

# THE EXPERIENCE OF BECOMING A TEACHER IN THE ENGLISH FURTHER EDUCATION SECTOR

## A Systematic Review of Evidence

A REPORT TO THE GATSBY FOUNDATION

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# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE REVIEW AND THE FE SECTOR

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

The original aim of this systematic review was to establish what is currently known about the experience of becoming and being a further education (FE) teacher in England and the factors that influence the recruitment, retention and attrition of FE teachers. Following the initial searching and screening processes, which resulted in more sources than expected, the decision was made to focus on the experience of becoming an FE teacher in England between 2014 and 2023 (inclusive). This narrowed focus incorporated an interest in:

- trainees and teachers who were undertaking or had completed a pre-service or in-service initial teacher education (ITE)<sup>1</sup> qualification in the five years prior to data generation about their experiences
- teachers in their first five years of teaching in the sector who were not undertaking and had not undertaken an ITE qualification
- the recruitment, retention and attrition of all these trainees and teachers.

The specific review questions are outlined in [Chapter 2](#).

The rest of this chapter locates the review in the context of the English FE sector and workforce and situates this in the wider international context. In the subsequent chapters, we:

- provide a brief overview of the review methodology, summarise the mapping of the research base that relates to becoming and being an FE teacher, and describe the becoming an FE teacher studies that were included in the review ([Chapter 2](#)). (Further details on the methodology are presented in [Appendix 1](#) and [appendices 3-7](#) and there is additional detail on the mapping in [Appendix 2](#))
- present the findings of the review ([Chapter 3](#) and [Chapter 4](#))
- set out our conclusions, implications for policy and practice, and recommendations for further research ([Chapter 5](#)).

## 1.2 DEFINING THE FE SECTOR

What we are referring to as the FE sector has been given a wide variety of different names, including post-compulsory education and further education and training (FET). The current name used by the British government's Department for Education and by Ofsted<sup>2</sup> is the further education and skills (FES) sector. We consider FE to be sufficiently inclusive to recognise that the sector contributes to the development of a skilled workforce.

<sup>1</sup> While initial teacher training (ITT) is the common term used in policy documentation in England, many (but not all) providers and authors prefer to use ITE, often because of a perceived association of 'training' with a view of teaching as 'performing a set of mechanical tasks' (Stephens et al. 2004), to the exclusion of 'understanding and intelligent awareness' (Tomlinson 1995, p.11). We would also note that the reference to 'initial' (teacher education or training) is somewhat problematic in relation to practising teachers undertaking 'in-service' programmes. For reasons of convenience, we predominantly use the term 'trainee' or 'trainee teacher' to refer to those following ITE programmes, except where quoting specific studies which use alternative terms such as 'student teacher'.

<sup>2</sup> Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. It inspects providers of education, training and childcare services (including ITE) in England, in an effort to ensure that such provision is of a high standard for all learners.

Defining FE is notoriously difficult due to the size and variety of the sector (Hodgson et al. 2015). One study noted that ‘the very diversity of the FE curriculum offer [...] simplifies the life of school sixth forms and universities by enabling them to keep their more focused missions’ (Stanton et al. 2015, p.69). FE institutions throughout the four nations of the UK bear a strong resemblance in their focus on practical or occupation-focused education, which in international studies is most often referred to as vocational education and training (VET) (see [Section 1.5](#)).

Education policy in the UK is devolved to the national governments, and policy on FE in England is diverging from that of the three smaller nations (Hodgson et al. 2018). This systematic literature review is solely situated within the English FE system. FE in England is characteristically inclusive and it incorporates courses and welcomes learners that other sectors of education might exclude (ETF 2020, Dabbous et al. 2020). Above all, the FE sector is integral to mainstream education and FE institutions have been central to the communities in which they operate for well over a century (Orr 2019).

There have been repeated efforts to systematically document the FE workforce in England through the collection of Staff Individualised Record (SIR) data, which until recently was reported by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) (see, among others, Frontier Economics 2018 and 2020). Collection of these data by FE institutions was, hitherto, not mandatory and so the statistics were patchy, especially beyond general FE colleges. The first publication of statistics from the government’s Further Education Workforce Data Collection (FEWDC) in August 2023 provided a much more comprehensive basis for identifying the composition of the FE sector in England. This mandatory collection of data includes the following organisations:

- general FE (GFE) colleges, including tertiary colleges
- sixth form colleges
- private sector public funded providers, which includes independent training providers (ITPs)
- other public funded providers, including some higher education (HE) providers, some local authority (LA) providers and a small number of university technical colleges (UTCs), specialist colleges and 16-19 free schools.

The May 2024 release of these data, covering the academic year 2022-23, is even more comprehensive and specifically reports on ITPs, LAs with an education remit, special post-16 institutions and school-based providers. In total, 80.9% of 1,563 providers in scope provided data for the 2024 release (DfE 2024a).

These organisations offer very wide curricula, including many exclusively academic courses; for example, colleges have 126,000 16-18-year-old students taking A-level courses (AoC 2023). The ETF divides the sector into three: FE colleges, ITPs and ‘Adult and Community Learning (ACL) Providers, sometimes also known as Adult and Community Education (ACE) Providers’ (ETF 2022, p.6). The sector has also provided around 10% of all HE in England for many decades (Avis and Orr 2016).<sup>3</sup>

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3 FE providers’ provision of HE falls outside the scope of this review.



Nevertheless, FE can broadly be distinguished by its focus on technical and vocational education and training up to Level 3,<sup>4</sup> with many colleges offering specialist provision for higher technical education at Level 4 and 5 as well. Recent policy has also characterised the sector in this way (for example, see DfE 2021). The latest FEWDC survey estimates that there are 81,928 teaching staff in the whole sector; 51% of whom 'teach vocational subjects as their main subject' (DfE 2024a), which reinforces FE's vocational or technical character.

The largest portion of the wider FE sector comprises GFE colleges, which employ 59.5% of the sector's entire workforce (of whom 49,373 are teaching staff) according to the FEWDC (DfE 2024a). As of September 2023, there were 158 GFE colleges in England with 1.6 million students in all FE colleges (AoC 2023). These GFE colleges differ greatly in size.

Despite an uplift of 1.9% in funding for FE from August 2024 (see Chowen 2024), FE colleges have endured significant cuts over recent years, which has had the direct effect of restricting teachers' pay. That in turn has had an impact on the recruitment and retention of teachers, which is discussed in [Section 1.4](#). The Institute for Fiscal Studies noted that:

*Cuts to post-16 education funding have made it difficult for colleges to allocate money towards higher levels of staff remuneration. Between 2010–11 and 2019–20, public spending per student (aged 16–18) fell by 14% in colleges, while spending on classroom-based adult education almost halved in the same period.* (Sibieta and Tahir 2023, p.3)

Apart from FE colleges, the FE sector comprises many smaller organisations such as ITPs. These are independent insofar as they are not managed or directly controlled by the state, but like colleges they are still mainly funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and are regulated by Ofsted. Most ITPs are private companies (AELP 2021, p.4).

For our literature review, we include studies that address teaching staff in all types of FE provision but exclude those that address teachers working only on HE courses.

### 1.3 ROUTES INTO TEACHING IN THE FE SECTOR

The ETF (2022, p.9) report that, 'There is a potential pool of 25,000 newly qualified teachers per year (shrinking slightly in more recent years)' who are entering the sector. That figure was apparently based on data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)<sup>5</sup> and Ofqual<sup>6</sup> about students or apprentices on ITE courses. However, this number seems high given that the previous government's own estimate was 6,910 new entrants to the sector in 2019, based on the FEWDC (DfE 2024a). Pathways to becoming a teacher in the FE sector are more varied than in the school sector. Most FE teachers, and especially those teaching on technical courses, at least

4 The levels referred to are those used by the UK government, which broadly align with The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Level 3 is normal upper-secondary, equivalent to A-levels or T-levels; Levels 4 and 5 are equivalent to year one and two of a normal bachelor's degree and include Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas; Level 6 is equivalent to a bachelor's degree; and Level 7 is equivalent to a master's degree. These levels relate to the relative demand or difficulty of the course, not its coverage or duration. See [Table 1.1](#) for how these levels relate to ITE in England.

5 HESA is the official agency for the collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative information about HE in the United Kingdom. HESA (accessed 2025) [Data protection guidance for the HESA records](#). In 2022 it became a directorate of the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), the 'UK digital, data and technology agency focused on tertiary education, research and innovation'. JISC (accessed 2025) [About us](#).

6 The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) is the body that 'regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England'. Ofqual (accessed 2025) [About us](#).

start to practise before they hold a teaching qualification (Greatbatch and Tate 2018, p.12). No single comprehensive list of ITE courses for FE teachers exists, but FE colleges, usually in collaboration with universities as awarding organisations, are the most significant providers of ITE qualifications at Level 5 and above.

That range of courses reflects the current deregulation of ITE courses (since 2013), which led to the burgeoning of provision. So, there are many courses that Ofqual does not list on its website but that a Google search will return. There has also been an expansion of qualifications that are ostensibly regulated by Ofqual but which may not have the level or coverage to equip an individual completing the qualifications with the skills and knowledge required for teaching in the FE sector or be recognised by employers in the sector. Yet, at least within GFE colleges in England, it is rare to find teachers who do not hold or are not working towards a well-recognised teaching qualification at Level 5 or above. The same cannot be said for private providers. Table 1.1 sets out ITE courses that are or have recently been available for FE, including apprenticeships, which are noted in this literature review. The matrix showing only currently available qualifications is provided in [Appendix 8](#).

**Table 1.1: FE teaching qualifications matrix (England), including legacy qualifications referenced in this systematic literature review**

Level	Pre-service? (and awarding organisations)	In-service? (and awarding organisations)	Providers
Level 3 Award in Education and Training: Introductory (Microteaching but no placement)	Yes City & Guilds BTEC NCFE	No City & Guilds Pearson Ofqual	FE colleges ITPs
Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training: 30 hours teaching practice	Possible	Yes City & Guilds Pearson	FE colleges ITPs
Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training 100 hours teaching practice (Specialist option with 100 hours teaching practice in specialist area)	Yes	Yes City & Guilds Pearson	FE colleges ITPs
Level 5 Learning and Skills Teacher Apprentice	No	Yes Min 2 years NCFE Pearson End point assessments (EPAs)	FE colleges Universities ITPs EPAs
Level 5 Certificate in Education Level 3 qualification required	Yes Universities	Yes Universities	FE colleges Universities
Level 6 Professional Graduate Certificate in Education Level 4 qualification required	Yes Universities	Yes Universities	FE colleges Universities
Level 7 Post Graduate Certificate in Education Degree required	Yes Universities	Yes Universities	FE colleges Universities

Note: The Level 3 and 4 courses above are to be phased out following introduction of a new learning and skills teacher occupational standard and an associated updated qualification framework produced by the ETF.

In our review we define ITE as referring to any of the courses listed in [Table 1.1](#) at Level 5, 6 and 7, all of which are of substantial duration.

The age of applicants to ITE in FE further distinguishes the sector from schools. According to a report for the ETF, the average age of an FE ITE trainee is 37, compared to 24 for a school ITE trainee (ICF Consulting 2018). These are the most recent available statistics and for reference the median age of FE teaching staff in 2022/23 was 47 (DfE 2024a). ICF Consulting also found that the majority of ITE graduates progressed into work in GFE colleges, as might be expected since these colleges are the largest employers in the sector.

As already noted, universities working with networks of colleges are the largest providers of ITE qualifications at Level 5 and above in the FE sector and under the current regulations these courses are the only ones eligible for government funding (DfE 2024b). The teaching of these courses most frequently takes place in a college, by teacher educators employed by the colleges but validated by the university. However, there are many other courses available from other awarding organisations, especially at lower levels. The complexity of teacher education courses may be an obstacle to people potentially interested in becoming FE teachers.

#### **1.4 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS**

A survey of members of the Society of Education and Training (SET) carried out in 2017 (796 completions out of 14,000 members) included a question about the 'motivation for joining FE and training' (Straw 2017, p.2). The most popular reasons for becoming a teacher in FE reported by SET members were:

- enjoyment in working with young and adult learners, inspiring the next generation, helping them realise their potential and transforming lives
- enjoyment of teaching/work-based learning
- personal/professional career development.

Despite the positive responses about motivation, problems with recruiting and keeping teaching staff in the FE sector, and especially teachers of certain technical subjects, have frequently been reported (Hanley and Orr 2019, Tully 2023).

The Sainsbury report similarly noted that:

*College principals have told us that recruiting technical education teachers with well-developed pedagogical skills, mastery of their field, and up-to-date industry experience can be a significant challenge in the competitive labour market.*  
(Sainsbury 2016, p.66)

The previous government launched a campaign to attract experienced people from industry to become teachers (see DfE 2024b), which was a reaction to how difficult recruitment of teachers has become. That campaign followed a report on teacher recruitment in the FE sector by the ETF which called for:

*A more strategic approach to recruitment, by building sector capacity, scaling-up successful initiatives, and offering better support to teachers and trainers throughout their careers.*  
(ETF 2022, p.3)

There have been at least 15 such government-backed schemes to encourage recruitment and retention of teachers in the FE sector since 2000 (CooperGibson Research 2018, p.16), which have had variable but overall limited impact.

Recent analysis of online recruitment activity for FE teachers carried out by SchoolDash for the Gatsby Foundation found that after 'a modest downturn' during the pandemic there was an increase of 50% or more in job advertisements in 2021 and 2022. The rate is now back to around pre-pandemic levels. The most common subject vacancies have consistently been for teachers in construction, engineering, digital, business and health (SchoolDash 2024).

The most recent FEWDC reports a vacancy rate for teachers of 4.9 per 100 teaching posts, but due to the use of a different methodology it is not possible to compare that rate to previous years. A report commissioned by DfE and published in 2020 provided analysis of a survey of 3,694 teachers and leaders from general FE and specialist FE colleges (excluding sixth form colleges and other types of FE providers). That report found the most common reasons teachers and leaders gave for leaving the FE sector were 'poor college management (58%) and unmanageable workload (46%)' (DfE 2020, p.10). Better pay was the factor identified as most likely to attract leavers back to FE according to the same report (DfE 2020, p.50), although pay was not a motivational factor identified in the survey of SET members mentioned above.

Likewise, the Institute for Fiscal Studies highlighted significant pay decline in the FE sector. In 2023 they reported that:

- 1. The recommended pay of college teachers has declined by 18% in real terms since 2010–11. In the same period, teacher pay scales have fallen by between 5% and 13%. There have been especially sharp declines in recent years due to high levels of inflation – recommended college teacher pay has fallen by 9% in the last two years.*
- 2. The gap between the average salary of school and college teachers has grown over time. In 2010–11, the median salary (in today's prices) was around £48,000 for a school teacher and £42,500 for a college teacher. Median pay is now around £41,500 for a school teacher and £34,500 for a college teacher. This means that between 2010–11 and 2022–23, the median salary for a school teacher fell by 14%, while the median salary for a college teacher fell by 19%.*

(Sibieta and Tahir 2023, p.2)

The 2022 ETF report noted that the churn of new entrants to the profession 'may pose questions about recruitment more widely' (ETF 2022, p.43) but also importantly noted that problems of recruitment and retention of teachers in FE are similar to those in schools. Specifically in regard to churn in FE, the Institute of Fiscal Studies found that:

*Around 25% of college teachers leave the profession after one year compared with 15% of school teachers. Three years in, almost half of college teachers have left compared with around a quarter of school teachers. Ten years after beginning teaching, less than a quarter of college teachers remain in the profession compared with over 60% of school teachers.*

(Sibieta and Tahir 2023, p.3)

The so-called exit rate, or the proportion of staff leaving the profession each year is higher among college teachers than elsewhere in the public sector: '16% of college teachers exit the profession each year, compared with 10% of school teachers, 10–11% across most NHS occupations and 7–8% in the civil service' (Sibieta and Tahir 2023, p.3). Associated with that high exit rate, Hanley and Orr (2019) described the significant amount of time and effort that middle managers in colleges, such as curriculum leaders in construction, were spending on finding and trying to retain good teaching staff. Hanley and Orr also noted how teaching agencies were, in many cases, perceived by college managers to be exacerbating and not solving the problem of sustainable recruitment into FE. Agencies would sign up available teachers in a particular shortage subject within a town or region and make it difficult for colleges to recruit those teachers on a permanent basis.

While turnover of teaching staff is a concern for colleges, the ETF (2022, p.7) noted that turnover in ITPs was even higher. However, none of the concerns about teacher recruitment, training and retention is peculiar to England's FE sector.

### 1.5 INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

As already described, VET is the term most commonly used in international comparisons of education with a primarily practical or occupational focus, such as is offered in England's FE sector. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has defined teachers of VET by the subject that they teach because the institutions in which they practise can differ so much from nation to nation. Therefore:

*VET teachers refer to all upper secondary teachers who reported in TALIS [Teaching and Learning International Survey] that they teach practical and vocational skills in the survey year, regardless of the type of programme or school.*  
(OECD 2021, p.17)

Somewhat differently:

*UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat data define VET teachers as classroom teachers and academic staff working in upper-secondary and post-secondary programmes [with a specifically vocational occupational focus ...] Within this definition, the teaching workforce in VET programmes or institutions can be further divided into three different types.*

- *Teachers of vocational theory, who teach theoretical subjects, such as sales techniques and electronics, in VET programmes.*
- *Teachers of vocational practice, who teach practical applications, such as mechatronics practice in school workshops, in VET programmes. [This group may also be described as instructors, see York Consulting 2022]*
- *Teachers of general subjects, who are responsible for teaching academic subjects, such as mathematics and sciences, in VET programmes.*

(OECD 2021, p.18)

Either of these broad approaches to defining VET teachers would include teachers in English FE offering vocational or technical education, as distinct from teachers of general (academic) subjects (who are typically required to follow a different ITE pathway regardless of the nature of institution in which they teach).

There is wide international agreement that teachers like those working in FE matter to their countries' society and economy. The European Union's VET organisation, Cedefop (2009, p.111) claimed that 'teachers, trainers and other VET professionals are the ground agents of change' for a modernised European VET system. Yet even educational researchers with an interest in VET have tended to overlook teachers and trainers and have focused instead on policy or institutions. Illustrating this, Mulder and Roelofs (2013) carried out a comprehensive review of research articles on VET published in international academic journals in 2012. Of the 173 articles they identified, fewer than 10 had teaching practitioners as their primary research focus.

What the OECD wrote in 2021 about VET teachers internationally, reflects the challenges of recruiting technical and vocational teachers in England's FE sector:

*Teachers in VET need to have a unique combination of pedagogical and industry-specific skills and knowledge that allow them to effectively teach vocational theory and practice to students. Moreover, as students in VET are often more diverse than in general education programmes, VET teachers play a key role in motivating students and overcoming barriers to learning. Leaders of VET institutions manage complex organisations that often involve close ties with local stakeholders and require smart investment in tools and technologies for teaching a diverse set of VET programmes.*

(OECD 2021, p.3)

That extra load that teachers in technical and vocational subjects are expected to carry is problematic and may be affecting recruitment and retention, and not just in England. Very similar issues to those outlined above, specifically in relation to the recruitment and retention of teachers in England, have been reported in comparable sectors elsewhere in the world, including Australian TAFE colleges and US community colleges (Orr 2019). In their international survey of teachers and leaders in VET published in 2021, the OECD found that:

*VET teacher shortages are significant in many OECD countries [...] half of states in the United States, and a third of VET principals in Denmark, Portugal and Turkey reported shortages. VET teacher supply is estimated 80% of the demand in Germany, 70% in Korea and 44% in Sweden.*

(OECD 2021, p.11)

Common concerns around how and how many people become vocational or technical teachers emerge from across the nations of the European Union. Cedefop summarise these challenges, which 'include an ageing VET teaching population, shortage of VET teachers, especially young ones, low attractiveness of VET in general and VET teaching in particular' (Cedefop 2022, p.7). The concern that the VET workforce is ageing (for England, see Greatbatch and Tate 2018, p.15) is a recurrent theme in international studies, but is at least partially explained by the fact that people join the profession after working in industry, and so later in life than many school teachers. As noted in [Section 1.3](#), the median age of teachers in FE is 47 (DfE 2024a).

OECD research on the preparation of vocational teachers and trainers in five countries (Canada, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway) reveals significant variance in the content, entry requirements and level of their ITE courses (OECD 2022, pp.10-12). In Germany the training includes university-based bachelor's and master's courses, followed by a period of work-based learning. In Denmark the pedagogy diploma for vocational teaching is offered in university colleges that sit within the country's adult education system. As this 2022 report on five case study nations suggests, ITE for teachers of VET differs widely in OECD countries (see also OECD 2021, pp.91-92), but the OECD report a general concern that ITE for VET is less effective at developing teachers' pedagogy than ITE for teachers of general (academic) subjects working in upper-secondary education (OECD 2021, p.93).

Whatever the form of the ITE, the 2022 OECD report (p.11) identifies dilemmas present when encouraging people to become teachers in vocational and technical subjects, which are shared by each of the five nations, as well as England. Prominent among those dilemmas are:

- Entry requirements need to ensure trainee teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills, but they should not be so restrictive as to unnecessarily limit applications from those wanting to become a technical teacher.
- Flexibility of ITE provision may increase access to diverse trainees, but the quality of the ITE needs to be guaranteed to ensure trainees learn what they need to, and that the public money is well spent.

These dilemmas continue to shape and restrict policy responses to recruiting and retaining FE teachers in England (and elsewhere).

## **1.6 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, we briefly introduced our systematic review before providing an overview of the FE sector and workforce in England, situating this in the wider international context, which locates the findings relating to becoming an FE teacher that are presented in this report. In the next chapter we present a brief overview of the review methodology, summarise the mapping of the evidence base and describe the studies included in our review.



# CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY AND MAPPING AND DESCRIPTION OF SOURCES

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we set out:

- the review aims and questions
- a brief introduction to the review methodology
- headline findings on the extent and nature of the research base on becoming and being a further education (FE) teacher
- a brief description of the 20 research studies on becoming an FE teacher included in our review.

## 2.2 REVIEW AIMS AND QUESTIONS

As we noted in [Chapter 1](#), the original aim of this systematic review was to establish what is currently known about the experience of becoming and being an FE teacher in England and the factors that influence their recruitment, retention and attrition. Our first review question (RQ1) relates to this broader aim and was addressed prior to the narrowing of the focus of the review to *becoming* an FE teacher. Review questions 2 and 3 (RQ2, RQ3) are solely focused on becoming an FE teacher:

- RQ1. What is the nature and extent of the research base relating to the experience of becoming and being an FE teacher in England between 2014 and 2023 (inclusive)?
- RQ2. What does the research tell us about the experience of becoming an FE teacher in England between 2014 and 2023 (inclusive)?
  - RQ2.1. What aspects of becoming an FE teacher do participants experience positively, negatively or find challenging, and what do they perceive to be the contributory factors to such experiences?
  - RQ2.2. What factors influence and shape the experiences of those becoming FE teachers?
  - RQ2.3. What concepts are most frequently deployed in empirical studies on becoming an FE teacher, and what does their use tell us about the experiences of trainees and teachers?
  - RQ2.4. What does the research tell us about the recruitment, retention and attrition of FE trainees and teachers in England?
- RQ3. What are the gaps in the evidence base relating to RQ2?



## 2.3 METHODOLOGY

This review was undertaken in line with the key principles of conducting systematic reviews (Lasserson et al. 2023). Explicit, rigorous and accountable methods and quality assurance procedures were deployed throughout the review. The methodological approach is set out in [Appendix 1](#). This spans the scope of the review and associated eligibility criteria, the methods deployed, quality assurance processes and ethics. [Appendices 3-7](#) provide detailed supplementary information. Table 2.1 provides an overview of the review phases and associated outcomes.

**Table 2.1: Review phases and outputs**

Review phase*	Outputs
1 and 2: Initial searching, screening and classification based on titles, abstracts and keywords	2,093 unique records related to the experiences of becoming and/or being an FE teacher were identified from academic database and website searches. 148 sources met the initial eligibility criteria. <sup>7</sup> 63 of the eligible sources included data and findings on becoming an FE teacher.
3: Full text screening and additional classification	23 sources from 20 different research studies met all the eligibility criteria for the review.
4: Data extraction/recording key findings and supporting evidence	Evidenced findings summaries constructed for each of the 20 research studies which recorded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• key findings and supporting evidence related to the review questions</li> <li>• supplementary detail related to the study and the reviewer's assessment of the quality of the research.</li> </ul>
5: Thematic synthesis of findings and qualitative weighting of the supporting evidence	A template completed from the evidenced findings summaries to synthesise key findings on the positive and negative experiences, and the challenges of becoming an FE teacher; the factors perceived to bring about those experiences and any consequences of those experiences. Completed templates summarising key findings for each of the review phenomena of interest. <sup>8</sup> In addition to key findings, all templates included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a list of sources supporting each finding, together with illustrative evidence</li> <li>• assessments of the strength of the evidence and recording of gaps in the evidence base.</li> </ul> Collaborative research team activity to check and agree the findings to be reported.

\* Phase 1 encompassed being and becoming an FE teacher. Phases 2-5 focused solely on becoming an FE teacher.

<sup>7</sup> Eligibility criteria are set out in [Appendix 1, Table A1.1](#).

<sup>8</sup> Phenomena of interest encompassed aspects of trainees' and teachers' experiences, such as workload or relationships with colleagues, together with becoming teachers' perceptions of the factors that underpinned their experiences. In some instances, phenomena of interest were theoretical concepts, e.g. professional identity and performativity. For further information and a list of the phenomena of interest, see [Appendix 1, Section A1.2.1](#) and [Appendix 3](#).

