

## COLLEGES CONNECT

DECEMBER 2019

# GTC Scotland takes responsibility for lecturers' Professional Standards

**G**TC Scotland has been given responsibility for the Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges by the Scottish Government.

The modernised set of Professional Standards were launched in November 2018. They firmly embed the importance of digital approaches in learning, teaching and assessment and, for the first time, include the professional values of a lecturer in Scotland's colleges.

## How the standards support lecturers in PRD

The Professional Standards challenge thinking, enhance practice and demonstrate professionalism. They can be used to not only support lecturers to engage in high-quality, impactful professional learning but also to support your professional learning and development

through your college Professional Review and Development (PRD) process.

The standards are there to encourage lecturers to think critically; to allow you to reflect on your own thinking and professional practice and to consider and plan your professional learning.

Ken Muir, Chief Executive and Registrar of the General Teaching Council for Scotland and Chair of the College Lecturer Registration Working Group, said: "The transfer of the Professional Standards to GTC Scotland is another important step in acknowledging the professionalism of lecturers and their ongoing commitment to professional learning. We look forward to working with partners across the college sector to offer lecturers a suite of services to support their ongoing professional development."

## Explore the Standards

### The Professional Standards have a range of purposes including:

- To develop lecturers as critically reflective and evaluative practitioners
- To support professional dialogue and collegiate working
- To challenge lecturers' beliefs and values
- To support professional learning and development
- To underpin the Teaching Qualification for Further Education (TQFE) and the SQA Professional Development Awards (PDAs) related to developing your teaching practice
- To contribute to sector developments as a benchmark standard (through TQFE) for entry to GTC Scotland's Register of Teachers as a college lecturer.

Find out more about the Professional Standards, visit [www.gtcs.org.uk/web/files/the-standards/Standards-for-Lecturers-Scotland-Colleges.pdf](http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/files/the-standards/Standards-for-Lecturers-Scotland-Colleges.pdf)

## Win an iPad!

Thank you for reading our first newsletter for colleges! We have named this launch issue *Colleges Connect* but we want you to choose the name for the next publication and all future editions.

To win, simply email [communications@gtcs.org.uk](mailto:communications@gtcs.org.uk) with your suggestion. The winner will receive an iPad and be announced in the next edition.



## Read the GTC Scotland registration FAQs

Over 400 college lecturers are already registered on a voluntary basis in the Further Education registration category of the GTCS register.

Read the [FAQs](#) to find out more about the benefits of registration with GTC Scotland.

# Registration recognises the key contribution of the college sector

College lecturer registration with GTCS has been a long-held aim of the EIS. With the return to national bargaining in 2015 one of our key priorities was to tackle the casualisation and deskilling of the college workforce and to ensure properly resourced provision for TQFE and lecturer CPD – GTCS registration is a key part of this.

The College Lecturer Registration Working Group was established as part of the 2017 Agreement – the outcome of our 'Honour the Deal' campaign on pay and key national terms and conditions. As part of the Agreement, both sides committed to GTCS registration with a target date of April 2019.

For the EIS, lecturer registration is not about us 'becoming professionals'. We are professionals – we are highly skilled, trained not only in our subject area or vocational discipline but also as teachers of diverse and often vulnerable adults and young people. Registration does not change our jobs, rather it recognises – for the very first time – our professional status.

Registration will bring change to the sector. It sets down a challenge to the sector to look seriously at how we approach learning and teaching and how we use our professional standards (and they are our standards as lecturers). It challenges us to be empowered and to take decisions about our own professional learning and development – again our CPD for our benefit and that of our learners. And in setting down this challenge to us as lecturers, registration sets down a challenge to the whole sector. Registration brings challenges for colleges and for the Scottish Government, starting with the need for real investment in TQFE and lecturer CPD. With hundreds of experienced, qualified lecturers leaving the sector after mergers, a third of lecturers now sit on lengthy waiting lists for TQFE courses due to a combination of access being blocked and not enough capacity in the system to cope with demand.

Registration recognises the key contribution that our college sector makes to the Scottish education system – the lynchpin between school and university and central to closing the attainment gap, whether offering real opportunities and alternatives to young people in the senior phase or providing Further and Higher Education that is genuinely accessible to communities from Galashiels to Stornoway. Most of all, it recognises the lecturers at the centre of this system – not instructors, not assessors – but empowered, professional lecturers.



There are hurdles ahead and questions to be answered. The working groups are under way and EIS reps will be visiting branches to update on our work in the coming months. At present, registration is only open to those with TQFE (or an equivalent schools' qualification like PGDE). This could change when new registration categories are considered.

No one will lose their job as a result of registration – but it will take time to register all 7,000 college lecturers in Scotland.

