



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Professional standards for further education teachers, work-based learning practitioners and adult learning practitioners in Wales



# **Professional standards for further education teachers, work-based learning practitioners and adult learning practitioners in Wales**

## **Audience**

Further education (FE) teachers; work-based learning (WBL) practitioners; adult learning practitioners; WBL providers; colleges; National Training Federation Wales (NTfW); Colleges Wales; Learning and Work Institute; Education Workforce Council (EWC); employers; trade unions; post-16 providers; voluntary and community sector organisations; commercial organisations and independent training providers; adult and community learning providers; other public sector organisations.

## **Overview**

This document sets out the professional standards for further education teachers, work-based learning practitioners and adult learning practitioners in Wales, outlines the background to their development and provides guidance and support for their implementation and ongoing use.

## **Action required**

None – for information only.

## **Further information**

Enquiries about this document should be directed to:

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## **Related documents**

*New overarching professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector in Wales* (Lifelong Learning UK, 2007)

[www.gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/110809professionalstandards.pdf](http://www.gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/110809professionalstandards.pdf)

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## **Foreword by Professor Bill Lucas**

Practitioners in further education (FE) and work-based learning (WBL) are part of a highly diverse workforce which plays a vital role in promoting the social and economic well-being of those living and working in Wales.

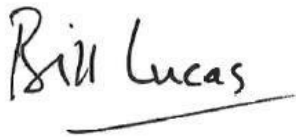
This document has been developed with the practitioners for whom it has been designed. Over the coming years it will evolve to contain and feature compelling examples of practice from which we can all learn.

A decade has passed since the original FE professional standards were last subject to a formal review and much has changed since then. They have served their purpose but we now want to be even more ambitious.

Specifically we want to set high expectations for all practitioners and be more explicit about the role of high-quality collaborative professional learning to support improvements. In all that we are proposing we are seeking further to enhance and re-estimate the professionalism of this important sector.

Effective professional development for practitioners in FE and WBL is a core part of securing the highest possible quality of learning, teaching and assessment practices in Wales.

I am very grateful to colleagues on the working group who have given so generously of their time to ensure that these standards are both practically realistic but also inspiring and aspirational.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Lucas". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

**Professor Bill Lucas**

**Chair: Professional standards for further education teachers and work-based learning practitioners – working group**

**Director: Centre for Real-World Learning at the University of Winchester**

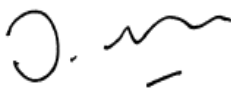
## Ministerial foreword

Our *Programme for Government* commits us to promoting the parity of vocational and academic routes in Welsh education. This reflects the equal importance of both pathways within an education system that is equipped to create the skilled, innovative, and adaptable workforce that Wales needs. High quality Post-16 Education and Training that is diverse, agile, collaborative and delivers for learners, employers, and communities across Wales is central to this vision.

Whether by providing compelling options for 14 to 19-year-olds, supporting learners to re-engage with learning in our communities, or by providing continuing opportunities for those in employment, we aspire to provide learning of the very highest quality. Within this context it is essential that our practitioners are given the right tools and support to facilitate excellence in their professional practice.

The Professional Standards set out here aim to provide an aspirational framework for the sector to work towards, with professional learning and collaboration at its core. We have worked in partnership with the sector to develop these standards, to ensure they enhance individual professional learning in a structured and cohesive way. We are confident that these standards will further engage and motivate practitioners and their employers in their pursuit for excellence and improved outcomes for all.

These standards are not the Welsh Government's standards. They belong to the post-16 workforce - written by the sector, driven by the sector, and owned by the sector.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a wavy line and a short horizontal stroke.

Jeremy Miles

Minister for Education and the Welsh Language

## **Background and context**

Between February and July 2017, the Welsh Government worked in partnership with a working group made up of a range of FE and WBL practitioners and others with specialist expertise in these areas. In May 2017, draft professional standards were published for wider engagement and comment from the sector. As a result of the engagement process, these revised standards and their accompanying guidance have been strengthened by many helpful suggestions from the field.

In 2022-23 a task and finish group was established to review the professional standards and update them to include the adult learning sector.

A powerful indicator of sector ownership of the standards is that they have been written in the first person, 'In my practice and with others, I . . . '.

