



# Supporting Teacher Educators

*for better learning outcomes*

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This text draws on the work of the Thematic Working Group 'Teacher Professional Development' which comprised experts nominated by 26 European countries, and stakeholder organisations. More information can be found at: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/teacher-cluster\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/teacher-cluster_en.htm).

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## Executive Summary

- 1 Making sure that Europe's six million teachers have the essential competences they require in order to be effective in the classroom is one of the keys to raising levels of pupil attainment; providing new teachers with initial teacher education of the highest quality, and encouraging serving teachers to continue developing and extending their competences throughout their careers, are both vital in a fast-changing world.
- 2 Teacher educators are crucial players for maintaining - and improving - the high quality of the teaching workforce. They can have a significant impact upon the quality of teaching and learning in our schools. Yet they are often neglected in policy-making, meaning that some Member States do not always benefit fully from the knowledge and experience of this key profession. It also means that teacher educators do not always get the support and challenge they need, for example in terms of their education and professional development.
- 3 Member States increasingly acknowledge the need to define clearly what those who teach teachers should be expected to know, and be able to do; they acknowledge that great care needs to be taken in recruiting and selecting teacher educators, and in facilitating their career-long professional development. By stimulating and supporting the development of explicit frameworks and policies, national and regional education authorities can assist teacher educators to be as effective as possible.
- 4 This document is intended to inspire and inform policy makers in this endeavour. The guidance and advice it contains stem from a process of 'peer learning' between experts on teacher education policy and practice, nominated by 26 countries and by European stakeholder bodies. Peer learning enables participants to compare and contrast different policy approaches, learn from other countries' practices, reflect critically on current arrangements in their own countries and draw shared conclusions about what makes for effective policies.
- 5 This document offers policymakers practical advice that is underpinned by evidence from academic research and from the analysis of current policies in participating countries. It identifies key characteristics of successful policies and gives practical examples. Recognising that every education system is unique, it does not make prescriptions about specific policy reforms, but provides a menu of choices, allowing for tailored policy responses to fit each national context. With examples drawn from many countries, it deals with the following aspects:
  - the importance of the profession and the roles it plays (▶ chapter 1)
  - policy challenges facing Member States (▶ chapter 2)
  - issues of professional competences and quality (▶ chapter 3)
  - teacher educators' professional learning and development (▶ chapter 4)
  - research for a better understanding of teacher education and teacher educators (▶ chapter 5)
  - the importance of professional communities and associations (▶ chapter 6)
  - roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. (▶ chapter 7)

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## How this text was researched and prepared

- 6 The European Commission's Thematic Working Group on 'Teacher Professional Development' brings together national experts from 26 countries. It is recognised that Peer Learning activities between Member States can provide opportunities to share knowledge about current policy and to exchange best practice.
- 7 The group identified the need for peer learning to support Member States in developing and improving their policy and practice as regards teacher educators. In 2010, a preliminary Peer Learning Activity (PLA) was organised which began to map the main policy issues and challenges concerning teacher educators' identities, profiles and education – and the responsibilities for ensuring the quality of their work.
- 8 The report of that PLA emphasised that teacher educators, as key players in improving education quality, should be enabled to be the lynchpins in innovation, both within teacher education and in schools. However, widely different understandings of the notion of teacher educator were noted between – and even within – countries, education systems and institutional levels (European Commission 2010a).
- 9 That initial mapping was followed by a more detailed overview of developments, challenges and achievements in teacher educator policy and practice across most European countries (Caena 2012).
- 10 In March 2012, the Commission's peer learning conference in Brussels hosted 150 participants from 26 countries – teacher educators, academics, policymakers and stakeholder groups – in order to:
  - exchange good policy examples and engage with current research,
  - develop an informed consensus around the key policy issues that Member States can be invited to address,
  - raise awareness amongst stakeholders (policymakers, teacher educators, higher education institutions, school leaders and others) about these issues, and
  - contribute to the development of policy advice to Member States.
- 11 The conclusions of the conference (see Annex) highlighted the need to raise awareness of the important role of teacher educators and to ensure national policies support the development of the profession (European Commission 2012c). Following this, the Irish Presidency of the European Union hosted a conference in February 2013 which allowed some of these issues to be discussed in more detail.
- 12 The present document draws upon all of these sources of knowledge and expertise. Throughout the text, policy examples from different countries are used to illustrate ideas and proposals; these are not intended as a complete overview of existing policies on teacher educators in Member States.

# 1 Who are teacher educators? Why are they important?

This chapter:

- describes the many different types of teacher educator, and
- identifies the key roles they play.

## A profession increasingly in the public eye

- 13 There is a pressing challenge for Member States: ensuring that education and training systems deliver the right skills for employment, are more inclusive and operate with greater efficiency. The European Commission's communication 'Rethinking Education' (European Commission 2012a) proposed specifically that Member States:
- "... revise and strengthen the professional profile of all teaching professions (teachers at all levels, school leaders, teacher educators). Key actions are reviewing the effectiveness as well as the academic and pedagogical quality of initial teacher education, introducing coherent and adequately resourced systems for recruitment, selection, induction and professional development of teaching staff based on clearly defined competences needed at each stage of a teaching career, and increasing teacher digital competence".
- 14 The accompanying Staff Working Document 'Supporting the Teaching Professions' (European Commission 2012b) recommends that Member States take action to support the teacher educator profession. It notes that:
- "the selection and professional development of those who educate teachers is a prerequisite for raising the quality of teaching and improving learning outcomes.  
Teacher educators guide teaching staff at all stages in their careers, model good practice, and undertake the key research that develops our understanding of teaching and learning."*
- 15 This builds on the Council Conclusions on the professional development of teachers and school leaders, in which Ministers of Education underlined that teacher educators should have attained a high academic standard, together with relevant practical experience and competences (European Council 2009).
- 16 In this context - and also as a result of wider educational developments such as the Bologna process - teacher education has been re-defining its place and increasing relevance in academic cultures and higher education systems (European Commission 2007, European Council 2007). Only recently has policymaking begun to focus on teacher educators, perhaps indicating that the so called 'hidden profession' (Snoek et al 2011; Murray and Male 2005) is finally becoming increasingly visible.
- 17 Teacher educators are not only responsible for the initial education of new teachers, but also contribute to the continuing professional development of

Europe's six million serving teachers. They are present at every stage of the teacher's career. They teach teachers how to teach, and facilitate and encourage their learning, both explicitly, via lectures, seminars and tutorials, and implicitly, by modelling in their own teaching what it means to be a professional teacher. Importantly, it is teacher educators who teach (student) teachers how to link theory with practice and how to reflect on and evaluate their own practice in order to enhance their learning. They look after the well-being of student teachers, and offer guidance and counselling to serving teachers on professional issues. They play a key role in introducing innovation into schools. And they undertake the key research that develops our understanding of teaching and learning.

- 18 Teacher educators are therefore crucial in supporting both new and experienced teachers, who need to acquire and develop knowledge, skills and values in order to be effective in the classroom, throughout their careers. Teacher educators are thus key players in supporting teachers in raising student attainment.
- 19 The teacher educator profession is, in most Member States, still in its early stages of development. This is related to the fact that many countries have yet to achieve a 'teacher education system', understood as a single, coherent continuum of policy and provision that leads teachers seamlessly from initial teacher education, through the induction phase and into career-long continuing professional development. In most Member States, government policy on the quality requirements for teacher educators, or on their academic and professional development, does not exist or is underdeveloped; this is especially the case for those who educate teachers in early education, adult education, as well as vocational education and training.

