

*(Last updated 16/06/2008)*

## Guidelines for the appointment of Specialist Teachers (ST)<sup>1</sup> in Area Schools

These guidelines provide advice to employers appointing a teacher to the Specialist Teacher (ST) role. A notification and time allowance application form is attached.

The establishment of the ST role in area schools was part of the 2007 Area School Teachers' Collective Agreement settlement and is intended to provide professional learning support for teachers in area schools. In addition, the role allows for the development of a different career opportunity to retain teachers in the classroom through the provision of an alternative career path to the more traditional management one.

The ST role offers a career opportunity for area teachers to develop and demonstrate their professional learning leadership skills.

While the development of the ST role has been informed by the pilot and implementation of the Specialist Classroom Teacher role in secondary schools since 2006, the ST role has been designed to meet the specific needs of area schools. These guidelines are also intended to offer flexibility to allow for the diverse types, isolation and sizes of area schools.

The 2007-2010 Area School Teachers' Collective Agreement provides the terms and conditions of the ST role in area schools:

- From the start of Term 3, 2008, each area school shall be entitled to appoint a permanent teacher as a Specialist Teacher. This role has a time allowance associated with it of 0.16 FTTE (for area schools with 100 or more students) or 0.08 FTTE for schools with a roll of less than 100 students.
- Specialist Teachers in an area school with 100 or more students shall be entitled to an allowance of \$7600 per annum increasing to \$8000 from 1 July 2009. Specialist Teachers in an area school with a roll of less than 100 students shall be entitled to an allowance of \$3800 per annum increasing to \$4000 from 1 July 2009.
- Each ST shall have an entitlement of up to two reimbursements of study fees towards post graduate qualifications which are relevant to the role. Each reimbursement shall be a maximum of \$1000. Only one reimbursement shall be paid in any one year. Only one entitlement per teacher in an ST role will be available<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Schools may have a different title for this role eg –Professional Support Teacher, Teaching support, Professional Learning Leader.

- Schools with rolls of 1-99 may opt, by mutual agreement with another school, to engage a teacher employed at that other school to perform this role. In such circumstances the staffing will be transferred to the employing board of that teacher

These guidelines have been agreed by the Ministry of Education, PPTA, NZEI – Te Riu Roa and NZSTA. Employers must ensure that appointments to the ST role are consistent with the guidelines.

### ***Aims and Objectives of the ST Role***

The PPTA, NZEI – Te Riu Roa, NZSTA and the Ministry of Education agree that a fundamental goal of education policy is to contribute to high education outcomes for all students. There is also recognition of a range of characteristics of quality teaching that are effective in producing improved learning outcomes for all students, especially those most at risk of underachievement.

The aim of the ST role is to contribute to the enhancement of such quality teaching practices in all schools by providing support for the professional growth of other teachers in the school. This could be through:

- Supporting and assisting beginning teachers to develop and demonstrate effective teaching practices to maintain a purposeful learning environment that engages students;
- Supporting and assisting other teachers in the school or across schools with effective teaching practices and maintaining a purposeful learning environment that engages students;
- Supporting and assisting teachers to expand their knowledge, skills and attributes to increase teaching effectiveness;
- Encouraging collaborative, reflective and shared practice;
- Providing leadership in school wide or cross-school professional learning and development;
- Supporting and assisting teachers to develop and use e-learning in their classrooms.

STs are encouraged to explore and develop professional learning support approaches which may include a variety of focus areas such as coaching, mentoring, leading mentoring programmes, leading professional learning groups, providing professional reading and leading discussion groups, developing reflective practice, classroom observations/support, supporting beginning teachers, developing classroom management strategies, leading professional learning programmes in the school, and facilitating and supporting professional learning communities.

### ***ST Role Description***

After discussion with their staff, employers will need to develop their own role description for the ST in their school, outlining the specific roles the ST will perform. Regional Advisors from NZSTA or Leadership Advisors from School Support Services may be able to give further advice and guidance on developing job descriptions.

It is not proposed that this role should necessarily replace any existing arrangements schools have for the induction and support for beginning teachers or teachers new to the school, or to replace any other professional development programme in the school, for example it is not intended to replace the PRT Co-ordinators where these exist. However, it may well complement existing support or be incorporated into it.

It is important that this role is kept separate from any appraisal, performance management or competency judgements. The ST should always be seen in a support and guidance role, in order to operate with their teacher colleagues in a high-trust and confidential relationship.

