

1 Scope

The Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS) is designed to follow on directly from a student teacher's successful completion of his/her initial teacher education programme. This policy provides guidelines for student teachers or probationer teachers who seek a deferral in the following circumstances:

- (a) prior to the commencement date of the TIS programme; or
- (b) on or following the commencement date of the TIS programme.

2 Interpretation

- "days" means calendar days.
- "Flexible Route" means the route whereby probationer teachers, who are not eligible for the TIS or for whom the arrangements of the TIS are not suitable, may complete their required period of probation on a more flexible basis, including supply work.
- "GTC Scotland" means the General Teaching Council for Scotland.
- "probationer" refers to a student teacher or newly qualified teacher who will be applying for provisional registration or who is provisionally registered with GTC Scotland, and who is requesting a deferral of his/her TIS place to the following academic session.

3 General Principles

- 3.1 GTC Scotland has overall responsibility for making the final decision about a deferral and will do so taking into consideration the views of relevant stakeholders as is seen fit.
- 3.2 GTC Scotland may seek advice from or require the applicant to be examined by an independent medical adviser appointed by GTC Scotland.
- 3.3 GTC Scotland cannot consider or address employment contract, occupational health or any other employment related issues. These matters should be addressed by the probationer and his/her prospective or current employer.
- 3.4 This policy seeks to take account of both the exceptional circumstances of probationers requesting a deferral and the practical difficulties which a deferral can create for an employer.

4 Deferral Requests

4.1 Eligibility

Requests for deferral from a TIS post will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. A material impact upon the probationer's ability to undertake the TIS post will require to be evidenced in any deferral request. Requests will normally be expected to relate to factors

outwith the control of the probationer, such as material health issues.

Because of the intended follow-on of the TIS after successful completion of an initial teacher education programme and the practical difficulties which a deferral creates for an employer, the following are reasons for deferral requests which would **not** be considered to constitute exceptional circumstances:

- travel purposes (including teaching posts abroad);
- further studies;
- pursuit of alternative career options;
- teaching posts in independent schools;
- dissatisfaction with TIS allocation;
- dissatisfaction with allocated class.

In addition, requests made following commencement of a TIS post will only be considered where there are no employer concerns over the probationer's professional conduct or competence.

4.2 **Key Principles**

- (a) Consideration of a deferral request prior to commencement of a TIS post is strictly subject to the Eligibility criteria set out above.
- (b) Deferrals will only be considered and granted for a period of up to one year.
- (c) If the deferral request is successful, the probationer will be expected to take up a TIS post commencing from the August of the following academic session.
- (d) Only in exceptional circumstances and where there is just cause will more than one application for deferral be granted.

If a subsequent deferral (ie further to one already granted) is required, the probationer must submit a fresh deferral request to GTC Scotland, detailing the reason for this second request.

4.3 **Procedure**

- (a) Any application for deferral must be submitted on the appropriate form to the Professional Learning and Development Department.
- (b) The application should be accompanied by relevant evidence to support the request as appropriate. This evidence will remain strictly private and confidential.
- (c) Deferral requests will be considered by an Assessment Panel of officers appointed by a member of the Senior Management Team of the GTC Scotland.
- (d) The probationer may be invited to submit any additional information which the Assessment Panel may consider necessary.
- (e) The Assessment Panel has the discretion to request the attendance of the probationer at the meeting of the Panel to consider the deferral request. In this regard the probationer would be given reasonable advance notice of the date and time of such a meeting.

- (f) The Assessment Panel will aim to inform the probationer of its decision in relation to the deferral request, together with the reasons for the decision, by letter within 7 days from the date of the Assessment Panel meeting.

Where this may take longer, the Assessment Panel will let the probationer know when he/she can expect to receive its response.

- (g) If the deferral request is successful, the probationer's participation in the TIS will be deferred until the next TIS session and, where necessary, GTC Scotland will notify the relevant local authority accordingly.

- (h) If the deferral request is unsuccessful, the probationer will be given the option to:

- remain part of the allocated TIS and commence/continue his/her post;

or

- withdraw from the TIS and follow the Flexible Route to meet the Standard for Full Registration.

If the probationer has already declined/resigned his/her allocated TIS post, then, the only option is to follow the Flexible Route.

The probationer is required to notify the local authority and GTC Scotland of which option he/she has decided to follow within 14 days from the date of receipt of the letter or email intimating the Assessment Panel's decision.

4.4 ***Procedure for Appeals***

4.4.1 Appeals against a decision of the Assessment Panel will only be considered if:

- (a) there are material procedural factors which affected the validity of the Assessment Panel's decision;

and/or

- (b) there is new material evidence which was not, and could not have been, available to the Assessment Panel.

4.4.2 An appeal against a decision of the Assessment Panel must be submitted in writing, on the form provided by GTC Scotland, within 14 days of the probationer being informed of that decision.

4.4.3 Appeals against decisions of the Assessment Panel will be considered by a Preliminary Panel of officers appointed by a member of the Senior Management Team of GTC Scotland. Neither the appointing officer, nor the panellists will have had any prior involvement in relation to the appointment of the Assessment Panel or to the original request or appeal. No member of the Preliminary Panel will have served on the Assessment Panel which considered the original deferral request.

4.4.4 The Preliminary Panel will submit a recommendation, together with the reasons for that recommendation, to an Appeals Panel consisting of the Chief Executive (or his/her appointed deputy) and the Convener of the Professional Standards Committee or other GTC Scotland member, the latter being required to be an elected registered teacher.

- 4.4.5 The Appeals Panel will consider whether the grounds for appeal are satisfied and, if so, will then consider the appeal itself. This process may be conducted using remote means.
- 4.4.6 The Preliminary Panel and the Appeals Panel have the discretion to invite the probationer to submit any additional information in advance of formal consideration of the appeal by the respective Panel.

The Appeals Panel also has the discretion to request the attendance of the probationer at any meeting of the Panel to consider the appeal. In this regard the probationer would be given reasonable advance notice of the date and time of such a meeting.

The Appeals Panel will aim to inform the probationer of its decision in relation to the appeal, together with the reasons for the decision, by letter within 7 days from the date of the Appeal Panel meeting. Where this may take longer, the Appeals Panel will let the probationer know when he/she can expect to receive its response.

- 4.4.7 The Appeals Panel's decision on any appeal will be final and immediate.

4.5 **Contact Details**

Professional Learning Development Manager
E-mail: pld@qtcs.org.uk

Post: Professional Learning Development Manager
The General Teaching Council for Scotland
Clerwood House
96 Clermiston Road
Edinburgh
EH12 6UT

Correspondence with enclosed evidence should be marked "Strictly Private & Confidential".

2 March 2010