

GTCS DRAFT Professional Standards Consultation – Scottish Professional Learning Network Response

Responding on behalf of a national education body.

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

The new introductory document clearly sets out the purpose of the refreshed Professional Standards and The Professional Code.

If you wish to comment on question 2 please do so below

Please refer to final comments at end of consultation.

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

The refreshed Professional Standards and The Professional Code set out clearly what it means to be a teacher in Scotland.

If you wish to comment on question 4 please do so below

Please refer to final comments at end of consultation.

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

The Professional Standards inspire public confidence of the teaching profession?

If you wish to comment on question 6 please do so below

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

The Professional Code inspires public confidence of the teaching profession?

We find it difficult to make comment on this due to there being no communication of how these will be shared with the wider public. However, if these were to go out in their current form then we would be doubtful that they would inspire public confidence in the profession due to being not conceptually coherent.

If you wish to comment on question 8 please do so below

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

Feedback from the national conversation suggested that the language used in the Professional Standards was 'too complicated' and 'ambiguous'. This has been addressed and the language in the refreshed Professional Standards and the Professional Code is appropriate, accessible and easy to understand.

If you wish to comment on question 10 please do so below

It would have been helpful to have had an analysis of the national conversation to which this statement refers. The bigger issue would appear to be that these documents are not easily accessible rather than the language being over complicated. It is essential that the language used in professional documents is in line with teacher professionalism and what we would expect of fully qualified education professionals.

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

The refreshed Professional Standards and Professional Code are aligned with current thinking in Scottish education around teacher professionalism. See 'GTCS Position Paper: Teacher Professionalism and Professional Learning in Scotland'

If you wish to comment on question 12 please do so below

If the vision has changed for the teaching profession, then the current Standards and Code do not align with the position paper on teacher professionalism and professional learning. If the vision has not changed then both documents do not align with the current vision for the Standards in education.

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

The inter-relationship between the refreshed Professional Standards and Professional Code is clear.

If you wish to comment on question 14 please do so below

We firmly believe that the two documents should not be inter-related in their current form as they serve different purposes. We believe that both documents should have shared principles and values but not sit together. It is essential that the documents are easily accessible for education professionals and the language used is logical and coherent.

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

The inter-relationship between the refreshed Professional Standards and Professional Code is coherent.

If you wish to comment on question 16 please do so below

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

The refreshed Professional Standards and Professional Code clarify the importance of professional values which are at the heart of teachers as professionals.

If you wish to comment on question 18 please do so below

We firmly believe that the place of values within the documents is not well articulated and clearly defined across both the Code and the Standards. Values should wholeheartedly underpin our professional actions and commitment.

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

The refreshed Professional Standards and the Professional Code clarify the importance of professional commitment which is at the heart of teachers as professionals.

If you wish to comment on question 20 please do so below

Throughout the document it is implicitly implied that the actions within the Standards are based on professional commitment, however it would be beneficial for professional commitment to be explicitly defined as a precursor for all actions of teaching professionals.

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree **Disagree** Strongly disagree N/A

The refreshed Professional Standards provide a framework that supports professional learning as well as high-quality PRD.

If you wish to comment on question 22 please do so below

It is essential that the Standards promote ongoing professional learning and dialogue and do not merely support PRD as a 'one-off' meeting which takes place annually and is not interlinked to ongoing professional learning and dialogue.

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree **Disagree** Strongly disagree N/A

The refreshed Professional Standards provide a framework that promotes professional learning as well as high-quality PRD.

If you wish to comment on question 24 please do so below

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree **Disagree** Strongly disagree N/A

The refreshed Professional Standards inspire career aspirations.

If you wish to comment on question 26 please do so below

If the purpose of the Standards was to align to the Career Pathways these should have been structured to support the pathways. We would argue that this is not the purpose of the Standards and that career aspirations are not viewed as a linear progression for development as a teacher. They may help to support identification of professional learning opportunities if I wish to move into a middle leadership role, however we do not believe that career aspirations should not be a main aim of the Standards.

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree **Disagree** Strongly disagree N/A

The refreshed Professional Standards support career aspirations.

If you wish to comment on question 28 please do so below

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

The refreshed Professional Standards and Professional Code support teacher leadership at all levels.

If you wish to comment on question 30 please do so below

The purpose of the Professional Code is not to support or to inspire teacher leadership. The Standards should promote this although this is not explicitly made clear throughout the document. Has consideration been given to the fact that not all teachers need to be leaders but that the main aim should be for teachers to be enquiring professionals who aim to achieve agency?

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

The refreshed Professional Standards and Professional Code inspire teacher leadership at all levels.

