OECD Education Policy Perspectives
No.1

Improving the Teaching Profession in Romania

Romania's aspirations to raise learning outcomes and develop a more competency-focused, student-centred approach to teaching and learning depend to a large degree on the countries' teachers. Romania has a dedicated and respected teaching workforce, but modernisation and professionalisation are necessary to improve teaching and learning (Kitchen et al., 2017[1]). In 2016, the *Educated Romania* project began a multi-year national consultation led by the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis, to discuss key challenges for education in the country and identify objectives for 2030. To support improvements in the teaching profession, the *Educated Romania* report put forward a set of goals:

1. develop competency profiles or standards for teachers
2. implement a new system of initial training for the professional, focusing on the need to provide a stronger basis in practical skills
3. develop continuous professional development programmes
4. implement a flexible career management system to allow differentiated career paths and help to attract and retain talented teachers (Educated Romania, 2018[2]).

The mission of the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) of the European Commission is to provide support for the preparation and implementation of growth-enhancing administrative and structural reforms by mobilising EU funds and technical expertise. Romania has requested support from the European Commission under Regulation (EU) 2017/825 on the establishment of the Structural Reform Support Programme ("SRSP Regulation"). The request has been analysed by the Commission in accordance with the criteria and principles referred to in Article 7(2) of the SRSP Regulation, following which the European Commission has agreed to provide technical support to Romania in the area of education, with the purpose of supporting the objectives of the *Educated Romania* project. The SRSS has awarded a grant agreement to the OECD in order to assist the Presidential Administration and the President of Romania with preparing a set of policy briefs in four thematic areas of the *Educated Romania* project. This policy brief focuses on the teaching profession. It draws on international evidence and examples to suggest ways in which Romania could work towards achieving the above goals related to supporting the professionalisation of teachers.

OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

Improving the Teaching Profession in Romania

Romania's aspirations to raise learning outcomes largely depends on teachers. In support of the **Educated Romania - project of the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis**, a policy brief on this topic was funded by the European Union and implemented by OECD in cooperation with the European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service.

International Advice





Advice for Romania

Teacher competency profiles

Identify relevant teacher competencies.

Differentiate by expertise and roles.

Communicate with stakeholders.

Align policies with standards.



Identify new competency profiles with stakeholders, especially teachers.

Consider different standards according to level or career stage.

Make competencies visible via communications strategy.

Ensure initial education, professional development and teacher appraisal align with new standards.

Initial teacher education (ITE)

Set framework for ITE, often the responsibility of central or state education authorities.

Ensure duration of practicum is sufficient.

Combine theory and practice.

Assess teacher candidates based on professional standards.



Develop ITE based on new teacher competencies, the MNESR and/or the ARACIS should do this.

Lengthen practicum in line with European and OECD norms.

Build strong school-university partnerships and sequence the teaching practicum across ITE.

Transform the *definivat* into an ITE licencing exam and revise probation appraisal.

Professional development

Match teachers' development needs

Establish quality assurance mechanisms.

Provide school-level professional development.

Foster school-to-school collaboration.



Use data to inform professional development.

Introduce more specific accreditation requirements.

Encourage more in-school collaboration among teachers.

Career management system

Develop a performance-based career structure.

Identify and train external teachers' evaluators.

Offer alternative pathways into teaching.



Focus promotion appraisals on authentic evidence of teaching.

Develop new cadre of professionals to appraise teachers.

Improving the Teaching Profession in Romania.

* Eurostat (2017), Education and Training (database), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/education-and-training/data/main-tables

** Ibid.; OECD (2017), Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2017-en.

OECD BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

Funded by the European Union

EDU România Educată
Proiect al Președintelui României, KLAUS IOHANNIS

ROMÂNIA Administrația Prezidențială

Policy priority 1. Developing teacher competency profiles

Teacher competency profiles or standards define clear expectations for teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes, and explain how teachers can apply these in response to individual student needs and in different contexts (Kitchen et al., 2017[1]). In recent years, most European countries have developed teacher competency profiles and standards to guide teacher policy (European Commission, 2018[3]). In these countries, teacher competencies are used to align key teacher policies such as admissions to initial teacher education, programme design, certification, teacher appraisal, professional development and career advancement (European Commission, 2018[3]). Overall, this helps to ensure that the teaching profession and teacher policies are focused on the same objectives: encouraging higher standards and professionalisation.

If teacher competencies are to be an effective lever to support improvements in teaching and learning, they should be grounded in national and international evidence of teaching approaches that have the greatest impact on student learning. They should also be aligned with national education priorities, learning standards and the curriculum to ensure that teachers develop competencies to support national learning goals (Louden, 2000[4]).

While Romania developed some occupational standards for teaching in 1999, their use was optional. Also, since the standards were not updated following the widespread changes introduced by the 2011 Education Law, they fell into disuse (Educated Romania, 2018[2]). As part of its national consultation on education, *Educated Romania*, Romania has indicated that the lack of clearly defined national teaching competencies is a key gap the country would like to address. In particular, Romania has requested guidance on the following issues:

- How can Romania identify relevant competencies for the teaching profession?
- How might teacher profiles be differentiated for teachers at different levels of education?
- Which competencies should be considered "minimum" requirements at the beginning of a new teacher's career and how competencies should be expected to develop during a teacher's career?

Potential impact

By providing a central reference for teaching quality that guides all policies related to teachers, introducing teacher competencies in Romania will support the overall professionalisation of the teaching workforce. Using competencies to set out the knowledge, skills and attitudes that new teachers are expected to demonstrate will help to ensure that new entrants to the profession have the attributes required for teaching and meet minimum standards. Competencies will help potential aspirant teachers to assess whether teaching is the profession for them, and can serve as a reference for setting standards for entry to initial teacher education programmes (ITP). Competencies also provide a basis for determining essential quality assurance processes in ITP, such as accreditation requirements and provider guidelines, signalling expectations in terms of curriculum content, opportunities for practice (the practicum) and the criteria against which aspirant teachers will be assessed. Competencies are also essential to support the rigorous and meaningful licensing and certification of new teachers, including strengthening in Romania the probation appraisal and the *definitivat* examination.

Teacher competencies will also support Romania's plans to introduce a performance-based career path by providing a common standard that teachers are expected to reach for promotion. Transparent and consistent standards for teacher appraisal will support decisions on performance rewards and career advancement. They may also be used to define increasing expectations for teachers as they move up the career ladder, helping to strengthen teaching roles within schools and harness the professional capital of experienced teachers to promote system-wide improvements in teaching (see policy priority 4).

Through this, teacher standards will support Romania's reforms to modernise, and raise the quality, of teaching and learning. First, by ensuring that teachers are expected and supported to develop competencies that will help all students to achieve national learning standards. Second, by encouraging teachers to use new teaching practices, in line with the on-going curriculum reform, for competency-based learning. Improving the quality of teaching and learning is especially important in Romania given the high share of students not meeting basic standards of functional literacy and numeracy (see policy brief on equity) (OECD, 2016[5]).

International evidence and experience

Identifying relevant teacher competencies

As Romania develops new teacher competencies, it should take into account the following points which build on international evidence and experience:

Core competency areas

Across countries with teacher standards or competencies, the latter typically set out expectations for two types of knowledge:

- Specific content knowledge. This relates to the disciplinary or subject knowledge of the sciences, arts, humanities and social sciences that teachers are expected to teach.
- Application knowledge or pedagogical content knowledge. This relates to a teacher's pedagogical skills to make content knowledge accessible for students. This kind of knowledge is continuously gained and improved by experience or training in practice to address specific situations (Guerriero, 2017[6]).

