachers from the urban setting appear to be less familiar with the standards and their implications than teachers in rural settings.

The data in Table 2 show that almost all principals have been in-serviced about the standards. This is a satisfactory state of affairs as the principals have also indicated that the teachers are most likely to obtain their information about the standards from their principal. More than 95% of principals claimed to have trained their teachers in the use of the standards.

Table 2. Principals' experience with the teacher standards

School	Have you heard about the Teacher Standards?		Have you been trained to use Teacher Standards?		Have you been trained to assist teachers with self		Have you assessed teachers against the Standards?		Have you trained teachers in your school to use the	
FDS	100	0	98.5	1.06	97	1.37	90.2	2.31	98.8	0.62
HDS	100	0	92.2	2.91	91.3	2.81	90	3.3	94.3	2.35
Mixed	100	0	96.6	1.54	94	2.12	88.7	2.74	98.7	0.93
Total	100	0	96.2	1.04	94.5	1.16	89.7	1.56	97.5	0.76
Region	Have you trained									
Urban	100	0	97.6	1.74	98.4	1.16	83.2	3.82	96.8	1.49
Small town	100	0	96.7	3.37	93.5	4.65	82.9	7.45	100	0
Rural	100	0	97.7	1.07	94.2	1.67	91.8	2.12	98.3	1
Remote/Isolated	100	0	90.4	3.85	91.8	3.33	93.3	3.14	95.3	2.35
Total	100	0	96.2	1.04	94.5	1.16	89.7	1.56	97.5	0.76
Economic										
Economic level1	100	0	96.6	1.7	96.6	1.57	82.6	3.41	96.8	1.36
Economic level2	100	0	99.2	0.84	99.2	0.84	93.1	2.51	99.7	0.35
Economic level3	100	0	95.1	2.86	90.6	3.68	93.7	3.11	98.7	1.34
Economic level4	100	0	92.1	4.05	89.2	4.44	88.3	4.74	98	2.01
Economic level5	100	0	95	3.44	91.1	4.4	97.7	2.29	92.1	4.48
Total	100	0	96.2	1.04	94.5	1.16	89.7	1.56	97.5	0.76
Provinces with teacher profiles										
Yes	100	0	97	1.33	94.6	1.72	91.5	2.05	95.6	1.49
No	100	0	95.4	1.57	94.5	1.61	88	2.34	99.2	0.45
Total	100	0	96.2	1.04	94.5	1.16	89.7	1.56	97.5	0.76
N	413		413		412		410		413	

Figure 1 also demonstrates that there is not much difference between the provinces involved in the teacher development project and those who were not involved in it.

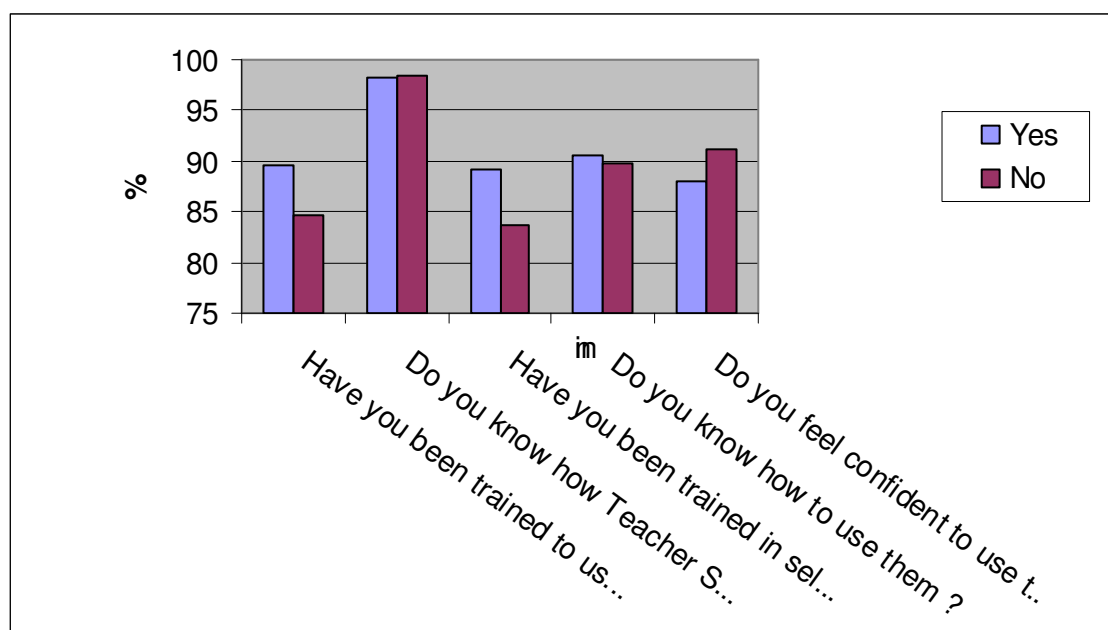


Figure 1: The Teacher awareness of standards for provinces involved in the teacher development project and not involved in the teacher development project. The blue bars (category Yes) represent provinces involved in the Primary Teacher Development Project and the brown bars (category No) represent provinces that were not involved in the Primary Teacher Development Project.

