



IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING : IMPLEMENTING THE GTCS CODE OF PRACTICE ON TEACHER COMPETENCE

1. Context

- 1.1 The General Teaching Council has now issued its Code of Practice on Teacher Competence. It is appropriate for the Education Services department to revise its approach to dealing with under-achievement in the context of improving the quality of teaching.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The key objective of the education services in the city of Glasgow is to ensure that every pupil has access to the highest level of quality of education which will enable him/her to achieve maximum potential. To that end it is essential that all staff employed within the department – at the chalk face as teachers and in the variety of support roles – are of the highest quality and have access to appropriate training and support.
- 2.2 The vast majority of teaching staff and support staff within the education service provide excellent service supporting children and young people in the teaching and learning process. However, as in any profession or area of employment, there are staff whose performance is significantly below that which rightly can be expected.
- 2.3 Staff whose performance continues to fall short have a dramatic impact on the extent to which pupils do benefit from the education provision made available for them. Poor teachers and poor teaching not only have a detrimental affect immediately on pupils as they attend classes but the long term effects can be very damaging. Pupils can be demotivated, losing their enthusiasm for the learning process and gaps in learning at any stage can have a serious effect on future learning. In such circumstances there are implications for discipline and for attendance at schools. Members of staff who hold posts of responsibility have a key role in ensuring that the service is managed effectively and in monitoring the quality of education provision. The effective delivery of the service is dependent upon the quality of staff who are in promoted posts. Sound performance at management level is essential if pupil achievement is to be maximised.
- 2.4 The sustained attendance of staff is also a key issue in ensuring quality of provision for children and young people. The revised Disciplinary Framework issued as SNCT/18 by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers includes specific reference to attendance.

3. Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning

- 3.1 It is appropriate, as part of the Glasgow City Council's drive towards improving educational attainment, to re-emphasise the procedures and practices which seek to improve the overall quality of teachers and the teaching and learning process. In this there is a key role for head teachers and other senior staff in schools identifying appropriate training and staff development for teachers and support staff through each school's development planning processes and in engaging the standard disciplinary procedures where, in spite of appropriate internal and external support, through the education improvement service (and, where appropriate, directorate) for members of staff, the performance of a member of staff continues to be unacceptable. In such circumstances our primary concern must be for the quality of educational experience for pupils.
- 3.2 At the outset it is critical that all members of staff know exactly what is expected of them and to that end all staff should be made clearly aware of the remit or specification for the job as outlined in Annex B of "*A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century*". This should be discussed fully with them so that no member of staff is in any doubt about the role they have to play in the business of education.

4. Providing Support for Teaching Staff

- 4.1 The teaching profession has consistently striven to improve itself to meet the challenges provided by major curricular changes and the wider social changes which impact particularly on large urban areas. Within the city of Glasgow, teachers have embraced the social and economic policies of the Council and the educational challenge of raising levels of achievement. The development plan for each school will not only describe the priority issues which the school will pursue over the next three years but will also indicate how other areas of work and life within the school will be maintained.
- 4.2 In doing so the training and other staff development needs of individual members of staff and groups will be identified. Each school will also have in place policies and procedures for supporting continuing professional development of all staff, including probation teachers and teachers who provide absence cover. Induction for new members of staff is critically important and each school should have in place a clear induction policy within the overall Probationer Placement Scheme introduced in August 2002. Schools also co-operate with the teacher training colleges to provide support for students on their initial teacher training. In each school there is a member of the senior staff nominated as the Continuing Professional Development Co-ordinator who has a specific and key role in supporting the training needs of all members of staff and determining how these can be best met within the resources available to the school for development and training purposes.
- 4.3 Professional review for individual members of staff is an important element in defining the particular needs of individual members of staff, not only as they relate to the development plan of the establishment, but also in personal development. The outcome of such review will be a statement of targets for individual members of staff related to the development plan of the establishment, and also to personal development, together with the type of activities in which the teacher should engage, required to assist the achievement of targets.