Teacher standards also frequently encompass professional values, attributes and ethical conduct.

Developing competencies

As well as drawing on research and international practices to identify core competency areas, Romania will need to design a clear process to identify relevant teacher competencies nationally. In general, countries use the following processes for this purpose:

- Analysing how teachers work.
- Consulting excellent teachers and other practicing professionals. Consulting and involving teachers in the development of new competencies is essential to help build their support for new approaches to teaching. The latter is especially important when countries are changing their curriculum, as Romania is, towards a competency-based approach. Involving teachers can help to build teachers' understanding of new learning goals like 21st century, transversal competencies and related teaching approaches like active learning and formative assessment.
- Conducting research on factors that relate to higher learning performance among students (Roelofs and Sanders, 2007[7]).

Romania can draw on examples of how other countries have designed this process. In Ontario, Canada for example, an on-going forum – the Education Partnership Table – was established to gather insights from stakeholders on the development of new policies to reform the province's education system (Kitchen

et al., 2017[1]). While in Singapore, to inform the development of a competency-based appraisal process that promotes teachers along their career path, the Ministry of Education contracted researchers to interview teachers to identify the competencies that distinguished successful educators (Steiner, 2010[8]).

Features of effective competencies

International research and experience show that effective teacher competencies frequently demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Competencies are holistic. Teacher competencies are most effective when they recognise that effective teaching is contingent on a range of factors and encourage teachers (and their evaluators) to understand the complexity of the competencies that they are expected to demonstrate.

This means that new teacher standards in Romania should refer to broad competencies or complex sets of skills, rather than pointing at "micro-level" competencies or describing individual tasks in a checklist of individual items or behaviours (Guerriero, 2017[6]).

- Competencies include examples of effective practices. Statements of good practice help teachers and evaluators understand the knowledge and skills that they are expected to demonstrate. Competencies can be designed to provide exemplars of good practices that will resonate with teachers working in different contexts. Some countries, such as Singapore and Australia have created online platforms with videos and other materials designed to make competencies more accessible and help teachers translate standards into classroom practice (AITSL, 2011[9]).

Differentiating competencies in relation to expertise and roles/responsibilities

Countries take different approaches to how they use teacher competencies or standards to set expectations for teacher performance by career stage and proficiency level (see Table 1). Broadly, these different approaches can be grouped as:

- *Basic core*: there is one set of competencies for all career or proficiency stages.
- *Roadmap*: standards distinguish between expectations at entry and most advanced career stages.
- *Semi-roadmap*: standards specify requirements for some professional stages such as registration (Guerriero, 2017[6]).

Table 1. Purpose of teacher standards across selected OECD systems

Country, professional teacher standards	Purpose
Australia Australian Professional Standards for Teachers	Roadmap
Ontario (Canada) Professional standards	Basic core
England (United Kingdom) Teachers' Standards	Basic core
Scotland (United Kingdom) Professional standards for teachers	Semi-roadmap
United States National Board of Professional Teaching Standards	Basic core

Source: (Guerriero, 2017[6]), Pedagogical Knowledge and the Changing Nature of the Teaching Profession, Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264270695-en;
(NBPTS, 2019[10]), Standards for NBPTS | The Five Core Propositions - NBPTS | Shaping the profession that shapes America's future, NBPTS, https://www.nbpts.org/standards-five-core-propositions/ (accessed on 27 February 2019).

An increasing number of countries use competency profiles to define different expectations during a teacher's career in "roadmap" or "semi-road" standards (Guerriero, 2017[6]). This is the case, for example, in Australia, Scotland (United Kingdom), Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Singapore and the Netherlands (Révai, 2018[11]; European Commission, 2018[3]; Guerriero, 2017[6]). Roadmap standards clarify expectations for

teachers at different points in their career. This helps to ensure that new teachers meet at least minimum standards while providing a reference to recognise and reward teachers' higher competencies as they develop in their career. Different steps or levels in teacher standards are often associated with different roles in the school and education system. These may include leadership roles (e.g. as school heads) or to other non-teaching positions within the country's education system to effectively reward and make use of existing professional capital. In contrast, in the United States, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards defines what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. There is no separate set of competencies for novice teachers, as the view is that it is possible to map backwards from the standards to identify areas for professional development (NBPTS, 2019[10]).

In Romania, given the need to ensure that new entrants meet minimum standards, and to modernise the teaching profession more generally, the country might consider introducing roadmap or semi-roadmap standards. These standards should set out minimum expectations for new entrants. In identifying the minimum requirements for new entrants, Romania can draw on the findings of a recent workshop of experts and policy makers, which as part of the OECD project on Initial Teacher Preparation, identified some of the most important qualities of new teachers (see Box 1).

Box 1. Qualities of new teachers and teacher educators as defined in the final conference of the Initial Teacher Preparation study

At the final conference of the OECD Initial Teacher Preparation (ITP) study, small groups of experts and policy makers from different countries brainstormed the most important qualities of new teachers. The groups used various OECD, EU and country-specific frameworks related to teacher values, knowledge and competencies to inform this process. Attendees reviewed and synthesised these qualities into the list below. While the list is not comprehensive, nor universally applicable, it can serve as a starting point for discussions and reflections about some of the most important qualities of new teachers.

Table 2. Qualities of new teachers

Domains	Characteristics
Basic knowledge and skills	• High level of academic skills • Foundations of subject didactics / pedagogical content knowledge • Pedagogy / general teaching capabilities • Ability to analyse data (See also research mind) • Curiosity and willingness to learn and improve • 'Research mind' / 'critical mind' / metacognitive capabilities • Know how to give and receive feedback (to students and as teachers)
Communication and relationship skills	• Ability to communicate and collaborate (communication and relationships); ability to share and collaborate with colleagues • Ability to build relationships with learners • Collective efficacy: orientation to collaborating and having professional dialogue with other teachers on aspirations for students (the difference between a candidate and a new teacher is orientation to student outcomes beyond the self)
Confidence, resilience, proactivity	• Confidence in pedagogy (might not yet be expertise); confidence in their knowledge and ability to express their own knowledge and opinion to more senior teachers • Resilience ('strong and not run away after first disappointment') • Proactive / take action
Values	• Sense of mission and responsibility • Mind-set that all students can learn / high aspirations for all learners • Ethical mind-set

Source: (OECD, 2019[12]) *A Flying Start: Improving Initial Teacher Preparation Systems*, Paris, OECD Publishing, https://doi.org/10.1787/cf74e549-en.

Romania's intention to introduce a performance-based teacher career path will require formally setting out increasing expectations for teaching competencies in the new teacher standards. The latter would provide the reference to guide teachers' progression up the new performance-based career path and inform professional development (see policy priorities 3 and 4).

As Romania develops teacher competencies with higher levels during a teacher's career, the country should consider:

- *Determining the stages of the teacher career path*. As discussed above, it is recommended that Romania develop specific standards for new teachers, as well as for two to three higher competency levels. A number of countries have multi-stage career paths for teachers. For example, in Lithuania, there are three different qualification categories teachers can aspire to: senior teacher, teacher-methodologist and teacher-expert (Shewbridge et al., 2016[13]).
- *Setting out how teacher competencies are expected to develop progressively*. As teachers gain experience during their career, they will be expected to take on new responsibilities and demonstrate increased competencies. Romania might review teaching standards in other countries and research on what is important for effective teaching to define increasing competency expectations (Box 2).

