Excellence in Professional Learning Award: Schools and Learning Communities - 2019

Nomination Guide and Information

November 2018
## Contents

1  Excellence in Professional Learning Award ................................................................. 1

2  Excellence in Professional Learning Award - an Award for Schools and Learning Communities ................................................................. 1

   2.1  Background ............................................................................................................ 1

   2.2  The Principles Governing the Award .................................................................. 1

   2.3  Model of Professional Learning: The Teacher/Educator as Learner ...................... 2

   2.4  Panels and the Role of Professional Learning Advocates ..................................... 3

   2.5  Nominations 2019 ............................................................................................. 3

   2.6  Successful Nominations ..................................................................................... 4
1  **Excellence in Professional Learning Award**

There has never been a more important time for a focus on the areas of both excellence and professional learning. This is particularly relevant in the current educational climate in the context of raising achievement and bridging the attaining gap as set out in the National Improvement Framework, Delivery Plan, the Governance Review and focus on leadership, through the work of Education Scotland/SCEL.

> “Teachers are the key resource in education; and how they are developed and supported throughout their careers necessarily has a strong impact on the performance of students and schools – particularly those with the greatest need.”

*Schleicher 2015*

GTC Scotland offers an Excellence in Professional Learning Award which celebrates, promotes and encourages teacher professionalism and professional learning at all stages of a teacher’s career, and includes the leadership of learning cultures in which teacher professionalism can thrive and bring about real impact to the life chances of pupils.

The GTCS Excellence in Professional Learning Award places a spotlight on the excellent work taking place in our classrooms, schools, colleges, universities, local authorities, and across a range of partnerships.

More information can be found on the GTCS website:

[Excellence in Professional Learning Award for Schools and Learning Communities](#)

2  **Excellence in Professional Learning Award - an Award for Schools and Learning Communities**

2.1  **Background**

The Excellence in Professional Learning Award recognises the central role that leadership at all levels plays in creating and sustaining professional learning environments where teacher professionalism can flourish and bring about sustained impact on learning and learners.

The Award is held for a 3 year period. It celebrates and recognises schools and learning communities which promote, support and lead professional learning which has significant and sustained impact on teachers, classroom practice and pupil learning, and is based around the Professional Standards.

2.2  **The Principles Governing the Award**

The principles governing the award were established by the Professional Learning Award Strategic Development Group in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders.

The Professional Learning Award Strategic Development Group was guided by the GTCS Teacher Professionalism position paper and were instrumental in creating the Professional Learning Model. This model was subsequently adopted by Education Scotland and was launched at the 2018 Scottish Learning Festival as the National Model of Professional Learning.
The principles governing the design and delivery of the Award were as follows, there needs to be:

- transparency in all processes and should be empowering for the school/learning community;
- strong support for the underpinning vision for teacher professionalism;
- a focus on the professional learning of the teachers/educators and must actively build collaborative professionalism;
- the Career Long Professional Learning Standards central to the professional learning undertaken;
- leadership of learning at all levels, this is crucial;
- leadership for learning, this must create a positive ethos and culture of trust within the school or learning community;
- honest discussions on the barriers, challenges and a solution focused approach to overcome;
- the voice of participants, this is crucial to the process.

2.3 Model of Professional Learning: The Teacher/Educator as Learner

The Model of Professional Learning is premised on the Professional Standards which are underpinned by professional values and professional commitment and is built upon a wide range of international and national literature and research on what supports teacher professional learning and development (see below).

Teachers demonstrate their professional commitment by being lifelong learners and undertaking professional learning. Professional learning is a critical part of developing teacher professionalism. The model identifies the key principles and features of effective professional learning that build professional capacity and promote collaborative practices. It outlines the kind of learning that supports teachers to be empowered and enables them to meet the needs of all learners.

The Model of Professional Learning focuses on the teacher/educator-as-learner and how this relates to, and impacts on, the learning of children, young people and adult learners. It illustrates the importance of leadership of and for learning to create the culture and ethos of learning which is informed by the Professional Standards. The model demonstrates the priorities of:

- **Learning as collaborative** – interactive, reflective and involves learning with and from others
- **Learning by enquiring** – underpinned by and developing skills of enquiry and criticality
- **Learning that deepens knowledge and understanding** – challenging and developing thinking, knowledge, skills and understanding
2.4 Panels and the Role of Professional Learning Advocates

GTC Scotland’s Education Committee delegates the scrutiny and evaluation of the Excellence in Professional Learning Award to specifically convened panels.

A GTCS Council member must chair the panel. The panel is made up of a team of trained Professional Learning Advocates* who are experienced head teachers, senior leaders and local authority officers with strategic responsibility for professional learning or have key roles within educational settings. The panel is serviced by a GTCS Education Officer.

The panel will look for evidence against the Model of Professional Learning that indicates the strength of the provision of learning for those participating in the school or learning community and the strength of the development, knowledge and skills of those leading the learning within the school or learning community.

*Professional Learning Advocates will be recruited from local authorities, primarily those who have responsibility for professional learning.

2.5 Nominations for 2019

Nominations must be supported by the Director of Education and a lead officer from the local authority needs to be identified to form part of the support team for the school or learning community.

There should be confidence that the school or learning community nominated clearly demonstrates the key features of the Professional Learning Model and the processes of Professional Learning are embedded in the culture of learning.
The process for evidencing the award will draw upon existing knowledge, e.g. from local authority Quality Improvement visits or other locally held evidence of the rich professional learning taking place within and across the nominated school or learning community.

Nominations are limited to one per local authority and should be received no later than **14 December 2018**. A nomination proforma is included with this guidance for completion.

(A GTCS Education Officer will be available to help with questions and any additional information as required).

### 2.6 Successful Nominations

If the nomination is successful then the school or learning community will be allocated a support team comprising of:

- GTCS Education Officer;
- Local Authority Support Officer/Organisation Lead Officer;
- Where possible, a Professional Learning Advocate from outwith the LA.

The GTCS officer will send the school or learning community a submission pack and set up an initial meeting to set out a working timeline and identify how the school or learning community wish to approach their submission.

**Please note:** whilst the support team are there to support the process it is the responsibility of the school/learning community to engage fully in the process, lead their submission and complete all relevant aspects required for the submission.

The majority of the Professional Learning Award panels will take place from April to early June 2019.
GTC Scotland aims to promote equality and diversity in all its activities