
INSPIRING WORLD-CLASS
TEACHING PROFESSIONALISM



GTC Scotland's response to the Muir Review

Education reform consultation

16 December 2021

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1.1 The vision for Curriculum for Excellence reflects what matters for the education of children and young people in Scotland.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree/Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

1.2 What do you think should be retained and/or changed?

A rework of CFE's four capacities with associated big ideas, along with assigned time and space for teachers to design curriculum at local level in collaboration with colleagues, young people and their school community is required along with the integration of pedagogy so the 'how' gets as much focus as the 'what'. There is a need to start this process with an analysis of responsive pedagogy and what that means for all learners and all teachers. Teachers as curriculum builders/makers needs to be explored and defined; how best to support teachers as co-creators and enactors of policy needs to be considered and practical solutions found to finding the time and space needed to embrace this role. Teacher confidence needs to be enhanced to support individuals to critically engage with policy.

In a model of high-level national direction alongside supported contextual enactment, multiple policy layers and levels need to be addressed. Fundamentally the question 'who owns the curriculum' needs to be debated and agreed. The complexity of the education system does not need to be complicated – a system focus on humanity, compassion and wisdom are fundamental and allow for action to be prioritised on essential matters such as equality, diversity and sustainability.

There requires to be a reduction of policy creation as a management technique for managing issues or addressing unwanted variation and serious and specific implementation planning is required to move into a critically informed action oriented stance.

2.1 Curriculum for Excellence provides a coherent progression in the journey of learners (3-18 and beyond) that gives them the best possible educational experience and enables them to realise their ambitions.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree/Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

2.2 Please share what you believe currently contributes to a coherent progression.

Teacher Professionalism - Teachers have the potential to transform, have a profound impact on the learning experiences and life chances of our children and young people and have a critical role in helping them achieve positive outcomes, to thrive and flourish in life. At the heart of this are professional values and teacher professionalism. Teacher professionalism in Scotland is at the heart of the work of GTC Scotland and is built on the following key principles:

1. Professional values with an unswerving commitment to social justice and a moral imperative to 'get it right for every child'.
2. The importance of promoting, developing and reinvesting in teachers' professional capital through human, decisional and social capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Specifically, this means developing:
 - Teacher-as-learner and their knowledge and understanding (human capital);
 - Collaborative professionalism (social capital);
 - Professional judgement and a critical stance (decisional capital).
3. Ensuring the conditions are created to support & promote teacher professionalism through an aspirational suite of Professional Standards and high-quality leadership at all levels

This kind of professionalism locates teachers as key agents of educational change. It highlights the importance of teachers, school leaders, clusters, local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives working in partnerships and collaboratively to 'lead from the middle' (Lieberman et al., 2017; Fullan & Hargreaves, 2016). Leadership at all levels of the system needs to support, develop and lead change, collaboration, learning and culture. It is about leading self and others, leadership of self and others should have a clear focus on providing coherence for the learner.

2.3 Please share ideas you may have to improve learner progression across stages and sectors.

There are well acknowledged issues in the disconnect between BGE and the senior phase, as well as recognised over-complexity. The value placed on exams and a culture of measurement negatively influences the rest of the system. The tension between attainment and achievement requires to be debated from a starting point of considering education for whom and whose purposes. The purpose of education and school requires clarity within and across sectors in order to address tensions between economic and human drivers. It is unlikely that one system of assessment can meet everyone's needs – together the system needs to decide what is most important to us for now and, crucially, for the future and develop a system from there, we need to consider aspects such as how is assessment distributed, accumulated, extensive, manageable and trusted.

There is a question about how well the three policy pillars of DYW, CFE and GIRFEC are understood and applied coherently across sectors. Is CFE for example a key driver in promoting progression for learners working in the college sector or starting their early learning in funded ELC provision? What support is available (or could be available) to all elements of educational provision to improve learner progression? GTC Scotland believes that there is a connection to the consideration of the professional identity of specific groups. There is a need for example to consider the professional identity of early years practitioners in their provision of both care and education and further immediate national commitments are required to ensure that individuals who join the college lecturing profession have access to a teaching qualification within two years of their employment as well as access to ongoing professional learning that complements their subject specific expertise in their development as a professional lecturer.

Within CFE there is a need to clarify arrangements for responsibility for all and interdisciplinary learning as well as understand what level of variable enactment that responds to local and contextual needs is deemed acceptable. There is also a continued need to ensure transitions within and across the education continuum is more effective for all learners but particularly for those with additional support needs.

To support the development of teacher professionalism for all, the necessary infrastructure needs to be in place. Teaching is complex work, both relationally and intellectually. Developing teacher professionalism is about the way we are as professionals; it informs who we are, how we act, what we know and do, and what we prioritise. Teachers and teaching really matter so how we learn, grow, and develop throughout our careers is important and needs to be prioritised.