### **A multi-faceted profession**

- 20 The phrase 'teacher educator' is often taken to refer to someone in higher education, perhaps teaching educational science or didactics within an initial teacher education programme. This narrow definition, however, has been the subject of debate and change in many countries and institutions. The task of educating a teacher is complex; it lasts throughout the teacher's career; and it requires the cooperation of a wide range of actors.
- 21 Therefore, it is logical to argue that teacher educators are all those who play a role in teacher education. For example, the various profiles of teacher educators outlined by the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE 2008) include:
  - supervisors of practice in schools linked to initial teacher education institutions;
  - trained and experienced teachers supervising practice in other schools;
  - tutors (counsellors, coordinators, mentors, guides etc.) supervising prospective teachers during the qualifying phase in the workplace;
  - networks of supporters in the qualifying phase in the workplace;
  - higher education academic staff, who teach education;

- higher education academic staff, who teach school subjects;
- other higher education academic staff, who teach didactics or general courses, and
- education researchers.

22 We may also add:

- professionals in the private sector or in trade unions, who provide in-service training and development for teachers.

23 Through the process of peer learning, a common definition of teacher educators has been adopted:

***Teacher Educators are all those who actively facilitate the (formal) learning of student teachers and teachers.***

24 As teacher educators work in many different institutional contexts, and come to teacher education from different backgrounds, they may differ significantly from one another - even within the same country - in several aspects, including:

- level of qualification (Bachelor, Master, PhD),
- (subject) area specialism,
- work experience (as school teachers, as lecturers ...),
- competence profiles,
- work environments (school, higher education, private provider of continuing professional development, state agency etc.),
- contractual arrangements and salary,
- institutional constraints, etc.

## Identity

25 In any profession, the issue of professional identity is important. The collective sense of self helps the group to shape the common aims, values and philosophy. Professional identity is also closely linked to the issue of quality, for it is the professional group as a whole that determines what standards should apply to its members.

26 Research suggests that teacher educators, unlike members of other professions, have multiple professional identities: they may think of themselves primarily as school teachers, as teachers in higher education, as researchers, or as teachers of teachers (Swennen et al. 2010) - or they may identify with several of these roles simultaneously. Many of those who teach teachers might not consider themselves to be teacher educators at all.

27 As a consequence, teacher educators can have varying levels of commitment to teacher education. For example, teacher educators in a faculty of education may devote their whole working time to student teachers, and research on teaching

or learning. By contrast, professors of chemistry in the same institution may spend only 10% of their working time with future teachers, and may not think of themselves as teacher educators, despite (perhaps unwittingly) exercising an influential role over beginning teachers by the example they set.

- 28 An important concern here is that lecturers who do not think of themselves as teacher educators may inadvertently model poor teaching behaviours to their students. Indeed, student teachers' learning seems to be influenced by form as much as by content – by how they are taught, as much as by what they are taught (Loughran and Berry 2005). Teacher educators, in modelling what they advocate for the classroom, in fact give future teachers a genuine learning experience, with first-hand insights into teaching and learning that might not be fully appreciated or understood, were they to be discussed or conveyed in other ways.
- 29 Because of their strong influence on the competence and lifelong learning of teachers, it is important for teacher educators to be conscious of the importance of their role, and to work together effectively at all stages of the continuum of professional development. Effective cooperation requires common values for the profession and a shared responsibility for high quality teacher education. Therefore, teacher educators – no matter what role they play in teacher education or how they identify themselves – should have a clear, shared understanding of their roles and of the many aspects of quality in teaching.

## 2 A major challenge: coherent policy

This chapter:

- outlines the current situation of the profession in Member States; and
- identifies challenges and issues that will be discussed in following chapters.

- 30 Student teachers are both 'learning to teach' and 'teaching to learn' (Boyd et al. 2011). The roles of their educators are key, in both school and higher education settings.
- 31 Although the teacher educator profession spans a range of professionals with multiple identities, as well as different backgrounds, qualifications and work contexts, a relatively narrow definition of teacher educators seems to be held in most Member States, whether explicitly or implicitly.
- 32 According to recent small-scale survey data from European countries represented in the Thematic Working Group 'Teacher Professional Development' (Caena 2012), the broad definition of teacher educator – including teacher education academic staff, CPD educators as well as school-based teacher educators – is currently used in seven countries.
- 33 In half of the countries in the survey (9 out of 18), the teacher educator profession is conceptualised either narrowly, or not at all - and the term 'teacher educator' applies only to pedagogy and didactics staff in higher education. Legislation, in these contexts, tends to be vague or absent; it does not guarantee the formal recognition of teacher educators, or common quality requirements for their selection. Moreover, initial teacher education and professional development are likely to be separate in terms of providers, trainers, standards and curricula.
- 34 This poses a significant challenge, particularly in contexts characterised by reforms and institutional restructuring in teacher education. In fact, failing to define teacher educators' roles and the competences they require, and the failure to acknowledge all those who play a part in teacher education, can be barriers to educational improvement and innovation.
- 35 Available evidence and peer learning suggest that in many Member States the teacher educator profession faces several interlinked challenges, which can hamper its potential to enhance the quality of education. These issues are dealt with below.

### **The competences, professional learning and development of teacher educators**

- 36 A clear definition of what society expects from its teachers can help improve teaching practices. In the same way, the coherent definition of the roles of teacher educators and the competences they require can support a more coherent approach to selecting and educating them (European Commission 2012a, 2012b).

- 37 In most countries, however, there is not yet a shared understanding about the roles, competences or qualification requirements of teacher educators. This may be due to the fact that in those contexts, no single body is responsible for professional quality frameworks, or the recruitment or selection of teacher educators (Caena 2012). Therefore, in many countries there is still relatively little awareness about teacher educators' key roles in improving educational attainment, or the competences they need to fulfil their roles effectively (see chapter 3). The framework and range of policies to support the profession are limited and do not always guarantee consistency or quality.
- 38 In most countries represented in the above-mentioned survey, responsibility for the requirements and professional profile of teacher educators lies with a variety of stakeholders or parties (e.g. governments, university boards, etc.), or is not clearly assigned. As a result, most countries lack shared formal regulations or recognition concerning teacher educators.
- 39 In seven countries, teacher educator competence requirements can be found, or are under development; in a few cases, such definitions are specified in detail (Caena 2012). However, competence descriptions often apply to only one group of teacher educators, such as those who work in teacher education institutions, as mentors in induction programmes, or in primary education.
- 40 Moreover, such requirements can sometimes stem from institutional initiatives on different levels, such as universities or networks – and thus can often exclude teacher educators in schools or in the private sector. This lack of a system-wide consensus about minimum competence requirements and qualifications may limit countries' ability to safeguard quality, e.g. through the process of selecting people for the profession.
- 41 Finally, the roles and competences of teacher educators are connected to other issues in many Member States, as well – for instance, the need for guidance and provision concerning the initial training, induction and continuing professional development of teacher educators is linked with the consistency and quality of the preparation of teachers (Caena 2012).

### **Communication, cooperation and collaboration**

- 42 In most Member States there is a wide range of organisations and institutions which can claim to have responsibilities and roles in teacher education. These might include national, regional and local government departments, trade unions, professional associations and private sector organisations, as well as higher education institutions and schools.
- 43 Evidence (from peer learning and the cited survey) suggests that coordination between these different organisations tends to be limited or infrequent. For example, teacher educators in schools are likely to have little contact with those in teacher education institutions; even within the same university, teachers in subject departments may rarely interact with colleagues in education faculties.
- 44 This lack of coordination can prevent the sharing of knowledge and good practice between different settings (Caena 2012). For example, it can lead to inconsistency in the recruitment and selection of teacher educators, if institutions

can each define the qualities, competences and skills required in different ways, following internal institutional needs rather than a shared understanding of professional roles and competence frameworks.