Finding 1: The overall level of reported awareness of the teacher standards is high; all of the teachers surveyed have heard of the standards

- approximately 87-89% of teachers have been trained to use them
- more than 98% teachers understand how the standards work
- 90% teachers have been trained in self-assessment and know how to use them or will feel confident to use the standards
- almost all principals have been in-serviced about the standards.
- more than 95% of principals claimed to have trained their teachers in the use of the standards.

Finding 2: There is not much difference in the levels of awareness of the standards between those provinces involved in the teacher development project and those who were not involved in this project.

In Table 3 it can be seen that more FDS teachers than HDS teachers were assessed as excellent and likewise, more FDC teachers were assessed as excellent teachers than their peers from HDC. A comparison across school types yielded the same result. There were more teachers from urban schools or economic level 1 who do not know the level they were assessed at. Approximately 78% of the teachers have been assessed as good or excellent teachers against the teacher standards. Success against the standards was enjoyed more in the rural or small town schools. Teachers from economic levels 2-4 appear to have more satisfactory results than those in economic levels 1 or 5.

Table 3: Teachers' assessment results against teacher standards

If you have been assessed against the Teacher Standards what level were you assessed at ?										
Class	Bad		Average		Good		Excellent		Don't know	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
FDC	0.2	0.13	2	0.4	44.2	2.14	34.4	2.15	6	1.12
HDC	0.3	0.15	5.1	0.75	47.1	2.06	31.4	2.06	7	1.31
Total	0.3	0.1	3.4	0.44	45.6	1.58	33	1.59	6.4	0.87
School										
FDS	0.3	0.17	1.5	0.46	42.3	2.63	35.2	2.68	6	1.42
HDS	0.3	0.2	5.5	1.03	49.4	2.75	27.2	2.6	7.3	1.8
Mixed	0.2	0.13	4.1	0.86	46.4	2.83	35.2	2.95	6.3	1.35
Total	0.3	0.1	3.4	0.44	45.6	1.58	33	1.59	6.4	0.87
Region										
Urban	0.4	0.25	1.4	0.48	43.7	3.44	28.5	3.09	8.2	2
Small town			2	1.25	46.7	6.87	37.3	7.05	2.4	1.28
Rural	0.1	0.07	2.8	0.49	45.3	2.26	38.5	2.41	4.4	0.99
Remote/isolated	0.7	0.34	8.3	1.82	48.8	3.57	22.5	3.21	11.1	2.77
Total	0.3	0.1	3.4	0.44	45.6	1.58	33	1.59	6.4	0.87
Economic										
Economic level 1	0.3	0.17	1.3	0.37	38.8	2.72	30.5	2.58	10.4	1.85
Economic level 2	0.1	0.1	2.1	0.61	36.8	3.32	45.3	3.69	4.3	1.41
Economic level 3	0.2	0.15	5	1.33	56.1	3.67	34.5	3.97	2.1	1.42
Economic level 4	0.4	0.27	4.4	1.37	48.2	4.38	34.4	4.65	6.4	2.22
Economic level 5	0.7	0.51	10.5	2.58	70.4	4.17	9.8	2.97	3.8	1.91
Total	0.3	0.1	3.4	0.44	45.6	1.58	33	1.59	6.4	0.87
Provinces with Teacher Profiles										
Yes	0.4	0.18	5.1	0.75	52.7	2.2	27	2.12	8.3	1.5
No	0.1	0.08	1.9	0.48	39	2.27	38.5	2.37	4.6	0.95
Total	0.3	0.1	3.4	0.44	45.6	1.58	33	1.59	6.4	0.87
N	3652		3652		3652		3652		3652	

The results of teacher assessment against the teacher standards across regions are presented in Figure 2. The effects of assessment against the teacher standards are presented in Figure 3 and Table 4. The data suggest that success against the standards was enjoyed more in the rural or small town schools.

