**Validation Guidelines for Independent Schools involved in
Pilot Programmes of Professional Update: Phase 2**

Your school has agreed to take part in Phase 2 of the national pilot scheme of Professional Update. It is intended that the Professional Update scheme will apply nationally from August 2014 and will be rolled out over a 5-year period.

1 Introduction

GTC Scotland has developed a system called Professional Update. The development of such a system was required by an act of the Scottish Parliament in 2011 in which the term re-accreditation was used.

The **key purposes** of a system of Professional Update are:

- to maintain and improve the quality of our teachers as outlined in the appropriate professional standard and to enhance the impact that they have on pupils' learning.

- to support, maintain and enhance teachers' continued professionalism and the reputation of the teaching profession in Scotland.

The **key principles** of Professional Update are that the scheme will ensure that teachers have:

- a responsibility to consider their development needs.

- an entitlement to a system of supportive professional review and development (PRD) which can:

  – assist them to identify constructive ways to update their skills;
  – provide access to opportunities which can address those areas identified as requiring support;
  – help them to manage change;
  – offer a focus on ways in which they can enhance their careers.

- confirmation that they have maintained the high standards required of a teacher in Scotland's educational establishments. (The Standard for Full Registration is the baseline standard for all fully registered teachers. It is now normally attained at the end of the Teacher Induction Scheme but is maintained thereafter throughout a teacher's career.)

GTC Scotland also recognises the need to ensure that proposals are practicable; supportive of teachers and not constrained by bureaucracy; and that they allow individual teachers the opportunity to identify and meet their future needs.

Professional Update has the following **key stages**:

- Independent schools apply the principles and criteria of Professional Update to quality assure and to revise their Professional Review and Development processes as appropriate, and this is the focus of a validation event initiated by GTC Scotland.

- Teachers keep their registration details updated annually with GTC Scotland.

- Teachers/...

- Teachers engage in ongoing professional review processes, self evaluate using appropriate GTC Scotland Professional Standards, undertake professional learning, keep a record of their professional learning and a portfolio of evidence, and discuss the impact of their professional learning with their line manager.

- Every 5 years, teachers declare their ongoing engagement in this process to GTC Scotland, and their line manager is asked to confirm this. This is recorded as part of teachers' registration details for a period of 5 years on the GTC Scotland Register of Teachers

2   Validation Events

2.1   The Purpose of the Validation

GTC Scotland seeks to ensure that the key purposes, principles and features of the Professional Update process are applied consistently across Scotland for all registered teachers. Each independent school has its own PRD system, and so validation criteria have been established to clarify how those key purposes, principles and features should be applied to local PRD processes. The criteria are listed in Section 3.

The validation panel will look at each school's processes by examining documentation and visiting the school to hold a validation event. From the evidence gathered, the panel will decide to what extent the criteria have been met. The panel may then decide to validate fully or with conditions. Any conditions must be addressed by the school before full validation can be given. In addition, the panel may make recommendations which provide advice on further steps the school should take.

From experience in previous validation events, examples of conditions attached have included issues such as the need to further develop recording systems for PRD and professional learning, and the need to raise awareness of Professional Update amongst teachers. Examples of recommendations regarding Professional Update have included continuity of responsibility following staff changes, how supply staff can access the process, and the development of quality assurance processes.

Further support is available on the GTC Scotland Professional Update web pages where a sharing practice area can be found. This includes examples of policies, recording processes, staff surveys and validation reports. Local authorities and independent schools who have participated in the Professional Update pilot have been invited to share these documents with others.

2.2   The Validation Panel

The Validation Panel will be arranged by GTC Scotland. It will normally comprise 2 members: a GTC Scotland Council member or a member of the GTC Scotland Professional Update Working Group, and a GTC Scotland officer. In discussion with the school, a third panel member may be agreed who is a member of staff in another independent school taking part in the national pilot of Professional Update.

2.3   Location of the Event

The event will be held in the school.

2.4/...