If you wish to comment on question 32 please do so below

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

The refreshed Professional Standards and Professional Code support empowerment at all level

If you wish to comment on question 34 please do so below

If the Professional Standards remain in their current form then we would argue that they do not support empowerment of the teaching professional and limits and diminishes the agency and power of teachers at all levels. This appear to get progressively more regulatory as the Standards progress.

Please rate this statement:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree **Strongly disagree** N/A

The refreshed Professional Standards and Professional Code inspire empowerment at all levels

If you wish to comment on question 36 please do so below

I think I would use the refreshed Professional Standards to: (please select all that apply)

Regularly influence my professional thinking and practice

Engage in professional dialogue

Plan my professional learning, PRD and career pathway

Reflect on my practice and self-evaluate

Understand what is expected of a teacher

Support and lead colleagues in the above

I think I would use the Professional Code to: (please select all that apply)

Engage in professional dialogue about values and professional behaviour

Understand what is expected of a teacher

Influence my actions and behaviour

Plan professional learning

Reflect on my professionalism and self-evaluate

Are there any support or guidance materials that would help you better understand and engage with the Professional Standards and Professional Code?

Do you have any other comments on the refreshed Professional Standards?

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on a refreshed set of Professional Standards for Teachers and the new Professional Code.

We respond on behalf of the membership of the Scottish Professional Learning Network (SPLN) which supports professional learning for education professionals at national level. Our membership consists of a wide range of partners within education in Scotland who contribute to the promotion and support of career-long professional learning.

Our response is informed by:

- Participation in GTCS Review of Professional Standards Scottish Professional Learning Network event held on Wednesday 13th November 2019 at Moray House, University of Edinburgh.
- Consultation with Scottish Professional Learning Network Planning Group members on Friday 1st November 2019 at Moray House, University of Edinburgh.

Key Themes

- No introduction to any of the Professional Standards to bring conceptual coherence across the set.
- No clear articulation of the Professional Values throughout the Professional Standards.
- Standards need to be aspirational and forward looking; they need to link with the current context / landscape, which is unlikely to change soon. A visionary statement about teaching in Scotland today is needed, including moral purpose and complexity of teaching
- Format needs to be more usable, i.e. online with relevant links to needed information as part of a joined up approach to technology, possibly with an app option.
- The documents need to be thoroughly proof checked.
- Tends to be over regulatory/ about compliance.

- A far broader and deeper understanding of inclusion, and a far greater understanding of the cultural diversity within Scottish schools is needed.
- Courage and wisdom appear to have dropped out of the values; these signalled the bold and principled narrative to aspire to within the teaching profession.

Introduction to the Professional Standards and Professional Values

The 2012 set of Standards articulated a clear vision and moral purpose for the profession in Scotland. This has been omitted from the refreshed Standards and we would strongly argue that this be restored within an introductory statement to clearly signal that teaching is a profession based on professional values and commitments and committed to the principles and practices of social justice and learning for sustainability.

We suggest including an encouraging and motivational overall introductory vision statement to inspire and enable practitioners. This should set out the changing local and global context for educators and society in Scotland, highlighting what it is to teach in Scotland in the 21st century and that Scotland is an aspirational forward looking country with a teaching profession foregrounded on personal and professional values. The world's children are coming to our schools, and we should be acknowledging and reflecting this rich cultural diversity and change in our schools within the introduction to the Standards.

The absence of an aspirational and visionary introduction to the Standards adds to the overall concerns that the refreshed Standards have a tone of regulation and compliance which potentially leads to the reduction of teacher professionalism to a set of competencies and loses the vision and boldness that captures the complex and dynamic challenges our learners face in society and the role of education and teachers to equip those learners with the necessary knowledge, critical skills and abilities to live in this changing world.

In addition to the overarching vision, it is also important to articulate the vision and purpose of each set of Standards to ensure conceptual coherence and to highlight the distinctive nature and place of each set of Standards.

Social Justice should be at the heart of the Standards and though inclusion and diversity are noted as important they do not capture the breadth and depth of work being taken forward nationally. This is an opportunity to enhance what was in the current Standards and think more critically about issues of diversity and culturally responsive pedagogies referenced recently in the report 'Teaching in a Diverse Scotland'.

Professional Code and the Professional Standards

Combining the Standards and the Code suggests a significant change in the purpose of the teaching standards.

The Professional Standards for Teachers in Scotland have consistently placed professional values at their heart, and Scotland has been acclaimed internationally for prioritising values that foreground and permeate each Standard. However in the refreshed Standards they have been combined with the Professional Code and do not foreground each Standard as before. Currently a teacher or any other educator working with the Standards would only see the values if they had to consult the Code, which generally means there is a problem or conduct case. It is perfectly possible that the

values would not be read when consulting each Standard for PRD, PU or the accreditation of teacher education programmes. This is a major omission and weakness with far reaching implications. We suggest that the professional values are restored to foreground each Standard, to reflect the deep commitment in Scottish education to the values and to the principles and practices of social justice and professionalism.

