

April 2016

# Appraisal using the Standards and Criteria

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**These guidelines explain how to use the Professional Standards and Practising Teacher Criteria and make them useful, reasonable and meaningful. They have been prepared by the PPTA Executive with help from the Senior Positions Advisory Committee and the NZ Secondary Principals' Council.**

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PPTA represents the professional and industrial interests of some 17,500 secondary teachers in state secondary, area, manual training and intermediate schools, as well as tutors in community education institutions, alternative education and activity centres, and principals in secondary and area schools.



## Foreword from the President

Appraisal of teachers can be stressful and onerous for individuals, and has in recent years at times been highly politicised, through government expressions of concern about 'teacher quality' and pressure from some quarters to introduce performance pay as a supposed way to address this. PPTA believes that appraisal must not be politicised in this way.

Instead, appraisal should be part of a robust, high trust system, and should be developmental and helpful for both appraiser and appraisee.

PPTA is aware that sometimes teachers have been made to participate in processes that are far from ideal, and that some schools have introduced practices which are perfunctory, unhelpful, and unfortunately sometimes far too time-consuming for the benefit gained by anyone involved.

With this context in mind, PPTA has developed these guidelines for appraisal and attestation. As well as information and advice on how to use the two sets of standards that apply to secondary teachers, they provide a framework for development of a valid and reasonable appraisal system in schools.

The current legal and contractual provisions about teacher appraisal are complex; teachers and schools are often confused by them, and many schools have developed unnecessarily onerous systems that teachers are resisting. Nevertheless, appraisal which is developmental and responsive and takes into account the complicated whole of teachers' work, rather than just those easily measured outcomes that performance pay advocates care about, is a valuable professional tool.

We welcome comments, insights and feedback on the issue of teacher appraisal. Please write to [enquiries@ppta.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@ppta.org.nz)

Regards,



**Angela Roberts**

**PPTA President**

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# 1. Background

PPTA has a longstanding commitment to good quality and robust guidance and appraisal of teachers, to equity of access to quality professional learning and development, to professional ethics, and to proper processes for addressing issues of competence and conduct of teachers. Long before the government introduced professional standards in the late 1990's, the PPTA secondary teachers' employment agreement contained processes for addressing issues of competence or professional conduct, and set out criteria against which competence and behaviour should be evaluated. These processes and criteria were instigated by the union. PPTA has also had a Code of Ethics for many years, which covers a teacher's responsibilities to their students, families and to the profession.

Clear guidelines about what constitutes quality performance, and consistent and robust approaches to situations where practitioners fall short in the area of competence or conduct, are among the criteria for being a profession.

The question of what kind of standards or benchmarks or criteria are best for the teaching profession was an area of debate in the lead-up to the writing of the Registered Teacher Criteria (RTC). The Teachers Council commissioned a review by two Australian researchers, Lawrence Ingvarson and Elizabeth Kleinhenz<sup>1</sup> which argued for highly specified criteria. PPTA and NZEI, in response, commissioned a paper by Martin Thrupp, a New Zealand academic just in the process of returning from time at the Institute of Education, University of London, to a position as professor of education at Waikato University.<sup>2</sup> Thrupp's paper argued for generic standards on the grounds that while they "require a higher trust approach ... [they] are a sensible response to the paradox that the more managerial and performative pressure is placed on teachers, the less authentic their teaching will become" (p.4).

Thrupp's arguments prevailed in the end, and generic standards, the RTC, were developed by the Teachers Council in consultation with the profession.

In 2015, when the Teachers Council became the Education Council, the rules around registration and practising certificates also changed. One of the results of this was that the Registered Teacher Criteria were renamed as the Practising Teacher Criteria (PTC). To date, the criteria themselves, and the rules around meeting them, have not changed.

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<sup>1</sup> Kleinhenz, E. & Ingvarson, L. (2005) *Standards for teaching: Theoretical underpinnings and applications*. Unpublished paper for the New Zealand Teachers Council.

