

PAY PROGRESSION FOR TEACHERS

NEU Guidance for members in England and Wales

This document summarises how performance related pay progression works for teachers. This factsheet is designed to help NEU members understand the process of pay progression.

What we say

When you read through this document you may have questions about what happens in your particular school or workplace and there may be collective issues that affect other members. In most circumstances, you should initially discuss the matter with your workplace rep, as they will know whether similar concerns have been raised by other members. If you do not have a rep at the moment, it would be a good idea to get members together to elect one. Further advice on this is available at:

<https://neu.org.uk/becoming-a-rep>

Although you may sometimes feel that you are the only person affected by or concerned about a particular issue, in reality this is seldom the case. Any difficulties you may experience are likely to be linked to wider conditions at your workplace and as a member of the NEU you have the advantage of being able to act collectively with your colleagues. This should give you the confidence of knowing that you have the weight of the Union behind you.

NB – This document refers to the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD). Teachers employed in local authority maintained schools are statutorily covered by the provisions of the STPCD. Many academies and academy chains also employ teaching staff according to terms of the STPCD, but they are not obliged to do so (except in the case of teachers whose STPCD rights are protected by TUPE legislation following the school’s transfer to academy contracts). Members working in academies should check with their NEU rep or should refer to their contracts in cases of doubt.

What is ‘pay progression’?

All pay progression for teachers in maintained schools in England and Wales is now linked to their performance. The School Teacher’s Review Body (STRB) has given schools more flexibility in how they determine teacher’s pay – although the vast majority continue to operate according to national pay scales. All pay progression is now based on performance and the outcomes of appraisal.

Who is eligible to progress?

All teachers are eligible to progress except:

- teachers at the top of the main pay range who have not expressed a wish to 'cross the threshold'
- teachers at the top of the upper pay range
- teachers at the top of their leadership group pay range
- unqualified teachers at the top of the unqualified teacher pay range
- leading practitioners at the top of their range.

Who makes the decision as to whether or not I progress?

As part of your performance appraisal review meeting your appraiser must make a recommendation on your pay progression. Usually, the decision will have to be approved by the headteacher and governing body. The NEU's view is that a decision to progress made by your appraiser should not be overturned by the headteacher or governing body without good reason.

What evidence do I need to provide?

The decision should be based on the outcome of your performance appraisal review, and there is no requirement for you to provide additional evidence. You should check your school's pay policy to see the criteria and evidence your school expects you to fulfil for progression. When you agreed your objectives you should also have discussed how your performance against these objectives would be measured. The NEU does not expect teachers to be required to provide a portfolio of evidence to show they have met their objectives. You should agree with your appraiser how your performance will be managed and what, if any, evidence you need to collect. You may wish to take note of examples showing how you met the aspects of your objectives, which may be useful if you do not receive the pay recommendation you think you deserve.

Should I progress if I meet my objectives?

The STPCD provides clearly that "continued good performance ... should give [a teacher] an expectation of progression". However, teachers who do not fully meet objectives should not automatically be denied progression. The DfE advice accepts that if you have "made good progress on, but not quite achieved, a very challenging objective", you may have performed better than teachers who meet less stretching objectives.

What sort of objectives are acceptable?

Objectives must be SMART and fit for purpose. The DfE advice advocates "targets and objectives that enable teachers to demonstrate performance, rather than simply results". You should challenge any objectives you think are unachievable or inappropriate at the outset and, if they are imposed, record your objections in writing. Objectives using wording like "sustained high quality", "outstanding", "good with elements of outstanding" etc are certainly inappropriate.

How much should my pay increase if I am progressed?

Your school must have a pay policy that details how pay progression will operate in your school. If your school has a pay scale, ideally the one recommended by the NEU, then you should progress to the next point on the pay scale. If your performance has been deemed exceptional you may progress two points on the scale provided this has been incorporated into your school's pay policy. If your school does not have a pay scale it is likely that all teachers will be paid on a spot salary determined by the governors/headteacher.

Can I be moved down the pay scale?

As long as you remain at the same school there is no mechanism by which you can be moved down the pay scale.