Some schools may opt to extend the duties and functions of their ST by providing further time or recognition, or by providing additional resourcing and recognition to enable another teacher to work in a teacher support role. To remain eligible for the additional resourcing associated with the ASTCA provisions any teacher who operates in an extended role must continue to be a practising classroom teacher, and is expected to be teaching, as a guide, a minimum of 12 hours per week in order to maintain credibility as an effective classroom teacher.

### ***Resourcing for Appointments to the ST role from 2008 (Salary and Time Allowances)***

The 2007-2010 Area School Teachers' Collective Agreement provides the on-going terms and conditions of the ST role in area schools:

- From the start of Term 3, 2008, each area school shall be entitled to appoint a permanent teacher as a Specialist Teacher. This role has a time allowance associated with it of 0.16 FTTE (for area schools with 100 or more students) or 0.08 FTTE for schools with a roll of less than 100 students. Schools with rolls of 1-99 may opt, by mutual agreement with another school, to engage a teacher employed at that other school to perform this role. In such circumstances the staffing will be transferred to the employing board of that teacher
- Specialist Teachers in an area school with 100 or more students shall be entitled to an allowance of \$7600 per annum increasing to \$8000 from 1 July 2009. Specialist Teachers in an area school with a roll of less than 100 students shall be entitled to an allowance of \$3800 per annum increasing to \$4000 from 1 July 2009.

The time and salary allowances cannot be split.

In relation to reimbursement of fees for study towards a post-graduate qualification (see clause 6.11), the post-graduate qualification is agreed in discussion between the principal and the Specialist Teacher as relevant for the role. Where no appropriate post-graduate qualification is available, a relevant course of study may be substituted.

In order to give certainty to schools going forward, the Ministry of Education advises that the entitlement to the time allowance specified in clause 2.15 shall be allocated annually on the provisional rolls notified to schools in September for the following year.

### ***Appointment to the Role***

These eligibility requirements have been set as a guide to schools to appoint an experienced, well established teacher, with demonstrated knowledge about and expertise in teaching, to a professional learning leadership role in the school. This level of experience and expertise has been shown to be essential to the success of these types of roles in a school.

The parties to the ASTCA have agreed that the intention is for the ST role to offer an alternative career pathway for those teachers who want to remain centred in teaching practice through supporting and encouraging effective teaching, rather than following a management and administration pathway. As such, schools are asked to minimise other responsibilities of STs in order to allow them to focus on this important professional support role (eg it is not expected that STs will also hold senior or middle management roles). Schools will need to ensure that the focus of the role is on teacher professional learning. As such STs may need to make choices about roles they wish to hold, which to forego, and career opportunities they wish to take.

The ASTCA outlines (clause 2.15.4 and 3.28) the eligibility criteria for a teacher who is appointed to the ST role:

- be a permanently appointed registered teacher; and
- have at least six years total teaching experience (either in New Zealand or overseas); and

- have had three successful attestations against the experienced classroom teacher standards (Supplement 1 of this agreement), or overseas equivalent; and
- be a full time teacher, or a part time teacher with a significant classroom teaching load at time of application; and
- not hold any permanent units and hold no more than one fixed term unit; and
- meet other criteria in the agreed guidelines.

The parties have agreed that smaller schools may require more flexibility in order to be able to appoint a suitable person to the role. Therefore, the ministry has agreed to offer limited concurrence to some smaller schools.

*Note that these guidelines and the concurrence will be reviewed prior to the expiry of the 2007-2010 ASTCA.*

### **Appointment to the ST role in U6 and above schools**

These schools must comply with the terms and conditions, including six years total teaching experience, outlined in the ASTCA. In addition:

- Appointees to permanent ST roles *must* relinquish all salary units\* but may hold *one* fixed term unit where the school requires continuation of a specific responsibility, or chooses to extend the purpose and functions of the ST role and provide further recognition;
- Appointees to fixed-term ST roles *must* relinquish, for the term of the appointment, all salary units\* but may hold *one* fixed term unit where the school requires continuation of a specific responsibility, or chooses to extend the role and functions of the ST position and provide further recognition;
- Appointees to fixed term ST roles are entitled to protection of their current position subject to any existing agreement for that position.

\*Note: This does not restrict employers from allocating MMAs and 3R payments in the normal way.

