There is a wide range of roles and job titles linked to teaching in adult and further education (FE) [1] and training in England. These include teachers, trainers, lecturers, tutors, mentors, coaches and workplace supervisors, who may work for different types of education and training provider. They also teach across a wide range of academic and vocational areas and from basic skills through to degree or higher level qualifications, and are often referred to as ‘dual professionals’, being skilled as both teachers and technical professionals in their own right. In this article, the term ‘teachers’ is used to refer to all such roles and contexts.

There is no legal requirement for teachers in this sector to hold particular qualifications; the regulations governing this were revoked in 2013. It is a matter for employers to ensure that their staff are appropriately qualified for their role.

In 2015/16, around three quarters of teachers in the sector held a recognised teaching qualification, as stated on page 26 of the Department for Education (DfE) research report, Teaching, Leadership and Governance in Further Education [2]. This report also states on page 27 that, in contrast to entry into school teaching, around 90% of FE teachers are employed untrained and gain a teaching qualification on a part-time, in-service basis.

This article describes recognised teaching qualifications in the sector, which include academic awards, certificates and diplomas. The article on ‘Continuing Professional Development [3]’ describes the professional formation for Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status and for Advanced Teacher Status (ATS) for teachers in the sector.

Workplace assessors assess skills and knowledge acquired on the job. They are trained in the assessment approach required for the award of a qualification, but do not necessarily deliver any teaching. Specific qualifications for workplace assessors include Level 3 [4] awards and certificates in assessing competences and achievement. They also include Level 4 [5] certificates and awards in internal and external quality assurance of assessment processes and practices. The FE Advice [6] website provides further information. This article does not deal further with workplace assessors.

Some colleges choose to use instructors to support the delivery of learning. They are not teachers, but complement their work by taking responsibility for overseeing agreed learning and / or training activities. Instructors are not dealt with further in this article.

**Framework of qualifications**

A suite of teaching qualifications is approved for the further education (FE) sector by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) [7].

The DfE research report, Teaching, Leadership and Governance in Further Education [2] highlights on page 26 that the most commonly held teaching qualifications are:

- the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) covering 32% of teachers;
- the Certificate in Education (Cert Ed) covering 23% per cent of teachers; and
The qualifications are closely aligned with the Professional Standards [9] for FE teachers described in the article on ‘Conditions of Service’ [10].

Common to all teaching qualifications is the requirement for FE teachers to have a knowledge and skills base in English literacy, English language, numeracy and ICT. This must be at an appropriate level for them to best support the needs of their students. The set of specifications for these skills is known as the Minimum Core [11]. Course providers often put applicants through an initial assessment which can be used to form a personal development plan. This should include any English, maths or ICT development needs which should be met during the course.

Initial teacher education qualifications may also offer training in subject-specific teaching skills, though this may be limited, as highlighted on pages 27-8 of Teaching, Leadership and Governance in Further Education. Challenges faced by teacher education providers in this respect include the huge diversity of trainee teachers and the vast range of subject and occupational areas in which they are preparing to teach.

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) [12] produces an annual mapping [13] report which aims to give a clear picture of the FE teacher training sector, including number of trainees, qualifications taken, destinations and providers. The ETF intends to review FE teaching qualifications in 2019, leading up to the expiry date for existing qualifications in July 2020. Further information is available on the ETF website [14].

Level 3 qualifications

The Level 3 Award in Education and Training (AET) [15] is an introductory, knowledge-based teaching qualification comprising 12 credits. It has no minimum teaching practice requirement, so can be undertaken by individuals who are not in a teaching role. The observed teaching practice requirement takes the form of micro-teaching (teaching a short session to peers on the teacher training course). For more detailed information, see pages 61-3 of the ETF’s guidance [16] on teaching qualifications for the further education and skills sector (2016).

Former qualifications at this level that still have currency include the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) qualification.

Level 4 qualifications

The Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training (CET) [17] is a 36-credit qualification which focuses on practical teaching skills and requires a minimum of 30 hours of teaching practice. It comprises 21 credits from mandatory units and a minimum of 15 credits from optional units. Further information about this qualification is available on pages 56-60 of the ETF’s guidance [16] on teaching qualifications for the FE and skills sector (2016).

Although it is no longer available, at this level, the Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS) still has currency.

