



School Catering Workforce Development

Guidance on

How to Use the Professional Standards

Introduction

With their launch at the LACA Conference in July 2015, we now have a set of aspirational Professional Standards for a range of job roles, all crucial in the delivery of quality, nutritious school food to 4.6 million children each day:

- Head of kitchen (Catering Manager / Head Chef)
- School Cook
- Assistant Cook
- General Kitchen / Catering Assistant
- Midday Supervisor

The Professional Standards for the school catering workforce clearly define the professional requirements that underpin the delivery of quality school food and help to create a consistent standard for the industry. They say exactly what employers agree are the *'knowledge'*, *'skills'* and *'behaviours'* that an individual needs to achieve the best industry standard of performance in their job role. They are a way for all front and back of house catering staff to see HOW they are doing in relation to what they know CAN be achieved.

By supporting schools and catering providers to develop a committed and skilled workforce, the Professional Standards will help to engage and motivate employees, raise morale and improve the profile and image of the school food sector. They are purposefully designed to sit alongside, but not replace, in-house training, apprenticeships and qualifications.

The following guidance has been developed by the LACA-led Workforce Development Group and is designed to help cooks and caterers, your companies, organisations, schools and Head teachers use the Professional Standards in the best way to suit your needs and operations. This guidance will be built up over time from experience of what works well across the industry.

1. How do I use these Professional Standards?

However you would like. There isn't one defined method, it depends on what your need is and what your objectives are. The standards are there to be used by employers and members of their workforce to improve performance and job satisfaction. In our testing, people told us that they would be using them in recruitment, selection, induction, training, development and recognition of staff.

Above all, they are there to improve performance of those working in schools to deliver better service and show appreciation for the great work that is already being done.

- ✓ The best place to start is by reading through the five different roles that have been developed and select those that are most relevant. If an individual job roles encompass more than one professional standard then you might want to refer to others. You can access the Professional Standards via the LACA website <http://www.laca.co.uk/>
- ✓ Then look at what you are already do to recruit, select, induct, train, develop and recognise your staff.
- ✓ Decide what you want to achieve - have you already identified something you need? E.g. to improve consistency of performance across a number of sites / schools? To improve staff morale?
- ✓ Hold a meeting with the front and back of house team involved in delivering school food to introduce the Professional Standards.

2. Some questions to consider when deciding how best to use the Professional Standards

How you use the Professional Standards will depend on what you already have in place, and what your objectives are. Here are some questions to consider to help you get started.

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| How to Use in Recruitment and Selection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider the roles you want to recruit for and select the appropriate standards ✓ Review your job adverts, job descriptions or specifications – could they be enhanced when comparing them to the selected standards? ✓ Review your selection criteria and interview questions – could you make them relevant based on the selected standards? |
| How to Use in Induction, Training and Development | <p>Individual and team training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Could you use the Professional Standards to inform your staff skills assessments and personal development plans? ✓ Could line managers conduct on-going performance reviews and annual appraisals in line with the standards? ✓ Line managers would need to fully understand the Professional Standards and be committed to them. |
| | <p>Improving consistency of performance across a number of sites / schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review your job descriptions and specifications across the sites / schools ✓ Could you use the Professional Standards to standardise the roles? |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ You could then bring staff skills assessments and personal development plans, performance reviews and annual appraisals in line with the roles, setting a consistent standard across the sites / schools? |
| | <p>Mapping the Standard to existing provision and support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Map what you are already doing to meet the professional standards. ✓ Are there any gaps that need to be filled? ✓ Do you need to source training locally or do you have the expertise in-house to fill the gaps? E.g. by setting up an in-house coaching and/or mentoring programme. |
| | <p>Plugging gaps in training and development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Do you have an existing external training provider, possibly delivering NVQs in the workplace? ✓ Can you meet with them and look at the implications of the Professional Standards, bring them into the process? They may be able to help plug any identified gaps. |
| How to Use To Recognise Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Do you already provide training and qualifications which map to the Professional Standards and are happy with the performance of your team? ✓ Consider using the standards as the basis of recognising and rewarding your team for their achievements. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Do you need to help staff feel valued and motivated in their roles? ✓ Consider using the standards as the basis of recognising and rewarding your team for their achievements. |
| How to Use to Raise Awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Do you have an internal newsletter, notice boards, social networking or websites you can use to promote the standards? ✓ Can you promote the standards on external websites and networks, to school colleagues and other stakeholders? ✓ Can you promote the standards in job adverts and careers sites? |

3. What do I do now?

- ✓ Consider your priorities and make a plan, based on a time-frame that suits your organisation.
- ✓ Consult with your front and back of house teams to get their feedback and gain commitment.
- ✓ Communicate the plan and your objectives to the head teacher and other relevant stakeholders in your schools/s to gain their buy in and support.
- ✓ Have a look at examples of how others are successfully using the professional standards at: www.schoolfoodplan.com/www

4. What do I do if the front of house staff i.e. the Midday Supervisors do not work in the same team as the catering staff?

- The midday supervisor role links the school food workforce together with the school. It is these vital links that help to develop a whole school approach to food and a positive lunchtime experience.
- Within the hospitality industry the midday supervisor would be your front of house staff.
- Talk to head teachers about the standards and explain how they can use the standards (especially midday supervisor) to support a culture and ethos of healthy eating supervisors.
- Meet with your senior midday supervisor, if you have one, and explain to them how the standards can work and the benefits they will bring.

Tips for Success

- ✓ Don't try and do everything at once
- ✓ Involve the team from an early stage to get their buy in
- ✓ Involve members of the wider school community
- ✓ Keep it simple and easy to understand
- ✓ Show the positive way the standards can be used to celebrate the work everyone is doing
- ✓ The key is not to over complicate it!

5. Who do I contact if I need help and support?

Contact the Workforce Development Project Manager Ruth Asker-Browne either on 07796177019 or info@laca.co.uk

Ruth will be able to discuss your needs with you and help you explore how to use the standards to benefit your operation. She may also be able to put you in touch with others facing similar challenges to share ideas and experiences.

Anne Bull is the LACA Director "leading" on this project and if you require advice or support please contact Anne on her e mail address – annebull14@gmail.com