Of critical importance is a core idea in the vocational education of countries across the world, that those working in FE, WBL and AL tend to operate as dual professionals, as experts both in a 'vocation' and as 'teachers'. In the standards and guidance we have made this a central strand.

Another distinctive aspect of FE, WBL and AL is the use of language. Colleges, other training centres and workplaces are very different from schools as locations for teaching, learning and assessment. Those who work in WBL see themselves less as teachers and more as practitioners, tutors, coaches and assessors. Work-based practitioners rarely use the word 'pedagogy' to describe the teaching and learning methods they select; whereas in schools this is more common. In FE and AL, 'tutor' or 'lecturer' are common terms whereas WBL practitioners are often not working in a classroom environment. Understanding such differences in context and terminology are important considerations in preparing professional standards that will be credible and meaningful to their target audience.

These professional standards are an important aspect of supporting all practitioners to actively engage in professional learning, with the purpose of developing individual and collective expertise to make a collaborative, coherent, innovative and sustainable research-led impact on all learners.

We are also encouraging employers to consider how they can use these professional standards to support and embed professional learning within their current professional development systems and processes.

Although the professional standards are not statutory, they do provide an important element for the sector to be considered alongside registration with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) (where applicable) and access to the Professional Learning Passport (PLP).

Full consideration has been given to Estyn's inspection framework which highlights the importance of professional learning, with this in mind, the standards have been developed to complement this approach.

## **Purpose of the professional standards**

The professional standards aim to promote the professionalism of practitioners in FE, WBL and AL, provide a framework for continuing professional learning, promoting improved practice through self-reflection and collaboration, and so ensure high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. Their primary purpose is to support individuals in making the most of their personal professional learning and as a basis to inform professional learning needs analysis.

### **Who are these standards for?**

It is envisaged that these professional standards will be used by practitioners within all of the following groups:

- further education teachers and institutions
- work-based learning practitioners and providers
- adult and community learning practitioners and providers
- voluntary and community sector organisations
- commercial organisations and independent training providers
- employers
- other public sector organisations.

### **How can the professional standards be used?**

Like any statement of quality, the standards can be used in a range of ways, for example: to stimulate debate

- as a focus for research and enquiry
- as an inspiration for specific training inputs
- as a framework for progression
- as an agenda for coaches, mentors and trainers
- as a benchmarking tool for training provision within institutions
- as a strategy tool for developing institutional strategies to improve teaching and learning
- as a guide for induction processes
- to inform the construction of job descriptions and person specifications
- as an indicator of personal and professional performance and learning
- as a means to establish a common language and expectation
- to inform curriculum development
- for organisational development and as core principles for setting up and running services.

The professional standards have been written to support and inspire practitioners and not as a means of assessing competence. We see high-quality, well-informed dialogue between practitioners and their managers as the best way of improving standards of teaching and thereby improving outcomes for all learners.

The aims sit well with some of the key messages in *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2015-2016* ([www.estyn.gov.wales/document/annual-report-2015-2016](http://www.estyn.gov.wales/document/annual-report-2015-2016)), which highlights the importance and key features of effective professional learning across all sectors.

Further work will be undertaken to develop the requirements for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) for further education based on this work.