Level 5 qualifications

Level 5 qualifications provide the opportunity to explore underpinning theories, frameworks and research into effective teaching and learning alongside the development of practical teaching skills. A minimum of 100 hours of teaching practice is usually required.

The Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training (DET) [18] is the main, full teaching qualification for the
sector and is a 120-credit qualification, lasting one to two years. It comprises 75 credits obtained from 4 mandatory units, and 45 credits obtained through a combination of optional units. Students can choose a university- or college-led pre-service training route, or work as an unqualified FE teacher whilst training part-time.

Higher education institutions[19] are required to base their qualifications on the mandatory and optional units but are not required to use the title Diploma in Education and Training (DET). They usually offer two versions of the qualification – one for graduates and one for non-graduates. A range of titles is used, including most commonly Professional or Post Graduate Certificate in Education for Post Compulsory Education and Training (PGCE PCET).

There are also a number of Level 5 qualifications allowing learners to specialise in a particular area.

a) **Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training including a specialist pathway** [20] (120 credits). This qualification is the same as the Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training, but provides the opportunity to take all optional units in a specialist pathway. Specialist pathways can include English, mathematics or teaching disabled learners. 50 of the 100 hours of teaching practice must be in the candidate’s chosen specialist area.

b) **Level 5 Integrated Specialist Diplomas** [21] (120 credits). These are individual specialist qualifications in either English (literacy and/or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)), mathematics (numeracy), or teaching disabled learners. All of the compulsory 100 hours of teaching practice must be in the specialist area.

c) **Level 5 Standalone Specialist Diplomas** [22] (45 credits). These qualifications are intended for teachers who already hold a recognised generic teaching qualification, but want a qualification in one of the specialist areas. There is a requirement for a minimum of 50 hours of teaching practice, all of which must be in the chosen specialist area.

For more detailed information on the different types of Level 5 Diploma, see pages 35 to 55 of the ETF’s guidance[16] on teaching qualifications for the further education and skills sector (2016). Former qualifications at this level that still have currency include the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS).

**Reforms since 2001**

Requirements for teachers in further education (FE) colleges[23] to hold a teaching qualification were introduced by The Further Education Teachers' Qualifications (England) Regulations 2001[24]. They were followed, in 2002, by the establishment of the Institute for Learning (IfL) as the professional body for teachers in the FE and training sector.

The first Professional Standards for the sector were introduced in 2007. At the same time, The Further Education Teachers' Qualifications (England) Regulations 2007, [25] which revoked the 2001 regulations, required all new teachers to hold, or acquire within five years, a qualification such as the:

- Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) qualification,
- Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS),
- Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS).

The 2007 regulations also required those undertaking a full teaching role to complete a period of professional formation leading to Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status (see the article on ‘Continuing Professional Development’ [3]).

Additional regulations - The Further Education Teachers’ Continuing Professional Development and
Registration (England) Regulations 2007 [26] - required teachers to register with the IfL to be licensed to practise.

In 2007 also, the statutory qualification requirement, that had been in place for teachers in FE colleges since 2001, was indirectly extended to teachers in work-based learning and adult and community learning settings. This was as part of contractual obligations attached to the receipt of public funding.

In 2012, the requirement for teachers to register with the IfL was withdrawn and, in 2013, following the 2012 [27] review of professionalism in FE, the statutory qualification requirement was removed. At the same time, the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) [28] was established to oversee the development of the FE and training workforce. Its first task was a review of the Professional Standards with a view to establishing a new professional framework for the sector.

The Level 3 to Level 5 teaching qualifications for the sector were introduced in 2013, alongside an initial teacher training bursary to attract high quality graduates to teach English and maths in FE. Although bursaries [29] have been awarded for the 2018/19 academic year, there will be no new English and maths bursaries from August 2019. The Taking Teaching Further [30] programme, however, launched in June 2018, does include the provision of some financial support to attract experienced industry professionals with expert technical knowledge and skills to train to become FE teachers.

Revised Professional Standards for FE teachers were introduced by the ETF in 2014. In that year also, following the closure of the Institute for Learning (IfL), the ETF took on the IfL’s role and established the Society for Education and Training (SET) [31] as the professional membership organisation for the sector.

Further information on reforms since the introduction of the Professional Standards in 2007 is provided on pages 22-6 of Teaching, Leadership and Governance in Further Education [2].

Article last reviewed June 2019.