Box 2. Danielson's Framework demonstrates increasing competency expectations

Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument* (2013) identifies aspects of teachers' responsibilities that have been documented through empirical studies and theoretical research as promoting improved student learning. While the Framework is not the only possible description of practice, these responsibilities seek to define what teachers should know and be able to do in the exercise of their profession. The framework includes four domains with a set of relevant components. Each component includes descriptions of performance levels that can help focus improvement within the context of shared definitions and understandings. For example, below are the levels of performance related to the designing student assessments component:

Table 3. Levels of teacher performance for designing student assessments

Unsatisfactory Level 1	Basic Level 2	Proficient Level 3	Distinguished Level 4
Assessment procedures are not congruent with instructional outcomes and lack criteria by which student performance will be assessed. The teacher has no plan to incorporate formative assessment in the lesson or unit.	Assessment procedures are partially congruent with instructional outcomes. Assessment criteria and standards have been developed, but they are not clear. The teacher's approach to using formative assessment is rudimentary, including only some of the instructional outcomes.	All the instructional outcomes may be assessed by the proposed assessment plan; assessment methodologies may have been adapted for groups of students. Assessment criteria and standards are clear. The teacher has a well-developed strategy for using formative assessment and has designed particular approaches to be used.	All the instructional outcomes may be assessed by the proposed assessment plan, with clear criteria for assessing student work. The plan contains evidence of student contribution to its development. Assessment methodologies have been adapted for individual students as the need has arisen. The approach to using formative assessment is well designed and includes student as well as teacher use of the assessment information.

Source: (Danielson, 2013[14]), The Framework For Teaching, Evaluation Instrument, 2013 Edition, www.danielsongroup.org (accessed 30 April 2019).

- Offering opportunities for new roles and responsibilities. To effectively use the capacity of the country's best teachers, the higher levels of teaching competence should also be linked to new roles and responsibilities. In many countries, promoted teachers are expected to use their professional competence to support the professional development of other teachers, their school and the education system more widely. For example, in Estonia, each stage of the teaching career aligns with increasing competency expectations (see Box 3). In Scotland (United Kingdom), a "lead" or "head" standard sets out the competencies required for teachers to move into school leadership positions and in other countries, teachers might benefit from more varied career paths, such as a track for those who wish to pursue a specialist career (e.g. for curriculum designers or researchers).
- Considering how the new higher teaching levels will interact with teacher salaries. Research recommends that, within each career stage, teachers have the opportunity to progress up salary steps, so that those who wish to remain in the classroom and not take on additional responsibilities are still rewarded for their experience and efforts (Santiago et al., 2012[15]).

Box 3. New responsibilities for teachers in Estonia

In 2013, Estonia introduced a new career structure for teachers that is associated with a set of teacher professional standards. The standards define the competencies for each career stage and progression to higher roles is voluntary. There are four career grades, which reflect different levels of professional competence and experience:

- *Teacher (level 6)*: applies only to pre-primary teachers upon entrance in the teaching profession, following the completion of an initial teacher education programme (at bachelor's degree level) or following the recognition of professional qualifications for this level by the teacher professional body. This career stage is awarded indefinitely.
- *Teacher (level 7.1)*: is awarded upon entrance in the teaching profession, following the completion of an initial teacher education programme (at master's degree level) or following the recognition of professional qualifications for this level by the teacher professional body. This career stage is awarded indefinitely.
- *Senior teacher (level 7.2)*: is awarded to a teacher who, in addition to conducting teaching activities, supports the development of the school and of other teachers and is involved in methodological work at the school level. This career stage is awarded for five years, period after which the teacher needs to submit a new application.
- *Master teacher (level 8)*: is awarded to a teacher who, in addition to conducting teaching activities, participates in development and creative activities in and outside his or her school and closely co-operates with a higher education institution. This career stage is awarded for five years, period after which the teacher needs to submit a new application.

Source: (Santiago et al., 2016[16]), OECD Reviews of School Resources: Estonia 2016, OECD Reviews of School Resources, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264251731-en.

Developing standards for different educational levels

Teaching standards typically include a general profile setting out expected teacher competencies. Romania's 2016 ministerial order also specifies that new teacher competency profiles and standards should be differentiated according to school level taught (primary, lower and secondary levels). Some countries, like the United States, also include specialised profiles for teachers of different education levels or subjects (Santiago, 2013[17]). However, in general across OECD countries, teacher standards apply to the teaching workforce across all school levels. A teacher's ability to adjust their practice in line with the developmental needs of the age group that they are teaching is a core aspect of the pedagogical skills that

teacher competencies are based on. This means that it may not be necessary to differentiate teacher competencies for different school levels. Romania might consider introducing a general profile for teacher competencies and incrementally developing profiles for specific levels or areas of specialisations.

Effective implementation and capacity development

Romania has tried to develop teacher standards in the past. In the early 2000s, the country worked with an advisor from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the United States to develop a roadmap for national teaching standards. However, the lack of agreement among stakeholders meant that the standards were never finalised (Kitchen et al., 2017[1]). In developing teacher standards on this occasion, Romania should consider the following steps to ensure a well co-ordinated and consultative process:

Stakeholder engagement

Internationally, stakeholders who are relevant to the process of developing teacher competencies include teachers and their union representatives, teacher educators (from initial teacher education and continuing professional development programmes), university researchers, students, parents, community members and business leaders (European Commission, 2018[3]). In Romania, it will also be important to engage stakeholders who are directly involved in teacher appraisal, such as school leaders, inspectors from the County School Inspectorates (CSI) and the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education (ARACIP).

A combination of methods and processes should be used to deepen and broaden input. This may include online consultations, surveys, focus groups, stakeholder panels, stakeholder advisory committees and/or public hearings. Since the stakeholders in Romania have been unable to reach agreement in the past, the country may consider appointing a facilitator to mediate the discussions and help reach agreement (Kitchen et al., 2017[1]). Once the new teacher standards are developed, stakeholders should also be engaged in piloting and validating them. The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards in the United States points to the importance of stakeholder engagement not only in the design of teaching standards, but also in their validation.

Communication

Finally, it will be important to develop a communication strategy to share new competency profiles and standards. While stakeholders engaged in the core design and implementation processes will be aware of the new frameworks, the broader population of stakeholders will not have the same level of awareness. One way to communicate the new standards and what they mean is to include examples of effective practice within the standards themselves to illustrate how they relate to classroom practice.

Capacity building

If Romania decides to introduce roadmap standards, it is critical that their introduction is accompanied by a professional development programme that is intended to:

- Support in-service teachers update their competencies to meet new standards, and to qualify for potential career advancement.
- Prepare all those that will need to help teachers assess their own level of competency, such as school principals. Then confirm this formally, for example by using external evaluators for appraisal.

Alignment policies and programme with the new standards

When new standards are introduced, accreditation and guidelines for initial teacher education programmes will need to be developed to ensure that programmes are required to update their content in line with the

new standards. In addition, resources for teacher appraisal, in particular the reference framework that guides appraisal, will need to be aligned with the new standards. Finally, a requirement should be introduced so that teachers' professional development is adapted to reflect the demands of the new standards.