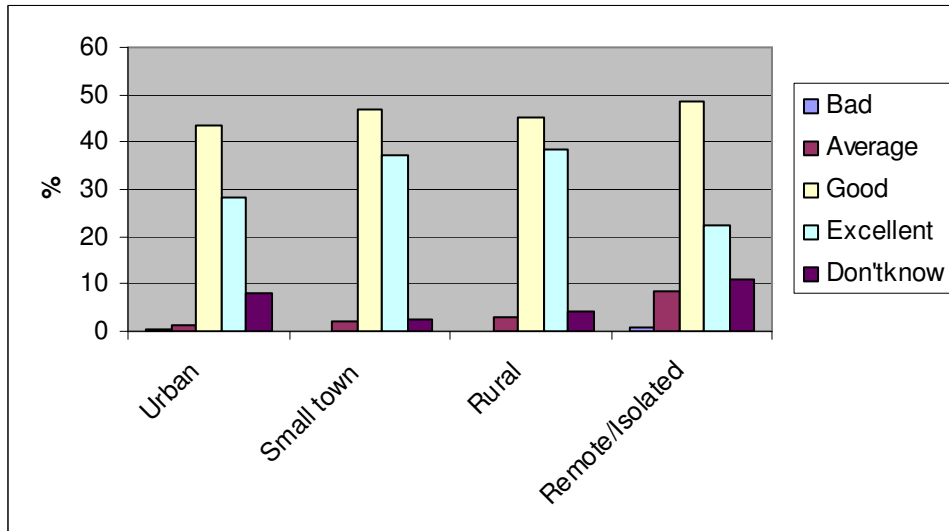


Figure 2: The results of teacher assessment against the teacher standards across regions

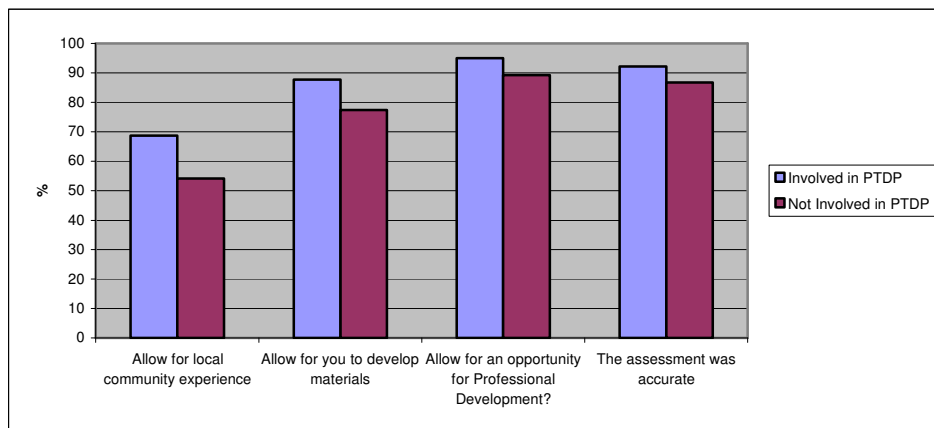


Figure 3: Effects of assessment against the teacher standards

Finding 3: Current use of the standards shows that:

There were more teachers from urban schools or economic level 1 who do not know the level they were assessed at.

Approximately 78% of the teachers have been assessed as good or excellent teachers against the teacher standards.

Success against the standards was enjoyed more in the rural or small town schools.

Table 4. Effect of assessments against the standards

If you have been assessed against the Teacher Standards								
Class	Did the assessment allow for local community experience		Did the assessment allow for you to develop materials		Did the assessment allow for an opportunity for Professional Development?		If so was the assessment accurate?	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
FDC	55.7	2.49	79.8	2.08	89.9	1.62	88.6	1.6
HDC	67.5	2.31	85.4	1.54	94.6	1.09	90.2	1.54
Total	61.2	1.83	82.4	1.39	92.1	1.03	89.4	1.15
School								
FDS	52.8	3.08	78.5	2.68	88.7	2.09	88	2.08
HDS	71	3.07	85.5	2.05	94.3	1.47	90.6	2.12
Mixed	63.1	3.14	82.4	1.39	94.4	1.3	90.1	1.72
Total	61.2	1.83	84.7	2.04	92.1	1.03	89.4	1.15
Region								
Urban	60.6	3.5	79.2	2.92	88.5	2.42	81.1	3.07
Small town	64.9	6.23	87.2	4.39	93.7	3.35	90.7	3.71
Rural	58.2	2.79	83.5	2.05	92.9	1.49	92.7	1.41
Remote/Isolated	68.5	3.9	82.1	3.06	94.1	1.83	91.5	2.27
Total	61.2	1.83	82.4	1.39	92.1	1.03	89.4	1.15
Economic level								
Economic level 1	65.2	2.89	78	2.57	88.2	2.1	83.5	2.46
Economic level 2	51.2	4.26	78.1	3.45	91.6	2.41	90.3	2.25
Economic level 3	53	4.55	87.9	2.62	94.7	1.92	95.4	1.7
Economic level 4	72	4.64	92	2.09	97.1	0.92	94.3	1.87
Economic level 5	69	5.28	87.9	3.23	97.1	1.69	93.2	2.84
Total	61.2	1.83	82.4	1.39	92.1	1.03	89.4	1.15
Teacher profiles								
Yes	68.7	2.36	87.7	1.55	95	1.03	92.2	1.24
No	54.2	2.72	77.4	2.26	89.3	1.75	86.8	1.92
Total	61.2	1.83	82.4	1.39	92.1	1.03	89.4	1.15
N	3870		3912		3932		3873	