### **Appointment to the ST role in U5 schools**

Upon application, a U5 area school may be able to have some flexibility in making their appointment in relation to either the requirement for six years' experience and/or the limit of holding one fixed term unit. To gain exemption from one and/or the other a school shall have to demonstrate their inability to make an appropriate appointment from current permanent teaching staff without being able to waver from these requirements.

If a school wishes to make an application, it should direct it to:  
Industrial Relations Unit or industrial.relations@minedu.govt.nz  
Ministry of Education  
PO Box 1666  
Wellington.

### **Appointment to the ST role in U1-U4 schools**

U1 to U4 schools should attempt to meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the ASTCA. If the school is unable to achieve this, then a school is granted an exemption from the ASTCA requirements on the following basis. The SCT must:

- be a permanently appointed registered teacher; and
- have at least three years total teaching experience (either in New Zealand or overseas); and
- have had a successful attestations against the classroom teacher standards (Supplement 1 of this agreement), or overseas equivalent; and

- be a full time teacher, or a part time teacher with a significant classroom teaching load at time of application; and
- hold no more than two permanent units and hold no more than one fixed term unit; and
- hold no senior management role in the school (such as a principal, deputy principal or assistant principal)
- meet other criteria in the agreed guidelines.

U1-U4 schools should note that they do not have to apply for this exemption.

### ***Support for the Role***

Where possible, schools should consider providing the following support for STs:

- A confidential but accessible office space away from the management/administration area of the school.
- Access to the network of others who have some aspect of professional oversight of teachers such as professional learning coordinator, HoDs, and possibly guidance counsellors.
- Professional learning opportunities that will support the work of the ST.
- Relief cover to attend local ST cluster or regional meetings.
- Resourcing for materials such as internet access, printing, photo copying, professional reading, etc.
- If the role is to be shared with another school(s), facilities to enable the ST to effectively communicate with and, where necessary, travel to, the other school(s).

### ***Professional Development Support for STs***

STs are encouraged to participate in training days and relevant professional learning opportunities offered by School Support Services in their region. STs are also encouraged to link into existing SCT regional networks and clusters to draw on their experience and support.

A helpful tool for STs to access is the Professional Learning site on Te Kete Ipurangi at: [http://professional-learning.tki.org.nz/leading\\_professionalism](http://professional-learning.tki.org.nz/leading_professionalism). This area contains information and resources about and for professional learning leaders.

### **Entitlement for fees reimbursement as study support**

The ASTCA provides for professional development support for STs with an entitlement to a reimbursement of fees for study towards relevant post graduate qualifications up to a maximum of \$1000 a year for each of two years.

The study undertaken should be agreed in discussion between the principal and the Specialist Teacher. The study should take into account the relevance to the role, the professional development needs of the ST, and the professional learning support needs in the school. There is no need to seek approval for course(s) prior to commencing study.

The purpose of the ST role is seen as providing professional development and guidance to other teaching staff.

Examples of areas for the post-graduate qualifications that STs may wish to consider could include: adult education, mentoring/coaching, teacher professional learning.

Application forms, to apply for reimbursement, will be available from mid 2008 on the Ministry of Education website.

## ***Advertising, Selection and Appointment Process***

The expectation is that all appointments to the ST role are internal as the trust and confidence of the staff in the person appointed is crucial to the success of this role. However, in certain circumstances, where schools have been unable to appoint internally and have an actual teaching vacancy, they may advertise externally in the Education Gazette and other media usually used.

The advertising, selection and appointment process should be as follows:

1. The employer must ensure that there is an **open and transparent** internal process advertising, selection and appointment to the role;
  - All teachers in the school must be notified of the eligibility requirements, role description and the selection process
  - Experience from the pilot indicated that it was useful to include staff consultation and involvement in the selection process, in order to secure staff awareness of and confidence in the role
  - It is the responsibility of the employer and principal to ensure that the most suitable applicant, according to the criteria, is selected for appointment to the ST role.
2. Options for appointment:
  - Where the employer is confident that an applicant will clearly meet eligibility requirements, role description and criteria, it will be able to offer a permanent appointment to the ST role
  - Where a permanent appointment is not made, the employer may:
    3. offer a fixed-term appointment<sup>3</sup>; or
    4. advertise externally if the school has an actual teaching vacancy; or
    5. make no appointment.