Teachers are school and system leaders and should examine their own practices to identify the ways in which they enact and enable teacher professionalism. The ways in which they lead and create the necessary conditions for teachers to engage in this way of working will promote the development of an 'enquiring stance' across the profession. These dispositions and professional actions are embedded in the Professional Standards for teachers. GTC Scotland's Professional Update is an important part of the supporting infrastructure with its focus on self-evaluation using Professional Standards as a framework and engaging in and reflecting on professional learning to ascertain teachers' impact on themselves as learners and the learners they support.

3.1 In practice, learning communities are empowered and use the autonomy provided by Curriculum for Excellence to design a curriculum that meets the needs of their learners.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree/Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

3.2 Please share ideas you may have on what is needed to enhance this in future.

It is unclear from the question what the use of 'learning community' refers to and we also have some concern about the concept that autonomy is 'provided'. There is in our view a need to discuss teacher confidence, capability and capacity to engage in curriculum design. The starting point for any such design needs to be clarity on what kind of curriculum, for what and whose purposes; essentially which model is being privileged (in which sectors) – an economic or personal focus.

Our preference is to consider teacher relational authority and trust rather than empowerment and autonomy. However, in an attempt to answer the question, we believe that autonomy is dependent on context and leadership and how much time and space has been prioritised to support teachers in being curriculum developers.

A framework for this work exists through the Professional Standards for Teachers which outline expectations in relation the curriculum, for instance the Standard for Headship requires individuals to design and build the curriculum.

4.1 The creation of a Curriculum and Assessment Agency will help to address the misalignment of curriculum and assessment as outlined in the OECD report¹⁵.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree/Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

4.2 Please share your views of the potential advantages of establishing such an Agency.

The potential creation of a curriculum and assessment body combines some of the functions of two existing organisations. Any structural change is just that, a change to structure. Whilst GTC Scotland is committed to working in partnership with key bodies in the education landscape regardless of structural organisation, it is essential that careful consideration is given to the impact on functions. It is unclear in these proposals as to the impact on specific national education functions. Essentially it depends on what this agency does and how do they do it. The agency's remit and the way in which they undertake their remit requires to be understood. Is the focus on producing policy direction for example or acting as facilitators/enablers for teachers to discuss curriculum with an associated engagement strategy, which makes it clear how the profession are to be engaged?

GTC Scotland has a central role in Scottish education and will continue to work hard to establish and maintain effective working relationships with all partners including any new agencies with the aim of enhancing teacher professionalism. There is a need for any new educational bodies to have a clear understanding of the scope and statutory functions of GTC Scotland (and vice versa) to enhance collaborative work and ensure clear understanding of roles and functions.

There are likely two main potential main areas for GTC Scotland consideration in any reframing of national education provision:

1. Professional learning and leadership
2. Regulation of the educational system

Which in turn raise issues about:

1. trust
2. policy coherence and relationships between bodies to ensure clarity of functions, potential overlap and alignment
3. equality and diversity
4. governance

4.3 Please share your views of the potential disadvantages of establishing such an Agency.

The potential creation of a curriculum and assessment body combines some of the functions of two existing organisations. Any structural change is just that, a change to structure. It is essential that careful consideration is given to the impact on functions. It is unclear in these proposals as to the anticipated and/or desired impact on specific national education functions. Essentially it depends on what this agency does and how do they do it. Remit and process for delivering the remit is essential understanding. Is the focus on producing policy direction for example or acting as facilitators/enablers for teachers to discuss curriculum with an associated well-thought through engagement strategy, which makes it clear how the profession are to be engaged?

GTC Scotland has a central role in Scottish education and will continue to work hard to establish and maintain effective working relationships with all partners including any new agencies with the aim of enhancing teacher professionalism. There is a need for any new educational bodies to have a clear understanding of the scope and statutory functions of GTC Scotland (and vice versa) to enhance collaborative work and ensure clear understanding of roles and functions. There are likely two main potential main areas for GTC Scotland in any reframing of national education provision:

1. professional learning and leadership
2. regulation of the educational system

Which in turn raise issues about:

1. trust
2. policy coherence and relationships between bodies to ensure clarity of functions, potential overlap and alignment
3. equality and diversity
4. governance

5.1 The full breadth of existing SQA qualifications play an important part of the curriculum offered by secondary schools.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree/Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

5.2 Please identify the main factors, if any, that support a broader range of SQA qualifications being included in the curriculum in secondary schools.

Our response is premised on an understanding that there are a range of qualifications outwith the SQA provision offered in learning contexts. There are however cultural elements at play with regard to the perceived value of specific subjects along with young people and parental perceptions and expectations. There is also the potential impact of practical components such as staffing availability.

More could be achieved through college lecturer and teacher partnerships; however this is predicated on strong teaching qualification support for lecturers and time and space for planned collaboration. There are strengths in the range and variety of the college offer, including - the ability to offer part time programmes; online delivery; college based delivery extended curricular offer to young people; offering opportunities to new arrivals in Scotland and to adults returning to education. There is some excellent work in school-college partnerships and college-university articulation routes.