- 45 The lack of coherence and communication within the profession can go deep: within the same teacher education institution, teacher educators may adhere to different professional standards and values, depending on the university department to which they belong. In these circumstances, institutions or governments might face considerable challenges in ensuring consistency and quality in the content and delivery of teacher education.
- 46 In a few countries (for instance, the Netherlands and Hungary), associations of teacher educators can provide leadership for the profession and promote coordination, communication and dialogue between the several different stakeholders (See Chapter 6). Such associations have the potential to play an important role in forging a professional identity for teacher educators, addressing issues of common interest, creating platforms for professional dialogue or debate, as well as influencing and informing the development of policy and legislation.
- 47 Where professional associations are present, they can take the lead in promoting the development of professional quality frameworks and profiles for teacher educators, which could improve consistency and quality across different types of institutions.

### A fragmented institutional landscape

- 48 Some of the issues discussed so far and in the following pages, concern tensions arising from the fragmentation of the profession over a variety of institutional contexts. Here are some examples.
- 49 **Failure to draw on the full range of research activities undertaken by teacher educators.** Some teacher educators already carry out relevant research for some of the major research councils (e.g. the Economic and Social Research Council). Some also make a significant contribution to policy research (funded by local, national and international policy makers), thus working towards evidence-informed policy making. However, the involvement of the profession in these activities can be strengthened. Other possible research activities suitable for teacher educators can include:
- enquiry by reading and reflection;
  - systematic enquiries into personal practice, informed by research;
  - individual practitioner research and action research for academic theses;
  - participation in small-scale studies published in professional journals;
  - writing books and materials for school practitioners;
  - involvement in national research projects with international dissemination of results in academic journals (Murray 2008a, 2008b).
- 50 Both practice-based and theory-focused research can contribute to a deeper understanding of education and of educating teachers. However, in universities,

practice-based research tends to be considered of inferior value, if compared with more traditional types of research, such as theoretical, subject-specific studies.

- 51 **Insufficient recognition of teacher educators within universities.** The perceived low status of university teacher educators tends to drive many promising teacher educators away from the profession, towards subject specific academic research – this seems to be the case in one third of countries in the cited survey (Caena 2012). In order to promote the recognition of teacher educators within universities, local stakeholders such as teacher education institutions or education authorities could play a significant role.
- 52 **Inadequate support for school-based teacher educators (mentors).** Mentors have difficulties in identifying themselves, or being accepted, as teacher educators (Bullough 2005). If mentors are not formally recognised and supported as school-based teacher educators, with accredited training programmes and certification of their work, they may struggle to have meaningful, collaborative working relationships with other groups of teacher educators such as those in teacher education institutions.

## Moving forward

- 53 The following chapters consider ways for the challenges outlined so far to be tackled in different countries. It should be noted, however - as in any aspect of education or training systems – that there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution for different countries and cultures.
- 54 This is largely due to the significant variety of legislative and institutional arrangements covering teacher educators. Member States’ ability to address these challenges is affected by a number of contextual factors, including:
- the degrees of control and support for policies on teacher educators at national, regional and local levels (for example: is centralised policy action possible, or is responsibility decentralised?);
  - the institutional responsibilities and roles for teacher education quality (for example: does the government itself monitor the quality of teacher education, is this role delegated to another body such as a Teaching Council, or is it left to individual teacher education institutions?);
  - the extent to which teacher educators’ profiles, competence requirements and career paths have already been defined (in higher education institutions, and schools ); and
  - the specific features of school teaching levels/ stages and curricular/ subject areas.
- 55 Peer learning suggests that the key steps that can be taken by Member States to put the profession of teacher educator onto a firmer footing include:
- finding ways to achieve shared definitions of professional competences – reflecting agreement on the multi-faceted knowledge, experiences, skills and

attitudes required for teacher educators to be effective in different contexts (chapter 3);

- improving provision of professional learning and development (chapter 4);
- promoting investigation and research about teacher educators (chapter 5);
- promoting active, committed professional communities and associations (chapter 6); and
- clarifying roles and responsibilities (chapter 7).

### 3 Professional competences and quality

This chapter:

- outlines the kinds of competences that teacher educators may require;
- discusses issues of quality, selection and qualification; and
- considers policy implications.

#### Defining teacher educators' profiles

- 56 Given the influence that teacher educators have on the learning of (student) teachers, ensuring that their work is of high quality is extremely important (Snoek et al. 2011). Raising teacher educators' quality and formal qualification requirements can lead to wider improvements in education (Buchberger et al. 2000, European Commission 2012b). In European countries, however, there seems to be little explicit policy, either to define what quality means in teacher education, or to define the formal education and professional development required of teacher educators.
- 57 Swennen and van der Klink (2009) point out that teacher educators "need to act in such ways that other stakeholders, including policy makers and education authorities, recognise [their] professionalism." They advocate the definition of quality frameworks and/or codes of conduct by the profession; this can provide a shared language - a frame of reference that teacher educators and school leaders can use to reflect on teacher educator quality and professional development.
- 58 However, quality frameworks for teacher educators cannot be set unless there is a clear definition of the role(s) played by teacher educators and the competences required of them.

#### Professional knowledge and competences

- 59 As outlined in chapter 2, teacher educators need to be able to deploy competences on two levels: *first-order* and *second-order* knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- *First-order* competences concern the knowledge base about schooling and teaching which teacher educators convey to student teachers - as related to subjects or disciplines;
  - *Second-order* competences concern the knowledge base about how teachers learn and how they become competent teachers. They focus on teachers as adult learners, the associated pedagogy, and organisational knowledge about the workplaces of students and teachers (Murray 2002).
- 60 In addition, a mapping of the key areas of competence required of teacher educators can include the following:
- knowledge development, research and critical thinking competences;

- system competences (i.e. managing the complexity of teacher education activities, roles and relationships);
  - transversal competences (for instance, decision making, initiative taking, entrepreneurship, team work);
  - leadership competences (inspiring teachers and colleagues; coping with ambiguity and uncertainty); and
  - competences in collaborating, communicating and making connections with other areas.
- 61 Teacher educators should be encouraged to expand their repertoire of skills, as an essential feature of their lifelong learning journey. They might be involved in the selection, recruitment and retention of teachers, in some national contexts; they need expertise in the professional use of theory and research development, together with an awareness of value issues in education (Cochran-Smith 2005).
- 62 While the competences and areas of knowledge outlined so far provide a general overview of professional qualities, the requirements of individual teacher educators might vary, according to their roles and working contexts (Smith 2005). For instance, in some countries, school-based teacher educators (such as mentors) might not be as much involved in research as those employed in universities. Whether this variety of requirements should lead to different competence profiles for teacher educators working in different contexts, such as university or school institutions, can be debated.
- 63 If the teacher educator is considered as a cooperating member in a team, the full range of competences needed might be provided by the team as a whole, with individual members bringing different areas of knowledge and expertise. Such an approach will require effective coordination and management. Employing complementary staff within areas of professional activity, strengthening partnerships, and describing competence at a team level with a mix of different profiles (subject specialists, pedagogy experts, and mentors), might represent effective strategies for this approach.
- 64 The setting of explicit teacher educator requirements and the development of quality frameworks for teacher educators may be beneficial in providing reference points for training and evaluation, enhancing routes for professional competence and growth (Crooks 2003). The approach to developing professional quality frameworks by associations of teacher educators, including regular revision and national accreditation criteria, can represent an example of collaborative processes in professional communities (Murray 2008a; Cochran-Smith 2005).
- 65 Quality frameworks might be seen as fulfilling an 'ethical' obligation to be precise about teacher educators' work, an opportunity to share a knowledge base, and a way to make public the characteristics of the specialization (US Association of Teacher Educators /ATE 2008). ATE standards, for instance, underscore the key aspects of modelling, reflection, collaboration, professional responsibility, and service in quality education - with research-based practice underpinning all aspects.

