

Consultation on our Election Scheme

CONSULTATION INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Why are the changes proposed?

We want to maintain confidence in GTCS and are continuously looking at ways in which we can improve how we work. The GTCS Election Scheme which is currently in place was last revised in June 2014. We have now identified a number of changes that are required based on feedback from others as well as our own ongoing evaluation procedures.

The 2015-2016 GTCS Council Election was trialled as the first-ever solely online election. This was done for a number of reasons, the main one being GTCS's commitment to sustainability. By conducting online ballots, we saved approximately £43,000. Feedback on the online process was largely positive and as a result, we have decided that all future elections will be conducted in this way.

As part of the review of the 2015-2016 GTCS Council Election and the move to an online process, we identified that there is a need for greater clarity on how to go about standing as a candidate in our elections. Although we are not proposing many changes as part of this consultation, we think the changes proposed will have a real positive impact in simplifying and streamlining our future election process.

What changes are proposed?

You can view the Scheme [currently in place](#) and the [draft revised version](#). The changes that we have proposed are track changed (or revision marked) on the document. We have also made some general tidying changes to ensure that the Scheme is clear and aligns with practice. More about the changes proposed (and other aspects of the election process on which we are seeking views) is explained below. Please respond to the questions in this Consultation through our online survey.

Election categories

Recent elections have seen some degree of confusion regarding 'registration category' and 'voting category'. This has been an issue for nominees seeking support from colleagues for their nomination (particularly where Registrants are registered in more than one sector).

We have the following registration categories:

- 1 Primary/Nursery Teacher**
- 2 Primary/Nursery Headteacher**
- 3 Secondary Teacher**
- 4 Secondary Headteacher**
- 5 Further Education (FE)**
- 6 Universities providing courses of Initial Teacher Education (TEI)**

Within Primary/Nursery and Secondary sectors, there are 2 employment categories – Teacher or Headteacher. It is the responsibility of registrants to ensure that their details are kept up to date as we may not always know when someone moves school or changes job as a result of promotion (e.g. through promotion to a Headteacher post).

Employment categories only really come into play in terms of those nominees wishing to stand for election in the Primary/Nursery and Secondary categories as we reserve 2 Headteacher seats in each for the Council membership.

We have the following voting categories:

- 1 Primary/Nursery Teachers in Schools in Scotland (including Headteachers)**
- 2 Secondary Teachers in Schools in Scotland (including Headteachers)**

3 Teachers/Lecturers Employed in Further Education (FE)
4 Universities Providing Courses of Initial Teacher Education (TEI)

Registrants can request a change in voting category at any time. Those employed in the Further Education (FE) and Teacher Education Institution (TEI) sectors commonly need to request a change as often they continue to hold the voting category in which they gained Full Registration (e.g. Primary/Nursery or Secondary).

Registrants wishing to propose, second or support nominations require to be in the same voting category as the nominee. More often than not, this is not the case and can lead to delays in the validation process for nominations. We regularly remind registrants to check their voting category as this also dictates which ballot materials they receive. In the last election, it became apparent that some registrants mistakenly believed that a fee would be incurred if they requested a change of voting category.

Proposal

We think we need to improve our communication of this among registrants to increase awareness and attract a greater deal of interest in our Council elections.

➤ **Consultation questions:**

- a) ***Do you have any comments on how we could improve awareness and understanding of voting (as compared to registration) categories?***
- b) ***Do you think there is anything else we could do to attract more interest in our election process?***

Simplification of the nomination process

At the moment, nominees must have their nomination proposed and seconded as well as supported by five individuals. The proposer, seconder and supporters must all be currently registered teachers and be in the same voting category as the nominee.

Proposal

We think that standing for election should be made far simpler and accessible. We therefore propose:

- (i) Nominations may be proposed and seconded by anyone who is currently registered with GTCS. For example, a person standing for nomination as a Secondary Teacher could be proposed and seconded by anyone in primary/nursery, Secondary or Further Education.
- (ii) Removing the need for 5 supporters in addition to a proposer and seconder. This nomination method is currently used by GTCS when co-opting new members to serve on Council (where necessary when a vacancy arises between Council elections) and works well.

We feel that by making these changes, we may attract nominations from a more diverse range of candidates and make the election process more inclusive. We also think it will make the nomination process less bureaucratic and easier to follow.

➤ **Consultation questions:**

- a) ***Do you agree that anyone currently registered, in any voting category should be permitted to propose or second a nomination as outlined in (i) above?***
- b) ***Do you agree that nominations should now only be proposed and seconded – removing the need for an additional 5 supporters?***
- c) ***Do you have any other comments regarding the simplification of the nomination process?***

3 Move to online nominations

Following on from the move to an online ballot process, we are proposing to introduce online nominations: the changes we have proposed to the Scheme would enable that to happen.

➤ **Consultation questions:**

- a) ***Do you agree that the nomination process be moved online?***
- b) ***Do you have any comments regarding the proposed change to online nominations?***

Equality and Diversity

GTC Scotland promotes equality and diversity because we respect and value difference. We want everything that we do to be fair to all individuals and groups.

We want to ensure that all of our policies and services are free from discrimination. For this reason, we are carrying out an equality and diversity impact assessment on the changes that we are proposing to the Election Scheme (as detailed above). We are interested in receiving feedback as part of this consultation exercise to help us carry out our impact assessment.

➤ **Consultation question:**

Do you think that any of the changes we are proposing will have an impact on any group of people in terms of the protected characteristics (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership)?

When would the proposed changes take effect?

It is intended that the revised Election Scheme will come into effect before the 2016-2017 GTCS Council Election process starts.

Got any questions?

If you would like to clarify any aspect of this consultation, please contact Lisa Dobie, Council and Panel Support Officer consultations@gtcs.org.uk