4.4 To support the staff development function in individual schools, the authority's education improvement service has a pastoral link with individual schools through its education advisers. Advisers liaise with staff development co-ordinators and head teachers to determine whether staff development needs can be more appropriately supported at the individual school level or in a wider context. To that end the service has developed a wide ranging menu of training courses and other development activities which schools may wish to access for members of staff. In addition to the curriculum related provision of courses, there are training and staff development opportunities for groups of staff such as probationer teachers and teachers returning to the profession, for teachers aspiring to senior levels of management and for teachers who hold senior posts of responsibility within schools. These opportunities make up the framework in Glasgow for supporting the continuous professional development of staff.

5. Procedures for Dealing with Under-Performance and Incompetence

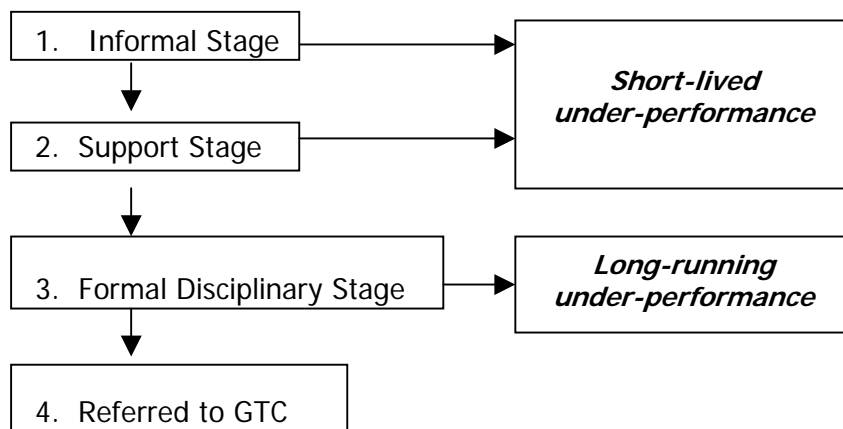
5.1 There are staff who do experience difficulty in the classroom or in the various support roles and there is a clear responsibility for senior staff in schools and in the authority to assist such staff identify where improvements require to be made in, for example, planning for lessons, managing classroom activities, presenting lessons, organising work for pupils of different levels of ability within the class and in other areas of teaching and learning, and in aspects of the roles defined for support staff. Senior staff can also provide guidance in dealing with difficult disciplinary situations through clearly stated school policies.

5.2 A Code of Practice on Teacher Competence, produced by the General Teaching Council (Scotland) provides the definition of competence in terms of the Standard for Full Registration. The code also explains the steps in the process of dealing with cases of short lived under-performance and long running under-performance. The authority will apply management and leadership competences in circumstances where staff in promoted posts are experiencing difficulties.

5.3 A copy of the definition of teacher competences is given in Appendix 1.

5.4 THE PROCEDURES

5.4.1 There are four stages in the procedures



Short-lived under-performance may be caused by many factors such as illness, personal circumstances, lack of understanding of current methodology, loss of competence or external factors beyond the control of the teacher. In stages 1 and 2 it is assumed that the teacher's problem is one of short-lived under-performance.

Longer running under-performance is the term used to describe the problem where Stage 3 of the procedures is implemented. By this stage, although support and guidance and professional development opportunities have been offered to the teacher, this has not resulted in the teacher maintaining the level defined in the Standard for Full Registration.

Teachers may wish to invite a colleague or representative from their professional association to accompany them to any meetings. At all stages it is important accurate and full documentation is maintained.

5.4.2 **Stage 1: Informal Stage**

- i. The informal stage does not form part of the authority's formal disciplinary procedures. Principal teachers and senior management have a responsibility placed upon them to monitor the performance of staff, and this may result in the need to draw to the attention of a member of staff matters of under-performance or poor attendance.
- ii. Informal discussions should be held between the teacher and senior colleague(s) to discuss identified areas of under-performance. During these informal discussions the teacher should be encouraged to participate fully in identifying the causes of the under-performance and suggesting possible remedies. Advice and guidance should be offered from senior colleagues to support improvement.
- iii. At the conclusion of the first informal discussion a date should be agreed by the teacher and senior colleagues to review performance. The length of time to be given for the teacher to reach the required standard will depend on the context of the situation but it should be unduly long.
- iv. At the conclusion of the meeting to review performance, ie whether or not the required standard has been achieved, an oral report should be given to the teacher indicating the outcome. Two outcomes are possible:

Outcome 1:

Where improvements have been made to the required standard, no further action will be taken. The teacher should be informed of this decision in writing.