<sup>2</sup> Thrupp, M. (2006) *Professional standards for teachers and teacher education: Avoiding the pitfalls*. Available from <http://www.ppta.org.nz/resources/publication-list/2429-standards-thrupp>

Since the advent of the Education Council, another change has been the requirement that the Council audit and moderate 10% of appraisals for issue and renewal of practising certificates annually. This function has been contracted out to the Education Review Office. Section 5 of these guidelines includes information about this.

## **2. PPTA policy on the PTC**

PPTA Executive was consulted at all stages in the development of the RTC. While there were considerable difficulties along the way with producing a set of criteria that worked for all sectors from early childhood educators to secondary teachers, the Executive was satisfied that what resulted was a good description of the key elements of quality teaching.

However, since the launch in 2010 of the RTC, PPTA has fielded many requests from members, branches and school leaders for advice about how to implement them, and especially about what is seen as a “proliferation” of standards, the RTC and the Professional Standards in the STCA and ASTCA.

As long as the PTC are simply renamed versions of the RTC, PPTA’s policy towards them has not changed. However the Education Council has begun a review of the criteria. What will eventuate from this review is far from clear at the time of writing.

### **2.1 The PTC v. the professional standards**

For many years there have been two different sets of professional standards:

- The Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions, which were used to guide decisions about whether to recommend beginning teachers for full registration, and for the three-yearly renewal of experienced teachers’ practising certificates.
- The professional standards in the STCA and ASTCA, which were used to guide annual appraisal, make judgements about attestation for pay increments, and when competency procedures are invoked.

In many ways not much has changed, except that the Satisfactory Teacher Dimensions have been replaced by the Practising Teacher Criteria. However, the Teachers Council conducted workshops around the country which put the spotlight on the PTC, and in those workshops there was significant discussion about why there are two sets of standards.

PPTA Executive has discussed whether, at some time in the future, it should work towards the use of a single set of teaching standards, which would be the PTC. In 2012 PPTA made a claim in the STCA round to change the professional standards in the collective agreement and make them the same as the RTCs (as they were then). This was rejected by the Ministry, and was not sought again in 2015.

## 2.2 The PTC and *Tātaiako*

A further dimension to an apparent proliferation of standards has been introduced by the promulgation of a set of ‘cultural competencies’ for ‘effective teaching of Māori learners’, called *Tātaiako*.<sup>3</sup> The genesis of these was the coalition agreement in 2008 between the Māori Party and the new National government, and their development was placed with Hon Pita Sharples as Associate Minister of Education 2008-2011.

The cultural competencies described in *Tātaiako* are not compulsory for schools to use when evaluating teachers. One major use of these competencies is to expand teachers’ understanding of the PTC as they relate to effective teaching in the bi-cultural context of New Zealand. As the Teachers Council material published at the time of *Tātaiako*’s development stated, they are NOT a checklist, or exemplars or benchmarks for assessment of culturally responsive teachers, nor are they a ‘one size fits all’ model of ‘an exemplary culturally responsive teacher’.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/t%C4%81taiako-cultural-competencies-teachers-m%C4%81ori-learners-0>

### **3. The roles of the different standards**

Schools have been encouraged to make the PTC central to appraisal and attestation processes. This is not unreasonable, but it could be problematic in some ways because of the different roles of the standards and criteria.

#### **3.1 The professional standards**

The collective agreements refer to these standards in relation to:

- Attestation for pay progression, including justifying the withholding of an annual increment (STCA 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 and ASTCA 3.7 and 3.8);
- Teacher competence (STCA 3.3 and ASTCA 2.3)

These references in the agreements mean that even if a school chose to use the PTC as its first reference point in its appraisal processes, once any question arose about whether a teacher was meeting the standards set by the PTC, recourse would need to immediately be made to the professional standards.