Conflating the Professional Code with the Professional Standards suggests that the purpose of teaching in Scotland has changed to demonstrating compliance with a set of benchmark competencies. Whilst we recognise that the SPR and SFR require the meeting of competences, this is only one purpose and does not articulate across all the Standards.

We suggest that the Professional Code serves a distinct and important purpose and that the integration of the Code within the Standards will serve to counter the strong narrative from the GTCS to teachers in Scotland that Professional Update is **not** about competence but rather the professional learning and development of a teacher, with the competence route being a distinctly different journey. The emphasis on professional learning, PRD and PU has been the strength of the Standards and will potentially be diminished to a demonstration of compliance if the Code is included.

The place of Learning for Sustainability (LfS) in the Professional Standards

The inclusion of Learning for Sustainability in the GTCS Professional Standards in 2012, in recognition of changing contexts in education and society, has been recognised as world leading by UNESCO. The embedding of LfS is acknowledged within the Introduction to Professional Standards and the Professional Code (section 3) however, LfS does not then articulate in content across the Standards.

Considerable professional learning focused on LfS has taken place across Scotland to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities within the teaching profession and this had a significant impact on the professional practice of teachers and schools across Scotland. However, we are disappointed that all this rich and developing work may be at risk. We are dismayed to find that many important aspects of Learning for Sustainability, such as outdoor learning, learning our way to a better future and our interdependence with nature have been removed from all the Standards and the values.

We ask that LfS is restored to permeate the Standards and that a clearer definition is written perhaps referencing the suggested definition proposed in the GTCS sub group for LfS and the Standards.

Standard for Provisional and Full Registration

We are concerned that there is a tone that suggests the Standards are to be used for policy compliance rather than as a set of expectations for us as a teaching profession. We are concerned that the revised Standards narrow our measurable outcomes for the role of the teaching professional as a whole or are encouraging us to measure success of a teacher based on a very narrow set of measures.

Are the Standards making it clear about the criticality of the role of the teaching professional? The wording around 'accessing research' needs to be more clearly defined as teachers engaging critically with research to inform knowledge, understanding and practice. Could there be a broader definition of research included? BERA document recently published would be helpful to inform this. We need

to be realistic about the expectations on teachers about their role in research given the demands of the job. Clearer links need to be made to self-evaluation and the role that all teaching professionals have in being involved in self-evaluation for self-improvement.

Do we need to have all of the documents? Would there be a way for the introductory document to be incorporated into the Standards documents? We need to think about the amount of documents we are expecting the education profession to engage with. Use of digital technologies should be explored to make the Standards more accessible to a wider audience.

Articulation of values throughout the Standards with a clear focus on social justice and the wider understanding of inclusion rather than solely about ASN. Social justice appears to have been greatly diminished throughout the document at a time when this should be high on the agenda for all of our teaching professionals.

How do the Standards align with the work carried out by the PRD Steering Group in terms of consultation and development of the revised standards? Could some work be done to align the revised standards with the PRD Guidelines around what high-quality professional learning and PRD should look/feel like? PRD is mentioned within the document however, it suggests that PRD is a 'one-off' meeting held annually rather than it being a process of creating a culture and climate of trust around professional learning and dialogue. It is essential that the National Model for Professional Learning and MyPL Cycles are clearly articulated throughout the Standards.

We need to be clear about using the word 'justify' within the Standards as this suggests that as long as we can justify there is no challenge around whether this is justifiable practice.

Within the SPR there are a number of statements that do not make sense and do not clearly articulate the role of the teacher in Scotland. Grammatical structure needs to be addressed for many of the statements.

In the SPR under 2.2.1 where the list of legislation is the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 does not appear even though this is a key piece of legislation in terms of children's rights, participation and engagement.

Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning

This would benefit from an informed introduction that explains the purpose and vision of this Standard. We are concerned about the removal of the professional dispositions from the refreshed Standards which articulate that a teacher in the 21st Century needs to be:

- Critically informed and reflective
- Committed to the principles and practices of practitioner enquiry
- Research informed
- Collaborative
- Adaptive

These dispositions informed the context of the CLPL Standard and without these articulated dispositions the CLPL Standard loses its depth and meaning and removes the coherence to the knowledge, skills and abilities stated in the remaining text of the CLPL standard.