## 2.4 MAPPING THE BECOMING AND BEING AN FE TEACHER RESEARCH BASE

In [Table 2.2](#) we present the headline findings of our mapping of the key characteristics of the 148 becoming and being an FE teacher sources that met the initial screening eligibility criteria in phases 1 and 2 of the review. A full description of all the findings of the mapping exercise is presented in [Appendix 2](#). These findings address RQ1 – What is the nature and extent of the research base relating to the experience of becoming and being an FE teacher in England between 2014 and 2023 (inclusive)?

A degree of caution is needed in interpreting these findings, since there may be additional sources that our search process did not identify and because the mapping was based on the information in the sources' titles, abstracts and keywords, rather than the full text.

**Table 2.2: Selected key features of the becoming and being an FE teacher research base**

Characteristics	Key features of the 148 sources included after the initial screening
Focus of findings	43% of the sources (n=63) included findings on becoming an FE teacher (and may also have included findings on being an FE teacher). <sup>9</sup> 57% (n=85) solely included findings on being an FE teacher.
Publication rates and types of publications	From 2014 to 2023 inclusive, the minimum number of the included sources published per year was 10 and the maximum 23. Following a peak in 2018 and 2019 (20 and 23 per year respectively), annual publication rates dipped, which may in part be due to the Covid-19 pandemic, before rising again in 2022 and 2023 (18 in both years). 55% of the sources (n=82) were published in peer-reviewed journals, 21% (n=31) were doctoral theses and 18% (n=27) were research or evaluation reports. There were four full conference papers and four book chapters.
Methodologies	53% of the sources (n=78) reported qualitative research, 25% (n=37) deployed mixed methods. The 14% of quantitative sources (n=20) were primarily surveys with very few experimental designs.
Context	47% of the sources (n=69) included findings on the experiences of becoming and/or being an experienced teacher in FE colleges or from FE colleges and one or more other area(s) of the sector. In comparison far fewer sources included findings related to other areas of the sector e.g. only 8% of the sources (n=12) included findings related to independent training provision. <sup>10</sup>
Phenomena of interest	The nature of teaching work, practice and pedagogies, professional learning and development and professional identity were the most frequently occurring phenomena of interest, with findings presented for each of these phenomena in 22% or more sources (n=32). Findings on induction, recruitment and retention were reported less frequently (n=9 or fewer sources).

<sup>9</sup> Given the revised focus of the review being solely on becoming an FE teacher; it was beyond the scope of this project to distinguish between sources that only included evidenced findings on becoming an FE teacher, and those that included evidenced findings on both becoming and being an FE teacher.

<sup>10</sup> In 52% of the sources (n=77) no information was provided on the area of the sector or there were indications that other areas of the sector were included beyond those named, so this finding is only a partial indicator of the spread of research across the sector.

## 2.5 DESCRIPTION OF THE INCLUDED BECOMING AN FE TEACHER SOURCES

To provide contextual information for the interpretation of the syntheses of findings presented in [Chapter 3](#) and [Chapter 4](#), [Table 2.3](#) briefly describes the aims and methodologies of the 20 research studies that were included in our review of becoming an FE teacher. In summary, key characteristics of these 20 studies are as follows:

- The majority are qualitative (n=15) and the remainder have mixed method designs (n=5), of which one has an intervention and evaluation design.<sup>11</sup>
- Seven studies were cross-sectional, that is, data were generated at a single time point. In the remaining 13 studies data were generated at two or more time points: most frequently this was over one or two years.
- The studies predominantly have a small number of participants, for example seven studies have six or fewer trainees and/or teachers that are in scope for the review. However, it is important not to equate a small number of participants with a lack of research quality or findings that cannot be substantiated. There are notable examples of studies with a small number of participants, where in-depth research has generated comprehensive data and well-evidenced findings.
- Of the 23 sources with findings related to the 20 studies, nine are doctoral theses, eight are peer-reviewed journal articles, four are research or evaluation reports and two are book chapters.

**Table 2.3: Description of the studies included in the becoming an FE teacher review**

No.	Author/date	Description
1.	Ahmad, A. and Zaidi, A. (2019)	A mixed methods evaluation of induction processes, the factors influencing induction provision and its impacts. Includes survey data from trainees and/or teachers in FE colleges (n=63), adult and community learning (ACL) provision (n=32), independent training providers (ITPs) (n=4) and other provision (n=10).
2.	Boodt, S.E.J. (2021)	Interview-based case studies of four in-service trainee teachers* and their mentors that investigates how the social and cultural histories of the trainees influence their interactions with opportunities to learn in the workplace and the role that their mentor plays in this.
3.	Brown, S. and Everson, J. (2019)	Longitudinal qualitative study that examines the experiences of 26 pre-service trainees during initial teacher education (ITE) and in their first year of employment.
4.	Burton, S. (2016) and Burton, S. (2020)	Interview-based study** of 21 former in-service FE trainees' perceptions of the impact of in-service IT on their preparations for, and success in working in the sector.
5.	IFF Research (2022)	Sequential mixed methods evaluation of 'Taking Teaching Further', a two-year programme that supports FE providers to recruit and provide early career support to those with relevant knowledge and industry experience, to retrain as FE teachers. Includes data from 53 in-service trainees.

<sup>11</sup> Intervention studies in education include designing and implementing an evidence-based approach to address a perceived issue and testing its effectiveness on the intended outcomes.

6.	Manning, C. (2018)	Comparative qualitative study of judgemental and developmental approaches to the mentoring of pre-service FE trainees in England and Norway. Includes six trainees in England.*
7.	Manning, C. and Hobson, A.J. (2017)	Sequential mixed methods study of 22 second year in-service trainees' and seven mentors'*** experiences of judgemental and developmental mentoring.
8	McCrone, G.A. (2021)	Longitudinal qualitative study of the experiences and development of professional, social and pedagogic practices and identity of former pre-service trainees (n=14) and in-service trainees (n=2) within three years of qualification.
9.	Orr, K., Hanley, P., Hepworth, J. and Thompson, R. (2019)	Mixed methods study to evaluate the impact of an intervention which aimed to enhance the practice of 28 in-service trainee teachers of science, engineering and technology in FE colleges through ITE that supported the systematic application of subject-specialist pedagogy.***
10.	Smithers, M.R. (2018)	Interview-based study to develop understanding of the process of professional identity formation of 20 teachers in FE colleges, and the factors that influenced their transition from industry practitioners to teachers.
11	Sowe, N.B. (2021)	Mixed methods study of 20 in-service trainees' perspectives on the significant transformative experiences that inform the transition from trainee to early career teacher.
12.	Terry, R. (2021)	Longitudinal qualitative study to establish what six* former in-service trainees learned in their first year after qualifying through the everyday practices of their work, and how this learning is shaped by institutional and policy contexts.
13.	Thompson, C.A. and Wolstencroft, P.J. (2018)	A comparative qualitative study of the experiences of six in-service trainees in a military establishment and six in an FE college to explore the obstacles faced by newly appointed tutors, the professional roles they adopt and the tactics they use to handle the demands of their roles.
14	Tyrer, C. (2021) and Tyrer, C. (2023)	Qualitative study of mentoring feedback on pre- and in-service ITE programmes at a single site. Involving five pre-service mentoring dyads and nine in-service dyads. (Tyrer 2023 reports findings only on in-service trainees).
15	Wilde, J.A. (2019) and Scott, H., Wilde, J. and Bennett, P. (2022)	Longitudinal qualitative study of documentary evidence generated by six pre-service trainees during ITE and their first year of employment post-ITE. Exploring the relationship between socialisation and subjectification as teacher and pedagogical praxis in the context of the conditions in FE.
16.	Wilson, P. and Russell, H. (2023)	Interview-based study on the experiences of eight industry associates who contribute to technical education teaching while employed in industry, exploring motivations for the role, curriculum delivery, preparation and training, benefits, challenges and suggested improvements. Also includes data from managers in their industrial workplace.
17.	Winder, C.L. (2018)	Qualitative study of four in-service trainees exploring how the relationship between practice and praxis shapes their professional identity.

18.	Wright, V., Bates, S., Loughlin, T., Clarke, N. and Hale, D. (2022)	Qualitative study of the experiences of three pre-service trainees and two* experienced teachers with one to three years teaching experience post-ITE, to investigate their growing professionalisation as FE teachers.
19.	Wright, V., Loughlin, T. and Hall, V. (2017)	Longitudinal qualitative study of seven* pre-service trainees to explore how lesson observation and feedback contribute to trainees' perceptions of their developing identity as teachers.
20.	Wright, V., Loughlin, T. and Hall, V. (2018)	Interview-based study of the experiences of six* early career teachers approximately eight months after completing a pre-service ITE programme, focusing on notions of identity' within the transformational journey from trainee to qualified teacher.

\* Research study also includes out of scope trainees/teachers that are not recorded in the table nor taken account of in the synthesis of findings (e.g. trainees working in a country other than England that are part of a comparative study, or former trainees now teaching in schools).

\*\* Research study also includes out of scope methods (e.g. policy analysis) and/or some data generated prior to 2014 that are not recorded in the table nor taken account of in the synthesis of findings.

\*\*\* Research study also includes other participants who are out of scope in relation to the review (e.g. teacher educators who only provide data on their own training).

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have:

- provided a brief introduction to the review methodology, which is detailed in [Appendix 1](#)
- given headline findings on the extent and nature of the research base on becoming and being an FE teacher, which are set out in more detail in [Appendix 2](#)
- described the key characteristics of the 20 research studies (comprising 23 individual sources) included in our becoming an FE teacher review (see [Section 2.5](#)).

As we noted earlier, some caution is needed in interpreting the findings on the characteristics of the 148 sources on becoming and being an FE teacher that were included following initial screening. Nonetheless, we are able to see recurrent patterns in characteristics across the wider mapping of the becoming and being an FE teacher sources and the 23 becoming a teacher sources included in the review, which are indicative of gaps in the current research base. In particular:

- The very limited representation of trainees and/or teachers employed in private sector public funded FE. This is important because recent FE workforce statistics available for England (GOV.UK 2024) showed that, in the academic year 2022/2023, 23% (n=18,456) of all FE teachers were employed in this area of the sector.
- The limited number of large-scale studies. The predominance of studies with a small number of participants does provide rich and comprehensive data, which is important given the focus of this review on teachers' and trainees' experiences. However, it limits the transferability of findings.

- The almost complete absence of experimental or quasi-experimental designs. To some extent this absence can be explained by the experiential focus of this review. Nonetheless, it is surprising that more interventions that aim to support and/or improve the development of FE teachers, or their recruitment and retention, have not been designed and tested using experimental or quasi-experimental methods.
- The limited number of longitudinal or sequential studies that span more than one or two years. This limits exploration of trainees' and early career teachers' development over time and how this may best be supported.
- Finally, the relatively high proportion of doctoral theses, and therefore contribution by early career researchers, raises questions about why a higher proportion of outputs are not being produced by established researchers and whether the progression from early career researcher to established researcher in the FE field is sufficiently well supported.

In the following two chapters, we present a synthesis of findings from our analyses of the 20 becoming an FE teacher research studies that we reviewed in depth.

## CHAPTER 3 THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF BECOMING AN FE TEACHER

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we summarise research findings relating to the overall experience of becoming a further education (FE) teacher in England between 2014 and 2023. Specifically, we present a synthesis of findings from the 23 included sources, relating to positive, negative and challenging experiences associated with becoming a teacher, and to ways of alleviating negative and challenging experiences.

The findings presented in this chapter address RQ2.1 – What aspects of becoming an FE teacher do participants experience positively, negatively or find challenging, and what do they perceive to be the contributory factors to such experiences?

In the more detailed [Chapter 4](#), we elaborate on and provide supporting and illustrative evidence for these findings, as well as for a broader range of considerations which shape experiences of becoming a teacher.

In this chapter and in [Chapter 4](#), when we provide supporting and illustrative evidence for our findings:

- where in-text citations are included, we generally refer to the sources we regarded as providing the best evidence in support of the specific findings discussed, rather than listing all relevant sources
- where quotations are included, those presented in single inverted commas are attributed to the authors of the source cited, while those in double quotation marks are from participants in the reviewed studies.

### 3.2 POSITIVE EXPERIENCES OF BECOMING AN FE TEACHER

Our analyses identified that positive experiences of becoming an FE teacher were most commonly associated with:

- relationships with and support from colleagues in the workplace
- relationships with and support from mentors
- participation in, learning from and successfully completing pre- or in-service initial teacher education (ITE).<sup>12</sup>

We discuss each of these before outlining three additional, but less frequently reported or less well-evidenced, factors associated with positive experiences of becoming an FE teacher. Given the nature of the evidence, it is not possible to indicate how widespread the factors associated with positive and negative experiences are, or the percentages of trainees or teachers across the sector as a whole or in different parts of the sector who experienced each of these. As noted in [Chapter 2](#), much of the evidence related to trainees' and teachers' experiences in FE colleges.

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<sup>12</sup> As noted in [Chapter 1](#), findings relating to ITE are based on the experiences of those who were undertaking or had undertaken a substantive pre- or in-service ITE qualification at Level 5 or above.

### **3.2.1 RELATIONSHIPS WITH AND SUPPORT FROM COLLEAGUES IN THE WORKPLACE**

A wide range of sources provide evidence of trainees' and teachers' positive experiences of relationships with and support from workplace colleagues (Brown and Everson 2019, IFF 2022, Wilde 2019, Terry 2021, Tyrer 2021 and 2023). In some sources, this was identified as the single most influential factor associated with positive experiences of becoming an FE teacher (Smithers 2018).

While the amount and quality of support from colleagues varied (IFF 2022), most trainees (Brown and Everson 2019, Burton 2020, IFF 2022, Tyrer 2023) and former trainees (Terry 2021) experienced supportive relationships and a generally supportive professional environment in the workplace. Particular aspects of support from workplace colleagues that were valued by beginner teachers and trainees included:

- having someone to talk to and seek advice from (IFF 2022, Smithers 2018, Terry 2021)
- receiving validation and praise (Wright et al. 2018)
- access to professional networks (Tyrer 2023).

Among the reported consequences of positive relationships with and support from workplace colleagues were:

- being made to feel part of the team, contributing to a sense of belonging (Wright et al. 2018)
- enhanced confidence and positive sense of self (Brown and Everson 2019, Wright et al. 2018).

(Trainees' and teachers' relationships with and support from workplace colleagues is discussed further in Chapter 4, [Section 4.4.](#))

### **3.2.2 RELATIONSHIPS WITH AND SUPPORT FROM MENTORS**

Across a range of studies, strong relationships with and support from mentors were associated with positive experiences of becoming a teacher (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, Boodt 2021, Manning 2018, McCrone 2021, Wright et al. 2022).

Trainees and teachers valued a number of aspects of their relationships with and support from mentors, including:

- opportunities to access informal support and ask questions (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019)
- mentor feedback and advice (Manning and Hobson 2017)
- opportunities to engage in collaborative problem-solving (Boodt 2021)
- emotional support (Wright et al. 2022)
- provision of access to professional networks (Tyrer 2021 and 2023).



Among the reported consequences of positive relationships with and support from mentors were:

- enhanced professional learning and development (Manning 2018)
- feeling emotionally supported and the mitigation of isolation and loneliness (Manning 2018, Tyrer 2021 and 2023)
- enhanced confidence as teachers in general (Brown and Everson 2019, Manning 2018) and in relation to the development of their own teaching style in particular (Manning 2018)
- enhanced teacher identity (Wright et al. 2022).

(Trainees' and teachers' relationships with and support from mentors is discussed further in Chapter 4, [Section 4.6.](#))

### **3.2.3 PARTICIPATION IN, LEARNING FROM AND SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING ITE<sup>13</sup>**

Across a range of studies, trainees and former trainees reported positive experiences and outcomes of undertaking both pre-service ITE (e.g. Wilde 2019) and in-service ITE (e.g. Winder 2018, Sowe 2021). Elements of participation in ITE that some trainees and former trainees found valuable and beneficial included:

- the provision of a safe environment in which to share experiences, learn and exchange ideas and provide mutual support for fellow trainees (Wilde 2019, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018), including those with the same and different subject/vocational specialisms (Burton 2020, Sowe 2021)
- opportunities to observe other teachers and to be observed and receive feedback on their own teaching (Sowe 2021, Smithers 2018, Wright et al. 2017)
- opportunities for critical reflection on their practice and wider experiences of becoming an FE teacher (Boodt 2021, Sowe 2021)
- the study of pedagogical theory and its relation to practice (Orr et al. 2019, Sowe 2021)
- opportunities to explore different teaching and learning methodologies and approaches (Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018)
- support for subject and vocational knowledge and subject-specialist pedagogy, where this was provided (Orr et al. 2019).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> There are not enough studies included in the review, nor sufficient detail within individual studies, to make any definitive claims as to whether or not the findings presented in this section differ between different types of ITE providers. That said, our impression is that in most studies, these positive findings related to ITE led by HE providers or FE college staff in partnership with an HE institution.

<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that not all trainees and former trainees experienced and/or valued all of these ITE activities to the same extent, and for some trainees some of these activities were associated with negative experiences, as reported in [Section 3.3](#) below.

Studies reported several positive impacts on trainees and former trainees of undertaking and successfully completing ITE, including:

- increased confidence, self-esteem and self-belief (Burton 2020, Sowe 2021, Wilde 2019, Wright et al. 2018)
- an enhanced connection to the teaching profession, understanding of their teaching role within the sector, and perceived ability to 'act with enhanced authority outside their ordinary sphere of influence' (Burton 2020, p.343)
- an enhanced understanding of teaching (Wilde 2019) and capability as teachers (Winder 2018), including improved 'technical or pedagogic skill' (Burton 2020, p.345) and capacity 'to carry more practical and pedagogical skills into the workplace' (Burton 2020, p.337)
- an enhanced 'sense of professionalism' (Burton 2020, p.337; Wright et al. 2018) and teacher identity (Sowe 2021, Wright et al. 2018)
- an enhanced commitment to professional learning and development (Burton 2016 and 2020)
- enhanced status and credibility in their organisations (Burton 2016 and 2020).

(Trainees' and teachers' participation in and learning from ITE is discussed further in Chapter 4, [Section 4.5.1.](#))

#### **3.2.4 OTHER FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POSITIVE EXPERIENCES**

A relatively small number of studies identified other factors that were associated with positive experiences of becoming an FE teacher for some trainees and teachers, including:

- positive relationships with and feedback from learners/students (Brown and Everson 2019, Wright et al. 2022), which can positively impact trainees' and teachers' professional identity (Brown and Everson 2019, Wright et al. 2022), sense of belonging (Brown and Everson 2019) and self-efficacy (Brown and Everson 2019)
- the accumulation of experience of teaching and associated activities, and opportunities to take on greater responsibility, which can increase trainees' and early career teachers' self-confidence (Brown and Everson 2019, McCrone 2021) and sense of pride (Sowe 2021)
- the opportunity to share industry knowledge and workplace experience with learners (IFF 2022, Orr et al. 2019, Wilson and Russell 2023), through which teachers can "leave a legacy" (IFF 2022, p.135).

### 3.3 NEGATIVE AND CHALLENGING EXPERIENCES OF BECOMING AN FE TEACHER

Our analyses identified three factors to be the main causes of negative and challenging experiences of becoming an FE teacher. These were:

- demanding workloads
- the pressures of performativity
- a perceived lack of support and/or difficult relationships with colleagues.

We discuss these in turn before outlining a small number of additional but less frequently reported or less well-evidenced factors associated with negative experiences of becoming an FE teacher.

#### 3.3.1 DEMANDING WORKLOADS

The most well-evidenced factor associated with negative experiences of becoming a teacher related to demanding workloads (IFF 2022, McCrone 2021, Sowe 2021, Terry 2021, Winder 2018), which many participants reported to be excessive and heavier than expected (Wilde 2019, Winder 2018). In several studies, trainees and teachers found their workloads unmanageable or overwhelming (Wilde 2019, Winder 2018) and detrimental to their work–life balance (Terry 2021), causing some to consider leaving the profession (McCrone 2021).

A number of factors were found to contribute to demanding workloads for trainees and teachers, including:

- teaching long hours (Wilde 2019, Winder 2018), reportedly beyond contractual teaching hours in some cases (IFF 2022, Wilde 2019), and with few breaks (Wilde 2019, Winder 2018)
- attending meetings and undertaking continuing professional development (CPD) (Terry 2021)
- being given additional tasks at short notice (Winder 2018), such as covering for staff absence (Wilde 2019)
- Ofsted inspections (Terry 2021, Wilde 2019)
- for some in-service trainee teachers, having to combine a full teaching workload with study (IFF 2022)
- adapting to online teaching, notably during the Covid-19 pandemic (IFF 2022).

Last but certainly not least, one of the most frequently reported factors contributing to teacher workload was teaching-related administration, including lesson planning and monitoring student attendance and progress (Boodt 2021, McCrone 2021, Terry 2021, Wilde 2019). These latter considerations relate to the second most frequently reported factor contributing to trainees' and teachers' negative experiences, namely the pressures of performativity (Ball 2003), to which we now turn.

(Trainees' and teachers' experiences of demanding workloads and administrative tasks associated with teaching are discussed further in Chapter 4, [Section 4.8](#).)

### 3.3.2 THE PRESSURES OF PERFORMATIVITY<sup>15</sup>

Several studies revealed that some trainees and teachers bemoaned what some authors referred to as 'pressures of performativity in the workplace' (Sowe 2021, p.162; Manning 2018; McCrone 2021; Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018; Tyrer 2023). Teachers and trainees associated such pressures with:

- a perceived "no fail" culture in relation to students (Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018) and a primary focus on examination results rather than student learning or preparing students for employment or university (Sowe 2021)
- being required to conform to teaching approaches determined by their organisation, which restricted their autonomy and creativity (Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018)
- a significant focus on monitoring student attendance and progress, with associated record-keeping, and on the scrutiny of teachers' 'performance', including via internal quality assurance observations (Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, Wright et al. 2018)
- managerial expectations of teachers being continually "on-message" (McCrone 2021, p.201).

Teachers and trainees indicated that consequences of the pressures of performativity included:

- increased workloads, e.g. additional student tutorials, phone calls to parents and other actions intended to ensure attendance and prevent students failing exams (Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018)
- feeling deprofessionalised due to constraints on teacher autonomy and agency, and specifically on their capacity to teach in a way that they would like and consider most appropriate (Manning 2018, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018)
- feeling afraid to express concerns to line managers or to be themselves for fear of falling out of favour with management (McCrone 2021) and/or potentially losing their job for failing to conform (Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018)
- resultant frustration, disillusionment and feeling drained (McCrone 2021, Sowe 2021).

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 4, [Section 4.9](#), for a definition and extended discussion of performativity.

### **3.3.3 A PERCEIVED LACK OF SUPPORT AND/OR DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES**

A common finding, in slightly different guises across multiple studies, was that some trainees and new or early career teachers experienced a lack of support from their placement provider or employer (e.g. Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, McCrone 2021, Winder 2018). This was associated with:

- some trainees or new teachers not having an allocated mentor in place from the outset (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, Boodt 2021), some mentors having limited time or availability to support their mentees and some problematic relationships (e.g. conflict) between mentees and mentors (Boodt 2021, Brown and Everson 2019, Manning 2018, Orr et al. 2019, Tyrer 2023)
- trainees' and teachers' perceptions that managers were too busy and that they could not ask them for support (Winder 2018)
- perceptions of inadequate induction and support in their first two years as teachers (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, IFF 2022), and being left to "sink or swim" in the first year in particular (McCrone 2021).

Among the consequences of this perceived lack of support were:

- a lack of integration into the professional placement or workplace (Brown and Everson 2019) associated with an absence of a sense of belonging (Manning 2018), with trainees and new teachers feeling "alone", "insecure", "ignored", "unwanted", "a burden" and "an inconvenience" (Brown and Everson 2019, p.240)
- constrained professional growth (Tyrer 2021 and 2023)
- new teachers feeling inadequately prepared for teaching in FE (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019), contributing to feelings of frustration (McCrone 2021), doubt, anxiety and worry about potential failure (Brown and Everson 2019).

(Trainees' and teachers' experiences of workplace support are discussed further in Chapter 4, sections 4.4, 4.6 and 4.12.)

### **3.3.4 OTHER FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO NEGATIVE AND CHALLENGING EXPERIENCES**

Some studies found other factors that were associated with negative and challenging experiences of becoming an FE teacher for some trainees and teachers, including:

- perceived deficiencies in the ITE curriculum (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, Burton 2016 and 2020, Smithers 2018), including issues around the sufficiency or quality of subject-specialist instruction and preparation for 'the practical skills of teaching' (Burton 2020, p.349; Burton 2016; Smithers 2018)
- having their teaching observed for quality assurance purposes (Boodt 2021, Wright et al. 2017), which for some was "quite an anxiety-inducing experience" (Wright et al. 2017, p.107)
- having to teach subjects beyond their subject or vocational specialism and/or for which they did not have a formal qualification (Boodt 2021, McCrone 2021, Wright et al. 2022), which could 'impact negatively on their confidence as teachers and on their evolving teacher habitus' (Boodt 2021, p.99)

- the lack of a common work or desk space for some trainees and teachers, which sometimes contributed to an absence of a sense of belonging as well as practical difficulties in finding a space to work and storing and transporting teaching resources (Manning 2018, McCrone 2021)
- a perception that placement providers and employers undervalued and/or underutilised their industry knowledge and experience (IFF 2022)
- the prospect of no longer having the support of mentors or fellow trainees following completion of ITE (Brown and Everson 2019)
- difficulties engaging with, understanding and applying academic research literature during ITE (McCrone 2021)
- behaviour management, which some considered more challenging than they expected (Sowe 2021)
- supporting students with pastoral and mental health needs (Wright et al. 2022)
- feelings of isolation and challenges of adapting to online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic (IFF 2022, Tyrer 2021).

