Dumfries and Galloway COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate

Professional Learning Strategy for Teachers and Associated Professionals

(including Professional Review and Development and Professional Update Procedures)

2025

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Context

Successful schools are those which promote a culture of learning.

Dumfries and Galloway Council will improve education and learning opportunities to help all our children, young people, and staff fulfil their potential.

Professional Learning arrangements reflect local and national guidance, including the General Teaching Council Scotland's Professional Standards 2021. They are in place to support all teaching staff.

This policy complements the People Strategy for non-teaching staff.

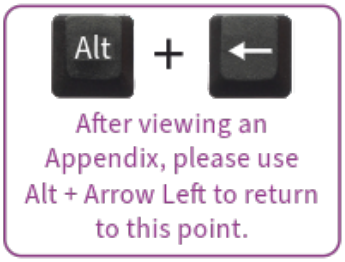
What is Professional Learning?

Professional Learning - The General Teaching Council for Scotland

How are Professional Learning Needs identified?

Engaging with the General Teaching Council for Scotland's (GTCS) Professional Standards and using them as tools for both reflection and development are key to the professional learning process for teachers. The Standards are there to be used positively; to encourage critical thinking, reflection and to consider and plan Professional Learning. This is supported by the Professional Review and Development (PRD) process.

You can use the Reflective Questions found in Appendix 1 to support you to consider and plan your professional learning, development and practice related to the Professional Standards.



A guide to the Professional Standards

The Professional Standards for Scotland's Teachers describe teacher professionalism in Scotland; teachers' 'way of being'. Refreshed and restructured Professional Standards were enacted on 2 August 2021 and can be viewed in Appendix 2.

The Professional Standards support and promote partnership, leadership, enquiry and professional learning and have multiple purposes.

Which Professional Standard/s can I reflect against?

The professional learning pathway is owned by the teacher, and it is the teacher's responsibility to define their own pathway having successfully completed the probationer teacher phase. To support you in identifying the GTCS Standard/s you should reflect against, please refer to Appendix 3.

Being a Teacher in Scotland

The Professional Standards 2021 include a new section called 'Being a teacher in Scotland', which highlights the professional values of social justice, trust and respect and integrity as central to what it means to be a teacher in Scotland.

Professional Standards for Teachers - The General Teaching Council for Scotland

Trusted Teaching

Having a strong focus on professional values helps teachers develop their professional identity and underpins a deep commitment to all learners' cognitive, social and emotional growth and wellbeing. They are integral to, and demonstrated through, teachers' professional relationships, thinking and actions in their professional practice. Teachers' commitment to reflecting on the connections between professional values and actions and career-long professional learning is a critical part of enhancing their professionalism.

Professional Update

Professional Update - The General Teaching Council for Scotland

All registered teachers, supply register and central staff must meet the expectations of the GTCS and undertake career long professional learning by reflecting against the appropriate Standard/s. Every five years, all registered teachers must complete the Professional Update (PU) process.

If you do not complete your PU by your sign-off year, you risk being deregistered and will be unable to teach in any school setting.

Request a deferral

GTCS appreciate that there are circumstances which may make completion of the PU process difficult. This may be due to a career break, extended illness, or maternity/ paternity/ adoption leave. If you are experiencing any of these circumstances, you can request a deferral. Please note that all deferral requests need to be approved by the Schools' Manager – People. On return to service, the reviewee and reviewer will agree a suitable date for the PRD. MyPL users can use their MyPL record as long as they have a reviewer associated with their record. If you do not have a reviewer associated with your MyPL record, ask the Education People Team (EducationPeopleTeam@dumgal.gov.uk) to email gtcs@gtcs.org.uk with your name and registration number, confirming your deferral request.

Roles and Responsibilities

The key principles guiding PU are that teachers will have:

- a responsibility to consider their own professional learning needs;

- an entitlement to a system of supportive PRD; and
- confirmation that they are maintaining the appropriate professional standards.

This will be achieved by:

- an annual update, involving submission to GTCS of changes in personal details;
- continuing engagement in the PRD process and professional learning; and
- a five yearly professional update procedure.

Dumfries and Galloway Council work with our Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) and the GTCS to validate and deliver our local Professional Update system.

The completion of the five yearly PU sign-off process is the responsibility of the individual teacher.

The Headteacher/Line Manager has responsibility for confirming this requirement by signing off the individual teacher's declaration of engagement.

Professional Review and Development (PRD)

For all registered teachers, the Professional Review and Development (PRD) process should be undertaken on an annual basis. For teachers on fixed term contracts, PRDs will take place during their normal working week.

Central Staff wishing to retain registered teacher status must engage with the PRD process using the relevant GTCS Standard/s.

PRD should be viewed as a process and is intended to engender a culture of professional learning.

Professional Review and Development - The General Teaching Council for Scotland.

Ten key features of PRD (GTCS)

Effective PRD should take place within a culture of trust and professional integrity, supporting the maintenance of a collegiate organisation where morale is high.
PRD A positive experience for all diagram.

How do I identify a PRD/PU Reviewer?

It is helpful that the reviewer is familiar with the work of the reviewee in order that quality productive dialogue can be engaged in, to support the professional learning of the teacher. It is the responsibility of the reviewee to approach and arrange their

PRD/PU with their reviewer. This would normally be your line manager, i.e., Headteacher, Depute Headteacher or Principal Teacher. Supply teaching staff who are working regularly in a school setting are also encouraged to approach a member of staff with management responsibility within that setting or partnership. For other supply teaching staff who are not employed regularly within a consistent setting, they are advised to consult the list of approved PRD/PU Reviewers that sit within the ECT/ Supply Teacher Network.

Roles and Responsibilities for all for PRD

Guidance documentation is available from the GTCS and provides clarification and support for the following parties regarding their roles and responsibilities for PRD –

1. Reviewee
2. Reviewer
3. School Leadership Team
4. Local Authority and Employer
5. GTCS

To access the guidance document, please use the following link:
View the Roles and Responsibilities for all at PRD guidance document.

Local authority guidance is also available to support reviewers in their role with PRD. Refer to Appendix 4.

In addition, Local Authority Guidance for Supply Teachers, Temporary Teachers and Central GTCS registered staff can be viewed in Appendix 5.

Commitment to PRD

Our commitment to PRD will ensure:

- All participants will fully understand the intentions and the operation of the process.
- Each teacher will access PRD documentation in advance and will be encouraged to take time to consider their views and ideas.
- The PRD will take account of appropriate GTCS Standard/s.
- Each person undertaking a PRD meeting will receive information and support as necessary.
- The PRD meeting will be part of an ongoing process supporting Professional Update (PU).
- Headteachers/ Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that the PRD process is operated fairly and effectively within their establishments.
- Headteachers/ Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that alternative reviewers are agreed upon at the request of individual reviewees.
- Headteachers/ Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that all PRDs are recorded in iTrent.

- Headteachers/ Line Managers or approved local authority reviewers are responsible for facilitating the PRD process for those staff who are assigned to them. They also have the responsibility for signing off staff allocated to them who are undertaking PU in that year.
- Headteachers/ Line Managers or approved local authority reviewers have the responsibility of ensuring, that where there may be potential issues regarding the PRD/ PU process, these are discussed at the earliest available opportunity.
- Headteachers/ Line Managers are responsible for developing a coaching and mentoring approach to support the PRD/ PU process.

Appeals and Deferrals Procedure

In PRD/PU, any aspect of the process can be subject to appeal. In the first instance, any appeal should be made to the Headteacher/ Line Manager. Where a Headteacher/ Line Manager wishes to appeal any part of this process, this should be made to the Head of Education Resources.

In the unlikely event of an appeal being lodged in relation to Professional Update, advice should be sought from the GTCS.

Professional Update - The General Teaching Council for Scotland.

Conducting the PRD Meeting

1. Before the PRD Meeting

Prior to a PRD meeting, the Headteacher/ Line Manager will inform the teacher that their PRD meeting is due. Teaching staff should be given at least two weeks' notice prior to the mutually agreed review date.

All teachers will have access to the PRD documentation. Teachers will also have access to the School's Improvement Plan(s) and the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate Objectives for the year ahead.

Before the meeting, the teacher will be expected to have:

- Reflected against their previous year's objectives.
- Considered potential objectives for the next year in relation to the Standard/s.

PRD is based on professional self-evaluation. This self-evaluation will help:

- Identify areas of success and improvement.
- Identify specific objectives for development.
- Incorporate development needs into a Professional Learning Plan.

The discussion of the self-evaluation will enable the reviewer to:

- Acknowledge all that is good in their work.
- Note achievements and successes.
- Identify areas for further development.

2. Conducting the Review

It is good practice for the PRD to be a culmination of several prior coaching conversations. Between 1 to 2 hours should be set aside for a PRD meeting to ensure that there is adequate opportunity to cover all matters in sufficient depth. **All PRD meetings will take place in private and should not be interrupted**.

During the PRD meeting, the reviewee and the reviewer should discuss the reviewee's self-evaluation. The year's objectives should then be agreed.
In summary, the PRD meeting should include the opportunity for the reviewee and the reviewer to discuss and agree:

- Progress with professional learning and reflection based on the GTCS Professional Standards.
- The progress towards achieving last year's objectives.
- Objectives for the coming year.

An exemplar agenda for the meeting is shown below:

Agenda

- General Introduction
- Consideration of self-evaluation within the relevant Standard/s.
- Consideration of progress made towards development objectives from the previous review.
- Agreement on development areas and related professional learning activities for the coming session, within the context of the school's improvement agenda and the relevant Standard/s, Service Objectives and areas of professional development the reviewee would benefit from. The support required should also be noted.

3. Concluding the PRD

The reviewee should finalise their Professional Learning Needs plan and share this with the reviewer. This document is confidential to the two participants. Reviewers are responsible for communicating any identified professional learning needs to the Headteacher/Professional Learning Coordinator.

The completed Professional Learning Needs plan should be viewed as a working document and as such be reflected on throughout the year. The reviewer will arrange for the date of the PRD meeting to be recorded in iTrent. Headteachers/Line Managers are responsible for facilitating support and development opportunities informally, through regular communication and more formally through regular support

and advice, and the formal PRD meeting. This is best supported by the development of a coaching and mentoring approach. Completed PRD documentation can be uploaded to each reviewee's GTCS profile. This will ensure the retention of each reviewee's Professional Learning records and PRD documentation regardless of the reviewee's school or authority. **Reviewees can alternatively input their PRD information directly into their GTCS profile electronically.**

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

This document has been agreed with the teachers' unions, through the LNCT and is subject to regular revision.

The collective impact of PRD and PU will be evaluated on a regular basis as one element of each school's self-evaluation processes. This document will be reviewed every two years by the Professional Learning Reference Group Appendix 6 and subsequently agreed by LNCT.

Kenny Pullen
Schools' Manager - People
7th October 2025
Ratified by the LNCT 7th October 2025

Appendix 1 – Reflective Questions

The reflective questions below should not be seen as prescriptive or as a list to be completed. The questions are intended to provide prompts for reflection and self-evaluation.

Using the Professional Standards to plan and support professional learning and development

- How will I use the Professional Standards to inform and support me when planning my professional learning and development?
- How will I use the Professional Standards to support me to identify areas of learning and development to enhance my knowledge, understanding and practice?
- What aspects of the Professional Standards do I find most challenging? Why? How could these challenges be addressed?
- How can I use the Professional Standards to support my self-evaluation process in preparation for a Professional Review and Development discussion?

Assessing your Professional Values

- How are the Professional Values reflected in my Professional Actions?
- How have my Professional Values been developed and informed by knowledge and experience?
- How do I critically reflect on my assumptions, beliefs and values?
- Who am I as a teacher? What has influenced me? What sustains me?

Assessing your development needs

- What development needs do I have concerning enhancing my subject/ content knowledge and pedagogical expertise? How do I plan my professional learning to enable me to develop in these areas? What support would I require to meet those needs?
- In what ways do I engage with professional literature, theory, research and policy to challenge and inform my thinking and practice?
- What informs my thinking when planning my priorities for future professional learning and development?

Reflecting on your professional learning

- As a result of my professional learning, how has my practice developed to improve outcomes for all learners? How do I know? What evidence of impact do I have? What does this tell me about my practice?
- How do I critically reflect on my learning with a focus on impact and how do I share this with my colleagues to lead improvement across the school and/or wider community? What evidence do I have of this impact?

- How do I know the impact of my teaching on learners? How will I systematically gather and analyse evidence of impact?
- What impact has my professional learning had on my colleagues or others in my educational community?

Developing accomplishment and expertise

- What areas of accomplishment/ expertise would I like to develop?
- What professional learning will I engage in to support my development in this area?
- Would Masters-level learning support and inform me in this development?
- As I develop accomplishment and expertise in a specific area how do I share this with colleagues and lead developments within and beyond the school community?
- How could I use the GTC Scotland Professional Recognition Framework to support my professional learning and to recognise and develop accomplishment/ expertise in specific areas. Please note that this is currently paused.

Appendix 2 - GTCS Professional Standards

Standard for Registration

The Standard for Full Registration is the foundation of the Professional Standards and is the benchmark of competence required of all registered teachers in Scotland.

This Professional Standard encompasses what it is to be a teacher in Scotland.

Standard for Career Long Professional Learning

The Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning provides an aspirational and developmental framework for teachers.

This Professional Standard supports the professional growth of teachers in Scotland.

Standard for Middle Leadership

The Standard for Middle Leadership provides an aspirational and developmental framework for teachers in or considering leadership roles.

It outlines the strategic vision, professional knowledge and understanding, interpersonal skills and abilities and professional actions that support teachers in leadership roles.

Standard for Headship

The Standard for Headship is designed to support individual self-evaluation and reflection as an integral part of leadership development.

The Standard for Headship has the additional purpose of being a requirement for teachers permanently employed in local authority headteacher roles.

Appendix 3 - Which Standard?

The Professional Standards, underpinned by the values of *Courage, Wisdom, Social Justice* describe teacher professionalism in Scotland. In Dumfries and Galloway these Standards support and promote teacher partnership, leadership, enquiry, and professional learning.

Self-evaluation is an important part of the professional learning and PRD process. The **GTCS Professional Standards** offer support for teachers as they consider how to develop their professional values, knowledge and skills.

The Standard for Provisional Registration is the benchmark of competence required of all student teachers at the end of Initial Teacher Education who are seeking provisional registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland). This Professional Standard outlines what is required to become a teacher in Scotland and can also be applied to Staff who are undertaking the Teacher Induction Scheme or the Flexible Route.

The Standard for Full Registration is the foundation of the Professional Standards and is the benchmark of competence required of all registered teachers in Scotland. This Professional Standard encompasses what it is to be a teacher in Scotland. Unpromoted teachers who are considering career pathways into promoted posts should also reflect against the Standard for Middle Leadership where applicable, e.g. A member of staff who has undertaken the Introduction to School Leadership course may wish to reflect against standards 2.1.4.

The Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning provides an aspirational and developmental framework for teachers at all stages in their career to reflect upon and identify next steps for professional learning. It describes the advanced professional knowledge and pedagogical expertise that registered teachers could develop and maintain as they continue to progress in teaching and the education profession. e.g. A Headteacher who has decided to continue with In Headship having completed Into Headship may wish to reflect against standards 2.1.2.

The Standard for Middle Leadership and **The Standard for Headship** provide aspirational and developmental frameworks for teachers **in/or** considering leadership roles. They outline the strategic vision, professional knowledge and understanding, interpersonal skills and abilities and professional illustrations that support teachers in leadership roles. These standards should be used by PTs, Deputes and Headteachers in a way that is relevant to the stage of their career, e.g. a Depute aspiring to Headship and undertaking Into Headship may wish to reflect against the Standards for Headship 2.1.1. The Standard for Headship is a requirement for teachers permanently employed in local authority Headteacher roles.

GTC Scotland Side-by-side Comparison Tool.

Appendix 4 – Supporting the Role of the Reviewer

PRD/PU Training for Reviewers

High quality training for reviewers is available. Reviewers are encouraged to seek training in coaching and mentoring prior to engagement in the process.

Support

Headteachers/ Line Managers and approved local authority reviewers will be offered information, support and training as appropriate before undertaking the PU process with teaching staff.

The information, support, and training on the PRD/ PU process will emphasise the need for self-evaluation by reviewees and the use of coaching and mentoring approaches by reviewers.

Having Hard Conversations

The Jennifer Abrams materials found within Middle leaders | Video resource library | Professional Learning | Education Scotland can serve as valuable tools for preparing for, and engaging in, hard conversations:

1. Having Hard Conversations (Education Scotland, 2023)
2. Hard Conversations – Unpacked (Education Scotland, 2023)

Appendix 5 – Local Authority Guidance for Supply Teachers, Temporary Teachers and Central Staff

Additional Roles and Responsibilities for PRD

Supply Teachers, Teachers on Short-term Temporary Contracts and Central Staff have the responsibility:

- To ensure that their personal details held on the GTCS online system are updated on an annual basis.
- To ensure that they participate in the PRD process and maintain a portfolio of impact of their professional learning.
- To engage in the 5 yearly Professional Update process. The annual Professional Learning Record will be a key component of their portfolio.
- To update the GTCS system, with a record of their professional learning and their annual PRD objectives. It is good practice to upload any documentation to the teacher's GTCS account.
- To contact their nominated reviewer, to organise their PRD, giving at least two weeks' notice.
- To participate in relevant professional learning activities.

Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Directorate has a responsibility:

- To maintain a register of teaching staff who can undertake PRDs for Supply/temporary teachers.
- To offer each Supply teacher a nominated reviewer for PRD purposes.
- To maintain central records of PRD completion.

Within clusters, named managers have the responsibility:

- For conducting the PRD/PU process with allocated Supply staff.
- To organise an alternative reviewer to conduct a PRD, where requested.
- To ensure that any completed PRDs are recorded in iTrent.

Appendix 6 - Professional Learning Reference Group

Purpose and Aims

To advise and respond to the Headteacher Strategy Groups in relation to the development of a culture of ongoing Professional Learning for all *Education and Learning Leadership* roles, to maximise the learning and the life chances of all learners.

The aims of the group are as follows:

- Increase the understanding of the expectations and offer in relation to Professional Leadership Learning for all promoted staff, at all levels, including Early Learning and Childcare providers.
- Review the systems in place and analyse the emerging trends in relation to PRD/ PDR process and engagement.
- To develop and communicate a consistent understanding of the purpose, process, and procedures in relation to the expectations of PRD/ PDR/ PL/ PU.
- Further develop a culture of Coaching and Mentoring across all settings.

Responsibilities of Group Members:

- To ensure effective dialogue between the Reference Group, Schools, Clusters and Professional Association colleagues.
- To ensure messages are shared as appropriate.
- To gather feedback from staff.