In Figure 3 and Table 4 it can be seen that, of teachers who have been assessed, more than half agreed that the assessment linked their activities to the community. Almost all (>90%) agreed that the assessment was linked to professional development and more than 80% of teachers linked their assessed category to the development of curriculum materials. Almost everyone agreed that the assessment was accurate. In other words, they agreed that they were either 'good' or 'excellent'. These assessments may reflect locally applied assessments rather than systematically graded assessments based on a set of criteria.

Finding 4: Assessments against the standards may reflect locally applied assessments rather than systematically graded assessments based on a set of criteria. The data show that:

- Almost everyone agreed that the assessment was accurate. In other words, they agreed that they were either 'good' or 'excellent'
- There is a serious mismatch between teacher's statements that they understand the teacher standards and their self- assessment results.
- These assessments may reflect locally applied assessments rather than systematically graded assessments based on a set of criteria

Comments on the meaning and understanding of standards

The standards should enable teachers to articulate their values, beliefs, knowledge and practices. Standards allow the teachers to express their own distinctive knowledge, skills and attributes. They also allow and provide a framework for the professional development of members, and provide a framework for a range of assessment procedures related to the purposes of professional learning, planning, certification, and credentialing. In many ways standards are a public commitment of the profession and its level of accountability. Standards are generally developed using the discourse of the profession, are developed by the profession, for the profession. Standards help the profession to establish its credibility within the community and, in the case of teachers, within the education community. For this reason the labelling of the developmental levels of teacher standards in Vietnam as ‘Bad’, ‘Average’, ‘Good’ and ‘Excellent’ may lead to future mistakes for the users of the teacher standards. It fails to recognise the developmental nature of the standards and its possible link to a career path. The assessments as shown below in Table 2 demonstrate how this has evolved into a relatively meaningless use of the standards. More than 45% of teachers regard themselves a ‘good’ and 33 % are assessed as ‘excellent’. These are neither career path designations nor are they competency statements. There is little communication regarding the meaning of the labels as they are assigned. Location, economic zone, and the existence of FDS in any form fail to differentiate the nature of teacher competence distribution. Of the teachers who had not been formally assessed, there is a similar pattern. No one expects to be assessed as ‘bad’. Less than 6% expect to be assessed at average. The remainder (more than 90%) expect to be ‘good’ or ‘excellent’. Thus, there is a serious mismatch between teacher’s statement that they understand the teacher standards and their self- assessment results. Therefore measures should be taken to help teachers to understand the assessment of teachers against the teacher standards. Teachers should be trained in how to conduct peer assessment and self-assessment. They also need to understand the procedures of assessment using the teacher standards.

This discussion raises the issue of how well teachers understand the standards and their links to professional development. The competency-based nature of the standards may have become confused. The possible lack of understanding of the standards may also lead to confusion as to how they can be used. Labels such as ‘bad’ to ‘excellent’ also confuse their application. This, however, is not restricted to Vietnamese teachers; the use of standards needs to be clarified worldwide. However, the Vietnamese use of standards is made worse by the labelling. Thus in the future MOET should consider the option of separating the teaching profession from general public servant titles. This will free the teaching profession from the need to use the four labels: bad, average, good and excellent, to measure the level of their performance.

The Vietnamese teacher standards have never been empirically associated with student achievement. International studies and reports on teacher effectiveness have mixed conclusions on how teacher competence is associated with student achievement. Although there are many reports that link teacher effectiveness with student improvement that are freely cited in arguments about teacher performance, the glaring omission in arguments and studies about teacher effectiveness is the lack of

clarity about the precise nature of the relationship with student performance. What is it about a teacher that leads to improvements in the capacities of students? Therefore further study is needed to validate the teacher standards. Future research studies should explore the relationship between student achievement and teacher ratings against the teacher standards.