One study (Wilson and Russell 2023) identified specific challenges faced by industry associates new to teaching, notably establishing the right level at which to pitch their sessions; short notice requests from organisations, which led to rushed preparation; responsibilities for safeguarding and classroom and behaviour management; and instances of regular teaching staff leaving the classroom so they were teaching alone, which made some industry associates anxious.

Having outlined various factors associated with both positive and negative experiences of becoming an FE teacher, in [Table 3.1](#) we summarise and demonstrate the relationships between many of these.

**Table 3.1: Overview of factors associated with positive and negative experiences of becoming an FE teacher**

Factors associated with positive experiences	Factors associated with negative experiences
Workplace relationships and support	
Positive relationships with and support from colleagues in the workplace. Positive relationships with and support from mentors. <sup>16</sup>	Perceived lack of support and/or difficult relationships with colleagues. Problematic relationships with or lack of availability of some mentors. Prospect of not having support of mentors following completion of ITE.
ITE	
Participation in, learning from and successfully completing ITE. Being observed and receiving feedback on teaching.	Perceived deficiencies in the ITE curriculum. Difficulties engaging with and applying academic research literature during ITE. Prospect of not having the support of fellow trainees following completion of ITE.
Interactions with and relationships with learners/students	
Positive relationships with and feedback from learners/students.	Behaviour management. Supporting students' pastoral and mental health needs.
Application of industrial experience	
Opportunities to share industry knowledge and workplace experience with learners.	Perception that providers undervalued trainees'/teachers' industry knowledge and experience.
Workplace processes and conditions	
	Demanding workloads. Pressures of performativity. Teaching subjects beyond subject or vocational specialism. Having teaching observed for quality assurance purposes. Lack of common work or desk space.
Other	
Accumulation of experience of teaching and associated activities.	Feelings of isolation and challenges of adapting to online teaching during Covid-19 pandemic.

<sup>16</sup> In most instances support from mentors (whether experienced as positive or negative) was provided by workplace colleagues and formed an integral part of trainees' ITE programmes.

### 3.4 MEANS OF ALLEVIATING NEGATIVE AND CHALLENGING EXPERIENCES

Our analyses revealed a number of effective means, in at least some contexts, of overcoming some of the negative and challenging experiences outlined above. Firstly, while we have seen that relationships with and support (or a lack of it) from mentors and other colleagues contributed to both positive and negative experiences of becoming an FE teacher, studies also show that:

- support from formal or informal mentors and workplace colleagues helped many trainees and early career teachers to deal with and overcome various challenges associated with becoming an FE teacher, including preparation for teaching and managing their workloads (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, Boodt 2021, Manning and Hobson 2017, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018).

A second means of alleviating negative and challenging experiences was:

- participation in organisational communities of practice (Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018), specifically where these provided a safe space in which they could “bounce ideas around” with colleagues and/or fellow trainees, “say the unsayable” and “just sit in on each other’s lessons and sit down now and again with a brew and iron out any problems” (Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, p.191).

Thirdly, and related to this, trainees and new teachers also valued:

- the provision of a physical space in which they could have some of those conversations with colleagues and peers, and in which they “can’t be hounded by phone calls” (Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, p.191), which helped them to feel both at home in the organisation and settled in the profession (Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018).

Fourthly, regarding some of the ‘pressures of performativity in the workplace’ (Sowe 2021, p.162):

- some former trainees and early career teachers were found to be successfully learning how to navigate and, in some cases, resist performative demands, and thereby retain some autonomy or agency (McCrone 2021, Orr et al. 2019, Terry 2021, Wright et al. 2022) (See Chapter 4, sections 4.3, 4.9, 4.10, 4.12).

Fifthly, in an attempt to overcome feelings of isolation and lack of integration into the professional placement or workplace:

- some trainees and early career teachers adopted conscious strategies to integrate themselves into teams, for example by seeking to be as helpful as possible while not getting in anyone’s way, sharing resources (Boodt 2021), leaving “friendly little notes” for colleagues and updating colleagues on class progress when providing supply cover (McCrone 2021, p.219).

Finally, to alleviate the specific challenges experienced by industry associates:

- some industry associates overcame the challenge of not knowing how to pitch their sessions by discussing this with college staff, which helped them avoid over-complicating or over-simplifying their teaching



- managers clarified that safeguarding and classroom and behaviour management were the responsibilities of regular teaching staff, not industry associates
- some managers sought to agree a time-limited commitment, including preparation time, to ensure that potential contributions by industry associates were not perceived to be too onerous or demanding (Wilson and Russell 2023).

### 3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have provided an overview of positive, negative and challenging experiences associated with becoming an FE teacher; together with what the evidence tells us about some means of alleviating negative and challenging experiences. We have reported that:

- positive experiences of becoming an FE teacher were most commonly associated with
  - relationships with and support from colleagues in the workplace
  - relationships with and support from mentors in particular
  - participating in, learning from and successfully completing ITE (for those who did so)
- negative and challenging experiences of becoming an FE teacher were most commonly related to
  - demanding workloads
  - pressures of performativity
  - a perceived lack of support and/or difficult relationships with colleagues.

That relationships with and support from colleagues were highlighted as both positive and negative experiences suggests, along with other evidence presented above and in the next chapter, that there may be considerable variation in the support provided for trainees and new teachers.

It is important to note that the evidence presented in the reviewed studies does not enable us to make a definitive statement about the balance between the positive and less positive experiences of those becoming FE teachers. Nonetheless, our overall impression is that, while the precise balance of positive and negative experiences undoubtedly varies for individual trainees and teachers, for most participants in most of the studies reviewed, positive experiences seemed to outweigh negative ones. If this perception reflects the reality of trainees' and teachers' experiences, it may go some way towards explaining why, despite clear challenges, most trainees and teachers remain in the profession. However, given the lack of conclusive evidence, we suggest that it would be beneficial for this question to be explored further as a specific focus of future research.

In [Chapter 4](#), we elaborate on some of the findings presented in this chapter and synthesise evidence relating to a number of additional phenomena which the reviewed studies suggested were central to the experience of becoming an FE teacher. We also extend our earlier discussion of gaps in the evidence base relating to the experience of becoming an FE teacher.

## CHAPTER 4 KEY THEMES IN BECOMING AN FE TEACHER

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we present our findings on the most prominent themes in the empirical evidence across the included studies, relating to experiences of becoming a further education (FE) teacher. Several of these themes were introduced in [Chapter 3](#), as they were associated with positive, negative or challenging experiences associated with becoming an FE teacher; or with the means of alleviating negative and challenging experiences.

The themes are:

- recruitment, retention and attrition ([Section 4.2](#))
- pedagogical beliefs and practices, and relationships with learners ([Section 4.3](#))
- relationships with and support from colleagues, managers and peers ([Section 4.4](#))
- professional learning and development ([Section 4.5](#))
- mentoring ([Section 4.6](#))
- wellbeing, illbeing, confidence and self-esteem ([Section 4.7](#))
- teacher workload and administrative work associated with teaching ([Section 4.8](#))
- performativity ([Section 4.9](#))
- professional autonomy and agency ([Section 4.10](#))
- professional identity ([Section 4.11](#))
- organisational culture, policies, processes and conditions ([Section 4.12](#)).

In the following sections, we discuss each theme in turn – summarising key research findings and illustrating these with some of the strongest evidence and data from the reviewed studies. It will become apparent in the presentation of findings that there are considerable overlaps between the content of some of the different themes, and we provide cross-references between the sections where appropriate.

Having discussed these key or prominent themes in the literature, we then outline gaps in the evidence base relating to becoming an FE teacher ([Section 4.13](#)).

In this chapter, we address the following review questions:

- RQ2.2. What factors influence and shape the experiences of those becoming FE teachers?
- RQ2.3. What concepts are most frequently deployed in empirical studies on becoming an FE teacher; and what does their use tell us about the experiences of trainees and teachers?
- RQ2.4. What does the research tell us about the recruitment, retention and attrition of FE trainees and teachers in England?
- RQ3. What are the gaps in the evidence base relating to RQ2? (What does the research tell us about the experience of becoming an FE teacher in England between 2014 and 2023 inclusive?)

## 4.2 RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND ATTRITION

In the studies we reviewed, the evidence on experiences of recruitment, retention and attrition of FE teachers was limited. The evidence was strongest on recruitment, more limited on attrition and virtually non-existent on retention insofar as few studies explicitly addressed this topic, and none of them provided strong evidence on factors which encouraged FE teachers to remain in the sector. In what follows we summarise research findings relating to recruitment and then attrition.

### 4.2.1 RECRUITMENT

Motivations for entering teaching are diverse (Boodt 2021, Smithers 2018, Wilson and Russell 2023). They include:

- a belief in the 'intrinsic value' of education (Boodt 2021, p.92)
- a 'love' or 'passion' for their subject or vocational areas and/or for inspiring others (Boodt 2021, p.92)
- enjoyment of training in industrial or other roles

*"I worked in retail as a store manager, within that I had to do a lot of training, which I really enjoyed, from there I progressed into training as a job working for a training provider."*

(Smithers 2018, p.126)

- encouragement from family or friends, or from workplace colleagues when undertaking a support or non-teaching role, or from an FE provider

*"I did not wake up one morning and say that I want to be a teacher, I am going to train to be a teacher and then get a job. No, I was approached by the college because of my skills set, because I am a scientist of food technology."*

(Smithers 2018, p.126)

- being unable to remain in employment in their prior vocational area due to no longer feeling physically able to do the job

*'Both Ben and his mentor freely admit that the only reason they are now teaching is because scaffolding "hurts you".'*

(Boodt 2021, p.108)

Other factors, for some, related to perceived (positive) teacher status, job security and their families valuing education. Influential factors for industry associates, who were undertaking some teaching alongside their existing work in industry, included:

- giving back to the community

*"It's nice to give back to a local area by supporting students' education and their journey to careers in the near future."*

(Wilson and Russell 2023, p.10)

- corporate social responsibility

*"All businesses are thinking about social value now. Sharing your expertise and knowledge gained through employment in industry is a direct way to support local communities."*

(Wilson and Russell 2023, p.10)

- marketing and brand awareness, including to support future recruitment to their organisations
- individual development opportunities, sometimes identified in annual performance reviews.

The evidence highlights that, for many, becoming an FE teacher is an incremental process via one of the following routes:

- moving from part-time teaching roles while still working in industry, to full-time teaching roles over time (Boodt 2021, Smithers 2018, Terry 2021, Wright et al. 2018)

*"I applied for a full-time job, never got it, I must have impressed because I got a call back after being told I wasn't successful, asking if I would be willing to come in one day a week and teach a certain aspect of plastering. And that grew from one to two days up to three and then in the end full-time."*

(Smithers 2018, p.128)

- initially working in teaching support or non-teaching roles in their organisation and/or applying for internally advertised posts (Boodt 2021, McCrone 2021, Terry 2021)

*'[Leah] had worked within the childcare team in a non-teaching capacity for over 5 years before she was offered a teaching position and encouraged to complete the Level 3 Award in Education and Training and then the PGCE.'*

(Terry 2021, p.97)

It is also interesting to note that, for some trainees, teaching had not been a long-term aspiration (Smithers 2018, p.126), and others 'had believed it was beyond their capabilities [...] rejecting it as something they perceived they were already excluded from' (Boodt 2021, p.107).

#### **4.2.2 ATTRITION**

Several factors were reported to be associated with trainees or teachers leaving or considering leaving the profession, including:

- workload (IFF 2022, McCrone 2021), which many trainees found more demanding than they had expected

*"I do not see myself staying in the job, purely and simply because I know that there are other jobs that I can do with my qualifications that although they may not be perfectly nine to five, I am not going to be working 60-hour weeks, when I am on holiday, I am on holiday and when it is the weekend, it is the weekend."*

(McCrone 2021, p.225)

- a perceived lack of early career support (Burton 2016 and 2020, IFF 2022, McCrone 2021)

*'Feedback from teachers [...] indicated that some of those recruited [...] might not have received the level of support that they were expecting to as part of their new role. The disparity between these expectations and what they received in reality might well have contributed to some teachers leaving their post early.'*

(IFF 2022, p.59)

The influence of workload is also highlighted in the (limited) evidence relating to factors supporting teacher retention, where initiatives designed to reduce teacher workload were considered influential:

*"The reduced workload had really helped"* [Provider] and

*"I am 99% sure we would not have kept them without having the funding to reduce their hours"* [Provider].

(IFF 2022, p.32)

In relation to the lack of early career support, some studies identified problematic relationships with mentors, or the nature of the support provided by mentors, as particular concerns (IFF 2022, Tyrer 2021 and 2023). Tyrer explained how a trainee left one institution:

*'Because of the relationship with her first mentor [...] She [...] commented how her mentor's co-presence in the site of teaching practice caused her anxiety. She felt under constant scrutiny and evaluation, and, given the directness and prescriptivism of the feedback, was loath to engage in any risk-taking in her teaching, all of which affected her self-esteem'.*

(Tyrer 2021, pp.197-198)

Other factors found to be associated with teacher attrition included:

- higher salaries in industry than in teaching

*'Providers [...] found it difficult to retain some of the teachers that they recruited [...] Most of these reportedly returned to industry for higher wages.'*

(IFF 2022, p.19)

- constraints of organisational policies and processes, emanating from national policy

*One trainee left employment at an FE college during the study, highlighting 'constraints imposed by the College, where Health and Safety considerations, Study Programme requirements and the mandatory group tutorials on British Values all conspire[d] to obstruct her central goal of sharing her subject expertise and enabling students to achieve qualifications.*

(Terry 2021, p.106)

- stress, associated with one or more of the factors outlined above

*One early career lecturer in McCrone's study 'stated that "I would not recommend the job to anybody" and that it was the most stressful thing that he had ever done [...] He felt that [...] if things did not improve within the next two years, he would leave the profession.'*

(McCrone 2021, p.225)

### 4.3 PEDAGOGICAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES, AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEARNERS

A number of studies found that trainees' and teachers' previous subject and vocational knowledge and prior educational experiences impacted on their approach to teaching (Boodt 2021, IFF 2022, Orr et al. 2019, Winder 2018):

*"My industry experience is so important when teaching [...] You can give the stories. You can give the tales. You can give the examples. You know, which creates a sense of reality."*

(IFF 2022, p.136)

*'Dan also consciously uses his poor relationship with his maths teacher at college, combined with his experience as a youth worker, to inform a teaching style which has positive relationships and open communication with his students at its heart.'*

(Boodt 2021, p.139)

With respect to trainees' and teachers' pedagogical beliefs and practices, a range of studies show that they profess to believe in and practice a student-centred approach to teaching (McCrone 2021, Terry 2021, Wright et al. 2022, Wright et al. 2017).

Trainees in Wright et al.'s 2022 research said that teachers were not "on a pedestal" (p.300), nor were they the "power at the front" (p.300); rather, as one participant put it, "It's a shared climate" of learning (p.300). Similarly, in another study:

*'Participants perceived themselves as a manager of learning experiences (promoting differentiation and inclusion), as well as recognising the dialogic/ interactive nature of teaching and learning.'*

(Wright et al. 2017, p.106)

One participant in Terry's 2021 study captured the sentiments of many in stating that "I focus on my learners because I think they're the most important" (p.107), while a participant in Wright et al.'s (2022) study expressed a similar 'desire to do their best by their students' (p.302). This concern for learners' interests was not restricted to their learning or to 'helping them gain qualifications to improve their life chances' (Boodt 2021, p.142). Trainees and teachers were also concerned about the 'emotional needs and previous (possibly traumatic) histories of students' (Wright et al. 2018, p.16), and recognised the need to take into account any:

*"Home troubles and mental health and things like that [...] We had three that had bipolar last year [...] Personality disorders, anorexia, bulimia ... ADHDD [attention deficit disorder with dyslexia]."*

(Terry 2021, p.120)

Consistent with this, studies suggest that many trainees and teachers 'emphasised the importance of positive, empathetic relationships with their students' (Boodt 2021, p.142) and indicated that developing positive relationships and "good rapport" with learners was 'very important to them' (Brown and Everson 2019, p.242):

*"I see the relationships with my students as paramount really, I think that you need to know your students and be comfortable, and for them to be comfortable with you, for them to be able to come and ask you a question and for them to know that you care about them, in a way."*

(Boodt 2021, p.140)

*"I think a great rapport with the students makes the experience of learning easier and more rewarding."*

(Wilde 2019, p.143)

It is clear from the studies that trainees' and teachers' teaching strategies are also influenced by:

- institutional regulations (Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018) and/or organisational demands such as the need for visible assessment practices (Terry 2021)

*'Most of the [former trainees] discuss improving their teaching in terms of improving the visibility of assessment practices, in part to motivate students, but equally to make student progress visible to an observer.'*

(Terry 2021, p.119)

- external priorities, including Ofsted and sector (McCrone 2021, Terry 2021, Wright et al. 2017)

*'In response to being asked about meeting diverse learner needs [one early career teacher] described the influence of Ofsted: "I think it's just, erm, I don't think here we've been given, I don't think we had been given that much information about meeting like diverse learning needs, special needs and things like that, it is only recently [...] after OFSTED."*

(McCrone 2021, pp.167-168)

*'Student-teacher data also referred at times to [...] sector priorities in having to embed English, Maths and Technology in to their subject contexts. They also (in some cases) thought about the Education and Training Foundation professional standards [...] as a measurement/tool through which to evaluate their performance.'*

(Wright et al. 2017, p.106)

Studies suggest that trainees and teachers often experience, and are required to negotiate, tensions between such institutional regulations or organisational demands and their preferred pedagogical approaches (McCrone 2021, Terry 2021, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, Winder 2018). Such tensions have been found to be a great source of frustration to many trainees and teachers, although there is evidence that some are effectively negotiating and mediating these:

*'He [Ryan] gives examples of strategies he has implemented with his classes that are effective but remain out of sight of college managers'.*

(Terry 2021, p.107)

Such tensions and some of their impacts and the ways teachers and trainees deal with them are discussed further in sections 4.9 and 4.12.

#### **4.4 RELATIONSHIPS WITH AND SUPPORT FROM COLLEAGUES, MANAGERS AND PEERS**

The literature reveals that trainees and teachers had mixed experiences of relationships with and support from work-based colleagues, leaders and managers (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, Boodt 2021, Brown and Everson 2019, IFF 2022, Terry 2021, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, Tyrer 2023, Wilde 2019, Winder 2018):

*"I didn't get very much support. On the first day of the job, I was chucked a course spec and lesson plans, and I'd obviously never seen them before [...] It was left to me to shadow people, it wasn't scheduled in your timetable. It was more just go watch on the day. And it shouldn't be like that, it should be more 'this is what you're looking for' and this is what you need to pick out. These are the skills you need to become a teacher so this is what you should be looking for, you know."*

(IFF 2022, pp.59-60)

*"Some people were more approachable than others, some people when asked for any help or clarity on anything gave a very general, 'oh you will find your own way of doing it', which is great, but you need a way of doing it first before you find your own!"*

(McCrone 2021, p.222)

*"Honestly my experience has been very good. The support from all the different people at different levels has all been very good. Everyone has been very supportive."*

(IFF 2022, p.126)

Several studies highlight a lack of appropriate support for trainees and early career teachers, which was often explained in terms of the potential providers of such support being too busy (IFF 2022, McCrone 2021, Wilde 2019, Winder 2018, Wright et al. 2018):

*"I don't get any support. You get the feeling that you can't or daren't even ask. It's kind of ... they're very busy, or always more busy than you are – that sort of attitude. The only support I've had has been from CertEd tutors."*

(Winder 2018, p.156)

In some instances, the ways in which beginner teachers reported they had been treated by some established members of staff, including those who were charged to support them, left a lot to be desired and had detrimental impacts on their wellbeing:



*"I knew she was going to observe me. She emailed at 9pm the night before and she had changed my planner! I thought OK she might be under pressure too so I accepted the changes. The next day she came into the office and cancelled the observation. Again I thought OK ... And then she said it would be later the same day! I literally had to create time in the day to plan for it. I felt so stressed but it is like some people just want to catch you out ... make you vulnerable."*

(Wilde 2019, p.154)

Despite the existence of such negative experiences, our impression from the evidence is that, on balance, for most trainees and teachers, positive experiences of relationships with and support from mentors (see [Section 4.6](#)) and other colleagues in the workplace outweighed negative ones. In addition, several studies found that trainees experienced and valued positive relationships with peers on their initial teacher education (ITE) programmes (Burton 2020, Terry 2021, Wilde 2019):

*"It is great to be with peers at uni. We get in the classroom and off load! We offer advice and sometimes that can be quite humorous but always welcome."*

(Wilde 2019, p.130)

Trainees' and early career teachers' positive experiences of relationships with and support from more experienced colleagues were enhanced when such staff were receptive to building relationships with them, were approachable and responsive to requests for support, and proactive in offering support:

*"It's very rare that you get to the point where you have to go: 'I need some help'. Usually somebody will say 'do you need some help?' [...] it just shows what a close staffroom we are really and how supportive we are as colleagues".*

(Terry 2021, p.128)

There is also evidence of some teachers enjoying positive experiences of support from line managers and other leaders in their organisations (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, Winder 2018):

*"My head of department is supporting me on this [in-service ITE] programme and acting as my mentor, she has changed my work commitments so I can have some time off one afternoon to make up for attending in the class in the evening. In terms of wider organisational support, I'm appreciative [of] the CPD [continuing professional development] opportunities and financial support invested in me by the college who have paid my course fees."*

(Winder 2018, p.164)

Evidence also suggests that early career teachers tend to enjoy more positive relationships with workplace colleagues following successful completion of ITE and/or becoming a full-time teacher (Burton 2016 and 2020, McCrone 2021, Wilde 2019, Winder 2018, Wright et al. 2018):

*'Following the successful completion of ITT [initial teacher training], teachers feel a far more significant connection to the post-compulsory sector and to the other employees and stakeholders within the sector. This includes the trainee body, as well as other teachers and management within their institutions.'*

(Burton 2016, p.170)

*'They felt that they had only been "accepted" as a member of the community [after] having been taken on permanently having previously "had to elbow my way in."*

(Wright et al. 2018, p.17)

Trainees' and teachers' positive experiences of relationships with and support from colleagues, leaders and peers were perceived to have positive impacts on their professional learning and development, notably their teaching (Boodt 2021, Brown and Everson 2019, Burton 2020, Smithers 2018, Wright et al. 2018), and on their confidence, wellbeing and sense of belonging (Brown and Everson 2019, Manning 2018, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, Tyrer 2021 and 2023, Wilde 2019):

*"Learning off other people was a huge influence on my teaching, when I first started ... I did not know really how to teach but because I was in a shared office all I needed was to turn and ask a colleague who would help me or show me. They were all used to helping new teachers like me, it was encouraged."*

(Smithers 2018, p.134)

*"They're building my confidence and I'm learning from my colleagues, how they deal with things [...] I feel like they're all hugging me."*

(Tyrer 2021, p.200)

#### **4.5 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

In this section we present findings relating to factors that bring about or impede the professional learning and development (PLD) of trainees and teachers. We first discuss this in relation to ITE and then in-house CPD, before discussing a number of specific means of enhancing trainees' and teachers' CPD and informal workplace learning more broadly, and finally we include some ways in which trainees' and teachers' PLD was impeded.

##### **4.5.1 ITE**

Several studies report evidence of how in-service ITE fostered trainees' and former trainees' PLD (Boodt 2021, Burton 2016 and 2020, IFF 2022, Orr et al. 2019, Sowe 2021, Wilde 2019, Winder 2018). Lesson observations and post-observation conversations and feedback (discussed later in this section), and opportunities to practise, critically reflect on and learn from their teaching were considered the most valued aspects of ITE programmes:

*"Actually having to be the teacher in a classroom and havin' the experiences n bein' able to reflect on those experiences and lookin' at what I can do to change ... whatever that experience was, an' improve on that experience ... that's been more of a direction to progress."*

(Boodt 2021, p.75)

*"The PGCE is encouraging me to reflect on how I am received in the classroom ... this is important to me in that I want to represent all those things that are important to me such as calmness and commitment to my students."*

(Wilde 2019, p.133)

Perceived positive impacts on teachers of undertaking and successfully completing in-service ITE included enhanced capacity for critical reflection on practice, enhanced pedagogical skills and improved teaching, which in turn enhanced teachers' confidence (Boodt 2021, Burton 2020, Wilde 2019, Winder 2018):

*'Analysis revealed three major areas of improvement on the part of the respondents, these being in the contexts of own academic skills, creativity in teaching and learning, and general pedagogic skill.'*

(Burton 2016, p.171)

*"I think where teacher training has helped me is that it's now given me a bank of tools or a bank of resources up here in my head [...] that I can then go and use and change it. Whereas I think at the beginning of the course I would have gone OK, so that went really bad but I don't know what to do about it."*

(Sowe 2021, p.178)

*"CertEd was really helpful overall and I think I am a much better tutor than I would have been without it."*

(Winder 2018, p.152)

*"I have developed my skills as a tutor and I think I am able to provide the best possible lessons for my students."*

(Winder 2018, p.152)

It is important to note, however, that not all those who were undertaking or had undertaken ITE felt that it led to such outcomes:

*"Do I really need to know this in order to teach? NO! It's all very well telling us all about schemes of work and getting us to create one, but really I have better things to do like marking and getting lessons ready for tomorrow."*

(Winder 2018, p.173)

As reported in Chapter 3 (Section 3.3.4), some trainees and former trainees felt there were limitations in the ITE curriculum. These included the sufficiency or the quality of subject-specialist teaching and support for the development of practical teaching skills (Burton 2016 and 2020, Smithers 2018).

There is some evidence of trainees becoming more independent or autonomous during and after ITE (Wright et al. 2017, Wright et al. 2018), but our analyses did not reveal any well-evidenced common findings relating to pre-service ITE, for which there is a relatively small evidence base.