Outcome 2:

Where improvements have not been achieved to the required standard, the teacher should be informed that the matter will be referred to the head teacher who will consider whether the second stage of the procedures should be implemented. The teacher will be informed of the head teacher's decision and the underpinning reasons in writing. The teacher will be informed of the procedure that could result in disciplinary action being taken in the event that performance remains below that defined in the standard for full registration.

5.4.3 **Stage 2: Support**

Note: Where the situation is serious then Stage 1 and Stage 2 can be combined in one stage of support.

- i. The support stage does not form part of the employer's formal disciplinary procedures. It is assumed, at this stage, that the problem is still one of short-lived under-performance.
- ii. The teacher should be informed by the head teacher of:
 - the specific aspects of the Standard For Full Registration (SFR) which are to be addressed;
 - the proposed mechanisms which will be put in place to support the teacher;
 - appropriate professional development opportunities which can be accessed.
- iii. Discussions should be held between the teacher and head teacher to agree the way ahead. During these discussions the teacher should be encouraged to address the issues openly in order to:
 - clarify the areas of under-performance;
 - suggest forms of support which he/she would find helpful;
 - agree appropriate professional development opportunities.

Sympathetic consideration should be given to all reasonable requests made by the teacher.

At the conclusion of these discussions the head teacher should give a broad indication of the support mechanisms and professional development opportunities which will be made available. Dates for an Interim Review meeting and a Final Review meeting will be confirmed. Information about any structured observations to assess the performance of the teacher will also be provided.

- iv. As soon as possible after the discussion the head teacher should confirm in writing:
 - the improvements to be made;
 - the support mechanisms and professional development package to be provided;
 - confirmation of the review dates

Sample documentation is attached as Appendix 2.

- v. At the conclusion of the Final Review meeting the teacher should be informed of the outcome.

Two outcomes are possible:

Outcome 1:

Where improvements have been achieved to the required standard, no further action will be taken. The proceedings will be deemed to be complete. The teacher should be informed of this discussion in writing.

Outcome 2:

Where improvements have not been achieved to the required standard, the teacher should be informed that formal disciplinary procedures will be implemented. The decision and the underpinning reasons should be communicated to the teacher in writing.

The teacher should be advised of their statutory and contractual rights to be accompanied at stages 3 and 4.

5.4.4 **Stage 3: Disciplinary**

- i. This stage comprises the employer's formal disciplinary procedures. The problem is now considered to be one of chronic incompetence.
- ii. The teacher should be advised of their statutory and contractual rights to be accompanied.
- iii. A comprehensive statement should be produced by the head teacher indicating:
 - details of the teacher's alleged failure to maintain the standards described in the SFR with clear identification of which aspects are alleged not to be of the required standard;
 - details of the support mechanisms and professional development opportunities offered to the teacher;
 - the duration of stages 1 and 2;
 - the teacher's performance at the start of the support stage;
 - the teacher's performance at the end of the support stage.
- iv. The above information will be considered:
 - at subsequent stages in the employer's formal disciplinary proceedings;
 - if the case is referred to GTC Scotland.
- v. The disciplinary hearing and any subsequent appeal will be within the Disciplinary and Appeals Procedures of the Authority.

5.4.5 **Stage 4: Referral to the General Teaching Council for Scotland**

- i. A case is referred to the General Teaching Council under the terms of Section 9B of the Teaching Council (Scotland) Act 1965 as amended, ie where a case culminates in:
 - the dismissal of the teacher;
 - the resignation of the teacher in the context of a possible dismissal.
- ii. Relevant information from the Disciplinary stage will be sent to the General Teaching Council by the Authority.
- iii. Information relating to the General Teaching Council's procedures for dealing with such cases can be found in the Council's Code of Practice on the Exercise of its Disciplinary Functions and in the Conduct, Competence and Disciplinary Rules.