Policy priority 2: Reforming initial teacher education

Research on effective teacher education has identified selectivity in the recruitment of teacher candidates (with a focus on dispositions and commitment to teaching), and appropriate coursework, mentorship, and field-based practice as important for teaching quality and the retention of new teachers (Cochran-Smith et al., 2011[18]). In Romania, teachers' initial education provides significantly less preparation in the core domains of teaching than in many OECD countries, especially in practical domains (Kitchen et al., 2017[1]).

Aware of the need to strengthen initial teacher education, Romania's 2011 Education Law planned to introduce a two-year Master of Arts programme in teaching. However, resistance among universities, lack of readiness to implement the programme and disagreement about the level of qualification the new programme should provide have prevented it from being implemented. The recent *Educated Romania* project aims to address these challenges, and asked for specific advice on the following questions:

- What adaptations to the content of initial teacher education are necessary to ensure that graduates develop the minimum competencies needed to enter the profession (see Policy Priority 1)? In particular, focusing on developing the practical preparation of candidate teachers.
- What implementation and quality assurance approaches can be used to ensure that the content of initial teacher education is adapted to reflect new teacher competencies? Also, how to ensure the quality of initial teacher education programmes provision?

Potential impact

Over the next 5 to 10 years, around a quarter of Romania's teachers will retire from teaching (in 2013, 26.9% of teachers were aged 50 or over (OECD, 2014[19])). This creates an opportunity to use initial teacher education to set a higher standard for entry into the profession. Over time, the latter will help to ensure that new entrants contribute to raising the quality of, and modernising, instruction. At the same time, the country's declining student population means that there is space for Romania to be far more selective about the new teachers that enter the profession.

International evidence and experience

Once Romania has developed new teacher competencies (see Policy Priority 1) theministry and/or the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS), should use them to develop a new framework for the contents and structure of initial teacher education programmes. The outline should be guided in particular by the competencies for new teachers. This approach would be in line with the practice in around two-thirds of OECD countries with available data where the central or state education authority sets a framework for the content of initial teacher education programmes, or the practice in around one-third of countries, where the accreditation authority is responsible for developing this framework (OECD, 2014[20]).

In developing the outline for initial teacher education programmes, the following steps should be considered to strengthen the practical aspect of initial teacher education:

- Lengthening the practicum. Student-teachers in Romania currently receive significantly less time for teaching practice than in other European and OECD countries and economies. For

example, future primary and lower secondary teachers in Romania receive less teaching practice (78 hours), than in all but one other European country. Future upper secondary teachers in Romania receive 120 hours compared with up to 1 065 hours in other European countries and economies (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013[21]).

Romania should review the length of the teaching practicum across other European and OECD countries to determine a duration that will provide sufficient time for practical learning.

- Clearly structuring the practicum to integrate theory and clinical experience. Increasing the overall length of the practicum needs to be accompanied by steps to ensure that the extra time is devoted to useful learning opportunities. One option to encourage integration across theory and practice is to sequence teaching experience across initial teacher preparation so that teachers can progressively develop their practical teaching experience, alongside the knowledge and skills that they acquire as part of their overall initial teacher education. For example, in Finland, teaching practice is organised at different phases throughout initial education (see Box 4).

Box 4. Sequencing teaching practice throughout initial teacher education in Finland

In Finland, initial teacher education lasts for five years (three years of undergraduate work followed by two years of master's degree work for primary teacher preparation), with practical teaching experience provided across three phases:

- *First year*. Student-teachers observe children and chart social relationships in classroom environments. They also observe teachers and their classroom interactions. Later in the first year, pairs of student-teachers return to the same classroom. Over three weeks, the student-teachers together plan courses on Finnish language and drama and act as co-teachers in each other's lessons, and complete a project on the themes they are teaching.
- *Third year*. Student-teachers complement a six-week placement (with one week for planning, and five weeks for teaching) in the subject not covered in the first year's placement e.g. mathematics, science, history, music and physical education, arts and technical work). Again working in pairs, student-teachers plan all lessons together and co-teach each other's' lessons.
- *Fourth or fifth year*. The final placement is in a school that is specifically chosen or developed to support student-teachers to learn about teaching. Each student-teacher is responsible for teaching over a period of five weeks. They take turns with independent teaching - with one teacher candidate teaching while the other observes and provides support. Throughout practice teaching placements, student-teachers are encouraged to reflect upon their experiences. They work with mentors (i.e. experienced teachers who have been trained to work as mentors) and university-based faculty members who reinforce connections between teaching experiences and theories about learning and teaching.

Source: (Hammerness, Ahtiainen and P. Sahlberg, 2017[22]), *Empowered Educators in Finland: How high-performing systems shape teaching quality,* Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

- Outlining the characteristics of an effective practicum. Research on creating an effective practicum experience highlights that certain learning opportunities are important. These include opportunities to practice and refine teaching skills, engage in creative processes of reflection, evaluation, and criticise teaching and learning models (Burn and Mutton, 2015[23]). The Finnish model described in Box 4, where student-teachers work in pairs to plan and co-teach, provides an example of how such opportunities can be provided.

In Romania, the ministry or ARACIS might develop, or commission researchers to develop, a list of the characteristics of an effective practicum. This should draw on research about the features of teacher learning that are grounded in practice, see Table 4. The outline could be shared with initial teacher education providers and inform programme accreditation.

- Building strong school-university partnerships. These kinds of partnerships foster the development of common knowledge and shared beliefs across school-and university-based faculty, that helps teacher candidates learn in professional communities that model modern teaching practices (Darling-Hammond, 2006[24]).
- Assessment of teacher candidates based on professional standards. Assessment should evaluate teacher candidates' demonstration of critical skills and abilities using performance assessments and portfolios that support the development of 'adaptive expertise'. Adaptive experience refers to the process whereby teacher candidates practice and experiment with the new teaching skills that they have acquired during their practicums, and under the guidance of a skilled practitioner, develop an understanding of when pedagogical theories work and when they have to be modified (Darling-Hammond, 2006[24]).

Table 4. Opportunities Grounded in Practice in Teacher Education

	Description of dimension
1. Plan for teaching and teacher role(s)	The extent to which candidates have opportunities in the class to plan lessons or units, to develop instructional materials and resources, etc.
2. Practice of rehearse teacher role(s)	The extent to which candidates have opportunities in the class period to practice, rehearse, or approximate elements of practice (e.g., practice leading a whole-class or small-group discussion)
3. Analyse pupils' learning	The extent to which candidates have opportunities to analyse pupils' learning (e.g., to analyse K-12 pupil work, to view classroom transcripts or videos, and analyse pupils' learning)
4. Include teaching materials, artefacts, and resources	The extent to which candidates have opportunities to use, discuss, or analyse artefacts or resources from real classrooms and teaching (e.g., video of teachers or samples of real K-12 pupil work)
5. Talk about field placement/ student teaching experiences	The extent to which candidates have opportunities to discuss or relate what they are discussing or doing in class to their own fieldwork or student teaching (e.g., bring in their own pupils' work)
6. Take pupils' perspective	The extent to which candidates have opportunities to do work that their pupils will or might do (e.g., candidates read texts their pupils will read)
7. See models of teaching	The extent to which candidates have opportunities to see their teacher educators explicitly modelling the kinds of practices discussed in class (e.g., instructors model group work or giving good feedback)
8. See connection to national or state curriculum	The extent to which candidates have opportunities to read, review, critique, or analyse materials or resources specific to the national, state, or local context (e.g., to analyse national, state, or local curriculum, etc.)