The removal of the **Professional Actions** from the CLPL Standard and restructuring under Skills and Abilities and Knowledge and Understanding is confusing. There is no explanation as to why

these have been removed. We suggest that the layout and content of the CLPL Standard be reviewed to include the professional dispositions and to ensure consistency with the other Standards, including consistent use of Professional Knowledge and Understanding, Professional Skills and Abilities and Professional Actions.

Learning for Sustainability has been entirely removed from the Standard for CLPL, both in the introduction and body of the text. We suggest that this is made explicit to ensure teachers embed LfS into their practice as stated in the introduction to the Standards and Code 3.3, and to retain alignment to national education policy.

Inclusion/ASN is not mentioned within the CLPL standard despite the acknowledged need for the profession to be more supported with professional learning in this area and the legislative nature of Inclusion. Overall Inclusion is presented in the standards in narrow terms, for example listing specific additional support needs, and does not reflect the current broader view that embeds principles of inclusive practices and inclusive pedagogies.

Overall we suggest that there is a lack of conceptual coherence to this standard, the sense of aspiration, teacher agency and being agentic and empowered professionals has been reduced resulting in a lack of depth and substance to the standard. The sense of the aspirational, forward looking and critical learning stance which underpins the current CLPL standard is significantly diminished and also does not align with or reflect the national model of professional learning.

Standards for Middle Leadership

Though it is of interest to consider a Middle Leader Standard this term is so open to interpretation (similar to the Senior Leader term) that this may cause confusion across the system. Also we believe that some of the Standards within Middle Leadership may well be the same as those in the Headship Standard and at times there are tokenistic attempts to differentiate. This is fairly meaningless and unhelpful. For example ML - 3.4 - last point is good example of tokenistic language of progression.

In the section on Professional Actions of Middle leaders, there are no actions (page 3) which is very confusing; it's clearer in SfR and needs to be in line with this document

Standard for Headship & Senior Leaders

Values, which underpin all professional roles in education, should be an integral part of all of the Standards, and are currently diminished by being listed as examples and only in the Professional Code. Professional commitment sits at the core of empowerment, and of particular significance in any leadership role.

The additional 5 key strands that sit across this Standard make it very challenging to negotiate and understand the changes that are proposed.

The professional actions of Head Teachers are felt to be essential but appear to have been removed, and we are not clear on the rationale for this decision.

Introduction of Senior Leader category - who are these Standards aimed at specifically? There are so many leaders in the system not covered in Standards, and not all leaders are Head Teachers. We wonder if there is need for a System Leader Standard. It is disappointing that the role of Depute Head Teacher is not evident within the refreshed Standards.

Similarly we firmly believe that there needs to be distinct Head Teacher Standard – with the award of Standard for Headship becoming mandatory, merely using the title Senior Leader lacks definition. How will those awarding the Standard for Headship (Into Headship providers) be offered clarity here?

There is no cognisance of Teacher Career Pathways, the Standard for Headship becoming mandatory from August 2020 or the HT Charter.

Indeed the Senior Leader/Headship Standard reads somewhat like a job specification or operational management toolkit instead of articulating the aspirations and actions that make a difference within the role of headship . These draft Standards may describe what Head Teachers do but they do not articulate or ensure how Head Teachers develop as a leaders and professionals more broadly for their own growth. The narrative is very much about what Head Teachers/senior leaders do for others, with very little about their own personal and professional growth and development. They are very much positioned in a “servant leadership” role.

This is a significant shift and loss to the current documentation. This Standard now seems to be all about Head Teachers creating ongoing opportunities for the PL and collaboration of others but very little about their own learning. There is very little there about them as learners (lead learners) or support for the often disenfranchised stance of Head Teacher i.e. always facilitating and creating opportunities for others and putting their own needs last. The language used is that Head Teachers are to establish, to promote... verbs ‘to do to/for other people’- and feels like a list of ‘to do’ tasks.

It is felt that the professional actions as described in the refresh have a tone of compliance and competence, rather than a sense of leadership as agentic, visionary and innovative, with little sense of the holistic nature of the role indeed it feels “operational rather than aspirational”.

Much of the dominant discourse which is present in the current standards has been removed again without a clear rationale being made explicit. Where has criticality in this Standard gone? Criticality is a key skill of school leaders and one of the key aspects of the Into Headship programme, but this not as evident in the refreshed Standards.

Where is enquiry in these Standards? Superficially including the word empowerment in these Standards does not lead to the actions, dispositions, mind sets which are required for authentic empowerment - e.g. voice, criticality, offering differing perspectives and the courage and conviction to live your values and speak your “truths” - are these dispositions now not required? We are also not convinced that empowerment and self-evaluation sit comfortably together within the draft Standard.