

1 Introduction

The General Teaching Council for Scotland undertook a consultation on the review of GTC Scotland Professional Standards from 29 August until 6 November 2012. In addition to a news release to all media contacts, this was publicised through *Teaching Scotland*, the GTC Scotland website, the regular e-newsletter and the social medium Twitter. GTC Scotland also wrote directly to stakeholder groups to encourage participation in the consultation process.

2 Overall Response

The consultation offered a range of opportunities by which people could respond: an online survey, three regional meetings and a series of Glow Meets organised in partnership with Education Scotland.

A total of over eighty people attended the regional meetings in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen in October, with participants from North Lanarkshire, Orkney, Shetland, Dundee and Aberdeen joining the Glow Meets along with a representative of Education Scotland.

There were seventy-nine responses to the consultation, most of them submitted through the on-line response form, although some submissions were received in hard copy. Four of the latter did not respond directly to the questions in the survey form but offered general comments or discussed specific aspects of the draft Standards.

The following table represents the breakdown of those who responded directly to the survey.

Respondent population		
	No.	%
Individual	42	56.0
School	2	2.7
Local Authority	9	12.0
University	7	9.3
Teachers' union	4	5.3
Stakeholder body	9	12.0
GTC	1	1.3
Other	1	1.3
Total	75	100

Although this report contains statistical counts of responses to each question in the survey, several factors should be considered relating to this information:

- some submissions represent the views of individuals, while others are joint responses from groups of individuals, and some are from organisations representing a large number of individuals. It is therefore impossible to count the number of individuals whose views are represented. In consequence, caution should be taken when drawing conclusions from the statistical count of the responses;
- this report covers 75 responses, but as some respondents did not answer every question the numbers do not all add up to this total; and
- respondents opted-in to the consultation and therefore are not necessarily representative of their sector.

3 Overall Findings

There were eight sections in the survey questionnaire. For each question respondents were invited to select from a drop-down menu or yes/no buttons to allow a measurable response, followed by the opportunity to comment through free text responses.

The following tables illustrate the outcomes.

3.1 Introduction

The introduction sets out the thinking and the context for the revised Professional Standards, which requires the reconceptualisation of the teaching profession in Scotland.		
Q1 How clear is this description of the reasons for introducing revised standards and of their content?	No.	%
<i>Very clear</i>	30	42.3
<i>Clear</i>	30	42.3
<i>Not that clear</i>	7	9.9
<i>Not at all clear</i>	4	5.6
Totals	71	100
<i>Comments received</i>	42	

There was a general welcome for the decision to revise the Professional Standards and for the rationale provided, though some respondents believed there was a need for greater clarity in some areas. Themes raised by respondents included:

- some suggestions for changes to the structure of the document, especially in the introduction, to ensure the context for the revision and the purposes of the Standards were explained fully,
- a need to avoid the use of over-complex language in the interests of clarity of meaning,
- some discomfort over the use of the term 'reconceptualisation' as implying criticism of current practice in teaching,
- some concerns over the possible misuse of the Standards to audit performance.

What we did:

- revised the information contained in the introduction, stating the context for the revision and outlining the generic purposes of the revised Standards,
- included information on specific purposes within the introductory information in each standard,
- revised some of the language included in the introduction,
- established a short life working group to produce guidance notes to support teachers and line managers in using the revised Standards.

3.2/...

3.2 Values

For the first time, the same values are replicated across each standard, in recognition that these are the same for all teachers, irrespective of experience and stage in career.		
Q2 Does the values section in each standard include the appropriate values for the teaching profession in Scotland?	No.	%
Yes	59	84.3
No	10	14.3
<i>No (in part)</i>	1	1.4
Totals	70	100
<i>Comments received</i>	49	

More than thirty respondents stated their welcome for the concept of placing values at the centre of the Standards, some of these very warmly. One example was the individual respondent who commented:

I welcome wholeheartedly the strong focus on social justice, global citizenship and sustainability in the Professional Values section of all three documents and am delighted to see that the rights of learners and issues relating to equality and inclusion are also featured. I am delighted to see these themes highlighted so prominently in the first few pages of each document.

