

The Evidence Portal: Your questions Technical report 2025

Introduction

Our vision is for a school system that nurtures the talents of teachers and leaders at all stages of their careers, so they can provide children with the excellent education they deserve. But we know the quality of professional learning across England varies greatly, and all too often colleagues who could benefit from great support miss out, and so do their pupils. That is why we have created the NIoT Evidence Portal.

The NIoT Evidence Portal has been created to provide access to the best available evidence on professional learning. A core aspect of our portal is the NIoT Evidence Toolkit, an interactive online resource that distils findings from high quality evidence on a wide range of teacher and leader professional learning approaches. However we know that this will not cover all topics that users might be interested in. That is why we have created a 'Your questions' page where we will respond to sector questions about professional development that cannot be addressed by creating a strand in the [NIoT Evidence Toolkit](#).

We know teachers and leaders have many questions about professional learning (see the '[Closer to the Classroom: Teachers' professional development research priorities](#)' report) but there is not always enough systematic evidence to create a strand within the toolkit. Therefore, to address this gap, the 'Your questions' page provides shorter, evidence-informed responses to emerging or under-researched topics. To ensure transparency, each short response in the 'Your questions' section will be developed using the following methodological approach.

Methodological approach

While the NIoT Evidence Toolkit draws evidence from reviews (systematic syntheses), not all topics and questions will be answerable in this way. Therefore, we have developed a responsive mechanism to provide evidence-informed responses to questions submitted by teachers and leaders through the Evidence Portal. This approach will be used when the response cannot be included in the toolkit due to limited availability of high-quality systematic reviews.

To ensure transparency and consistency, each short response in 'Your questions' section will be developed using the following methodological approach:

1. A targeted rapid literature/evidence review will be conducted using databases including Web of Science, Scopus, ProQuest, EBSCOHost, and Google Scholar. Sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, grey literature, practitioner reports, and policy documents, with an emphasis on primary research studies.
2. The review will identify up to six relevant research papers from the key literature published within the last 10 years. This timeframe ensures the review captures both recent innovations and well-established evidence, reflecting current educational practices and policy contexts.

The rapid review approach used for 'Your questions' does not follow full evidence synthesis guidelines like PRISMA. Therefore, findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than definitive.

Structure

This section provides a structured approach to answering specific questions submitted via the Evidence Portal. Each response is designed to provide a comprehensive, evidence-informed overview of a topic by synthesising key information from recent research.

Element	Description
<i>Title: Question submitted to the NIoT Evidence Portal</i>	The title represents a question asked through the Evidence Portal e.g., What motivates teachers to engage in professional development?
<i>Short answer with key findings</i>	This section provides a summary of key findings relevant to the question and based on up to six most up-to-date research papers from the key literature published within the last 10 years.
<i>Where were the studies conducted?</i>	This section outlines key contextual details regarding the studies reviewed, focusing on their geographical scope, educational levels, and subject areas. Countries where the studies were conducted. Educational levels (e.g., primary, secondary, early childhood, further education).

	c. Subjects represented in the studies.
<i>Key Research Papers</i>	This section lists up to six relevant studies related to the topic, including details on the reference.