#### **4.5.2 IN-HOUSE CPD**

Across the reviewed studies, trainees and teachers had mixed views on the quality and usefulness of in-house formal CPD, and the balance of evidence suggests that this had limited impact on their PLD (McCrone 2021, Smithers 2018, Terry 2021, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018). There was evidence that relatively little CPD sought to enhance teachers' pedagogy and less still focused on subject/vocational knowledge and pedagogy. But where CPD did focus on pedagogy and/or was subject-specific, there was some evidence it was valued by teachers (Smithers 2018, Terry 2021):

*"It's not to say the staff development about teaching isn't useful, because it is, but it's then fitting that into your subject, isn't it?"*

(Terry 2021, p.98)

*"The college has really developed me particularly when we have college inset days, looking at areas such as differentiation of teaching for example and how to implement it."*

(Smithers 2018, p.134)

However, many trainees and teachers were critical of their organisation's effort to enhance their PLD and did not consider it to be a good use of their time:

*"CPD's a pain in the bum, its tick boxes as far as I am concerned and its rubbish, if they marked their own teaching the way that they mark our teaching, they wouldn't be teachers, it is death by PowerPoint"*

(McCrone 2021, p.206) and

*"CPD is useless".*

(McCrone 2021, p.207)

In particular, many trainees and teachers regarded the training provided by their employers associated with statutory requirements such as safeguarding, the Prevent duty<sup>17</sup> and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) negatively (Terry 2021):

*'All the [former trainees] refer to compulsory attendance at CPD sessions addressing current policy issues, such as Prevent and EDI. Although there is a recognition of the importance of fulfilling their statutory duties in these areas, CPD of this kind is not associated with developing their teaching, partly because of its pastoral rather than pedagogical focus, but also because it is generic rather than subject-specific. Micha states, "I often struggle to connect some of the things in CPD to the environment in which I teach."'*

(Terry 2021, p.126)

Finally, some trainees and teachers perceived that much of the CPD (particularly statutory training) that was provided, was primarily concerned with meeting organisational expectations and needs, and not their individual learning needs, which limited its impact on their PLD (Terry 2021, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018).

#### **4.5.3 SPECIFIC MEANS OF ENHANCING PLD**

Having their lessons observed and participating in post-lesson discussion and reflection with the observer who might offer 'feedback' was often, though not always, regarded as positive and developmental by trainees and teachers (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, Smithers 2018, Sowe 2021, Terry 2021, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, Wright et al. 2017).

Some studies pointed to the importance of establishing trust between the observer and the observed, and of observers adopting a supportive rather than evaluative and judgemental approach, which could enhance the positive impacts

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<sup>17</sup> The Prevent duty, introduced with the passing of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, requires education providers in England and Wales to help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, including safeguarding learners from extremist ideologies and radicalisation.

on PLD and mitigate against some of the negative impacts of observation (e.g. on trainees' and teachers' wellbeing) that were noted in Chapter 3 (Section 3.3):

*'Data suggest that if feedback from observation is in a collegial, supportive and guided fashion to promote reflection, it is useful. However, grading may inhibit this process.'*

(Sowe 2021, p.181)

Some evidence indicated that trainees and teachers valued observations of their teaching where:

- it enabled them 'to demonstrate their successful compliance and provide affirmation of their teaching abilities' (Terry 2021, p.122)

*"I felt proud that the feedback I got from the assistant principal was good".*

(Terry 2021, p.122)

- it reinforced their position within their community of practice (Wright et al. 2017)

*'With the observer positioned as "an experienced voice to validate what you've done" [...] Lesson observation was seen to celebrate and reinforce [trainees'] position within the community.'*

(Wright et al. 2017, p.108)

- post-observation conversations helped them to recognise their progress and signposted future improvement (Wright et al. 2017).

Studies also demonstrated that the PLD of trainees and early career teachers was enhanced through various kinds of interactions with and support from both mentors (see Section 4.6) and other colleagues in their organisations (see Section 4.4) (Boodt 2021, Smithers 2018, Terry 2021, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018). Engagement with learning from colleagues was stronger and more impactful when their workplace team had a culture of supporting trainees and early career teachers (Smithers 2018, Terry 2021):

*'All participants recognised and valued the ways in which their immediate colleagues offered support and sought informal ways of accessing this for professional development and emotional sustenance.'*

(Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, p.192)

As suggested here and elsewhere (notably Section 4.4), trainees' and teachers' PLD often came about as a result of informal interaction in the workplace rather than planned and formal opportunities for CPD (Boodt 2021, Smithers 2018, Terry 2021, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018).

#### **4.5.4 IMPEDIMENTS TO TRAINEES' AND TEACHERS' PLD**

Across several studies, the following factors were found to impede trainees' and early career teachers' PLD:

- Heavy workloads and an associated lack of time was a barrier to engaging in formal and informal PLD, with the difficulty of finding time for both work and study being particularly emphasised by in-service trainees (IFF 2022, Orr et al. 2019, Sowe 2021, Terry 2021, Winder 2018).

- Following completion of ITE, critical reflection becomes more informal (McCrone 2021), and for many teachers heavy workloads again precluded them from having sufficient time to engage in critical reflection on their practice, thus impeding their PLD (McCrone 2021, Terry 2021)

*“Throughout the year I have been very busy, so I’ve not really had the time to reflect [...] I don’t feel we have enough time in between lessons to think ‘that worked really well, I’ll do that again’ or ‘that didn’t’ [...] And that does affect your teaching because you’re always rushing [...] onto the next thing.”*

(Terry 2021, pp.98-99)

- Some trainees and teachers found engaging in critical reflection on their practice difficult and in some cases were resistant to this (McCrone 2021, Winder 2018)

*“Reflecting on what I do and how I do it is a valid process but one I am very uncomfortable with. I am not used to thinking about myself, my feelings, my life. I have internally kicked and screamed my way through, so far as most of its aspects I find hard on a personal level.”*

(Winder 2018, p.162)

- During all stages of becoming a teacher, trainees and teachers reported a lack of subject-specific pedagogic training and development, and they perceived this as problematic because they valued subject and context-specific training and development more highly than generic training and development (McCrone 2021, Sowe 2021, Terry 2021).

## 4.6 MENTORING

We saw in [Chapter 3](#) that, for some trainees and teachers, strong relationships with and support from mentors contributed to positive experiences of becoming a teacher (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, Boodt 2021, Manning 2018, McCrone 2021, Wright et al. 2022), although several of the reviewed studies show that not all trainees and teachers who had mentors enjoyed positive experiences of mentoring (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, Brown and Everson 2019). We elaborate on those findings here.

### 4.6.1 ASPECTS OF MENTORING VALUED BY TRAINEES AND TEACHERS

Across the reviewed studies, a number of aspects of mentoring were perceived as important contributory factors to some trainees' and teachers' positive experiences, including:

- mentors being helpful, available and flexible (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, Manning 2018, Tyrer 2021)

*“My mentor was lovely and extremely helpful. And always on email or phone access.”*  
(Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, p.28)

- regular interactions with and feedback from mentors (Manning and Hobson 2017, Smithers 2018, Sowe 2021, Terry 2021, Tyrer 2021)

*“I got feedback every other day. It didn’t need to be during a meeting or after a formal observation. If she thought I could improve on something, she’d help”.*

(Tyrer 2021, p.173)

- mentors' providing emotional support (Boodt 2021, Manning 2018, Tyrer 2023, Wright et al. 2022)
- mentors' facilitating access to relevant professional networks and other sources of support and expertise (Boodt 2021, Manning 2018, Tyrer 2023, Wilde 2019).

There was also evidence, although it was more limited, that some trainees and teachers valued:

- opportunities to engage in collaborative problem-solving with their mentor (Boodt 2021, Manning 2018)
- mentors who were not (and were independent from) their line managers (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019).

In addition, while some trainees valued receiving relatively directive mentoring, others experienced and valued a less directive and more developmental approach – there was a lack of consensus on the perceived value of these and other approaches to mentoring (Manning 2018, Manning and Hobson 2017, Tyrer 2021 and 2023):

*"If she came into my class, she'd be like: '[do] that instead of this', which was really helpful"*

(Tyrer 2021, p.173)

*'Jan, like Darren, expressed a preference for a developmental approach as it gets her to "think more about how things are working and analyse" her teaching [...] and] she would "take more away from the experience".'*

(Manning and Hobson 2017, p.588)

#### **4.6.2 POSITIVE IMPACTS OF MENTORING**

Positive relationships with and support from mentors were associated with a number of beneficial impacts for trainees and teachers, including:

- enhanced PLD, and knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning (Boodt 2021, Manning 2018, Manning and Hobson 2017, Tyrer 2023)

*"She [the mentor] was able to explain and I was able to ask questions [...] Everything I've learned has helped me to form my understanding of teaching and to form who I am."*

(Tyrer 2021, p.179)

- enhanced confidence as teachers in general and in relation to the development of their own teaching style in particular (Boodt 2021, Brown and Everson 2019, Manning 2018, Tyrer 2023)

*'Another positive consequence of mentoring identified by six mentees [...] was having increased confidence as a teacher.'*

(Manning 2018, p.179)

- enhanced resilience (Boodt 2021, Brown and Everson 2019, Manning 2018)  
*'Trainees who had emotional support from their mentor displayed the greatest resilience and several mentors talked proudly about their trainee's ability to learn from their mistakes'.*  
(Boodt 2021, pp.157-158)
- overcoming isolation and contributing to trainees and teachers feeling part of the team and the creation of a sense of belonging (Manning 2018, Tyrer 2023)  
*'Mentees [...] emphasised they had found collaborating with their mentor beneficial in terms of preventing loneliness [and ...] described how working alongside their mentor and other teachers meant that as a result they felt included whilst on placement [and ...] "part of the team"'.  
(Manning 2018, pp.179-180)*
- the development of a stronger identity as a teacher (Brown and Everson 2019, Manning 2018, Wright et al. 2022) (see [Section 4.11](#)).

#### 4.6.3 NEGATIVE AND MIXED EXPERIENCES OF MENTORING

Where trainees and beginner teachers had less positive experiences of mentoring, the reviewed studies identified the following contributory factors:

- Some mentors were not sufficiently available, had or were perceived to have too little time to support their mentees or were "too busy" (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, p.29; IFF 2022; Orr et al. 2019)  
*"As far as a mentor for my teaching goes, no, I haven't had a meeting with the person that's supposed to be mentoring me since the end of February last year."*  
(IFF 2022, p.141)  
*"I think they [mentors] see it as a burden, it's another job on top of everything that they have to do, they're not given hours for this so they do it as a favour really."*  
(Orr et al. 2019, p.37)
- Some mentors are untrained and/or unprepared (Manning and Hobson 2017, Orr et al. 2019)  
*"My mentor hadn't really been given any information about what she actually had to do to fulfil the mentor role ... I wasn't too sure either, obviously I had my personal development record which she had to fill in sections every week. She had no idea about that".*  
(Orr et al. 2019, p.25)
- Many mentors do not have the knowledge or expertise to support mentees with their subject or vocational knowledge or pedagogy (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, IFF 2022, Orr et al. 2019, Sowe 2021, Tyrer 2021 and 2023)  
*"It would be good to have mentors with vocational experience".*  
(IFF 2022, p.131)



*"I could do with a set of questions that would help me with my mentor, or focus me a little bit more in my subject content, because that's where I'm missing and I need some more input".*

(Orr et al. 2019, p.33)

- Some mentors are unsupportive and show little concern for mentees' emotional needs (IFF 2022, Manning and Hobson 2017)

*"I had quite a bad experience in the first year [...] The mentor wasn't very supportive."*

(IFF 2022, p.59)

*"The mentor would have been quite pleased if I'd failed."*

(Brown and Everson 2019, p.245)

- Some problematic relationships and conflict between mentors and mentees (Boodt 2021, Brown and Everson 2019, Manning 2018, Orr et al. 2019, Tyrer 2023)

*'Another mentee described "occasional conflict[s]" arising between herself and her mentor as at times she felt "told off" and "criticised".'*

(Manning 2018, p.180)

- Some mentoring relationships are hierarchical, with mentors enacting an overly evaluative, judgemental and/or directive approach (IFF 2022, Manning 2018, Manning and Hobson 2017)

*'Jan described her mentoring meetings as "a bit one sided" because she [Jan] "spends a lot of time listening".'*

(Manning and Hobson 2017, p.584)

*'One of the [...] mentees described being "told off" by her mentor [...] another stated that at the start of the process, his mentor adopted a "this is what you have to do, this is what you're doing wrong" approach'.*

(Manning 2018, p.140)

The reviewed studies highlight a number of detrimental impacts experienced by trainees and teachers when they did not have positive relationships with and support from their mentors, including:

- anxiety, frustration and negative impacts on their self-esteem (Brown and Everson 2019, Manning 2018, Tyrer 2021 and 2023)

*'Difficult relationships with mentors or placement colleagues led to feelings of doubt and anxiety. One participant [...] expressed "worries about failure due to lack of support and clarity".'*

(Brown and Everson 2019, p.240)

- feeling of a lack of autonomy (Manning 2018, Tyrer 2021)

*"I see her role as guiding me but also to set goals and challenges. Obviously, my mentor knows me really well and she said to me she knows what I'm capable of but I'd like to be challenged more and given more independence."*

(Tyrer 2021, p.159)

Overall, while some trainees and teachers enjoy positive relationships with and support from mentors, the evidence suggests that there are inconsistent standards of mentoring across the sector. Therefore there is a failure to take full advantage of the potential positive impact of mentorship (Brown and Everson 2019, IFF 2022, Manning 2018, Manning and Hobson 2017, McCrone 2021, Sowe 2021):

*'Mentees reported varying positive and negative consequences of the mentoring and none of the approaches were found to be realising the full potential of mentoring to support the student teachers' learning and growth.'*

(Manning 2018, p.2)

#### **4.7 WELLBEING, ILLBEING, CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM**

There are few rigorous studies with primary evidence from FE trainees or teachers that explicitly address the extent to which FE trainees and teachers experience wellbeing and/or illbeing, or the factors that contribute to such experiences. Most direct evidence from trainees and teachers in this area relates to experiences of stress and to associated factors.

##### **4.7.1 TRAINEE AND TEACHER STRESS**

There is evidence across a range of studies that some trainees and former trainees experienced high levels of work-related stress (Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, McCrone 2021, Scott et al. 2022, Terry 2021, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, Wilde 2019, Winder 2018):

*"THIS IS SOUL DESTROYING, AARRGGHHH!!!!!! I feel like I can't breathe at times with everything going on. AARRGGHHHH changing goal posts and workload – don't tell me this is it. I think I will cry. I feel so bad that I can't keep up."*

(Wilde 2019, p.126)

The factor attributed most frequently and powerfully with experiences of stress was heavy workload (Scott et al. 2022, Terry 2021, Winder 2018, Wilde 2019):

*"I am up to 26 hours' contact – how long can I maintain this pace without cracking up? On Wednesday I worked from 8.30am to 6.30pm without a break, not a cup of tea or anything. In my ½ hour lunch break I was told I had a meeting with a student's social worker. I went home crying I was so tired. I feel totally drained and I feel I can't cope."*

(Winder 2018, p.171)

Other factors associated with some trainees' and teachers' experiences of stress include:

- a perceived lack of support and isolation (McCrone 2021, Wilde 2019) – see [Section 4.4](#).

- not understanding the rules around behaviour policies and being “tripped up by little things” (McCrone 2021, p.198)
- conflict with personal and caring responsibilities

*‘[Kerry] refers to the work she has to take home, and the impact this has on her ability to balance her job with her caring responsibilities as a single parent.’*  
(Terry 2021, p.100)

Tightly regulated management systems were also said to contribute to some trainees’ and teachers’ levels of stress, while the following quote from an experienced teacher completing an in-service ITE qualification also demonstrates one means of alleviating such stress:

*“People are frightened of losing their jobs so they are therefore conforming to the rules ... when you become stressed you revert to a situation where you stick to the rules or a process so that you don’t actually feel the stress quite so much. So, if you just keep ticking the boxes then you can keep the stress levels down.”*  
(Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, p.188)

Overall, there was limited evidence in the literature about factors found to directly mitigate stress or enhance trainees’ and teachers’ wellbeing, although positive relationships with, support from and collaborations with mentors, colleagues and fellow trainees appeared significant insofar as these were associated with enhanced confidence and self-esteem, overcoming isolation and experiencing a sense of belonging (Brown and Everson 2019, Manning 2018, Tyrer 2023).

#### **4.7.2 CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM**

With regard to trainees’ and early career teachers’ experiences of confidence and self-esteem, the first thing to note is that these can vary over time. Wright and colleagues (2018) found that, for some former trainees (particularly those in part-time or sessional roles), their confidence dipped in their first term after qualification but began to rise again from the second term. These authors describe how, for one participant:

*‘There was a sense of being “lost/wandering” in the first term, questioning themselves all the time [...] In the second term and in relation to their subject specific teaching, their confidence had returned [...] and] they knew what they were doing’.*  
(Wright et al. 2018, p.14)

Secondly, the evidence suggests that, for some trainees at least, their confidence could fluctuate on a daily basis. Brown and Everson (2019) note that several pre-service trainees in their study indicated that ‘their sense of confidence as a teacher was not fixed. There were “some days when confident and some days when doubting myself”’ (p.240). Related to this, the beginner teachers reported having had ‘fluctuating levels of self-esteem’ (Brown and Everson 2019, p.246).

A number of studies identified factors that enhanced teachers’ confidence and self-esteem. The strongest evidence related to:

- undertaking and successfully completing ITE (Burton 2016 and 2020, Sowe 2021, Winder 2018, Wright et al. 2018). One trainee noted

*“The knowledge (from the course) has given me the confidence that now I am an educator.”*

(Sowe 2021, p.170)

*“When I was qualified it did kind of give me a bit of a confidence boost ... now I can be a professional.”*

(Wright et al. 2018, p.14)

- positive relationships with, support from and collaborations with mentors, colleagues and peers (Brown and Everson 2019, Sowe 2021, Tyrer 2023), for example, Sowe (2021) reported that for some in-service trainees, enhanced confidence came “from the experience and the sharing with my peers” (p.170) (see sections 4.4 and 4.6).

- amassing greater experience as a teacher, securing employment and other forms of validation, for example, McCrone found that for early career lecturers, the nature of being employed itself seemed to confer greater confidence than had been felt on placement

*“I used to at first be really scared about what people would think about me [as a teacher ...] but then I’ve been like the more I have done it, I’ve been like ‘well hang on a minute, they are buying me in to do this, I know what I can do’”.*

(McCrone 2021, p.192)

- ‘assuming greater responsibilities that were “coming thick and fast”’ (Brown and Everson 2019, p.241)
- validation, which Wright et al. (2018) found was important in boosting early career teachers’ confidence

*“Validation for Participant 3 came from their interview for their teacher contract. Though teaching there prior to the interview, “nobody saw me nobody knew what I was doing and I was really lacking confidence and everything I was doing I was thinking this can’t be right surely”.*

(Wright et al. 2018, p.15)

At least two studies suggest that higher levels of confidence and self-esteem among trainee and early career teachers helped them to develop a stronger teacher identity (Brown and Everson 2019, Sowe 2021) (see Section 4.11).

## 4.8 TEACHER WORKLOAD AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORK ASSOCIATED WITH TEACHING

### 4.8.1 THE NATURE AND IMPACT OF DEMANDING WORKLOADS

There was recurring evidence in the majority of the studies reviewed that trainees and teachers in the sector experienced high workloads, which many indicated were difficult to manage (IFF 2022, McCrone 2021, Orr et al. 2019, Sowe 2021, Terry 2021, Wilde 2019, Winder 2018). The studies revealed a number of features of such workloads, notably:

- busy schedules and long working hours (IFF 2022, McCrone 2021, Orr et al. 2019, Sowe 2021, Terry 2021, Wilde 2019, Winder 2018)

*'[George] felt that there had been times in his first year when he had far exceeded his contracted hours and worked beyond the remit of his grade [...] there were "hours and hours of marking".'*

(McCrone 2021, p.225)

- preparation and teaching across multiple courses, topics and groups (IFF 2022, Terry 2021, Wilde 2019)

*'Her "crazy timetable" is "horrific" because it represents the eight different groups she teaches, squeezing out time for planning, preparation, marking and pastoral care, to the extent that "you just feel like you can't actually take a 10 minute breath".'*

(Terry 2021, p.117)

*'Planning isn't easy I was planning 4 topics, 4 extensions and 4 worksheets. I live the frenzy of panic planning.'*

(Wilde 2019, p.125)

- administrative tasks and other demands on time, in addition to preparation and teaching workload (IFF 2022, McCrone 2021, Sowe 2021, Terry 2021, Wilde 2019, Winder 2018)

*'If you're not teaching and you're not marking and you're not sorting out a problem or an issue with a student, you're either at staff development or you're being asked to get some data for the management, or you're being asked to run a taster session, or you're being asked to go to an educational healthcare review, or, you know, there's always something'.*

(Terry 2021, p.125)

- the dual demands of being a teacher and undertaking an ITE programme for in-service trainees (IFF 2022, Sowe 2021)

*'I'm teaching 24 hours face to face teaching now still on my PGCE and it's like a 50/50 balance of planning and teaching so I'm currently working a 46-hour week if you were to put the study on top of it. It was hard trying to balance it all.'*

(IFF 2022, p.144)

Some trainees and teachers attributed heavy workloads to a lack of foresight and support on the part of institutional management (McCrone 2021, Terry 2021):

*“Management” [...] are presented as an undifferentiated mass, who contribute to her workload and fail to give her the support she needs as a recently qualified teacher [...] Additional training, lesson planning and the recent Ofsted inspection are all referred to as sources of workload and stress that managers have failed to alleviate.’*

(Terry 2021, p.100)

The reported impacts of trainees’ and teachers’ demanding workloads included:

- insufficient time to plan lessons leading to lower quality of teaching (Terry 2021, Tyrer 2021, Winder 2018)

*‘Hamish, who had a young child to look after, judged that his teaching had got worse whilst he had been doing his ITE course on top of his full-time job due to pressure of time.’*

(Orr et al. 2019, pp.24-25)

*“I simply can’t make my lessons as interesting, enjoyable, innovative as I want them to be because there’s not enough time in the world – because of all these other jobs I’ve got to do.”*

(Winder 2018, p.180)

- limited time to engage in formal or informal PLD (IFF 2022, Orr et al. 2019, Sowe 2021, Terry 2021, Winder 2018) (see [Section 4.5](#))
- difficulty in meeting the performative demands of their organisations (IFF 2022, Tyrer 2021) (see [Section 4.9](#))
- exhaustion and stress (McCrone 2021, Terry 2021, Tyrer 2021, Wilde 2019, Winder 2018) (see [Section 4.7](#))

*“What I recognise is that I am tired and my battery needs recharging. I am like a hamster on a wheel – planning, planning and more planning – I’m losing sleep!!!”*

(Wilde 2019, p.125)

- work–life imbalance (McCrone 2021, Terry 2021)

*‘[Flora] stated that she had a “non-existent” work life balance.’*

(McCrone 2021, p.226)

*‘[Kerry] refers to the work she has to take home, and the impact this has on her ability to balance her job with her caring responsibilities as a single parent.’*

(Terry 2021, p.100)

#### 4.8.2 ADMINISTRATIVE WORK RELATED TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

As noted above, administrative tasks were found to be a major component of teachers' demanding workloads. The reviewed studies suggest that when they talked about the administrative demands of the role, trainees and teachers tended to refer to common tasks, including:

- 'paperwork' (Boodt 2021) and 'filling out' forms (McCrone 2021, p.199) or "filling in forms" (Wilde 2019, p.124)
- writing lesson plans (Boodt 2021, Burton 2016 and 2020)
- monitoring data (Sowe 2021), especially relating to student attendance and progress (Terry 2021, Wilde 2019), which one participant referred to as "the demand for acceptable metrics" (Terry 2021, p.141).

On the subject of data, one first year teacher in Wilde's 2019 study was quoted as stating:

*"You need to do this, that and the other ... data! data! And yes you guessed it more data! You are expected to put so much on [ProMonitor™] every day. Then you have to predict and monitor student grades, write about their behaviour and attendance and then Ofsted ... Ofsted ... Ofsted. I think when you are a PGCE student you are protected a lot. However when you are employed there is no holding back."*

(Wilde 2019, p.153)

As we reported in Chapter 3 (Section 3.3), the administrative work that teachers were required to undertake was found to have a (sometimes strongly) negative impact on the experiences of many trainees and teachers, with many finding it challenging and/or frustrating (Boodt 2021, McCrone 2021, Sowe 2021, Terry 2021, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, Wilde 2019).

One participant in Wilde's study of pre-service and first year teachers stated:

*"I'm fighting the workload and most of it stems from admin and filling in forms. I'm putting the same information on three different forms and then having to change it to suit whichever way the management wind blows".*

(Wilde 2019, p.124)

Sowe reported in-service trainees bemoaning the administrative workload demands associated with and on top of their teaching work:

*'One trainee with agreement of others said: "It's numbers its data, pushing pressure on me"'.*

(Sowe 2021, p.180)

McCrone referred to early career lecturers as experiencing "'gruelling' expectations of administration' (2021, p.193); while an in-service trainee in Thompson and Wolstencroft's study (2018) stated:

*"If a student isn't doing work, its more work for me rather than for them. You have to do a tutorial and then type it up, phone their parents, write an action plan and I can do all of that and then the student still doesn't do anything, it is frustrating".*

(Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, p.187)

As suggested above, in relation to demanding workloads more broadly, some studies reported that early career teachers and former trainees perceived that the administrative demands of the role diverted precious time away from, and may thus have a detrimental impact on, the primary activity of teaching and learning. Terry found that many former trainees viewed the production of forms to monitor attendance and progress 'as a diversion from the more important tasks of teaching and learning' (Terry 2021, p.140).