PPTA has produced updated advice on competence procedures.<sup>4</sup>

#### **3.2 The practising teacher criteria**

These standards must be the reference point in relation to:

- Beginning teacher induction and mentoring
- Decisions on whether to recommend that beginning teachers or teachers subject to confirmation progress to full certification
- The three-yearly renewal of practising certificates.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/resources/publications/doc\\_download/282-teacher-competence](http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/resources/publications/doc_download/282-teacher-competence)

### 3.3 Appraisal

Schools are required to have a performance management system in place for principals and teachers. The purpose of this is to ensure that:

- The principal and individual teachers know what is expected of them
- Support is available to them to meet those expectations
- Their performance will be monitored and assessed
- Their skills can be further developed.<sup>5</sup>

When the regulations requiring annual appraisal were first put in place in 2007, the reference point for this was the professional standards, but there would probably be no problem if a school chose to use the Practising Teacher Criteria instead for this purpose. On the other hand, although the STCA and ASTCA are not specific about the professional standards in relation to the annual appraisal of teachers who have reached the top of the salary scale, they are clear that those teachers who have management units are to be appraised against the unit holder standards for those responsibilities, and against the professional standards for their classroom teaching.

Both agreements do require an employer to “Make provision for ... opportunities for the enhancement of the abilities of individual employees” (STCA 3.1.1 (b) (iv) and ASTCA 2.1.1 (b) (v)). (These words are taken from the State Sector Act, Section 77A, and relate to being a good employer.) This is a useful reference point for a teacher who is not being given equitable access to professional learning opportunities to meet their individual professional needs.

### 3.4 Possible problems with using the PTCs as central to appraisal

Below are two examples which demonstrate the potential fishhooks in using the PTCs as central to the school’s performance management processes.

#### ***Example 1***

School A decides to use just the PTC for all appraisal and attestation, however one fifth year teacher is deemed to be not meeting PTC1 Indicator i: “Engage in ethical, respectful, positive and collaborative professional relationships with:

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.education.govt.nz/school/running-a-school/employing-and-managing-staff/performance-management/>

- ākonga
- teaching colleagues, support staff and other professionals
- whānau and other carers of ākonga
- agencies, groups and individuals in the community.”

The school is threatening to withhold a pay increment. On the other hand, the teacher would meet the professional standard for classroom teachers “Communicate effectively with families, whānau and caregivers”. The issue is around whether they communicate with “agencies, groups and individuals in the community”.

In this case, the teacher should still receive the increment because the professional standard should be the reference point for pay progression. (In any case, they should be deemed to meet the PTC as well, because it is the criterion that must be met, not every individual indicator.)

### **Example 2**

School B has initiated competence procedures under STCA 3.3 with an experienced teacher, deeming them to be failing to meet PTC3: “Demonstrate commitment to bicultural partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand”. The school argues that the teacher, who has strong atheist beliefs, is not being respectful when they protest at staff meetings about the increasing use of Christian karakia and himene at school events. On the other hand, the teacher is meeting the professional standard in relation to Te Reo me ona Tikanga by learning to use and correctly pronounce Te Reo Māori and understands “basic Māori protocols” such as pōwhiri.

In this case, a PPTA Field Officer would argue that there are no grounds for initiating competence procedures because the teacher meets the professional standard in the STCA, and they are exercising their right to freedom of religion, and they are not behaving unprofessionally about their concerns. (During karakia and himene, the teacher simply sits or stands quietly without participating, which could not be deemed disrespectful.)

## **3.5 Conclusion**

These two cases demonstrate the need for schools to be very clear about which set of standards/criteria is relevant to the process being followed. If normal appraisal for teacher professional development is shifting into consideration of withholding a pay increment or initiating competence procedures, the professional standards must immediately become the **sole** reference point.

The Education Council's website has a matrix which maps the PTC against the professional standards.<sup>6</sup> If a school is using the PTC as its first point of reference for appraisal, this document would be useful if a teacher appears to be failing to meet a criterion. An appraiser could then check whether the teacher is also failing to meet the equivalent professional standard or not. If there are concerns, the first step is to discuss it with the teacher and offer appropriate help designed to assist them to reach the standard. Following this an appraiser will need to consider whether or not a programme of support and development should be initiated and a pay increment withheld (STCA 4.2.4, ASTCA 3.8) or the competence procedures begun and an assistance and personal guidance programme initiated (STCA 3.3, ASTCA 2.3). For these decisions, only the relevant collective agreement can guide you.