2.4 The Programme for the Validation Event

In advance of the event, panel members will have read any documentation sent to them by the school. The event itself will normally take a little more than half a day. Although it may vary according to local circumstances, a typical programme would be:

09:00 - 09.30 Private meeting of the panel
09.30 - 10.30 Meeting with school strategic staff
10.30 - 11.00 Panel discussion
11.00 - 11.45 Panel divides to meet focus groups 1 and 2
11.45 - 13.00 Panel lunch and discussion
13.00 - 13.30 Panel gives decision and verbal report to strategic staff

A written report from GTC Scotland will follow within a few weeks.

2.5 Focus Groups

To gather as wide a range of opinion as possible, it is requested that 2 differently composed focus groups of 4 or 5 teachers are invited to meet with panel members:

Group 1 – unpromoted teachers
Group 2 – promoted teachers

Other notes regarding focus groups:

- The inclusion of some part-time and temporary teachers would be helpful where possible
- Issues of equality and inclusion should be considered when forming focus groups

Examples of focus group questions can found at Section 4.

2.6 Documentation in Advance of the Validation Event

About 10 days prior to the event, the school is asked to send any relevant documentation to GTC Scotland for distribution to the panel. The documentation should include, where available:

- Policies on PRD / Professional Learning Programmes / Professional Update
- Staff guides to PRD / Professional Learning Programmes / Professional Update
- Recording materials for the process (or online links if the panel can access these)
- Statistics regarding the level of engagement in the PRD process in recent years
- Surveys of teachers regarding PRD / Professional Learning Programmes
- Where a school is in the process of revising PRD / Professional Learning policies, both the previous and proposed sets of documentation should be submitted.

3/...

3   Criteria for Discussion with School Strategic Staff

The panel will seek evidence that the criteria listed below have been met. Some of the evidence may come from the documentation submitted in advance of the validation event and other evidence may be sought during meetings with the school's strategic staff and focus groups on the day of the event.

3.1   Partnership with Employees

3.1.1   The school has engaged with employees in developing the Professional Update process.

3.1.2   Staff have been involved in the development of the process.

3.2   The Key Purposes of Professional Update

3.2.1   The process is likely to maintain and improve the quality of our teachers as outlined in the appropriate professional standard, and to enhance the impact that they have on pupils' learning.

3.2.2   The process is likely to support, maintain and enhance teachers' continued professionalism and the reputation of the teaching profession in Scotland.

3.2.3   There is a system of evaluating the impact of the process on teaching and learning.

3.3   Annual Update

3.3.1   The process includes a procedure to ensure that teachers update their registration details annually with GTC Scotland. (Note – this can be done by registering for a My GTCS account at http://www.gtcs.org.uk/mygtcs-application-form.aspx)

3.4   Continued Engagement in PRD and Professional Learning

3.4.1   The process is continuous rather than just an annual interview.

3.4.2   The process is based on support and challenge within an atmosphere of trust and collegiality.

3.4.3   Teachers take responsibility for their own development as lifelong learners.

3.4.4   Monitoring is in place to confirm that the 3 criteria above are reflected in practice.

3.4.5   Training is available for those carrying out reviews, with an emphasis on coaching and mentoring approaches.

3.4.6   Training is available for reviewees which emphasises the importance of preparing thoroughly for PRD reviews as the foundation for their professional learning and career development. Teachers have the opportunity for continuing engagement in PRD and general professional development at individual, establishment and local authority level.

3.4.7   The school's PRD guidelines are shared with all teachers.

3.4.8/...

3.4.8 Teachers record and evidence their PRD and professional learning activities.

3.4.9 Teachers have opportunities to engage in on-going self-evaluation, using the relevant GTC Scotland Professional Standard.

3.4.10 There is an emphasis on the importance of professional learning opportunities which are relevant to a teacher's identified needs.

3.4.11 Supply teachers have access to the PRD process, including opportunities to participate in appropriate professional learning.

3.5 Five yearly Professional Update

3.5.1 Completion of the five yearly Professional Update is the responsibility of the individual teacher.

3.5.2 The line manager has responsibility for signing off the individual teacher's Professional Update.

3.5.3 Additional information and training is available for the teachers who will complete the pilot Professional Update sign off.