A stakeholder body reflected similar thoughts, as it welcomed:

the acknowledgement that professional values are at the centre of all the Professional Standards and need to be regularly re-appraised by teachers throughout their career. We agree that the values of social justice, integrity, trust and respect and professional commitment and the points set out within are core to being a teacher in Scotland

At the same time, some, including both of those cited above, felt that some values would benefit from more precise definition. This was especially true of the notion of learning for sustainability, where different respondents interpreted this in different ways; some regarding it as relating to pupil learning about sustainable practices ecologically and others interpreting it as a reference to sustainable professional development for teachers.

A few respondents contested the selection of values, suggested alternatives or felt that a justification of the selection should be provided.

What we did:

- revisited the language included in the Values to ensure that definitions were clearer,
- included an explicit definition of learning for sustainability, both in the introduction and in each Standard.

3.3/...

3.3 Leadership

Leadership is explicit across the Professional Standards, with a focus on teacher leadership, leadership for learning and building leadership capacity in others.		
Q3 How effectively does the framework of standards reflect the development of leadership qualities in teachers?	No.	%
<i>Very effectively</i>	14	20.6
<i>Effectively</i>	26	38.2
<i>Not that effectively</i>	22	32.4
<i>Not at all effectively</i>	6	8.8
Totals	68	100
<i>Comments received</i>	48	

Many respondents welcomed the inclusion of leadership skills across the Standards and the emphasis on developing leadership skills, a point that also arose in a Glow Meet. Some felt that though the word leadership was present in all Standards the theme could have been more explicit in some areas.

Some respondents would have liked a clearer distinction between leadership of learning and leadership of schools. One stakeholder body made the point that the emphasis tended to be on those with formal leadership roles, whereas:

leadership should be about teachers mutually enthusing and inspiring each other to become better at what they do – sharing their strengths and working together.

A few submissions also suggested that there should be greater recognition of collegiate practices and emphasised the importance of professional trust.

An individual respondent reflected the views of some others by arguing that it is not reasonable to expect a teacher to be a leader in every area:

I agree that we are all leaders of learning. Not every teacher can be a leader in the whole school community. Many teachers would like to be leaders but this again should not be forced upon those who do not want to be leaders in the whole school community.

One of the professional associations agreed, commenting that:

While we understand the concept of distributed leadership, not everyone can lead all of the time and there should be some recognition of that.

A number of respondents raised concerns that the emphasis on leadership could be used to ask more of teachers. This was argued by one of the professional associations, which wrote:

There must however be a clear understanding of what leadership means and that it is being used as a supportive learning tool rather than teachers being pressed to undertake leadership roles for which they are not being remunerated.

What we did:

- ensured that leadership for learning was a clear focus within the Standards for Registration and the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning,
- ensured that each of the Standards included an emphasis on collegiate practices,
- established/...

- established a short life working group to produce guidance notes to support teachers and line managers in using the revised Standards.

3.4 Sustainability

Learning for sustainability has been embedded within the framework in order to support teachers in embracing and promoting principles and practices of sustainability in all aspects of their work.		
Q4 How effectively does the framework of standards reflect the importance of learning for sustainability?	No.	%
<i>Very effectively</i>	10	14.7
<i>Effectively</i>	29	42.6
<i>Not that effectively</i>	19	27.9
<i>Not at all effectively</i>	9	13.2
<i>Other</i>	1	1.5
Totals	68	100
<i>Comments received</i>	48	

There was strong support for the focus of learning for sustainability and associated concepts such as global citizenship, especially from a number of stakeholder bodies, one of which described the review of Standards as “internationally significant” and potentially unique. An individual respondent also noted that this aligns the Standards with key themes in Curriculum for Excellence.

A number of responses also welcomed the specific references to outdoor learning in the Standards, one stakeholder body observing that:

If practitioners are to effectively develop children and young people as global citizens with a commitment to sustainable living then it is essential that practitioners have the skills and confidence to take learning outdoors

By contrast, a few respondents queried the focus on sustainability over other themes such as citizenship or asked that there be more explicit justification of this focus.