**Despite the potential problems discussed above, there is no question that the PTC are potentially powerful tools for development as a teacher. Using them for the appraisal and attestation processes as well as for Beginning Teacher induction and mentoring and for three-yearly renewal of practising certificates is probably a good move to address workload, as long as the issues identified above are addressed where necessary.**

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<sup>6</sup> <https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/rtc-matrix-mapping-secondary>

## 4. Good appraisal/attestation processes

### 4.1 Develop a shared understanding of the standards/criteria

The fact that the PTC constitute a single set of generic standards for the whole teaching profession from early childhood education to senior secondary, and without levels for different stages in a teacher's career, is both a strength and a weakness.

It is a strength because it allows the criteria to be contextualised to the sector, the school, and the particular teaching roles of the individual.

It is also a weakness if the school fails to make reasonable judgments about how a particular criterion should be interpreted for their particular sector and context and for individual teachers depending on their years and range of experience and their roles and responsibilities in the school.

During the development of the RTC, PPTA representatives on the reference group struck many situations where early childhood teacher and secondary teacher views about what was important were radically different. One example was around involving parents in assessing learners. Early childhood teachers collect information from families/whānau about what their child can do. Secondary teachers are more likely to share with families/whānau assessment information collected by the school, because the school is likely to have greater expertise in what are the requirements of Level 2 NCEA Physics, for example. In the end, the indicator was written as “foster involvement of whānau in the collection and use of information about the learning of ākonga”, which was a delicate compromise between the perspectives of the sectors.

Hence, developing a shared understanding within an individual school of the twelve criteria and the indicators is important, alongside using whatever reference material is available to ensure that the school's understanding is not out of kilter with that of other secondary schools. There are resources on the Education Council's website that should help with this.<sup>7</sup>

A way to build a shared understanding among teachers in your school is to build the PTC into meaningful contexts, such as:

- Professional learning conversations, focussing on one of the criteria at a time
- To reflect on practice
- To assist professional goal setting

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<sup>7</sup> <https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/supporting-resources-practising-teacher-criteria>

- To identify professional learning needs
- Evaluation of professional learning opportunities
- Classroom visits or observations
- Explicitly including the criteria in appraisal and reflection processes
- End of topic evaluations
- Connections to other programmes in the school.

## **4.2 Ministry of Education resource**

The Ministry of Education has a website for school leaders to assist them in developing appraisal processes that encourage success for Māori students.<sup>8</sup> The resources on this site closely link teacher appraisal with professional learning, and have little focus on summative judgements of teachers against either the PTC or professional standards. This is in many ways a very positive and helpful approach, but appraisers need to be aware of both aspects of appraisal, particularly in a climate of heightened accountability.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://appraisal.ruia.educationallleaders.govt.nz/>

## **5. The issue of evidence**

### **5.1 Gathering evidence over three years**

PPTA advice on gathering evidence for the Practising Teacher Criteria has been that teachers need to have evidence towards all 12 criteria over the three year certification cycle, so we recommended that teachers focus on four each year. At the point that our Appraisal and Attestation Guidelines were released in 2012, the Teachers Council appeared to support this advice. Many schools have subsequently used the PPTA advice in the implementation of their appraisal processes.

However, in 2015 the Education Council staff informed PPTA that they had changed their view on this, and were now requiring teachers to gather evidence towards all 12 criteria each year, so there would be multiple pieces of evidence gathered for each of the criteria during the appraisal cycle.

PPTA is of the view that this is unnecessarily onerous and adds little to the validity of appraisal practices. The cycle of appraisal against the Practising Teacher Criteria is a three year cycle, and as long as there is evidence against the criteria to be presented at the end of the cycle for any summative judgement, then that is sufficient. Furthermore, the assumption that without physical, documented evidence the Criteria are not being met, is one that we reject.