DEFINITION OF TEACHER COMPETENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Code of Practice on Teacher Competence provides the definition of competence in terms of the Standard for Full Registration (SFR) and explains the steps in the process for dealing with cases of short-lived under-performance and long-running under-performance. This Code is part of the Council's procedures for maintaining standards of professional conduct and competence in teaching.

It is important to note that this Code will be kept under continuous review and will be updated regularly.

It should be noted that where the alleged under-performance relates to administrative/managerial duties of a promoted teacher, similar procedures may be applied, but in the knowledge that the power of the Council, at the end of the day, to remove the name of a teacher from the register for long-running under-performance relates to teaching competence not administrative/managerial competence.

2. DEFINITION OF TEACHER COMPETENCE

Teacher competence is described in terms of the Standard for Full Registration (SFR) and applies to teachers who have gained full registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

The Standard describes the:

- ❖ professional knowledge and understanding
- ❖ professional skills and abilities
- ❖ professional values and personal commitment

which all fully registered teachers should be able to demonstrate in their professional activities.

Professional Knowledge and Understanding

Registered teachers:

- (a) have detailed knowledge and understanding of the relevant areas of the pre-school, primary or secondary school curriculum;
- (b) have sufficient knowledge and understanding to fulfil their responsibilities for literacy and numeracy; personal, social and health education; and ICT. (As appropriate to the sector and stage of development.);
- (c) understand the nature of the curriculum and its development;
- (d) have sufficient knowledge and understanding to meet their responsibilities to teach cross-curricular aspects.

- (e) have a broad, critical understanding of the principal features of the education system, educational policy and practice, and of their part in it;
- (f) have detailed working knowledge of their sector, of the school(s) in which they teach, and of their professional responsibilities within them;
- (g) can articulate their professional values and practices and relate them to theoretical principles and perspectives;
- (h) have research-based knowledge relating to learning and teaching and a critical appreciation of the contribution of research to education in general.

Professional Skills and Abilities

Registered Teachers:

- (a) are able to plan coherent and progressive teaching programmes which match their pupils' needs and abilities, and they can justify what they teach;
- (b) communicate clearly, making skilful use of a variety of media, and interact productively with pupils, individually and collectively;
- (c) use a range of teaching strategies and resources which they can evaluate and justify in terms of curriculum requirements and of the needs and abilities of their pupils;
- (d) set and maintain expectations and pace of work for all pupils;
- (e) work co-operatively with other professionals and adults;
- (f) organise and manage classes and resources to achieve safe, orderly and purposeful activity;
- (g) manage pupil behaviour and classroom incidents fairly, sensitively and consistently, making sensible use of rewards and sanctions, and seeking and using the advice of colleagues when necessary;
- (h) understand and apply the principles of assessment, recording and reporting;
- (i) use the results of assessment to evaluate and improve their teaching, and the learning and attainment of the children they teach.

Professional Values and Personal Commitment

Registered teachers:

- (a) learn from their experience of practice and from critical evaluation of relevant literature in their professional development;
- (b) convey an understanding of practice and general educational matters in their professional dialogue and communication;

- (c) reflect on and act to improve their own professional practice, contribute to their own professional development, and engage in the process of curriculum development;
- (d) should show in their day-to-day practice a commitment to social justice and inclusion;
- (e) take responsibility for their professional learning and development;
- (f) value, respect and are active partners in the communities in which they work.



REVIEW OF TEACHER COMPETENCE/PERFORMANCE

Name of Teacher and Subject

Period of Review

School

Review Meetings (dates)

Area(s) of Performance Review

Arrangements for Support

Signed (Head Teacher)

Signed (Teacher)

Date



PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Support from Education Improvement Service

Name of Teacher

School

Date of Referral to EdIS

Adviser/Development Officer

Targets for Improvement	Details of support to be provided	Timescale	Comments

Signed _____ (Teacher)

_____ (Adviser)

Date _____

_____ (Head Teacher)