5.3 Please share any ideas you may have on what is needed to enhance the role of a broader variety of qualifications in the curriculum in secondary schools.

There are potentially wasted opportunities with school-college partnerships in the senior phase. These could be (and sometimes are) fantastic opportunities to extend the curriculum for all young people, to break down rigid gender barriers in employment (especially apprenticeships) and to broaden the senior phase experience (not just about 'learning X' but about working with others from other schools, learning in a college environment, independent learning etc). Instead, they are too often used as a convenient parking spot for pupils who are disengaged at school/not attracted by the 'academic options'. There is an opportunity to revisit the idea of skills profiles to comment, for all learners, their abilities in areas such as working with others, problem solving, etc. There is a need to value this more and consider how we assess and report on it more overtly.

National clarity is required about the ethical deployment of college lecturers in school and college partnerships and a commitment to ensuring lecturers have teaching qualifications and have access to ongoing meaningful professional learning.

There is a vast array of units available in the SQA catalogue for different ages, with different assessment instructions. It is unclear if there is anyone responsible for reviewing NQ units to ensure a coherent college curriculum. Decisions to develop new courses (e.g. Higher Applications of Maths), which would be very relevant to college learners – especially Access students – are now developed without a unit structure at all, making them difficult to deliver in a college context.

The route to becoming a registered college lecturer is in direct contrast to that of a school teacher – employment first followed by qualification then registration. This raises fundamental questions about the national strategic leadership of lecturer professionalism. There is a need to ensure teaching quality (through qualification) is invested in at college in the same way as it has been in schools.

6.1 Technologies are fully and appropriately utilised as a support for curriculum and assessments.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree/Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

6.2 Please share any comments you may have on the use of technologies to support curriculum and assessments, and what could be done to deliver improvements.

Significant and coherent work is required with regards to the use of technologies to address the inequalities in provision and offer. This includes but is not limited to ensuring a resolution to issues regarding parental access to learning platforms, improving the infrastructure and hardware for digital access in schools and communities, considering how all learners can access the support and provision they need and a planned and sustained focus on teacher professional learning. The pandemic and provision of e-sgoil highlights the potential and limitations of on-line learning. In many small/rural schools it can be a challenge to offer courses or find teachers. It also showed the limitations of a formal exam diet. We have an opportunity to look at how utilising technology allows for more equal provision and opportunity across Scotland.

7. Please share any additional comments you have on curriculum and assessment.

Regardless of decisions made with regard to future strategic organisation of provision and functions it is necessary to ensure clarity and coherence about curriculum and assessment that clarifies what we collectively value – what is agreed to be the purpose(s) of the curriculum and for whose benefit alongside a focus on time and space to allow enhanced teacher confidence, provide opportunities for innovation and enable leadership. To ensure alignment with the agreed purpose of curriculum and indeed of education, which should capture what it is we value in Scottish education – we must design the assessment system so that we actually assess what is valued.

8.1 There is clarity on where the responsibilities for the strategic direction, review and updates for Curriculum for Excellence lie.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree/Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

8.2 Please indicate where you think the responsibilities for the strategic direction, review and updates for Curriculum for Excellence should lie.

It is currently unclear as to who 'owns' the curriculum; is it the Scottish Government, Education Scotland or Scotland's teachers? There can appear to be political and public concerns with regard to variation of experience. There is a need to address this issue – if Scotland's teachers are to be trusted to teach in a way that meets the needs of their local context, there will be variation. Improved clarity is required as to the high-level national policy, support for understanding and engagement and trust in relation to local implementation. There requires to be greater policy coherence to reduce unacceptable variability – that is the purpose of Scotland's curriculum needs to be clear and clearly articulated to other major policy drivers. Coherence and streamlining of planning processes is also required – the layers and levels of required plans can be overwhelming.

9.1 There is clarity on the roles played by national agencies and other providers for responding to needs for support with curriculum and assessment issues.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree/Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

9.2 Please share which aspects of the support currently provided by national agencies and other providers is working well.

The experience of GTC Scotland is that teachers are more likely to first contact their colleagues, employer or distinct organisations (such as royal societies) for support with curriculum and assessment, particularly specific subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. There is a particular need to address routes of support for teachers with regard to subject specific, equalities and diversity and additional support needs knowledge and skills.

9.3 Please indicate where you think greater clarity is needed in relation to the roles played by national agencies and other providers for responding to needs / requests for support with curriculum and assessment issues.

