

Cambridge School Leader and Teacher Standards – Frequently asked questions

What are the Cambridge School Leader and Teacher Standards for?

The Cambridge School Leader and Teacher Standards are provided as a resource to support teacher and school leader development and to encourage effective practice in teaching and leadership. They provide benchmarks of teaching and school leadership based on international research and good practice. They can be a focus for shared understanding and dialogue within and between schools. Their ultimate aim is to encourage excellence in student outcomes.

My country already has a set of standards. Do we need to use the Cambridge Teacher Standards and School Leader Standards as well?

The situation varies between countries and within schooling systems in each country. If a set of standards is mandatory in your school, perhaps for teacher accreditation within your system, then this will take priority. However, you may wish to refer to the Cambridge Teacher Standards, Cambridge School Leader Standards and associated resources to provide an additional source of support and stimulus for discussion when considering teacher and school leader development.

How do I know if I have met the Standards?

The Standards are provided as a resource to help you develop as a teacher or school leader. They can be used to help you identify areas of strength in your practice and also areas for professional development. You will need to reflect on evidence about your practice across the Standards. It may be helpful to discuss this evidence and your reflections with a mentor or colleague in your school. The focus is on continual professional learning and development for all teachers more than 'meeting' the Standards. Teaching is a complex and demanding profession, requiring ongoing development of our knowledge and skills across all aspects of our role.

What sorts of evidence can I use?

It is important to use evidence to inform your self-reflection on the Standards and your discussion with colleagues. This evidence should focus on student outcomes, taken at their broadest definition. For example, you might gain evidence about the way your teaching impacts on pupil learning using pupils' oral responses noted by an observer or their written work discussed with your mentor. You might also consider evidence of attainment from test scores or exam results, though this should always be carefully contextualised. Evidence for some Standards could be provided through formal or informal feedback from learners or parents. For the Cambridge School Leader Standards, a wide range of evidence, including feedback from colleagues will be useful. Think carefully about the types of evidence you use and their strengths and weaknesses. Ideally more than one type of evidence should be used to support discussion of a particular Standard. Resources to support using the Standards will soon be available on our website.

I've used the Standards to identify an aspect of practice I need to develop. What should I do now?

Hopefully this was part of a process involving discussion with your mentor or other colleagues, so they may well be able to advise you on next steps. There are many different options depending on the time and resourcing available. It could be that some in-school training or other development could support you in this area, or maybe it would be helpful for a colleague or mentor to observe this aspect of your practice and give feedback. You may also be supported in your development by web-based material, such as the [Cambridge 'Getting started with...'](#) guides. External training opportunities e.g. through [Cambridge Professional Development](#) are also available.

Should only teachers who have met the Standards be teaching on Cambridge courses or leading Cambridge schools?

The Standards are designed to be aspirational, providing benchmarks of effective practice, reflecting international research on teaching and learning. They are not intended as a baseline or minimum level. All teachers and school leaders will identify areas of strength and areas for development in their practice, as they reflect on a range of evidence. The Standards primarily address this developmental aim. Schools will, of course, continue to make their own judgements about deploying staff as appropriate in their contexts.

How can my school use the Standards in staff professional development?

Each school context has distinctive characteristics, so professional judgement will be needed on the best use of the Standards in your school. The aim is for their use to support development of teachers and school leaders, so you may wish to integrate their use into your existing staff development processes. For example, through discussion with the leadership team or wider staff team, you might choose a particular Standard as a focus for staff training and development in a particular term or year. Alternatively, you might like to use them as a focus for staff to reflect on their current strengths and areas for development as part of discussions within department teams or mentor-mentee pairs. It will be important to make sure discussions take place in a supportive and professional climate, in which people are able to reflect honestly on their development needs, in order to improve teaching and student outcomes. You will wish to evaluate your use of the Standards over time. Additional resources to support using the Standards will soon be available on our website.

Will Cambridge accredit teachers and leaders who meet the Standards?

The Standards are provided as a tool to support professional development in schools. We wish to encourage and support schools in their own processes of self-evaluation and reflection, with the aim of encouraging effective practice in teaching, leadership and excellence in student outcomes. The ownership of the Standards and development processes therefore needs to be with the school. However, we provide externally-accredited Professional Development Qualifications for teachers and leaders which complements using the Standards.

I'm a head of department. How can I use the Cambridge Teacher Standards with my staff team?

Each staff team has its own distinctive characteristics, so professional judgement is needed with regard to using the Standards. With a team of experienced teachers, you may wish to distribute copies of the Standards and rationale then meet to discuss initial responses to them. As part of further discussion, you may consider evidence in order to identify a particular focus for staff development. This could then be incorporated in your department's action-planning process. If your team is less experienced, you may wish first to support individuals to reflect on aspects of their practice in a 1-1 discussion with you. If there is a common theme in priorities for development, these could form part of ongoing discussion and training in your department meetings. It is important that your team sees this as a supportive and developmental process, in which you collaborate to improve teaching and student outcomes.

I'm a school principal. How can I use the Cambridge School Leader Standards with my leadership team?

One starting point would be to distribute copies of the Standards and rationale to your leadership team, then meet to discuss responses to them in the context of your school. Then you might decide to focus on a particular Standard relating to already established development needs and ask each member of the team to self-evaluate, meeting to discuss your findings as a group or in pairs, as appropriate. Alternatively, you might take an extended meeting to reflect on the whole set of Standards as a leadership team together, using them as a diagnostic tool to identify realistic priorities for team development. It is important that your team sees this as a supportive and developmental process, in which you collaborate to improve teaching, management and student outcomes. Each school and

leadership team has distinctive characteristics, so professional judgement is needed to make the most effective use of the Cambridge School Leader Standards in your context. Further resources and guidance will soon be available on our website.

Will there be any help in using the Standards?

Yes. We are planning to develop supporting materials and case studies from a range of schools that are using the Standards. These will be available soon on our website.

I'm the only Cambridge teacher in my school. Are the Standards any use to me?

Yes. Even if your school does not use a set of teacher standards, you can use the Cambridge Teacher Standards to help you explore your own strengths and areas for development. If possible, ask another teacher who knows your work to discuss your reflections with you – it is always helpful to have someone else's point of view.

Some parts of the descriptors do not fit my school's context. Can I customise them?

We have based the Standards on international research and good practice on teaching and school leadership, so we hope that they will be relevant to most school and country contexts. However, we recognise that each education system, school and location has its own special characteristics. You may wish, therefore, to customise the Standards to provide the best support to your school's aims in professional development.

How do the Cambridge Teacher Standards and Cambridge School Leader Standards work with the Cambridge learner attributes and Cambridge School Standards?

The Standards and attributes are all complementary, as they share a common vision of effective teaching and leadership impacting on positive learner outcomes in a wide variety of international contexts. They are offered as resources to support schools in encouraging development of teaching, learning and leadership. The focus of the Cambridge Teacher Standards and Cambridge School Leader Standards is at the individual level.