

## ***Response to consultation on College of Teaching***

Dear colleague

We have seen the proposals for the College of Teaching and applaud the broad intention to raise the status of the teaching profession and encourage high quality, evidence-based professional development. We would like to raise one central concern, however.

Although the focus of the College is intended to be teaching rather than teachers, the definition of whom is to be included, given at the foot of page 7, refers to types of teacher rather than teaching:

“Membership is voluntary and open to all\*”

\*Where “all” means teachers teaching in academies, maintained, special and independent schools and sixth-form colleges in England, from Early Years to Key Stage 5.

which clearly excludes teachers in colleges and other of post-16 institutions. Our main concern about this exclusion is its effect on learners, parents, employers and others seeking assurances about quality.

The award of fellow or member status will, we hope, enhance the status of schoolteachers who qualify. But this status would not be available to other teacher colleagues who would not be eligible. We envisage two negative consequences of this:

1. In a college such as City and Islington, which includes a sixth form college alongside vocational FE, or any Tertiary College, some teachers could be Fellows/Members, others couldn't. This could easily be read by parents, learners and other professionals as suggesting an inability to achieve the status on grounds of competence, rather than rules of membership.
2. In the context of a divided vocational and academic curriculum, the denial of College of Teaching membership status to the majority of those teaching vocational curricula (i.e. in FE institutions), would exacerbate the existing status problem of vocational curricula.

We believe a strong professional body dedicated to standards and professional development would be a great step forward and commend the College of Teaching initiative in principle. However, the anomalies in the structure of the English (and broadly the UK) education system make the realisation of this a complicated task, largely because institutional arrangements remain deeply divided at 16. Many students are studying academic courses outside schools (“A”-levels in colleges, for example) and the majority of 16–19 year-old young people following vocational or pre-vocational courses are outside the school system. It would be unfortunate to reinforce the negative economic and social consequences of this division through the exclusion from professional recognition by the College.

To illustrate the scale of the problem we offer figures for the number of full-time 16–18 year olds in schools and colleges in 2012 from the DfE First Statistical Release:

State-funded schools	440,700	38%
Independent Schools	86,700	7%
Sixth Form Colleges	152,100	13%
FE and tertiary colleges	485,900	42%

The numbers in FE colleges exceed those in state schools and are a major fraction of the total.

Figures for the number of 16–18 year olds entered for Level 3 qualifications (A level or equivalent) in 2011/2012 also show a major proportion from FE colleges (specifically, almost exactly twice as many as are enrolled in Sixth Form Colleges):

State-funded schools	170,882	43.1%
Independent schools	37,069	9.3%
Sixth Form Colleges	63,741	16.2%
Other FE Sector colleges	125,424	31.5%

We acknowledge that for *post-19* education there are further complications in recognising the professional status of teachers; attempting to include all categories of teaching professional initially may prove too daunting a task. Nevertheless, excluding teachers of 16 –18 year olds in FE at the start creates a particular risk of exacerbating already damaging professional divisions.

Our suggestion would be that a clear statement of intent about the desired scope of teacher membership be set out from the beginning and if different groups are to be included at different stages in the development of the College, that should be made clear. Our hope would be that consideration be given to including all organisations that employ teachers of students up to the age of 18 from the outset.

We also suggest that consideration be given to the use of the word *teaching* in the title. If it is to be retained, we think there would have to be an intention to extend the scope to teaching in a range of contexts, not just school and early years. If not, we suggest the title would need to refer to the more limited scope – e.g. *College of School and Pre-school Teaching*; at least this would allow other complementary Colleges to emerge such as *College of Further and Higher Education Teachers* or a *College of Vocational Education Practitioners* for the other realms of teaching.

Yours sincerely,



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