There is currently a large and complicated national professional learning offer. However GTC Scotland believes that this reform brings an opportunity to ensure that the support offer to teachers does not remain so convoluted and that it is directly related to Professional Standards as a signpost for ongoing professional learning and enhanced professionalism. Strategic leadership for professional learning and leadership for teachers has previously been separated from the Professional Standards for teachers which GTC Scotland believes is problematic. Further, the strategic leadership for developing college lecturer professionalism is unclear. Whilst Scottish Ministers handed responsibility for the Professional Standards for college lecturers to GTC Scotland in 2019 as part, as we understood it, of an approach to hand strategic leadership for the professionalism of lecturers to GTC Scotland in line with professional registration becoming mandatory, Scottish Ministers retain powers in relation to the determination of entry qualification to the profession. Having the Professional Standards separated from the determination as to what makes for effective entry to the profession is, in GTC Scotland's view, problematic.

As well as improving clarity about strategic leadership in relation to professional learning and leadership, it is necessary to refine the provision of professional learning to be as close to teachers as possible. There is an opportunity, for example, to consider the role of regional improvement collaboratives in this regard and to harness the power of in-school established and expert teachers as well as encourage the creation of teacher led networks. The effectiveness of the model of removing subject experts from schools into a national body further away from learners needs to be questioned. There is a fundamental opportunity to reframe the scope and nature of what it means to be an accomplished, expert teacher in Scotland recognising the impact such professionals have on the entire system including coaching and mentoring beginning teachers. Part of our considerations need to return to how masters level learning can be promoted and supported for Scotland's teachers.

10.1 There is clarity on where high-quality support for leadership and professional learning can be accessed to support practitioners.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree/Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

10.2 Please share any comments you may have on support for leadership and professional learning.

The current national strategic leadership of professional learning for teachers is unnecessarily confusing and requires to be streamlined. This reform is an opportunity to address this issue and provide greater clarity and consistency to teachers, lecturers, leaders and the system. Issues related to competition and overlap of provision require to be addressed alongside clarity as to where strategic leadership rests for the professionalism of teachers and college lecturers. GTC Scotland believes that greater strength in professionalism (and therefore trust) can be led by aligning this strategic responsibility with Professional Standards. It is through teacher and lecturer professionalism that experiences and outcomes for learners will be addressed and trust in education will grow.

There is a need to consider how teacher leadership is developed from initial teacher education. This is essential for developing teacher confidence, capability and capacity to enhance professionalism and improve learner outcomes. Professional learning for systems leadership needs to be further considered alongside a supporting framework. What does it mean to lead education services and what are the agreed expectations and requirements of such leadership?

A network of professional learning providers across the system is required to create an offer that makes best use of resources, adds value, and ensures equity of access. The centralisation of professional learning provision impacted well established pathways and programmes from partners and arguably also impacted on quality in some areas. A networked model of professional learning and leadership support needs a clear funding model – finance that allows for the creation of long-term sustainable models, with increased strategic planning that ensures a future operating model for professional learning is shared and understood through all parts of the education system.

There is therefore an opportunity (and GTC Scotland believes a requirement) to realign the strategic leadership for professional learning and leadership with the Professional Standards and the professional body for teacher professionalism. For clarity what is meant by strategic leadership is the overarching policy framework and future strategy for professional learning and leadership for teachers. This needs to be re-embedded as a core part of teacher professionalism and an ongoing commitment to professional learning as a mechanism for both maintaining professional registration and enhancing professionalism. Greater coherence is required in this space. It is essential in GTC Scotland's view to align strategic leadership of this with the Professional Standards, accreditation of entry to the profession of teachers and the requirements for ongoing professional learning to be maintained as part of 'being a teacher' in Scotland. There is a distinct need to ensure clarity about the strategic framework in this area as separate to professional learning provision. It is in this latter space that the work of the regional improvement

collaboratives, University provision, third sector partnerships, teacher networks and within school and college teacher and lecturer experts is yet to be harnessed.

GTC Scotland sets a professional learning requirement as part of maintaining registration as a teacher in school and further education. This requirement is set out in GTC Scotland's governing legislation, The Public Services Reform (General Teaching Council for Scotland) Order 2011. One of the principal aims set out in article 5 is for GTC Scotland to "contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning'. GTC Scotland leads in ensuring Professional Standards for teachers are enacted and embedded. Central to this is developing and promoting a professional learning framework and leading the development of pathways to professional growth which enhance teaching professionalism. Previous decisions taken to separate strategic leadership for learning and leadership from the framework of teacher professionalism has, in our view, added confusion and unnecessary overlap. In addition, combining responsibility for the strategic leadership of professional learning and leadership with the operational provision of such support is problematic. As such GTC Scotland believes that the strategic leadership for teacher professional learning and leadership should be embedded within the existing framework for teacher professionalism which underpins what it means to be a teacher in Scotland.