Can I remain where I am on the pay range?

It is possible for appraisers to recommend you do not progress on the pay scale and remain on your current point. Where this is the case the reasons for making the decision must be fully explained to you. If you disagree with the decision you should be able to lodge an appeal. If you are denied progression then part of the discussion with your appraiser must include details of what you need to do to achieve progression next year. Agreement should be reached on what support you need and this should be provided.

When should my pay be increased?

Any increase to your pay following pay progression should be backdated to 1 September.

What should I do if I do not agree with the decision of my appraiser?

If you do not agree with your appraiser's decision not to award you progression, or you believe the amount of progression recommended is insufficient, then you should consider lodging an appeal. You should check with the school's pay policy to ensure your appeal is made within the time limits. You usually have 10 working days to lodge an appeal. You may wish to discuss your decision to appeal with your NEU rep in the first instance (if you do not have a school rep you should contact the relevant region using the details at <https://neu.org.uk/contact-us>) If your appraiser is not your line manager you may also wish to discuss your appeal with your line manager. Your appraiser should have given you reasons why he or she did not recommend you for progression, and you should consider carefully whether you have the evidence available to show that these reasons are not sufficient and that his or her decision is not correct. You may be required to provide additional evidence to support your appeal, although it should not be too onerous a task for you to collect this information.

What if I haven't had an appraisal or it wasn't completed?

Denying progression on this basis is clearly unfair and, in certain circumstances, can be unlawful discrimination. For that reason, the decision should be taken by reference to such information as is available, whether from only one appraisal review or whatever part of the

appraisal which was conducted, or might be postponed until sufficient information is available. Complaints of unfair treatment and possible unlawful discrimination are then less likely to arise.

If you moved post during or at the end of the previous year, previous statutory guidance said that head teachers should consult with the previous head teacher. The STPCD no longer includes that advice, but its principles remain valid.

I have missed part of my appraisal cycle due to maternity leave; can I still progress on the pay range?

Teachers who, for reasons of maternity or other leave miss significant periods during the cycle should have their targets reassessed in order to make them more realistic and achievable, while still rigorous, bringing them in line with the school's appraisal cycle.

The DfE advice confirms that such teachers are entitled to consideration for pay progression in the same way as other teachers. Governing bodies should take decisions by reference to such information as is available. This might include information from the most recent appraisal review or information from any part of the period when the teacher was present.

If you go on maternity leave at the end of the summer term, then we would advise you to ask for a review to be undertaken before you leave. Similarly, if you return to work in the summer term you should ask for interim targets to be set for you to meet by the end of October.

Do I get a cost-of-living award?

The STPCD pay ranges continue to be increased each year, and the NEU expects all teachers to receive at least the increase for the relevant range. If you are in England and receive a payment at the minimum of the main pay range, unqualified pay range, upper pay range, leading practitioner range or the leadership range, you will automatically receive a 2.75% increase. Teachers on the minimum of the main pay range in Wales should receive 5% and 2.75% to all the other pay ranges. If you receive more than the minimum of the range your school has the discretion whether or not to increase the amount of your payment.

Details of the latest award can be found at <https://neu.org.uk/advice-and-resources/pay/pay-scales-2018-9>

Where should I go for further advice and support?

If further advice is needed, contact your NEU workplace rep in the first instance. If there is no NEU rep in your workplace, or the peripatetic nature of your employment makes contact with a workplace rep difficult, contact the NEU AdviceLine, or the NEU Wales office instead. Their details may be found at <https://neu.org.uk/contact-us>

Further Resources

Further NEU guidance on school teachers' pay generally can be found at <https://neu.org.uk/help-and-advice/pay> Pay advice for teachers working in Sixth Form Colleges or employed as Soulbury Officers is also available at the same link.

The NEU Pay Progression Toolkit - including the Model Pay Policy and Pay Policy Checklist - can be found at <https://neu.org.uk/pay-toolkit>

The 2019 School Teachers' Pay & Conditions Document is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions>

The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document 2019 <https://gov.wales/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions-wales-document-2019>

***National Education Union
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