It is, however, generally agreed that student achievement, as measured by test scores, is only one indicator of teacher competence. The teacher is not and cannot be the sole influence on student achievement, and he/she has no control over factors such as student mobility, language proficiency and class-size. Hanushek (2007) has pointed out that families make a difference in the education of students, and teachers should be rewarded for their adding to the education of the child. It is also clear that there is scope for wider measures of effectiveness and that there is a need to radically rethink the parameters of teacher effect and expertise. Where these judgements are assessments by supervisors, it is possible that biased assessment may taint the evaluations. However, there are ways of detecting this, and ways of overcoming these forms of biased assessment. A developmental framework, fuelled by value-laden categories, judgements, evidence portfolios and direct links to further in-service programs for teachers who can demonstrate a direct need for training can be used to assess teacher effectiveness.

Teaching excellence can be readily recognised and should be rewarded. The teacher can and does make a difference, and describing a teacher as 'excellent' is a common approach to the description of a teacher. It is also used commonly in promotion decisions. In Vietnam, however, the link between the standards and the term of services of professional titles is incomplete. The opportunity to make such a link is not solely dependent on the teacher's expertise. The effect of an 'excellent' teacher can outweigh the effect of a poor school, and so reduce the importance of where a student attends school. While there is sympathy for the effect of teaching on learning, there is no systematic approach to identifying how it occurs, nor whether it can be modelled, manipulated and consequently developed.

Linking standards to professional development

A profession is based on a body of systematic, scientifically derived knowledge. In pre-service studies, teachers will have developed both the basic core knowledge and skills that give them entry into the profession. The teaching profession is not characterised by a set of tasks that have to be performed to demonstrate competence. The teaching profession is not characterised by a series of folklores, traditional ways of doing things, or fixed routines. Professional skills and knowledge require independent thought and advanced understanding of the context, the phenomena, and an ability to adapt, create, translate and deal with contingencies, shifts in thinking and changes in society. Developing standards for the teaching profession cannot be based on a set of tasks that a member of that profession is expected to perform.

Members of the teaching profession have a core set of skills that enables them to function as a teacher, and it is expected that after graduation, they will continue to develop professionally. With the emergence of the knowledge society, increased emphasis is placed on the development of additional professional skills. Rapid technological advances in biotechnology, microelectronics, and computing and

communications technology will see each of the professions change continuously. Graduates and teaching graduates in particular, have already begun a non-negotiable process of lifelong learning.

For professionals, lifelong learning becomes a dominant form of education. It does not mean only continuing enrolment in higher education courses. The dominant classroom for the professional has become the workplace and the 'teacher' for the teacher is now the practice of the profession. Each school may differ in terms of what it regards as a skilful professional. What is highly skilled in one school may not be so regarded in another. The truly competent teacher is one who can translate skills and expertise from one context to another and adjust their performance to the highest possible quality, regardless of the context in which they find themselves teaching. It is not a matter of being 'excellent' or 'good' in one school and assuming that this can transfer to another economic zone, location, or school. The professional and expert teacher has to enlarge their capacity to learn in each of these contexts; to adapt performance; to absorb the requirements of the new context and to build upon the knowledge and expertise developed in both formal and non-formal learning contexts. This is the mark of a competent professional and part of beginning to understand the nature of the teaching profession. All teachers will need to develop a thorough understanding of the practice of their profession and build upon what they have learned at University in their initial teacher education program.

Teachers will also need to provide leadership as citizens of a knowledge and information society. The emergence of globalisation in almost every sphere of life means that there is a need to embrace the opportunities it offers but to be wary and critical of the opportunities it gives to those who manipulate society; it means that teachers must not confine their thinking to the local classroom project; instead they have to be thinking internationally or transnationally. Professional practice will be influenced by international interactions because of the ubiquitous nature of the internet. Perhaps in the very near future, classes in schools will be routinely learning languages by interacting with classes in other countries through interactive video. Teachers may be in charge of a cohort who will not know learning any other way.

Teachers will always be required to develop their skills and make detailed decisions in the school context. The demands of an information culture will mean that each small detail needs to be examined within a bigger picture. The role of professional development linked to the standards is not only focussed on their understanding of the standards, although this is an important consideration. Their need for professional development and capacity to make decisions on curriculum are also part of the process of developing professionally.

In all of this it would be unfortunate if teachers focused their professional growth and development on the persistent development of the procedural workplace skills and tasks. As professionals, the drive of curiosity should never leave them. Curiosity-driven learning will always be an integral part of professional life and underpins the ways people learn. Curiosity and passion for learning, convincing others to learn to learn in and about their profession and to process information systematically, will be the hallmark of the true professional teacher. A profession is more than an occupation. A profession is responsible for itself because the community entrusts it to discharge its responsibilities in a particular field. This would be an integral part of

developing autonomy and satisfying the curiosity of the teacher in a professional sense.

There would be a need for professional development in implementing the standards. There would be a definite need to provide professional development for staff in teacher training institutions and this could be manifested as both formal and informal qualifications through training opportunities. It would be necessary for teachers to undertake self-assessment against the standards. The annual appraisal of teachers by the principal could also be linked to standards and the identification of professional development needs.