Source: (Jenset, Klette and Hammerness, 2017[25]) "Grounding Teacher Education in Practice Around the World: An Examination of Teacher Education Coursework in Teacher Education Programs in Finland, Norway, and the United Sates", *Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 69/2, pp. 184-197, http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022487117728248.

Effective implementation and capacity development

As well as developing an outline that initial teacher education providers will be expected to follow, the following mechanisms can be used to ensure that the content of initial teacher education is revised in line with the new teacher competencies (policy priority 1). These mechanisms will also help ensure the quality of initial teacher education programmes:

- Accreditation, One way to ensure that initial teacher education providers adapt the content of their programmes to reflect new teacher standards is through accreditation. To achieve this, accreditation needs to be robust and specific in terms of what is expected of teacher education programmes. This is currently not the case in Romania. In contrast, accreditation in Australia is used as a strong mechanism to align teacher education to professional standards. For

example, providers must demonstrate how their courses prepare candidates to achieve the standards in order to be accredited (TEMAG, 2015[26]).

- Adapting the *definivat* to become a licensing examination. In many OECD countries, prospective teachers pass an external qualification or licensing examination at the end of their initial education. This can help to ensure fairness and consistency for selection and guarantee basic standards (OECD, 2014[20]). Such examinations also exert pressure on providers to ensure that their student-teachers are sufficiently well-prepared to pass the examination, especially if results are made publicly available by education faculties.

New teachers in Romania currently pass a written examination, the *definivat*, as part of their probation appraisal. The *definivat* might be reformed as a licensing examination at the end of initial teacher education programmes. This would mean moving it to the end of initial teacher education, aligning the content of the exam with the standards for new teachers, and setting a firm minimum result that new teachers must reach for licensing. The *OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Romania* also provided recommendations on how the examination's content can be adapted to be better assess the teaching competencies required by the country's new curriculum (Kitchen et al., 2017[1]).

- Probation appraisal. The knowledge and skills that new teachers are expected to demonstrate to pass their probation appraisal should be revised in line with the standards for new teachers. Evaluators need to be trained in how to apply and judge teacher performance against the new standards. The *OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Romania* provided recommendations on how evaluators can be supported so that the probation appraisal becomes a well-designed performance-based assessment (Kitchen et al., 2017[1]).

The ministry should ensure that information about candidate success in both the revised licensing exam and the probation appraisal is shared with providers of initial teacher education. This can help providers update their programmes.

Policy priority 3: Improving the quality and availability of professional development

Professional development enables teachers to grow professionally throughout their career. It also enables teachers to learn and refine their pedagogical practices in line with curricula changes. In Romania, professional development will help to educate teachers about the country's curricula reforms and the kinds of teaching strategies that are most effective to support it. This is especially important in Romania since just over half of the teaching workforce was educated and trained at a time when teaching emphasised a very different approach, focused on memorisation and knowledge transfer (OECD, 2000[27]).

Countries that provide teachers with high quality, impactful professional development frequently combine two main types. One is in-service training, often organised at the national level outside of a teacher's school. This type of training can be helpful when introducing major policy changes (for example, to update teachers on curricula changes) or advancing policy priorities (for example, on formative assessment or to improve literacy and numeracy teaching). The second is school-embedded professional development that takes place within a teacher's school. This type of professional development often involves collaboration with other teachers and focuses on challenges or issues related to a teachers' daily practice. An external impetus is often important to make school-embedded professional development a genuine learning experience.

Teachers in Romania are required to participate in approximately 240 hours of professional development every five years (Kitchen et al., 2017[1]). On average, Romania's lower secondary teachers undertake more days of continuing professional development (24) and are exposed to more topics (7) than the European average (10 days and five topics) (OECD, 2014[19]). However, there are concerns that the professional development that teachers undertake is not well-connected to their learning needs (Educated Romania, 2018[2]). This led the *Educated Romania* project to raise the following questions regarding professional development in Romania:

- What improvements need to be made to teachers' professional development so that it better reflects teachers' needs?
- What approaches can be used to ensure the quality of professional development?

Potential impact

Professional development has the greatest impact on teaching and learning when it is embedded in a teacher's daily practice, collaborative and sustained (Schleicher, 2012[28]). In Romania, while teachers have traditionally received fairly strong preparation in knowledge content, pedagogical content knowledge i.e. how to make content accessible to learners has been much weaker. By addressing some of this gap in teachers' existing knowledge and skills, professional development can positively impact teacher quality and student achievement (Timperley et al., 2009[29]).

In Romania, demographic factors combined with teachers' high participation in professional development activities mean that strengthening professional development will be essential to raising teaching quality. First, because the general decline in teacher numbers (reflecting the declining student population overall) means that reforms to initial teacher education will impact only a minority of the profession over the coming

decades. This means that updating and modernising teachers' knowledge and skills will primarily be achieved by working with the existing teacher population. Second, data indicates that in-service teachers in Romania participate in professional development more than their counterparts in many other European and OECD countries. While the content and delivery of professional development are not currently perceived to be effective or closely target teachers' needs, this does signal a positive expectation that teachers engage in professional development and have the time to do so.

International evidence and experience

Romania can consider some of the following actions to ensure the relevance and quality of professional development:

Using data and information to inform the design of professional development

One of the major concerns regarding professional development in Romania is its low relevance to teachers' learning needs. In part, this is driven by limited use of evidence on teachers' needs to design professional development. Countries are increasingly recognising that systems providing evidence on teachers' development needs, like appraisal results, can be shared with teacher education providers to help them improve the relevance of their programmes. In the United States for example, efforts are being made to ensure that teacher education providers receive feedback about the performance of their graduates (OECD, 2013[30]). While this example refers to initial teacher education programmes, a similar approach could be taken for continuing professional development providers and their programmes. Another source of evidence are surveys about teachers' needs and teacher feedback following the completion of professional development programmes. These tools are common in many professions.

In Romania, the Ministry should use available information about teachers' learning needs to inform the design of professional development. This will help to ensure that professional development targets the learning needs of the country's teachers. Important sources of information that the ministry should review include:

- Results from the teacher examinations like *definivat* and the didactical qualifications level 1 and 2.
- Results from all types of teacher appraisals.

As well as revealing areas of teachers' learning needs, results from teacher exams and appraisals can also be analysed to understand if specific groups of teachers such as new or more experienced teachers, or teachers in different types of schools have specific learning needs.

- Data from national assessments and examinations, and international student assessments like the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). While Romania does not regularly participate in the latter, results from international assessments can reveal weaknesses in student learning, and by extension content or skills where teachers need to be supported to develop more effective teaching strategies.
- A national teacher survey could be organised to diagnose the gap between teachers' existing knowledge and skills, and those set out in the new competency profiles and school curricula. Data from the international teacher survey that Romania participates in - the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) – can also provide information on teacher participation in, as well as perceptions of the usefulness of, professional development activities.

The ministry could consider establishing a regular process to review the above information. A summary of findings could be made publicly available so that teacher education providers can ensure that their

programmes match teachers' learning needs. This information should also guide the ministry's accreditation of professional development programmes.

