

Putting Learners at the Centre



RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

1. Name/Organisation

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3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual

/ Group/Organisation

Please tick as appropriate

(a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

Please tick as appropriate Yes No

(b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

Please tick ONE of the following boxes

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

(c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

Please tick as appropriate Yes No

(d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Please tick as appropriate

Yes

No



Putting Learners at the Centre: Delivering our Ambitions for Post-16 Education

Consultation Response from the General Teaching Council for Scotland

Introduction

The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) is the independent professional body which maintains and enhances teaching standards and promotes and regulates the teaching profession in Scotland. We strive to be a world leader in professional education issues.

Established in 1965 as a result of the Teaching Council Scotland Act, GTC Scotland was the first such professional body for teaching and teachers in the United Kingdom and one of the first teaching councils in the world.

The legislation that established GTC Scotland in 1965 will be replaced by The Public Services Reform (General Teaching Council for Scotland) Order 2011. This will see a number of significant changes taking place in terms of our constitution and functions. The Order will come into force on 2 April 2012.

Our principal aims are to:

- Contribute to the development of a world class education system in Scotland.
- Maintain and enhance professional standards in schools and colleges in collaboration with partners.
- Be recognised as an advocate for the teaching profession.

Not all sections of the consultation are relevant to the remit of the GTCS and hence only some questions have been answered.

Efficient, flexible learner journeys

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS p22

How can we ensure delivery of an appropriate place in post-16 learning for **all** 16-19 year olds? What are the priority actions?

While appreciating the current difficulties of finding employment, this commitment appears to nullify the possibility of any 16 – 19 year old gaining employment. Perhaps the commitment needs to be modified to allow for this possibility.

Better articulation, CfE, Activity Agreements and the use of Advanced Standing are all positive steps.

In considering the proposed package of measures for improving the learner journey, where should the focus be to improve pathways for all learners? What actions are required to make progression more coherent for learners?

Paragraph 28 acknowledges that ‘the number of qualifications can seem overwhelming to all users’ and this is an area in which improvements could be made by simplifying and ensuring that pathways and equivalences are clear for all.

How effective is the SCQF in promoting flexible learner journeys? Are there any barriers and, if so, how could they be overcome? How could the SCQF be used more effectively to deliver our aims?

The SCQF is a boon to the Scottish education system but please see the comments immediately above.

What more can the Government and its partners do to encourage more articulation between colleges and universities?

What scope is there to make the transition from school to university more effective for learners, while reducing unnecessary duplication?

The GTCS would support better articulation between school and college or university and between college and university. Schools, colleges and universities need to work together in partnerships ensuring that each sector knows its own role and responsibilities but also appreciates how its provision is complemented by the provision of the other sectors.

Clearly in economically difficult times this is challenging, but better partnership, better knowledge and better trust between the sectors would be a positive development here.

Widening access to post-16 learning

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS p29

What do we need to do to ensure the Government’s commitment, through Opportunities for All, to post-16 education and training for all 16-19 year olds is delivered to more vulnerable young people? What are the priority actions?

What more could the Government and its delivery partners do to improve retention and progression, building on Opportunities for All?

Steps already being taken through CfE should help to address issues in this area as should the introduction of Activity Agreements. Empowering the learner is a significant part of striving for success and increasing self-efficacy is a very positive part of that process.

How can we maximise the contribution of Community Learning & Development to widening access? What examples of good practice can we build on?

Partnership should again be at the heart of this with strong relationships between different parts of local authority provision helping to ensure as wide access as possible to learning. Schools, CLD and others all need to work together for positive results. Conversations between different types of practitioners (and their respective professional bodies such as the GTCS and the CLD Standards Council) need to be encouraged and facilitated.

What do we need to do to help more people from the most deprived backgrounds get a place at university? How can we frame this in legislation?

Statutory Duties may well help but the proposed imposition of possible penalties is a less positive development and the GTCS would urge further consideration of this.

Colleges and especially universities need to be more proactive in linking with schools and communities in areas of deprivation. Good examples already exist such as Glasgow University's work on encouraging pupils from such areas from early in their Secondary schooling to think about teaching as a possible career.

Maintaining Scotland as a global leader in university research

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS p38

How best can we maximise the impact of our excellent research?

While acknowledging the statement in paragraph 1 of the consultation document about the Government making clear that 'its primary purpose is to achieve sustainable economic growth' the GTCS would respectfully suggest that a broader view of what constitutes research is needed. Educational research may not be as sexy as that in Biotechnology and the Biological Sciences (paragraph 97) but it does contribute to economic growth through improving educational provision, particularly if it is research into pedagogy. The forthcoming Research Excellence Framework calls for 'impact' to be taken into account and the GTCS is strongly supportive of this so would encourage the Government, even in financially difficult times, to continue to fund useful educational research.

What would be the main activities of a single knowledge exchange office? What activities are best left to individual universities?

While the KEO is clearly aimed primarily at business the GTCS would urge that a similar model should be developed for public sector areas such as education. Having such a mechanism to share, disseminate encourage practical use of educational research would be very positive.

Effective and sustainable delivery

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS p49

What are the pros and cons of our proposals for the regionalisation of colleges? Are there other criteria we should consider in determining the optimal regional structure?

For a country with a fairly small population the number of colleges and universities is a significant issue. The GTCS has no policy on what shape provision should take but it does recognise the desire for effectiveness and efficiency within the system. As a registration body and linking with our aim of acting as an advocate for the teaching profession, the GTCS would strongly urge that staff in colleges and universities should be fully involved in any consultations about proposed changes to provision.

The GTCS would also urge that in terms of increasing the quality of provision in the college sector further consideration should be given to making it a mandatory obligation for teaching staff to be registered with the GTCS.

For university provision the GTCS notes the possibility of particular universities specialising in particular areas, a system already in operation for initial teacher education. The GTCS is also aware of the question posed in *Teaching Scotland's Future* over the overall provision and pattern of ITE and assumes that this issue will at some point in the future be debated.

What are the pros and cons of the new leadership and support role envisaged for the SFC? What lessons can we learn from successful change management elsewhere?

While bearing in mind the points made immediately above, the GTCS is supportive of central bodies giving direction to the system. Andy Hargreaves, a noted educational theorist, writes about steering from the top while building from the bottom and the GTCS would concur with this strategy.

Simplification of the funding system and income generation

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS p55

Is there a market for co-investment with employers? If so, how do we select the employers with whom we might co-invest in order to maximise the leverage of Government funding? On what basis should Government funding be made available?

For initial teacher education with increasing emphasis being put on the necessity for partnership working between universities, local authorities and schools, thought must be given by the Government and the Funding Council to how this model will be financially supported.

Performance, governance and accountability

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS p60

What measures should form the basis of our performance management framework for colleges and training providers in order to improve outcomes for all learners?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of an enhanced role for Education Scotland in supporting continuous improvement in the college and skills sectors?

It should be noted that the TQFE is currently approved by the Government and accredited by the GTCS. As well as advocating GTCS registration for teaching staff in the college sector the GTCS would also strongly suggest that continued Government involvement in the setting of Standards for college staff and in programme approval should be ended.

The Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges should transfer to join the Professional Standards for other teachers, all of which from April 2012 will be developed and administered by the GTCS.

The advantage of having an enhanced role for Education Scotland in supporting continuous improvement in the college and skills sectors would be the potential for coherence and cohesion in its support over a wide range of sectors while the advantage of maintaining the role of Scotland's Colleges would be its specific expertise in these fields.