High quality appraisal practices are about a lot more than gathering and documenting evidence, and we encourage schools to continue to implement practices that are high trust, educative and developmental, rather than based on collating screeds of documentation.

### **5.2 What sort of evidence is required?**

Members have expressed concerns to PPTA that some school leaders used the introduction of the RTC as a reason to change the requirements for production of evidence for appraisal and attestation processes.

The RTC did not intrinsically change anything in this regard. Ever since the professional standards were introduced and schools were required to have performance appraisal processes, schools have needed to formalise their processes for teachers' professional reflection on and documentation of their work. The issue is always around how much documentation is enough. (See 'Reasonable and meaningful documentation' section below.)

Decisions about the PTC, whether for beginning or experienced teachers, do need to be based on evidence. It is perfectly reasonable to expect teachers to reflect on evidence of the impact of their teaching on their students, including social outcomes as well as academic outcomes. This should be done regardless of the requirements of the PTC, as an ongoing part of every teacher's professional practice, not just as a one-off activity for an annual appraisal interview. The PTC should be seen as linked to ongoing teacher growth and, as such, part of the teaching as inquiry process.<sup>9</sup>

Evidence can come from:

- Classroom observations
- Discussion with appraiser or other colleagues
- Documentation, which could include:
  - Evidence of reflective practice
  - Records of PLD and study undertaken
  - New material developed for subject area
  - Student feedback
  - Student achievement data (academic and social outcomes)
  - Records of inquiry processes undertaken.

The Education Council recommends that the evidence used for the PTC should represent 'a natural harvest of everyday practice' rather than material collected especially for appraisal.

The Draft Evidence Guide<sup>10</sup> from the Education Council is useful in this regard.

### **5.3 Reasonable and meaningful documentation**

The Teachers Council, in the booklet that launched the RTC in 2010, wrote:

The degree of formality and extent of documentation of evidence supporting the demonstration of the Registered Teacher Criteria will clearly be different for experienced teachers renewing practising certificates in contrast to what is required by provisionally registered teachers working towards gaining full registration, which may be more extensive and formal.

Schools that saw the introduction of the RTC as a requirement for teachers to gather masses of data in portfolios and complete extensive checklists of actions have been demanding unnecessary work of their already overworked teachers. At the same

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<sup>9</sup> NZ Curriculum 2007 p.35

<sup>10</sup> <https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/rtc-draft-evidence-guide>

time, some schools have had relatively rudimentary appraisal processes which did not require teachers to focus on any evidence of the impact of their teaching on their learners. As a result of the Teachers Council workshops on the RTC between 2013 and 2015, such schools may have realised that they need to make their processes more robust, both in relation to the professional standards and what have become the PTC.

Often teachers will have straightforward access to all the evidence required to show that they are meeting the criteria, simply because they like to organise their professional records around the criteria as part of their ongoing self-review.

Other teachers may prefer not to organise themselves this way, but can easily access relevant documents when needed, either in hard copy or by showing them online to an appraiser as part of a professional conversation.

Gathering a specific portfolio of evidence just for an annual appraisal interview should not be essential. For example, if modified and updated unit plans, student feedback, achievement data, meeting notes, PLD reflections, etc, are all stored in appropriate places (digitally, on paper or a combination of both) then it should not be required to duplicate them for appraisal purposes. On the other hand, if a teacher would like to assemble a sample of relevant documents to show and discuss at an appraisal meeting, then that should be fine too.

Digital systems such as google.docs, OneNote or e-portfolios can be good for this, as long as the opportunity to learn to use them is factored in, but paper systems are also acceptable. School leaders should ensure that teachers have plenty of opportunities to review evidence, including to locate and/or assemble it in preparation for appraisal interviews. Developing a timeline with a cycle of regular gathering of evidence for self-review, opportunities to record and reflect, and to collate documentation, will make it a more useful process.

Documentation used should include some form of summary documentation that is referred to the principal for use when making decisions about whether to endorse a teacher's application for issuing or renewal of a practising certificate. To ensure teachers' perceptions of safety within the appraisal process so that they feel able to honestly disclose to their appraiser areas of weakness, the principal should not be able to access all of the source documentation for appraisal.