The administrative demands associated with becoming and being an FE teacher, and those relating to data in particular, are a key feature of performativity, to which we now turn.

#### 4.9 PERFORMATIVITY

In this section, we elaborate on some of the findings presented in Chapter 3 (Section 3.3) by summarising and evidencing common themes in the reviewed studies on the phenomenon of performativity, which is understood as 'the definition and regulation of professional life in relation to bureaucratic targets, measures and sanctions' (Simmons and Thompson 2008, p.602). More broadly, performativity is associated with performance management (Avis 2003) and what Avis refers to as 'target-driven managerialism' (2009, p.658).

The first common finding relating to this subject is that the 'pressures of performativity in the workplace' (Sowe 2021, p.162) were perceived to have detrimental impacts on the experiences of many trainees and teachers, including on the ways in which they teach (Sowe 2021, Terry 2021, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, Wilde 2019, Wright et al. 2022, Wright et al. 2017). Some trainees and teachers were found to be particularly frustrated by what they considered to be a primary emphasis in their organisations on getting students through courses and examinations, at the expense of what they saw as good pedagogy and developing students more holistically, including for work, higher education (HE) and life. One trainee in Sowe's study spoke for themselves and others in stating that:

*'Their previous perception of the teacher was: "Developing the student holistically" but now they realised this was not possible, because "the focus appears to be on getting as many students through the course as possible for target, funding reasons"'.*

(Sowe 2021, p.139)

Others said:

*"We were not teaching students in preparation for university or employment but just to pass qualification" and "Grades have too much focus in education".*

(Sowe 2021, p.153)



One beginner teacher in Wilde's (2019) study stated that:

*"The pressure on teachers and students to perform or produce outcomes doesn't help at all. Pressure has a negative impact on learning and the group dynamics."*  
(Wilde 2019, p.145)

Some studies suggest that trainees and teachers experience performative demands that are primarily driven by organisational policy and processes (e.g. lesson observation), senior and middle leaders and managers, and Ofsted (McCrone 2021, Terry 2021):

*'[Former trainees] work in a performative environment where accountability is paramount. Observation of teaching is experienced primarily as recording rather than changing practice; where change is prompted this relates to the visibility of teaching and assessment practices, rather than pedagogical development.'*  
(Terry 2021, p.124)

*'Managers ("they") are seen as spokespeople for an undefined but predictable force that controls what can be said and done.'*  
(Terry 2021, p.118)

*'Both [former trainees] and managers are alert to the need to "keep up" [...] with policy developments but appear to be motivated by the "fear of Ofsted".'*  
(Terry 2021, p.123)

It is clear from the research that performative demands on trainees and teachers create tensions in relation to meeting their students' wider needs, which they need to 'navigate' (Terry 2021, p.141) or 'mediate' (Sowe 2021, p.218):

*'The monitoring of student attendance and progress forms a primary area of activity for the majority of the [former trainees], involving mediation between the complex needs of the students and the requirements of a performative workplace.'*  
(Terry 2021, p.3)

*'Expected by managers to monitor attendance and track progress through centralised systems [...] the [former trainees] are forced to mediate between the real-life, bottom-up pressures stemming from their students' experiences and behaviours, and the demand for acceptable metrics issued by managers at multiple levels.'*  
(Terry 2021, p.141)

A number of the reviewed studies also suggested that some trainees and teachers were successfully learning how to navigate and mediate these tensions, and in some cases to resist performative demands (McCrone 2021, Orr et al. 2019, Terry 2021, Wright et al. 2022):

*'In negotiating between these competing pressures, the [former trainees] learn, to varying degrees, how to navigate their role within a performative environment.'*  
(Terry 2021, p.141)

*'For [some] participants [...] the rigid demands of qualification prompt a range of adaptive strategies, in order to evade the "strait-jacket" of exams [...] to counter "boxticking" [...] and to help students to achieve genuine "success"'.  
(Terry 2021, p.121)*

One early career teacher in McCrone's study:

*'David also challenged these bureaucracies, describing management as being in their "ivory towers" "playing the game" possibly without really knowing what they were doing. He explained that this perception led to him and his colleagues going "full reverse, heels in ..." and refusing to comply.'  
(McCrone 2021, p.200)*

Wright et al. also present evidence of some early career teachers exercising agency through 'pushing back', giving an example of one participant who felt:

*'Empowered to "start kicking back" [against managers and colleagues] if needed so as not to "put myself in a position where I don't feel comfortable with my teaching or my teaching ethics"'.  
(Wright et al. 2018, p.16)*

One study found that the inclusion of a strong focus on pedagogical content knowledge in an ITE programme:

*'May have helped to liberate some participants from the straitjacket of performativity, with one trainee describing a valuable impact of the intervention as making him realise that "decision making in teaching should be based more on my own knowledge of the sector, and not what the awarding body wants."  
(Orr et al. 2019, p.25)*

#### **4.10 PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY AND AGENCY**

A number of studies suggest that trainees' and teachers' ability to exercise some autonomy or agency in their work is beneficial to themselves and others (Boodt 2021, Brown and Everson 2019, McCrone 2021, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018):

*'Interestingly, one participant acknowledged they had begun to feel more positive after being given "more autonomy". For our participants, feeling able and trusted to "do the job" of being a teacher in a professional placement was very important to them [...] For [one participant], assuming greater responsibilities that were "coming thick and fast", contributed to increased confidence, empowerment and agency.'  
(Brown and Everson 2019, pp.240-241)*

*'Maria felt that her industry experience enabled her to overcome problems rooted in practice, that she could "put my own spin on it, share my own values ... which is why I love the job as much as I do"'.  
(McCrone 2021, p.169)*

*'Mentors also recognised trainees' ability to be autonomous and responsive as important dispositions for the teacher habitus. Several mentors noted that this was not only highly beneficial to the trainees and the department they were working in but also helped bring about positive change in attitudes and working practices in the department'.*

(Boodt 2021, p.131)

Thompson and Wolstencroft report that 'many' of the in-service trainees in their study 'did use their agency in ways which had a positive impact on their colleagues or students' (2018, p.189), giving the following powerful example of the latter:

*"My best student is straight distinctions for everything, has attendance of 60 odd percent and everyone else can look at these statistics and go 'oh that's pretty awful ... what's being done to punish this one?' ... but they are literally outperforming in every other thing you ask them to do." By not "punishing" this student the tutor is acting agentially in order to protect them from aspects of organisation policy which are considered unhelpful or even harmful.'*

(Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, pp.189-190)

All that said, the extent to which FE trainees and teachers experience the ability to act autonomously and with agency appears to vary considerably within the sector (Brown and Everson 2019, McCrone 2021, Wright et al. 2022, Wright et al. 2017, Wright et al. 2018), though there is no identifiable pattern of variation between different parts of the sector or of particular organisations.

A number of studies highlighted trainees' and teachers' perceptions of having limited autonomy (McCrone 2021, Terry 2021, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018). Thompson and Wolstencroft reported trainees feeling that their agency for teaching was limited by their institutional contexts, with one in-service trainee stating:

*"The problem is I am then being told by 'higher ups' in our organisation that I am taking too much of myself into that room and I am making too much of a personal bond with the students as was pointed out to me earlier in the week ... after five years now I am still treated like the unreliable child."*

(Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, p.190)

Terry provides numerous examples of national and organisational policy constraining the autonomy of former trainees and shares the experiences of a number of participants, including one who contrasted their teaching work in an FE college with that in a hair salon:

*'The salon represents a space that is free of the constraints imposed by the College, where Health and Safety considerations, Study Programme requirements and the mandatory group tutorials on British Values all conspire to obstruct her central goal of sharing her subject expertise and enabling students to achieve qualifications. As she states: "now [in the salon] I feel like I can teach" [...] Unlike in the college, here she is free to make her own decisions. She also believes that her students will be freed from extraneous subject-matter: "spending their time doing bloody British Values rather than learning what they're supposed to be learning".'*

(Terry 2021, p.106)

Other studies also reported that some early career teachers felt their ability to act autonomously was challenged by organisational expectations or demands (McCrone 2021, Wright et al. 2018):

*“For responsibility for their [the students’] learning I would say that is ... within the constraints we get given, that is zero”.*

(McCrone 2021, p.199)

As we suggested in Chapter 3 (Section 3.3), some trainees and teachers felt deprofessionalised due to constraints on their autonomy and agency, and specifically on their capacity to teach in a way that they would like and consider most appropriate (Manning 2018, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018):

*‘[There] was a general feeling from tutors that their job was being de-professionalised by the introduction of a conformist approach to teaching. This was illustrated by a tutor in organisation B: “I feel they are telling you how they want you to teach and I want to develop my own way ... I feel like there is a very narrow view of what teaching is”.*

(Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, p.185)

Yet despite constraints on and variation in trainees’ and teachers’ capacity to act autonomously, we reported in Chapter 3 (Section 3.4) and in Chapter 4 (Section 4.9) that there is some evidence of:

- trainees and teachers becoming more agentic both during and after ITE (Wright et al. 2017, Wright et al. 2018)

*‘In the second term [... a newly qualified teacher was] not the “new person”, they knew what they were doing and were therefore given autonomy.’*

(Wright et al. 2018, p.14)

- some former trainees and early career teachers exercising agency by employing ‘a range of adaptive strategies’ (Terry 2021, p.121) to mediate organisational policies and procedures, and in some cases by digging their ‘heels in’ (McCrone 2021) and resisting performative demands.

One former trainee in Terry’s study reports drawing on his learning from ITE to provide some autonomy in his work:

*“‘It [ITE] gave me a broader understanding of what I should and shouldn’t do and what I probably could get away with [...]” [...] he appears actively engaged with the priorities and values of the institution, but is prepared to define these on his own terms.’*

(Terry 2021, p.107)

Similarly, Wright and colleagues present findings on early career teachers who ‘recognised the need to hold on to their sense of self as agentic and independent’ (2018, p.17) as features of their professional identity, to which we now turn.

#### 4.11 PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

The reviewed studies suggest that the extent to which trainees and teachers develop an identity as a teacher, or a dual vocational-teacher identity, varies between different individuals, and that teacher identity development is a constantly evolving process (Boodt 2021, Orr et al. 2019, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, Wright et al. 2018). There is evidence that some trainees and teachers with previous or ongoing industry experience of the subject they were teaching retained a strong vocational identity without developing an equally strong teacher identity:

*"I have taught a lecturer in electrical installation who stills sees himself as a 'spark', therefore his sense of occupational identity is as an electrician, not a teacher."*

(Orr et al. 2019, p.20)

*'[Ben] appears conflicted in his role as a dual professional, diffident about his teacher identity'.*

(Boodt 2021, p.72)

*"I am a soldier first of all, then an intelligence officer".*

(Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018, p.185)

On the other hand, some trainees and teachers, including those with no prior industry experience of the subject they were teaching or with weaker vocational identities, had formed stronger teacher identities:

*'The evolving teacher habitus of Sophie, Dan and Amy, who did not have industry experience of the subject they were teaching, was much more prominent. Sophie has renegotiated her habitus [...] in response to the ESOL field in which she now works, and there is no hint of any residual allegiance to her degree subject, or her former role.'*

(Boodt 2021, p.132)

*"I am a teacher, this is my career and I am a professional".*

(Wright et al. 2018, p.15)

For some participants, their professional identity formation was hampered by experiences of imposter syndrome, insecurity or feeling unworthy of the title of teacher:

*'All the trainees expressed varying degrees of incredulity that they were now teachers'.*

(Boodt 2021, p.115)

*'Several participants in the study expressed a sense of unworthiness as they began their teaching careers'.*

(Boodt 2021, p.103)

*"I never see meself as a teacher, because [...] I don't think I deserve that badge, and I never think I would"*

(Boodt 2021, p.111) and

*"It's just that little bit in me that thinks, 'no, you're not an academic, you're nowhere near an academic, you're just a rough old scaffolder, just come in to teach and that's all you'll ever be."*

(Boodt 2021, p.73)

*"[I] still need to build on my confidence with[in] being the teacher and not the imposter".*

(Wright et al. 2017, p.106)

For some trainees and early career teachers, however, gaining more experience as teachers and having their teaching 'validated' by more experienced colleagues (e.g. following lesson observations) helped them to feel more worthy of the title of teacher:

*"When I'm told I meet [ETF; Education and Training Foundation professional standards] criteria I feel less as an 'imposter' and more of a 'real' teacher".*

(Wright et al. 2017, p.108)

As reported in [Chapter 3](#) and earlier in this chapter, other factors found to enhance teacher identity development include:

- undertaking and successfully completing ITE (Burton 2016 and 2020, Sowe 2021, Wright et al. 2018)
- positive relationships with and support from mentors (Brown and Everson 2019, Manning 2018, Wright et al. 2022)
- positive relationships with and feedback from students (Brown and Everson 2019, Wright et al. 2022)

*'They recognised the positive impact of their mentors [...] and their own students on their developing teacher identity'.*

(Wright et al. 2022, p.300)

As well as establishing and retaining a sense of autonomy or agency, as reported earlier (notably in [Section 4.10](#)), there is evidence that a strong commitment to learners and their holistic development and to learner-centred pedagogies (see [Section 4.3](#)), were key features of some trainees' and teachers' professional identities (McCrone 2021, Terry 2021, Wilde 2019, Wright et al. 2022, Wright et al. 2017, Wright et al. 2018):

*'This clear sense of professional responsibility for "getting things right for individual learners" [...] was present for all [early career teachers].'*

(McCrone 2021, p.167)

*"My main goal is for students to achieve something not me ... I don't need a super ego. I'm truly finding who I am as a teacher."*

(Wilde 2019, p.143)

*"I think about it every day about how I can amend myself and change my footing to help them [learners] to know that it's a fun kind of happy positive space but that also I'm looking after them I care about them and I have to be stern with them so it's a real kind of gentle balance that I have to try and create and [...] it's very much on my mind all of the time about which kind of branch of my teacher identity I need to really use that day to get the best of them or to make them feel kind of safe."*

(Wright et al. 2018, p.15)

#### 4.12 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE, POLICIES, PROCESSES AND CONDITIONS

Several of the reviewed studies showed that organisational culture, processes and decision-making, which appeared to be shaped to a large degree by the external environment and lack of funding, had a number of detrimental impacts on trainees' and teachers' experiences (McCrone 2021, Orr et al. 2019, Terry 2021, Wilde 2019, Wright et al. 2018). Wilde quotes one beginner teacher who expressed the sentiments of many in stating "I think the managers here only care about Ofsted and money ... not staff, not students" (2019, p.158).

Orr et al. report that in-service trainees found lack of time to be a persistent obstacle to their professional development, and that this appeared to reflect organisational priorities. For example:

*'Brian complained that his college had insisted he follow the ITE course, but then he had insufficient time to complete a rationale and lesson plan for a teaching observation because his department was so short staffed.'*

(Orr et al. 2019, p.24)

McCrone reported evidence of a lack of capacity rather than a lack of willingness to support early career teachers:

*"It almost feels like that [supporting new colleagues] is just another thing that they have added on to this is the [established] teacher's responsibility, the growing pile that 'they should be able to do' [...] rather than you being just that teacher or a lecturer [...] You've got 15 other things going on."*

(McCrone 2021, p.168)

Lack of capacity may also help to explain new teachers' somewhat mixed experiences of induction to organisations and the profession. While Ahmad and Zaidi's survey of teachers entering the FE sector in the previous two years (n=109) found that 78% of respondents reported receiving an induction package upon starting with their employer (2019, p.11), only a minority felt that the induction they received had adequately prepared them for teaching in FE:

*"My first year was a huge struggle – definitely thrown in at the deep end [...] an incredibly stressful and distressing situation – almost no structured support at all."*

(Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, p.29)

*"My induction consisted of 2 mornings. I was initially assigned a mentor, but we only met once for 20 minutes as she was too busy with her own teaching workload".*

(Ahmad and Zaidi 2019, p.29)

As previously suggested (see sections 4.3 and 4.9), there is some evidence of a lack of congruence between the values of individual teachers and those of organisations or their senior management teams (McCrone 2021, Terry 2021, Wilde 2019, Wright et al. 2018):

*"I know the organisation have an idea of professionalism. I also have my idea about professionalism and sometimes I don't match with the organisation".*

(Terry 2021, p.132)



*'George and Maggie were both dismayed by the focus on financial priorities and business models, prioritised over pedagogic and pastoral needs. George explained that it was "all business talk and it was all about money" with "no idea that the student was top of our priority list." He continued that he felt that students came lower in priorities than financial considerations and positions in "league tables".'*

(McCrone 2021, p.201)

Studies also show (as previously reported in sections 4.3, 4.9 and 4.10) that in some cases, teachers resist organisational processes that are at odds with their own values and principles (McCrone 2021, Terry 2021, Wilde 2019). Wilde provides evidence of a number of beginning teachers engaging in 'strategic compliance' (2019, p.140) with policies and procedures of their FE college. Similarly, Terry reports several former trainees deliberately subverting or mediating the demands of organisation policies and procedures:

*'Micha [...] discusses how she mediates the new institutional policy of setting homework in every session when working with "non-traditional students" [...] She states: "keeping them attending college is one thing but expecting them to go home and have the space, the facilities, the conditions that they would need to go away and do large amounts of homework is ... unrealistic." [...] Although her opposition to the policy is explicit, her intended response is more nuanced: "if it's enforced, then homework will be to 'go home and consider' or 'go home and bring something to the next lesson" [...] She thus adopts a form of tactical compliance, protecting the students from the impact of the policy and herself from possible negative consequences.'*

(Terry 2021, p.131)

Another issue experienced by some trainees and early career teachers in particular, was a lack of provision, by the organisations in which they were employed or on placement with, of a common work or desk space. In some cases, this was found to contribute to an absence of a sense of belonging, as well as practical difficulties in finding a space to work and in storing and transporting teaching resources (Manning 2018, McCrone 2021). One participant in Manning's study:

*'explained how his teaching timetable meant he was working across four different sites. He described how there was "no staff room or desk ... you go into a lesson, bring your bag, and then you go off, you're like a travelling salesman".'*

(Manning 2018, p.154)

Despite the common findings, reported above, on trainees' and teachers' challenging experiences of navigating organisational cultures and processes, there is also some evidence of more positive experiences. Firstly, there is evidence that some trainees and early career teachers were provided with and valued the provision of a physical space, which helped foster positive and mutually supportive relationships with colleagues and peers and helped them to feel at home in the organisation and settled in the profession (Terry 2021, Thompson and Wolstencroft 2018).

Secondly, some studies found greater congruence between individual trainees' and teachers' values and those of their departments, than those of the wider organisation or its senior management (Boodt 2021, Orr et al. 2019):



*'The departmental focus is very much to inspire their students to develop a positive relationship with maths, which Dan shares.'*

(Boodt 2021, p.74)

Thirdly, as reported in sections 4.4 and 4.6, many trainees and teachers have reported positive relationships with and support from colleagues, mentors and managers within their organisations.

### 4.13 GAPS IN THE EVIDENCE BASE ON BECOMING AN FE TEACHER IN ENGLAND

In Chapter 2, we identified a number of limitations in the current research base on both becoming and being an FE teacher, and in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 we highlighted some specific limitations of the evidence base relating to becoming an FE teacher. We extend this analysis by presenting, in Table 4.1, a more comprehensive account of the gaps in the becoming an FE teacher evidence base.

**Table 4.1: Gaps in the evidence base on becoming an FE teacher**

Types of studies
<p>Limited number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large-scale studies</li> <li>• longitudinal or sequential studies that span more than one or two years, which restricts what can be learned from these kinds of studies</li> <li>• almost complete absence of experimental or quasi-experimental designs.</li> </ul>
Areas of the FE sector and types of trainees and teachers
<p>Areas that are under-represented in existing studies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trainees undertaking placements and teachers employed in private sector public funded FE provision</li> <li>• trainees and teachers who have not undertaken an ITE qualification of sustained duration at Level 5 or above</li> <li>• trainees who are undertaking or who have completed pre-service ITE qualifications (which comprises a small minority of ITE provision)</li> <li>• the evidence base is especially scant in relation to the experiences of those in industry associate (or similar) roles, including their teaching practices and pedagogies, and means of supporting these.</li> </ul>
Comparative studies
<p>Limited, or an absence of, studies relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the experiences of trainees and teachers in different areas of the FE sector and the associated consequences for practice, wellbeing and retention</li> <li>• the experiences of trainees and teachers with different subject and vocational specialisms</li> <li>• the experiences of and associated outcomes of participation in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– pre-service compared to in-service ITE</li> <li>– different ITE qualifications at Level 5 and above of sustained duration and the comparison of these to not undertaking a formal ITE qualification</li> <li>– ITE qualifications led by different types of providers</li> <li>– the comparative impact of relatively directive versus more developmental, non-directive or progressively non-directive approaches to mentoring.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Evidence related to PLD</b>
<p>Gaps in the evidence related to PLD include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how FE trainees and teachers learn to become teachers in the workplace, including how they translate learning from ITE and CPD into practice</li> <li>• CPD provision for, and the PLD of, teachers who have not undertaken ITE</li> <li>• mentoring of FE teachers other than trainees and newly qualified teachers.</li> </ul>
<b>The motivation to teach, and retention and induction</b>
<p>Limited evidence, specifically experiential evidence, on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what motivates people to become FE teachers, what factors encourage some to leave, and especially on what might encourage FE teachers to remain in the profession</li> <li>• new FE teachers' induction to organisations and the profession, though there is some evidence of a lack of effective induction, and of teachers in FE colleges being more likely to receive meaningful induction support than those in independent training providers (ITPs) and the adult and community learning sector.</li> </ul>
<b>Other key phenomena of interest</b>
<p>Limited, or absence of, evidence on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teachers' or trainees' pedagogical intentions and the practices they implement in their teaching</li> <li>• the nature, extent and impact of any organisational support for developing collegial relationships or communities of practice</li> <li>• the extent to which trainees and teachers experience wellbeing and/or illbeing, and the contributory factors and consequences of such experiences, in particular there are few rigorous studies reporting primary evidence from trainees or teachers</li> <li>• effective strategies which enabled trainees and teachers to manage heavy workloads and deal with the administrative demands of teaching in the FE sector.</li> </ul>
<b>Overall experience of becoming an FE teacher</b>
<p>Restricted evidence on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether for most teacher and trainee participants, positive experiences (as a whole – in relation to their workplace experience and, if appropriate, ITE experience) outweigh negative ones</li> <li>• to what extent, in what circumstances, and how different trainees and teachers may be able to overcome specific negative and challenging experiences or particular combinations of these.</li> </ul>

#### 4.14 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have presented findings on prominent and commonly discussed themes in the literature relating to experiences of becoming an FE teacher and we have highlighted several notable gaps in the evidence base. In the next and final chapter of this report, we present our main conclusions, acknowledge limitations of our review, and offer a number of implications for policy and practice, as well as recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this report we have:

- provided a context for our review ([Chapter 1](#))
- outlined the review methodology ([Chapter 2](#) and [Appendix 1](#))
- mapped the literature on becoming and being a teacher in the English further education (FE) sector, and described the sources selected for detailed review ([Chapter 2](#) and [Appendix 2](#))
- synthesised the evidenced findings in the included studies on becoming an FE teacher ([Chapter 3](#) and [Chapter 4](#)).

In so doing, we have provided an original comprehensive account of the experience of becoming a teacher in the English FE sector between 2014 and 2023, and a state of the nation review of factors that shape those experiences.

In this final chapter, we:

- acknowledge limitations of our review and the evidence base ([Section 5.2](#))
- present key findings of our review ([Section 5.3](#))
- discuss potential implications of our findings for policy, practice and further research (sections [5.4](#) and [5.5](#)).

### 5.2 LIMITATIONS OF OUR REVIEW AND THE EVIDENCE BASE

The claims we are able to make from this study are inevitably constrained by both the limitations of our review and the underlying shortcomings of the evidence base. We address each of these, in turn.

One potential limitation of our review is that our searches might have missed some studies which included valuable evidenced findings of relevance to our review questions. The unavailability of the British Library's thesis database may have increased the likelihood of this. A further potential limitation is the application of some eligibility criteria, particularly the criteria related to relevance to the review questions and research quality. Although final decisions on these criteria for each study involved more than one researcher, an element of subjectivity inevitably remained. Similarly, in line with the limitations of qualitative systematic reviews more generally, our assessment of the strength of the evidence within individual studies and for the synthesised findings, while carefully considered by the research team, included subjective elements.

Regarding limitations of the evidence base itself, we have discussed different aspects of this in the concluding sections of [Chapter 2](#) and [Chapter 3](#), and in [Chapter 4](#), [Section 4.13](#). We do not repeat all of these considerations here but highlight a small number of key (and related) concerns. One such concern is that most studies of becoming (and being) an FE teacher in England are small-scale and often conducted within specific contexts (e.g. associated with the initial

teacher education (ITE) provision of a specific provider, and/or one or a small number of FE organisations), which raises questions about the transferability of their findings. While a positive contribution of our review is that our analyses have revealed considerable commonalities between the findings of different studies, this overcomes some but not all concerns relating to transferability. The most serious remaining limitations relate to the fact that most and sometimes all participants in most studies:

- were employed by or on placement in general further education (GFE) colleges, so it is not clear to what extent common findings (across studies) relate to teachers and trainees in private sector public funded providers (e.g. independent training providers (ITPs)) or other public funded providers (e.g. local authority (LA) providers)
- were undertaking or had undertaken a formal ITE qualification at Level 5 or above, so it is not clear to what extent the common research findings represent the experiences of 'unqualified' teachers.