This framework scaffolds individual self-evaluation of learning needs, determination of what provision will best meet those needs and evaluating the impact of learning. The provision of professional learning should therefore be planned and bespoke. The provision of professional learning should be as close to the individual teacher as possible. There are also specific groups of teachers where GTC Scotland believes there needs to be increased national strategic coherence to ensure that the framework and provision of professional learning meets individual, and group needs:

- ❖ **probationers and early career teachers** – GTC Scotland believes that the variation in the support provision for probationers and early career teachers can be too great. There is an opportunity to better support beginning teachers through prioritising a within-school/local authority support provision through established and expert teachers. There is an opportunity to develop a strategy for the continuum of learning from ITE across early career, building on the work that arose as a need post-pandemic. There is a need for strategic and systemic practical support for self-organised teacher networks and to consider how best to harness the power of established and expert teachers in the system to support the learning of other teachers. This directly relates to the creation of a more positive narrative about initial teacher education and beginning teachers. Views have been shared that any issues perceived with beginning teachers and their 'readiness' to teach, are as a result of an element of missing learning in their initial teacher education (ITE). As such over time, various influences have been made to address what specific groups believe is essential for inclusion in ITE programmes. It is the view of GTC Scotland that there are structural and systemic issues that influence this narrative. By this we mean that the prioritisation and availability of support for student and beginning teachers in school can be challenging to provide in a consistent and deep way within the current structures. There is a need in our view to reframe an understanding that initial teacher education is indeed that – initial – and whilst it must continue to develop, innovate and grow to provide the best introduction to a career in teaching, it is necessary to rethink the within school support systems to enhance support and challenge for student and early career teachers. In our view, there is clear synergy with the creation of the post of lead teacher which could be a perfect opportunity for leading the support and development of beginning teachers. Availability of support needs to be complemented in our view with a structured framework of learning. That is, there requires to be a strategic framework of a continuum of teacher learning from ITE, through probation and into early career. This continuum needs to include guidance about required generic and subject specific professional learning.

Elements of this continuum need to be available throughout every teacher's career to allow for ongoing learning directly relevant to the teaching and learning experience. This needs to include subject specific support that ensures degree knowledge is broadened for subject education teachers and depth of knowledge across curricular areas in primary education. In suggesting this continuum, we do not mean to infer a need for increased centralisation of professional learning provision. Instead, it is suggested that a strategy is needed in this space that highlights and uses the best of the provision that is available. It is therefore further suggested that a professional learning accreditation process should be undertaken as a requirement by providers of professional learning in Scotland. There is current confusion in this space with dual routes in Education Scotland and GTC Scotland. This process needs to include evidence of an understanding of the Professional Standards for teachers. It is likely that such approaches will require a fundamental rethink of teaching commitments to consider the time and space needed for such teacher learning. In addition, some of the work that happens across each school during in-service days needs to be reframed. Some mandatory learning elements could be offered in distance learning methods for example.

- ❖ **accomplished, expert teachers** – there is a need to consider the role of accomplished and expert teachers including how their professional learning needs are met and how their knowledge and skills can be harnessed at school, local and national level. Access to and encouragement of Masters-level learning needs to be supported by the development of effective learning pathways and funding.
- ❖ **school leaders** – the infrastructure for leadership professional learning is embedded and continues to develop. In some respects, it is over-engineered and does not always align with the aspirations of local leaders. There is an opportunity to refresh the professional learning framework for school leaders (and aspiring school leaders) keeping the best of what is available and allowing scope for more local and partner innovation of solutions. Current considerations in relation to the development of a coaching strategy is central to this. Such strategies should not be about centralising or reducing choice of provision or type of support but instead provide an important framework that values coaching as essential to the professional growth of teachers.
- ❖ **college lecturers** – there is an urgent and critical need to ensure there is a national commitment from all parties to ensure that industry experts employed as college lecturers have an entitlement and requirement to a foundational teaching qualification in the first two years of their employment. Issues relating to access, funding and provision need to be addressed if the ambitions to support lecturer professionalism are to be realised. It is also necessary to determine where the strategic leadership for lecturer professionalism sits.

11.1 There is sufficient trust with all stakeholders, including children, young people, parents & carers, so they are genuinely involved in decision making.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree/Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

11.2 Please share any ideas you may have on how trust and decision making can be further improved.

It is difficult to answer this particular question as it refers to all stakeholders and appears to seek information about trust that is directly related to involvement in decision-making. It is unclear from whose perspective this question is seeking to address – essentially trust between whom? In terms of the engagement and participation of stakeholders in education, there is more work to do. There is a need to ensure representation from all voices, if you are not round the table, you can't have a voice. Engagement does not mean representation and trust does not automatically mean that all voices are given equal weighting. The Edelman trust barometer provides some useful insight to longitudinal societal views on trust. There is a need to improve information flow and decision rights in Scottish education, governance of decision-making needs to be transparent and understood to support trust in the system as a whole.

As the independent professional and regulatory body for teachers in Scotland, with a focus on teacher professionalism, GTC Scotland is committed to the maintenance and continual improvement of trust and confidence in teachers. A trusted system also has effective (and proportionate) regulation. It is our view therefore that trust and regulation need to be considered together. There is embedded regulation of individual teachers through GTC Scotland's fitness to teach function, there is a need to ensure that system regulation is clearly understood, and functions related to this activity across agencies are aligned.