When they are conducting a review of a school's appraisal process and judgements on behalf of the Education Council, Education Review Office reviewers do not expect to see all of the documentation either, but instead are happy to view the summary documentation on which the principal made their judgements. There is an example

of such a summary document on the Education Council's website.<sup>11</sup> An explanation of ERO's approach to the audit is on their website.<sup>12</sup>

PPTA's *PLD Toolkit*<sup>13</sup> contains extensive information on areas such as appraisal, teaching as inquiry, quality professional learning, and other relevant topics. Another useful resource is the material on NZ Curriculum Online about teaching as inquiry.<sup>14</sup>

Material on the Education Council's website generated from the Teachers Council's programme of PLD on appraisal between 2013 and 2015 is helpful for a school reviewing its appraisal process.<sup>15</sup>

**The most important message is not to go overboard in collection of evidence.**

## 5.4 Beginning teachers

For beginning teachers, there is quite a lot of advice available on the Education Council website about what is required in regards to their induction and mentoring programme and the evidence they need to keep.<sup>16</sup> The evidence-gathering for beginning teachers needs to be more formal and robust than for fully certificated teachers.

Provisionally certificated teachers have three years to reach the standard for full certification, which can be extended to six years with justification and on application to the Education Council. Periods of being employed for at least 0.5 Full Time Teacher Equivalent in blocks of time of at least six weeks can be considered towards full certification. Day relief cannot.

It is important that provisionally certificated teachers who are employed on fixed term agreements take evidence with them between schools. They will need to be able to show that they have engaged in an induction and mentoring programme, and have evidence of things like lesson observations and how they are meeting the Practising Teacher Criteria, in order to show it to the professional leader who will make the recommendation for full certification to the Council.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/appraisal-of-teachers-project> - final document on that page

<sup>12</sup> <http://ero.govt.nz/Review-Process/Education-Council-Audit>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/resources/publication-list/1651-pld-toolkit>

<sup>14</sup> <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-stories/Case-studies/Inquiry/Teaching-as-inquiry>

<sup>15</sup> <https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/appraisal-of-teachers-project>

<sup>16</sup> <https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/being-issued-full-practising-certificate>

Research with beginning teachers in 2006<sup>17</sup> revealed a worrying picture of the state of induction and mentoring practices in some secondary schools. 21% of beginning secondary teachers felt they had been left alone to “sink or swim”. 12% did not even have anyone assigned to mentor them. Around a third did not know what criteria were being used to assess their work. 20% did not believe that their beginning teacher programme was carefully documented by the school. It is to be hoped that this research, if repeated now, would reveal a far more positive picture.

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<sup>17</sup> Cameron, Dingle & Brooking (2007) *Learning to Teach: A survey of provisionally registered teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand*, Wellington: NZCER

## 6. Appraisal checklist

A school can use this checklist when developing its appraisal processes or to evaluate the ones that it has in place. If the answer is 'No' for any of these questions, the guide above will help the school to make changes. Any changes in the processes should be discussed with the branch by school leaders.

1	Does your school have a performance appraisal process for teachers?	
2	Are the Practising Teacher Criteria and/or Professional Standards referenced in your appraisal process?	
3	Is the relationship between the Practising Teacher Criteria and the Professional Standards made clear? Do teachers know which standards they are being evaluated against?	
4	Do you have opportunities to think about and unpack the Practising Teacher Criteria in order to develop a shared understanding of what they mean?	
5	Is the evidence required for performance appraisal naturally occurring?	
6	Do you use multiple sources of evidence for performance appraisal?	
7	Is any extra work required for performance appraisal built into the school timetable and/or meeting cycle and properly accounted for to allow it to happen effectively?	
8	Do teachers set their own goals for performance appraisal?	
9	Are they offered appropriate and relevant support to reach their goals?	
10	Is there a clear relationship between the school's appraisal system and allocation of resources for professional learning and development?	