It will be the Ministry of Education and Training that makes the decision. The Department of Teaching and Educational Management will have to decide which organisations would administer the standards to be assessed against. The Ministry of Education and Training and the Department of Training and Education managers would need to provide the training opportunities for the teachers. This would have to be done nationwide under the guidance of the Ministry of Education and Training. It could be administered through the Department of Education and Training in each province. The principals would provide training for the lower levels of teachers and schools and this would have to be done so that there is a generalised understanding of the standards and the role of the standards in determining professional development of teachers.

After issuing standards and classifying teachers at each level there would be a need to identify resources and funds to enable teachers to rise to higher levels against the standards. The Ministry of Education and Training would have to require the Department of Educational Management to identify the resources. Then the Department of Education and Training in each province would have the responsibility of providing training opportunities.

When the standards are issued, the Ministry must consider the expansion of professional development opportunities. The content of the training should be suitable for all teachers. It should also be linked to levels on the standards, professional titles and teachers' terms of service.

The provision of training would have to cover and provide for the professional development of leading teachers and then to provide training to the lower levels. The need for professional development would have to be determined by teacher assessments against the standards. Each teacher could decide on the training needs and the order of training that would be required to help them improve as a teacher, but also help them to rise through the levels nominated by the standard.

Professional development is important. It needs to be available at all levels of the system. Leading teachers would be the ones providing training inside the school. Content of the training should be consistent with the requirements of the standards and be offered under the direction of the Department of Education and Training. It should be consistent on a nationwide basis. Workforce planning and planning for professional development is essential and needs to be linked to the standards.

Professional development and its provision should be based on the demands of the teachers. It is an issue for the teachers to identify professional development needs and is about the classified levels of the teachers. It should be necessary to undergo training to move to higher levels. After they have identified their desired professional title and after a certain level has been reached, teachers should be required to attend training and to take an exam to move to a higher level. Formal training should be modular and updated regularly. Leading teachers and experienced teachers could help write these modules. It would also be sensible to involve international experts and specialists in the development of the modules.

The use of the media when implementing teacher standards nationwide

There would be a need to make sure that documents on the detailed elaboration of the standards were accessible to users. The focus group discussions suggested that media can help with the interpretation and explain the way in which the standards have become compulsory. The Ministry would be able to issue a regulation that the media would be allowed to disseminate such information. Furthermore, it was suggested that if the standards and the assessment against the standards and their linked professional titles were based in law, teachers would have to undergo this process.

The media could encourage the use of standards. If the standards are good and have meaning for education, managers would want to apply them.

Television, radio and newspapers could be the media used to inform teachers of the work on the development of standards for classroom teachers. However, MOET should be the major agent to disseminate information about changed conditions for employment, assessment and registration of teachers.

Consistency across levels of education

To understand the consistency across levels of education, early childhood, lower secondary, and secondary education teacher standards were reviewed. Focus group interviews were conducted with relevant officers involved in designing and evaluating these standards. It has been found that the lower secondary and secondary teacher standards include eight standards. Each of the standards consists of a number of criteria. For each criterion, four quality levels were specified. The early childhood teacher standards have the same structure as the primary education teacher standards. To a varied extent, the structure and assessment procedures of the primary school teacher standards were reflected in the teacher standards of other levels. As this report does not aim to evaluate these teacher standards, the extent that these standards are valid and reliable instruments for assessment of teacher performance is beyond its scope.

The focus group interview with education officers from MOET shows that, to some extent, the standards for different sectors of education (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary) should be similar in structure, but there are areas where they must differ. For example, they would be the same in 'ideology and personality' but they would differ in others. The 'discipline knowledge' in many cases would differ, as

would 'pedagogy'. However, the process of assessment against the standards and the implementation procedures should be the same, as should be the process of development. There is a need for consistency amongst education levels, although the content of the standards could be different.

The assessment procedures and their implementation should be the same for at least three of the education levels. It should be the same for the primary, secondary and professional education. There would be, for example, a need for practical skills in vocational and higher education. Higher education would need to be assessed differently due to the alignment of government departments and universities.

Those who propose the absence of standards for vocational and higher education argue that there should be a focus on the amount of time spent on research and the need for practising skills. Beginning teachers should have at least a bachelor's degree and Expert teachers should have a PhD. Although there is a debate based on the length of training required for senior positions in higher education, the standards could be contrasted with primary and secondary teaching in terms of discipline training.