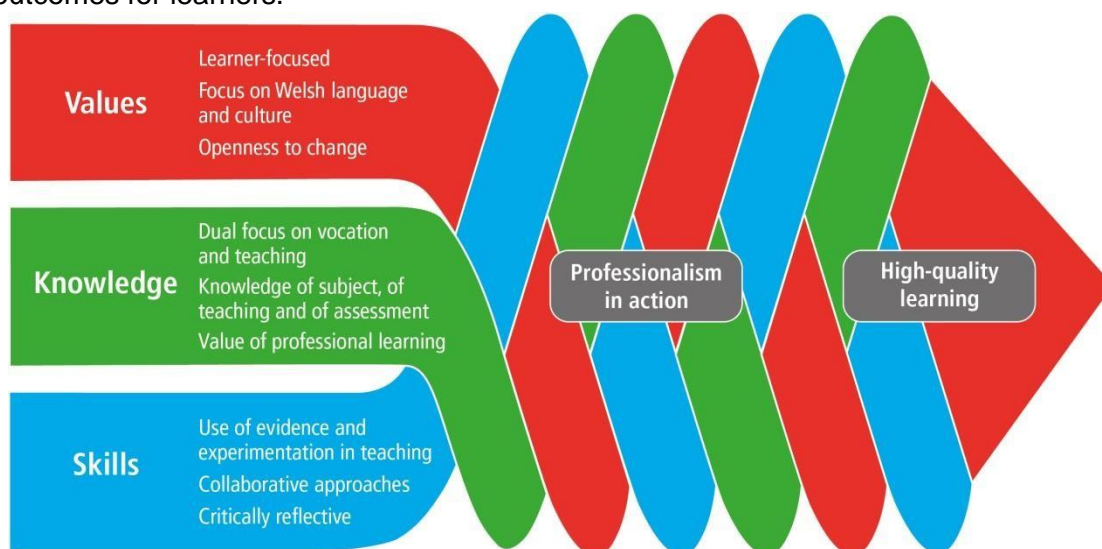
## Our approach

The key principles which informed the creation of the professional standards are as follows.

- **Dual professionalism** – respecting that many practitioners can be both subject and vocational specialists and leaders of, and experts in, teaching, learning and assessment.
- **Ownership** – developed by practitioners from the sector in Wales in collaboration with employers, trade unions and other stakeholders, as a concise and useful framework.
- **A continuum of growth** – inspiring for experienced staff and relevant to those starting out.
- **Practitioners as critical thinkers and innovators** – using the best teaching, learning and assessment methods according to the diverse needs of learners.
- **A common language** – an accessible framework to support individual and collaborative professional learning.

## Our model of professionalism

FE, WBL and AL practitioners need a particular blend of values, skills and knowledge. Taken together these define their professionalism and indirectly lead to improved outcomes for learners.

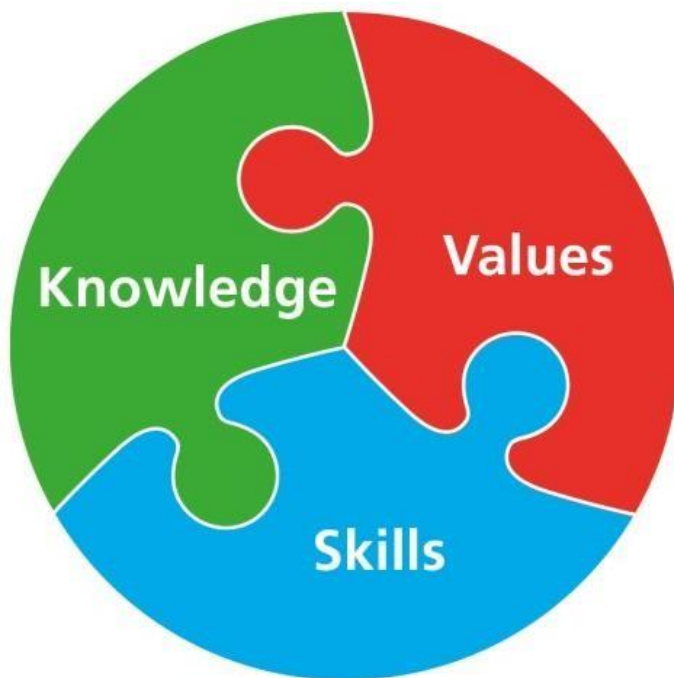


The DNA-like model above seeks to show the inter-relatedness of the values, knowledge and skills which make up professionalism and which, in turn, contribute to better outcomes for all learners<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In creating this model we have drawn on the OECD's Education in 2030 Framework and are deliberately making connections between the education of young people and the professional development of adults. The framework appears on page 2 of *Global Competency for an Inclusive World* (OECD, 2016).

As the diagrams above and below suggest, we see values, knowledge and skills as being more often interlocking than separated into three discrete elements, as they tend to be in professional standards across the world.