While the scope of our review was intentionally broad to present a comprehensive account of the experiences of trainees and teachers in the FE sector, the combination of the scope and the limitations of the evidence base meant that it was often not possible to report subgroup findings. For example, only very limited claims could be made about trainees or teachers in settings other than GFE colleges or who participated in shorter initial professional development courses and/or awards at Level 4 or below who were not or had not undertaken an ITE qualification.

Despite these limitations of our review and the evidence base, we have:

- undertaken and provided a transparent account of a rigorous search and screening process
- identified a substantial amount of empirical literature on becoming and being an FE teacher in England, published between 2014 and 2023
- carried out a robust and detailed identification and synthesis of key findings from what we considered to be the highest quality studies most pertinent to our review questions on becoming an FE teacher.

In doing so, and as we indicated in the introductions to [Chapter 3](#) and [Chapter 4](#), we were able to address all of our review questions, which were initially set out in [Chapter 2, Section 2.2](#).

We now present key findings from our synthesis of evidence from the included studies, with the caveat that, for the reasons outlined above, they may not apply to the whole of the English FE sector.

### 5.3 KEY FINDINGS

In [Chapter 3](#) we outlined positive, negative and challenging experiences associated with becoming an FE teacher; together with what the evidence tells us about some means of alleviating negative and challenging experiences. We have shown that:

- positive experiences of becoming an FE teacher were most commonly associated with
  - a) relationships with and support from colleagues in the workplace
  - b) relationships with and support from mentors in particular
  - c) participating in, learning from and successfully completing ITE (for those who did so), while
- negative and challenging experiences of becoming an FE teacher were most commonly related to
  - a) demanding workloads
  - b) pressures of performativity
  - c) a perceived lack of support and/or difficult relationships with colleagues.

In addition, in [Chapter 4](#) we drew attention to the fact that relationships with and support from colleagues, mentors and managers could be positive and negative, and we also evidenced variation, both across the FE sector and in specific areas of the sector (even within specific organisations), in relation to several other aspects of the experience of becoming an FE teacher, including:

- experiences of new teacher induction programmes
- the extent to which trainees and teachers felt able to act autonomously or with agency.

Among other findings of our review, we would highlight the following:

- One of the most valued aspects of undertaking (pre- or in-service) ITE, related to the provision of a safe environment in which trainees could share experiences, learn and exchange ideas with and provide mutual support for their peers.
- Related to this, studies suggested that trainees and early career teachers also valued the provision of a shared physical workspace, to support the kinds of interactions and mutual support referred to above. For others, the lack of their own or a shared workspace contributed to negative or challenging experiences, including the absence of a sense of belonging and the practical difficulties in finding a space to work and storing and transporting teaching resources.
- Despite generally positive experiences and impacts of undertaking ITE, some trainees and former trainees perceived a number of deficiencies in the ITE curriculum, notably relating to the sufficiency or quality of subject-specialist instruction and preparation for the practical skills of teaching.
- There is evidence that lesson observations and post-observation conversations and feedback were among the most valued aspects of ITE and continuing professional development (CPD), though lesson observations were sometimes negative and anxiety-inducing experiences for trainees and teachers, especially where they were (or were perceived to be) carried out for evaluative or quality assurance, as opposed to supportive and developmental, purposes.

- We encountered evidence across a range of studies that some trainees and teachers experienced high levels of work-related stress, frequently attributed to heavy workloads and teaching-related administration, including lesson planning, assessment and monitoring, and addressing student attendance and progress.
- There is evidence that a strong commitment to learners and their holistic development, and to learner-centred pedagogies, were key features of many trainees' and teachers' professional identities. It is of note in respect to this, that some studies suggested that some trainees' and teachers' perceptions of the role of the teacher were relatively narrowly focused on classroom teaching, thus excluding other aspects of the role, particularly teaching-related administrative duties and pastoral care beyond the classroom setting.
- There is also evidence that trainees' and teachers' commitments to learners and learner-centred pedagogies were often challenged and compromised by organisational demands and external demands and priorities. Specifically, some trainees and teachers were found to be frustrated by
  - what they considered to be a primary emphasis in their organisations on maximising their students' retention and examination performance at the expense of their broader learning and development, including for work, higher education (HE) and life
  - expectations or requirements to conform to teaching approaches determined by their organisations, which restricted their autonomy and creativity.
- Nonetheless, a number of studies also reported evidence of teachers and trainees demonstrating strategic compliance, that is, learning how to adapt and in some cases resist performative demands,<sup>18</sup> thus exercising some autonomy and retaining some agency.
- There was repeated evidence that much in-house formal CPD was not valued and had minimal impact, and that relatively little CPD sought to enhance teachers' pedagogy. That which did, rarely focused on teachers' subject and vocational knowledge and pedagogy, which tended to be the most highly valued type of CPD.

## 5.4 AREAS OF POTENTIAL FOCUS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

### 5.4.1 FOR FE PROVIDERS

In the light of the findings presented in this report, we suggest that organisational leadership teams may wish to consider the following:

- Ways of ensuring that trainees and new teachers are made to feel welcome, supported and nurtured in their organisations. This may include the provision of a physical workspace for trainees and new teachers, means of enabling a supportive culture to flourish throughout the organisation, and ensuring that those acting as mentors and supporting new teachers' induction are appropriately trained and have sufficient workload capacity to do so.
- Means of addressing high levels of teacher stress, particularly ensuring that teacher workloads and timetabling are manageable and teaching-related administration is not unduly burdensome.

<sup>18</sup> As noted in Chapter 4, [Section 4.9](#), the concept of performativity has been defined as 'the definition and regulation of professional life in relation to bureaucratic targets, measures and sanctions' (Simmons and Thompson 2008, p.602).

- Increasing the provision of CPD which seeks to enhance teachers' pedagogy in general, and subject and vocational knowledge and pedagogy in particular.
- Means of ensuring that lesson observations are carried out in supportive and developmental ways, to maximise positive impacts on professional learning and development, and minimise detrimental impacts on teachers' wellbeing.
- Means of enabling teachers to feel autonomous and empowered, including encouraging creativity in their teaching, which can positively impact their wellbeing, teacher identity, and retention.
- Seeking to ensure that their organisations are (and are perceived by trainees and teachers to be) committed to enhancing the holistic development of their learners as well as maximising learners' retention and qualification performance – and that they support teachers in seeking to achieve all of these aspirations.

#### **5.4.2 FOR ITE PROVIDERS<sup>19</sup>**

The review findings on the positive aspects of ITE, as well as the less frequently reported negative or challenging aspects, suggest that ITE providers ensure that their provision includes:

- sufficient focus on the study of pedagogical theory and its relation to practice
- opportunities for trainees to explore different teaching and learning methodologies and approaches
- sufficient support for the development of trainees' subject and vocational knowledge and subject-specialist pedagogy
- opportunities for trainees to observe other teachers and to be observed and receive supportive, developmental, non-judgemental feedback on their own teaching
- opportunities for trainees to engage in critical reflection on their experience and practice
- the provision of a safe environment in which trainees can share experiences, learn and exchange ideas with and provide mutual support for each other.

#### **5.4.3 FOR DfE AND POLICYMAKERS**

We suggest that policymakers might also consider the proposed areas of focus above, and how they can support FE and ITE providers in addressing them. In particular, we suggest that the Department for Education (DfE) and the Education and Training Foundation (ETF):

- consider the potential impact of any new policies or guidance on trainees and teachers
- seek to ensure that these do not result in additional administrative demands being placed on teachers and trainees.

<sup>19</sup> Some ITE providers are also FE providers.

While this review has focused on trainees' and teachers' experiences and did not set out to assess the impact of national policy, our findings do suggest that national policy, as understood and mediated through FE sector organisations, has a significant impact on the experiences of those becoming teachers in the English FE sector. More specifically it suggests that the new (in 2024) Labour government might in conjunction with appropriate sector organisations, such as the ETF, the Association of Colleges (AoC) and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), consider the following:

- The development of research-informed guidance for the induction of new teachers across all areas of the FE sector and in all types of teaching role, supplemented by guidance on training for teachers whose primary employment is in industry.
- The development of research-informed guidance on CPD for teachers, with tailoring as necessary for all FE sector contexts, which includes appropriate emphasis on the provision and contextualisation of general pedagogical CPD, and CPD related to subject and vocational knowledge and pedagogy.
- Reviewing the experiences of, and training and support provided to, those becoming an FE teacher in settings outside general FE and sixth form colleges, where currently there is very limited experiential evidence. Then, if appropriate, supporting providers to implement evidence-informed organisational strategies and processes that enhance trainees' and teachers' experiences and contribute to their wellbeing, retention and quality of teaching.
- Including in any reviews of the regulatory regime, consideration of whether an appropriate balance has been achieved between
  - setting clear expectations for high-quality teaching and learning and enabling opportunities for individual creativity and appropriate levels of autonomy in teaching
  - the emphasis on learners' retention and qualification performance and the holistic development of learners in terms of their preparation for work, life and HE.

## 5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

We noted earlier that there was a paucity of larger-scale studies and those employing experimental or quasi-experimental designs. While we do not wish to suggest that qualitative and small-scale studies are not valuable, we do suggest that the evidence base would be enhanced if a wider range of quantitative, qualitative and mixed method designs were employed, including large-scale, longitudinal or sequential and intervention studies.

One of the reasons for the preponderance of smaller-scale studies is likely the lack of external funding of research in the English FE sector. To some extent, this reflects relatively low and diminishing funding of education research in general (REF2021), but it is clear that there has been significantly greater funding of research into aspects of primary and secondary education than FE. For example, aside from the Centre for Learning and Life Chances in Knowledge Economies and Societies, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has not provided consistent funding for research focused on FE (Staufenberg 2022). Given the importance of the FE



sector for the country's industrial base, and of FE providers to the communities in which they are situated and which they serve, we suggest that the ESRC, DfE, the Educational Endowment Foundation (EEF) and other funding bodies consider this observation in relation to their future priorities.

What, then, might be the focus of future research relating to becoming a teacher in the English FE sector? We consider that it would be valuable to extend the findings of this review by exploring, across all areas of the FE sector:

- the experiences of becoming a teacher; how trainees and teachers make sense of both positive and negative experiences, and how this impacts on their professional learning and development (PLD), practices, job satisfaction and career intentions
- the extent to which some positive or negative experiences are outweighed by others, and in what circumstances.

Related to this, a fuller exploration of effective means by which some trainees and teachers are able to overcome negative and challenging aspects of their experience could be highly beneficial for trainees' and teachers' wellbeing, for retention and PLD, and for their practice, and therefore for the learning of those they teach.

Considering the gaps in the evidence base identified earlier, and some of the wider issues relating to the FE sector discussed in [Chapter 1](#), we hope that researchers, funding bodies and policymakers committed to enhancing teaching and learning across the FE sector might also prioritise studies of:

- FE trainee and teacher recruitment, attrition and retention, with particular attention paid to what factors encourage FE teachers to remain in the sector, including trainee and teacher perspectives on this
- how trainees and teachers learn to become teachers in the workplace, including how they translate learning from ITE and CPD into practice, and what factors and experiences contribute to the development of teaching practices which have a powerful impact on students' learning and development
- how the experience of becoming a teacher compares between those who undertake an ITE programme of substantial duration at Level 5 or above and those who do not, and any variations in the longer-term impacts on the quality of their teaching, wellbeing and retention in the profession
- the experiences of becoming a teacher of those in industry associate or similar roles, including their teaching practices and pedagogies, and the means of supporting these
- the nature and impact of different kinds of CPD, including that which seeks to enhance teachers' pedagogy and that which focuses on teachers' subject and vocational knowledge and pedagogy in particular
- different ways of conducting lesson observations, and the positive and negative impacts of different approaches to doing so on trainees' and teachers' professional learning, development, practice and wellbeing
- the extent to which new FE teachers' experiences of induction to organisations and the profession vary across different parts of the sector, and with what consequences

- teachers' mentoring journey post-ITE, and the impact of different approaches to mentoring (e.g. relatively directive versus more developmental, non-directive or progressively non-directive approaches) at different career stages
- the nature, extent and impact of any organisational support for developing collegial relationships or communities of practice in different kinds of FE provider.

We also recommend the funding of intervention studies which assess the impact of research-informed and promising programmes or strategies to support key aspects of becoming a teacher and learning how to teach. Specific foci for such studies could usefully include interventions designed to enhance trainees' and teachers':

- subject and vocational knowledge and pedagogy, and/or effectiveness more broadly
- wellbeing and retention
- ability to effectively manage their workloads.

Finally, we encourage those conducting and funding future research on becoming an FE teacher to consider:

- specific studies of those parts of the sector, including private sector public funded providers and other public funded providers, that are currently under-researched
- studies that compare and contrast the experiences of participants from under-researched areas of the sector with those that are relatively easier to reach in GFE colleges.

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# APPENDIX I REVIEW METHODOLOGY

## AI.1 INTRODUCTION

In line with the key principles of conducting systematic reviews (Lasserson et al. 2023), this study was undertaken using a protocol that set out the scope of the review and specified the review questions and eligibility criteria. Explicit, rigorous and accountable methods were deployed throughout. The review was conducted in five phases:

1. searching, initial screening and classification, and initial mapping
2. refinement of review questions, identification of additional sources and associated initial screening and classification, and final mapping
3. full text screening and additional classification
4. data extraction/recording key findings and supporting evidence
5. thematic synthesis of findings.

In this appendix we provide an overview of the review methodology. This spans the scope of the review and associated eligibility criteria, the methods deployed, quality assurance processes and ethics. We also present a flowchart that summarises the numbers of identified and included sources at each stage of the review process (Figure A1.1). Supplementary information on the methodology is presented in appendices 3-7.

## AI.2 REVIEW SCOPE AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

### AI.2.1 CONTEXT, POPULATION AND PHENOMENA

In this subsection we summarise the key parameters of our systematic review related to the context, population and phenomena of interest. The more detailed specifications included in the review protocol are set out in Appendix 3.

The context of the review is the further education (FE) sector in England. We define the sector as comprising any institution or organisation that provides education and/or training to people over 16 years of age,<sup>20</sup> other than schools and universities.<sup>21</sup> This includes:

- colleges (general land-based; art, design and performing arts; specialist designated; national specialist and sixth form colleges)
- independent training providers (ITPs)
- local authority (LA) providers
- employer providers
- third sector providers
- adult and community education (ACE) providers
- prison education.

20 Some FE sector organisations also provide programmes for 14-16 year-olds.

21 This is an expansion of the Education and Training Foundation's (ETF 2020) definition, which is restricted to government-funded education and training.



In relation to RQ1:

- RQ1. What is the nature and extent of the research base relating to the experience of becoming and being an FE teacher in England between 2014 and 2023 (inclusive)?

The population is trainees and/or teachers within the FE sector, which is defined broadly as anyone undertaking a pre-service initial teacher education (ITE) qualification with associated teaching placements, or a teaching role that involves the formal education and training of learners in the FE sector in England with the aim of developing their subject and vocational knowledge and skills and/or their functional skills. Those undertaking a teaching role may also be concurrently undertaking an in-service ITE programme or have previously completed a pre- or in-service ITE qualification or may not have undertaken an ITE qualification. For the purposes of this study an ITE qualification is defined as a programme of substantive duration at Level 5 or above. This comprises all of the ITE qualifications at levels 5, 6 and 7 that are listed in [Table 1.1](#) in Chapter 1.

In relation to RQ2 and RQ3:

- RQ2. What does the research tell us about the experience of becoming an FE teacher in England between 2014 and 2023 (inclusive)?
  - RQ2.1. What aspects of becoming an FE teacher do participants experience positively, negatively or find challenging, and what do they perceive to be the contributory factors to such experiences?
  - RQ2.2. What factors influence and shape the experiences of those becoming FE teachers?
  - RQ2.3. What concepts are most frequently deployed in empirical studies on becoming an FE teacher, and what does their use tell us about the experiences of trainees and teachers?
  - RQ2.4. What does the research tell us about the recruitment, retention and attrition of FE trainees and teachers in England?
- RQ3. What are the gaps in the evidence base relating to RQ2?

The population is those becoming teachers in the FE sector, which for this review encompasses:

- trainees and teachers who were undertaking or had completed a pre-service or in-service ITE qualification in the five years prior to data generation about their experiences<sup>22</sup>
- teachers in their first five years of teaching in the sector who were not undertaking and had not undertaken an ITE qualification.

For this review, the phenomena of interest encompassed areas of experience reported across a range of research studies, e.g. workload or relationships with colleagues, together with becoming teachers' perceptions of the factors that underpinned their experiences of particular phenomena. In some instances,

<sup>22</sup> In the FE sector some teachers have several years' experience of teaching in the sector before they undertake an ITE qualification. They have been included in this review as becoming teachers.

phenomena of interest were theoretical concepts used in the studies as research tools to aid understanding of experiences and associated factors, e.g. professional identity and performativity. During the initial screening process, the research team identified a draft list of phenomena of interest that appeared to recur across a range of the included becoming and being an FE teacher sources. This list was used for the initial mapping of becoming and being an FE teacher and is set out in [Appendix 3](#). The list was subsequently refined when examining full texts at later phases of the review to more accurately reflect the scope of the findings in the included becoming an FE teacher sources. The refined list is provided below and forms the structure for reporting our synthesis of findings in [Chapter 4](#):

- recruitment, retention and attrition
- pedagogical beliefs and practices, and relationships with learners
- relationships with and support from colleagues, managers and peers
- professional learning and development
- mentoring
- wellbeing, illbeing, confidence and self-esteem
- teacher workload and administrative work associated with teaching
- performativity
- professional autonomy and agency
- professional identity
- organisational culture, policies, processes and conditions.

#### ***A1.2.2 TYPES OF STUDIES***

Any type of empirical study, quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research or evaluations, in the formats listed below, were included for consideration in the review:

- peer-reviewed journal articles
- books and monographs
- book chapters
- full conference papers
- doctoral theses
- research and evaluation reports.

#### ***A1.2.3 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA***

Eligibility criteria were applied at three stages during the review. Firstly, during the initial screening of becoming and being an FE teacher sources, undertaken in phases 1 and 2 of the review, inclusion and exclusion criteria relating to the date and language of publication, type of study, country, education sector, target population and phenomena of interest were applied. The specific criteria used are set out in the first section of [Table A1.1](#).

Secondly, at the end of phase 2 an additional target population criterion was applied to identify those sources that included findings on becoming a teacher in the FE sector, which from this point became the focus of the review. This criterion is set out in Section 2 of [Table A1.1](#).

The seven initial screening criteria and the additional target population criteria were rechecked for all sources included during full text screening (review phase 3). Three additional criteria, that could not be assessed without full text review, were also applied at this stage. These criteria, set out in Section 3 of [Table A1.1](#), related to empirical data generation in or after 2014, quality of research and relevance to the review questions.

**Table A1.1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

Section 1: Criteria applied during initial screening of becoming and being an FE teacher sources (review phases 1 and 2)			
		Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
1.	Date of publication	Published between 1/1/2014 and 31/12/2023. <sup>23</sup>	Published outside this period.
2.	Language of publication	Written in English. <sup>24</sup>	Written in any other language.
3.	Type of study	Empirical AND Published in any of the formats listed in <a href="#">Section A1.2.2</a> above.	Not empirical OR Any other type of publication.
4.	Country	Findings solely relating to England OR A comparative study of FE that includes separate findings for England.	Solely focused on countries other than England OR Comparative study where findings relating to England cannot be distinguished from findings relating to other countries.
5.	Educational sector	Findings are solely related to the FE sector (as defined in <a href="#">Section A1.2.1</a> ) OR Where other sectors are included in the research, separate findings are presented for the FE sector.	There are no findings related to the FE sector OR Findings relating to the FE sector cannot be distinguished from findings relating to other sectors.
6.	Target population	Trainee teachers and teachers at all career stages, employed full-time, part-time or providing specialist contributions to teaching who have a role that involves the formal education and training of learners, with the aim of developing their subject and vocational knowledge and skills, and/or their functional skills.	Trainees/teachers who do not teach on any courses on the <a href="#">Regulated Qualifications Framework (RCF)</a> , only teach learners undertaking qualifications at Level 4 or above, and/or have a role title of solely mentor, coach or counsellor.

<sup>23</sup> The year 2014 was chosen as it aligns with the Institute for Learning closing and the establishment of the ETF.

<sup>24</sup> Since the study is limited to England, we expect that all but a very few of the relevant sources would be written in English.

7.	Phenomena of interest	Includes findings related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• experiences of becoming or being an FE teacher in England</li> </ul> AND/OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the factors that are perceived to influence those experiences</li> </ul> AND/OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• factors that influence the recruitment, retention and attrition.</li> </ul>	Does not include any findings related to any of these phenomena.
<b>Section 2: Criteria applied to reduce sources to only those with findings on becoming an FE teacher (end of review phase 2)</b>			
8.	Additional target population criterion (becoming an FE teacher)	Includes findings on the review phenomena of interest relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trainees and teachers who were undertaking or had undertaken a pre-service or in-service ITE qualification in the five years prior to data generation about their experiences</li> <li>• teachers in their first five years of teaching in the sector who were not undertaking and had not undertaken an ITE qualification.</li> </ul>	Does not include any finding on the review phenomena of interest for groups of trainees or teachers.
<b>Section 3: Additional criteria applied during full text screening of becoming an FE teacher sources (review phase 3)</b>			
9.	Date of data generation	Data generated in or after 2014. <sup>25</sup>	Data generated prior to 2014.
10.	Relevance <sup>26</sup>	Holistic judgement on degree of relevance of data and findings, and amount of relevant information. Guiding principles for inclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• data and findings have a high or medium degree of relevance to the review questions</li> </ul> AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is a significant or moderate amount of relevant information.</li> </ul>	Guiding principles for exclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• data and findings have a low degree of relevance to the review questions</li> </ul> AND/OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is a limited amount of relevant information.</li> </ul>

<sup>25</sup> This is to restrict the review to recent research to ensure it is relevant to the current FE teaching workforce and context. The year 2014 was chosen as it aligns with the Institute for Learning closing, and the establishment of the ETF.

<sup>26</sup> In instances where there were borderline judgements in relation to either relevance, the quality of the research was also considered in making a final decision on inclusion or exclusion.

11.	Quality of research <sup>27</sup>	Holistic judgement on the transparency and appropriateness of the methodology, and data generation and analysis methods, in the context of the study aims AND Evidence for reported findings and claims is strong or adequate.	The research design and processes are unclear AND/OR The methodology and methods have limited appropriateness in the context of the study aims AND/OR Evidence for reported findings and claims is limited.
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### AI.3 METHODS

The research was conducted in five phases. The focus of each phase and the specific activities undertaken are summarised in [Table AI.2](#). A brief description of each phase is provided in sections [AI.3.1](#) - [AI.3.5](#) below. The quality assurance procedures deployed during each phase, are summarised in [Section AI.4](#). More detailed information on each phase and the associated quality assurance procedures are presented in [appendices 3-7](#).

**Table AI.2: Summary of review phases and activities**

Phase	Scope	Review activities	Related RQ
1.	Becoming and being an FE teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Searching, initial screening and classification</li> <li>Systematic and targeted searches for empirical literature</li> <li>Initial screening on title, abstract and keywords</li> <li>Initial classification of included studies on title, abstract and keywords</li> <li>Initial mapping of the included studies.</li> </ul>	RQ1
2.	Becoming an FE teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refinement of review questions and additional searching, screening and classification of sources related to becoming an FE teacher</li> <li>Construction of a longlist of becoming an FE teacher studies that met the initial screening</li> <li>Targeted search for theses related to becoming an FE teacher; initial screening and if appropriate initial classification and addition to the longlist</li> <li>Review of longlist by key stakeholders to identify potential omissions</li> <li>Initial screening of stakeholder suggested additions and if appropriate initial classification and addition to the longlist.</li> </ul>	RQ2 and 3
3.	Becoming an FE teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full text screening and additional classification</li> <li>Full text screening and additional classification of longlist to support the production of a final list of studies for inclusion in the review.</li> </ul>	RQ2 and 3

<sup>27</sup> Similarly for borderline judgements in relation to quality of research, final inclusion/exclusion decisions also took into account relevance.

4.	Becoming an FE teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data extraction/recording key findings and supporting evidence</li> <li>• Extraction of key findings and supporting evidence from included studies into evidenced findings summaries</li> <li>• Checking of screening and classification coding for all included studies.</li> </ul>	RQ2 and 3
5.	Becoming an FE teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic synthesis of findings</li> <li>• Synthesis of key findings from across the evidenced findings summaries into analytical templates related to the experiences of becoming a teacher and the review phenomena of interest</li> <li>• Qualitatively weighing the strength of the evidence for identified synthesised findings</li> <li>• Identification of gaps in the evidence base.</li> </ul>	RQ2 and 3

### ***A1.3.1 PHASE 1: INITIAL SEARCHING, SCREENING AND CLASSIFICATION***

#### **Searching**

General systematic searches of the Web of Science, Education Research Complete (ERC) and the ProQuest global database of dissertations and theses were undertaken to identify records of academic sources. This was supplemented by targeted searches of the British Education Index and Google Scholar to check for sources related to the areas of the FE sector; teacher roles and phenomena of interest that were under-represented in the general searches. A list of all the databases searched can be found in Appendix 4, [Table A4.1](#) and the search syntax and limiters are set out in Appendix 4, tables [A4.2-A4.4](#).

Grey literature was identified through manual searching of the 12 websites of key sector organisations and research and evaluation organisations with an established record of undertaking research relevant to the review. These are listed in Appendix 4, [Table A4.1](#).

All retrieved records were uploaded to EPPI-Reviewer version 6 and duplicates were removed. EPPI-Reviewer is a web-based application that supports the conduct of systematic literature reviews. It was developed by and is hosted by the Evidence and Policy Information Centre at University College London.