Link between teacher standards and professional titles of teachers

The focus groups interviews with education officers involved in the secondary teacher development projects suggested that it is difficult to make generalisations regarding the titles for professional teachers. Professional titles need to be practical and closely linked to salaries and promotions for teachers. There needs to be a connection between rewarding, salary, promotion and the standards. This connection is achieved through the assessment process. Because of the imposition of the standards, there is a need for a professional supplement, perhaps linked to qualifications. In higher education, senior teachers would need to provide evidence regarding the number of scientific papers, plus other certifications.

The participants from the group interview stated that it is hard to directly use the teacher standards for promotion. It is possible to link the teacher standards with the terms of service for professional titles and then to link the professional titles to promotion. Tests or examinations could be used for promotion along the levels of the professional titles, as currently applied for upper secondary school teachers' promotion. The assessments for upper secondary school teachers could have three or four parts, e.g.:

- Part one could consist of an essay on the subject with a target of the pedagogy discipline and professionalism section of the standards.
- Part two, for the primary and secondary teachers might consist of presentations focusing on ability in the classroom, such as a demonstration lesson to a promotion panel. In higher education and professional education, the presentation would be made to a research panel or professional panel of experts.

- Part three could consist of proficiency in a foreign language as assessed in terms of proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Part four could consist of an assessment in ICT skills.

These assessment processes would need to be managed. There was some debate in the focus group sessions about who would design and administer the test, who would be able to mark it, and who would be interpreting the results. Also, with an examination, security would be an issue for schools.

The examinations could be held at provincial level. This could be introduced with the upper secondary standards in the 2008 / 2009 school year. If the standards were accepted, there would be a need to link the standards to professional titles. It may then be necessary to change the structure of the examination to link to the content of the professional standards.

For primary teachers, there needs to be a continuation of the three levels, but no examinations at this point. The test could be introduced in the 2009 / 2010 school year. The schools would nominate the teachers who were considered to be ready to take the exams. This would constitute a preliminary assessment on the part of the school, along with approval by the school principal.

In terms of terms of services professional titles for teachers and the way in which they would be manifested, it would be expected that a leading teachers should be able to assist graduate teachers to become a classroom teachers. The idea would differ for baccalaureate graduate teachers. Their transition would be based on the skills of the teacher. A teacher at each level must be able to mentor teachers at lower levels. Thus, new teachers should be able to be trained by their colleagues and peers, in order to rise from a novice to a leading teacher. This should include mentoring and the use of information technology.

While there are differences and similarities between education sectors, the professional titles for primary and secondary education should be the same. It would be preferable that comparable years of training, skills, and competencies would be taken into account in determining career structures and titles. The Ministry of Education and Training should develop and issue the standards. The Ministry of Home Affairs would be in charge of allocating titles. The Department of Teaching and Education managers develops the laws, and these must be approved by the National Assembly. The Department of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Training should work closely together, through consultation and collaboration, to overcome any differences in approaches and solutions to defining the term of services for the different teacher professional titles.

There is a need for assessment tools and means of motivating departments to apply the standards to professional titles. The obvious use of standards is for classifying the term of services of the professional titles of teachers. This would mean that we would need to devise links between the levels and the descriptions of the standards and terms of services for the professional titles and make this clear while developing standards.

It would add credibility to the standards if they were used to classify teachers and if they were linked to professional titles. In order to use the standards it would make more sense to add more demands for professional titles, such as expertise in language, information technology, or additional qualifications in order to be promoted against the standards, and to move from one professional title to another.

Links to a career paths: Rewarding excellence

The definitions of teacher career paths in Vietnam have been linked through World Bank projects to competency and effectiveness frameworks in the United Kingdom, the USA, through a system developed by Griffin, Nguyen, Gillis and Mai (2006). In one teacher jurisdiction (e.g. Western Australia), teacher competency standards have linked to pay scales. The World Bank system developed for Vietnam enables career pathways to be linked to effectiveness and expertise in a process modeled in Figure 2.

Figure 2 contains several sections. Each of the four vertical columns represents a career development pathway and these are aligned to the professional expertise development framework on the right of the figure. The number of levels needs to be equivalent to the range of classroom teacher classifications. The number of years needed for each level in Figure 2 does not in any way indicate a recommendation or a resolution of this process.