Note that where schools with rolls of 99 or fewer are looking at the option of sharing the ST resource, the employers at the schools involved should discuss with their respective teaching staff members the reasons for sharing the resource and provide an explanation as to how the shared resource would operate.

### ***Criteria for Appointment to the ST Role***

Applicants will need to demonstrate expertise in a number of the following areas.

#### **Knowledge/Skills**

The ST is a highly effective classroom teacher who consistently demonstrates exemplary practice by:

In own teaching:

- Demonstrating expertise and refined strategies in the practice of teaching, including:
  - high and clear expectations of all learners' abilities to achieve
  - ability to respond flexibly and appropriately to the needs of diverse learners
  - use of evidence to guide teaching and learning
  - use of reflective inquiry in their own teaching practice
  - purposeful relationships with learners, families, communities and colleagues
- Demonstrating a sound knowledge of the theory and practical application of curriculum, learning and assessment
- Being conversant with current educational research, best practice and current issues and initiatives in education to inform teaching practice

Transfer of knowledge:

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<sup>3</sup> NOTE: a fixed-term appointment is not to be made in order to establish the suitability of an employee for permanent appointment.

- Understanding how adults learn and having knowledge of effective professional learning strategies for teachers
- Effectively communicating sound knowledge and practice of teaching and learning to other teachers across subject, class and school contexts
- Assisting colleagues to apply reflective practice in working to address problems, improve student engagement and raise student achievement
- Creating opportunities to share current educational research, best practice and current issues and initiatives in education with colleagues
- Being a highly skilled observer and providing timely and sufficient feed-back and feed-forward to colleagues

### **Experience**

Relevant experience (including where applicable e-learning experience) for an appointee to the ST role could include:

- Extensive teaching experience
- Successful collaboration with other teachers to improve teaching practice
- Successful experience in mentoring beginning teachers
- Successful experience in mentoring/coaching other teachers
- Leading or facilitating the professional learning of other teachers

### **Attributes/Dispositions**

In their professional practice, the applicant:

#### Self

- Demonstrates a strong commitment to being a highly effective classroom teacher and improving student learning
- Is seen by teaching staff as being a highly effective and credible area school teacher
- Demonstrates a commitment to ongoing professional learning
- Is seen as approachable by teachers in the school
- Demonstrates leadership and innovation in working to resolve problems and improve student achievement

#### Others

- Has the trust, respect and confidence of teaching staff and personal status within the school and/or across schools
- Develops effective and supportive working relationships with colleagues to other teachers and builds teachers' self-esteem and motivation
- Shows respect for diversity and appreciation of differences eg culture, gender, ethnicity, in both students and colleagues

### ***Process for Resourcing the Role – Making an Application***

Principals should apply to the Ministry of Education for the ST time allowance by filling out a *Specialist Teacher Time Allowance Application Form*. An application form is enclosed with this advice and is available on the Ministry website: [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz) and use the search function to search for 'Specialist Teacher'.

For future appointments, wherever possible the process should be completed, and the Ministry Resourcing section notified by the end of Term 4 in the year prior to taking up the role.

For 2008, while there is no absolute "cut-off point" after which appointments to the role cannot be made, in situations where the appointment is made within the first four weeks of Term 3, ie by 15 August, the staffing and the ST allowance paid from the beginning of Term 3. Appointments made after that date will be resourced from the date the ST is appointed as recorded by the date of signature on the application form.

The application form will serve as notification to Payroll, who will then process the salary allowance along with the ST's base salary and adjustment of any other applicable salary allowances.

The staffing allowance will be added to the school's staffing notices on receipt and approval of your application.

Principals will need to notify their payroll service if a fixed term unit is to be applied, in accordance with these guidelines.

Principals will need to notify their payroll service of any relinquished units which have been reallocated.

If the ST has been appointed permanently to the role or to a fixed term role for more than one year, there is no need to reapply for the time allowance in subsequent years. For each subsequent new appointment to the role (permanent or fixed term) application needs to be made by the Principal submitting a *Specialist Teacher Time Allowance Application Form*.

For STs appointed permanently to the role, the allowances will continue until the appointee resigns from the role. The ministry must be notified if the appointee resigns, or of any replacement.

For fixed term appointments to the role, the allowance approval is valid until the end of the term of appointment. Schools will need to submit a *Specialist Teacher Time Allowance Application Form* for any new fixed term appointment.