## **Professional standards for further education teachers, work-based learning practitioners and adult learning practitioners in Wales**

The professional standards for Wales are expressed in the form of a series of personal commitments – *In my practice and with others, I . . .*

### **Demonstrate commitment to learners, their learning, safety and well-being**

- inspiring, supporting and stretching learners, taking account of their starting points and progression options
- working with others to ensure learners are fully supported
- ensuring safe and inclusive learning environments

### **Value and promote diversity, equality of opportunity and inclusion**

- embracing diversity and advocating inclusion
- challenging discrimination in all forms

### **Understand the importance of the Welsh culture and language as a bilingual nation**

- taking opportunities to celebrate the diverse culture of Wales and its place in the world
- pursuing opportunities for my own Welsh language development and promoting its importance to others

### **Demonstrate dignity, courtesy and respect towards others**

- listening to and respecting other peoples' views, opinions and ideas
- acting as a role model for fair, courteous and respectful behaviours

supporting the wellbeing of learners and colleagues, seeking support where necessary

### **Maintain and update knowledge of my subject(s) and how best to teach and assess them**

- keeping abreast of my subject or vocational area and of effective teaching and assessment methods
- using assessment of and for learning to support learner progress

### **Know how to use evidence and research to improve my practice**

- accessing and experimenting with research from a range of sources
- reflecting on the latest theories and research with colleagues and exploring their relevance to my teaching and learning context

### **Plan and deliver effective learning, teaching and assessment**

- identifying, preparing, delivering and assessing learning programmes
- using a range of media, including digital, effectively to enhance the learning process

### **Build positive and collaborative relationships**

- working to build and maintain relationships with learners, colleagues, employers and others as appropriate
- exercising leadership through all aspects of professional practice and participating in and contributing to professional learning networks

### **Enable learners to share responsibility for their own learning and assessment**

- working with all learners to empower them to set challenging goals and targets and to evaluate their own progress against these
- communicating effectively with all learners, employers and others as appropriate

### **Critically reflect on own values, knowledge and skills to improve learning**

- developing my own literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills along with other appropriate professional skills
- critically appraising my own practice and adapting it in the light of reflection and feedback, including feedback from learners.

### **Demonstrate a commitment to sustainability**

- inspiring and motivating learners and colleagues to make the changes that will guarantee a sustainable future for everyone
- supporting learners to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development

## **Appendix 1: Examples for the use of the professional standards**

The examples below are intended to provide ideas and suggestions on how the professional standards might be interpreted and used in general day-to-day activity. Your examples should not be limited to these suggestions alone and they should be used to inform professional dialogue and support you with your continuous professional development.

The professional standards for Wales are expressed in the form of a series of personal commitments – *In my practice and with others, I . . .*

### **Demonstrate commitment to learners, their learning, safety and well-being**

- inspiring, supporting and stretching learners, taking account of their starting points and progression options
- working with others to ensure learners are fully supported

#### **For example, by:**

- promoting positive attitudes to learning
- supporting learners to identify their learner needs and aims
- supporting learners to achieve their potential by setting challenging work/tasks
- working collaboratively with others to reduce and remove barriers to learning
- ensuring learners are supported and taught in a safe learning environment, taking appropriate action where required using relevant policies and guidance
- using a range of teaching and assessment methods, making best use of knowledge and skills to support learners.

### **Value and promote diversity, equality of opportunity and inclusion**

- embracing diversity and advocating inclusion
- challenging discrimination in all forms

#### **For example, by:**

- promoting diversity and opportunity
- creating an environment in which learners feel safe to challenge discrimination
- encouraging learners to understand the benefits of diversity
- treating all learners and stakeholders equally and fairly
- challenging unacceptable behaviour.

### **Understand the importance of the Welsh culture and language as a bilingual nation**

- taking opportunities to celebrate the culture of Wales and its place in the world
- pursuing opportunities for my own Welsh language development and promoting its importance to others

#### **For example, by:**

- promoting the importance of the Welsh culture through topic/subject delivery
- encouraging and supporting Welsh speaking learners to undertake learning and assessment through the medium of Welsh
- promoting the benefits of developing Welsh language skills to learners, staff and employers, particularly in the context of the work place/sector and/or subject area

### **Demonstrate dignity, courtesy and respect towards others**

- listening to and respecting other peoples' views, opinions and ideas
- acting as a role model for fair, courteous and respectful behaviours

**For example, by:**

- treating all learners and colleagues equally and fairly, ensuring all have an equal opportunity to be heard
- listening to and responding positively to others' views
- behaving professionally at all times
- reviewing own professional and personal attitudes and beliefs

**Maintain and update knowledge of my subject(s) and how best to teach and assess them**

- keeping abreast of my subject or vocational area and of effective teaching and assessment methods
- using assessment of and for learning to support learner progress

**For example, by:**

- actively participating in professional development activities
- keeping abreast of developments on own subject/vocational area ensuring learners benefit from the latest knowledge and skills
- meeting awarding organisations' continuous professional development (CPD) requirements if appropriate
- maintaining an up-to-date Professional Learning Passport (PLP) or other system to include examples of reflective practice
- reflecting on latest research and developments collaboratively with colleagues to ensure continuous improvement.