- 66 Professional ownership seems to be promoted also by Dutch teacher educator standards (Koster and Dengerink 2008); on the other hand, teacher educators can see standards linked with assessment systems (such as in England) mainly as external quality assurance tools, and therefore perceive them as constraints on professional autonomy (Morley 2003).
- 67 Policies in European countries which show growing interest in these aspects can provide examples for reflection. In some countries, teacher educator competences are already defined by the government and specified in law (e.g. in Portugal), or they are being developed (e.g. in Austria and Germany). In the Netherlands, a set of professional standards for teacher educators is in place, developed by the relevant professional body through dialogue with stakeholders. In other contexts, competences for teacher educators have been partially defined, with a focus on specific subgroups, as country examples below show (Caena 2012).

*In **Belgium (Flanders)**, a developmental profile for teacher educators was devised by one regional teacher education network, in consultation with other networks; it is now disseminated on a national scale by the professional association of teacher educators. The definition of minimal levels of competence in this professional profile is considered as important; the Ministry can have a facilitating and supporting role.*

***The Netherlands** have had a complete set of teacher educator standards for more than ten years now; it has been revised to include school-based teacher educators, and currently, competence levels. This is complemented by a specific knowledge base that describes the key elements of being a teacher educator, undertaken jointly by the professional association VELON and the VU University Amsterdam (in place since 2011).*

*In **Luxembourg**, following up recent educational policy for teaching and learning improvement in schools, a university working group has the task of defining competences for teacher educators in primary education, facilitating collaboration between university faculty and school mentors. A university research project has also been launched to develop a handbook for secondary school teacher educators, who all receive specific training.*

*In **Estonia**, guidelines about competences of teacher educators (mentors) in induction are used for their selection in schools: they underline the importance of first and second order competences, but also of professional attitudes – commitment, responsibility, willingness to support and supervise. There are also interesting initiatives in academic institutions. The categorisation of teacher educators aims to develop professional career models in teaching practice schools, where teacher educators can express multiple identities and competences – teaching, supervising and carrying out action research*

(University of Tartu).

*In **Germany**, national standards for teacher education offer guidelines for teachers' and teacher educators' quality, defining specific knowledge requirements for teacher educators. Those working in University Colleges of teacher education (Ausbilder) are generally expected to have the competences mapped above – including intercultural, collaborative, supervision and pedagogical competences. In most Länder there are special regular offers of CPD for teacher educators, within regional partnerships and cooperation structures with teacher educators from Universities.*

*In **Austria**, legislation on the duties and responsibilities of teacher educators in University Colleges will provide a point of reference for the description of necessary competences, working in parallel with a Quality Act recommending the competence requirements of teacher educators working in schools and continuing professional development (CPD). The profile of CPD trainers, for instance, focuses on competences about counselling, process management and implementation, communication, and so on.*

## Qualifications for teacher educators

- 68 The previous section addressed the issue of the quality of teacher educators by looking at professional profiles, and competence or quality frameworks. A different approach consists in looking at formal qualification requirements - academic qualifications and research credentials - which mostly represent the current key reference criteria for selection, as there usually exist no formal courses to become teacher educators. In the main, defining formal requirements for teacher educators appears to be a task for central authorities (national advisory boards, accreditation commissions, the Ministry), working together with university and school staff.
- 69 The following questions can be raised, with different relevance according to the professional contexts of teacher educators.
- Should a teacher educator have the prerequisites of a teaching qualification and several years of teaching experience?
  - Should all teacher educators at least have a Masters' degree?
  - Should all teacher educators have a PhD?
- 70 If the teacher educator is considered as a member of a cooperating team, teaching experience might not be a necessary prerequisite for all on entering the profession. However, most countries seem to require that all teacher educators have at least a teaching qualification and basic pedagogical skills, entailing a full programme of initial teacher education and teaching practice (Caena 2012).
- 71 Most countries surveyed have no specific qualification requirements for teacher educators, but only general academic requirements for working in higher education contexts. Even where professional quality frameworks are in place,

clear national requirements about minimum qualifications may be lacking, or under debate.

- 72 This situation has given freedom of decision to those in charge of recruiting teacher educators; recruiters might thus prioritize either professional experience or academic qualifications. In fact, the debate on teacher educator competences often focuses on the supposed pre-eminence either of academic and research skills, or of teaching qualifications and experience.
- 73 The recognition and validation of a wide range of professional experiences and assets, also linked with informal and non-formal settings, could be extremely important for reinforcing the professional quality and status of different profiles of teacher educators. This would require setting up legal, regulatory frameworks and quality monitoring on a national level. It could also highlight a prominent role for professional associations, which could promote the importance of self-regulation and self-assessment for teacher educators as professionals (Koster and Dengerink 2008).
- 74 In some countries of the cited survey, formal qualification requirements for teacher educators have been introduced, focusing on specific groups (e.g. in Sweden, Hungary and Finland). Other countries have approached this issue in the context of the accreditation of institutional providers of teacher education, as in Ireland (Caena 2012).

*In **Sweden**, all teacher educators working at universities are required to have a PhD, with the development of intensive support programmes for those teacher educators that need to achieve a PhD qualification.*

*In **Hungary**, formal university education programmes for school-based teacher educators (mentors) are being introduced.*

*In **Finland**, the requirements for teacher educators working in teacher education institutions include MA qualifications and advanced Education studies (at least 90 ECTS).*

*In **Ireland**, the Teaching Council has developed revised criteria for teacher education providers, which now express requirements for staff responsible for student teachers' learning. They include:*

- *a qualification at a higher level than the one being taught;*
- *teaching experience in the relevant sector (primary or post-primary);*
- *research activity as for supporting theory-practice integration; and*
- *registration with the Teaching Council (it is recognised that all these criteria might not be met by all staff).*

*The Teaching Council has also begun to identify some of the competences needed by school-based teacher educators, within a pilot model of induction/probation. Such teacher educators should:*

- *be fully registered and have at least five years' experience as such;*
- *be good communicators, sensitive to the viewpoints of others;*
- *be committed to providing professional as well as personal support and challenge;*
- *be good role models, with a wide repertoire of teaching styles;*
- *be committed to high standards of professional practice and conduct;*
- *be willing to commit time and effort in the interest of developing newly qualified teachers as well as their own practice;*
- *be open to being observed in their practice by other teachers.*

*Consideration is being given to developing similar sets for teacher educators involved in facilitating induction workshops.*

## 4 Professional learning and development

This chapter:

- describes the particular features of teacher educators' professional development and learning;
- identifies challenges and opportunities for policy support in this field.

