



Protocol for Managing the Business of Council in the Event of an Emergency or Other Exceptional Situation

- 1 The Standing Orders of the General Teaching Council for Scotland (“GTC Scotland”) determine how full Council business should be conducted. Similarly Standing Orders relating to a number of GTC Scotland’s committees determine how the business of each of the foregoing should be conducted. (“Committees” is understood to include all committees, sub-committees, working groups and sub-groups of GTC Scotland.)
- 2 In the event of an emergency situation, or any other event which led to travel restrictions or non-availability of Council/committee members or staff, it is proposed that:
 - meetings will go ahead only if there is urgent business to conduct;
 - where possible, and only to the extent necessary, meetings and communications with members of Council and committees will be effected using alternative means and the process for making a Council decision will be adjusted as appropriate;
 - in the event of restrictions on or suspension of public transport, where possible arrangements will be made for alternative transportation of members and staff.

Where it is proposed that meetings and communications of Council be effected using alternative means, these will be agreed between a member of GTC Scotland’s Senior Management Team (the Chief Executive/the Director of Corporate and Legal Governance in the first instance) and the Convener of the Council (or the person designated to fulfil such role in terms of paragraph 5 below).

- 3 Where it is necessary to adjust the Council’s decision-making process given the severity of the circumstances, the appropriate process will be decided by the Convener of the Council (or the person designated to fulfil such role in terms of paragraph 5 below) in view of the circumstances at that time and any decisions made using such process shall be subject to ratification by the Council as soon as possible thereafter.

- 4 With reference to meetings of committees:

- (a) With the exception of proceedings relating to individual cases to be considered by GTC Scotland’s hearings and casework committees, where there may not be enough members to make a committee quorate (due to illness), the Convener of the committee, or in his/her absence, the Convener of the Council, will be permitted to suspend Standing Orders in order that the committee can make decisions. Any decisions made in such circumstances will be reported to the next Council meeting.

The Servicing Officer or other designated officer with responsibility for the committee will agree the need for teleconferencing, video conferencing or other appropriate arrangements with the Convener of the committee (or, in his/her absence, the Convener of the Council).

- (b) In relation to proceedings relating to individual cases to be considered by GTC Scotland’s hearings and casework committees, consideration as to whether or not to proceed and, if appropriate, how to proceed, as per paragraph 2 above, will be made on a case by case basis. Such consideration will take into account the availability of the parties and others necessary to the proceedings and the current national advice and arrangements in place at the relevant time.

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- 5 (a) In relation to meetings of the Council, in the absence of the Convener of the Council occupying the chair, the Standing Orders entitle the Vice-Convener of the Council to act as Chair or members of Council to appoint any other member of Council so to act.

In the event that the Council is unable to nominate a member to be considered for appointment in such circumstances, the following Council members will be approached with respect to this role:

- firstly, the Convener of the Finance and General Purposes Committee;
- secondly, one of the other Committee Conveners;
- thirdly, other available Council members.

Approval by Council to appoint may be sought by e-mail or using other appropriate means in the circumstances.

- (b) In relation to meetings of committees, in the absence of the Convener of the particular committee occupying the chair, the Standing Orders of each committee entitle the Vice-Convener of that committee to act as Chair or members of the committee to appoint another member of that committee so to act. Approval of committee members to appoint may be sought by e-mail or using other appropriate means in the circumstances.

- 6 The relevant GTC Scotland Staff Plan for emergency or other exceptional situations shall apply in respect of arrangements relating to staff.

30 September 2009

[*Note:* A copy of the current GTC Scotland Staff Flu Pandemic Plan is attached to this Protocol as an Annex.]



GTC Scotland – Staff Flu Pandemic Plan

Plan for high absenteeism

- a) *Identify the key functions of the organisation that are essential to continue (see Risk Management Plan for further detail)*
- Keep the IT systems (Miller database and Website) operating so that the registration look up facility can continue to be accessed (IT staff and Grant McGregor as back-up)
 - Payment of staff salaries – as a minimum, one of the four people authorised to do so, to call Ceridian to tell them to pay basic salaries
 - Clerwood House opened for staff able to attend work – ‘phone round’ to be arranged for the seven key holders to ensure one of them is available to open up.
- b) *If necessary, redirection of staff to areas of the organisation where there are shortages. Ensure appropriate training / documentation available to allow this to take place.*

1 Minimise spread of disease

- a) *Require high standards of hygiene*
- Use of education and signage to encourage frequent hand washing and use of tissues
 - Facilities available to enable hygienic disposal of tissues
 - Regular cleaning of hard surfaces, eg desks, telephones, door handles
 - Use of funnels at water coolers
- b) *Provision of supplies to aid high standards of hygiene*
- Tissues available at work stations
 - Sanitising hand gel available at work stations
 - Sanitising wipes provided for cleaning hard surfaces
- c) *Minimise exposure to others who are ill*
- Staff displaying symptoms required to stay at home
 - Staff displaying symptoms at work immediately sent home
 - Where possible, use alternatives to direct meetings, eg videoconferencing
 - Restriction of non-essential travel

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3 Communicate GTC Scotland's policy for dealing with absence due to flu pandemic

a) *Absence reporting procedures*

- In general, the usual absence procedures including reporting arrangements will apply.

b) *Staff member is infected or suspects that they are infected*

- Reinforce importance of early recognition of symptoms and the requirement to stay at home if infected until symptoms have ended
- Reporting requirements and return to work procedure same as normal Absence Policy and Procedure
- Normal rules for sick pay apply
- Absence due to flu pandemic recorded separately and not taken into account when determining whether attendance has been unacceptable

c) *Staff member not infected but unable to attend work due to caring responsibilities (ie for sick relatives or if schools are closed) or travel restrictions / suspension of public transport*

- Within reason, treated as if the member of staff is absent due to sickness (each case looked at on its merits)
- Where appropriate and practicable, staff member allowed to work from home or other temporary flexible working arrangements to put in place
- Arrangements made for alternative transportation where possible

d) *Abuse of policy*

- Staff suspected of abusing the policy will be subject to investigation and, if appropriate, the Disciplinary Procedure will be applied
- The fact that staff may be unwilling to attend work due to fear of being infected taken into account in any disciplinary decision made

31 July 2009