#### **Initial screening**

The eligibility criteria 1-7 (set out in Section A1.2.3, [Table A1.1](#)) were applied to the title, abstract and keywords of the included sources. Where identified sources were literature reviews, the sources drawn on in the review were identified and any that met the initial screening criteria were added to our database. For edited books, chapters were reviewed and any meeting the initial screening criteria also added to our database.

Of the 2,052 unique sources related to becoming and/or being a teacher in the FE sector identified during phase 1, 1,928 were excluded. Nine of the exclusions were due to the full text not being available and the record being insufficiently detailed to enable application of the inclusion/exclusion criteria. On completion of the initial screening in phase 1, 124 becoming and/or being an FE teacher studies were marked for inclusion in the review and an initial classification completed.

### Initial classification

Initial classification was undertaken on titles, abstracts and keywords. In instances where further information was required, a scan of the full text was undertaken. Codes were developed and applied in relation to each of the characteristics below:

- date of publication
- type of publication
- type of empirical study
- context
  - area of FE sector
  - associated learning programmes
- population (teachers/trainees whose experiences are the focus of the study)
  - career stage
  - mode of employment
  - role descriptor
- phenomena of interest
- other descriptive features
  - data sources
  - specificity of study
    - by subject/technical area
    - by numbers of FE sector organisations.

### Mapping

The EPPI-Reviewer 6 reporting function was used to provide frequencies in relation to the key features recorded in the initial classification of the 124 becoming and becoming an FE teacher sources. This draft mapping was discussed with the advisory group, and the decision to restrict the remainder of the review to becoming an FE teacher was agreed.

The final mapping of the becoming and being an FE teacher research base, which is summarised in [Chapter 2](#) and supplemented with more detailed findings in [Appendix 2](#), spans the sources included at the end of phase 1 and the additional sources on becoming an FE teacher included and classified by the end of phase 2. In total, 148 becoming and/or being an FE teacher studies are included in the final mapping.

### AI.3.2 PHASE 2: ADDITIONAL SEARCHING, SCREENING AND CLASSIFICATION

#### Construction of an initial longlist of becoming an FE teacher sources

The additional target population criterion (no. 8 in [Table AI.1](#)), which narrowed the focus of our review to *becoming* an FE teacher, was applied to the 124 becoming and/or being an FE teacher sources identified through initial screening in phase 1. This screening process resulted in 39 sources being included on an initial longlist of becoming an FE teacher sources.

### **Identification and screening of additional becoming an FE teacher theses**

As the research team was aware that some highly relevant theses had not been identified during the phase 1 searching process, and the British Library theses database was unavailable due to a cyber-attack, targeted searches were undertaken in Google to identify additional becoming an FE teacher theses. The search syntax and limiters are set out in [Table A4.5](#). This identified 28 universities that held at least one potentially relevant thesis. The websites of these universities were then manually searched for all the theses likely to meet the eligibility criteria 1-8 in [Table A1.1](#). This resulted in 24 theses being identified, one of which was a duplicate of a study identified in phase 1. Of the 23 unique sources, 15 met the initial screening criteria and were added to the longlist of becoming a teacher studies, making a longlist of 54 sources.

### **Expert review of the becoming an FE teacher longlist**

The longlist of 54 sources was circulated to the advisory group, active researchers in the field and key contacts for national FE sector organisations and they were asked to identify any omissions. In total, 11 responses were received and 22 sources recommended for inclusion in our review, of which four were duplicates of sources already identified. Initial screening of the 18 unique sources excluded eight sources and a further source was excluded due to the full text being unavailable. The nine sources remaining were added to the becoming a teacher in FE longlist, making a total of 63 sources that were then included for full text screening.

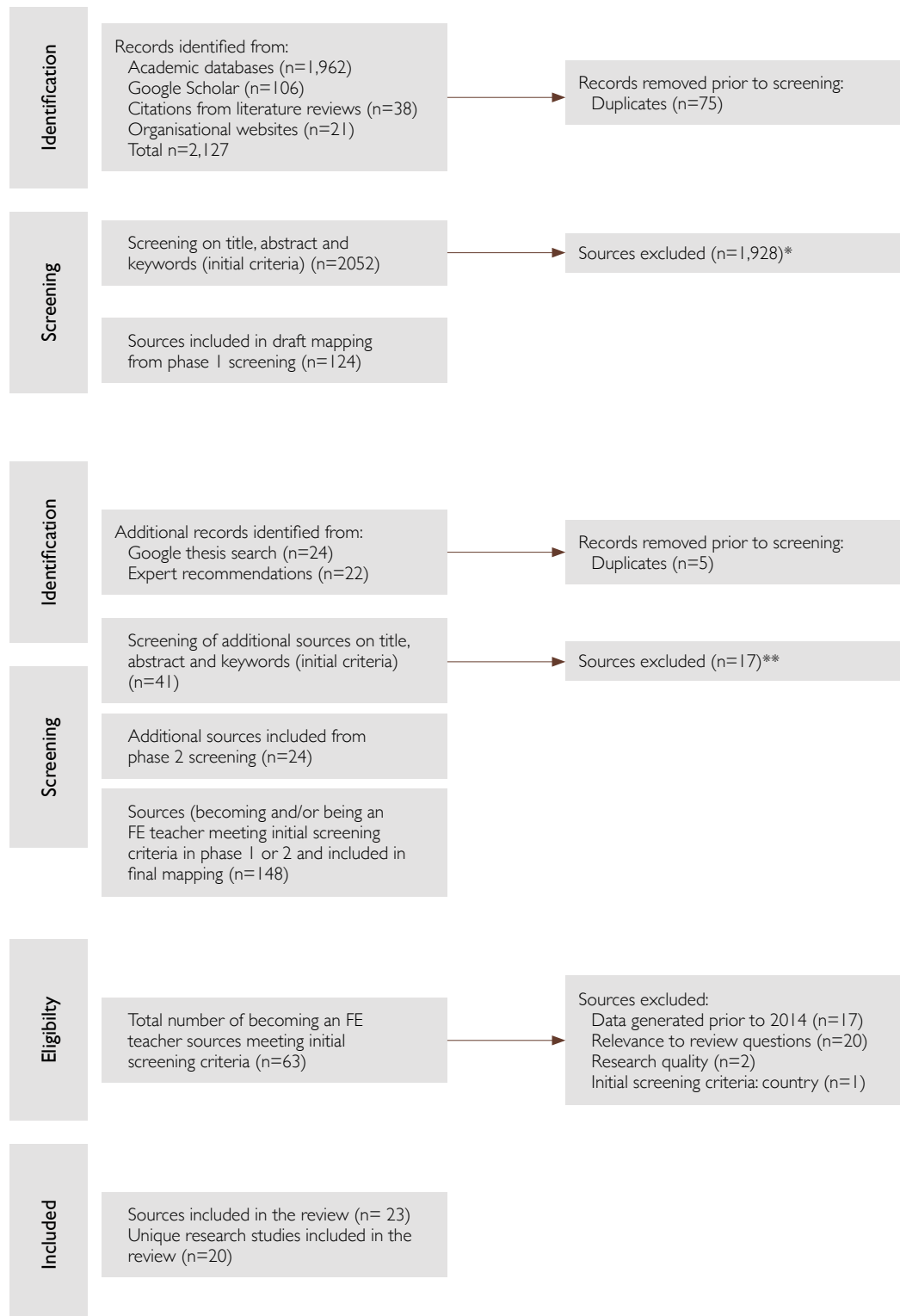
### **A1.3.3 PHASE 3: FULL TEXT SCREENING**

Full text screening involved rechecking all eligibility criteria applied in phases 1 and 2 (no. 1-8 in [Table A1.1](#)), and the application of the three additional criteria (no. 9-11 in [Table A1.1](#)) – date of data generation, relevance to review questions and quality of research. On completion of phase 3, 25 sources were included in the review. Two of these were subsequently excluded during phase 4, when it became apparent during in-depth scrutiny that they did not meet one or more of the inclusion criteria. In total, 40 of the 63 sources included in full text screening were excluded either during phase 3 or 4. Full bibliographic information on the remaining 23 sources is set out in [R1 The final 23 reviewed sources](#) and the key characteristics of all included studies are described in Chapter 2, [Section 2.5](#).

A flowchart that summarises the identified sources, inclusions and exclusions at each stage during phase 1, 2 and 3 is presented in [Figure A1.1](#).



Figure A1.1: Flowchart of identified sources, inclusions and exclusions



**Figure notes:**

\* Includes nine sources for which no full text could be accessed.

\*\* Includes one source for which no full text could be accessed.

The flowchart has been adapted from the Prisma flow diagram (Page et al. 2021).

#### **AI.3.4 PHASE 4: DATA EXTRACTION/RECORDING KEY FINDINGS AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Using a template developed for this review (see [Appendix 6](#)), evidence findings summaries were constructed from the full texts of the 23 included sources. In instances where there was more than one research or evaluation output which drew on the same data set, a single evidenced findings summary was produced. In total, 20 evidenced findings summaries were produced from the sources. The 20 research studies summarised in the evidenced findings summaries are listed in Chapter 2, [Table 2.3](#).

The main aim of the data extraction process was to record the evidenced findings in each of the 20 included studies, together with quotations that provided summative or illustrative evidence for each finding. Evidenced findings were organised into:

- positive and negative experiences of becoming an FE teacher; any consequences of those experiences and the factors that were perceived to lead to those experiences
- any challenges experienced in becoming an FE teacher
- any effective means of overcoming any such challenges or negative experiences
- the phenomena of interest for this review.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, the evidenced findings summaries recorded:

- the research or evaluation aims
- a brief statement to summarise the methodology, methods and participants
- any other potentially relevant findings not included in the previous bulleted list
- author recommendations which followed from the evidence
- any potential recommendations identified by the reviewer but not discussed by the author
- the reviewer's assessment of the key strengths and limitations of the research.

#### **AI.3.5 PHASE 5: SYNTHESIS OF KEY FINDINGS AND IDENTIFICATION OF GAPS IN THE LITERATURE**

Two templates were created ([Appendix 7](#)) to aid the process of synthesising key findings and identifying gaps in the literature. The first template was designed to synthesise findings on the overall experiences of becoming an FE teacher; the factors perceived to bring about those experiences and any evidenced consequences of those experiences. The template was divided into three sections: positive experiences, negative experiences and challenges. Alongside each key finding, the following information was recorded:

- An assessment of the strength of the finding using three categories: (1) strong evidence, (2) moderate evidence or (3) limited or inconclusive evidence that potentially could be important areas of further research. Two dimensions were considered in making judgements on the strength of the evidence. The first related to how widespread the findings were across different studies, the second

<sup>28</sup> Following the research team's familiarisation with the full texts in phase 3, the study of two additional phenomena of interest were added to the list used in initial classification. See [Appendix 3](#) for details.

to how comprehensive the supporting data were within the individual sources that supported the finding.

- The sources that supported each key finding.
- Illustrative supporting evidence quotations.

The templates were populated by comparing and contrasting the findings recorded in the evidence findings summaries. The findings from this synthesis are presented in [Chapter 3](#).

The second template was developed to record and assess the strength of evidence for key findings in relation to each phenomenon of interest. For each key finding, the following were recorded:

- trainee/teacher group(s) the finding is evidenced for
- all sources supporting the finding/theme
- illustrative supporting evidence quotations
- statement on quantity and quality of evidence supporting the finding
- any contradictory evidence.

In addition, links to other phenomena and significant gaps in the research base relating to the phenomena were noted.

Once a template had been populated for each phenomenon of interest from the information included in the evidenced findings summaries, they were reviewed to ascertain whether the findings for any individual phenomenon were sufficiently substantial to merit a separate findings section and to identify where there was considerable overlap in the key findings recorded across one or more phenomena. As a result, some phenomena were combined or collapsed into another phenomenon, so that the findings, which are presented in [Chapter 4](#) are based on a condensed list of phenomena.

#### **AI.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Rigorous quality assurance processes were put in place in all phases of review. They are summarised in [Table AI.3](#) and further detail for each phase, including agreement outcomes for standardisation exercises, are provided in [appendices 4-7](#).

**Table A1.3: Quality assurance procedures**

Activities	Quality assurance procedures	Review phases
Development of screening and classification codes and descriptors	All draft codes and descriptors trialled and then refined by two or more members of the research team.	1, 3
Coding in EPPI-Reviewer 6	Standardisation and reconciliation exercises were completed by all researchers who would be undertaking the specific coding task. These involved independently coding a sample of sources, discussing and agreeing final coding decisions and where necessary amending codes and descriptors.  During coding, when a researcher was uncertain about a decision, it was referred to another researcher for checking.	1, 2, 3
Final decisions on inclusion in the becoming an FE teacher review	Standardisation and reconciliation meeting prior to researchers provisionally recommending or rejecting sources for inclusion.  Final decisions made collaboratively by two researchers after reviewing provisional recommendations.	3
Development of templates	Draft templates trialled independently by two or more researchers, review of the populated templates and revisions agreed.	4, 5
Population of evidenced findings templates	Paired standardisation and reconciliation exercise prior to completion of templates, involving independent completion of a template for the same study by each pair; comparison and agreement on the approach.  All populated templates were reviewed by the principal or co-investigator to ensure that the findings were supported by appropriate evidence and that there was consistency in recording approaches.	4, 5
Population of overall experiences templates and decisions on key themes for reporting	Initial team meeting to discuss how to complete the template. Template then completed individually by all researchers, followed by a meeting to review these and collaboratively agree key themes for reporting.	5
Population of phenomenon of interest templates and decisions on key themes for reporting	Paired initial standardisation and reconciliation exercise involving independent completion of two phenomena of interest templates per pair. Emerging issues shared across the pairs and consistent approaches agreed.  For subsequent templates, one researcher drafted the template and the other reviewed the findings on the phenomena across the evidenced findings summaries and recommended any necessary amendments.	5
Reporting	Report reviewed by all researchers.	

### **AI.5 ETHICS**

The research was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines set out by the British Educational Research Association (BERA 2018). Following a submission to the University of Brighton's ethics review process, it was concluded that an ethics review was not required because there were no human participants.

### **AI.6 CONCLUSION**

This appendix has set out our systematic review methodology, including the review scope and associated eligibility criteria, phases and methods, quality assurance procedures and ethics. Supplementary information is presented in [appendices 3-7](#).

## APPENDIX 2 MAPPING OF THE BECOMING AND BEING AN FE TEACHER RESEARCH BASE

### A2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this appendix is to supplement the brief overview in [Chapter 2](#) of the existing research base on becoming and being a further education (FE) teacher by presenting the findings of our quantitative mapping of the key characteristics of the existing research base. The mapping was conducted on the 148 sources that met the review's initial inclusion criteria (as set out in Section 1 of [Table A1.1](#) in Appendix 1) by the end of phase 2 of the review. Key features of these sources were coded in EPPI-Reviewer 6 during the initial classification processes, based on the information in the source's title, abstract and keywords. Coding frequencies were then calculated and are reported in sections [A2.2-A2.10](#) below. A degree of caution is needed in interpreting the findings as further information may have been provided in full texts that could have altered coding decisions. In addition, our searches may not have identified all sources that potentially could have met the initial eligibility criteria.

### A2.2 BECOMING AND BEING AN FE TEACHER

Of the 148 sources in our review that met the initial inclusion criteria, 63 included evidenced findings on becoming an FE teacher; and may in addition have included evidenced findings on being an FE teacher.<sup>29</sup> The remaining 85 sources solely included evidenced findings on being an FE teacher.

### A2.3 DATE OF PUBLICATION

Ten or more sources, from our list of 148, were published each year from 2014 to 2023, with the highest number being published in 2019 (n=23) ([Table A2.1](#)). The numbers of publications increased in 2018 and 2019 and again in 2022 and 2023. The dip in published outputs in 2020 and 2021 may be, at least partially, attributable to research project delays and suspensions during the Covid-19 pandemic and other demands on researchers' time during this period.

<sup>29</sup> Given the revised focus of the review being solely on becoming an FE teacher; it was beyond the scope of this project to distinguish between sources that only included evidenced findings on becoming an FE teacher; and those that included evidenced findings on both becoming and being an FE teacher.

**Table A2.1: Date of publication**

Date of publication	No. of sources	% of total sources
2014	14	9
2015	11	7
2016	10	7
2017	10	7
2018	20	14
2019	23	16
2020	11	7
2021	13	9
2022	18	12
2023*	18	12
Totals	148	100

\* Includes sources published in 2023 and full revision academic journal articles that were hosted online by publishers in 2023 prior to inclusion in a final print and online journal which was to be issued after December 2023.

#### A2.4 TYPE OF PUBLICATION

Just over half of the 148 sources (55%, n=82) were published in peer-reviewed journals. A further 18% (n=27) were published research or evaluation reports (Table A2.2). Interestingly, 21% (n=31) were doctoral theses, indicating a significant contribution to the evidence base by researchers at an early stage in their research career. Four sources were published as book chapters and a further four as full conference papers.

**Table A2.2: Type of publication**

Type of publication	No. of sources	% of total sources
Peer-reviewed journal article	82	55
Doctoral thesis	31	21
Research or evaluation report	27	18
Book chapter	4	3
Full conference paper	4	3
Totals	148	100

## A2.5 METHODOLOGY

Qualitative studies were reported in just over half of the 148 sources (53%, n=78) (Table A2.3). A quarter of the sources (25%, n=37) deployed mixed methods and 14% (n=20) reported quantitative studies, primarily surveys with very few experimental designs. The methods in 13 sources (9%) were either not specified or were unclear.

**Table A2.3: Methodology**

Methodological approach	No. of sources	% of total sources
Qualitative	78	53
Mixed methods	37	25
Quantitative	20	14
Unclear/not specified	13	9
Totals	148	101*

\*Percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## A2.6 DATA SOURCES

In approximately one-third of the sources (34%, n=51) all data were generated directly from teachers and/or trainees whose experiences were the focus of the study (Table A2.4). In another 69 sources (47%) data generated directly from teachers and/or trainees were supplemented with data from other sources, such as line managers, mentors, colleagues and senior leaders. Data sources were unclear or unspecified in 23 sources (16%) and data were only generated from sources other than teachers or trainees in a further five sources. The inclusion of primary data from teachers and/or trainees in the vast majority of sources aligns with the review intention of foregrounding first-hand accounts of teachers' and/or trainees' experiences.

**Table A2.4: Data sources**

Data source	No. of sources	% of total sources
All data were generated directly from teachers/trainees whose experiences were the focus of the study	51	34
Data were generated directly from teachers/trainees whose experiences were the focus of the study and other sources (e.g. line managers, mentors, colleagues, senior leaders)	69	47
Data were only generated from sources other than the teachers/trainees whose experiences were the focus of study	5	3
Unclear/unspecified	23	16
Totals	148	100



There was limited information in the titles, abstracts and keywords on the number of organisations that were included within the research, with this being unclear in one-third of sources (33%, n=48) (Table A2.5). However, in relation to the scope of the sources, it is of note that in 37% (n=55) of the total 148 sources, data were generated from teachers and/or trainees in more than five different organisations. For studies of becoming a teacher, the breadth may, in part, be an artefact of sources reporting findings from relatively small samples of participants from initial teacher education (ITE) cohorts who work in different organisations, rather than indicating large-scale studies.

**Table A2.5: No. of organisations included in the research**

No. of organisations	No. of sources	% of total sources
Data from only one organisation	27	18
Data from between 2 and 5 organisations	16	11
Data from more than 5 organisations	55	37
Other	2	1
Unclear/not specified	48	33
Totals	148	100

## **A2.7 CONTEXT: AREA OF THE FE SECTOR**

Just under half of the 148 sources (47%, n=69) provided information in the title, abstract and/or keywords that indicated that they included evidenced findings on the experiences of becoming and/or being an experienced teacher in FE colleges, or from FE colleges and one or more other area(s) of the sector (Table A2.6). In comparison far fewer sources included findings related to other areas of the sector. For example, findings on teachers' and/or trainees' experiences in independent training provision were identified in only 8% (n=12) of the sources. There was insufficient information to ascertain whether these sources were solely focused on independent training provision or were a small part of a larger study across different areas of the sector.

In just over half of the sources (52%, n=77) no information was provided on the area of the sector or there were indications that other areas of the sector were included beyond those named. Therefore, while the data on the area of sector are helpful in indicating the broad patterns in the distribution of research across the sector, they only provide a partial indicator.

**Table A2.6: Area of the sector**

Area of the sector	No. of sources including data from the area*	% of total sources*
FE college(s) – all types except sixth form colleges	69	47
Sixth form college(s)	18	12
Independent training providers (ITPs)	12	8
Local authority (LA) providers	5	3
Employer providers	4	3
Third sector providers	5	3
Adult and community education (ACE)	14	9
Prison education	6	4
Unclear/not specified**	77	52
Totals	N/A	N/A

\*The number of sources by specific area of the sector includes both sources that solely included findings on trainees' and/or teachers' experiences in the specific area, and sources that included findings related to the area as well as one or more other areas of the sector, so the number of sources do not sum to 148 and the percentages do not sum to 100%.

\*\*No information provided on area of the sector or there were indications that other areas of the sector were included beyond those named.

## **A2.8 CONTEXT: ASSOCIATED LEARNING PROGRAMMES**

The absence of detail on associated learning programmes within titles, abstracts and keywords was insufficient to make valid claims in relation to the research base. Although technical and vocational courses were the learning programmes most frequently mentioned across the sources, this only encompassed 16% (n=23) of the total sources.

## **A2.9 POPULATION**

There was insufficient data within the titles, abstracts and keywords to validly map trainees' and/or teachers' subject or vocational area, career stage or mode of employment.

## **A2.10 PHENOMENA OF INTEREST**

Table A2.7 presents the number of sources that included findings on each of the initial set of phenomena of interest developed for the review (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 3 for an explanation of the development and refinement of the phenomena of interest for the review). Most sources included findings on more than one phenomenon of interest.

The phenomena of interest that recurred most frequently across the 148 included sources coalesced around the nature of teaching work, practice and pedagogies, where related findings were found in 36% of the sources (n=54), and professional learning and development where findings were presented in 32% of sources (n=47). More specifically in relation to professional learning, findings on ITE were found in 26% of sources (n=38) and on mentoring in 16% of sources (n=23).

Another frequently occurring phenomena of interest was professional identity, where findings were presented in 22% of sources (n=32). Of these 32 sources, 12 also included findings related to professionalism and/or deprofessionalisation. In total, findings on professionalism and/or deprofessionalisation were included in 18% (n=26) of sources.

Findings on three key and related factors that influence trainees' and teachers' experiences were each found in a moderate number of sources. Findings on organisational culture, policy, processes and conditions were identified in 16% (n=24) of studies and on external influences on teachers and trainees (including policy, external curricula requirements and inspection) in 15% (n=22) of sources. Findings related to relationships with colleagues and/or managers were also found in 15% (n=22) of sources.

Less frequently recurring phenomena included induction, recruitment and retention and/or attrition. Findings on induction were presented in nine sources (6%) and experiences of recruitment were reported in 13 sources (9%), as were findings on retention and attrition.

A review of the detail provided in relation to the 'any other phenomena' code identified the need for three further categories to fully represent the sources: confidence and/or self-esteem, self-efficacy/perceptions of effectiveness as a teacher, and subject/vocational specialism (related to teaching and/or support). The prevalence of these phenomena was subsequently only coded for the 23 included becoming an FE teacher sources. Evidenced findings on confidence and self-esteem were found in 35% of these sources (n=8), on subject/vocational specialism in 26% (n=6) of the sources, and on self-efficacy/perceptions of effectiveness of a teacher in 17% (n=4 of sources). This suggests that had they been recorded for the 148 being and becoming an FE teacher sources at the initial classification stage, they were likely to have been frequently reported phenomena.

**Table A2.7: Phenomena of interest**

Phenomenon	No. of sources including data on this phenomenon	% of total sources
<b>Evidenced findings on phenomena found in 20% of more of the sources</b>		
The nature of teaching work, practice and pedagogies	54	36
Professional learning and development	47	32
ITE and training	38	26
Professional identity	32	22
<b>Evidenced findings on phenomena found in 15-19% of the sources</b>		
Professionalism and/or deprofessionalisation	26	18
Organisational culture, policy, processes and conditions	24	16
Mentoring (formal and informal)	23	16
External influences on teachers and trainees (including policy, external curricula requirements and inspection)	22	15

Relationships with colleagues and/or managers	22	15
<b>Evidenced findings on phenomena found in 10-14% of the sources</b>		
Mental health and/or wellbeing	17	11
Relationships with learners	17	11
Autonomy/agency or lack of	15	10
Performativity	15	10
Workload	15	10
<b>Evidenced findings on phenomena found in 5-9% of the sources</b>		
Recruitment	13	9
Retention and/or attrition	13	9
Administrative work (directly related to teaching and learning)	10	7
Support from colleagues	9	6
Induction	9	6
Motivation and commitment	8	5
External networks and engagement	7	5
Covid-19 pandemic related	7	5
<b>Evidenced findings on phenomena in fewer than 5% of the sources</b>		
Resilience	4	3
Unclear/unspecified	4	3

Note: All phenomena of interest included in a single source were coded, so the total number of sources in the table > 148 and percentages do not sum to 100%.

## A2.11 CONCLUSION

In this appendix we have set out quantitative information on the research base on the experiences of becoming and/or being an FE teacher to supplement the summary presented in [Chapter 2](#).