### Lifelong learning: a must for teacher educators

- 75 The context in which teacher educators work changes over the years. Structures for teacher education, regulations on the teacher education curriculum, and the teaching profession itself, are all subject to change. The background and attitudes of students entering teacher education and schools will alter; research will give new insights into effective teaching strategies in higher education. Thus, lifelong learning is important for sustaining the high quality performance of teacher educators.
- 76 What is more, teacher educators as role models need to show that they are lifelong learners in order to promote similar attitudes in their students (Lunenberg et al. 2007). Therefore, the lifelong learning of teacher educators is essential in enabling them to be proactive, in raising their awareness of new challenges in society and schools, as well as in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers responding to these challenges (Day 1999).
- 77 Logically, the lifelong learning pathway for teacher educators should be similar to that of teachers and include the stages of initial education, induction and career-long professional development. This section considers these different stages, and their implications for policies aimed at encouraging and facilitating teacher educators' professional learning.

### Selection and initial training

- 78 Where countries do use specific criteria for selecting candidates to be employed as teacher educators, the selection process will generally feature academic degrees (e.g. the requirement of a master's degree or PhD), as well as teaching experience in primary or secondary education (especially for teacher educators involved with methodology courses or teaching practice).
- 79 These entrance criteria, therefore, often focus on some aspects of the professional roles of teacher educators; they can relate to their first-order identity as teachers, and as teachers/researchers in higher education, but they will less frequently cover their second-order identity as teachers of teachers. Furthermore, many people who educate teachers may not have been selected for their competences in teacher education in the first place – for instance, university lecturers in school subjects may have been chosen because of subject specific knowledge, or competences as researchers.
- 80 However, the criteria of entrance qualifications and prior experience can be useful instruments to provide a minimum level at the start of the teacher

educator career. These criteria can either be set on a national level, by governments, or locally, by the directors of teacher education institutions.

- 81 Initial courses of preparation to become a teacher educator are not available in any EU country. Generally, school-based teacher educators are appointed because they are experienced teachers, while teacher educators appointed by universities may be experienced teachers, subject specialists, or researchers in an educational or subject area. None of these usually follow any kind of initial training to prepare them for the teacher educator profession.
- 82 As a consequence, most teacher educators, whether in higher or school education, do not enter the profession with a clear understanding of their roles, or a clear identity as teacher educators (see Chapter 2), but will have to develop these while working with (student-) teachers.

## Induction

- 83 As most teacher educators entering the profession have not undertaken specific training, the induction phase is crucial in developing understanding of their particular roles, which entail second-order teaching competences. Research on the experiences of beginning teacher educators shows that the difficult transition from teacher to teacher educator can be challenging, when it comes to developing a clear understanding of their role, building professional confidence, learning the language of the profession, and gaining access to the knowledge base on teacher learning (Murray 2008b; Swennen et al. 2009).
- 84 At the beginning of their career, university teacher educators who come from the school sector may have feelings of inadequacy, above all about research practice. Their induction will often be unstructured, and happen 'by immersion', through informal teaching and research activities in the workplace (Murray 2008b). Collaborating with other teacher educators within their institution, in micro-communities of practice, to share interests, reflect and discuss professional problems might therefore be very important. Ensuring that such opportunities for collaboration are available can avoid too narrow a programme of staff development activities (Hargreaves 1992).
- 85 Personalised induction programmes, tailored to the needs, experience and expertise of individual teacher educators, should entail a variety of integrated tasks and settings, on and off the job, and build in adequate time for reflection. To develop professional confidence, the induction phase should highlight aspects of being a second-order teacher, as well as a teacher in higher education (for those coming from primary or secondary teaching contexts), or a mentor. This should include knowledge and understanding of adult learning and of the professional development of teachers.
- 86 Coherent induction programmes should cover personal and social support (becoming a member of the teacher education community) as well as professional support (focusing on professional knowledge and learning), and could involve a mentoring system, an expert system, a peer system and a self-reflection system (European Commission 2010b).

- 87 In most member states, there are no national policies in this field, and induction for teacher educators is only addressed in some small-scale initiatives at institutional level (Snoek et al. 2011). This leaves room for developing policies at national, regional or institutional level.

### Continuous professional development

- 88 Since there is no initial training for teacher educators and only limited induction, opportunities for teacher educators to reflect and to develop their professional qualities throughout their careers are extremely important. These learning opportunities should respond to individual professional needs, but also prepare them for new developments in (teacher) learning, (teacher) education, the teaching profession and society (Smith 2003).
- 89 Professional learning activities for teacher educators can focus on the following range of content areas, with wide variations depending on their roles (e.g. within universities or schools):
- new developments in society and education with a significant impact on teachers and teacher educators – for instance, ICT, second language learning, diversity and inclusion, learning to learn competences;
  - specific competences in innovation and change management, since teacher educators can be key actors in educational reform;
  - courses for school-based teacher educators or mentors concerning the methodology, pedagogy and didactics of teacher education;
  - programmes engaging teacher educators in practice-based research in both school and university settings - school-based teacher educators, if inexperienced in doing research, may find this useful in helping them meet the expectations of the newly joined higher education community.
- 90 Policy measures to support the professional learning of teacher educators can include setting formal requirements and regulations about continuing development, stimulating self-directed activities, creating incentives or arranging favourable conditions for their learning.
- 91 These measures should take into account the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders: teacher educators as individuals, in cooperating teams or organized in a professional body; employers of teacher educators, etc. Measures will also need to address issues of time (teaching loads, research and administrative tasks) and conditions of employment (part-time positions, or split jobs between school and university).

*In **Norway**, the Ministry of Education and Research has started a research programme for teacher educators (PRAKUT), engaging them in practice based educational research in close cooperation with schools. This programme is supported by a national graduate school in teacher education (NAFOL), where teacher educators can join PhD programmes. While supporting the development of teacher educators' research expertise, this initiative also contributes to the development of the knowledge base on teaching, teacher*

*education and teachers.*

*In **Austria**, the University Colleges of Education offer training courses for teacher educators in supporting school-based innovation processes (focusing on consultancy competences, process and implementation competences, communication competences, etc.).*

## Delivering professional development for teacher educators

- 92 Approaches to professional development can vary widely, depending on the preferences, learning styles and career prospects of teacher educators. Professional learning activities can cover both formal and informal arrangements, which include the following options.
- 93 **Workshops.** Traditional workshop approaches, used in several countries, represent a flexible option; they require a limited investment of time, can cover a wide variety of themes, and can be scheduled in or out of working hours.
- 94 **Degree programmes.** These programmes offer a more ambitious approach; they often aim to raise teacher educators' level of qualifications from Master's level to Doctorate level, such as the Norwegian NAFOL/PRAKUT programmes. These programmes can be costly in terms of time and money, since teacher educators are often offered a sabbatical to complete their dissertation work. In a few countries there is the possibility of engaging in educational doctorates; these allow the practitioner to carry out practice-oriented forms of research, which might better fit the context of teacher education.
- 95 **Collaboration in networks for curriculum innovation or practice-oriented research.** Networks represent examples of an informal professional learning arrangement. Important opportunities for professional development are provided by teacher education associations and networks (e.g. the Association for Teacher Education in Europe). Collaboration networks should cross boundaries between different institutions, as well (such as schools and universities).
- 96 **Sharing practice.** This is another type of informal learning arrangement and can include, for example, teacher educators observing each other's classes and exchanging feedback, or being engaged in the co-construction of curricula and learning arrangements for student teachers. Communities of practice for teacher educators (including virtual environments) can be 'safe spaces' that facilitate learning through action-based discourse and reflection (Margolin 2011; Loughran et al. 2008).
- 97 **Workplace experiential learning.** As there are no formal initial programmes for beginning teacher educators, much of the professional and identity development is based on workplace experiential learning. For work-based learning to go beyond local knowledge, teacher educators should develop an understanding of broader issues of teacher education, to be shared in wider professional communities (Fuller et al. 2004).