Other respondents believed that there was a need to clarify the use of terminology, as some were unclear as to whether learning for sustainability related to pupil knowledge of global and ecological issues or to teachers implementing sustainable practices. This issue also arose at the regional meeting in Glasgow.

What we did:

- included an explicit definition of learning for sustainability, both in the introduction and in each Standard,
- planned for the inclusion of additional reference materials for Learning for Sustainability in the additional guidance information.

3.5/...

3.5 The Standards for Registration

The Standards for Registration incorporate the Standard for Provisional Registration and the Standard for Full Registration, with professional actions detailed at two levels.		
Q5 Is it useful to have these two standards within the one document?	No.	%
Yes	62	87.3
No	9	12.7
Totals	71	100
<i>Comments received</i>	49	

There was strong endorsement of having the two Standards within one document, with many respondents agreeing that it demonstrated progression and helped to show the differences to probationers and to registered teachers. This was also agreed at the regional meeting in Edinburgh. Many also thought the single document approach provided a clear early career pathway.

A few respondents advocated including the SCLPL in the same document, thus permitting people to be at different stages in the same Standard. Both at the Edinburgh regional meeting and in a Glow Meet there was a suggestion to illustrate the profession across all three Standards diagrammatically.

Q6 How effectively do these two standards articulate the progression from Initial Teacher Education to the early phase of a registered teacher's career?	No.	%
<i>Very effectively</i>	23	32.9
<i>Effectively</i>	35	50.0
<i>Not that effectively</i>	7	10.0
<i>Not at all effectively</i>	5	7.1
Totals	70	100
<i>Comments received</i>	36	

Many of those who commented on this question agreed that the Standards articulate progression effectively, both from Initial Teacher Education to induction and from provisional to full registration. A few respondents argued that there should not be separate descriptions at Provisional and Full Registration but that one should apply to all.

A small number of submissions expressed concern that the move between the two might be difficult to achieve in one year.

One suggestion for further enhancement was to provide exemplification by illustration in areas where the distinction between the two Standards was by adjective or adverb.

Q7/...

Q7 How appropriate are the benchmarks and assessment provided by the Standards for Registration in order to award related qualifications and registration?	No.	%
<i>Very appropriate</i>	14	20.0
<i>Appropriate</i>	35	50.0
<i>Not that appropriate</i>	15	21.4
<i>Not at all appropriate</i>	6	8.6
Totals	70	100
<i>Comments received</i>	48	

The majority of those who provided comments felt that the benchmarks were clear and that the material was valid and appropriate, though a few respondents made specific suggestions regarding phrasing to enhance clarity or address a specific learning need.

A few individuals and three professional associations expressed the view that attainment of the benchmarks depended on teachers receiving adequate resources, especially in the provision of CPD opportunities. This theme of the importance of adequate funding for Continuing Professional Development featured in answers to several questions, especially those relating to the SCLPL and to the Standard for Middle **Leadership**.

Further issues raised included:

- some concerns that the benchmarks could become a “tick box” exercise,
- the need to clarify what was meant by “other qualifications”,
- the need to clarify the assessment process still further.

What we did:

- established a short life working group to develop guidance notes on the revised Standards, which will help ensure that they are used to support teacher professional learning at all career stages.

3.6 The Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning

The Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning provides a framework for experienced teachers to develop and advance practice as they progress throughout their careers.		
Q8 How effectively does the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning meet the needs of experienced teachers to develop practice?	No.	%
<i>Very effectively</i>	11	15.9
<i>Effectively</i>	32	46.4
<i>Not that effectively</i>	14	20.3
<i>Not at all effectively</i>	12	17.4
Totals	69	100
<i>Comments received</i>	54	

A/...

A range of views was expressed on the SCLPL. Some respondents welcomed the introduction of this Standard, while others suggested that in its current format it was more of a framework than a Standard. This theme also arose at the regional meetings in Glasgow and Edinburgh. This Standard drew more questions about specific details than the others, with several respondents believing that it needed closer links to the other Standards as well as a similar format to them.

