

## **SECTION 5**

# **Probation and Confirmation**

### **Introduction**

While the completion of a course of teacher training may lead to a qualification this, by itself, does not ensure that the newly qualified professional has all the necessary attributes to be recognised, publicly or professionally, as a fully-fledged teacher. Most countries require a newly qualified teacher to serve a period of probation and, subject to satisfactory reports over a period of time, to seek confirmation. This is normally granted by the appointing authority but, in some countries, confirmation is granted by an independent body and is taken as the act of conferring professional status.

### **Checklist**

- (1) Are there clear policies on: (a) probationary service  
(b) confirmation?
- (2) Have guidelines been provided for Headteachers, District Education Officers and Personnel Officers on these topics?  
Have detailed procedures been published for their guidance?
- (3) Are the responsibilities of each cadre of supervisors clearly defined?
- (4) Is there a timescale within which confirmation must be granted or refused?

### **Policy Suggestions**

Probation must be seen as a period of consolidation based on practical teaching experience. Teachers should be adequately supported during this time and be provided, on a regular basis, with guidance and assistance by those nominated as their mentors.

To ensure that confirmation is awarded without delay it is suggested that, because of their detailed knowledge of the teacher, Headteachers rather than Inspectors, whose workload is onerous, should make the initial recommendation. Only where an appeal is made by a teacher against a Headteacher's refusal to propose confirmation should the inspectorate be involved.

### **Procedures for Consideration**

The probation system must be regarded as one of the key elements in developing a professional teaching service. To ensure that this is so, the period of probation must have the following characteristics:

- the teacher's work must be under continuous review;
- the teacher must demonstrate that he/she has given adequate time to the preparation of lessons and the correction of pupils' work;
- the teacher must be given adequate support, guidance and counselling by the Head of Department and the Headteacher;

- regular reviews of the teacher's progress must be arranged by the Headteacher;
- the final report on the probationer teacher should not contain any element which has not been raised during the periodic reviews.

If teaching is to be seen as a professional service it is important that all teachers should have the opportunity to see and comment on their final probationary report before it is submitted.

The body granting confirmation should be able to:

- grant confirmation;
- refuse confirmation;
- defer a decision on confirmation for a limited period and afford the opportunity for the probationer teacher to start afresh in another school.

### **References:**

#### **Developing a Professional Teaching Service**

*Chapter 8*

#### **Turning the Tables on Teacher Management**

*Chapters 7, page 32*  
*12, page 53*