



## GTC Scotland Student Teacher Code Consultation Responses

The Council received a total of 14 responses to the consultation on the Student Teacher Code (STC). Eight of these were from individuals, the remainder came from:

- EIS
- Voice the Union
- ATL Scotland
- Aberdeen University
- Strathclyde University
- GTC Wales
- SLS

We thank all respondents for taking the time to help inform, and improve, our proposed Student Teacher Code.

### General

There was very positive support for the STC in general with some specific areas for consideration.

### Part 1 - Working with Pupils

- 1 One respondent raised a concern about the use of the word "strictly" in connection with past conduct.

#### **Response and reasons:**

This was accepted and the word "strictly" has been deleted.

- 2 One respondent wished to see a definition of role model.

#### **Response and reasons:**

After careful consideration it was decided that such an inclusion would be overly prescriptive in a code of this nature, purpose and scope. It was felt that a common sense approach and the STC taken as a whole should define the expectations of a role model sufficiently.

- 3 One respondent suggested that the term, "reflective practitioner" should be included.

#### **Response and reasons:**

After due consideration it was agreed that this expectation sits more appropriately in the relevant Standard (eg SITE for the SfR) than in a Student Teacher Code. It was also felt it did not best reflect the stage and position of the Student Teacher.

- 4 In regard to the terminology used in regard to 'pupil' or 'learner', a majority of respondents was in favour of 'learner'.

#### **Response and reasons:/...**

**Response and reasons:**

After a lot of discussion, on balance it was agreed to retain the term 'pupil' but that a wider definition of the term pupil should be incorporated at the outset of the STC and thus embrace the diversity of educational setting.

- 5 One respondent suggested that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should be expressly included in the STC.

**Response and reasons:**

This has been included as the final bullet point in Part 1 and will further enhance the focus on the child protection and equality and diversity elements already in the STC.

- 6 In regard to Child Protection all respondents supported the position outlined in the STC.

**Response and reasons:**

It was agreed that there should be no change but kept constantly under review in the light of any developments in this important area.

**Part 2 - Working with others**

- 7 One respondent suggested that at Bullet 4 the word "encouraged" should be deleted as this was not appropriate to the stage and role of the student teacher.

**Response and reasons:**

This was accepted for the reasons above.

- 8 One respondent suggested that Bullet 3 should include a reference to social networking given its rising prominence and usage.

**Response and reasons:**

This was accepted for the reasons above (and see also consultation point 12 below).

**Part 3 - Honesty and Integrity**

- 9 One respondent suggested the removal of drug abuse as it related to a criminal offence.

**Response and reasons:**

This suggestion was not accepted as, in terms of the STC, the GTCS could be concerned with drug abuse by an individual which may not necessarily be illegal.

- 10 There was one suggestion that the term "social event" (Bullet 8) was too vague.

**Response and reasons:**

This bullet point has been re-worded to reflect these concerns and incorporate whilst still maintaining an appropriate awareness about personal conduct.

11/...

- 11 One respondent raised concerns about inclusion of criminal behaviour "of any kind".

**Response and reasons:**

The Fitness to Teach procedures ensure that each case is looked at on its own merits with due regard to proportionality. Therefore it is highly unlikely that a one-off minor offence would be of serious concern. However, a series of minor offences may be viewed differently as this could evidence a concerning trend of criminal behaviour. It was agreed that the Bullet point should be reworded with the inclusion of "serious" to give the required balance and so address the concern raised.

- 12 There was very strong support for extra guidance in relation to social networking (see also point 8 above).

**Response and reasons:**

This was accepted and in response, the Council shall be bringing forward a new publication entitled "Professional Guidance on the Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media" early in 2012.

#### **Part 4 - Equality and Diversity**

- 13 There was wide support for this section of the STC and it has been agreed to keep this under review.

#### **General matters**

- 14 In regard to distribution/format, only one respondent opted for paper copies with the majority supporting electronic format, provided the STC was easily accessible and well publicised. Another suggested paper copies at the outset with electronic updates thereafter.

**Response and reasons:**

It was agreed that the STC should be published in pdf version only on the grounds of cost and the increasing and very effective use of electronic communication. We intend to have a full public launch of the STC and are already in liaison with the Universities to ensure its wide distribution via email and University Intranets. It was also considered preferable that there should be only one current version of the Code therefore the above suggestion was impractical and could lead to confusion.

The STC and its associated document the revised Code of Professionalism and Conduct (CoPAC) are by intention less legalistic and technical documents. Therefore it is thought that a glossary of terms is unnecessary and would indeed detract from the intention and character of the STC.

- 15 One respondent suggested that in the future an awareness of the STC should be integrated within the Standard for Initial Teacher Education (SITE).

**Response and reasons:**

This was accepted as a very helpful suggestion which has been passed to the Director of Education and Professional Learning for consideration.

#### **Next steps/...**

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It is hoped that the STC will be published early in 2012 and publicised/distributed in line with point 13 above.