The underpinning Professional Standards and Code of Professionalism and Conduct form the core foundation of maintaining and enhancing trust in teachers. GTC Scotland believes that greater coherence, and in turn trust, can be brought to the system by aligning strategic leadership for professional learning and leadership with the infrastructure for teacher professionalism – the Professional Standards and the statutory requirement for teachers to maintain their learning in order to remain registered with the professional and regulatory body as well as enhance their professionalism.

It is GTC Scotland's view that professional identity is core to the development and maintenance of trust.

The current, and only, 'definition' of teacher is set out in the 2011 Order, as an individual who holds a recognised teaching qualification (this means a teaching qualification obtained within Scotland following an approved or accredited teacher education programme) or who has satisfied GTC Scotland that they have adequate education, training or experience to warrant registration (i.e. GTC Scotland assessed equivalence or comparability to a Scottish teaching qualification, as reflected in our registration criteria for teachers who have qualified outside Scotland). Whilst it will likely be necessary to ensure clarity about the difference between teachers and teaching professionals, there is in GTC Scotland's view a fundamental necessity for GTC Scotland to retain a focus on teaching and the professional identity of groups described as teachers and teaching professionals. This professional identity needs to be shared by foundational standards and a code of ethics alongside a requirement and entitlement for career long professional learning as it is through such a structure that trust is maintained and enhanced in a professional group. In any future considerations of education reform arising from this 2021 work, GTC Scotland advocates for our core focus remaining with an emphasis on teaching

Registration with GTC Scotland is founded on being part of a profession – illustrated by having shared ethics and standards, entry requirements, ongoing professional learning and a fitness to teach function. It is through accepting this framework that individuals have the privilege of self-regulation. Regulation must take place at entry to the Register – this assures who can be registered by GTC Scotland. Registration is necessarily the first point of regulation.

Regulation may be applied through the fitness to teach function to anyone registered or applying to be registered with GTC Scotland. A commitment to ongoing professional learning is a requirement of registration with GTC Scotland.

There should be a child/learner protection driver to registration and GTC Scotland must have the power to regulate any register it creates. Registration should be proportionate and targeted in

the public interest. That is, it is unlikely that it is necessary to register and regulate every adult that works in schools.

A further area of influence is the fact that ‘teacher’ is not a protected title and that in Scotland being registered with GTC Scotland illustrates what it means to be a recognised (and qualified) teacher. Therefore, other professionals who call themselves teachers are not registered by GTC Scotland. There could be an impact on the trust that stakeholders have in registered teachers if there is confusion over who is a teacher.

12.1 Independent inspection has an important role to play in scrutiny and evaluation, enhancing improvement and building capacity.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree/Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

12.2 Please give examples of how you would like to see scrutiny and evaluation being carried out in future.

More information is required about what the purpose of inspection is likely to be and how the purpose will be conducted. Is the focus on performativity or system improvement? There is a need for clarity as to which body ensures all schools only employ registered teachers for example. It is also unclear about the nature of independence that would be offered to such a body. Who will the body be independent from and how will it be funded? If the creation of independent bodies is a route of travel, how will interdependence between bodies be established to ensure greater cohesion and an obligation to work in partnership?

It is important to understand in any model where the new and exciting ideas and innovation that influence the further enhancement of Scotland’s education will come from. Any model must leave

scope for such a function in order that the function does not solely involve moving the same knowledge around the system. The inspectorate needs to ensure a range of roles that allow for outside thinking to challenge and extend their work.

GTC Scotland welcomes a focus on peer and validated self-evaluation as well as creating a system of improvement and reassurance based on trust and professionalism within a supportive environment and learning system. If such an approach is determined appropriate, GTC Scotland has a role as the guardians of the Professional Standards for teachers and college lecturers as well as advocating (and having the checks and balances in place) for ongoing professional learning and robust systems for professional review and development. The place and scope of regulation in this system however needs to be clear.

13. Please share any additional comments on roles and responsibilities in Scotland's education system.

The place of system regulation in Scottish education requires to be clarified.

OECD define regulation as 'indispensable to the proper functioning of economies and societies. They underpin markets, protect the rights and safety of citizens and ensure the delivery of public goods and services'. This leads to the question in Scotland as to who is ensuring the delivery of education as a public service (and public good)? GTC Scotland believes that it is essential as part of this reform and the creation of a separate inspectorate to clarify what the function of inspection is and what relationship there is or is not to system regulation.

GTC Scotland further believes that the evidence presented during the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry leads to the question of which agency or body is the system regulator of education in Scotland. Therefore, as well as defining the purpose of inspection, it would be helpful to provide a rationale for why the models of inspection and regulation are different for different parts of the education system. For instance, why is the model so different in the early years?