The vertical column, marked by upward arrows, indicates automatic progression pathways for teachers. The first represents a new or the graduate teacher who may progress for a limited amount of time before an assessment is made in order to progress to the next registration classification of beginning teacher. Should the graduate teacher fail to attain beginning teacher registration, advice regarding appropriate professional development would then be provided and the graduate teacher would be permitted to try again for this registration level. The number and frequency of allowable reassessments would need to be a policy decision to be explored and determined, as would be the consequences of repeated failure to improve the registration level. Once registered at the second level, the beginning teacher could progress automatically each year to the top of that section. In order to cross to the next progression level of expert teacher, another assessment would be needed. The amount of time before becoming eligible for progression is a policy issue to be considered. Teachers who are not assessed as 'ready to transfer' to the higher levels should be given advice regarding opportunities for further experience, mentoring, professional development and / or study to enable them to achieve the level of competence and effectiveness to help make a subsequent assessment for transition to the next level. These processes would apply again once the expert teacher reaches the eligible level for assessment and attempt the transition to 'Leading Teacher'. The amount of time before becoming eligible for progression is a policy issue to be considered. If the transition between these two levels is to be capability-based, there ought to be no restriction. However, in practice, it is more likely that a teacher's progress within the developmental framework will be dependent on experience and opportunity. Some time may need to elapse just to allow the teacher to acquire the relevant expertise and to assemble the relevant evidence for a transition.

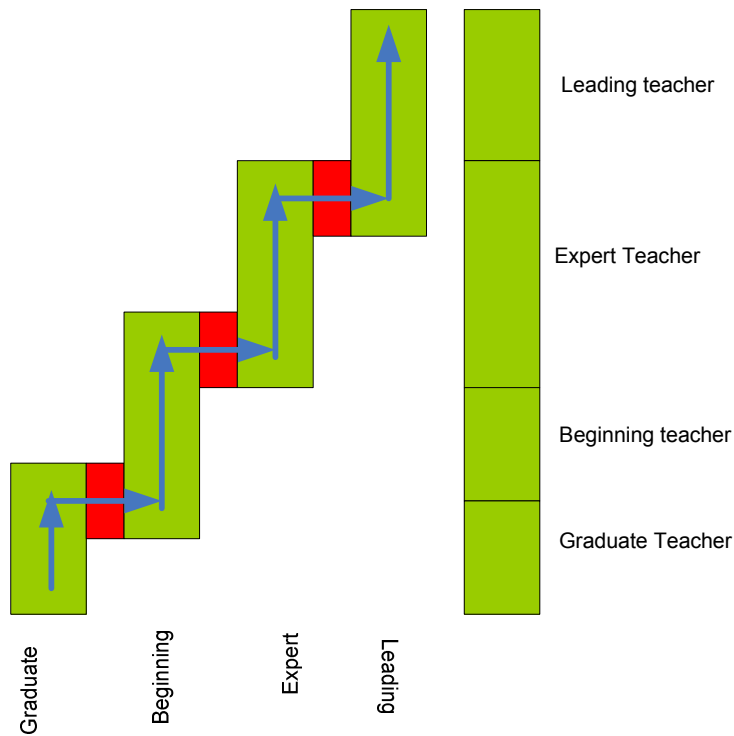


Figure 2: Schematic representation of teacher career advancement

At each transition point, details of relevant professional development support need to be available. This needs to be detailed, regardless of the transition of teachers from one progression scale to the next. The framework would be incomplete without information about opportunities for teacher career professional development. These should be available to any teacher at any stage of their career, with the proviso that the teacher is 'ready to learn' and prepared to develop the expertise relevant to the developmental level. Targets for further development and training to meet targeted objectives should be available for everyone, even those at the top of the scales.

In this way, the teacher annual appraisal process should regularly identify the training needed and identify relevant programs for the teacher to undertake, regardless of seniority. It might well be argued that this proposed process makes no change to the existing appraisal procedure. The advancement from a graduate teacher to an accomplished teacher requires meeting the standards set for an accomplished teacher. The move from accomplished to expert teacher requires meeting the standards of an expert teacher. Moving from an expert teacher to a leading teacher requires meeting the standards of a leading teacher. At the appraisal meeting, the discussion is expected to focus on the professional development needs of the teacher. For each satisfactory assessment, the teacher would be entitled to a salary increment. This means that for better than 95% of teachers an annual increment is an automatic outcome of the appraisal. This is surprising, given that *all* performance standards must be met in order to obtain a satisfactory assessment result. One difference may be a shift to an entirely merit-based system, and progressions through the salary scale.

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Appendix 1: Questions for Focus Group

1. Is there a need for consistency between primary professional standards and professional standards of other education levels (pre-school, lower secondary, higher secondary teacher professional standards, etc) in term of :
 - i. Strands/domains
 - ii. Requirements/capabilities
 - iii. Assessment procedures
 - iv. Methods of implementation
2. How would you describe the Professional titles for teachers as they are classified into levels in accordance the standards? What are the differences or similarities between the two? Are there any difficulties in the process of linking the two?
3. What is the importance of Professional Development training when implementing teacher professional standards nationwide? Who provides it and who makes the decision about the need for specific professional development?
4. What are the roles of the media in implementing teacher standards nation wide?

The standards refer to teachers making decisions in the classroom. What autonomy do the teachers need for this to be realised?