Introducing more specific accreditation requirements

In Romania, a commission composed of 15 members accredits professional development providers for a four year period. The commission might consider moving away from generic provider accreditation towards more specific programme accreditation, meaning the commission would accredit individual programmes. This would provide greater oversight and control over the quality of individual professional development programmes.

The commission can then use the accreditation process more purposefully to accredit only those programmes that closely match teachers' needs and demonstrate the characteristics of effective professional development (see Box 5). In addition to the characteristics set out in Box 5, new programme-specific accreditation requirements should require that teachers' professional development programmes:

- Use the new teacher competencies (see Policy Priority 1) as the central reference for determining which programmes are accredited. The commission could prioritise accreditation of those programmes where teachers' learning needs in relation to the new competencies are the greatest (i.e. areas where there is the biggest gap between teachers' existing knowledge and skills and the new teacher competencies).
- Demonstrate how the programme addresses teacher learning needs as highlighted by the ministry's annual summary (see above).
- Provide follow-up for teachers after participating in a course to see how they are putting what they have learnt into practice. For example, a requirement for completing a course might be that a teacher can demonstrate how they have applied new practices in their classroom.

The ministry might also consider clearly structuring the professional development offer so that teachers can identify how different professional development options will help them to address certain knowledge and skills gaps, and how they relate to expectations on the standards. This would clearly identify which type of professional development an individual teacher needs to follow if they aspire to reach higher levels on the new differentiated teacher career path (see policy priority 1).

Box 5. Features of effective professional development

Research indicates that some of the features of effective professional development for teachers are:

- focus on clearly articulated priorities that are relevant to the teaching practice and student learning
- provide on-going school-based support to classroom teachers
- create opportunities for teachers to observe, experience and try new teaching methods over a sustained period
- encourage the development of collaborative teacher learning communities.

Source: (OECD, 2018[31]), Effective Teacher Policies: Insights from PISA, PISA, OECD Publishing, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264301603-en.

Finally, the Ministry will need to ensure that teachers' professional development is sustained. Teachers need sufficient time to learn, practice, implement, and reflect upon new strategies that facilitate changes in their practice. This reflects a complex learning process that does not happen during a one-off isolated training course. The Ministry needs to ensure that there is sufficient and adequate funding to create a catalogue of professional development programmes that are sustained over time.

Building school-level professional development opportunities

Professional development that takes place in a teacher's school provides opportunities for collaboration with other teachers and can focus directly on challenges or issues related to a teacher's daily practice. Research shows that sustained, collaborative professional development directly related to teachers' classroom practice is among the most effective types of professional development (Schleicher, 2011[32]). School-based professional learning groups that refer to external research, as well as data on school performance, as the basis for joint inquiry have been shown to have a particularly positive impact on teacher practices, professional ethos and student learning (Little, 2003[33]; Louis, Marks and Kruse, 1996[34]).

Schools in Romania provide some school-embedded learning opportunities but these could be strengthened. For example, while the County School Inspectorates organise teachers' pedagogical circles, which meet two to four times per year, the groups are mainly used to transmit information rather than encourage discussion and collaboration (Kitchen et al., 2017[1]).

Romania could consider some of the following options to develop school-level professional development activities:

- Ring-fenced funding for school-based activities: schools could be provided with dedicated funding for professional development activities. The funding could be used at the discretion of schools, for example, to pay external professional development providers to provide group training sessions at the school. These sessions could be dedicated to the specific needs of teachers at a particular school. This would help to ensure that professional development is closely related to teachers' needs in the classroom, and address the current barrier that teachers have to pay for professional development themselves. In-school group training sessions would also have the added value of building a culture of teacher collaboration for improvement within schools, in contrast to the current approach where professional development is focused on teachers' individual needs.

In Estonia, for example, 1% of the state budget for teachers' salaries is provided to schools for their staff development needs. In Singapore, each school has a fund used for continuing professional development, most of which is delivered on site (Kitchen et al., 2017[1]).

- Creating school-based experts in teaching and learning. Improving school instructional practices takes a long time and requires support and advice that is directly related to the daily operations of a school and experiences of teachers. School-based experts that work either in individual schools or across multiple schools in a local area could provide Romania's teachers with this kind of sustained, regular and direct support. The experts might undertake activities like classroom observations and feedback, organise peer classroom observations, engage teachers in collaborative material development (e.g. assessments and lesson plans) and organise groups on content or pedagogical practices for experience sharing and collaboration.

In a number of school systems, this kind of leadership of teaching and learning is a recognised role for teachers that reach higher competency levels. Individuals who take on these roles are rewarded in status, pay and have dedicated time to undertake this activity and a reduced teaching load.

- Requiring that teachers spend some time devoted to in-school professional development activities. For example, in Singapore 20 hours per week are built into teachers' schedules for shared planning and classroom visits (Darling-Hammond and Rothman, 2011[35]).

Encouraging school-to-school collaboration

As well as highlighting the benefits of teacher peer learning and collaboration within schools, research also highlights the benefits of teacher collaboration across schools in a school cluster or network. School networks and clusters provide opportunities to learn from models used in other schools. This allows teachers to share insights and ideas beyond individual schools and can be particularly useful to share

experiences and practices when there are examples of particular schools that are implementing effective approaches to new challenges. In Romania, this might include linking schools that have found effective approaches to implementing the new curriculum or developing successful teacher collaboration groups. School-to-school collaboration often requires an external impetus or support to become established. Box 6 provides an example of how an independent foundation in Germany is encouraging these kinds of school connections.

Box 6. The German School Academy

The German School Academy is an independent non-profit foundation that supports professional learning for whole schools (rather than individual teachers), and school-to-school learning. The Academy provides opportunities for schools to meet colleagues from other innovative schools, to participate in workshops and forums, and to access internships at high performing schools (identified through the Academy's German School Award). In addition, the Academy matches schools that may learn from each other, and disseminates good practices.

Source: (European Commission, 2018[3]) *Boosting Teacher Quality: Pathways to Effective Policies*, Publications Office of the EU, Luxembourg, https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/95e81178-896b-11e8-ac6a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search (accessed 29 April 2019).

Effective implementation and capacity development

In Romania, strengthening professional development will require sustained support over a long period of time and policies that encourage teachers to update their skills, knowledge and practice. This might involve providing incentives or re-distributing resources to make time for professional development activities, such as participation in professional learning networks and teacher appraisals (Darling-Hammond and Mclaughlin, 1995[36]). Developing the capacity of key actors will also be crucial, including:

- *Teacher educators*. Teacher educators will need to update their knowledge and skills to be able to deliver new course content that better matches teachers' learning needs. One way to ensure that teacher educators are required to regularly update their knowledge is by making this part of the accreditation requirements for teacher programmes. This would mean that, in order to be accredited, a professional development programme would be required to demonstrate how its teacher educators have updated their knowledge and skills in line with national reforms and research on effective teaching and learning, and teacher education.
- *School leaders*. As discussed above, developing collaborative activities at the school-level will require external support. However, it will also require strong pedagogical leadership capacity, with school leaders who reflect on, and put in place, activities to support teachers' professional development. At present, school leaders in Romania occupy a primarily administrative role. The policy brief on school management discusses how school leaders can be supported to take on greater pedagogical leadership.