As a trade union we have fought hard for our pay and terms and conditions. We fought successfully for national bargaining because we believed that lecturers doing the same job in different colleges, in different parts of the country, deserved to be equally rewarded. We continue to work to ensure that agreements reached are implemented consistently across the country. But we also fight for the bigger picture of the college sector we want for our students and of the college sector we want to work in. Our students deserve to be taught by skilled, qualified, empowered professionals – and we deserve recognition.

**Pam Currie is EIS FELA President and a GTC Scotland Council member**

## College lecturer registration hits the education headlines

The *Times Educational Supplement* (TES) has highlighted the work that is being undertaken on the development of a bespoke registration model for college lecturers. In an opinion article in TES, Ken Muir, Chief Executive and Registrar of GTCS and Chair of the College Lecturer Registration Working Group, says that a culture of teacher professionalism is key to improving the quality of learning and teaching in the Scottish education system. He goes on to discuss the pivotal role colleges play for many to accessing employment or progressing to higher levels of education. Read the article at [www.tes.com/news/why-college-lecturers-will-benefit-registration](http://www.tes.com/news/why-college-lecturers-will-benefit-registration)

# Update from the College working groups

Representatives from GTCS, EIS FELA, Colleges Scotland, Scottish Government and universities offering the Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) met on 5 December to develop a bespoke registration model for college lecturers.

The registration programme is being carried out in response to the National Joint Negotiating Committee settlement agreement of 2017, which requires registration of college lecturers with the GTCS. Two sub-groups have been set up. The Registration group investigates registration criteria, while the Professionalism group focuses on ensuring that the distinct identity of the college sector is reflected in any registration and regulation arrangements.

Ken Muir said: "These sub-groups are looking in detail at the processes for registration and regulation of college lecturers in Scotland. It is a complex programme, which



will respect the distinct identity of the college sector and ensure the professionalism of lecturers is recognised and developed through professional learning. Registration will enhance and raise the profile of college lecturer professionalism across the country."

## Enhancing professional development and collaboration

Further Education Minister Richard Lochhead has announced a new College Quality Improvement Hub which will focus on reducing the full-time further education withdrawal rate, currently at 27%.

This follows a successful two-year pilot that saw an increase in student completions and identified some of the reasons why students decide to leave early – including complex personal issues, funding, or not initially choosing the right course. The Hub will also enhance professional development opportunities for school and college staff, improve collaboration among colleges, and provide access to practical tools and information from other successful projects.



**This represents a new partnership approach to quality improvement in Scotland's colleges"**

## New FE research network seeks journal submissions

The College Action Inquiry Research Network (CAIRN) online journal aims to be an important voice in the scholarship of the Scottish college education sector. It aims to provide a forum to disseminate innovation, knowledge and critical insights and understandings through a variety of scholarly submissions. These will include featured research articles, personal reflection articles and book reviews.

CAIRN welcomes submissions addressing a broad spectrum of contemporary developments, issues and challenges impacting across the sector. Themes may include:

- Leadership; management and administration
- Education policy and reform
- Student learning journey
- Vocational education and training
- Teaching, learning and assessment
- Theoretical and conceptual issues
- Professional issues
- Curriculum development
- Cultural change and structural developments
- Technological developments.

For more information, contact Patrick O'Donnell at [patrick.odonnell@perth.uhi.ac.uk](mailto:patrick.odonnell@perth.uhi.ac.uk), Christine Calder at [c.calder@dundeeandangus.ac.uk](mailto:c.calder@dundeeandangus.ac.uk) or Kevin Brosnan at [k.d.r.brosnan@stir.ac.uk](mailto:k.d.r.brosnan@stir.ac.uk)



# Large group of colleges validated for professional learning

**Fourteen colleges across Scotland have now completed the Professional Update (PU) validation process. As a result, these colleges have received the GTCS quality mark which offers assurance to lecturers, and the education system in Scotland, that colleges meet the national requirements for professional learning.**

Since 2015, colleges have been working with GTCS to align and quality-assure their Professional Review and Development (PRD) processes against the national criteria for PU. Over 400 college lecturers are currently registered with GTCS and must engage in career-long professional learning through PU.

Lecturers who took part in the pilot phase of the PU validation process said that it provided a clearer and more robust way of engaging in professional learning and development through using the Professional Standards for reflection and self-evaluation.

Colleges have additionally identified the following

benefits to validation:

- An opportunity to consider if their current policy and system is contemporary and meets the needs of lecturers and support staff;
- A chance to review current recording systems and their fitness for purpose;
- Helps to consider how the Professional Standards for Lecturers can be used within a reflective recording process which captures evidence of impact of professional learning and to support professional dialogue, and;
- An opportunity to consider new or refreshed approaches to supporting reviewers and reviewees in using effective coaching and mentoring for high-quality PRD.

GTCS is working with the remaining colleges on the PU national review and continuing to offer support to embed the new Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges.