
**MIDLOTHIAN NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS
PLANNING, ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION GUIDANCE FOR SECONDARY
SCHOOLS**

BACKGROUND

The MNCT has been committed for a number of years to addressing the demands of planning in secondary classes. The initial report of the Curriculum for Excellence Working Group on Tackling Bureaucracy was published (November 2013). A clear message emerged that the purpose CfE is to promote better learning and teaching. This must not be obscured by bureaucracy and unnecessary paperwork.

One of the identified drivers of excessive bureaucracy was over-detailed planning, assessment and moderation processes. The 2015 Follow-up report advised schools to simplify their planning and assessment procedures.

Midlothian Secondary schools may wish to consider the following as an example of what might as a maximum, be considered appropriate, remaining mindful that complex and lengthy plans and levels of assessment are not required. Moderation arising from assessment should also be manageable. Plans should continue to relate to the needs of individuals. Below are the main points from the working group, along with guidance from a Midlothian perspective.

The Purpose of Planning

Planning for every child involves creating rich, challenging and meaningful learning experiences, building on their individual talents and needs. Planning must start with the child, involve skilful observation and assessment, take account of the principles of design within Curriculum for Excellence and consider the experiences and outcomes in order to develop and support every child's needs.

Medium Term Planning (unit or block)

Whilst planning units or blocks of work within BGE, teachers may wish to establish planning frameworks and identify opportunities for assessment. Planning should not be complex or too detailed. These should facilitate professional dialogue rather than support an audit function. Opportunities for professional dialogue across stages/CfE levels should be built into the school calendar. The following illustrates the type of collegiate discussion and key questions professionals may want to have around medium term planning and assessment.

- How does your planning meet the needs of all learners?
- How do you plan opportunities for personalisation and choice?
- How and what are you assessing in the current/next unit of work?
- How are you incorporating experiences and outcomes (Es and Os) within units of work?

- How does your planning make use of significant aspects of learning or national benchmarks?
- What range of evidence do you collect to help make a professional judgement on learner progress?
- How do you keep records of the range of assessment activities?
- How do you make judgements on pupils achieving a level within BGE?
- How are teacher assessment judgements being moderated within subject areas?
- How are learners involved in the planning process for next steps in their learning?
- What data/ information/ evidence do you hold about the children in your class?
- Who are the highest achieving 20% and how are you challenging them?
- Who are the lowest achieving 20% and how are you supporting them?

In general, teachers should plan to the level of detail which will work best for their pupils. This will vary with the teachers' level of experience, familiarity with material and preferred style, so there should not be a 'one size fits all' approach.

Moderation systems within schools that are in place to moderate teacher judgement across assessment instruments in the BGE should follow good practice advice from Education Scotland and not be overly bureaucratic in terms of documentation or the amount of time for collaborative work. It would be expected that additional collegiate time spent on moderation activities in schools would form part of the balance time agreement either as a separate activity or as part of other agreed activities such as Department or Faculty time.

Short Term Plan (weekly or daily)

- This plan will build on prior learning and will be informed by discussion with learners, teachers' own reflections of learning and teaching, and most recent assessment evidence.
- Specific intended learning could be detailed on this plan, depending on a teacher's own requirements.
- This plan is an iterative working document which is adapted on a daily basis according to needs identified in previous lessons.
- The plan is for the teacher's own use (where teachers know in advance of an absence they should ensure a clear plan of work is left for the class; in the case of an unplanned absence teachers are asked, where possible, to communicate work plans to the school as soon as possible if weekly or daily plans are not left in the classroom)

ICT Planning Systems should be used with caution. The MNCT has concluded after its evaluation of the recent pilot of *On Track with Learning* that it does not reduce teacher workload. It will therefore not be used in Midlothian.

Next Steps

- Future meetings of Head Teachers will provide further discussion and support surrounding the guidance in this document.
- Individual schools' planning procedures will be monitored and advice and support given as required.
- A report on progress will be given to MNCT following the *(date to be added)*
- Good practice in planning in other areas of the curriculum will be gathered and disseminated.