Policy priority 4: Developing a career management system

Most OECD countries have developed a merit-based career structure, where teachers take on differentiated teaching roles and responsibilities as they develop increasingly higher levels of competence. Such a career structure requires an objective system for evaluating teaching competence in order to ensure fairness and transparency with respect to teacher advancement. This type of external appraisal for promotion will draw on a range of relevant evidence to evaluate whether teachers have the knowledge, skills and attributes to take on further responsibilities, guided by expectations laid out in teacher standards (see policy issue 1). A performance-based career structure is important for rewarding effective teaching, incentivising on-going professional development and formalising important teaching roles, such as mentorship and pedagogical leadership, that can drive improvement across the profession (OECD, 2013[30]).

Romania already has an appraisal process for promoting teachers. However it is an academically-oriented exercise, with teachers required to pass examinations in order to be promoted (Kitchen et al., 2017[1]). While examinations can evaluate some pedagogical and content knowledge, they cannot evaluate essential dimensions of teaching like teachers' pedagogical practice and interaction with students. At the same time, being successful in the examinations in Romanian is only linked to a salary increase, and promoted teachers are not expected to take on new roles and responsibilities that reflect their increasing competence. The above factors mean that the current appraisal process is not helping to identify, reward and make effective use of the country's best teachers.

Redesigning the process for promotion so that it is better focused on authentic evidence of teaching practices will help to ensure that it is more effective in recognising and rewarding good teaching. Equally, ensuring that promotion results in teachers taking on new roles and responsibilities will help to make the best use of teachers' talent, by providing opportunities for career growth and helping to retain talented teachers (OECD, 2014[19]). It was in recognition of these needs that *Educated Romania* asked for advice in the following areas:

- How can Romania introduce a differentiated career path so that it attracts and retains talented persons in the profession?
- How can Romania introduce a system to evaluate teachers based on their teaching performance in order for teachers to progress along the career path?
- What options are available to attract actors with professional experience from outside the education system into teaching?

Potential impact

A new merit-based career structure and associated appraisal for promotion would ensure that teachers are recognised and rewarded for their increasing pedagogical competence. Incentivising teachers to update their practices in line with curricula changes and new teaching techniques is important in Romania to modernise teaching and learning. In 2013, around half of the country's teachers (47.9%) were aged 40 or more (OECD, 2014[19]). These teachers were therefore educated and trained before the major education reforms of the 1990s when teaching and learning focused heavily on memorisation and content knowledge (OECD, 2000[27]).

Introducing a merit-based career path would also help to make the best use of the country's professional capital to support system-wide improvements. For example, as part of the new career structure, experienced or advanced teachers might be expected to devote some of their time to supporting collaborative professional development activities within their school or as a school-based expert in teaching and learning (see policy priority 3).

International evidence and examples

Introducing a teacher appraisal system for teachers to progress along a differentiated career path

In Romania, an appraisal process that focuses on the core work of teaching rather than the completion of academic requirements like examinations would offer a more authentic assessment of teachers' higher competency levels for career progression. This would require a change in who currently conducts the appraisals, as well as the methods and sources of evidence used. Key steps include:

Basing appraisal on new teacher competencies

The new teacher standards should be the main reference for promotion to focus appraisals on teachers' readiness to progress to higher levels of teaching competence (see policy priority 1). When a teacher applies to be promoted to a higher level, the evaluator would use the new teacher competencies to evaluate how far the teacher demonstrates the competencies of the higher teaching level to which they are applying (or have clear capacity to develop these competencies).

Identifying well-trained, external evaluators

Appraisal for promotion is often led by a trained evaluator that is external to the school to ensure integrity and transparency (OECD, 2015[37]). Well-trained external evaluators are important for conducting at least some part of an appraisal for career advancement because the judgement carries important stakes for a teacher's career, making objectivity and fairness in the process critical (Santiago et al., 2012[15]).

The *OECD's Review of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Romania* suggested that Romania develop a cadre of carefully selected and trained experienced teachers to serve as external evaluators for promotion appraisals. The review suggested that this cadre of teachers would be better-placed to undertake promotion appraisal than the current Country School Inspectors because the latter have little time to meaningfully evaluate teaching practice. For example, in one county that the OECD team visited, inspectors were required to observe more than 1 800 teachers in one year (Kitchen et al., 2017[1]). The review also highlighted concerns about the integrity and independence of the Country School Inspectors, suggesting that the establishment of a new cadre of professional evaluators, trained according to national standards and selected and managed according to a centrally determined process, would be essential for ensuring trust in the new career structure.

Focusing appraisals on authentic evidence of teaching practice

The most frequent sources of evidence for appraisal for promotion across OECD countries are classroom observation, an interview between the teacher and their evaluator(s), a teacher's self-assessment and a review of a teacher's portfolio (OECD, 2015[37]). These methods provide broad evidence of teachers' work in relation to student learning (Roelofs and Sanders, 2007[7]). While appraisal for promotion in Romania already includes classroom observations these could be made more effective by providing evaluators with guidance on the kinds of evidence of student learning that can be collected during classroom observations. For example, evaluators might be provided with guiding questions to help them focus on the quality of teachers' instruction and engagement with students.

Other sources of evidence that might be developed include:

- Teacher portfolios that document how teachers have demonstrated the knowledge and skills for the next level in the teaching career path.
- Appraisal interviews between evaluators and teachers. Evaluators can be provided with guidance on how to structure the appraisal interview so that teachers can demonstrate increasing professional maturity and competence.
- Input from regular school-based appraisals. In order to obtain a full picture of a teacher's practice, research recommends that career advancement appraisals take into account input from those involved in the regular, school-based appraisal of teachers (OECD, 2013[30]).

Australia's career advancement appraisal process includes elements Romania may wish to consider in moving forward with changes to its appraisal for career progression (see Box 7).

Box 7. Appraisal for career advancement in Australia

In Australia, certifying authorities within each state follow a national framework to assess teachers for certification as highly accomplished teachers or lead teachers based on professional teaching standards developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). Teachers must have received satisfactory results on at least two regular annual appraisals conducted by their principal/supervisor in order to be eligible for this assessment. The assessment process is conducted by external assessors who complete a national training programme as preparation for their role. It consists of three stages:

- *Pre-assessment stage*: the teacher determines their readiness for certification and conducts a mandatory professional discussion with their principal or supervisor.
- *Assessment stage 1*: the teacher submits evidence against the teaching standards, including material documenting their teaching practice and two classroom observation reports, one of which must be completed by their principal/supervisor, and comments from referees. The evidence collected by teachers at this stage should reflect and support their professional development, not become a burdensome administrative requirement.
- *Assessment stage 2*: the teacher's practice is assessed by an external assessor, which involves an observation, and discussions with the teacher's principal or supervisor and the teacher.

Certifications are awarded for five years. Teachers must contact their certifying authority 12 months prior to their expiry date if they wish to renew their certification. This process involves submitting documentation demonstrating evidence against the standards for review by external assessors. A range of guidelines and reference documents are available on the AITSL website to support teachers with the certification and renewal process.

Source: (AITSL, 2014[38]), "Certification – Frequently asked questions" Australia Institute for Teaching and School Leadership website, www.aitsl.edu.au/certification/frequently-asked-questions (accessed 23 April 2019).
(AITSL, 2015[39]), *Guide to the Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia,* Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership website, www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/certification-resources/guideto-cert_online.pdf?sfvrsn=2.