- 98 **Self-regulated learning.** Teacher educators can also widen their professional knowledge through self-regulated learning. This requires high quality resources to be available, which can consist of national and international conferences for teacher educators, national and international journals, books and web resources.
- 99 When it is linked with inquiry, experiential learning, reflection on practice, and collaborative knowledge construction, self-regulated learning can be key for teacher educators' professional development (Tillema and Kremer-Hayon 2002). Indeed, self-studies seem to be suitable to address the 'split' nature of teacher educators' work. They should mirror the fundamentals of their profession as teachers of teachers: higher levels of reflection, modelling roles, as well as the key pedagogical relationship between teacher educators and student teachers (Berry and Loughran 2002; Loughran et al. 2004; Loughran and Berry 2005).

*The **Hungarian** Association of Teacher Educators has created a Teacher Educator Academy, which offers several one-day or half-day sessions covering a wide range of topics - such as the role of subject disciplines; the organization, content, methods and evaluation of practice in teacher education; the Bologna process in teacher education.*

*In **Finland** teacher educators develop knowledge and competence through constant engagement in research projects - which also challenges them to develop their teaching using the latest findings.*

*In **Belgium (Flanders)**, professional networks of teacher educators are promoted at a regional level; teacher educators from different institutions work together on curriculum development and innovation in teacher education.*

*In **Estonia**, a project has been set up with a focus on placement exchanges between schools and teacher education institutions. This enables teacher educators who have been working in universities for a long time to update their knowledge of the daily practice and work of teachers in schools. At the same time, teachers with lots of practical experience have the opportunity to share their experiences with student teachers and higher education staff.*

*The Association of Teacher Educators in **the Netherlands** has developed an extensive online knowledge base for teacher educators, using national experts on topics such as the identity of teacher educators, the learning styles of student teachers, curriculum approaches, assessment techniques in teacher*

*education, and school-based teacher education.*

*The **Dutch** Teacher Educator profile, divided into broad areas of tasks and competences, has been conceived as a 'mirror for reflection' - for setting professional development goals, and not for assessment purposes. Teacher educators analyse their strong and weak points by assembling feedback from colleagues and student teachers, developing a professional development plan, and constructing a portfolio, engaging in professional dialogue with peer coaches and assessors.*

### **Policy conditions for teacher educators' learning**

- 100 For the development of a coherent and sustainable system of professional learning for teacher educators, a number of conditions should be taken into account. The first is an awareness of the unique nature of the multiple professional identities of teacher educators. Without such an awareness, governments, teacher education institutions or professional groups will be unlikely to organize focused professional development opportunities supporting teacher educators in their roles as teachers of teachers.
- 101 When this awareness exists, it is important to define clearly the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders (see chapter 7). These roles and responsibilities may depend on national circumstances – e.g. whether professional development is compulsory, is defined as a condition for employment by the heads of teacher education institutions, or is a requirement for acceptance as a member of the professional community of teacher educators. This will also define who takes the lead in organising professional development activities: national or regional authorities, (networks of) teacher educational institutions, professional associations, or all of these.
- 102 The variety of development opportunities needs to take into account different profiles of teacher educators (school-based, university-based, subject-oriented, practice-oriented, research-oriented, and so on), as well as differences of learning styles and learning needs. Therefore, a wide variety of topics and approaches is necessary.
- 103 The opportunities, obligations and expectations regarding the professional development of teacher educators need to be embedded in the human resources policies of teacher educators' employers (whether they are teacher education institutions, in-service learning institutions, schools, or the government). Space, time and funding are essential conditions for the engagement of teacher educators in professional learning, and for the development of activities and resources. Finally, the attitudes and motivation of teacher educators can be catalysts of innovation – in particular, personal entrepreneurship in networking for development with experts and professionals (Drent and Meelissen 2008).
- 104 As shown by policy examples in the previous sub-chapter, governments in several countries have financially supported the development of regional

networks (e.g. Belgium Flanders), training courses for teacher educators who support schools (e.g. Austria), or other forms of professional development for teacher educators.

*In **Hungary**, the National Association for Teacher Educators has developed formal education programmes for school-based teacher educators, while the government has issued a decree which defines such programmes as compulsory qualifications for all school-based teacher educators starting from 2015.*

*The **Dutch** Ministry of Education has created several centres of expertise for teacher education, focusing on subject didactics and teacher learning. These centres of expertise are connected to specific universities, but they have a national role.*

*In **Estonia**, a programme funded by the European Social Fund supports the professional development of teacher educators, by organising courses and exchange placements in different teacher education contexts (e.g. schools and higher education institutions).*

*In **Norway**, the NAFOL national graduate school – which offers teacher educators the opportunity to work towards higher academic qualifications (PhD) while doing work-relevant research – provides PhD students with seminars, national and international conferences in Norway, economic support for these activities and for research periods abroad. NAFOL is included in the PRAKUT programme, which aims at developing research expertise and knowledge base in teacher education, with research-based knowledge application in school practice.*

## 5 Improving our understanding of teacher education and teacher educators

This chapter:

- considers the particular role of research as connected with teacher education and teacher educators;
- highlights the relevance of teacher educators' professional action, learning and enquiry as priority areas for research;
- underlines the importance of international policy exchange and dialogue on these topics among key stakeholders.

105 A coherent system of professional development activities for teacher educators should be based on knowledge and research regarding the work and learning of teacher educators. This requires an intensive research agenda to develop the knowledge on teacher educators - which also needs to be made accessible, by means of centres of expertise, journals and publications, or conferences.

### Knowledge development

106 Teaching teachers to teach is a complex task - it must be undertaken to the highest possible standards, because of its impact on the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Therefore, Member States and the profession should have access to comprehensive, relevant information - for example, about what activities and practices seem to work in educating teachers, or what competences are needed in specific contexts.

107 However, little relevant research has been carried out and scant information is available to policymakers and course designers. There is little empirical evidence directly concerned with "...the professional learning of this unique group", and policy documents tend to overlook this issue (Murray and Harrison 2008). In particular, the evidence base in relation to the specific domains of knowledge required by teacher educators is limited.

108 The complexity of defining what knowledge teacher educators should have is a well-recognized issue (Murray 2008a). Even within a single cultural setting, there can be multiple models of teacher education - which leads to a lack of clarity and certainty on what knowledge is needed (Back 2012; Korthagen et al. 2005).

109 As public professionals at the foreground of their subject areas, teacher educators need to be involved in a constant dialogue between theory, practice and research (Cochran-Smith 2005; Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2004; Furlong et al. 2009). This entails developing local knowledge that is applied to professional practice, used in other contexts and transformed into public knowledge. The profession is characterized by specific types of scholarship, linked with multiple professional learning contexts (universities and schools) and the development of teacher competences.

110 There is also the need for in-depth knowledge about teacher educators' learning, in order to ensure that professional development and induction activities have

the greatest impact on the quality of their work. Practitioner research into teacher educators' learning and teaching can improve professional effectiveness, if it is carried out within a community of inquiry (e.g. school and university teacher educators, prospective and experienced teachers) who make their own learning accessible for the learning of others.