We note that the Care Inspectorate's role is to 'look at the quality of care in Scotland to ensure it meets high standards. Where we find that improvement is needed, we support services to make positive changes'. We also note a partnership arrangement between the Care Inspectorate and HMIE in the inspection of school early years provision. Clarity is therefore needed, in our view, as to whether an independent inspectorate will have functions that support education services to meet high standards. This includes a requirement to consider the mechanisms in place to ensure clarity about the method of and responsibility for system regulation where it has been deemed that an 'education service' – a local authority, independent school or college has not met their responsibilities in child protection or safeguarding matters. For the absence of doubt, our request for clarity in this area is underpinned by a consideration of some significant aspects of child protection management by responsible bodies. There are well-embedded structures in place in Scotland for the management of child protection concerns and the system as a whole discharges its responsibilities in the way intended – our query in this regard relates specifically to responsibilities for regulating the education system to ensure that no failures to follow these procedures results in risk for children and young people. It is also appropriate to consider where responsibilities sit for effective system regulation in ensuring the employers of teachers act as good employers, assuring that appropriate processes are in place and used for the management of teacher concerns.

For clarity while GTC Scotland is clear in its statutory regulatory functions for individual teachers, our powers do not extend to the regulation of employers, nor should they as the body responsible for the individual registration and regulation of teachers. In line with our legislative underpinnings, a

person who employs a registered teacher to work in an educational establishment must notify GTC Scotland if –

- a. They dismiss the registered teacher on grounds of misconduct or incompetence; or
- b. The registered teacher resigns or otherwise stops working for the person in circumstances in which the person, but for that fact, would or might have dismissed the registered teacher on such grounds.

As we highlighted to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, no other person, agency or body is obliged by law to make a fitness to teach referral to GTC Scotland and these are the only circumstances in which an employer is legally obliged to refer a case to GTC Scotland. GTC Scotland has no power to legally compel any person or body to provide it with information related to its fitness to teach investigations: it must go to the Court of Session for the court to determine whether an Order should be granted in this context. GTC Scotland does not regulate schools and has no power of inspection: GTC Scotland is the professional and regulatory body for teaching and teachers, it is not a regulator of the system (i.e., of schools and employers). GTC Scotland's regulatory role therefore inherently and intrinsically requires that employers of teachers can and should be trusted. To illustrate the implications of the current system, we offer the following questions:

- ❖ It is noted that the Registrar of Independent Schools is a function currently embedded in Education Scotland's structure. What will the locus and function of this role be in conjunction with a reformed inspection function?
- ❖ Is the function of a reformed inspectorate to inspect teachers and teaching? Will it also regulate the system? For instance, will it investigate incidences where there are concerns about employer handling of conduct concerns. If the Inspectorate is to not have this role, who undertakes this function for Scottish education?
- ❖ What assessment will take place to ensure that employers employ appropriately registered teachers and by whom? Who regulates this happening in all cases?
- ❖ Within their functions will the inspectorate have a requirement to provide information to GTC Scotland to support our regulatory function regarding individual registered teachers?
- ❖ What happens when employers of teachers do not get it right or breach the trust that the system has placed in them? Are effective arrangements in place to provide the necessary checks and balances and to ensure that information is shared across the system? Does the reformed inspectorate have a role in these checks and balances and if so what is the nature of that role and if not who does?
- ❖ GTC Scotland has no locus in investigating how an employer has dealt with an issue regarding one of their employees nor of monitoring the consistency of employer investigations: this is not a GTC Scotland role, nor should it be given our role, funding model and governance framework. Who has this role in Scottish education? There is currently no body for GTC Scotland to pass concerns of this nature to.
- ❖ What role, if any, does an independent inspectorate have in the quality assurance of ITE provision?

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- ❖ How does an independent inspectorate support the enhancement of teacher professionalism through the recognition of expert teachers? What framework will be in place to ensure such recognition aligns with the Professional Standards for teachers?

Removing Scrutiny (Inspection and review) from Education Scotland External scrutiny (inspection and review) plays a fundamental role in the overall drive to continue to improve education in Scotland for all of our children, young people and adult learners. HM Inspectors carry out independent, external evaluation of standards, quality and improvement with a clear focus on impact and outcomes for learners. The scrutiny programme covers all sectors from early learning and childcare to adult learning, The evidence gathered through observing practice at first hand identifies what is working well in our education system, including examples of highly effective practice, areas which are showing improvement and areas where further development is needed.

14. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below. We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example what form should this agency take)*
- b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example the development of a new national approach to inspection including alignment with other scrutiny functions)*
- c) the risks associated with any reform (for example whether the independence of the inspectorate could be jeopardised by change)*
- d) how any risks might be mitigated*
- e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.*

Clarity is required about the nature of any independence – independent from whom and what are the implications for this independent body to work in alignment with existing independent bodies. As previously outlined there is a need and opportunity to explicitly outline where system regulation fits in this picture of reform. Clarity is needed to determine what professional learning HMIE are required to undertake to ensure they have ongoing required skills and development. Are inspectors of school education for instance required to maintain full registration with a professional body such as GTC Scotland? What support and mechanisms are put in place for any areas that are deemed to be failing if we are to protect children, expand opportunities, raise standards, and improve outcomes?