Some respondents also raised questions about some of the language used in the SCLPL in defining teacher qualities, asking for clarification or exemplification. A few felt that there was a need for a fuller definition of accomplishment and clearer criteria for judging a “leading” or “accomplished” teacher, with a contributor to a Glow Meet queried the use of the word “status” in this context, wondering who would confer such a status on a teacher, a question which also arose in the regional meeting in Glasgow.

A number of respondents also expressed the view that as phrased, this Standard was very demanding, with one individual and one professional association describing it as “daunting”. Several respondents were concerned it could be used in the area of competency or as a punitive management tool. Others felt that it looked like a desire to retain Chartered Teachers without having to pay for them.

Several submissions referred to the need for support for teachers in CPD and in access to research in order to enable attainment of the Standard.

Other issues raised in the responses included:

- the hope that this Standard would challenge and support professional learning and development planning, including the development of Masters level study,
- the effectiveness of the Standard as a tool would depend on how it was implemented, so clarity on roles and responsibility for implementation was necessary.

Q9 Would five years after gaining the Standard for Full Registration be an appropriate time for teachers to consider their development against the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning?	No.	%
Yes	39	55.7
No	31	44.3
Totals	70	100
<i>Comments received</i>	45	

There was a clear division of views on the appropriateness of five years as a timescale for reflection against the SCLPL. Some respondents felt this to be entirely appropriate, but others argued for more flexibility as people develop their skills at different rates, so some might be able to use the Standard at an earlier stage while it might take others longer to be ready. This view was also expressed in the Aberdeen regional meeting.

One local authority stated that:

The situation is much more varied than setting a 5-year watershed. Some teachers may be ready to self evaluate against the SCLPL before gaining 5 years' experience and others may take much longer. An opportunity for teachers to reflect against all three of the standards simultaneously at any point in their career would be more flexible.

One/...

One individual, who described himself as a young teacher, agreed. He observed:

5 years is a long time. There should be an opportunity for SCLP to start earlier for those who choose, from 1 year after full registration.

As in other areas, a number of submissions referred to the necessity for appropriate guidance, support and access to CPD opportunities to enable teachers to engage effectively in this process.

What we did:

- revised the layout of the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning in line with the Standards for Leadership and Management,
- revised the guidance on GTC Scotland Professional Recognition to support self-evaluation using the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning (work in progress),
- removed reference to the use of this Standard from 5 years into the profession, identifying this as a standard to support the development of teachers who choose to reflect against this standard

3.7 The Standards for Leadership and Management

The Standards for Leadership and Management incorporates the Standard for Middle Leadership and the Standard for Headship.		
Q10 How helpful is the introduction of a Standard for Middle Leadership?	No.	%
<i>Very helpful</i>	18	26.1
<i>Helpful</i>	33	47.8
<i>Not that helpful</i>	12	17.4
<i>Not at all helpful</i>	6	8.7
Totals	69	100
<i>Comments received</i>	46	

Although there was a broad welcome for the Standard for Middle Leadership, a number of respondents did not like the use of the term Middle Leadership. This also arose in discussion at one of the Glow Meets and in the regional meeting in Edinburgh, while in the meeting in Aberdeen there was a request for clearer definition of what was meant by middle leadership.

Some of the points made in supporting the introduction of this Standard included:

the importance of middle-leaders is becoming increasingly in Scottish education; and should be recognised as such, (Professional association)

the description of this Standard as a 'resource', to help support those in or aspiring to leadership roles, is appropriate, (Stakeholder body)

a clear standard for those who are at this stage of their career has been needed and allows those in this position to develop the skills to achieve this in a coherent fashion, (Local authority)

it is helpful in establishing a pathway to leadership by demonstrating how to move from Registration through middle leadership to senior roles, (University)

gives a marker of intent and capability. (Individual)

A/...

A number of respondents believed that the Standards for Leadership and Management would contribute to progression between middle management and headship. One stakeholder body observed that the Standard for Middle Leadership “sets out clearly expectations of teachers, Middle managers and Headteachers - this is a partnership! Clearly defined roles”. Others noted that this progression would be supported by the Standards enabling middle managers to evaluate their own development.