### **Policy exchange**

- 111 Research on teacher educators mostly seems to focus on teacher educators as individuals - their identity formation, professional learning needs, and knowledge development. Little research exists on the profession as a whole, or on policies focused on the teacher educator profession. In the main, policy on teacher educators appears to draw on little academic research. Conducting more policy and evaluation studies, and more research on the teacher educator profession, would allow both teacher educators and policy makers to gain a better understanding of effective measures and conditions to strengthen the professionalism of teacher educators.
- 112 An active international policy exchange on quality in teacher education has been developing, with wider opportunities for sharing policy practices - in recent peer learning activities of the European Commission, international networks (such as the European Network on Teacher Education Policies – ENTEP, and the Teacher Education Policy in Europe Network - TEPE), as well as professional platforms (like the Association for Teacher Education in Europe - ATEE).
- 113 Given the importance of fostering leadership skills among teacher educators, the work of the European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNoSL) is also relevant. These networks provide arenas for knowledge development and debate, and involve academics, decision makers and professionals working in Teacher Education institutions, by means of conferences and journal publications.
- 114 However, in international discourse among teacher education institutions, stakeholders and teacher educators, the focus is often on the content of teacher education curricula and hardly ever on teacher educators' professionalism. Where these exchanges take place, the main focus is often on individual professionalism and not on policy support for the profession. There is the need for a more intensive exchange of policy practices and mutual peer learning by teacher educators and their professional associations, where such exist, on policy issues aimed at supporting teacher educators, both as individuals and as members of a strong profession (Snoek et al 2011).

*In **the Netherlands**, the process of drawing up a professional profile for teacher educators has implied the awareness of an available body of knowledge, and collective responsibility for professional development, as characteristics of a mature profession (Koster et al. 2005). The profile has been developed by means of a study involving teacher educators and external stakeholders, with theoretical underpinnings on effective teacher educator behaviour. As for the role of research in the professional profile of teacher educators, only teacher educators in universities acknowledged the importance of carrying out practice-based research; external stakeholders, however, considered it as necessary for all teacher educators.*

## 6 Professional communities and associations

This chapter:

- underscores the significance of professional associations<sup>1</sup> for promoting quality and raising standards in the teacher educator profession;
- indicates a relevant role also for informal communities and networks of professionals.

- 115 Developing a professional identity can be seen as “an ongoing and dynamic process which entails the making sense and (re)interpretation of one’s own values and experiences”, influenced by personal, social and cognitive factors (Flores and Day, 2006:220). The development of a professional identity by teacher educators is a complex process, which is shaped by social expectations, organizational structures and conditions, but also by a collective understanding among the members of the profession. The development of a professional identity cannot be imposed through policy measures but ought to be developed from within the professional community.
- 116 For the development of such a collective understanding, it can be useful for members of the profession to meet and discuss aspects of their profession, beyond institutional borders. This can take place both in formal structures, such as professional associations, and in informal contexts - networks and communities.
- 117 A formal professional organization (an example can be the Association of Teacher Education in Europe/ATEE) can act as a voice representing the teacher educator profession, engaging in a dialogue both with the members within the profession, and with the external stakeholders.
- 118 Such a formal professional organization can have different features: a regulatory body, a union, an association with individual memberships, or a formal professional association which takes on regulating tasks regarding the quality of its members. This will depend on national contexts and policy cultures. Each of these professional organizations can play a key role in stimulating leadership - by promoting networking and cooperation, as well as professional learning initiatives including courses, professional platforms, conferences, meetings, research coordination, journal publications.
- 119 In countries where professional organisations of teacher educators exist, they often have the form of professional associations. These associations create communities through which members of a profession can meet, exchange knowledge and experience, and join forces to promote their collective interests.

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<sup>1</sup> This term is used to cover different forms of organization which *seek to further and / or represent the interests of individuals engaged in a profession, and in the public interest*. According to the national context, such associations can have different responsibilities, which can include monitoring legitimate practices, acting as catalysts of professional knowledge development, learning and debate, or acting as representative stakeholders for policy and institutional dialogue.

- 120 In addition to developing professional identity, such associations can play relevant roles in:
- the development of frameworks for professional quality;
  - quality assurance through the maintenance of a professional register;
  - the development and sharing of knowledge through research, publications and conferences;
  - professional development of teacher educators through courses and workshops; and
  - contributions to national policies on teacher education, and so forth.
- 121 Professional associations differ from institutional networks through the type of membership; the former are characterized by individual membership and a focus on the concerns and needs of the members of the profession. The latter - institutional networks such as UCET (University Council of Teacher Education) in England - have institutional memberships, but can also focus on individual concerns.
- 122 The membership of professional associations can vary in its degrees of exclusiveness. It can be restricted to specific groups of teacher educators (e.g. in universities), for a specific education field (e.g. primary education), for a specific school subject (e.g. mathematics) - or it can widen its scope to include school-based teacher educators, in-service teacher educators, and so on.
- 123 Moreover, professional identity and quality can be furthered by more open networks and informal communities, through which teacher educators collaborate across institutions. In order to support professional agency and ownership, promoting participation in professional communities could be helpful. Guidelines to help associations to develop could also be of use.
- 124 As for examples of relevant policy, a network of university teacher training schools in Finland supports the professional roles of teacher educators and the development of training schools. In Belgium (Flanders), as well, the Ministry of Education has promoted the creation of regional networks for the development of curriculum and quality in teacher education, stimulating teacher education institutions to collaborate rather than compete, while maintaining their institutional autonomy.

*In **Hungary**, the Association of Teacher Educators (300 individual members) contributes to policy making on teacher education by issuing policy documents and publishes a professional journal. It has established a Teacher Educators Academy which offers courses and workshops for teacher educators.*

*In **the Netherlands**, the role of the professional association of Teacher Educators, VELON, is key in strengthening self-awareness, professional identity and tools for professional development. It is a recognized stakeholder in debates on teacher education, receives financial support for relevant projects, and is in charge of the development and revision of professional*

*standards. VELON has 1600 individual members, including school-based teacher educators. It publishes a professional journal and organizes annual conferences. With financial support from the Ministry of Education, VELON has developed a professional standard, a professional register and a knowledge base for teacher educators. The Ministry involves VELON as an important stakeholder in policies on teacher education.*

## 7 Responsibilities and roles of stakeholders

This chapter:

- discusses the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in furthering the professional competence of teacher educators, across different settings;
- considers the conditions and opportunities for effective social and professional dialogue among stakeholders, highlighting the need for stronger teacher educator agency and voice.

### Key stakeholders

- 125 The most important stakeholders concerned with the effectiveness of teacher educators are those that benefit from the quality of their work: student teachers, experienced teachers (for professional development arrangements) and school authorities as the employers of qualified teachers. When it comes to defining, developing and monitoring policy measures concerning the work of teacher educators, the key stakeholders will be governments, employers (boards, heads of teacher education institutions and schools) and teacher educators themselves.
- 126 In a recent survey, it was shown that the key stakeholders that are active in developing actions and measures related to the professional quality of teacher educators are usually national governments and the heads of local teacher education institutions (Snoek et al 2011). Sometimes, national higher education agencies can also play a role.
- 127 Teacher educators themselves, however, are mentioned much less frequently as active stakeholders in policies concerning their professional quality. This might be because in most countries, teacher educators are not professionally organized. If teacher educators are to be involved as stakeholders in the development of policies for their own profession, strong organizational structures could boost their leadership and professional agency.