Further Reform of Education Scotland

Beyond inspection Education Scotland is a broad organisation responsible for a range of important functions designed to support a number of parts of the Scottish Education system. These functions include directly supporting learning communities at local and regional levels, offering a wide range of professional learning and leadership development programmes and opportunities, Community Learning and Development (including the CLD Standards Council), supporting digital pedagogies and as the function of Registrar of Independent Schools.

15. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on how the functions currently housed in Education Scotland could be reformed.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example which functions should continue to sit within a reformed Education Scotland, and are there any functions which could be carried out elsewhere)
- b) the opportunities reform could present (for example should more prominence be given to aspects of Education Scotland's role)
- c) the risks associated with any reform (for example disruption of service to education establishments and settings)
- d) how any risks might be mitigated
- e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

Strategic leadership for professional learning and leadership for identified groups should sit with the appropriate professional bodies to ensure that there a clear focus on professionalism of professional groups and what that means including shared standards and ethics and an ongoing commitment to learning and development. This is necessary in order to build trust and ensure high standards of career-specific professionalism which improves outcomes for learners. It is necessary to understand the foundations of system regulation in order to determine where certain functions should sit and clear articulation between bodies is required to ensure policy coherence and understood governance about information flow and decision rights. Any proposals to reinvigorate 2017 debates about the creation of a 'super-regulator' for education professionals need to ensure clear understanding of the professional regulatory landscape including where this approach has been adopted and successful and adopted and unsuccessful. It is essential that approaches to registration and regulation have at the core a clear understanding of the nature of the professional identity of a given group if we are to protect children, expand opportunities, raise standards, and improve outcomes.

Replacing SQA SQA has two main roles: accreditation and awarding qualifications. ➤ SQA Accreditation accredits qualifications other than degrees and approves and quality assures awarding bodies that plan to enter people for these qualifications. ➤ SQA Awarding Body devises and develops national and vocational qualifications across schools, colleges, training providers and employers; sets standards and maintains such qualifications; validates qualifications (makes sure they are well written and meet the needs of learners and practitioners); reviews qualifications to ensure they are up to date; arranges for, assists in, and carries out, the assessment of people taking SQA qualifications; quality assures education and training establishments which offer SQA qualifications; and issues certificates to candidates. Within both of these roles, SQA offers a range of services for businesses and training providers, ranging from course and centre approval through customised awards, to endorsement, credit rating and licensing services.

16. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example could a function be carried out elsewhere)

b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example should more prominence be given to an aspect of SQA's role)

c) the risks associated with any reform (for example loss of income, confusion as to system of awards in Scotland)

d) how any risks might be mitigated

e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

In the restructuring of national education bodies there is likely much to be learnt from the history of similar change. It is essential that the logic and rationale for change is clearly articulated as structural change is rarely a panacea for all necessary improvements. If there are improvements to be made to functioning and relationships these need to be central to the planning of any change. Significant funding is associated with national education bodies, and it is necessary to consider the value added by such provision and if there are different mechanisms for the allocation of such funding.

Considering the Establishment of a new Curriculum and Assessment Agency, the establishment of new Agency has the potential to enhance the quality of learning and teaching across the education sector. It will be important that the remit, purpose, governance and culture of the new agency to match the aspirations of the system it will be designed to serve. We are therefore interested in the role of the new agency, its relationship with other parts of the system including the Scottish Ministers and how we will know it has been successful.

17. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

a) the approach this reform should take (for example are there alternative models for this reform?)

b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example what should the role of the new agency be?)

c) the risks associated with any reform

d) how any risks might be mitigated

e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

In the restructuring of national education bodies there is likely much to be learnt from the history of similar change. It is essential that the logic and rationale for change is clearly articulated as structural change is rarely a panacea for all necessary improvements. If there are improvements to be made to functioning and relationships these need to be central to the planning of any change. Significant funding is associated with national education bodies and it is necessary to consider the value added of such provision and if there are different mechanisms for the allocation of such funding. There is a need to consider how best to support more locally based support for teachers. Professional learning and leadership needs to be firmly focused on teachers and learners and the future strategy needs to be aligned with professional identity and supporting frameworks. GTC Scotland is committed to work in partnership with any body that has a role to enhance the quality of learning and teaching across the education sector. There is a need to ensure this work relates to Professional Standards and enhancing professionalism.

Inspiring world-class teaching professionalism

GTC Scotland
Comhairle Choitcheann Teagaisg na h-Alba

The General Teaching Council for Scotland is the independent professional body which maintains and enhances teaching standards and promotes and regulates the teaching profession in Scotland. We strive to be a world leader in professional education issues.

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