



Your Professional Recognition Application: a Reflective Guidance Tool

The following information is intended to support your reflections when filling out your Professional Recognition application. You may wish to use this to support a dialogue with your line manager or a critical friend.

Please ensure you are familiar with the more detailed information of Professional Recognition on the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) website before starting your application.

www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/professional-recognition.aspx

What is Professional Recognition?

GTCS's Professional Recognition recognises the enhanced, significant and sustained enquiry a teacher has undertaken and the development of their professional learning in a particular area. Professional Recognition provides the opportunity for a teacher to be recognised as an accomplished/expert practitioner in a particular area, whose practice is underpinned by ongoing reflective enquiry.

Professional Recognition aligns mainly with the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning (SCLPL). This Standard is closely aligned to features of SCQF Level 11 and describes the Masters level enquiry that leads to advanced professional knowledge and pedagogical expertise that registered teachers develop and maintain as they continue to progress in teaching and across the education profession. Some practitioners may however choose to reflect using the Standards for Leadership and Management (SLM).

The Standards

A guide to the SCLPL is available here: www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/the-standards/standard-for-career-long-professional-learning-1212.pdf

The SLM is available here: www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/the-standards/standards-for-leadership-and-management-1212.pdf

Word versions of the Standards are available upon request to: standards@gtcs.org.uk

“Underpinning the SCLPL are the core principles of practitioner enquiry. In practice, this involves teachers having an enquiring disposition at the core of their professional practice. This means thinking critically and questioning their own educational beliefs, assumptions, values and practices. They will create knowledge to enhance, progress and lead the learning experiences of all their learners and work collaboratively with colleagues. The teacher as an adaptive expert is open to change and engages with new and emerging ideas about teaching

and learning within the ever-evolving curricular and pedagogical contexts in which teaching and learning takes place.” GTCS 2012

To gain professional recognition in a specific area of expertise you are required to demonstrate:

- ❖ Enhanced, significant and sustained professional learning, aligned to the SCLPL (or other appropriate Standard) leading to the development of expertise and accomplishment in the specified area.
- ❖ Professional expertise/accomplishment within a specific curricular/ educational context in line with SCQF level 11 enquiry.
- ❖ Professional learning and development related to the area of expertise/accomplishment.
- ❖ Professional reading and research related to area of expertise.
- ❖ Professional action evidenced within a portfolio. (Please note the portfolio is not submitted along with the completed application form but GTCS randomly sample a number of submissions on an annual basis so please be aware you may be asked to share your portfolio too.)
- ❖ Critical reflection and analysis of impact on professional practice, learners and learning.
- ❖ Evidence of how you have shared this expertise and what the impact of this was on your colleagues and/or the wider educational community.
- ❖ Summary of professional discussion with line manager.

Advice on Completing Each Section of the Professional Recognition Application Form

Section 3 - In which specific area of expertise/accomplishment are you claiming Professional Recognition?

You should clearly indicate the area in which you are seeking Professional Recognition. Please note you can only claim in one area. You may wish to review the content with a view to structuring it into specific sections allowing the panel to clearly see the depth and clarity of your thinking in this area:

- ❖ The area you are seeking Professional Recognition in
- ❖ Why it is important to you – broadly
- ❖ Why it is important in your professional context
- ❖ Why it is important to you for the future
- ❖ How this is aligned with key aspects of the Professional Standards

Section 4 - How have you developed this area of expertise/accomplishment as part of a coherent systematic and sustained, learning experience?

This is a key section in terms of the foundations of your application. How have you developed expertise and accomplishment? This is not only asking what you have done but what you have learned and how you have professionally developed. Here you need to clearly show the features of Level 11 enquiry, showing the theory into practice links and the core principles of practitioner enquiry.

Along with the detail of the activities and seminars you have engaged with in this area of development, this section asks that you describe how you have developed this expertise as part of a sustained learning experience.

- ❖ What sustained learning did you engage with to inform and underpin this area of development?
- ❖ What professional reading did you engage with to inform this area of development?
- ❖ How has the professional learning/reading/research you engaged with critically informed and underpinned your area of expertise?
- ❖ How have the aspects of theory and practice informed your thinking and practice?
- ❖ What aspects of theory and practice did you study and what did you learn from this to inform your own thinking and practice?