**Know how to use evidence and research to improve my practice**

- accessing and experimenting with research from a range of sources
- reflecting on the latest theories and research with colleagues and exploring their relevance to my teaching and learning context

**For example, by:**

- working collaboratively with colleagues to share and debate ideas and innovations as a result of joint research
- actively engaging with networks of professional practice
- sharing best practice and research findings with colleagues to support continuous improvement

**Plan and deliver effective learning, teaching and assessment**

- identifying, preparing, delivering and assessing learning programmes
- using a range of media, including digital, effectively to enhance the learning process

**For example, by:**

- making use of digital teaching and learning platforms to support teaching, learning and assessment
- using learner data to track and review learner progress to inform planning, ensuring effective programme/subject delivery
- creating and planning learning environments where learners are active participants as individuals and as members of collaborative groups
- ensuring all learners have regular, constructive feedback to support progression

### **Build positive and collaborative relationships**

- working to build and maintain relationships with learners, colleagues, employers and others as appropriate
- exercising leadership through all aspects of professional practice and participating in and contributing to professional learning networks

### **For example, by:**

- guiding learners to manage and lead their own learning
- taking an active role in professional learning networks
- working collaboratively with peers to review the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on learner outcomes and own performance
- working collaboratively with peers, learners and stakeholders to support and drive learner progress
- taking responsibility for own development and seeking opportunities to extend knowledge to the network
- willingly sharing experiences to promote excellent teaching, learning and assessment locally and nationally
- ensuring appropriate communication with all stakeholders

### **Enable learners to share responsibility for their own learning and assessment**

- working with all learners to empower them to set challenging goals and targets and to evaluate their own progress against these
- communicating effectively with all learners, employers and others as appropriate

### **For example, by:**

- supporting learners to identify their learner needs and aims
- supporting learners to achieve their potential by setting challenging work/tasks
- leading learners to review their own progress
- using own experience and knowledge to engage, encourage and motivate learners
- understanding the links between employment/careers and own subject and/or vocational knowledge
- demonstrating an understanding of all stakeholder needs
- using technology to communicate, share information and encouraging the use of online platforms to share teaching, learning and assessment experiences.

### **Critically reflect on own values, knowledge and skills to improve learning**

- developing my own literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills along with other appropriate professional skills
- critically appraising my own practice and adapting it in the light of reflection and feedback, including feedback from learners.

**For example, by:**

- reviewing a sample of own lesson/assessment plans regularly to assess and measure the impact of each session on learners
- seeking and reviewing learners' views of own teaching/assessment and or delivery
- creating and taking opportunities to discuss and peer assess own work with other colleagues and practitioners
- seeking to share things that work well and collaboratively sharing good practice with peers to support improved learning outcomes
- being aware of how technology can be used to track and support learners to learn
- keeping abreast of constantly changing technology where relevant, and the requirements of providing effective literacy and numeracy support

**Demonstrate a commitment to sustainability**

- inspiring and motivating learners and colleagues to make the changes needed to achieve net zero
- supporting learners to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development

**For example by:**

- prompting colleagues and learners to review articles and literature on climate change
- being mindful of the resources we use day-to-day
- reducing high carbon resources in favour of low carbon alternatives



## **Appendix 2: Professional standards for adult learning task and finish group members and Professional standards steering group members**

Below are the members of the professional standards for adult learning task and finish group.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Martin Walker	Grwp Llandrillo Menai
Phil Southward	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Michelle Kerswell	Adult Learning Wales
Michelle Wright	Wrexham County Borough Council

The work of the task and finish group was overseen by the Professional standards steering group. Below are the members of the Professional standards steering group.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Kelly Edwards	Colegau Cymru
Lynne Hackett	Unison
John Graystone	Learning and Work Institute
David Hagendyk	Learning and Work Institute
Bethan Holliday Stacey	Education Workforce Council
Ben Lester	Education Workforce Council
Rachel Rees	Education Workforce Council
Lisa Mytton	NTfW
Margaret Phelan	UCU
Helen Scaife (observer)	Welsh Government