## APPENDIX 3 REVIEW CONTEXT, POPULATION AND PHENOMENA OF INTEREST

Table A3.1: Review context, population and phenomena of interest

<b>Context</b>	<p>The further education (FE) and training sector in England.</p> <p>We define the sector as comprising any institution or organisation that provides education and/or training to people over 16 years of age, other than schools and universities.</p> <p>This sector includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• colleges (general land-based; art, design and performing arts; specialist designated; national specialist and sixth form colleges)</li> <li>• independent training providers (ITPs)</li> <li>• local authority (LA) providers</li> <li>• employer providers</li> <li>• third sector providers</li> <li>• adult community education (ACE) providers</li> <li>• prison education.</li> </ul> <p>Learners in the sector are supported to achieve a wide range of technical, vocational, academic and functional skills qualifications at qualification levels entry to Level 3. Many FE providers also provide higher education (HE) courses (levels 4 to 8). Some courses are not accredited. Learners may attend in preparation for joining or rejoining the workforce, to support continuing professional development (CPD) or personal development and interest.</p> <p>Learning may take place in the workplace, at the education and training providers' premises and/or online.</p>
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Population	<p>For phase 1 and 2 of the review where FE becoming and being teachers were in scope – the population was teachers and/or trainee teachers in the FE sector in England.</p> <p>This is broadly defined, as anyone undertaking a pre-service initial teacher education (ITE) qualification with associated teaching placements, or anyone undertaking a role that involves the formal education and training of learners in the FE sector in England with the aim of developing their subject and vocational knowledge and skills, and/or their functional skills. For example, it included roles with titles such as: trainer; lecturer; facilitator; instructor; tutor; technician industry associate,<sup>30</sup> and educator.</p> <p>This encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all modes of employment e.g. full-time, part-time and specialist contributions to teaching (e.g. industry associates who contribute to technical education teaching through co-delivery of a session, masterclasses or delivery of short elements of the curriculum, etc.)</li> <li>• trainee teachers and teachers at all career stages.</li> </ul> <p>It excludes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teachers who do not teach on any accredited courses – defined, for this study, as courses on the Department for Education (DfE) <a href="#">Regulated Qualifications Framework (RCF)</a></li> <li>• teachers in FE organisations that only work with learners undertaking qualifications at Level 4 and above</li> <li>• those whose role title is solely mentor, coach or counsellor.</li> </ul> <p>For phases 3-5 of the review, where only becoming FE teachers were in scope, the definition of teachers/trainees was restricted to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trainees and teachers who were undertaking or had undertaken a pre-service or in-service ITE qualification in the five years prior to data generation about their experiences</li> <li>• teachers in their first five years of teaching in the sector who were not undertaking and had not undertaken an ITE qualification.</li> </ul> <p>The inclusion above in relation to the mode of employment and all exclusions above were also applied in phases 3-5.</p>
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<sup>30</sup> This includes other titles that may be used to describe industry associate roles, e.g. employer partners, guest/associate lecturers, guest/professional speakers and industry professionals/experts (Wilson and Russell 2023).

<b>Phenomena of interest</b>	<p>Initial phenomena of interest related to being and becoming an FE teacher (used in phases 1, 2 and mapping):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• administrative work (directly related to teaching and learning)</li> <li>• autonomy/agency or lack of</li> <li>• Covid-19 pandemic related</li> <li>• external influences on teachers and trainees (including policy, external curricula requirements and inspection)</li> <li>• external networks and engagement</li> <li>• induction</li> <li>• ITE and training</li> <li>• mental health and/or wellbeing</li> <li>• mentoring (formal and informal)</li> <li>• motivation and commitment</li> <li>• organisational culture, policy, processes and conditions</li> <li>• performativity</li> <li>• professional identity</li> <li>• professional learning and development</li> <li>• professionalism and/or deprofessionalisation</li> <li>• relationships with learners</li> <li>• relationships with colleagues and/or managers</li> <li>• recruitment</li> <li>• resilience</li> <li>• retention and/or attrition</li> <li>• support from colleagues</li> <li>• the nature of teaching work, practice and pedagogies</li> <li>• workload.</li> </ul> <p>Additional phenomena of interest related to becoming a teacher (added in phases 3-5):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confidence and/or self-esteem</li> <li>• self-efficacy/perceptions of enhanced teacher effectiveness.</li> </ul> <p>Refined phenomena of interest for becoming an FE teacher (used for reporting):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recruitment, retention and attrition</li> <li>• pedagogical beliefs and practices, and relationships with learners</li> <li>• relationships and support from peers, colleagues and managers</li> <li>• professional learning and development</li> <li>• mentoring</li> <li>• wellbeing, illbeing, confidence and self-esteem</li> <li>• workload and administrative work associated with teaching</li> <li>• performativity</li> <li>• professional autonomy and agency</li> <li>• professional identity</li> <li>• organisational culture, policies, processes and conditions.</li> </ul> <p>Findings on phenomena extracted during the review encompassed becoming teachers' reported experiences and their perceptions of the factors that led to those experiences and the perceptions of significant others, such as mentors, line managers and other FE leaders.</p>
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## APPENDIX 4 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION – REVIEW PHASE I

### A4.1 SEARCHING

#### A4.1.1 LIST OF DATABASE AND WEBSITE SEARCHES

Table A4.1: Database and website searches

Search foci	Database/website	Type of search
All academic studies (including theses)	Web of Science (WoS)	General
	Education Research Complete (ERC) accessed through EBSCO	General
	British Education Index (BEI)	Targeted
	Google Scholar	General and targeted
Theses specific search	ProQuest global database of dissertations and theses	General
	Google (undertaken in phase 2 – becoming a further education (FE) teacher only)	Targeted
Grey literature	Association of Colleges (AoC) Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) Association for Research in Post- Compulsory Education (ARPCE) Department for Education (DfE) research publications The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) The Education and Training Consortium European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) Gatsby Charitable Foundation Institutes of Technology (IoTs) National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Directorate for Education and Skills University and College Union (UCU)	Manual search of organisational websites



#### **A4.1.2 STRATEGIES TO MAXIMISE IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL SOURCES**

A number of strategies were deployed to identify as many potential sources as possible:

- Eighteen academic journals were identified as likely to be productive sources of studies for the review and a check was made that confirmed that all were included in at least one of the academic databases used in the review.
- Replacing a planned general search of the BEI with a targeted search, as few new records were being retrieved from general searching and gaps in the literature base were becoming apparent. Targeted searches in the BEI focused on areas of the sector beyond FE colleges, teacher roles that were not well represented – particularly in relation to technical education and training (e.g. industry associates) – and recruitment and retention.
- Undertaking simple general searches focused on “further education” and “teaching” and similarly on “post compulsory education and training” in Google Scholar when it became apparent that a number of relevant sources known to the research team had not been identified in the general searches. Some targeted searches were also undertaken in Google Scholar to try to identify sources related to gaps in the retrieved records, but these proved to be unproductive.
- As the British Library theses database (EThOS) was unavailable due to a major cyberattack we were unable to search it during phase 1 as originally intended. Instead we found that Google was a productive source of records on theses and we undertook a targeted search during phase 2 for becoming an FE teacher sources only.
- The list of organisational websites to be searched for grey literature was agreed with sector experts in the advisory group.

#### **A4.1.3 SEARCH SYNTAX AND LIMITERS**

The search syntax and limiters were developed following a brief period of experimentation, and feedback from the advisory group. While the syntax and limiters applied were broadly consistent across the databases, adaptations were made to address differences in the structures of each database.

**Table A4.2: Phase I – General searches – syntax and limiters**

Database	Syntax	Limiters
Web of Science (WoS)	TS=(Teacher OR Trainer OR Facilitator OR Tutor OR Lecturer OR "Industry (Associate OR professional OR expert)" OR Instructor OR Technician OR Workforce OR "Employer Partners" OR "(Guest OR Professional Speakers)" AND TS=("Further Education" OR "Lifelong learning" OR "Post-16" OR "Post-compulsory" OR FE OR "Sixth-form" OR College OR (Employer AND Training) OR "Training Provider" OR "Adult Education" OR "Community Education" OR "Work-based training" OR "Apprenticeship" OR FES OR "Learning Provider")	Countries/Region: England
Education Research Complete (ERC)	<p>(Teacher OR Trainer OR Facilitator OR Tutor OR Lecturer OR "Industry (Associate OR professional OR expert)" OR Instructor OR Technician OR Workforce OR "Employer Partners" OR "(Guest OR Professional Speakers)" AND ("Further Education" OR "Lifelong learning" OR "Post-16" OR "Post-compulsory" OR FE OR "Sixth-form" OR College OR (Employer AND Training) OR "Training Provider" OR "Adult Education" OR "Community Education" OR "Work-based training" OR "Apprenticeship" OR FES OR "Learning Provider")</p> <p>Include publication types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• academic journal</li> <li>• reviews</li> <li>• conference proceedings.</li> </ul> <p>Exclude:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• magazines</li> <li>• trade publications.</li> </ul>	Geography: England
ProQuest Dissertations and Theses	Teacher OR Trainer OR Facilitator OR Tutor OR Lecturer OR "Industry (Associate OR professional OR expert)" OR Instructor OR Technician OR Workforce OR "Employer Partners" OR "(Guest OR Professional Speakers)" AND ("Further Education" OR "Lifelong learning" OR "Post-16" OR "Post-compulsory" OR FE OR "Sixth-form" OR College OR (Employer AND Training) OR "Training Provider" OR "Adult Education" OR "Community Education" OR "Work-based training" OR "Apprenticeship" OR FES OR "Learning Provider" AND England)	Document type: Dissertation/thesis

Table A4.3: Phase I – Targeted searches

<b>British Education Index (BEI)</b>  All searches conducted with 'APPLY EQUIVALENT SUBJECTS' and types of publications not in scope for the review were filtered out	"industry associate*"
	"guest speaker*"
	"guest lecturer*"
	"visiting lecturer*"
	"industry professional*"
	employer* AND (teach* OR train*) NOT universit* NOT "higher education"
	"sixth form college" AND teach*
	instructor AND apprenticeship NOT universit* NOT "higher education"
	teacher recruitment NOT school* NOT "higher education" NOT "universit*"
	teacher AND (retention OR attrition) NOT school* NOT "higher education" NOT "universit*"
	A range of other experimental searches focusing on evidence gaps were unproductive
<b>Google Scholar</b>	"industry associates" AND teach*
	"industry associates" AND train*
	"further education" AND retention
	"post compulsory" AND retention

Table A4.4: Phase I – Simple search

<b>Google Scholar</b>	"further education" AND teach*
	"further education" AND train*
	"post compulsory" AND teach*
	"work based learning" AND teach*
	"work based learning" AND train*

Table A4.5: Phase 2 – Targeted theses search

<b>Google (conducted during phase 2 becoming an FE teacher only)</b>	"doctoral theses further education"
	variations such as "PhD theses in FE", "EdD theses in FE"

## A4.2 INITIAL SCREENING AND CLASSIFICATION

Two researchers undertook all initial screening and classification.

Table A4.6: Initial screening and classification coding standardisation and reconciliation exercises

	No. of sources in sample	Agreement rate	Agreement rate following reconciliation
Initial screening	50	77%	100%
Classification	10	89%	100%

## **APPENDIX 5 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION – REVIEW PHASES 2 AND 3**

### **A5.1 CREATING AN INITIAL LONGLIST OF BECOMING AN FE TEACHER STUDIES (PHASE 2)**

The longlist was developed in two stages:

- Stage 1 – Where any of the 124 sources that had been included at the end of phase 1 had been allocated any of the following classification codes, they were entered on the longlist: population/career stage/pre-service AND/OR in-service AND/OR early career teacher.
- Stage 2 – For sources that had not been categorised as becoming a further education (FE) teacher in stage 1, a keyword search of their full texts was then undertaken, using the terms frequently associated with becoming an FE teacher. A check was then made to ensure that they included empirical data and findings on becoming an FE teacher.

Two researchers collaboratively reviewed the decisions on the initial longlist.

### **A5.2 EXPERT REVIEW OF THE BECOMING AN FE TEACHER LONGLIST (PHASE 2)**

The longlist for review was circulated to the advisory group, active researchers in the field and key contacts for the sector organisations including:

- The Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) FE forum
- The Learning and Skills Network
- The Education and Training Foundation (ETF)
- The Association for Research in Post-Compulsory Education (ARPCE)
- The Teacher Education in Lifelong Learning (TELL) network.

Of the 11 responses, nine were from university staff and two from the ETF.

### **A5.3 FULL TEXT SCREENING (PHASE 3)**

At this stage a set of new codes was developed, trialled and refined to record data to inform inclusion/exclusion decisions on the three additional eligibility criteria of date of data generation, relevance to the review questions and quality of the research (See Section 3 of [Table A1.1](#) in Appendix 1).

**Table A5.1: Full text screening coding standardisation and reconciliation exercise**

	No. of sources in sample	Overall agreement rate on coding	Agreement rate on final include/exclude decision
<b>Full text screening</b>	5	81%	87%

All sources with all data generated before 2014<sup>31</sup> were excluded immediately. The remaining sources were assigned by the individual completing the screening to either 'potentially include' or 'borderline' categories. Borderline sources included those where the date of data generation was not transparent in the full text and/or the researcher was uncertain about relevance or research quality. All borderline sources were reviewed by another researcher and agreement reached on assignment of the source to potentially include or exclude. In instances where the date of data generation was absent, further efforts were made to retrieve this information, for example from Google searches of other sources including the author and consultation with experts. For a few sources where the date of data generation was still unclear, journal articles and research reports were included on the data generation before 2014 criterion if they were published from 2015 onwards and theses if they were published from 2017 onwards.

The provisional lists of included and excluded studies following the initial round of screening were reviewed by the research team across two meetings and final decisions made collaboratively on included sources.

<sup>31</sup> Sources that included data generated both prior to and from 2014 onwards were not excluded on date of data generation. However, if the source was included in the review, the data generated prior to 2014 were treated as out of scope.

## APPENDIX 6 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION – REVIEW PHASE 4

### A6.1 EVIDENCED SUMMARY FINDINGS TEMPLATE

FULL BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCE(S*)	
*Produce a single evidenced findings summary where more than one source is based on the same research study	
<p>ANALYSIS TAGLINE – Add brief descriptor which will accompany data cuts relating to various phenomena of interest, to include:</p> <p>i) author; date of publication; ii) teacher type(s) or career phase; (iii) any subject or vocational specialism(s) of the 'becoming teachers'</p> <p>e.g. Brown &amp; Everson 2019; trainee/first year teachers; subject/vocational specialism(s) not stated</p>	
AIMS AND BRIEF ACCOUNT OF RELEVANCE OF STUDY	
Summarise the type of study in a short phrase: e.g. large or small scale? comparative? longitudinal? qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, case study?	
Briefly summarise the overarching aim of the research output(s) (If drawing on two related sources, the aims may differ and the differences need spelling out)	e.g. to examine the development of pre-service trainee teachers during their FE teacher training course and into their first year of employment
Any stated connections to other studies in our shortlist? If yes, provide reference (authors, year) and brief account of connection	
OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF BECOMING AN FE TEACHER	
<p>SUMMARISE ANY FINDINGS ON POSITIVE EXPERIENCES OF BECOMING AN FE TEACHER, PLUS:</p> <p>Any factors contributing to positive experiences (e.g. support from mentors)</p> <p>Any consequences of the positive experiences (e.g. for retention, wellbeing, motivation)</p> <p>Include a summary and examples of the supporting evidence that might be used in our report (include quote marks and page numbers for direct quotes)</p>	

<p>SUMMARISE ANY FINDINGS ON NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES of becoming an FE teacher</p> <p>PLUS:</p> <p>Any factors contributing to negative experiences (e.g. lack of support from mentors)</p> <p>Any consequences of the negative experiences (e.g. for attrition, illbeing)</p> <p>Include a summary and examples of the supporting evidence</p>	
<p>SUMMARISE ANY FINDINGS ON CHALLENGES (not already identified above) associated with becoming an FE teacher</p> <p>Include a summary/examples of the supporting evidence</p>	
<p>Any EFFECTIVE MEANS OF OVERCOMING THE NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES OR CHALLENGES identified above, where evidenced</p> <p>Include a summary and examples of the supporting evidence</p>	
<b>SPECIFIC PHENOMENA OF INTEREST – Summarise findings and evidence for any that apply</b>	
Administrative work related directly to teaching/learning (including preparation, marking and assessment)	
Autonomy/agency or lack of	
Confidence and/or self-esteem	
Covid related	
External networks and engagement	
External influences on teachers – specify influence(s) in info (includes policy, curricula, inspection, personal circumstance etc., excludes external networks and engagement which is in a separate code)	
Mental health and/or wellbeing (includes stress and burnout)	
Mentoring – formal or informal	
Motivation and commitment	
Organisational culture, policy, processes and conditions	
Performativity	
Recruitment	
Retention and/or attrition	
Relationships with learners	



Relationships with colleagues and/or managers	
Resilience	
Subject/vocational specialism – findings relating to teaching of or support for teaching particular subjects/vocational specialisms	
Support from colleagues (other than mentors)	
Teaching work/practice/pedagogies – nature of (act of teaching – what teachers do when they are teaching)	
Workload (include work intensification)	
Other relevant phenomena – add to info	
SUMMARISE IN OUR WORDS ANY EVIDENCED CONNECTIONS (positive or negative if appropriate) between different phenomena of interest  (NO EVIDENCE NEEDED)	e.g. connection between findings on relationships with colleagues and teacher identity (former enhanced latter)
<b>ANY OTHER POTENTIALLY RELEVANT FINDINGS OR CONTENT</b>	
ANY AUTHOR RECOMMENDATIONS that are well evidenced/logically follow from the findings and potentially relevant to the implications of/recommendations from our review	
<b>ANY OTHER POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS that we feel logically follow from the findings, and we might potentially include in our report (if not mentioned by author so not stated above)</b>	
<b>BULLET POINT SUMMARY OF MOST RELEVANT FINDINGS for our review questions</b>	
<b>REVIEWER EVALUATION: STATE <u>ANY</u> LIMITATIONS OR CAVEATS that you feel should be noted, e.g. relating to methodology, findings claims and/or evidence</b>	
<b>ANY FOLLOW UP</b>	
Any additional sources to follow up?	Scan the text and reference section for potentially relevant empirical studies published from 2015 onwards (likely to include data from 2014 onwards), and list any (that make reference to FE sector) here:
PLEASE CONFIRM and add your initials when you have reviewed, added missing details where possible, and corrected any errors in both the ' <i>Classification after initial screening</i> ' and ' <i>Full text screening and classification</i> ' frameworks in EPPI: (Delete as appropriate)	
YES	
NO	

## APPENDIX 7 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION - REVIEW PHASE 5

### A7.1 SYNTHESIS TEMPLATE: OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF BECOMING AN FE TEACHER

(i.e. What beginning teachers experience as or perceive to be (not what the research team/others consider) positive, negative and challenging)

<b>Lead analyst:</b>	
<b>Second analyst:</b>	
Please provide bullet point summary of:	
NB. We need to keep this concise but it may be helpful to provide some nuance/explanation in some cases, and to note if/where there are contradictory findings on a theme (that may still have sufficient evidence overall to support it)	
<b>POSITIVE EXPERIENCES OF BECOMING AN FE TEACHER</b>	
COMMON OR KEY FINDINGS FOR WHICH YOU FEEL THERE IS <u>STRONG EVIDENCE</u> (add additional rows if more than 3)	Source of associated evidence – cite all sources (authors, date) which provide supporting evidence for each finding. Highlight (in bold) up to three sources that you think provide the strongest evidence for this finding
'CAUSES AND/OR CONSEQUENCES': Add any specific factors found to contribute to and/or consequences of each positive experience (within each row) where there is evidence to support them	
COMMON OR KEY FINDINGS FOR WHICH YOU FEEL THERE IS <u>MODERATE EVIDENCE</u> (add additional rows if more than 3)	Source of associated evidence – cite all sources (authors, date) which provide supporting evidence for each finding
'CAUSES AND/OR CONSEQUENCES': Add any specific factors found to contribute to and/or consequences of each positive experience (within each row) where there is evidence to support them	
POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS FOR WHICH THERE IS <u>ONLY LIMITED OR INCONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE</u> (add additional rows if more than 3)	Source of associated evidence – cite all sources (authors, date) which provide supporting evidence for each finding

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES OF BECOMING AN FE TEACHER	
Please provide bullet point summary of:	
<p>COMMON OR KEY FINDINGS FOR WHICH YOU FEEL THERE IS <u>STRONG EVIDENCE</u> (add additional rows if more than 3)</p> <p>Add any specific factors found to contribute to and/or consequences of and/or means of alleviating each negative experience (within each row) where there is evidence to support them</p>	<p>Source of associated evidence – cite all sources (authors, date) which provide supporting evidence for each finding. Highlight (in bold) up to three sources that you think provide the strongest evidence for this finding</p>
<p>COMMON OR KEY FINDINGS FOR WHICH YOU FEEL THERE IS <u>MODERATE EVIDENCE</u> (add additional rows if more than 3)</p> <p>Add any specific factors found to contribute to and/or consequences of and/or means of alleviating each negative experience (within each row) where there is evidence to support them</p>	<p>Source of associated evidence – cite all sources (authors, date) which provide supporting evidence for each finding</p>
<p>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS FOR WHICH THERE IS ONLY <u>LIMITED OR INCONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE</u> (add additional rows if more than 3)</p>	<p>Source of associated evidence – cite all sources (authors, date) which provide supporting evidence for each finding</p>
<p>CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY THOSE BECOMING FE TEACHERS OR UNDERTAKING ITT (Things teachers/trainees found challenging but were not reported/evidenced as negative experiences)</p>	
Please provide bullet point summary of:	
<p>COMMON OR KEY FINDINGS FOR WHICH YOU FEEL THERE IS <u>STRONG EVIDENCE</u> (add additional rows if more than 3)</p> <p>Add any specific evidenced effective means of overcoming each challenging experience (within each row)</p>	<p>Source of associated evidence – cite all sources (authors, date) which provide supporting evidence for each finding. Highlight up to three sources that you think provide the strongest evidence for this finding</p>

COMMON OR KEY FINDINGS FOR WHICH YOU FEEL THERE IS <u>MODERATE EVIDENCE</u> (add additional rows if more than 3)  Add any specific evidenced effective means of overcoming each challenging experience (within each row)	Source of associated evidence – cite all sources (authors, date) which provide supporting evidence for each finding
POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS FOR WHICH THERE IS ONLY <u>LIMITED OR INCONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE</u> (add additional rows if more than 3)	Source of associated evidence – cite all sources (authors, date) which provide supporting evidence for each finding

## A7.2 SYNTHESIS TEMPLATE: PHENOMENA OF INTEREST

Phenomena (add name):

Author:

Second analyst:

Trainee/teachers' experiences					
	Summary of key finding	Trainee/teacher group(s) the finding is evidenced for (see codes below)	All sources supporting the finding/theme	Exemplars of supporting evidence	Statement on quantity and quality of evidence supporting the finding.
1					
2					
3					
Links to other phenomena					
List as bullets or state None where no explicit links in the data cuts					
Significant and potentially important gaps in the research base relating to the phenomena					
List as bullets or state None. Include in bullet if completely absent or some evidence but insufficient to be a key theme on the basis of quality and/or quantity and state source where it appears					

Trainee/teacher group codes:

- undertaking pre-service initial teacher education (ITE)/initial teacher training (ITT)
- undertaking in-service ITE/ITT
- being an early career teacher following pre-service ITE
- being a more experienced teacher in the first few years following completion of in-service ITE/ITT
- those who become further education sector (FES) teachers without undertaking formal programmes of ITE/ITT at Level 4-5 (e.g. Cert Ed) or 6-7 (PGCE)
- unclear:

# ROUTES THROUGH INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING IN FURTHER EDUCATION

## Entry requirements

Teacher training is not mandatory in the further education sector, but it is highly recommended. Full teaching qualifications are defined as those at Level 5 or above. In addition to full qualifications, there are pre-service and in-service routes available at Levels 3 and 4 that provide introductory training. For Level 5 and higher programmes, typical entry requirements include GCSEs or equivalent in maths and English at grade C/4 or above, as well as a Level 3 or higher qualification in the subject area the trainee intends to teach. For some postgraduate courses, a degree in a relevant subject may also be required.

	In-service training			Pre-service training		
ROUTE	Learning and Skills (LST) Apprenticeship	Taking Teaching Further (TTF) Programme	Programme for employed teachers and trainers	Level 5 Certificate	Postgraduate Degree	Postgraduate Degree
DURATION	18 months	Up to 2 years	2 years part time	1 year	1 year	1 year
FUNDING	Funded Up to £7,000 government fund for apprenticeship training.	Funded Employers can apply for funding of either £15,200 or £21,200 per recruit, depending on the teacher training route taken.	Funded Trainees can receive funding from employer.	Bursary For specific subjects.  Tuition Up to £7,000 per year in fees.	Bursary For specific subjects.  Tuition Up to £9,250 per year in fees.	Bursary For specific subjects.  Tuition Up to £9,250 per year in fees.
QUALIFICATION	Level 5 LST Apprenticeship	Diploma in Teaching (FE & Skills)(DiT)	Diploma in Teaching (FE & Skills)(DiT)	Certificate in Education (Cert Ed)	Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (ProfGrad Cert Ed/PGCE)	Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)

## Pre-initial teaching training qualifications

Entry Point	Introduction
120 hours  Varied costs Cost varies depending on the specific provider.	360 hours  Varied costs Cost varies depending on the specific provider.
Award in Education and Training (AET)	Certificate in Education and Training (CET)

### Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS)

QTLS is a professional status gained after successfully completing a six-month period of professional formation and maintained through membership to the Society for Education and Training (SET). Applicants must:

- be an active member of SET
- hold a Level 5 or higher teaching qualification
- hold a Level 2 maths and English qualification
- hold a subject specific qualification at Level 3 or above
- teach for five or more hours per week in their specialism.

QTLS with SET membership is legally equivalent to qualified teacher status.

### Key

- Level 7
- Level 6
- Level 5
- Level 4
- Level 3

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