A contributor to a Glow Meet suggested there should be separate professional actions for those holding different levels of promoted posts.

A small number of respondents felt that the Standard for Middle Leadership was irrelevant for developmental purposes as opportunities for progression have become restricted.

Q11 How effectively do these standards articulate the progression from Middle Leadership to Headship and beyond?	No.
<i>Comments received</i>	<i>50</i>

The majority of those who responded felt that they articulated the progression effectively, showing the differences in role between middle management and headship. Several respondents would have welcomed diagrammatic representation of the progression as with the Standards for Registration and a few made specific suggestions for amending the presentation of the Standards or for clarifying particular usages of language.

One stakeholder group thought that the Standards did not recognise sufficiently the differences between the Principal Teacher roles in Primary and Secondary schools.

What we did:

- considered other terminology for middle leadership, but kept the title in line with references in current national and international leadership.

3.8 Additional questions

Q12 These standards have been developed to support the professional learning of teachers. How suitable are they in supporting the development of educational professionals more widely, for example in the area of Professional Update?	No.	%
<i>Very suitable</i>	11	16.4
<i>Suitable</i>	36	53.7
<i>Not that suitable</i>	11	16.4
<i>Not at all suitable</i>	9	13.4
Totals	67	100
<i>Comments received</i>	<i>45</i>	

There were divided views on the usefulness of the Standards for professionals beyond schools. Some respondents felt that they offered a welcome reference point and could assist in supporting both the Professional Review and Development process and Professional Update, while others felt that they needed revision to become applicable to people in Quality Improvement Officer posts and others.

Other themes raised in responses included:

- their effectiveness would depend on the support structures and CPD opportunities available, the challenge being to provide the infrastructure to deliver such support,
- concerns/...

- concerns in a small number of submissions about workload implications,
- as in responses to some other questions, warnings that the Standards should not be used as tick lists,
- some suggestions for specific re-phrasings.

What we did:

- considered these issues as part of the planning for Professional Update, which includes the need to develop a system to support the needs of all registered teachers.

Ian Matheson
Education Adviser (Research)

Patricia Morris
Researcher

Respondents

The following responded to the survey or submitted evidence in written form. Twenty-three individuals and one organisation indicated that they did not wish their participation to be made public. One individual survey submission was made anonymously.

Individual submissions

Ms. R. Akhtar	Ms. L. Harris
Ms. A-M. Banks	Mr. R. Hendry
Mr. A Britton	Ms. L. Imlay
Mr. R. Brown	Mr. I. McMillan
Mr. P. Cochrane	Ms. M. Maley
Ms. K. D'Arcy-Burt	Professor G. Smyth
Ms. M. Farquhar	Ms. V. Stewart
Professor L. Florian	Mr. C. Thornton
Ms. C. Franklin	Mr. D. Whitelaw

Local authorities

Aberdeen City Council	Moray Council Education and Social Care Department
Angus Council	North Lanarkshire Council
Argyll and Bute Council	Perth & Kinross Council Education and Children's Services
East Dunbartonshire Council Education	West Lothian Council Education Services
East Renfrewshire Council	

Universities

The Open University in Scotland
University of Aberdeen Partnership Teams
University of Edinburgh Moray House School of Education
University of Glasgow School of Education
University of the Highlands and Islands
University of Strathclyde School of Education
University of the West of Scotland School of Education

Teacher Professional Associations

Association of Teachers and Lecturers Scotland
Educational Institute of Scotland
NAS-UWT Scotland
Scottish Secondary Schoolteachers Association
Voice the Union

Stakeholder bodies

Association of Chartered Teachers Scotland
CALL Scotland
Catholic Education Commission
Church of Scotland Standing Committee on Education
Education Scotland
ENABLE Scotland
General Teaching Council of Ireland
Gretna Primary School
National Health Service Education for Scotland
One Planet Schools Ministerial Advisory Group
School Leaders Scotland
Scottish Council of Independent Schools
Scottish Qualifications Authority
Teviot and Liddesdale Learning Community Principal Teachers
WWF Scotland