3.5.4 All teachers are provided with guidelines on the completion of the Professional Update process

3.5.5 Line managers are given guidance to enable them to confidently sign off a teacher's Professional Update.

3.5.6 Line managers are aware that competence procedures are not part of the Professional Update process.

3.5.7 Line managers are aware that there is a need to discuss potential issues *regarding the Professional Update process* with teachers early in the cycle.

3.6 Appeals Process

3.6.1 There is an appeals process as part of Professional Update / PRD

3.6.2 The appeals process is consistent with existing complaints and grievance procedures.

3.6.3 Information on the appeals process is shared with all teachers.

4 Possible Questions for Focus Groups

The questions below give an indication of the kinds of issues that may be raised with focus groups, but the exact nature of the discussion will vary according to local circumstances.

- How has information on Professional Update been distributed to you and your colleagues?

- To what extent is training provided within your school for those carrying out reviews and those participating in PRD?

- What/...

- What types of professional learning opportunities do you engage in? How do these address your individual requirements?

- How do you record and evidence your professional learning activities?

- How do you evaluate the impact of your professional learning on the quality of teaching and learning?

- To what extent do teachers really engage in the self evaluation process?

- Is there any additional information that would be helpful to you during the Professional Update pilot and if so what would you be looking for?

GTC Scotland: Professional Update Validation

Criteria for Discussion with Independent Schools

3.1	Partnership with Employees	Notes	
3.1.1	The school has engaged with employees in developing the Professional Update process.		
3.1.2	Staff have been involved in the development of the process.		
3.2	**The Key Purposes of Professional Update**		
3.2.1	The process is likely to maintain and improve the quality of our teachers as outlined in the appropriate professional standard, and to enhance the impact that they have on pupils' learning.		
3.2.2	The process is likely to support, maintain and enhance teachers' continued professionalism and the reputation of the teaching profession in Scotland.		
3.2.3	There is a system of evaluating the impact of the process on teaching and learning.		
3.3	**Annual Update**		
3.3.1	The process includes a procedure to ensure that teachers update their registration details annually with GTC Scotland. (Note – this can be done by registering for a My GTCS account at http://www.gtcs.org.uk/mygtcs-application-form.aspx)		

3.4	**Continued Engagement in PRD and Professional Learning**		
3.4.1	The process is continuous rather than just an annual interview.		
3.4.2	The process is based on support and challenge within an atmosphere of trust and collegiality.		
3.4.3	Teachers take responsibility for their own development as lifelong learners.		
3.4.4	Monitoring is in place to confirm that the 3 criteria above are reflected in practice.		
3.4.5	Training is available for those carrying out reviews, with an emphasis on coaching and mentoring approaches.		
3.4.6	Training is available for reviewees which emphasises the importance of preparing thoroughly for PRD reviews as the foundation for their professional learning and career development. Teachers have the opportunity for continuing engagement in PRD and general professional development at individual, establishment and local authority level.		
3.4.7	The school's PRD guidelines are shared with all teachers.		
3.4.8	Teachers record and evidence their PRD and professional learning activities.		
3.4.9	Teachers have opportunities to engage in on-going self-evaluation, using the relevant GTC Scotland Professional Standard(s).		
3.4.10	There is an emphasis on the importance of professional learning opportunities which are relevant to a teacher's identified needs.		

3.4.11	Supply teachers have access to the PRD process, including opportunities to participate in appropriate professional learning.		
3.5	**Five yearly Professional Update**		
3.5.1	Completion of the five yearly Professional Update is the responsibility of the individual teacher.		
3.5.2	The line manager has responsibility for signing off the individual teacher's Professional Update.		
3.5.3	Additional information and training is available for the teachers who will complete the pilot Professional Update sign off.		
3.5.4	All teachers are provided with guidelines on the completion of the Professional Update process.		
3.5.5	Line managers are given guidance to enable them to confidently sign off a teacher's Professional Update.		
3.5.6	Line managers are aware that competence procedures are not part of the Professional Update process.		
3.5.7	Line managers are aware that there is a need to discuss potential issues *regarding the Professional Update process* with teachers early in the cycle.		
3.6	**Appeals Process**		
3.6.1	There is an appeals process as part of Professional Update / PRD.		

3.6.2	The appeals process is consistent with existing complaints and grievance procedures.	
3.6.3	Information on the appeals process is shared with all teachers.	