Section 5 - Provide a critically informed theoretical rationale for this area of work, including reference to relevant research, literature, policy and practice.

In this section you are asked to give a critically informed theoretical rationale for your area of expertise/accomplishment, drawing upon the relevant research you have engaged with, the literature, policy and practice that has informed your thinking:

- ❖ Why were you developing this area of expertise and how did the literature, research and policy you engaged with critically inform your understanding and practice?
- ❖ Why is this important and relevant to you and your educational context?
- ❖ How has this helped you critically question and challenge educational assumptions, beliefs and values of self and system?
- ❖ What challenges to your thinking and practice did you experience from the engagement with the literature?

Section 6 - Critically examine, analyse and evaluate what impact this area of development and expertise has had on your thinking, learning and practice and on learners and their learning. You should include brief extracts of analysed evidence to support your claim.

This section requires a depth of critical analysis in line with the Career-Long Professional Learning Standard on your learning and the impact this has had on your thinking, learning and practice. It requires detail of what you actually did along with the professional actions you demonstrated in this area of expertise. You need to provide evidence of your critical analysis and evaluation of the impact of this area of expertise on your thinking and practice.

- ❖ What did you learn?
- ❖ How did your practice change? What difference did this area of development make to you and your practice?
- ❖ What was the impact on the learners? How can you demonstrate how you know this?
- ❖ What is different for your learners and how would you evidence this?
- ❖ How was their learning enhanced?
- ❖ Can you provide examples of this?

Section 7 - How have you shared your knowledge and experience with others and what impact has this had on your colleagues and/or wider community?

In this section you are required to demonstrate that you have shared and contributed to the learning of others. Clear explanation and analysis is required to demonstrate your collaborative practice in this area of expertise and the subsequent impact this had on your colleagues' understanding and practice in this area.

- ❖ How were your colleagues involved in this area of expertise? What was the collaborative process? What difference did this make?
- ❖ What did you do to achieve this and how would you evidence this improvement?
- ❖ What was the impact on your colleagues and/or wider community? How did this enhance their thinking and what was different for them?
- ❖ Can you provide examples of the difference this has made to your colleagues? Do they think and work differently now as a result of your learning and professional actions? How would you evidence this? Impact may include what they did but it also includes a development or adjustment to thinking.

Section 8 - What are the next steps for the development of this area of expertise/accomplishment and your future professional learning?

This section requires that you outline a clear and coherent plan of what you intend to do and learn next. Remember that this should be aligned with the SCLPL or SLM Standards and the core principles of practitioner enquiry. Remember this section does not only ask you what you intend to do next to continue your professional learning journey.

- ❖ How will what you have planned further challenge and build accomplishment/enhanced practice?
- ❖ How do you intend to further develop this area in the future?
- ❖ What further professional learning will you engage with and what are your planned professional actions?
- ❖ How do you plan to further deepen and develop your area of expertise to be able to lead learners and the learning of colleagues?
- ❖ How do you plan to systematically investigate, analyse and evaluate the impact of practice?

Section 9 - Summary of Professional Discussion with Line Manager

This should include critical reflection upon how the learning and development you have gained in this area of expertise has impacted on your professional learning and practice, making reference to sections 5 and 6. Please also include any next steps that have been discussed.

Professional Recognition is an integral part of the supportive professional dialogue you have with your line manager as part of your PRD/Professional Update. You can use the following reflective questions to support this professional discussion as a starting point for reflection along with relevant aspects of this reflective tool:

Questions to consider as part of this discussion

- ❖ How is my work in this area of expertise/accomplishment enabling me to develop as a practitioner?
- ❖ How have I applied what I have learned in this area of expertise?
- ❖ How is this influencing and enhancing my professional practice?
- ❖ What reading and research has challenged and critically informed this learning and development?

- ❖ What is the impact on learners and their learning experiences?
- ❖ What is the impact on my colleagues' professional learning?
- ❖ What evidence do I have to demonstrate the impact on my practice, colleagues and learners?
- ❖ How will I take this forward? What are my next steps for development?
- ❖ In what ways will I be able to make a contribution to the school/wider educational community?

This section draws together a critical overview of this process and the role it has played in developing your area of accomplished professional practice.