*In **Norway**, the quality of Teacher Educators is promoted by policy actions under the PRAKUT/ NAFOL programme, with the involvement of stakeholders such as the national government, universities, teacher education and schooling contexts. NAFOL is a national graduate school offering specialised education and training in the thematic fields of pre-school, school and teacher education, and was established to strengthen a research based perspective in the fields mentioned. NAFOL is organised as a partnership between 7 Norwegian universities and 17 university colleges, and is co-ordinated by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology Management, at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim. NAFOL is to receive funding from the Norwegian Research Council from 2010 to 2016.*

## Roles and responsibilities

- 128 Each of the key stakeholders should have specific roles and responsibilities. How these are distributed among stakeholders would depend on national contexts and cultures - on traditions of social dialogue, the centralized or decentralized steering of educational policies, the autonomy of universities, the level of organized structures around the teacher educator profession, the existence of a professional body representing the voice of teacher educators, the role of other stakeholder organizations or intermediate bodies (such as a higher education council), and so on.
- 129 All key stakeholders should share the commitment to having the best teacher educators to support (student) teachers in their professional development. This would be translated into an explicit understanding of the key elements that define the professional profile of teacher educators (e.g. a professional competence framework), as a frame of reference for teacher educators' individual professional development, together with institutional or national policies and support programmes (European Commission 2012b).
- 130 It is essential that the roles of each of the stakeholders be recognized.
- National authorities should be responsible for safeguarding the quality of the national education system and of its teachers. This would mean responsibility for the quality of teacher education and teachers' professional development providers.
  - Employers of teacher educators (whether university- or school-based) should be responsible for providing high quality teacher education, by selecting and employing qualified teacher educators, as well as by supporting their professional practice and development.
  - Teacher educators should be responsible for providing high quality support to (student) teachers, modelling attitudes of lifelong learning, self-evaluation and reflection – as well as a constant focus on improving practice through qualification programmes, collaboration, research, and so on.
- 131 For each of these stakeholders, policies should focus on both quality development and quality assurance, and take into account different teacher education settings: higher education departments of education, pedagogy, didactics as well as subject departments; schools, training or adult education centres, local authorities, the private sector.

## Social Dialogue

- 132 Improving quality in the education of teachers is easier to achieve when there is collaboration between all the key actors in all phases of teacher education. This requires an active social and professional dialogue between national authorities, employers and teacher educators, leading to shared understandings and expectations about the quality of teacher educators' work and the roles and responsibilities of all involved.
- 133 For teacher educators to take responsibility for improving the quality of teacher education, it is important that they feel recognized as key stakeholders and can

develop ownership and agency concerning the profession and its development; professional leadership should be acknowledged and strengthened. The opinions and expertise of teacher educators should be acknowledged in social and professional dialogues.

- 134 Such dialogues are facilitated if teacher educators have a collective professional voice, and strong leadership skills. National authorities and employers can support, as appropriate, the development of professional communities and bodies of teacher educators, to strengthen their professional agency. These can support and nurture the development of a culture of quality, empowerment, accountability and continuing improvement.
- 135 Once the profession has endeavoured to build up this quality culture, government policies could decide to hand over more and more trust and responsibilities to the profession, recognizing its necessary contribution to the high quality education of teachers.

*The **Netherlands** provides an interesting example, as the profession itself (through the professional association of teacher educators VELON) has developed professional standards and a professional register which are recognized by the government and the employers as key instruments to guarantee and stimulate the professional quality of teacher educators.*

*The **Dutch** registration procedure sees the professional standards used as reference points by teacher educators, who analyse their strong and weak points, develop a professional development plan, and construct a portfolio – of particular relevance for self-evaluation quality - engaging in professional dialogue with peers. Dialogue and feedback from others are considered as most meaningful by Dutch teacher educators, who report positive outcomes in cognition, self-esteem, individual and collective development.*

## 8 Conclusions

- 136 This document has brought together available research evidence, knowledge and insights from European peer learning, together with examples of policy practice. It proposes ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools by developing explicit policies that can provide an effective framework for all those who educate teachers.
- 137 A number of systemic conditions can enhance the effectiveness of the teacher educator profession:
- creating, where appropriate, the necessary regulations or legislative framework in which teacher educators can be most effective;
  - promoting and supporting regular dialogue among key stakeholders, feeding into national policy making;
  - providing a framework of professional characteristics defining teacher educators; and
  - regularly assessing the quality of teacher educators' work and of the teacher education system.
- 138 Attention should be given to roles and responsibilities in meeting those conditions. The profession should play a key role in defining and safeguarding its own quality. That leads to another condition:
- A well organised profession, characterised by strong leadership skills and a body that can represent the voice of that profession.
- 139 The key stakeholders - government and education authorities, employers of teacher educators in universities and schools, teacher educators themselves, school leaders and teachers, professional associations or unions - need to be involved in decisions about the teacher educator profession. It is important that they achieve consensus on a shared vision - with a common understanding of what is meant by quality in educating teachers - and on the actions needed to support teacher educators.
- 140 Policy actions should start by clarifying who can and should educate teachers. Further steps include defining firstly the competences that teacher educators require, and secondly the most appropriate qualifications for members of the profession.
- 141 When this has been done, criteria can be set for entry into the profession, for selection to teacher education posts and for further stages of professional education and development.
- 142 All teacher educators, whatever their career entry stage or profile, need to take part in a suitable programme of induction into the identity and task of educating teachers, as well as into their new employer institution.
- 143 Thereafter, and throughout their careers, teacher educators, guided by their individual sense of responsibility for their own continuous professional learning,

should have access to high-quality opportunities for continuing professional development, conceived to meet their specific needs. These can be course-based or tailor-made, formal or non-formal, individual or collective. The needs of different kinds of teacher educators might require specific courses leading to relevant qualifications, e.g. Professional or Educational Doctorates.

- 144 Education authorities and professional bodies also need to promote effective professional collaboration between teacher educators working in different settings (university subject departments, university education departments, schools, local authorities, private sector etc.).
- 145 Reforms promoting systematic quality enhancement, restructuring and cooperation between different kinds of teacher education institutions can offer potential for supporting the practice and professional development of teacher educators, as well as boosting their leadership capacities.

## Conclusions of the Peer Learning Conference 'Education<sup>2</sup>: Policy Support for Teacher Educators, Brussels, March 2012

### ***A Key Profession***

Teacher educators, whether they work in schools, in higher education or elsewhere, play key roles in every education system.

There is a need to raise educational authorities' and stakeholders' awareness of these roles and to encourage them to develop policies that support the teacher educator profession.

### ***Professional Competence***

To strengthen the professional awareness and identity of teacher educators, it is necessary to identify and acknowledge the areas of competence (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that underpin teacher educators' diverse, multifaceted roles.

### ***Professional Profile***

There is a need in each education system for a collaborative effort to develop a profile or framework of these core areas of competence.

For this to be effective, the profession should have a sense of ownership of the process and the outcome.

The profile or framework should support and enhance teacher educators' lifelong professional learning (initial education, induction into the profession, and career-long professional development), and thereby stimulate improvements in quality.

### ***Professional Development***

In each education system there should be a diverse offer of professional development opportunities conceived specifically to meet the needs of teacher educators.

This could include, for example, research projects, job rotation, mobility and collaborative learning in networks and professional communities.

Employers of teacher educators should allow them sufficient practical support (including time and finance) to take part in these opportunities.

### ***Professional Knowledge Base***

In order to underpin future policy developments, it is necessary to build and further develop the knowledge base about teacher education and about teacher educators.

To this end, educational authorities should facilitate and support research in and on the profession and work of teacher educators.

### ***Professional Communities***

Education policies should encourage the establishment and further development of organised professional groupings and networks of teacher educators, both to strengthen professional identity and ensure that the profession is fully represented in social and professional dialogues.

### ***Professional Dialogue***

Education authorities should promote professional dialogue between the relevant stakeholders, in order to achieve a shared vision and agreement about such matters as roles, responsibilities, quality assurance etc.

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