Alternative pathways into teaching

Alternative pathways enable individuals with professional experience gained outside education and who do not hold full teaching qualifications to enter the teaching profession. They are an alternative entry route into teaching to the initial teacher education programmes discussed above (see policy priority 2). Around half of OECD countries with available data have alternative pathways into teaching (OECD, 2014[20]). In some countries, a significant minority of existing teachers enter through this pathway. OECD research from

2014 showed that in England (United Kingdom), at least 10% of new teachers entered through this route and in Belgium (French Community), around 20% of current upper secondary teachers, and there is evidence that this is increasing (OECD, 2014[20]).

Romania could consider introducing an alternative pathway specifically targeted towards attracting individuals with professional experience outside education into the teaching profession. This alternative pathway could also be used to target teaching shortages in specific subject areas. Research suggests that these types of programmes may be important to attract individuals with expertise in areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) (Münich and Rivkin, 2015[40]). In setting up such a programme, important considerations include:

- *Setting competitive salaries*. Frequently, mid-career changes are based on intrinsic motivation to support young people's learning. However, extrinsic motivations such as salary levels are also important. Countries may need to offer higher salary levels to mid-career teachers, especially if programmes are targeted to fields like STEM that may be in high-demand (and therefore well-remunerated) in the general employment market (Münich and Rivkin, 2015[40]).
- *Certification of new entrants*. Teachers who enter the profession from alternative pathways need to be sufficiently trained before working with students. In most countries with alternative pathways, new entrants receive some training from traditional teacher education providers but may receive credits in recognition of their prior experience so they do not have to complete the full initial teacher education programme. Other countries provide school-based or distance-learning. For example, in the Netherlands new entrants via an alternative pathway are required to pass an aptitude test in order to begin teaching immediately. Then, over the following two years entrants via this pathway receive tailored training and support to earn the full teaching qualification (OECD, 2014[20]). Similarly, Lithuania's "I choose to teach" programme requires candidates to pass a selection process in order to begin working in schools immediately. Over two years, entrants via this pathway receive professional support and also participate in relevant to receive teaching certification (School Improvement Centre, n.d.[41]).

Effective implementation and capacity development

The evaluators for the process to appraise teachers for promotion will require training. This should focus educating evaluators in how to form a judgement about teacher performance, in line with the new teacher competencies. This will also help to ensure that evaluators have a shared understanding of what types of competencies teachers need to demonstrate to ensure consistency across different teachers and schools. Evaluators should also be provided with advice and guidance on how to provide clear and constructive feedback for improvement.

Sequencing reforms to the teaching profession

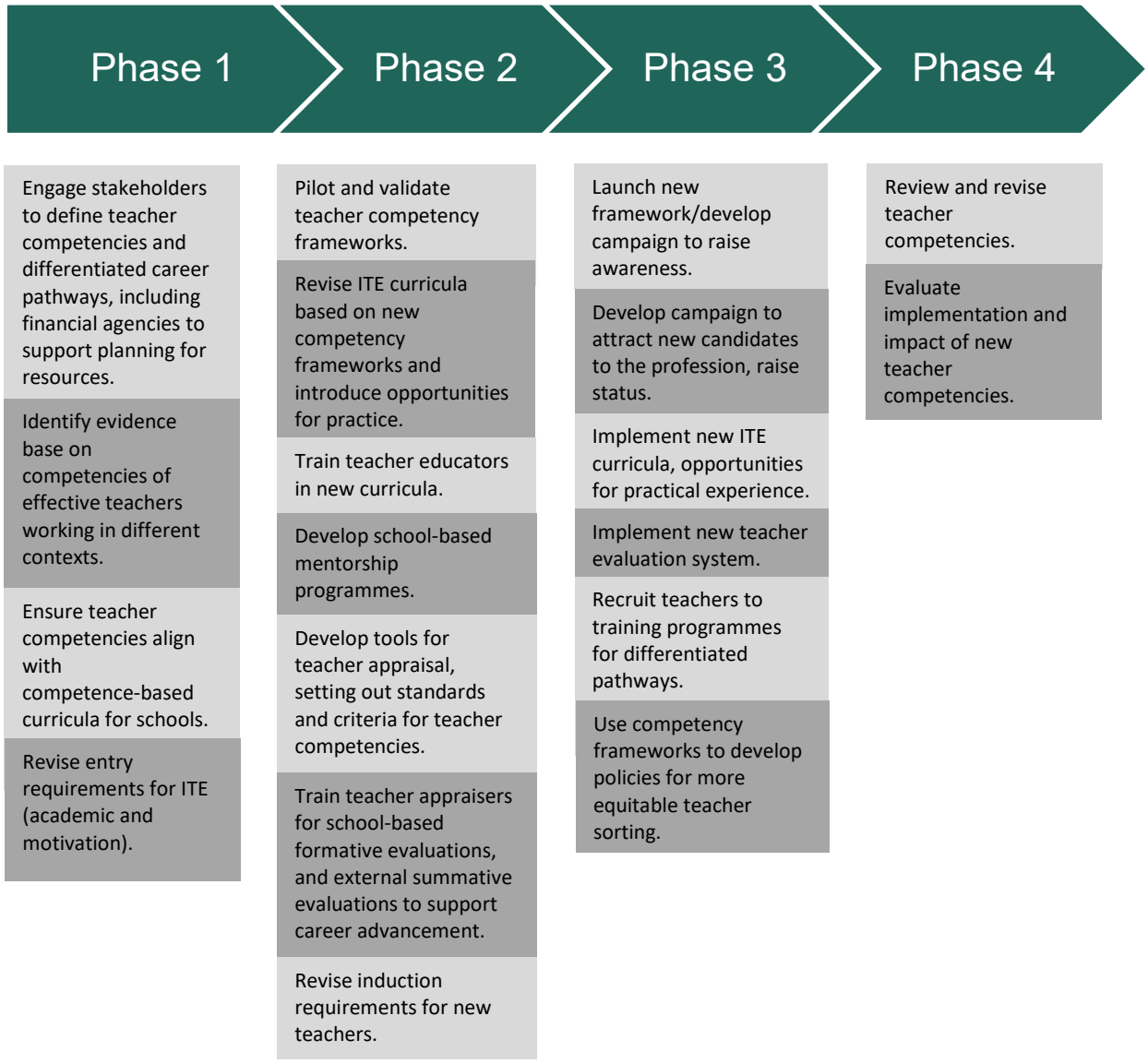
Figure 1 sets out a suggested sequence for introduction of reforms to teacher policies:

- *Phase 1*: defining new teacher competencies. Planning for long-term resource needs (human and financial) will also be important in the early stages of planning.
- *Phase 2*: the new teacher competencies should be piloted in a small number of schools, refined and then validated. During this phase, new competency-based curricula for initial teacher education, aligned with school-level curricula, should also be piloted. During this phase, teachers' professional development will need to be addressed in line with the new competencies and steps to strengthen professional development put in place (see policy priority 3).
- *Phase 3*: the validated teacher competencies are launched nationally. A public communications campaign and awareness raising strategy will be important to reinforce the

changes in the new competencies. At this stage, the differentiated teacher career path may start to be phased in.

- *Phase 4*: the implementation and impact of the teacher competencies and other teacher reforms (e.g. to initial teacher education, professional development and the teacher career path) should be reviewed and evaluated.

Figure 1. Sequence of reforms to support reform of the teaching profession in Romania



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This policy brief was undertaken by the OECD with funding from the European Union and implemented in cooperation with the Structural Reform Support Service to support the *Educated Romania* project.

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